



The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

Winter Solstice, 2016

AGM Report

Kootenay Mountaineering Club 48th AGM

The 48th Kootenay Mountaineering Club AGM was held at the Element Club Bar and Grill in Castlegar, BC on November 18, 2016. This was a new location to host our meeting and share stories about another great year of hiking and skiing in the Kootenays. The Element staff were very accommodating, all enjoyed a delicious meal and they had images of the last year's trips showing on their many screens.

President Clark started the meeting at 8:11 pm with 64 members present. I'll try and summarize some of the highlights of the meeting. You can read the AGM minutes online located in the members only document section of the website.

For a number of years now there has been some discussion amongst the membership about membership fees, with some feeling our old dues structure was unequitable. The KMC Executive put forward a motion to change our dues structure so that singles and couples membership fees would be equitable. There was some good discussion on the motion as to the history of our membership fee structure and the value of promoting a reduced rate for families. Ultimately the motion was passed to change our membership fee structure.

Our Treasurer Ross Bates presented and answered questions on our 2016 financial report and 2017 budget for approval and adoption. Expenses were up from members taking courses; this has been a great initiative to support our members taking courses to learn about being safer in the mountains.

Last year our Equipment and Trails director got some work started on rebuilding the Lost Mountain trail, a great initiative to rebuild some of the old trail to an amazing summit. If you have a desire to work on one of your favourite trails the tools are stored at Chris's house.

Members continue to enjoy summer and winter trips, hiking camp, Kokanee ski week and mountaineering school. We are all thankful for the directors and

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Article submission guidelines:

Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to

newsletter@kootenarymountaineeringclub.ca.

Attach your full resolution photos to the email. Lots of photos, please.

Publication dates according to the solar seasons

committee members who make these trips and courses happen. 2017 hiking camp will be held at the same location as 1992 – Edouard Pass.

The Bonnington huts are truly a Jewel in the Kootenays with an increasing number of local and international bookings. Our thanks to Graham for all his work maintaining the huts; he's done an incredible job.

We also had two special resolutions from the floor to remove the resident family member and remove the associate members. Both motions endured significant debate, ultimately both were defeated.

There was also an election with the following results (thanks Cindy):

- a. Treasurer– Ross bates
- b. Secretary – Cindy Kozak-Campbell
- c. Summer Trips – Peter Oostlander
- d. Winter trips – Phil Best
- e. Conservation – Peter Jordan
- f. Website – Tim Clinton
- g. Entertainment – Laurie Helyer
- h. Cabins – vacant

It has been an honour to be the Kootenay Mountaineering Club's Secretary for the last few years. I'm truly thankful for the people I've met, friendships made and experiences we've shared.

*Happy Trails,
Dan Derby*

Links

Cross Country Ski School in the Himalaya

From: Helen Foulger <helenfou@gmail.com>

Sent: November 14, 2016 7:37 PM

To: Doug Clark

Subject: Fwd: Zanskar Ski School- The first cross country ski school in the Himalaya

Here is a worthwhile cause to donate old mountaineering equipment if the club wishes. It would involve making enquiries about what they need and how to get it there. Ron Robinson just dropped a lot of his used climbing equipment off in Golden and it will be taken to the Zanskar Ski School supposedly.

just some food for thought.

Helen

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ron Robinson <robinson4065@gmail.com>

Subject: Fwd: Zanskar Ski School- The first cross country ski school in the Himalaya

Date: November 13, 2016 at 4:52:56 PM PST

To: Helen Folger <helenfou@gmail.com>

This is a link to the website, with contact info.

Ron

<http://www.zanskarskiskool.org/>

Greg Hill's Five Rules To Live By

<http://blog.arcteryx.com/greg-hills-five-rules-live/>

Firestarter Recipe

Backcountry firestarter

- Fill a cardboard egg carton with shredded paper, sawdust, and/ or clothes dryer lint.
- Melt some old candle nubs in a clean soup can on the stove.
- Pour into the egg carton cups over the tinder, to about 3/4 full (put some newspaper underneath for spills).
- For extra power, put a small stick or two into the wax, sticking out about 1", small splits of kindling works very well.
- Once cooled/ hardened, cut each cup out individually and wrap the cardboard corners over the top.
- Store a couple in the bottom of your pack all winter in a plastic bag (keep the cardboard dry).

To use: prepare more kindling and small splits of firewood, make a nice teepee with the firestarter at the centre, light the cardboard.

Stay warm and toasty all night for that unplanned bivy, or light the wood stove at the hut to cook your lunch!

You can facilitate the whole fire by having a snow saw that also cuts wood, or throw in Coglean's small chain saw into your emergency kit. It's very small, cheap, and neat and actually works. Available at Walmart, Canadian Tire, or wherever they have Coglean's camping supplies.

Thanksgiving Mountain

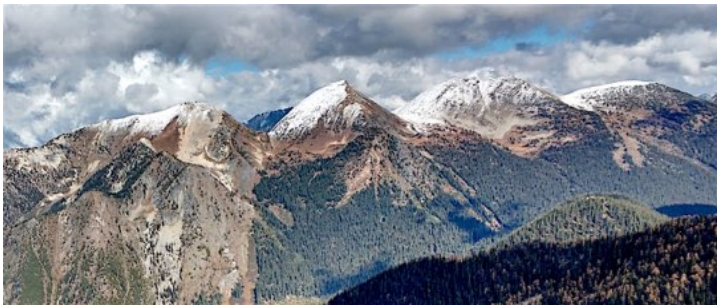
October 02

October 2nd was a perfect hiking day on Thanksgiving Mountain in the Gray Creek Pass with golden larch trees, blue sky, perfectly clear air, and snowy peaks like icing on the cake.

The seven hikers agreed: it had all the pleasures of a higher altitude hike without too much effort, and it was promptly added to personal lists of favourite hikes. The trail passes through a pleasant mossy subalpine forest, then ascends steeply to an alpine meadow with a steep drop-off, giving stunning views to the north and east after less than an hour's hiking.

Another 30 minutes up, a boulder-strewn slope brings you to the top with 360 views which included Kootenay Lake, Crawford Bay, the West Arm, Kokanee Glacier, and a sea of peaks to the south and east. A short walk along the narrow ridgetop brings you to a viewpoint where you can look down at olive-green Oliver Lake, 1200 feet below.

Attached pictures show the Sphinx Mountains to the north and Oliver Lake, which sits near the top of the pass.



Hikers came across the 8:10 ferry from Balfour and were at the trailhead at 10 AM. We were back down from the peak in 3 hours, with time to enjoy the

pleasant trail around Oliver Lake, have coffee and a snack in Crawford Bay, and then catch the 3:40 back home.

Hikers were Diane White (photographer), Leon Arishenkoff, Allan MacLeod, Andre and Gill Piver, Julie Hampton, and myself, Lorna Robin.

White Queen and Beattie

Goody Niosi

November 11

I anticipated my first hike with KMC with excitement and a good dose of trepidation.

Who were these people? Younger? Faster? Better equipped? More beautiful? Funnier and more intelligent?

Oh sure, I'd been hiking for forty years but not in the Kootenays and not with a group formidably named Kootenay Mountaineering Club. It was the word "mountaineering" that had me on edge. Sure, I was willing to hang off the edge of a cliff if that was what was required, But it wasn't my first choice for how to spend the day.

But the Kootenays were my new home and hiking was my passion, so I'd joined the group two weeks previously and I was determined to get out there. My previous group experience was with Take a Hike on Vancouver Island, a casual, loosely formed bunch of wonderful people who hiked several times a week – hikes that included everything from four hours up and down the local hills to four-day treks in the wilds of Strathcona, which often meant edge-of-cliff scrambles with full packs and Sherpas bringing up the rear to pick up the bodies (okay – maybe not the Sherpas).

So, on November 10, bright and early (dark and early actually) I set off, having ticked off my required gear list: gaiters (check), snowshoes (check), mini crampons (check), flask (oops and rats!).

We arrived at the designated meeting place and carpoled to the foot of the local ski hill south of Nelson. Good first impressions included everyone arriving on time and, most importantly, no one quite so young that they arrived in sneakers and tights, ready to run to the top and back in record time. Maybe, just maybe I would fit in.



We slogged our way uphill (a lucky thirteen of us if memory serves) for about thirty or forty minutes before strapping on snowshoes. And then we went up some more. Second impressions exceeded first – people were talking and laughing and having fun! I recalled one hike I'd been on back on Vancouver Island where we were told not to talk as it slowed the group down. Speed with this bunch didn't seem to matter all that much. It was more a case of enjoying the beauty, going at our own pace and kindly waiting when one group got ahead of the other. My kind of people!

We even had a bio break! And snacks!



The top of White Queen afforded magnificent 360-degree views. Peter Oostlander, our intrepid leader, kindly toured me visually through the ranges, helping me to orient in my new mountain land. Then he announced it was not time for lunch – much too early. We were going to go downhill just a bit and then a tiny

little 200-metre uphill to Mount Beattie – so small an uphill it was hardly worth mentioning.

Now, I've been known to fib just a tiny bit when I lead hikes – you know, minimizing distance just a tad so as not to discourage followers – or cause a general revolt. Was this same philosophy in play here? I couldn't say for sure, but in a conversation I had with another trekker, we agreed that it seemed we were doing just a tad more than 200 metres – like maybe six gazillion meters more. Okay – maybe not that much – not quite summing Everest – maybe just K2 or Annapurna.

When we finally got to the top, lunch never tasted so good.

And then, a lovely trek down over deadfall until we could take our snowshoes off again. Have you ever tried scrambling over deadfall downhill in snowshoes? Trust me – it's an experience not to be missed. Unless, of course, you decide to give it a pass, which I highly recommend.

By the end of the day, I evaluated my third impressions of KMC, best summed up by saying, "I can hardly wait to hike with these amazing, fabulous, welcoming, slightly mad people again." But mad in a good way, of course. I know it's in a good way because I suffer from the same mental malady that causes perfectly sane people to leave the comfort of their homes and seek the heights where the mountains call and you have to answer.



Mt. Crowe

November 20

Although this trip was advertised as a ski trip, limit 12 participants, things changed. Snow has been slower in coming this year, so two days before the trip, with only 12 cm of snow on the ground, I changed the venue to a hiking trip. Also, the emails came in so quickly from members wanting to come, that I decided to increase the numbers and form two groups. Our problem was how to get 20 people into View Pt Cabin to eat lunch, so with two groups, travelling a loop in opposite directions, we could have two "sittings" in the cabin. Dave Watson volunteered to lead the "Eh" Team, and I lead the B (Bob) Team.

Our B team headed straight for the View Cabin, through a new trail linking the parking lot at the Strawberry Pass, with Crowe Road. Travelling right on Crowe Rd, we took the second left, then a quick right towards what we used to call the "Lower Route". This summer a crew put in a new trail entering the forrest at the end of this road, and brushed a trail which intersects the old route. After a few turns on old logging roads, we turned right on Cliff Road and made our way to the View Cabin. New work on the cabin this past year included insulation, a new ceiling and exterior soffits. We got the stove heated up and enjoyed our foil sandwiches and the normal social conversation that a fireplace seems to bring out.

We took a B Team photo after lunch in front of the Viewpoint Cabin, which has that beautiful front door which was painted by KMC member Jenny Bailey.



About 15 minutes after leaving this warm cabin, we ran into the Eh Team. After doing high fives, hugs and a quick social on the trail, we took this group photo.



The incoming Eh Team had just visited 4 cabins, so were ready for lunch in a hot cabin. Our B Team goal now to visit those same four cabins. We headed up the Cliff Road to the new upper trail connecting with Crowe Road. We did a bit of a dance from snow patch to mud patch, and finally back to snow. Fortunately, no soakers. Our next cabin was Mosquito, built two summers ago. We met a young Rossland family with their two very young kids; the parents had skied in and pulled the kids on a sleigh.



Below Mosquito, we took another new trail down the clear cut and past the re-vamped Red Dog cabin. It had a new woodshed, new outhouse and the cabin had been revised. Back to the Crowe Road, and taking a bit of a detour around an Olympic sized water pond, we made our way to the new Chimo cabin, which replaces the old Rock n' Roll cabin. Chimo is almost finished, but awaits stairs, insulation, interior panels and ceiling. It'll have one of the nicest views of the new cabins. Unfortunately for us, we couldn't see Old Glory due to cloud cover, so make sure you visit this cabin on a clear day.

Our last cabin was a ski past the old Cookie Jar Cabin, where Cookie L'Ecluse used to hold court, display his art work, and insult you if he liked you. Unfortunately, it has had a lot of rodents in it and needs a good

cleanup. Still, the outside looks like a ginger bread house, befitting the name Cookie Jar.

We kept occasional contact between the two groups using radios, and it was to our surprise that we met up, very close to the end of our hike.

Our groups consisted of:

The Eh Team: Dave Grant, Andrea Vowell, Liz Huxter, Tyler Gale, Zuzanna Zach, Vicki Hart, Jill Watson, and coordinator Dave Watson.

The B Team: Terry Simpson, Diane Paolini, Steve Blackwell, Ross Bates, Chris Cowan, Jan Osborne, Sandra Fuller, Rachel Brunino (guest), and coordinator Bob McQueen

Thanks Chris for the hike stats as follows: Ascent 413 metres, distance 14.6 km, time 5 hrs 15 mins., moving time 3 hours 45 min, average speed 3.9 km/hr.

Mt. Lepsoe Cabin

December 3

The trip on the winter schedule started out as a ski trip for Sunday, December 4, with a maximum of 10 skiers. The max. 10 was so that we could all fit into the lunch cabin. However, with much of the trip participants pre-registered, the trip filled in about 20 minutes. So I decided to put on an additional Saturday trip.

We met at the Strawberry Pass parking lot at 9:00 am, ready to go. Unfortunately we were missing our two from Silverton, Petra and Timothy. The group was getting cold so most started off, while a couple of us stayed behind in case the missing two arrived soon. Just then, Petra and Johnathan arrived, early they thought. It turned out I had given them the only 9:30 am start time. They were strong skiers and good natured about my screw up, so it wasn't long before we all caught up. We had snow the night before which provided fresh powder on the Seven Summit Trail, our main route. Our first cabin visit was the new Sunspot, which was built this past summer and Fall by volunteers. A beautiful cabin with an artfully painted front door (see the Dec. 4 trip report photo) and a donated metal artwork piece behind the stove. The new location for Sunspot is finally in a sunny spot, with great views.

Up the old logging road (part of the Seven Summit Trail), we reached Lepsoe Basin, and used a new, easier trail which had been brushed this Fall. This got us to our destination of Lepsoe Basin Cabin.



Lepsoe Basin Cabin, with new wood shed.



After a lunch and social in the cabin, we skied the fields back to the logging road. This field had a spacing crew thin the trees as part of a FORRS (Friends of the Rossland Range Society) Recreation Site project. What a fun ski; the spacing crew did a great job. A quick discussion on routes down from there, and we split into two equal groups.

One took the road down (old logging road that meets up near the parking lot), and the other group taking the Seven Summit trail route down. This second route is a bit exciting, with speed through the trees, and lots of hairpin turns. Just before the bottom, the two groups met up, very close to the parking lot. This wasn't planned, but worked out perfectly.

Our group was: Ken Holmes, Dave Grant, Chris Cowan, Bruce Reeder, Frank Fodor, Barb Hanlon, Petra Hekkenburg, Timothy DenBok, Leslie Clint and Bob McQueen coordinator.

Mt. Lepsoe Cabin

December 4

Eleven of us met at the Strawberry Pass Parking lot on Sunday. A bit more snow overnight, so more good conditions. Again we skied up the Seven Summit trail on Mt. Lepsoe, our destination the two new cabins: Sunspot and Lepsoe Basin. A decent amount of snow for the early season had fallen, roughly 70 cm.



Unfortunately, Jan was suffering from a blister attack on both feet, this being her first ski of the season. So when we checked out the new Sunspot Cabin, she decided to wait for the group to return down the mountain and join us on our way out. We deputized her as the cabin greeter. The new cabin has some beautiful art work: a front door painted by local Rossland artist

Louise Drescher, and iron work behind the stove done of an outdoor scene by local Rossland business owner, Jay Zanussi of Columbia Steel. Both were donated to the new cabin. A quick photo op with the gang (below), we lit a fire for Jan, then headed up to Lepsoe Basin Cabin.



Lepsoe Basin Cabin is a short 30 minute trip further up the mountain. Some of the girls did a “Girls Rock” poster type photo in front of the new cabin. It definitely looked like the party was about to start.



Besides the usual hot fire, foil sandwiches, and conversations, we staged an avalanche burial as an early season practice. Several of the group located the 2 buried transceivers, and dug the “skiers” out. “Find and dig” times were actually pretty good.



Now the fun of a ski out, but we changed it up from our Saturday route. We all enjoyed skiing the field below the cabin, and regrouped on the Seven Summit trail below. Three of our group skied down the road to collect Jan at the Sunspot, and rendezvous at the hairpin corner on the logging road. The rest of us skied the recently thinned section of trees below the trail, which eventually comes out to the logging road again. The upper part had the best turns, but as we got lower, we found a few creek holes, and many bumps. It was a

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bit of an adventure, and we were some of the first to try this run. Tim tried to aquaplane through one of the bigger creek holes, but didn’t quite make it. Now, Stephen Leacock would have said he tried to swim to shore, but I’m just reporting that he made it out, without getting too wet. Way to go Tim. Our group met up with the road skiers, and we all headed back to the parking lot, stopping for one last photo op.



Our ski team was, (left to right), Bob McQueen coordinator, Tim Clinton, Terry Simpson, Cindy Kozak-Campbell, Andrea Vowell, Diane Paolini, Zuzana Zach, Jan Osborne, Amanda Sin, Steve Blackwell, and not shown is photographer Helen Foulger.

Igloo

Elizabeth von Ah

The Beaver Igloo was build by our Canadian winter guests in Haus Beaver Castle, Lemon Creek. They used a form to press the snow and worked their way up.



We greeted the new year enjoying hot spicy wine and cake in a cozy igloo-warming-party.



To experience the real igloo-feeling Elisabeth spent the night from Jan.2 to Jan.3. in it, well equipped with candles and hot tea with rum. During the clear starry night temperatures dropped to -15°C. Inside it was a nice -11°C, but the wax of the candles froze in no time.



Michael and Mira preferred their warm beds near the wood stove in the house. Spring came early and by the end of March the igloo was gone.



More Links

Know Before You Go

Another [avalanche awareness PSA](#). This video was an official selection of the 2016 Banff Mountain Film Festival.

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The Ten Commandments for staying alive in avalanche terrain

Bruce Tremper's books *Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain* and *Avalanche Essentials* receive good reviews by newcomers and professionals alike. The Calgary Section has posted Tremper's famous "Ten Commandments for staying alive in avalanche terrain" on their website. See the commandments at accalgary.ca.

These items lifted from the Alpine Club of Canada's NewsNet email. The editor is not really trying to scare everyone out of backcountry skiing.

Some Club Statistics

Bonnington Cabins

Bed nights booked for the Bonnington Cabins since October 1st: 981

"New" Members

There are currently 127 members who have not had a membership in previous years. Of those people, there are 38 who are new members since October 1st.

(Numbers may be slightly off given that members can vary how their names are entered each year)

Winter Desert Hiking Anyone?

Winter is a great time for hiking and camping in the “desert “southwest USA (DSW). Though the days may be short, blue skies and short sleeve shirts are often –but not always- the order of the day. The numerous trails are fairly easy and they have you immersed within varied landscapes almost immediately.

For communicating a “hiking itinerary,” the DSW area we are referring to is everything within approximately 200km north and south of the Utah and Arizona border. A piece around Las Vegas Nevada and Sedona Arizona is included as well. The natural wonders encompassed in this area making for a point to point “road trip” is more commonly referred to as The Grand Circle. Probably “common” because of the countless tour buses taking tourists on a 1 or 2 week sojourn around it, winter or summer. We have only visited the area mid October through to mid March when campgrounds are not full.

Highlights of the Grand Circle include:

Grand Canyon National Park

Bryce Canyon National Park

Zion National Park

Canyonlands National Park, Islands in the Sky

Canyonlands National Park, The Needles

Arches National Park

Capitol Reef National Park

Monument Valley

Natural Bridges National Monument

Cedar Breaks National Monument

Wupatki National Monument

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Snow Canyon State Park

Goosenecks State Park

This report has evolved from a trip report on the hikes that we had begun some 10 years ago. From these trips and our continually mounting compilations of information researched from friends, books, websites, brochures, maps and even Louis L'Amour novels, we have come up with what we believe is a fairly good “user friendly” itinerary of where to hike down there for the first, second or even 6th timer.

This report recently became a reality after we came across 2 books that had very accurate trip details on many of the hikes we had done. Both books also had information on hikes we had been researching as well as other numerous possibilities that we were unaware of. Not wanting to write out a trip description for 30ish hikes, we decided to use what exists. The authors of these books have done an excellent job. We discovered Afoot and Afield some 6 years ago and Hiking From Here to Wow this October. Both were found in National Parks Visitor Centers.

If you do not have access to the books, have no fear as it is not too difficult to 1) Research the internet for more information especially anything with the word “national” in it as the government websites have good maps and usually enough information to do the hike. 2) Visit the nearby Park Tourist Center, BLM (Bureau of Land Mgt) Visitor Centers, and local tourist offices. They abound down there. The information below however should be enough to get you started. We tried to stay away from pictures as well because there are thousands of them of this area on the internet that are far better than the ones Steven always takes.

The Books Review

Afoot and Afield, Las Vegas and Southern Nevada: A Comprehensive Hiking Guide

by Brian Beffort, 2nd printing 2012, Wilderness Press. Birmingham Alabama.

Viva Las Wilderness!!! Las Vegas for hiking? You would be very surprised and this book does a great job of describing the over 100 hikes around Vegas. Four fairly different terrains from the city in the 4 compass directions. Most trailheads are easily reached from the relatively inexpensive accommodation Vegas has to offer. One can also climb the famous buffet mountains of Vegas once the day is over. A two mountain day!

Besides the list below, the book also includes Death Valley area trails highlighted by its 11,049' high Telescope Peak.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Kaibab National Forest

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

Valley of Fire State Park

Mojave National Preserve

Spring Mountains National Conservation Area
(including 11,918' high Mt Charleston)

Of the some 20ish hikes we have done in the area, this book has good directions to all these trailheads. We only did a few of its "non-paved road" access trips and therefore cannot comment on the "description" of high clearance or 4x4 vehicle requirements. Our unhelpful experience in this area has been that some dirt roads are a very very rocky 4x4 challenge and others are very easy, if fact car-able. National Park and BLM (Bureau of Land Management) tourist centers did most often -when open- have helpful accurate information when we needed it. If however you don't want to compromise your vehicle for the eventual 3000km drive back home we suggest you tread carefully and turn around if conditions deteriorate.

Rain and the originally dry water courses called washes are something many northerners have never experienced. The book notes these when they exist on the access and trails. When rain is coming, "Flash floods" = don't go. This warning applies equally to Slot Canyons which are death traps during flash floods!!!

When trails were involved we found them relatively straightforward as per book description. Confirmations on the trail conditions, and additional maps, were often easy to get from Park, BLM or local tourist offices.

Several of the trips involved cairned route finding and "feint" paths. When walking up or down "washes" extra vigilance is required as the "feint" path may be gone after a rain. Examining the sides of the wash and looking for a cairn usually works. Tracking à L'Amour! Slickrock traverse presents another problem if the cairns are gone.

The maps of the hiking routes, particularly when trails are not involved, could be better, but GPS Waypoints and recommended topos to use was noted. All in all, we only had trouble with one book description and this was weird because we had done the Lake Mead Jimbilnan High Route before from an internet description -and prior to purchasing the book. Anyways we will have to return to this nice outing as the summit is a must and figure out what we did or didn't do so as not to get to the summit.

The book has a very good section on comfort, etiquette and "special" considerations in the desert landscape.

No doubt about it, this book is a definite keeper and we are looking forward to several more of the outings in it that we haven't done. The section on Death Valley hikes is a bonus!

Hiking From Here to Wow: Utah Canyon Country

by Craig and Cathy Copeland, 5th printing 2015, Wilderness Press, Birmingham Alabama.

This book with numerous colorful photos describes some 90 "classic" hikes in southern Utah's "canyon" country. Most KMCers are familiar with the trail books of the local Copelands. They have been doing this for some time now and this book does a very good job of the area's hikes.

The additional information contained in the Introduction and with each hike is very well done, informative and appreciated. The book also has a very good section on comfort, etiquette and "special" considerations in the desert landscape. Figure the Copelands to come up with a name like "thermonuclear" desert considerations.

Of the 30ish hikes we have done in the area, this book gives easy to follow directions to these trailheads. The Copelands always give accurate odometer settings which is a bonus. The recommended maps to use are documented. Personally when a competent hiker notes as a map to use "...park brochure (free, available at the entry station)", we are in!

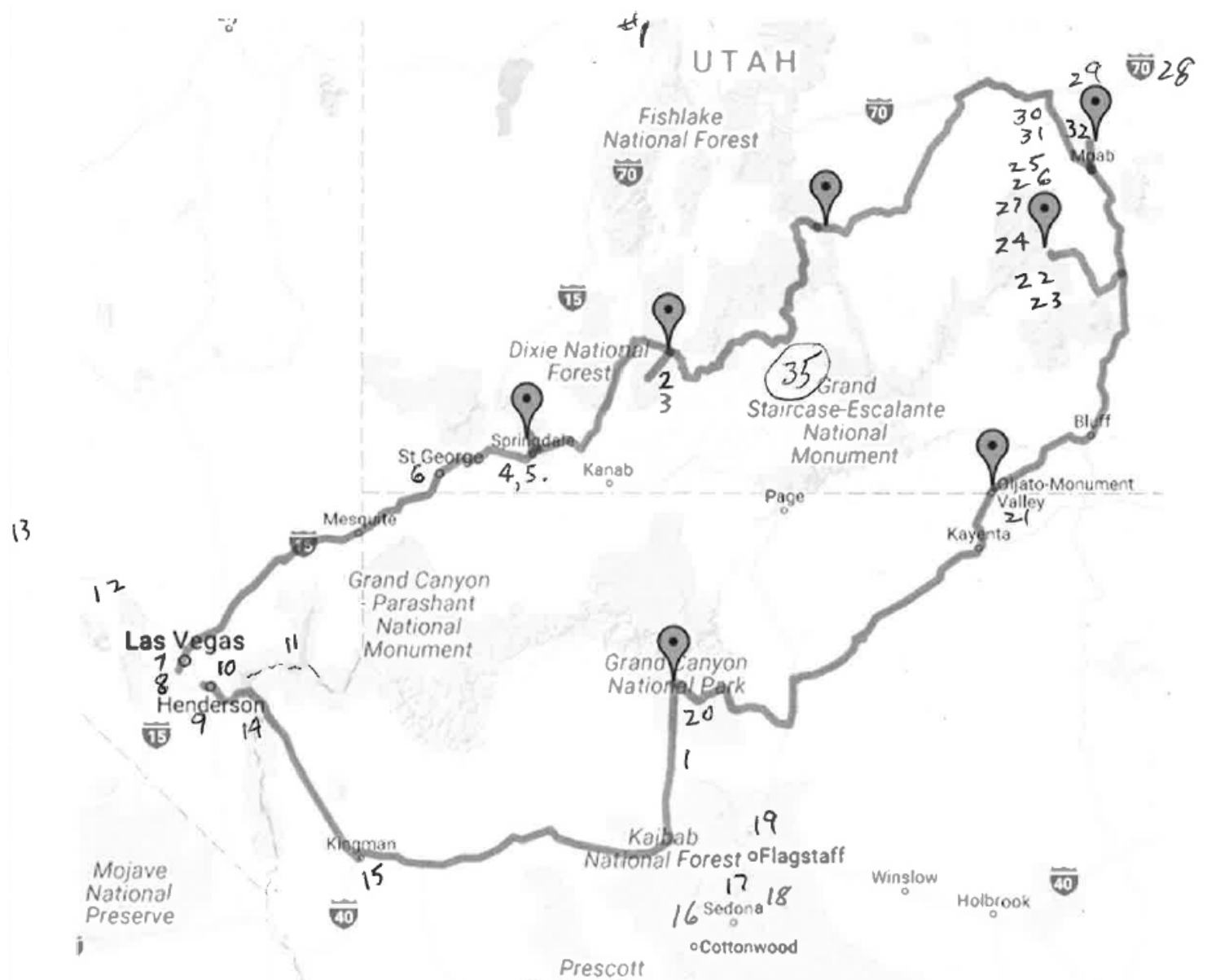
Notations regarding rain, FlashFloods, non-paved access, washes and slot canyons is noted for the trails.

When trails were involved we found them relatively straightforward. Slickrock and washes however require increased vigilance for cairns! It should be remembered that this is a high "traffic" area and usually someone will be

coming along sooner than later to help out. So help them out. The maps of the hiking routes, when trails are not involved, could have been better but then again these are very “common” routes.

This book is definitely another keeper. We can now get rid of a very big box full of “compilations” and we thank the Copelands for the 100 hikes they did research. We are also looking forward to many of the outings in this book that we haven’t done or hadn’t even known of. Their #1 Trip on Snow Canyon is a secret route gem that we have greatly enjoyed over the years and they got it right on! On the flip side they did miss a couple that we enjoy. Can’t do em all.

Map of the Grand Circle:



A Suggested Itinerary of Our Favorite Hikes

We have “roughly” followed the “Grand Circle” in both directions. There are so many variations that we usually find ourselves having to “miss” an area. It’s already not uncommon for us to log 6000 to 8000 km in a month or two. Three months would do justice to the area. Don’t forget that the following list is our “biggies” and that all these places offer numerous wonderful shorter and longer hikes to do. The “traditional” Grand Circle itinerary - jump out of the car, snap a picture, jump back in the car, stay in a hotel, say bin dere, done that- is normally a 1 or 2 week drive and you can find several descriptions on the internet if that’s what you want.

One key approach to hiking in the DSW that has worked for us in the winter months is that if you anticipate very cold weather, tackle Bryce NP and Zion NP first off. After these, especially if you are camping, it's nice to drop down into warmer and sunny St George Utah's Snow Canyon and onto Las Vegas for a few days of warmer hikes. This route strategy allows us to implement Plan B if need be. Plan B is what we do if the weather turns really bad. Plan B= Enjoy sunny and dry Vegas hiking for a few days, and then make the decision on whether to forgo the rest of the Grand Circle for awhile, drive south through Sedona or Lake Havasu into the Sonoran desert for hiking in southern Arizona where the grapefruit and oranges are ripening. That's another report hopefully. Plan B has worked for us twice now and it was great. It does add another couple thousand kms to your journey though. You can always get in some of your original itinerary on the way back.

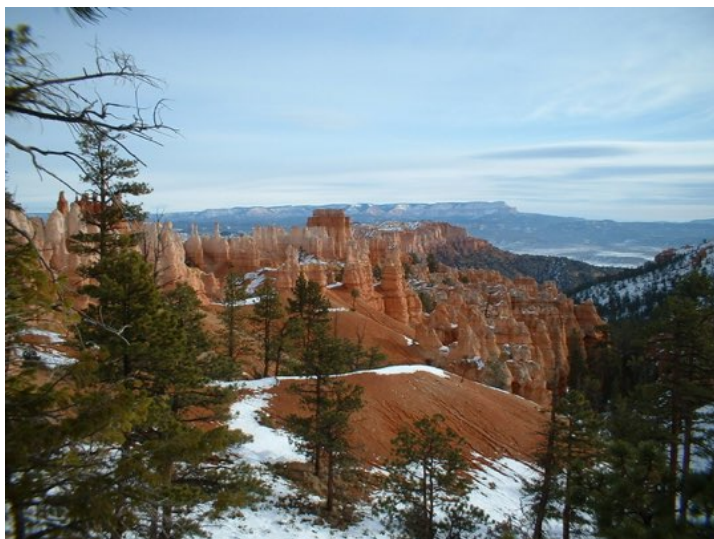
Our hiking vacation usually begins with a first night stop before Salt Lake City therein allowing for the enjoyable hike to:

#1 Frary Peak in/on Antelope Island State Park. This State Park has a nice campground and included in the fee you can summit Frary Peak and have a shower. The trail has an elevation gain of 2050' in 3.5mi. Views in all directions are grand. Bison, Pronghorn and the occasional mountain sheep can be seen from the trail.



After that it's on to the campgrounds at Bryce with two long walks amongst the spires.

#2 Fairyland Loop, Bryce NP. 8mi. 1680' el. gain. This was the 1st hike we ever did in the DSW (after reading it and another Bryce hike were the top rated desert southwest hikes). A stroll within a magical landscape. Nothing more need be said.



#3 Navajo/Peekaboo/Queens Garden Loop. Bryce NP. 6.4mi. 1145' el. gain. This is the other top rated hike.

Then the short drive to the campground at Zion and:

#4 Observation Point, Zion NP. 8mi. 2147' el. gain. Though many prefer the soaring heights of Zion's Angel's Landing we have found Observation Point has a spectacular cliff side trail passing through wonderful landscape and great views of Zion at the top. It should be noted that you are high above Angels Landing.



#5 West Rim, Zion NP. 12mi. 2510' el. gain. This starts out on switchbacks named Walter's Wiggles, and then enters a landscape above the valley floor. A detour is available for a quickie to Angels Landing.

Another short drive to St. George and the campground (showers) at Snow Canyon, then:

#6 Whiterock Trail and above. Snow Canyon State Park, 6mi. (approx) 460' el. gain of unmarked slickwalking to the park's highest unnamed peak. Snow Canyon has an unbelievable redness on its fantastic landforms. Sitting atop this unnamed peak captures it all. Why there is no trail to the summit is strange but we easily found a route to it at the end of the Whiterock Trail. You might do some extra distance here but you won't get too lost en route!



Then Vegas, weekly/monthly hotel stays, Lake Mead campgrounds, Vegas RV resorts or even the rough BLM campground in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. (west of Las Vegas). Then:

***7** Turtlehead Peak, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. (West of Las Vegas) 4mi. 2000' el. gain. A Vegas "pilgrimage" so do it on the weekdays when the crowds are less. We have however had the summit all to ourselves twice now. Marvellous rock formations and great views of the entire Red Rock area including its western Rainbow Escarpment. A good glimpse of the tiny Vegas skyscrapers off to the east too.



#8 Top of The Rainbow Escarpment: Red Rocks Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. (West of Las Vegas) 6mi. 1980' el. gain. We were the 2nd people to sign the new register 6 years earlier and we got to use the same book twice more. Long reaching views are great on this ridge walk above the Red Rocks.

#9 Black Mtn. 5mi. 2100' el. gain. A very special black lava desert landscape with views of Vegas to the north for the entire hike. The summit has long views in all directions. We did this hike twice during our last stay due to its convenience and beauty.

#10 Frenchman Mtn. Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 4mi. 1413' el. gain. A short steep grunt in a faulting eroded "tilting" geological rockscape. Great views along the way.

#11 Hamblin Mtn. Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 7mi. 1400' el. gain. Another geological theatre including desert landscape. The summit overlooks Lake Mead as well as other views in all directions.



#12 Mt Charleston, Mt Charleston Wilderness Area. 18-22mi. depending on loop. El. gain approx. 5000'. This is southern Nevada's highest peak at 11912'. It has been snow bound on all of our visits and is not recommended due to extreme icing. This last trip the closure was due to forest fire fall downs. Hopefully someday we will get to appreciate the pine forests, limestone cliffs and grand views we have read about.

#13 Telescope Peak, Death Valley NP. 12mi. 3200' el. gain. A classic ridge walk amongst sparse ancient bristlecones to a lofty 11049' summit directly above North America's lowest point at Badwater Basin. This trip is easily worth the detour. There are several shorter hikes to do in the park as well. A campground is at the trailhead.



#14 Colorado River Hoover Dam canoe/kayak Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 12 mi. A great chance to explore the soaring jagged and colorful cliffs along walls of the Colorado. Several small slot canyon hikes from the landings can be done along the way, some of which have hot springs. Several companies rent you the vessel, get you the permit and provide a guard to gain you access below the Hoover Dam, drop you off there and pick you up at Willow Beach later in the afternoon- days later if you prefer to camp along the river.

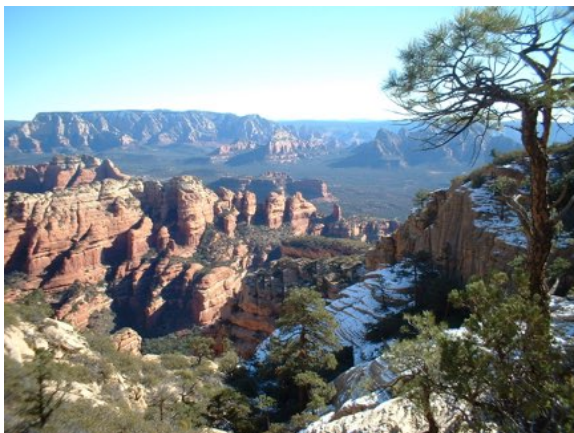
Prior to leaving Vegas it is occasionally worth the meander through the Vegas Strip Casinos. One way is several cement pounding miles. Both ways would take 24 hours but after all it is the city that never sleeps. At least you won't get hungry.

From Vegas it's either through Boulder City or on to Kingman, OR a drive down through the Mojave to Laughlin and Lake Havasu, then on to Kingman. Afoot and Afield, Las Vegas and Southern Nevada: A Comprehensive Hiking Guide notes several hikes along this Mojave Desert road.

#15 Hualapai Peak, Hualapai Mountains County Park near Kingman. 5mi. Approx 1000' el. gain. At 8417' this peak –along with its 2 siblings Hayden and Aspen- dominate the area as the desert plain is far below. "Hualapai" means "People of the Tall Pines" in the native language, Pinyon pines that is. Large granite slabs are part of this landscape. Great views from above. A good trailhead campground.

From Kingman it is a few hours drive to Sedona accommodation. There is also good accommodation and a great State campground (showers and good views) in Cottonwood some 15 miles away.

#16 Bear Mtn, 6444' Coconino National Forest Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness 4.8 mi. 2092' el. gain. A very entertaining grunt surrounded by the awe inspiring and captivating Sedona red rock formations. One of the “vortex” is just below in Boynton Canyon. The peak has great views including the San Francisco Peak's Mt Humphrey to the north. Vegetation is typically Sedonan with cypress, pinyon, juniper, yucca, manzanita, agave, prickly pear and cats claw.



#17 Soldier Pass, Brins Mesa, Jordan, and Cibola Pass (clockwise) Loop Coconino National Forest Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness. 5.2 mi. 1124' el gain. Once again you are immersed amongst stunning red rock formations, open desert Sedonan vegetation. Just after the Vortex location and just before you descend off Brins Mesa you will notice a faint path leading to the small peak to the west. After a few hundred meters it becomes feinter but there are cairns to follow to a wonderful lunch viewpoint on top. Few know of this route and most are detoured by brush quickly, but what a grand reward for those who navigate to the top. Besides you have nothing to lose on this detour as you can't get lost. Begin the loop at the well-marked trailhead at the end of Soldier Pass Road. A small parking area though.

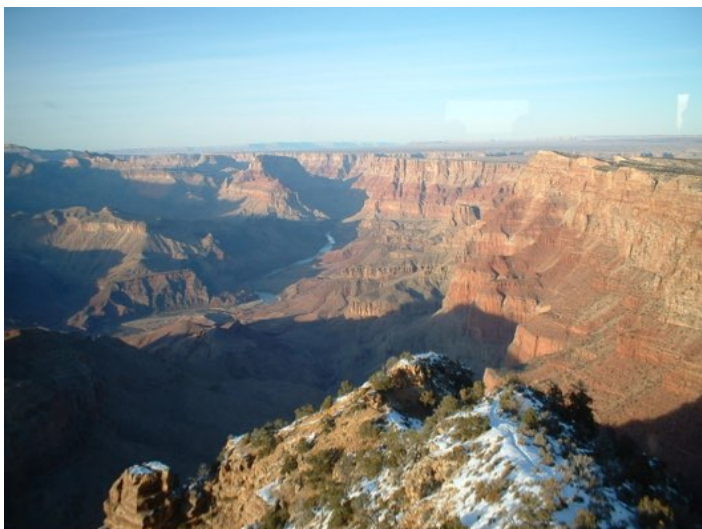
#18 Mt. Wilson 7122' Coconino National Forest Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness, 9mi. for both viewpoints. 2300' el.gain. The highest of the RedRock sandstone peaks therein offering a great panorama. South and West Wilson have completely different views. It is a steep hike, scenic all the way.

A short drive to Flagstaff accommodation including camping, then,

#19 Humphrey's Peak Kachina Peaks Wilderness Area 12633' 9mi. 3333' el. gain. One of the San Francisco peaks. Arizona's highest peak; has long views in all directions. The trail starts at the Arizona Snow Bowl amongst thick fir and spruce forests then transitioning into sparse bristlecone pines. Each time we have been there the mountain had considerable snow on it. Missed it by 2 days this time. Several other adjacent peaks to hike are Mt Eldon and Kendrick Peak.

After the hike drive to the Grand Canyon NP campgrounds and prepare for the next day.

#20 South Kaibab and Bright Angel Loop, Grand Canyon NP. 16.3mi. An iconic 4070' steep descent into the canyon to the Colorado River and Phantom Ranch followed by a 4360' ascent back up. Maybe lunch at the Ranch Canteen? A perfect introduction to the magnificence and sheer scale of this geological marvel. There is a shuttle bus for the roadwork. We have hiked this on New Year's Day, -15C at the Rim and 25C at the valley bottom.



From the Grand Canyon the next destination is Navajo National Monument. A great campground but the Betatakin Ruin and Keet Seel hikes are Navajo "ranger" led and closed in the winter. Monument Valley is the next stop. There is hotel and camping accommodation nearby or do the following short hike #21 and camp out on BLM land in the nearby Valley of the Gods.

#21 Wildcat Trail Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. 3.2 mi. A flat and enjoyable hike around the West Mitten Butte with views onto the other numerous red sandstone "monuments". The trailhead is near the park's hotel The View. To further immerse yourself amongst these "enduring and definitive images of the American West, make sure to do the Valley Drive too.

Take Hwy 261 to Goosenecks State Park (camping). From there it's up the Moki Dugway to Natural Bridges National Monument (camping). Consider the 9 mi. Natural Bridges National Monument loop. Next stop is the campground in the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. The Edge of the Cedars State Park's Museum in Blanding is a worthy rest stop en route.

#22 Peekaboo Trail Canyonlands NP. Needles District: 10 mi. The Peekaboo Trail passes through open desert, colorful canyons and lengthy slickrock benches offering great views along the way. At the terminus Salt Creek/Peekaboo Springs camp, are the Granaries and pictograph panels.



#23 Chesler Park Loop Trail, Canyonlands NP. Needles District: 17 mi. (but can be considerably less) 1,400' gain/loss: A most interesting hike for rock formations. This is hard to believe considering what you have already seen and what still is to be seen en route, but true it is! Chesler Park is a large circular meadow of desert grasses and shrubs surrounded by spectacular colorful sandstone spires. There are numerous combinations of trails one can use to get to and fro Chesler Park including extending the above Peekaboo trail into a very long but wonderful, tiring and rewarding day. Most of the options available are almost entirely on slickrock. Stone cairns often mark the way over, around and through obstacles. The section of trail between Elephant Canyon and Big Spring Canyon is particularly interesting, with a very long cave-like crack to walk through.



#24 Confluence Overlook Trail, Canyonlands NP. Needles District. 10.4mi. This trail's destination is the grand overlook onto the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Their 2 deep canyons also meet here. The overlook is not a good spot to start a descent down to the rivers, but you can traverse a ways along the rim of the canyon.

Drive to the Dead Horse Point State Park for camping and the next 3 hikes.

#25 Lathrop Trail Canyonlands NP. (Islands in the Sky District) 8.5mi. 2200' descent/gain. Lathrop Canyon provides the only route from the plateau to the Colorado River to a promontory above Upper Lathrop Canyon, turns sharply west and switchbacks down the cliff face, reaching the White Rim after 5 miles. The second part of the route is along a 4WD track down the less steep lower canyon, which winds its way gently to the Colorado.

#26 Upheaval dome / Syncline loop hike, Canyonlands NP. (Islands in the Sky District) 8.3mi. 1300-1500' el gain. An easy walk, partly across slickrock. Best done clockwise, descends into Upheaval Canyon before returning to the mesa top via the Syncline Valley.

#27 Dead Horse Rim Loop Trail, Dead Horse Point State Park 9 mi. on a flat trail. This isn't really a hiking trail but more of a long spectacular head spinning cliff overlook walk in a desert plateau landscape.



Next is the short drive to Moab. Search for some type of accommodation. Make sure to consider the several campgrounds northeast of Moab on the Colorado River. BLM campsites are nonexistent here. Get comfortable, all the walks and hikes in and around Arches are great. See it to believe it!

#28 Fisher Towers Trail BLM land. 4.4+ mi. 670' el. gain. The Fisher Towers are composed of red sandstone. The tallest, Titan, is 900' high. The trail has eroded into fantastical shapes. Climbers are often directly overhead. Great views of a beautiful landscape. The Colorado River and La Sal Mtns are easily seen in the distance.

#29 Devils Garden. including Primitive Loop. Arches NP. 8mi.

#30 Delicate Arch Arches NP. 3mi. 480'el. gain.

#31 Klondike Bluffs and Tower Arch Arches NP. 3.5mi. 400'el. gain



#32 Park Avenue Arches NP. 2mi. 320' el. gain. Great short "gauntlet" of colossal monoliths. We drop one of us at the top trailhead. The other drives to the bottom (north) trailhead. We kiss and pass the key at the midway point.



#33 Rim Overlook, Navajo Knobs Trail, Capital Reef NP. 9mi. 1670' el. gain. Navajo Knobs is a very scenic route of sandstone cliffs, domes, and monoliths. It climbs slowly while at the same time traversing slickrock. The visitor center, Fruita orchards, schoolhouse, and campground are far below, while the 360-degree vistas reach as far as Thousand Lakes Mountain and the Cathedral Valley District to the north, Factory Butte and the Henry Mountains to the east.

#34 Slot Canyons, Backroads, Highways 12 & 24 & 95 and a Final Note The Grand Circle Route, grand as it may be, does leave out a lot of spectacular landscape in the center of the circle. In particular gems of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the San Rafael Swell. When driving Highway 12 (Panguitch to Torrey), Hwy 24 (Torrey to Green River) and Hwy 95 (Hanksville to Blanding) you only touch the surface and there is a lot more to explore by venturing off into their peripheries. Hwy 12 is the northern access for the dirt surfaced Hole-in-the-Rock-Road, the Cottonwood Canyon Road Scenic Backway, Burr Trail Road and the Notom Road Scenic Backway.

- Hole-in-the-Rock Road (57mi.) provides easy access to the Escalante River and several classic slot canyons. This includes Dry Fork of Coyote Gulch (1.1mi long, 200') and its three exciting, narrow tributaries Peekaboo 1.1mi 180', Spooky 1.2mi, 220' and Brimstone Gulches 2.9mi.
- The 46mi. Cottonwood Canyon Road Backway provides access to Kodachrome Basin State Park, Grosvenor Arch, the Cottonwood Narrows, and Hackberry Canyon. Just off its southern terminus is "the Wave".

- The Burr Trail Scenic Backway winds through deep slickrock canyons and rolling desert forests while providing access to the eastern portion of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the southern half of Capitol Reef National Park, and a northern section of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.
- The Notom Backway skirts the eastern edge of the geologic wonder the Waterpocket Fold. Several narrow canyons cut through this tilted strata and the effort spent exploring them is well rewarded by the spectacular geology.

All of these roads may be impassable when wet and it is wise to seek information at the BLMs. BLM camping is found all along these roads. Hiking From Here To Wow does a good job of what is available on #12 & #24.

Our most recent trip totaled some 6000km of driving. We drive the freeway to Spokane, Missoula, Salt Lake City and Bryce. Think of all these kilometers as “rest stops” because there is a lot to explore and you will need them! It’s not too late for a trip now. Bonne Route, Enjoy,

Merry Christmas To All And To All A Good Hike,
Eliane & Steven Miros