June 29, 2018 Peter, Brooke, and I drove my truck from Orem to Sandy. In Sandy we switched to Peters truck and added Ryan to our group. Then we drove out to Eagle Mountain, filled up with gas plus an extra 5 gallon can, and continued on Highway 73 to the Pony Express trail. We took the Pony Express for 104 miles through Faust, Simpson Springs, Fish Springs, and Callao. Pretty barren country, but not with out a lot of appeal. We were lucky enough to see several pronghorns, as well as multiple groups of wild horses. I’m guessing that the first herd of wild horse we encountered was just after crossing Dugway Pass. From Callao we went South on Snake Valley Rd, past the CCC campground, then west and North on the Granite Creek Jeep trail for a total of an additional 16 miles. I had picked up Brooke just before 3pm, and it was after 9 pm when we arrived what would be our camp spot. In total we drove about 190 miles from Orem.

First thing we did, when arriving, was to get a fire started. By the time we unload and set up camp the fire was down to coals and it was dark out. We put our tinfoil dinners in the coals and around 10:30 pm we ate. Stars were bright, and the moon was full; I taught Brooke how to locate the North Star. It was after 11 pm by the time we retired for night.

The next morning I was woke up with the sun, but decided to stay in my tent until 7:00 am. We made breakfast, packed our lunches, and then took down our camp and stored the valuables in the truck. By 8:50 am we headed out on the hike. The information I had estimated the hike at six miles with 5,250 vertical feet of climbing but both Brooke and Ryan had Garmin like devices, and both measure the distance at over 8 miles. I’d guess it was more like 7.5 miles (or less). It took us 2.75 hours, traveling generally NW, to reach the large meadow at the base of Red Mountain, where we paused for 15 minutes to eat lunch. By noon we were off again heading NXNE from the meadow up to the Ibapah ridge. Took us about an hour to gain the ridge, and then another 30 minutes to skirt around the 11,385 subpeak to make the final 45 min push to the peak arriving at 2.15 pm. Brooke and Ryan arrived at 2:30 pm and Peter at 2:45 pm. The views from the top are amazing. Looking north one can easily see the Bonneville Salt Flats 60+ miles away. To the South, 99.6 km away, Nevada’s Wheeler Peak, in Great Basin NP, was showing a few patches of lingering snow. To the east we could make out the Pony Express road we’d traveled the day before. Goshute cave lies to the west of the peak about 48 miles but is not visible as there are a couple other mountain ranges (Antelope range, and Schell Creek Range) in between. The peak sits only 10.7 km inside the UT/NV border on the Utah side.

I was on the peak for almost 1 hours when we started down at 3:10 pm. At the sub peak, we came across a cairned route leading down which seemed a bit shorter then the way we had picked on the way up (there are no trails across the meadow). After a bit the cairned trail faded away and we just head toward Red Mountain and a strip of snow on it which was just above the meadow. We reached the meadow by 4:30 pm where we spot a trail marker at its west side point the direction SW along the Granite Creek back to the trailhead. At 5pm we paused at a small pour over where the trail crosses the creek for the second time. I filled up a water bottle, and then we continued down. We parked the first night at the same place Jared and I did in 2012, but now the jeep trail is no longer closed at that place, we however still hiked from there. One other party though didn’t, and they were camped further up the road, and as we came down their dog charged us. At 6:30 pm we reached our trailhead.

Since Granite Creek was west of our first night camp spot, we moved down the jeep trail to a better spot next to the creek for the second night (same spot Jared and I used in 2012). We skipped the fire, and broke out the hiking stoves. Peter and the kids had canned stew, and I had Top Ramen noodles, and canned herring with crackers. It was pleasant camped next to the creek, but I had trouble sleeping as I felt dehydrated but didn’t want to drink water as I didn’t want had to get up to use the restroom.

Sunday, I got up at 6:30 am but let the others sleep until 7 am. It was 9 am by the time we had breakfast, made lunches, and got packed up. We back tracked to the Pony Express Road outside of Callao which hooked us up on to the paved Ibapah Road (Hwy 1) where we had to go North to ALT-93 then south down ALT-93 to 93. Just six miles on 93 then we had to go overland, about 7 miles, on a sandy track across the BLM sand dunes of Steptoe Valley. Just before the abandoned Greens Ranch house the trail crossed the abandoned (maybe?) Nevada Northern rail tracks. From Greens we got on White Pine County Rd 25 for 1.2 miles then turned left and headed another mile or so up to Goshute cave parking area. We had spotted what we guessed was the dirt road up to the cave parking from way back at the intersection of ALT-93 and 93, and it indeed was that. The flies were outrageous, so we had to eat out lunches inside the truck by the time we were ready to go a breeze had picked up and the flies were no longer an issue.

There is next to no information, on-line, about the Goshute Cave, I had printed the only two blogs I’d found on it, but neither contained a cave map. We were going in pretty blind. From the parking lot is a 1/3-mile hike gaining 800 feet to a large cave opening. The actual Goshute cave open is small, only 3 feet high, and more or less a crack to the left of the large cave. Took us 30 minutes to hike up to the cave opening and we entered the cave. We ducked our way in, at about 12:45 pm, and were immediately greeted with a painted rock stating the caves name and informing us it was discovered in 1895. Just past the rock there is a registration book which I signed in as “your mom”. At the trailhead, before we hiked up, there is a faded map of the cave, I’d taken a photo of it, but wasn’t completely readable, so we just headed in. I’d guess now, that we first entered “The Dance Hall” on the left then exited that into the Ball Room, where we continued down leaving the dusty floor for rocking (stalagmite/tight like rock) floor. The formation are these big mammillary white type things on the ceiling along with popcorn formations. Of course, there are also stalagmites and tights. As we continued in and down (20% like grade) we saw painted on the wall “Devil slide”, and soon after that we came to a formation labeled “The Fountain” that was at 1pm. Again, a guess, but I think we next entered the President Wilson Room and soon after that came to this huge stalagmite (which I think is called the Liberty Bell, that was at 1:10pm) and soon after that the tunnel turned to white damp clay and dead ended. We back tracked out, trying to find any off shots but didn’t see anywhere else to go. I think I bypassed the dance hall on the way out. We probably spent just over an hour inside the cave. Our limited information mentioned TJ’s Hideout (which was a squeeze to get into and which we didn’t want to squeeze into) and it also mentioned a 50 foot climb up, which required a rappel to get down but we didn’t find either of these, no worries because we didn’t plan to do either. The trailhead map indicates to me that we covered 80% of what it maps, so we did good, and enjoyed what we saw.

We back tracked to highway 93 then drove 60 miles to Wendover for an early 4:00pm(ish) lunch at Arbys. We drove I-80 to to SR 201 to I-215 to I-15 and up to Peter’s house. We unloaded, then Brooke and I jumped in my truck and I took her to Provo and was home somewhere around 7 or 7:30 pm.

Great Trip! See <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10155355298001441.1073741875.620076440&type=1&l=1fc21de1fd> for photos with descriptions.