

Southern Utah NEWS

2024

# VACATION GUIDE

SOUTHERN UTAH AND THE ARIZONA STRIP

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**FREE**

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## About the front page photographer

James Mosdell was raised in Kanab, Utah, and graduated from Kanab High School in 1991. James attended college in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and, after graduating, worked in the affordable housing industry while living in Baltimore, Denver and Salt Lake City. James recently moved back to Kanab to take advantage of its unrivaled access to nature and wilderness. James enjoys photography, rockhounding and being outside in nature.

# SOUTHERN UTAH NEWS

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# 2024-25 KANAB AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 2024

May 2-4: Kanab Film Festival - Three-day film & food fest experience - [kanabfilmfest.com](http://kanabfilmfest.com)

May 6-8: Fort Desolation Fest - Music & Adventure Travel Festival - [fordesolation.com/fest](http://fordesolation.com/fest)

May 8-12: Amazing Earthfest - Celebrating the Colorado Plateau - [amazingearthfest.org](http://amazingearthfest.org)

May 10-11: Ragnar Trail Zion - Two-day relay-style running race - [runragnar.com](http://runragnar.com)

May 11: Kanab 10k - Local all-levels 10k - [visitsouthernutah.com/events/kanab-10k](http://visitsouthernutah.com/events/kanab-10k)

June 20-22: Jacob Hamblin Days & Rodeo - [visitsouthernutah.com/events/jacob-hamblin-days](http://visitsouthernutah.com/events/jacob-hamblin-days)

July 4: Independence Day Celebration - Fourth of July parade and fireworks

July 24: Pioneer Day Celebration - Parade, fireworks, celebration

August 3-10: Kane County Fair - [visitsouthernutah.com/countyfair](http://visitsouthernutah.com/countyfair)

August 22-24: Western Legends Heritage & Music Festival - [westernlegendsroundup.com](http://westernlegendsroundup.com)

September 20-28: Salt to Saint Cycling Relay - [visitsouthernutah.com/events/salt-to-saint](http://visitsouthernutah.com/events/salt-to-saint)

September 26-29: Nightscaper Photo Conference - [nightscaper.com](http://nightscaper.com)

September 27-28: Carmel Mountain Car Show - [carmelmountaincarshow.com](http://carmelmountaincarshow.com)

October 2-6: Grand Circle Trailfest Race - [visitsouthernutah.com/events/grand-circle-trailfest](http://visitsouthernutah.com/events/grand-circle-trailfest)

October 12: Over the Rainbow Runs - [overtherainbowruns.com](http://overtherainbowruns.com)

October 15: Grand Canyon Opens to Day Use

October 31: Kanab Spookfest

November 28: K-Town Turkey Trot

November 30: Kanab Parade of Lights

December 2-7: Kanab Polar Express

December 7: Symphony of the Canyons Annual Concert

**KANAB AREA EVENTS  
CALENDAR AT  
VISITSOUTHERNUTAH.COM**

## 2025

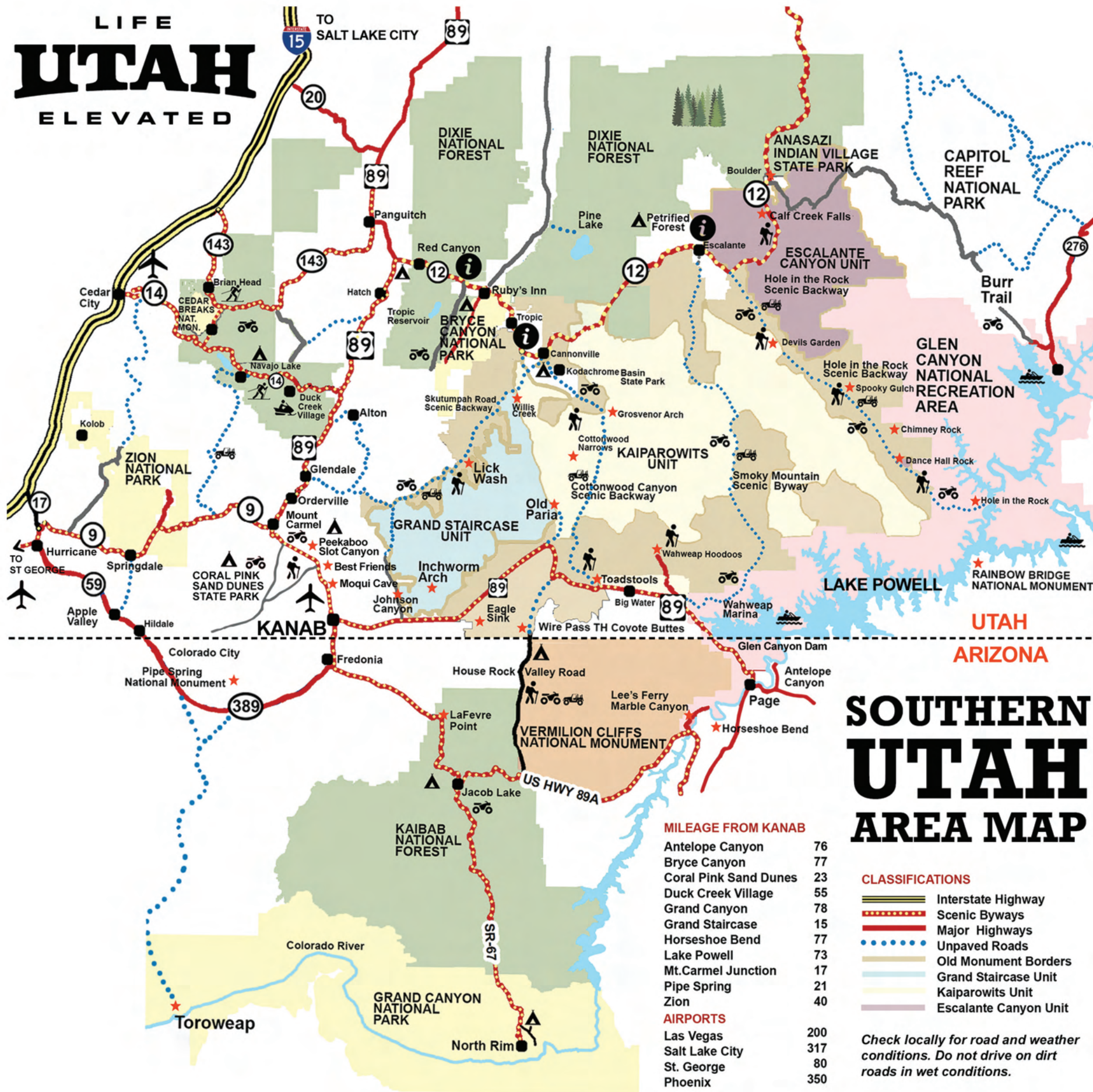
February 14-16: Balloons & Toons Music & Heritage Festival

April 19: Orderville Soup Town Days - [ordervillesouptowndays.com](http://ordervillesouptowndays.com)

April 23-26: Kanab Red Rock ATV Jamboree

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# KANAB UTAH

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LA ESTANCIA

CEDAR HEIGHTS

CORAL CLIFFS

TO JOHNSON CANYON

TO LAKE POWELL

KANAB CREEK RANCHOS

COUNTRY ESTATES

Kanab Airport

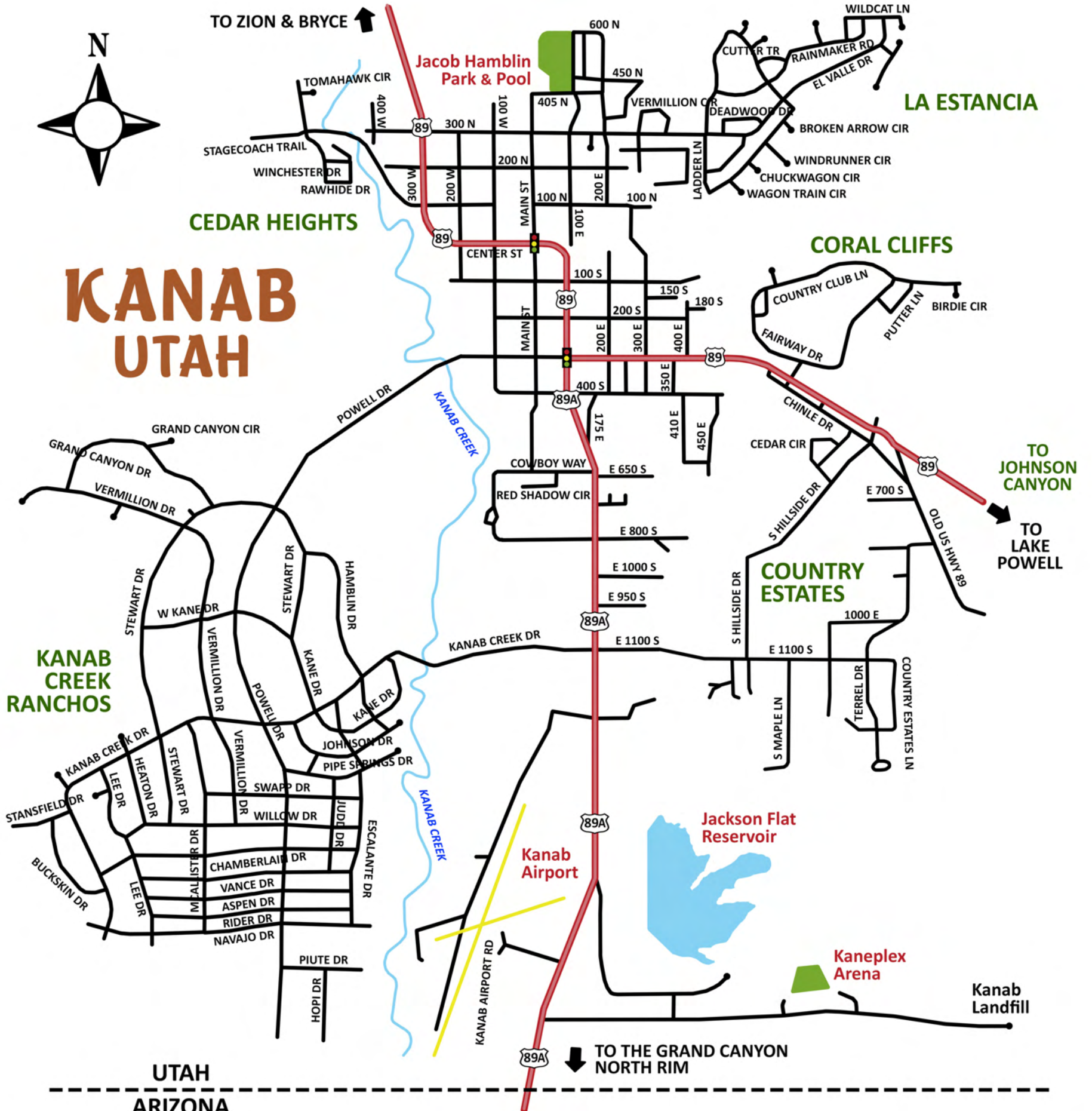
Jackson Flat Reservoir

Kaneplex Arena

Kanab Landfill

UTAH

ARIZONA



# WELCOME TO SOUTHERN UTAH - LET US BE YOUR GUIDE

*By Ty Gant*

Odds are if you're reading this guide you're doing so in or near Kanab, Utah, the capital of Kane County; Kanab has a long and storied history hosting guests from around the world, starting with its legacy as a location for classic cowboy films and growing as a tourist destination from there. As such, the town has evolved as a place well suited for visiting, with a healthy hospitality industry

and plenty of options for places to stay, to eat, and, of course, a thousand places to visit - the town is within close proximity to four different national parks and countless scenic locations and hikes.

**Kanab:** try any of the local restaurants. All of the following are founded, owned and operated by locals! Big Al's for burgers, fried chicken and shakes; Jakey Leigh's, Kanab Creek Bakery, Taro or Sunny Creek Cafe for breakfast

and coffee; Escobar's for Mexican; Havana Cabana for Cuban; Houston's Trail's End or Iron Horse for steakhouse classics; The Dining Room at Parry Lodge or Wild Thyme for locally sourced bistro; The Maharaja for Indian Cuisine; or Segó for gourmet Americana.

For historical and cultural sites, Kanab visitors can check out the Kanab Museum and the Heritage House for the founding history of the town; Parry Lodge, Little Hollywood Museum and the Crescent Moon Theater hearken to the town's cowboy filmmaking

legacy; and the Kanab Visitor's Center along the town's main road can provide information on local trails and hikes - look for the buffalo made of film reel, that's the spot to inquire! Kanab's hikes are probably its biggest appeal, and there are trails aplenty.

**Close visiting distance to Kanab:** just north of the town is the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, the largest no-kill animal sanctuary in the world - the sanctuary has guided tours, animal visits, and places to eat as well. Just a bit further north is the Moqui Cave, a



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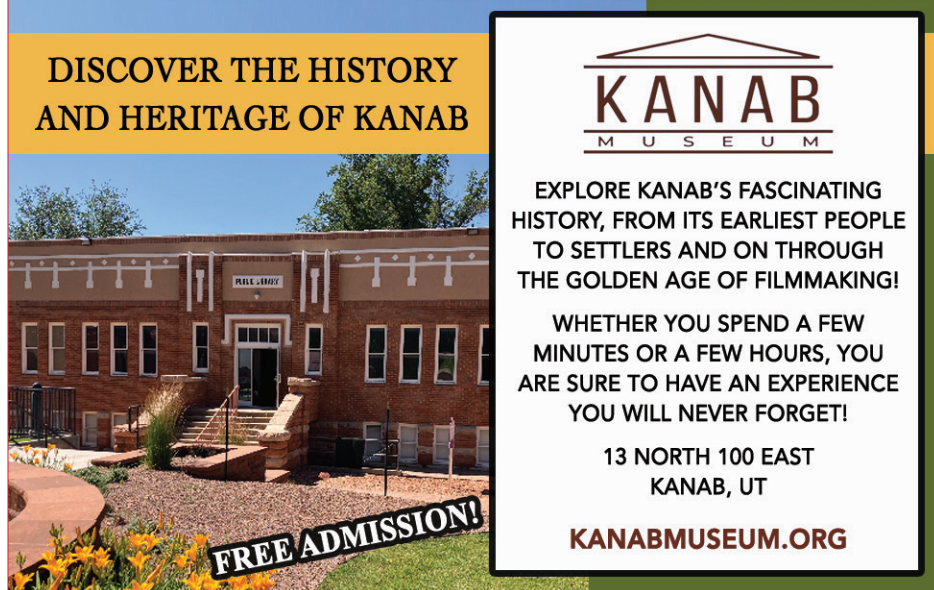
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## Historic downtown Kanab

Nestled in the heart of southern Utah, Kanab is a charming city that boasts breathtaking landscapes, including the Vermilion Cliffs, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Zion National Park. The city's rich history spans thousands of years and can be seen in the incredible cliff dwellings and petroglyphs left behind by the Ancestral Puebloans who once made it their home. Adding to its cultural significance, the Kanab area is also part of the ancestral homelands of the Paiute people. By the mid-1800s, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints settled the area, bringing about a wave of changes that led to the rise of industry and, eventually, tourism. Throughout its history, Kanab has welcomed people from different communities and cultures, with the red cliffs shaping and enriching their lives. Don't miss out on the magic of Kanab - come and experience it for yourself! Photo courtesy of Kanab Museum.



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museum collection by a local paleontologist and geologist, with relics and artifacts from local Indigenous cultures on display as well. There are sand caves nearby Moqui Cave that show off the beautiful sandstone formation in the area, with walking access for anyone able to make a little bit of a climb.

Many of the incredible hikes and climbs of the area fall under this category, with places like Belly of the Dragon and Peekaboo Slot Canyon within easy visiting distance. Be sure to double check at the visitor's center to find a hike that suits your party's - and just as importantly, your vehicle's - capabilities. If you're unsure if you can make a specific location, there are multiple guiding companies in the area with equipment and expertise to get you wherever you want to go. The Coral Pink Sand Dunes are a vista showcasing the landscapes of the area dyed red and pink by rich iron, perfect for photography, ATV'ing and sandboarding; lots to do, so bring plenty of water!

**Grand Canyon:** The vastness of the canyon, the colors painting the walls and the majesty of the Colorado river are almost unmatched anywhere in the world. With this

size and variety in mind, there's a reason the Grand Canyon has lodges for overnight stay - there's plenty to do out here, from hikes to restaurants to drive-up view spots. The Grand Canyon National Park system has multiple visitor's guides; the NPS has a surprisingly helpful phone application if you're looking to plan ahead!

**Zion National Park:** Zion has broken records for visitation year after year, and with good reason - it is the ultimate red rock southern Utah formation, the defining experience for a visit to the area. Some of Zion's best spots are hikes, so be prepared - get water, food and trail maps from the visitor's center or download them to a device. Be warned, however, the deep trails and far remote heights mean you won't always have digital service in places, so don't rely on navigation apps too heavily! Don't be discouraged if you're not in condition to go hiking - one highlight experience can be found in the simple drive through the canyon. Visitors often say one of the best parts of the Zion area is the moment you emerge from one of the cliffside tunnels to see the park.

**Bryce Canyon:** Visitors to our area often come expecting stark, dry desert - for many parts of Kane County and southern Utah/northern Arizona, that is true. However, what many folks find surprising is the difference between a low altitude desert like the ones you see in cowboy movies, and a high altitude desert. Bryce Canyon is a sterling example of this high altitude



*Kanab has been called "Little Hollywood" for all the movies filmed and movie stars hosted in the western town. Photo by James Holland.*



*Alton, Utah, is located about 40 miles north of Kanab and has a population of approximately 115 people. The "WHOA" signs in place of "STOP" signs add further charm to the tiny town. Photo by James Holland.*

biome - beautiful, sturdy evergreens atop red and pink plateaus, winding shapes carved into the canyon walls by snowmelt and staggeringly beautiful nighttime vistas characterize this gorgeous area. The rural areas around southern Utah and northern Arizona provide some of the lowest light pollution in the world, and on a cloudless night you can find some of the best stargazing opportunities anywhere. Bryce Canyon is a phenomenal place to see the stars.

**Lake Powell and Page:** If you're staying in Page, Arizona, this is probably why. Lake Powell is a massive artificial lake created by the Glen Canyon dam, and it functions as one of the most important resources to our area - as both a water storage reservoir and as a source of hydro-electric power running through the dam. Recre-

ation opportunities abound, from boating and kayaking, to visiting the top of the dam for photo ops and education. Page, similar to the description of Kanab above, has evolved as it has become a more and more popular tourist destination - which means good food and historical sites aplenty! Lake Powell will require a bit of planning, especially in hotter and busier months, and if you have a big boat to work around. Plan your trip well, you'll find days and days worth of adventure on the lake.

As always, the visitor's services in any of these areas stand by to answer questions and help you enjoy and stay safe as you explore the area. The rest of the content in the Southern Utah News Vacation Guide will be dedicated to the same goal, so enjoy the read, and enjoy your visit!

# A VISIT TO CORAL PINK SAND DUNES

*By Ty Gant*

Proving that playing in the sand isn't just fun for kids, the Coral Pink Sand Dunes, 3,700 acres of State Park land formed by wind erosion of the iron-rich red rocks in the region, are a must-see for any visitor to the southern Utah area.

The sand dunes make for some beautiful exploration and recreation. Some of the favorite pastimes for visitors are four-wheeling, sandboarding down the slopes or just hiking through the rolling dunes. There are miles and miles of trails and ATV roads on the BLM lands surrounding the park, and ATV companies that will rent you vehicles in the area.

The Coral Pink Sand Dunes were so lovely and unique, they even tie in to nearby Kanab's "Little Hollywood" filmmaking culture; multiple films have used the scenery to depict various desert

settings from around the world - and beyond, considering the Martian setting of *John Carter!* Most of these films featured local actors, extras and trained animals, so the Kane County area, where the dunes are located, has a major fondness for old movie landmarks. The Coral Pink Sand Dunes are a beloved local landmark, and some of the greatest fun you can have within a day's drive of Mt. Carmel, Orderville and Kanab.

The park is equipped for visitors, with a campsite, running water - including a shower house - and sewage disposal. The site is busy, so make reservations early if you want to camp on the actual park grounds. However, the dunes are easily accessible with a drive of less than an hour from nearby Kanab, so anyone making Kanab their travel HQ can make a trip without much concern. There are paved

roads the whole way, so no need for big four-wheel drives or ATVs to get to the best access points.

The sand dunes require a little bit of prep for anyone planning a visit. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen and snacks. With that in mind, the Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park has a visitor's center with a great view of the dunes very near a place to park a car, so don't lose hope if you're not up to hiking a literal desert. You can still see some of the dunes' most lovely

sites (and photo opportunities) just a short walk from your car.

Nearby locations worth visiting while you're there are the South Fork Petroglyphs and the dinosaur track site a short drive away - you may need a four-wheel drive vehicle for the latter.

Take a hike, see the sights, ride an ATV, sled down the slopes, role-play a desert nomad in a caravan train, whatever you're into; the Sand Dunes are an experience not to be missed.



Photo by Jill Williams.



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## S.T.A.Y. A.L.I.V.E

*By Katie Wallace  
Preventive Search and  
Rescue Specialist  
Kane County Sheriff's Office  
Search and Rescue*

Hello, southern Utah visitors!  
Welcome to our little piece of heaven!  
Southern Utah is one of the

most welcoming communities and charismatic landscapes around. We don't take it for granted. However, it is the high desert, and it needs to be approached with humility and respect. The terrain is remote, rugged, and at times, harsh. We've got mud that

is slicker than snot, mazes of cliff bands that are easy to get ledged out on, confusing terrain to get lost in, and a variety of weather conditions that can beat you down.

Kane County Sheriff's Office deputies and the volunteer Search and Rescue team respond to a wide variety of issues each year. Some folks just have bad luck, but the vast majority of rescues can be prevented. Here are our top tips to S.T.A.Y. A.L.I.V.E. out there!

### **Before you go:**

Scan the weather. *Weather.gov* is a great place to start; you can use their map function to pinpoint a specific location. If you're not familiar with our area, the biggest things you should be on the lookout for are rain and heat.

- Rain. Flash floods were the cause of four fatalities in Kane County in 2023. Stay out of narrow canyons when heavy rain is predicted – both in the canyon you want to



Photos courtesy of Katie Wallace, Kane County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue.

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enter, and in its entire watershed above. For example, if you're going to Buckskin Gulch, look at the rainfall predicted to hit the area around and below Bryce Canyon. Rain is also an important factor for the roads – some roads are sandy and actually get better after rain. Others are muddy and become impassable, even in 4WD. Stop into a visitor center or call an outfitter and ask about road and trail conditions if you're not sure.

- **Heat.** Be aware that much of Kane County is in the triple digits in the summer time. Plan on starting and finishing your recreation early in the summer.

Or move to a higher elevation, like Cedar Mountain or the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

**Trip plan.** Look at your intended route and itinerary ahead of time. Download the maps before you lose signal. Get an idea of what the terrain is like, what the tricky parts might be, trail junctions, and what you should expect in terms of exertion. Have a mental map ready in case your phone dies. Think about who is in your party and if they are prepared for the undertaking or if you might need to adjust.

**Assemble the right gear.** Think about the worst thing that could

happen. Would you be prepared if you broke a leg? If your ATV broke down? If your horse got injured? If it took you four hours longer than expected? You don't need to bring the kitchen sink, but think about some simple, lightweight things that could make a big difference – a small headlamp, a pair of gloves and warm hat, a few extra snacks and a little extra water, an emergency blanket, a knife, a backup charger for your phone, a spare innertube for your bike. In our county, with a severe lack of cell signal, a satellite communication device is highly recommended.

Tell Your loved ones your plan and what to do if they don't hear from you by a certain time. "Overdue party" is the most common callout we get. We have rescued many folks who might have ended up in dire straits had a loved one not called to report their absence.

#### **Out there:**

Adapt the plan as need be. Don't get so stuck on the destination that you get in over your head. Going out is optional; getting home is mandatory. It is a strength to know your own limits. Often,

rescues are not just one thing that went wrong, but a cascade of events. Here's a true rescue we've been on: A family arrived late to their hotel after a long day of hiking, which led to a late morning start, which led to hiking in the heat of the day, which led to a much slower pace than anticipated, which led to running out of food and water, which led to an electrolyte imbalance, which led to an individual ending up with seizing muscles and the inability to walk, which led to needing a rescue. This group had many opportunities to change their plan along the way, but they were so wedded to their destination (I'm looking at you, The Wave) that they put themselves in danger.

Look around. Keep an eye on 1) the conditions, 2) your party, 3) the time of day, and 4) the terrain.

- **Conditions can change quickly.** Storms can be unexpected. Pay attention to shifts in weather patterns and adapt accordingly. Also, familiarity is often a bonus, but can sometimes lead to complacency. An ATV track you've driven a hundred times can suddenly be washed out. An



anchor point on a canyoneering trip can be altered by rockfall.

- Pay attention to the others in your party. What is their body language saying about their comfort? Are they smiling and engaging? Are they hunched and grimacing? Are they scared by the activity? Are they struggling to keep up with the group? Are they spaced out and quiet?

- Keep an eye on the time of day, particularly as it relates to your pace. It is always good to have a mandatory “turn-around” time. I also find that if I say the time out loud to the whole group (“okay, it’s 1 p.m. and we’re at the upper cave”), later, when we start thinking back to how long it

is taking us to travel, we have a reference point we all remember.

- Notice the terrain as you travel. Pay attention to landmarks. Don’t forget to look backwards as you go – the landmarks will look different on their backside. If you get lost, have a general sense of where you came from so you can return. It can be easy in a large group to get focused on conversation or to be looking down at your feet. Take the time to look up and around.

Intake! Eat and drink. Southern Utah is DRY country (and I’m not talking about our liquor laws!). If you’re from a place with humidity (gross!), you will need to drink more than you are used to. But don’t forget to also EAT!

Drinking too much water with no snacks can dilute your blood of necessary electrolytes. And no, Gatorade won’t cut it; eat some real snacks. In the summer, load up on salty snacks because you’ll sweat out your salts. In the winter, load up on sugar snacks because they are easy calories for your body to convert to warmth.

Visualize what’s next. I hope none of you end up in a bad situation. But if you do, stay calm. In emergency medicine, we use the mantra “go slow to go fast.” Slow down your breathing. Do not panic. Focus on the next steps forward so you do not make your situation worse. When survivors are interviewed about

their experiences undergoing extreme circumstances, a common denominator is their ability to give themselves small tasks to stay busy and keep positive momentum toward getting rescued. Don’t get caught up in doomsday thinking; just focus on your next move.

Enjoy it! For goodness sake, have a good time out there. Don’t just stay alive; thrive! Be positive, welcoming, and helpful to others. You never know; you might need their help, too! And leave it enjoyable for everyone – don’t graffiti our rocks, take ancient artifacts, cut the trails, or leave trash behind. Keep our little piece of heaven incredible so we can all enjoy it for generations to come.

*Hello, I'm Karen Heet, your Kanab real estate expert!*

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*Karen Heet*

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## RANCHING IS THE LIFE-BLOOD OF KANE COUNTY AND THE ARIZONA STRIP

*By John and Dusty Reese*

Farming and ranching have always been an important part of Kane County. Early members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints began settling Kane County in the 1860s. They farmed the bottom lands near streams and creeks where irrigation systems could be developed; they began grazing livestock on the high plateaus during the summer and found the desert to the south to be excellent winter range; and as they began settling communities, the small towns prospered because residents established orchards, field crops and livestock grazing operations. Kane County has

maintained many of these customs and culture throughout its history.

Ranching and farming operations are still a priority and a large part of the local economy. Life for the early settlers was never easy; water was scarce and access difficult. The early residents worked hard to establish their livelihood, and today's residents work hard to maintain it. Farmers and ranchers are the backbone of America, working from sun-up to sundown, taking care of the land and livestock and providing food for fellow citizens and the rest of the world. Kane County is home to more than 180 active farming and ranching families. While they are an integral part of providing locally grown food in our area and playing their part in feeding the world, they also support other local businesses, whether it be other

agricultural supported businesses, fuel distributors, tire and vehicle repair shops or building and maintenance suppliers. The rancher's economic impact is often unrealized until it is gone.

More than 85 percent of the land in Kane County is managed under the control of the federal government; multiple use has always been a very important part of its management. Farmers and



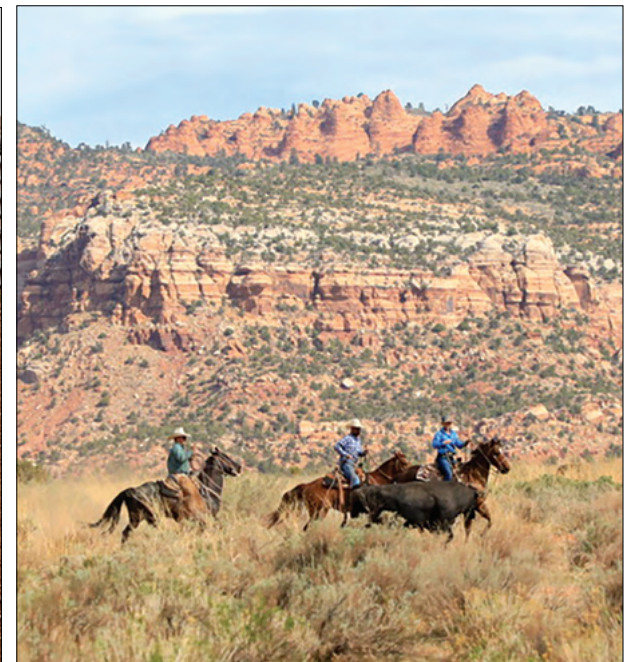
*Roping an animal is a crucial part of taking care of livestock to keep them and the ranchers safe during doctoring and handling. Photo by Lacy Button.*



*Photo by Lacy Button.*



*Calving season is a busy time for ranchers. Photo by John and Dusty Reese.*



*Photo by Lacy Button.*

ranchers are the caretakers of the land, ensuring adequate feed and water are available for livestock and wildlife. They love their cattle and the land, and they can use your help. Fences are very important for rangeland health and animal safety. Please never cut fences and always take the time to close gates, even if you plan on coming

back through – trust us ranchers, we always have the same thought and we always get in trouble for it. When you are looking for that perfect place to camp, please do not park or camp within 150 feet of a water trough or block access to corrals. Wildlife and some cows won't come to drink if people are there. If you are using recre-

ational vehicles, please stick to the roads. Grass is a rare commodity here and once torn out by tires, it can take years to come back.

We hope you enjoy your time here in Kane County and learn to appreciate the ranching lifestyle as we do. While here, check out a farmers' market for local produce or buy some local beef. While out enjoying the beautiful scenery, please remember that there are still families here that are working with the land to bring food to your table.



Photo by Carson Robinson.



Raising alfalfa and other crops is a huge part of many family's ranching operations in Kane County. Photo by James Holland.



Many ranches in the area are still owned and operated by the same families that settled them before the turn of the 20th century. Photo by John and Dusty Reese.



Many local ranchers raise hay crops for their own livestock and then sell the extra to other operations all around the country. Photo by Lacy Button.

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## SEEING THE GRAND CANYON FROM THE NORTH

*By Ty Gant*

One of the literal Seven Natural Wonders of the World is titled "Grand" with good reason. The beauty of the Grand Canyon is nothing short of staggering, and entire vacations could be dedicated to exploring the vast reaches and vistas that may as well have been colored and composed by a master artist. There's a quiet wonder to the Grand Canyon that is simply unmatched.

As the accessible parts of the Canyon run east-to-west lengthwise, it can be seen from the high vantage points of the northern or southern rims - most visitors reading this guide will have easier access to the North Rim than the South, and to their advantage too. The South Rim is the more popular of the two spots, being closer to big urban centers like Flagstaff, Arizona, and "popular" also means

"busy," especially in the height of vacation seasons. The North Rim is indisputably the quieter, more private way to experience the Grand Canyon, trading fewer amenities - though there are still excellent amenities - for breathing room and chances to take trails and viewpoints all to yourself.

The journey to the Canyon is an experience all its own - be sure to stop at Jacob's Lake for their renowned restaurant and fresh-

baked cookies! The North Rim is accessed through some of the greenest forests Utah and Arizona have to offer, with the cool high altitude encouraging impressive evergreens and all sorts of unique wildlife to flourish in the area. Check out some of the signs along the road to learn about different species being preserved in the Grand Canyon National Park - and yes, they're very passionate about their squirrels with good

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reason. The road takes you up a gentle incline, around the curves of the mountain terrain and along the great Kaibab Plateau, ultimately ending in one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring sights on this Earth. The thick forests and rolling terrain stay close to the road, meaning the Canyon can, in a way, sneak up on you - you're driving along, enjoying the trees and the flowers, and then boom - in an instant, you've rounded a corner and the entire horizon is unfolding in front of you. Welcome to the Grand Canyon.

Once you're there, there are a thousand ways to enjoy the Canyon. For the casual visitor, there are vistas and gorgeous photo ops just a short walk away from vehicle access, along with multiple eateries in the main visitor's lodge, which is also equipped with places to stay if you can find a reservation - if not, there are also campgrounds dotting the park site. The restaurants in the North Rim's Lodge provide excellent views of the Canyon, all from the comfort and ease of the indoors, so visitors who lack the means to take long hikes will still have plenty of ways to enjoy.

On the other hand, for those who do like a bit of rugged hiking, there's no place better than the

North Rim. Miles and miles of well-maintained hiking trails to some of the most gorgeous vistas in the world are accessible from multiple points across the park - and, again, if you time your hike right you can take the entire route from green forested base to soaring heights of the peak without seeing another hiker. If you're lucky, the right time of year, route and time of day might just get you a personal, one-on-one experience with this wonder of the world. The Visitor's Lodge has plenty of info for you, as does the National Park Services phone app. Just remember that due to sheer walls and sudden altitude changes, you won't always have cell service or data, so sometimes a good old fashioned paper map is the most reliable option - or at least something downloaded on a device with a good battery pack.

Stay safe as you hike the lovely Grand Canyon. Keep in mind that it can reach altitudes of over 9,000 feet! That carries travel implications: the body dehydrates faster at high altitudes, and people who are used to lower altitudes often experience shortness of breath in the thinner air. If you're used to hiking in low altitudes, expect your stamina to run out a little quicker - pace yourself,



*If you're feeling brave enough, look down. Photo by Jill Williams.*

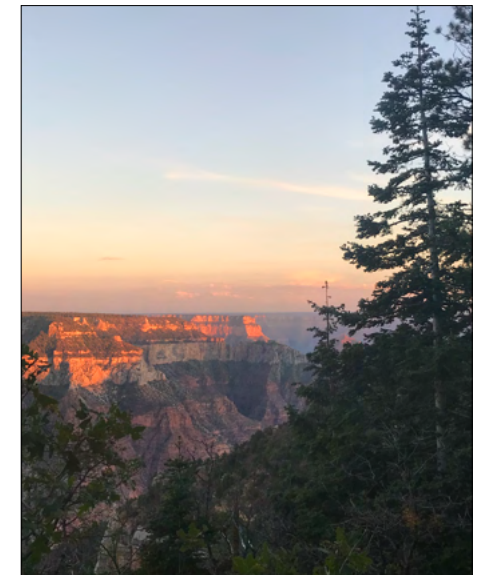
and bring plenty of water!

Most of the hikes on the North Rim stay at high altitudes and keep to the upper reaches of the Grand Canyon, but there are NPS managed trails that take travelers down the canyon walls to the roaring Colorado River that carved the canyon in the first place. These are pretty demanding hikes, not for the inexperienced or the faint of heart - and they are multiple day adventures. If you can swing it, it will give you a true appreciation for the vastness and majesty of the Grand Canyon itself, and the Colorado that created it. Check the same services mentioned above for the availability of guides and travel groups.

It's worth mentioning that the Grand Canyon is included in the National Parks Pass, like nearby Bryce and Zion; if you pay for entry to one, you can pick up the pass that gives you access to all of them. We did the math - if you're planning on visiting in 2024, getting the pass on at least two of the three above-mentioned sites will save you money.

If you are lucky enough to have a chance to visit the Grand

Canyon, you're guaranteed an experience like no other. The unique wildlife, the staggering contrast of the two opposing sides of the divide, just the quiet wonder of the largest canyon in the world is sure to impress and to give a sense of the greatness and awe that will crown your vacation to this area as a highlight.



*Clean air, evergreen trees and sedimentary vistas make the Grand Canyon a stunning sight. Photo by Katie Wallace.*

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## BRYCE CANYON, AND A PERSONAL NOTE

*By Ty Gant*

One of the first things they teach a young journalist is to take the first person “I” out of things, to keep things impersonal, to take a clear view on a subject.

However, Bryce is of great personal significance as the land my grandfather returned to after the war and therefore the home where my mother was raised, so I’d like to take a bit of personal liberty with this piece.

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the beauty and mystery that is Bryce Canyon. Named for Scottish immigrant Ebenezer Bryce, who settled one of the first ranches in the area in the late 1800s, the canyon was known then for easy access to water and high-quality timber - Ebenezer Bryce was a carpenter from old Scotland, and he brought with him many of the classical Norse stories for which the Canyon’s landmarks would be named (“Thor’s Hammer,” “Erickson’s Beard,” and so on.) The canyon would be dedicated as a national

monument in 1923, and designated as a National Park in 1928

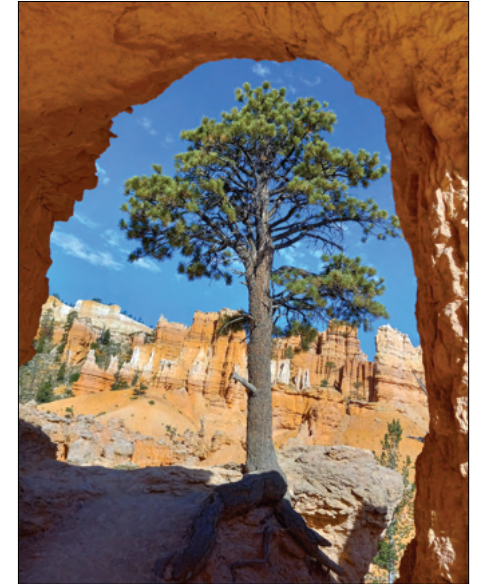
Approaching the upper reaches of the Grand Staircase, Bryce showcases some of the best that southern Utah has to offer, with layers of brilliantly colored sedimentary rock stacked in, among and above gorgeous evergreens, and all framed by naturally formed pillars of solitary stone. The spires and hoodoos seem to shift in color as the sun breaks over the cliffs, and the basins and ridges come alive when the sun hits them. It is, in a word, magical.

Bryce is arranged almost like a stadium or theater, with the entry points at high altitudes and looking out over the low-altitude basins. There are multiple hikes that take you into the canyon floor to get up-close-and-personal with the unique rock formations - evocative names like “Thor’s Hammer” and “Rainbow Point” give you an idea of some of the sights when you visit beautiful Bryce. In addition to the journeys down into

the canyon, there are ring trails that hug the high basin ridge, allowing you to take in each of the sights and landmarks it has to offer. Bryce is an enchanting place from any angle, so the opportunity to follow the Rim Trail around its entirety is a spectacular one.

The hikes along the Rim and into the canyon are generally manageable for the casual hiker. The Rim hikes in particular are forgiving when it comes to distance; there’s plenty to see early on so you can turn around if you’re exhausted without feeling like you’re missing out. Some of the trails into the basin can ask a lot of a hiker, but nothing too extreme. As always, keep the altitude in mind: Bryce, particularly the Rim, ranges high, above 9,000 feet on the southern side. That means rapid dehydration, thin air and cold winds - bring lots of water and plenty of snacks to stay fueled up, and especially if you visit in fall, bundle up!

Now with cold temperatures and cozy blankets in mind, there’s a secret to really enjoying Bryce: visit it twice! The colors and landscapes are phenomenal, yes, but they are best seen during the day. Bryce shines as an entirely new experience when you visit it at night. Rural Utah has some of the lowest light pollution levels anywhere in the US. It’s very dark here at night, no big cities or structures to fill the sky, and that means something special: stars. Bryce is a high altitude point in a low light pollution area, and there’s no place better for stargazing and witnessing the night sky. The park service has moonlight tours and guided stargazing for safe and easy travel along the canyon’s rim to the best spots to see the cosmos in a whole new way. There are even local dark sky enthusi-



*Bryce is as much a natural amphitheater as it is a canyon - and it's equally beautiful from the bottom and the top. Photo by Rocel Bettencourt.*

asts - like the good folks at Stellar Vista Observatory, who have their own piece elsewhere in this guide - who can help you arrange for stargazing equipment and give you advice on what to look for.

There is limited space to drive along the roads to the Canyon, but the Park Service provides a free shuttle service from a parking lot - there are visitors’ centers at the park entrance and in nearby Tropic, and as always, the NPS app has good information and access to services specific to the park. Bryce falls under the National Parks Pass along with Grand Canyon and Zion, so if you pay for access to the one you can access them all. Bryce is significantly more remote than either Grand or Zion, and while that means a little extra travel time, it also means significantly less visitation; brave the journey more casual vacationers won’t, and you’ll get a much more private and personal experience without any of the crowds.



*Even the desert sees snow sometimes. Photo by Judy Kiel.*

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## YOU'RE MORE THAN INVITED TO BEST FRIENDS

*By Michelle Sathe*

There is a destination in southern Utah where 30,000 people make a pilgrimage from all around the world every year. A place where dinosaur tracks and petroglyphs mark its red rock cliffs, where the Lone Ranger and John Wayne once roamed. A place that some people find so special that they make the journey to this destination in the high desert year after year, returning with friends, partners and kids so that they can share an experience often described as “magical.”

This place is the home and headquarters of Best Friends Animal Society, which operates the largest animal sanctuary in the United States. Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, located just outside Kanab, Utah, and in close proximity to Zion and Bryce National Parks, cares for about 1,600 animals on any given day and offers free visitor and volunteer experiences at every level.

It's the dogs, cats, horses, bunnies, pigs and more that

attract visitors for the first time. But it's the sense of community, the stunning ambiance, and the peaceful energy of the Sanctuary that keep people coming back.

What began as a dream by its co-founders in 1984 to save homeless pets, Best Friends' Sanctuary has grown from endless acres of rustic land formerly used as dinosaur stomping grounds and a backdrop for Western movies into a national organization that's working to end of the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters.

Visitors can see and experience that work in action, along with a whole host of other things, like socializing puppies, feeding popcorn to pigs, bottle feeding kittens and taking a dog out on a hike. Lodging options include staying on-site in one of several cabins and cottages that offer views of horse pastures and starry skies, or at the Best Friends Roadhouse & Mercantile in downtown Kanab.

Designed as the most pet-centric hotel in the country, the Roadhouse extends the Sanctuary experience

by offering guests sleepovers of Sanctuary animals and special features for guests' own pets. Every stay benefits the lifesaving work of Best Friends Animal Society.

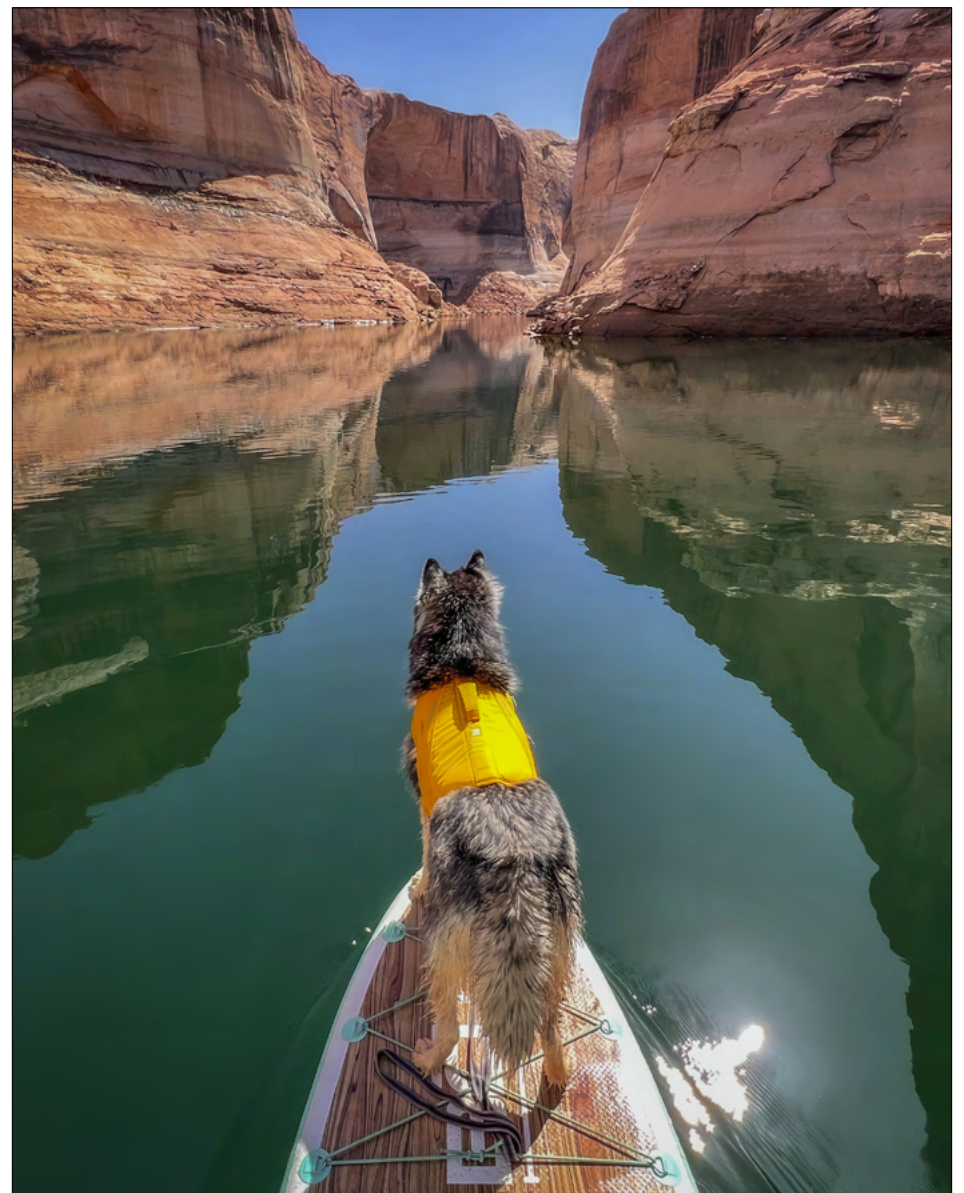
At the Roadhouse, pets aren't just welcome in the rooms, they're expected to enjoy all the available activities with their owners, such as time in the playyards, a summer splash zone, the mercantile store and hanging out during live music and movie events happening

throughout the year. Rooms come with built-in trundle pet beds, lots of pet treat, and a delicious vegan continental breakfast for humans.

Ready to experience this magic for yourself? To find out more about Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, visit [bestfriends.org/sanctuary](https://bestfriends.org/sanctuary). To book a room at the Best Friends Roadhouse & Mercantile, visit [bestfriendsroadhouse.org](https://bestfriendsroadhouse.org) or call (435) 644-3400.



*Photo by Best Friends Animal Society staff.*



*Every adventure can be made better with a furry friend. Photo by Sunny Stroerer.*

# JOURNEY TO THE STARS WITH KANAB'S STELLAR VISTA OBSERVATORY

*By Rich Csenge, President  
Stellar Vista Observatory*

Traveling through southern Utah is awe inspiring. In daylight, its monumental land forms capture the imagination. The beauty and grand scale of natural features are startling; high plateaus and bare rock exposed for eons assuming otherworldly shapes. The land is a study in geologic wonders. But then, as night falls over the land, to look up into the sky is to seemingly behold the entire cosmos!

Stars: uncountable stars! On a

clear night, the constellations and planets appear to be almost within the grasp of one's hand. The blizzard of glistening lights at first appears to be scattered across the heavens at random. But looking longer, familiar shapes can be traced; the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia, Orion, Scorpius, Sagittarius.

One day a few amateur astronomers residing in Kane County, Utah, got together to develop a visionary goal and to formulate a plan: they would work to create a facility for public

enjoyment and appreciation for what people can see in the southern Utah sky at night. From this spark of inspiration, the nonprofit Stellar Vista Observatory emerged in Kanab as a resource in assisting residents and visitors fulfill their desire to experience and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the night sky.

In Kanab, star parties for public enjoyment of the night sky are scheduled every month, while authoritative weekly sky reports published in area newspapers

help direct budding sky watchers to the most interesting and readily observable celestial phenomena throughout the four seasons. The nonprofit Stellar Vista Observatory enjoys strong support for its ongoing efforts to draw attention to and preserve the visibility of southwest Utah's starry night skies for present and future generations.

In recent years, a movement to preserve natural darkness has been sweeping across the states of the Intermountain West. National



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-Jeff & Julie

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and State Parks in Utah, 22 of them in all, worked diligently to meet outdoor lighting criteria to qualify for official designation as Dark Sky Parks from the International Dark Sky Association, the world's foremost body working to preserve and protect the visibility of the sky at night.

For a list of accredited dark sky parks in Utah, go to [visitutah.com/places-to-go/dark-sky-parks](http://visitutah.com/places-to-go/dark-sky-parks). To learn more about efforts to preserve star-filled nights across the four-state Colorado Plateau eco-region, go to [extension.usu.edu/iort/cp-darkskies/](http://extension.usu.edu/iort/cp-darkskies/).

At the heart of this magical experience is the absolute

necessity for reducing and eliminating light pollution, defined as a brightening of the night sky caused by street lights and other man-made sources, which has a disruptive effect on natural cycles and inhibits the observation of stars and planets.

Natural darkness above is protected when municipal, commercial and residential outdoor lighting is shielded, aiming the light we need to see at night down toward the ground, instead of shining sideways and up. This simple act of kindness to our neighbors, to our communities has become the key focus of a rapidly rising worldwide movement.

As well it must if humanity is to save its view of the stars, that ineffable and irreplaceable aspect of our common heritage. Because tragically, 83 percent of people in the United States can no longer see the Milky Way from where they live. Something truly majestic has already been lost, and people are taking notice!

Fortunately, Kanab, Utah, is one of a half-dozen proactive rural communities in the state that have enacted night sky friendly outdoor lighting ordinances

to preserve and protect their starry nights. With a complete range of visitor services, the growing community offers astro-tourists extraordinary proximity to federally managed parks, forests, monuments and public lands; all of them outstanding destinations for stargazing.

To learn more about Stellar Vista Observatory's free public star parties, and plans to build an educational astronomical observatory in Kane County, Utah, visit [stellarvistaobservatory.org](http://stellarvistaobservatory.org).

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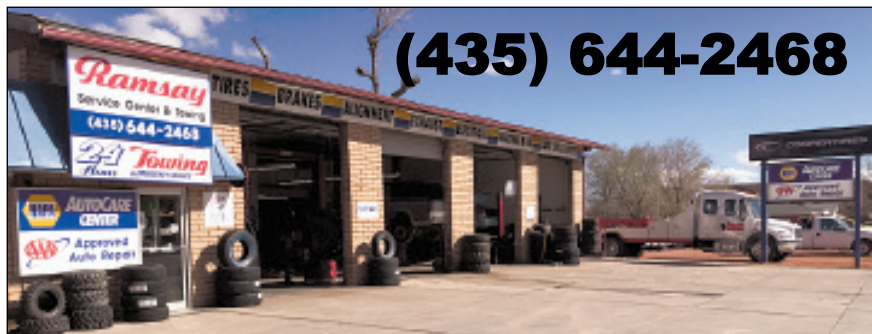
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*Aspen Mirror Lake on Cedar Mountain in Kane County.*



*Stargazing at the Toadstools. Photos by Stacy Cox, Stacy Cox Photography.*

# GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

*By David Hercher*  
*Bureau of Land Management*  
 Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument spans across nearly 1.87 million acres of America's public lands in southern Utah. From its spectacular Grand Staircase of cliffs and terraces, across the rugged Kaiparowits Plateau to the wonders of the Escalante River Canyons, the Monument is a diverse geologic treasure speckled with monoliths, slot canyons, natural bridges and arches. Due to its remote location and rugged landscape,

the monument was one of the last places in the continental United States to be mapped.

The Monument is also an outstanding biological resource, spanning five life-zones - from low-lying desert to coniferous forest. Deep within this vast and austere landscape, the Anasazi and Fremont cultures made contact in the period AD 950-1100, leaving behind rock art panels, occupation sites, campsites and granaries.

Stepping further back in time, fossil excavations have yielded more information about

ecosystem change at the end of the dinosaur era than any other place in the world. The Monument's size, resources and remote character provide extraordinary opportunities for geologists, paleontologists, archeologists, historians and biologists in scientific research, education and exploration. This unspoiled natural area remains a frontier with countless opportunities for quiet recreation and solitude.

On September 18, 2021, the Monument celebrated its 25th anniversary as the first national monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Today, the Monument continues to evolve as a place of cultural, paleontological, ecological and geographic discovery, as managers work to retain traditional resource values, while preserving important monument objects of value for the benefit of generations.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is becoming a very popular outdoor recreation location. Visitation to the monument dramatically increased during the pandemic, when

Americans headed outdoors and rediscovered BLM-managed public lands, not only in southern Utah, but throughout the west. The number of visitors has doubled in the last 20 years and today, more than 1.4 million people come to enjoy the beauty of the monument. Before visiting Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, ensure you are prepared with the most up-to-date information about the area by calling or stopping one of the monument visitor centers.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 western states, including Alaska, on behalf of the American people. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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*A hint of winter hides from the sun on the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Photo by Harry Barber.*

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## DESERT SURVIVAL

*By Kim Clark*

Summer is calling us to visit Lake Powell and the surrounding area, but to the unprepared visitor, the desert can be an unforgiving place. Even the smallest mistake can turn an afternoon of

fun or a weekend camping trip into an emergency. One mistake and you could die in the desert. Even if you plan to only be out in the desert heat for a few hours, remember to bring at least a gallon of water for each person in

your group, have a hat, sunscreen and some extra clothes with you, the desert does cool off at night. Matches, a mirror, a compass, sunglasses and chapstick is helpful too. Some extra food is a must, just in case. Fill your tank with gas and make sure your vehicle, whether a car, truck, ATV or boat, is in good working order. Remember to always watch your kids around water and watch for snakes, scorpions and other outdoor dangers. Never put a hand or a foot where you can't see the surface. Remember to keep an eye to the sky for thunderstorms that cause flash floods. Now that you are prepared, think about a few more important tips. There is no such thing as being too well prepared. The first tip is to share your plans. Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Have your family member, friend or neighbor write down the make, model and license number of your vehicle. Tell them where you are going and what route you are taking. Will others be traveling with you? Have them provide the same information for

their contacts too. Let your contacts know what kind of health issues the group may have and what kind of emergency supplies you have with you including all medications your group may need. While most have cell phones today, do not depend on it working or if you will have coverage or a charged battery when you need it. Consider renting a satellite phone if you plan to be on the lake or in the back country for an extended period of time. Another helpful piece of equipment is a handheld GPS. It can provide helpful topographical maps, but remember with their use comes the warning to be aware that they might tell you a cow trail is a road, so you must use common sense here too. Today the most prepared hikers will also have as a last resort a Personal Locator Beacon. These PLB's are a highly effective way of summoning help. A word of warning here, only use them in a life-threatening situation. Now that you have put together your survival pack, go out and have a wonderful time and enjoy Lake Powell and the surround area.



Though its had a few different names by different travellers over the years, the most common name is "The Great Chamber" for good reason! Photo by Katie Wallace.





Photo by Katie Wallace.



Photo by Sylvia Jessop.



Photo by Monica Jessop.

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## WE INVITE YOU TO ZION NATIONAL PARK

*By Ty Gant*

There's a reason "Zion Canyon" is named for the scriptural promised land, the divine haven for those seeking shelter from the world - names like "Angel's Landing" and "Temple of Sinawava" keep this theme of a sacred and beautiful sanctuary. More than one local Indigenous culture revere Zion as a literal sacred place, and any visitor will

be able to see why. The canyon was marked as Mukuntaweap National Monument in 1909, and the Zion National Park was established ten years later - all the way back then and well beyond, anyone who saw Zion knew it had something special.

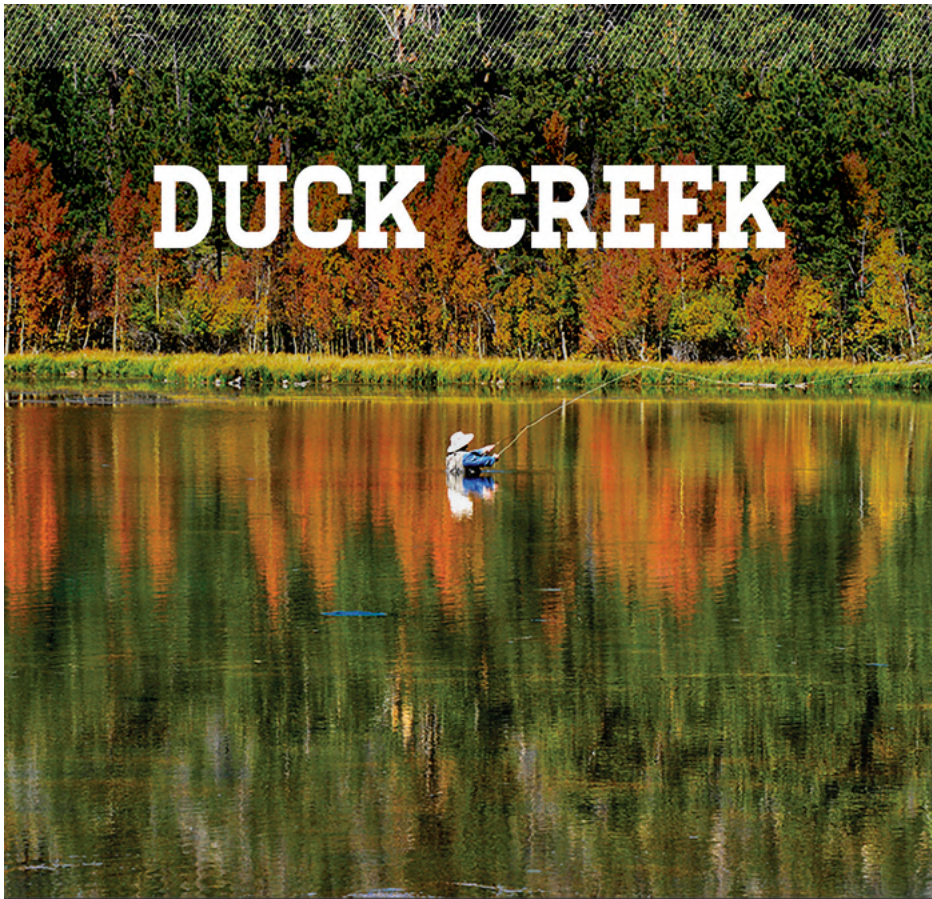
There's plenty to do in Zion Canyon with beautiful sights and experiences for the novice hiker and the professional rock

climber. Zion's slots and rills are a different experience from the likes of Bryce or Grand Canyon, mostly due to the fact that with Zion you start at the bottom. You generally view those canyons from a high angle that presents the whole canyon at once; by nature, Zion takes you through step by step, curve by curve and canyon by canyon, like some storytelling adventure where you never know what comes next.

Zion is also unique, especially in this desert biome, for regular encounters with water. Many of its trails and slots lead up to and through small water ways, crystalline pools and even Zion's famous curtain waterfalls. An ambitious hiker planning to visit

Zion would open up multiple new trails and paths by including waterproof boots in their kit.

Zion has a shuttle system in place from the nearby parking areas to get you into the park without having too many cars interrupting the natural serenity. Once you're in, Zion also has camping, biking, horseback riding, stargazing and world class cuisine. There is plenty to do in the canyon, just check NPS media for availability and schedules. Zion stands in opposition to Bryce and the Grand Canyon in that there is a good portion of the canyon that can be seen from within a car - the route through Zion actually goes through Zion. Most of the best



Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or completely new to the scene, you'll find that Duck Creek offers it all! With hundreds of miles of ATV/OHV and hiking trails, fishing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and more - there's every reason during every season to get out and have some fun. Plus, with a variety of cabins to choose from, you'll find the perfect cabin country lodging to complete your stay. Start planning today at [VisitSouthernUtah.com](http://VisitSouthernUtah.com) or at [DuckCreekVillage.com](http://DuckCreekVillage.com).



*Angels Landing in Zion National Park has become so popular in recent years, the park has switched to allowing hikers via a limited number of permits each day. The hike is also closed for a portion of the year to protect the raptors nesting in the cliffs. Photo by Weston Daley.*

sights require at least a little walking, but if someone happens to be car-bound for whatever reason, Zion is still a good option.

Zion is also home to some of the most gorgeous and significant fauna southern Utah has to offer. Utah's state bird, the stately Golden Eagle, as well as the symbolically ubiquitous Bald Eagle are both in the park year-round, though more heavily during migration season. Rare-but-resurging Peregrine Falcons also nest in Zion regularly; some portions of the year are dedicated to Peregrine nesting season, and some of the trails

close down to give the federally protected and sensitive birds space. Yes, that means some of the trails are inaccessible during this season, but a good pair of binoculars and a sharp eye may just treat you to a dazzling pair of parental raptors caring for a clutch of chirping babies.

Carved in part by the Virgin River, Zion ranges from around three thousand to around five thousand feet in altitude - average for the area, so most folks can breathe easier, even those used to lower altitudes. However, there are additional considerations to be made in hiking through a place

like Zion; most significantly, the weather. Slot canyons like Zion's can flood very quickly - called "flash floods" for a reason - so stay safe by keeping an eye on weather patterns, and listen to local guides and experts on which trails are safest when. And be warned, the canyon walls of Zion are high, dense and complex, meaning cell service is spotty at best. Don't count on your electrical devices for navigation if you can help it - maps are available at various visitor centers in the area, and at Zion's large and accommodating Visitor's Lodge (along with some of the best

food around). Zion is also one of the busier destinations around here, with dramatic increases in visitation in the last few years, so consider visiting in the shoulder months if you can swing it - it'll be a little less crowded in the off season, if a little chillier!

The mesas, cliffs and canyons of Zion are often cited as the highlight of any visit to this area. Many visitors will instantly respond "Zion!" when asked what their favorite part has been so far, so odds are it may be the case for you too. Go check out Zion, and find out for yourself why it's named after a biblical paradise.



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# KANAB'S OASIS, JACKSON FLAT RESERVOIR

*By Ty Gant*

Any summertime vacation to our beautiful but arid region of the world is naturally going to get hot and dry before long - luckily we have an easy way to cool off just minutes away. Jackson Flat Reservoir is an artificial lake only minutes away from Kanab, and the cool relief of a dip in the lake is improved by the contrast with the iron red cliffs surrounding it. The reservoir is ringed by the Sherry Belle Trail, allowing running, biking and skating on the lake's edge, and more than one location where it leads directly to the lake if you're in a triathlon mood.

The Kane County Water Conservancy District (KCWCD) that governs the reservoir has invested time and money into making Jackson Flat more than just a big water tank. The reservoir hosts a playground, a calisthenics course, a rope bridge and a concert stage.

The reservoir also serves an important recreational and environmental role as a spawning pool for trout and bass. Any anglers visiting can try their hand at fishing the lake, and the

KCWCD host "The Reel Deal" fishing competition, giving anglers two days to see who can catch the heaviest fish. Record breaking fish have been reeled in at that competition, and there are cash prizes and kids' competitions as well - the competition for who can bring in the smallest fish is typically just as heated as who can bring in the biggest. One fisher at the 2022 Reel Deal tournament once said "Honestly? The bass population in this reservoir is one of Utah's best kept secrets. You can wrangle some impressive stuff out of here ... and they're just getting bigger as they spawn and the water district brings in more and better food."

If you're looking to actually get on the lake, you can rent a paddleboard, kayak or pedalboat and enjoy drifting on the lazy ripples while the lake cools you off. Kanab hosts multiple events over the year that allow for more ready community boating and kayaking, including some events where the rentals are free for a time - keep an eye on the community schedule for those sorts of things, but of course you're



*Jackson Flat Reservoir has activities for the whole family. The KCWCD disc golf course is a state of the art popular course in southern Utah. Photo by Kelly Brown.*

welcome to bring your own kayak's and do the launching yourself.

The reservoir is equipped with an outdoor pavilion for shade, as well as rest stop facilities, and since last year they have added a dock for fishing, a ropes course and a sandbox - even if you've visited before, Jackson Flat is ever improving.

The reservoir's location leads to it being a popular holiday spot, as Thanksgiving Day charity runs, Utah's founding day fireworks and music festival showcases are set up regularly. It also happens to be a prime stargazing location, far away from the lights of the town and with plenty of open space to set up telescopes and binocular tripods. The local astronomy organization, Stellar Vista Observatory, often holds stargazing parties out at the

reservoir - and even if they are not hosting their own event at a convenient time, they have telescopes and other stargazing equipment to rent out for any independent stargazing parties. Other enthusiast groups like birdwatchers, casual musicians, distance runners and art groups often make use of the quiet, open space outside of the bustle of the town.

In all, Jackson Flat Reservoir makes a perfect compromise between accessibility and recreation. It's just outside of Kanab, it's got gorgeous scenery and plenty to do, and it has the oh-so-necessary ability to help keep you cool in the hot months when many folks do their vacationing. Slot it on any day of your trip around lunchtime, and you won't regret it.


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## TOP FIVE HIKING TRAILS IN KANAB

*By Harry Barber*

There are many trail opportunities to choose from on public lands in the Kanab area. Depending on what it is you want to do, I suggest you drop by a Kane County or Bureau of Land Management Visitor Center and talk to a knowledgeable employee about your desired trail use. I like to use the trails as a way to get into an area, and then push on to

explore even further. A word of caution – do not do something you are not comfortable with. Mother nature can be fickle out here in the desert, so it is important that you know your limitations, be prepared and travel with a friend if feasible. At the very least, make sure somebody knows where you are going and when you expect to be back. These trails are incredible, but can also become

dangerous, so take precautions to ensure you have a great hike!

Personally, my vice is mountain biking, hiking and trail running – so my focus here will be on five trails that I frequent.

**Bunting Trail:** (Hike/Run) Are you looking for steep? You found it! Located west of The Ranchos

subdivision, the trail starts off as a rolling trail following the wash bottom. The trail can be used to access a cool set of dinosaur tracks. Beyond the junction of the Bunting Trail with the wash that accesses the dinosaur track site, the Bunting Trail begins a steep upward ascent. As you



*Walk where they once walked. These dinosaur tracks atop Flag Point offer a chance to take a step back in history, literally. Photo by Harry Barber.*



*This pile of cars was used for rip-rap against the highway. Photo by Jill Williams.*



continue climbing right through the rim of the mesa, an amazing view awaits your arrival. The trail, particularly the last quarter mile, contains a lot of loose rock. The rock, combined with the steep nature of the trail, makes this a challenging climb. You will gain about 1,200 feet in elevation. From the trailhead to the rim and back again will give you about 3.2 miles of calories burned. And although this does not seem like a lot, what you lack in miles you will make up for in painful elevation gains!

**Greenhalgh Trail:** (Hike/Run/Horse) This trail is located in Trail Canyon, north of town just off Highway 89. The trail can be

accessed by parking at the ATV bridge that spans Kanab Creek and walking to the trailhead from there. Named after the Greenhalgh brothers, Harry and Wilford, the trail is moderately steep and offers great views of the surrounding area. A few years ago, the BLM worked with the American Conservation Experience (ACE) to make trail improvements for a safer user experience.

**Mansard Trail:** (Hike/Run) In the last several years, the BLM has made improvements to the trail using the ACE crews. The trail is also used as part of the G2G Ultra Marathon race and will get your heart pounding as you make your

way up through the switchbacks on your way to the rim, where once again – amazing views await your arrival. This trail will lead you to an alcove containing an incredible petroglyph panel. Please be respectful of the panel by not touching or walking on it. From the trailhead to the panel and back again will be about five to six miles.

**Cottonwood Trail:** (Hike/Run/Horse) The trail is mostly rolling with some moderately steep grades. The trail generally follows the base of the Vermilion Cliffs west of town. There are some great views of the Arizona Strip to the south. You will be under the rim of the Bunting Mesa with

opportunities on occasion to spot desert bighorn sheep. The trail offers a challenge if you take it all the way to Cottonwood Canyon, as you will be putting nearly 10 miles on your kicks before you return to where you started.

**Catstair Canyon:** (Hike) Catstair is the family-friendly trail. This is one of my go-to trails when the grandkids visit. The trail offers an opportunity to hike a narrow canyon bordering on being a slot canyon. The hike to the pile of old cars used for rip-rap against the highway is fairly short but offers plenty for kids to see. The hike from the trailhead to the old cars and back is about one mile.

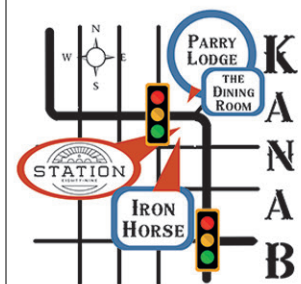


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## EXPERIENCE SOUTHERN UTAH ...

*By Jeremy Houston*

While “Roaming” around and guiding ATV tours for the many folks that come to visit Kanab, I am often asked about the wildlife here. People want to know what kind of animals are native to the area. As a wildlife photographer, this question is easy to answer. They are often amazed at the diversity of species the area holds. Because I am partial to mule deer, I like to steer the conversation toward a picture of a large buck or two, and in some cases I can show them the exact spot where the picture was taken.

It doesn't matter what time of year it is, there is always something to photograph. With the creation of the Jackson Flat reservoir, wintertime has become fun. I don't have to go far to find plenty of feathered friends. Eagles, Canadian geese, great blue herons and many species of ducks fill the reservoir with what seems like an unending supply of photograph worthy subjects. Early spring is a good time to find one of the cutest things you'll ever see, a newborn desert bighorn sheep. They can

be found in multiple areas, perhaps the best place to see them is the eastern side of Zion National Park. Spring and summer are a great time to find several big game animals such as mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and the occasional black bear. I'll never forget a remarkable day of seeing all of the before mentioned animals near Tropic Reservoir. Late summer is the time for mule deer bucks with velvet covered antlers and rutting desert bighorn rams. September and October is for elk. The sound of a bull elk bugle is simply magical! November and December is for the mule deer rut, and hopefully we get some good snowfall to make for serene winter pictures. The southern Utah landscape provides dramatic and vibrant colors lending to depth and beauty unique to the area.

*The following photos by Jermey Houston were taken within a 40-mile radius of Kanab:*



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# NAVAJO BRIDGE OVER THE COLORADO RIVER

*By Phil Clark*

Just south of the Utah border, stand two bridges that span the Colorado River, near Lees Ferry across Marble Canyon, named for the limestone that forms the canyon. Prior to 1929 there were no bridges and the only way to get from one side of the Colorado River canyon to the other was either to cross at Lees Ferry on a raft or drive hundreds of miles around. Until the late 1990s there was only one bridge. Now there are two bridges that are nearly identical in

appearance and one is a great place for a short walk, restroom break and a book and souvenir store.

Prior to either bridge being built, there was actually a ferry at Lee's Ferry that would take people and equipment across the Colorado River. Back then, there wasn't the Glen Canyon Dam and the river levels rose and fell with the waters flowing from the mountains. Sometimes the river was too low to allow the ferry to cross. Other times the river was flowing with such fury, that the ferry could

well capsizize from the high flows and had to wait for safer waters. People would travel down a dugway road to the Colorado River from the east side of the river and take the ferry across. The ferry was originally started by John D. Lee and operated from 1873 to 1929, allowing Mormon Pioneers and others to settle northern Arizona and southern Utah until the original bridge was completed.

When the original Navajo Bridge was completed, in 1929, it was originally called the Grand Can-

yon Bridge since it crossed the upper reaches of Grand Canyon National Park. At that time, it was the highest steel arch in the world. The public soon demanded that the name be changed. Other names proposed included 'Lees Ferry Bridge' and 'Navajo Bridge'. The bridge was renamed the Navajo Bridge in the 1934 and remains today. The original bridge might have been adequate when it was first built but as the 20th Century was coming to an end, it was deemed unsafe and unable to

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handle the increased and heavier modern traffic. Modern road standards call for each lane of traffic to be twelve feet wide. The original bridge was only 18 feet wide, for two lanes and shoulders, which was hardly wide enough for two vehicles to pass much less have room for someone to stop and take photos of the canyon below. Many, including this reporter, used to quickly snap a photo, well aware of the danger while determined to take a photo. Traffic was less then and not that dangerous to take a photo.

The State of Arizona recognized, in the 1980s, that the original bridge was unsafe for both pedestrians and modern-sized vehicles. There were three other alternative locations chosen for the bridge, all down canyon from the current location. One of the alternatives would have eliminated the historic masonry view point. Tribal members adamantly objected to the removal of the historic view point. Environmental groups opposed any other location than next to the existing bridge. At the conclusion of the planning phase, the new bridge was located where it is now, allowing visitors not only to enjoy the historic view point but also be able to see the river and the new

bridge from the original bridge.

In 1995 the new Navajo Bridge was opened to the public, after ten years of planning, design and construction. The original bridge was converted to a pedestrian-only bridge. The new bridge design, while wider and structurally capable of handling modern traffic resembles the original bridge in style and design. A subtle design difference is that on the original bridge the steel structure was held together with rivets. Nowadays riveted connections have been replaced by high strength bolts. One of the more challenging construction requirements called for there to be no rock allowed to fall into the river. All rock had to be removed and was placed nearby along the road east of the bridge. The original bridge was assembled with rivets, a technique that is no longer used in steel construction. High strength bolts and steel girders were used in the new bridge.

The east side of the bridge is on the Navajo Nation and vendors sell native American jewelry, art and crafts under a steel shade structure. On the west side of the canyon, a stone and wood shade structure was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.



*View from the historic Navajo Bridge showing Marble Canyon, the Navajo Nation and Glen Canyon NRA in the background. Photos by Phil Clark.*



*The two Navajo Bridges spanning Marble Canyon that are similar in appearance. The historic bridge, almost 100 years old, is on the right.*

Both sides are worth visiting for different perspectives of the bridges and canyon. Navajo tribal masons helped with the construction of the stone walls at the historic shelter. In the 1930s visitors could take a trail down to a lower level and view the bridge and the river. That trail has long since been obliterated. Relocated bronze plaques from the trail are now easier to see, next to the historic view shelter. As part of the new bridge construction, the Navajo Bridge Interpretive Center and restroom facility was constructed to resemble the stone and masonry techniques used in the original view shelter. Most visitors might find it difficult to tell the difference between the old and new masonry structures.

Today, many drive across Navajo Bridge oblivious to how difficult it had been, less than 100 years ago, to cross the Colorado River and what it took to build a new bridge to handle modern-day traffic while also protecting and preserving the original bridge and

masonry structures. Visitors will enjoy the stop for a short walk across the historic bridge to see views of the Vermillion Cliffs. Sometimes visitors are rewarded with sightings of condors, with their wingspans of almost ten feet, either roosting on the new bridge, or seemingly having fun gliding on air currents. California condors were first reintroduced in the Vermilion Cliffs in 1996. Each condor has a unique number on each wing to help identify them.

The old and new Navajo Bridges span the Colorado River Canyon in the Grand Canyon and are part of US Highway 89A which connects Bitter Springs and Fredonia, Arizona by way of Jacob Lake and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. A great loop road trip can be made by continuing to Kanab and circling around to Page and the Glen Canyon Dam. For more information about Navajo Brige across Marble Canyon, visit [nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/navajobridge.htm](https://nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/navajobridge.htm)

# DESERT ETIQUETTE

By Phil Clark

The Colorado Plateau, including Southern Utah and northern Arizona, has been “discovered.” People from the world over are coming for the spectacular natural beauty. While the high desert of the Colorado Plateau might seem to be tough as rock, strong and resilient, often it is actually extremely fragile. When the natural beauty is damaged, it’s damaged forever - since it takes so long to recover, if it recovers at all. “Leave No Trace” principles

and “The Hiker’s Code” on Utah.com offers guidance to people who might not be sure what to do in the wilds of the high desert. If in doubt, people should ask themselves “would it be OK for someone else to do this in my living room, in my yard or on my house?”

While hiking a trail or driving on a road it is important to stay on that trail or road. Often there are no ‘trails’ but rather routes, especially in canyons. The sandy surface of the desert is often populated by organisms that

create an extremely fragile darker colored crust that is actually alive and takes a really long time to grow, called “cryptobiotic soil”. It is amazingly fragile and should be avoided by following drainages and walking on solid surfaces instead. When on a trail or in a canyon with other people, remember that downhill hikers yield to uphill, and if there isn’t already a road, it’s illegal to create a new one.

With more visitors, comes more human waste and litter. Many places have no restrooms

and more often land managers require visitors to pack all waste out, including human waste, using “wag bags.” If you need to “go” in the desert, don’t leave the paper behind. The white “flowers” last a long time and won’t decompose in this dry climate. Experienced hikers bring a plastic re-sealable bag to store trash and other waste for later disposal. Public lands employees have enough to do without having to pick up after everyone else. It there’s not a proper waste

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receptacle, don't leave it behind.

Many people like to have a campfire. While a fire is fun and romantic, usually it is only really a necessity if it is cold. Southern Utah and northern Arizona are blessed with some of the darkest skies on the planet. Consider not building a fire and gazing at the night sky and the Milky Way. Cooking is easier on a propane camping or backpacking stove. Consider using a fire pan or an existing fire ring, since the fragile landscape can be forever marred by fire.

In many places, including The Wave and Coyote Buttes areas, there are delicate stone fins sticking out between softer layers of sandstone. Even though made of stone, fins are very fragile and delicate. It is best to take plenty of pictures and don't touch the fins, since even just touching them can cause them to collapse. Some surfaces are too steep to climb, and it's illegal to use cleats, microspikes or other traction devices on the formations, even in the snow and ice.

With the higher visitation seems to be an increase in incidents of graffiti. Most people know that it's not OK to scratch initials or other markings on the rock, but some still have the urge to do it. It's illegal, especially if the scratching is done at an ancient native American or other historic inscription. The ancients' work does not need to be 'improved' by scratching the markings up to make them more visible. There is never a reason to shoot them with a gun, either.

Other visitors seem to think it's fun to slap their muddy hands or draw designs on the walls with mud. "The next flash flood will wash them away," they might say. Actually, for the last two decades the American Southwest has mostly been in a drought and flooding hasn't happened as often. The muddy prints last a long time.

Some visitors stack rocks. Rock stacks for the purpose of marking a trail are called cairns.

Cairns are used to help navigate a route by placing them in visible locations, at a distance. A hiker moves from one towards another. Stacking rocks for any other reason does not improve the beauty of the landscape and is an unwelcome intrusion. Stacking rocks in a canyon where there is only one obvious path, down the canyon, is unnecessary. Why not spend the time taking pictures?

Picking wildflowers, while fun and romantic to do, isn't a good idea either. With so many more people visiting southern Utah, if each one of those folks picked a flower, or two, there would soon be few left for others to appreciate and even fewer seeds for another year. Some years produce few flowers at all since some plants require perfect conditions to germinate and grow.

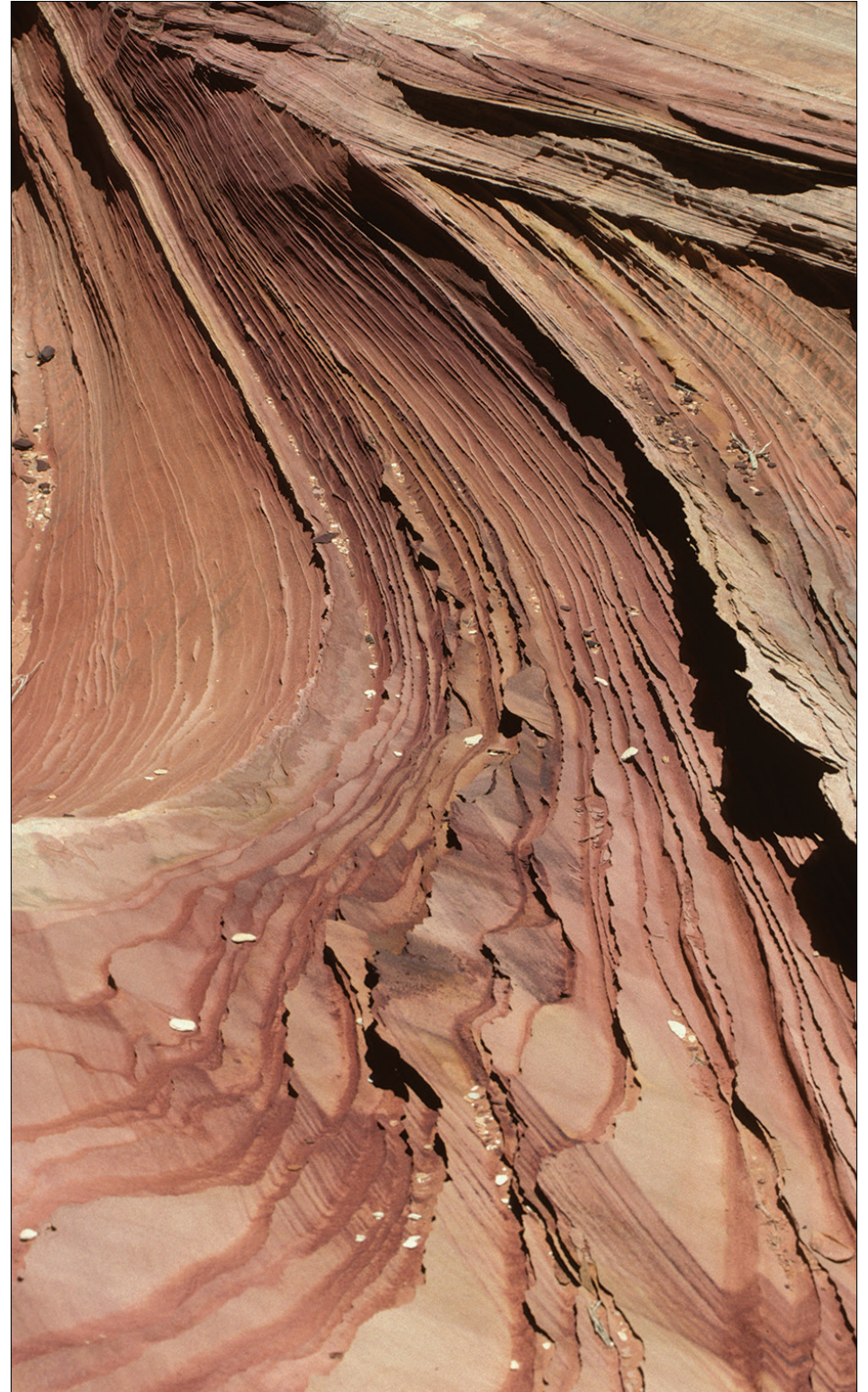
There are many interesting rocks in the desert. Different colors, different shapes. Consider taking a photo instead of a souvenir that will probably end up gathering dust or be forgotten entirely. Remember that it is better to do without that memento so others will enjoy it another time. Why not leave it alone and let others enjoy it?

These are just a few examples of how to respect the beauty of the Colorado Plateau. For many, southern Utah and northern Arizona are "God's Country;" a sort of natural cathedral. Public land management agencies have suffered years of budget and staff cuts. There simply are not enough rangers available to prevent damage to public lands and it's not cool to try to get away with damaging activities. If we all do our part to respect the land and even report violations to the authorities, we can rest assured that our children and their children will be able to enjoy our public lands undisturbed for a long time.

The basic principles of the "Hiker's Code", "Leave no trace" and "Take nothing but pictures" guide those in doing the right

thing for "God's Country". Please remember, before doing what might seem to be a fun or 'normal' activity, ask if it would be OK

for someone to do that to your house, your yard or your living room? For more information, visit: [Int.org/why/7-principles](http://Int.org/why/7-principles)



*Sandstone fins are very fragile. Admire at a distance and take photos instead of touching. Photo by Phil Clark.*



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