**Capitol Reef**

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**Introduction**

Capitol Reef is a unique national park in Southern Utah with many interesting features. It was established as a national park in 1971. The park is 241,904 acres and is where there is a water pocket fold in the earth’s crust. It has many geological formations. Capitol Reef Field Station is a collaboration between Utah Valley University and Capitol Reef National Park for students to have the chance to study a variety of different topics, and research the different features of the park.

**Capitol Reef National Park**

The park's name, "Capitol Reef” comes from the white domes of Navajo Sandstone that resemble the domed roofs of capitol buildings, and the term "reef" refers to the rugged ridges. A defining feature of Capitol Reef is the water pocket fold, a nearly 100-mile-lond fold in the Earth's crust with layers of rock which offers a visible record of the region's tectonic movements.

Geologically, the formations in the park are 250 million years old, with a range of sedimentary layers that show the environmental changes. Ecologically, according to the Capitol Reef information website, there are diverse plants and animals with over 840 plant species and nearly 60 mammal species documented within its boundaries.

**Capitol Reef Field Station**

Situated on top of the mesa within Capitol Reef National Park, the Capitol Reef Field Station offers a unique place for learning and research. Established through a partnership between UVU and the National Park Service, CRFS provides a platform for students, faculty, and researchers to engage with the park's natural and cultural resources. The facility has four buildings designed with sustainability in mind. Powered by a solar array and with a propane backup generator, CRFS operates off-grid, emphasizing energy conservation and environmental consciousness. Water is sourced from a nearby well and treated on-site using a solar-powered filtration system, ensuring a sustainable and clean water supply.

It has the space to accommodate up to 24 overnight guests. The field station supports a range of programs, including research projects, conservation initiatives, and educational classes and experiences. Visitors have the opportunity to participate in activities such as invasive plant removal, native seed collection, and science projects. Additionally, the station hosts public events, including star parties that take advantage of the park's designation as an International Dark Sky Park.

**Conclusion**

Capitol Reef National Park and the Capitol Reef Field Station are an awesome combination of natural preservation and educational engagement. The park's geological formations and ecological diversity offer invaluable insights into natural history and the importance of conservation. The field station serves as a model for sustainable design and a catalyst for research and learning, fostering a deeper connection between individuals and the natural world. Together they are preserving and sharing the wonders of the Colorado Plateau.

**References**

“Capitol Reef National Park (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/care/index.htm. Accessed 8 May 2025.

“Capitol Reef Field Station.” Capitol Reef Field Station | Utah Valley University, www.uvu.edu/crfs/. Accessed 8 May 2025.