

= Utah State Route 279 =

State Route 279 is a state highway in the U.S. state of Utah . The highway was constructed in 1962 ? 1963 to service the Cane Creek potash mine and processing plant southwest of Moab . The highway was named one of the most beautiful highways opened to traffic in 1963 . The entire length of SR @-@ 279 has been designated the Potash ? Lower Colorado River Scenic Byway by the Utah State Legislature , however is known locally as Potash Road .

This highway was intended to be part of a longer highway , State Route 278 , that was to scale the canyon walls between Moab and Dead Horse Point State Park . Only the connection to the potash mine was constructed before the project was cancelled . Although the highway was constructed to aid the mining industry of southeastern Utah , the road is popular with tourists and four wheel drive enthusiasts . The jeep trails beginning where SR @-@ 279 ends are used to access Canyonlands National Park and Dead Horse Point .

= = Route description = =

The highway begins just north of Moab at a junction with U.S. Route 191 near the southern boundary of Arches National Park . The road follows the north bank of the Colorado River to the potash mine . The road is legislatively designated north ? south , but actually serpentine for most of its length . The highway loosely parallels a spur of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built at the same time and for the same purpose of serving the potash mine . The route of the railroad features a 1 @. @ 59 @-@ mile (2 @. @ 56 km) tunnel that bypasses most of the serpentine bends in the Colorado River between Moab and the potash plant . While in the Colorado River canyon , the highway passes by dinosaur footprints , Indian petroglyphs and jeep trails leading to Canyonlands National Park and Dead Horse Point State Park . The highway also passes by three named natural arches , Corona Arch , Bow Tie Arch , and Jug Handle Arch .

= = History = =

The State Road Commission approved a new State Route 279 in 1960 , connecting US @-@ 160 (now US @-@ 191) northwest of Moab with Dead Horse Point State Park . The route would be mostly new construction , following the right (northwest) bank of the Colorado River to Day Canyon , where it would climb to the southwest onto the plateau containing the park . Within the park , an existing roadway , then its primary access road , would become part of SR @-@ 279 . The state legislature approved this highway in 1961 . Later that year , the commission added a second route ? State Route 278 ? that would continue south alongside the river from SR @-@ 279 to the Grand @-@ San Juan County line . However , when it approved the addition in 1963 , the legislature made it part of SR @-@ 279 , renumbering the spur to the park through Day Canyon as SR @-@ 278 . In addition , the south end of SR @-@ 279 was changed to Potash , a point north of the county line where the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company was building a potash plant . SR @-@ 279 was soon built , but the road through Day Canyon was never constructed . In 1975 , the legislature deleted SR @-@ 278 in favor of a new SR @-@ 313 , which followed the existing county road to Dead Horse Point through Sevenmile Canyon .

In 1963 , Parade Magazine held the third of an annual competition for most scenic highway that opened to traffic that year . SR @-@ 279 was one of four finalists in the competition . The others finalists were I @-@ 93 between Windham and Londonderry in New Hampshire , I @-@ 84 near Southington , Connecticut and I @-@ 405 near Sepulveda Pass in Los Angeles , California .

= = Major intersections = =

The entire route is in Grand County .