

ADVENTURE 2020

Thursday 1:47 PM the Jeep is loaded and I'm heading to pick Dawson up. We have two tents, backpacking equipment and 3 cameras. It's 80 F and supposed to rain. We pulled out of Nik's at 2:15 and the Jeep has 83,090 miles on the odometer. 3:09 in Dayton, and at 3:52 we are 9 miles east of Richmond and traffic is backing up. We waited a while then drove slowly, but after an hour or so we pulled across the median and back-tracked to try and find a parallel route. 4:49 on a back route to Rushville, it's nice and pleasant and we are eating bacon.

6:05 on 74N heading to 465 and we lost a couple hours. 7:07 in Danville with 175 left to Hannibal and we are still eating bacon. IL at 8:32 PM and Hannibal at Love's we drove 524 miles.

By Friday 1:37 PM OH time we are leaving North Platte NE and have driven 1,080 miles. It's a nice drive and I ate a McDonald's while Dawson opted for Subway. 7:36 PM we have driven 1,487 miles and we are 40 miles east of Rock Spring WY, our last destination before turning south. A big dust storm kicked up and it's pretty windy with lots of people pulling off the road.

Saturday 11:00 PM OH time 9:00 UT time we are leaving Vernal with 179 miles left to our pulloff in the San Rafael. It's getting dark and we are eating bacon





Saturday sunrise we took a couple pics at the snake panel pull-off before heading to the Ascending Sheep TH. Explored here a little bit; it's cloudy and looks like rain – very pleasant.





May 30, 2020 6:58 AM 20mm f 5.6 1/40



It was a cool morning hike to the Ascending Sheep. By 9:44 we are driving out – a mildly bumpy maze of trails. I wanted to hike into Washer-Woman but I felt pressed on time and I was anxious to grab some food and head to Glen Canyon. We checked out the TH then headed to Hanksville.

Fueling up someone thought (in error) that we cut them off, so they pouted visibly. We ordered shakes and food but they forgot our fries and we didn't catch it until we were miles down the road. We stopped at the Moki Maiden site then headed toward Hite for gas and then into Glen Canyon. At 11:14 AM it is cloudy and 86F.

The stretch from Hanksville into Glen Canyon and the road to the Maze section of the Canyonlands is familiar country. It is a beautiful area that parallels the Colorado River and is intersected by several side canyons. The area holds secrets and I know the ones poorly kept.

6:13 PM it's 100F. We camp at Sunset Pass and hike into some canyons just exploring. We walked in some nice isolated and beautiful side canyons but no ruins or rock art found.

We are up early and drive to the trailhead to see the Hitchiker Panel. The first section is sandy walking but it's a pleasant morning and perfect for hiking. There are a couple drops into the canyon and we get in quickly. This is my 4th trip so our hike is efficient. Once in the canyon there is some mile rock scrambling and a little sand but nothing that is exceptionally challenging.

We stop at the first site and take some pics of the old panel. I have never been happy with my photos of this ancient site so I brought a telephoto lens and used my tripod. I brought the telephoto with this panel in mind and got some better results. We hike to the second panel then explore up over the panel and try to find new sites, exploring.

Hiking out it is warmer and kicks my butt a bit. We head back to Sunset and try to nap but it's too hot to sleep. It's noon, we pack up and head for Cedar Mesa.



The first drop point angles in from the right and runs down left along the ledge



The panel is center-right along the ledge 7:49 AM



BARRIER CANYON ROCK ART



Leaving Glen Canyon we try to find the Linebacker panel but come up empty. We can see it from the rim, but no path down, maybe another time, on to Cedar Mesa and Mule Canyon.

6:11 PM OH gas at Hite was 4.19 and here was an attendant and it was open. It is 98F and we have driven 2076 miles so far as we head to Cedar Mesa and hope to find a place to sleep. 7:50 we pull into the Natural Bridges National Monument. The restrooms are open and clean, so we clean up a bit and check the weather status that is posted on the door. They usually post a week's worth of weather info and update it every day. The campground is closed but the scenic drive is open so we drove to the overlooks and hiked to the rim in a couple places.

The park was vacant except for one other couple that we talked to. There was covid tension in the air but after I pointed out the ruins they shared their binoculars and were very talkative. It was getting dark so we left NB and headed to the parking lot at the Mule Canyon TH. It is vacant and because it is vacant, kinda spooky. We are Jeep sleeping again. It was a cold night.

6:35 UT we are up and ate a junk food breakfast. It's brisk but will warm up soon. The plan was to backpack in, but the pack felt heavier than I decided to not burden Dawson with it. It was a good decision because toward the end of the trail about 4 miles in the up and down exploration took its toll on us. We didn't make it to the 5 mile ruins, in part because we didn't find a great trail just a climb all the way up and down, which would have meant up and down again. Dawson was whipped but I was fine; really.



STAIRSTEP RUIN – named after the hike up. Handprints and Duck-Heads are visible on left.



Hiking was hot on the floor but cool and breezy on the ledges. At 11:53 AM we walk out of the canyon it's 88F and we hiked about 9 miles. We take off for Blanding and buy supplies; ice and bread and washed the Jeep. Refreshed we head to the Butler Wash, I had a 7 day camp permit and I bought a seasonal hike pass (No 7) and we just needed to find the right spot to setup camp. I had several sites picked out from my Google Earth exploration.

But first we take a hike up to Fishmouth Cave. We found some real nice side ruins and decided to hike all the way into Fishmouth. It was cool and pleasant hiking to the ruins but Fishmouth was a rocky climb and in the sun so it got pretty hot. I stopped just short of the cave and Dawson ran ahead and explored a bit. We get back to the Jeep at 6:23 UT and it is 99F, snack up and head to our target campsite. We pick the one near Pedestal Ruin. Butler Wash seems abandoned. We stayed at this site 3 or 4 days and only saw 2 or 3 vehicles on the wash road.

We setup camp just before dark, and finish off some bacon, and chill. Dawson wants to call his Mom so he heads up a trail toward the top and doesn't get back till after dark. Calling him, he didn't answer and I was just about to go look for him when he replied.

We slept well after a good day, and it was our first time actually sleeping horizontal.





Our camp is closed to Monarch, a short drive and we are hiking at morning twilight. We get to Monarch and it's a very pleasant hike but we get there in time to catch the ruin in full harsh lighting. We explored all the art on the ledges, spend a short time in the ruin and then I explore to the Ovoids and take another pic of this mystery wall.

We get back to the Jeep at 7:50 UT. Next trip to Monarch will be in evening light

11:25 we are hiking to Pedestal Ruin. It's in direct open sunlight and we didn't hike up or explore too much. We drive south and stop to see the Wolfman panel. 10:15 UT and 61F (?)

12:47 we head down lower Johns Canyon road which is a good dirt road about 17 miles long. It is edgy in a couple places. The very end is a little rough, bumpy and it's hot out now. Johns Canyon is a skillet. We explore a little and find some small rock art, but, not what I came to see.

3:50 PM UT 95F we are out and heading up the Moki Dugway. We point the Jeep to the Bears Ears and then right to Blanding. We grab some Subway grub, ice up, gas up and head back to the Butler Wash. We hike up to Cold Spring. The hike was pleasant, and the trip was very rewarding with a nice mix of ruins and rock art. The lighting was good also.



PEDESTAL RUIN



OVOIDS









Wed 6:21 UT 63F we are driving north on the Butler Wash road heading to Bears Ears. This is my first trip in and was not sure what to expect. I was surprised at the greenery and the expanse of the area. There are a lot of campers in this area but they look like long term residents. I found their hideout.

10:33 UT 68F and we have drive 2,424 miles.

It's hilly, dusty but the are is full of trees. Some of them on fire but under control, probably from lightning last night. We find the Dollhouse and explore just a little but didn't find any rock art. We took some photos and head out at 12:44 but drive around and explore some roads but we are not sure where all the treasure is buried.

15:29 UT 82F we drive out of Bears Ears and head to Blanding again. We clean the Jeep and stop at the Visitors Center for wi-fi and a clean real restroom. We stop at the local grocery and buy pop, ice and some corn chips.

8:14 UT we are in camp watching the canyon go dim. We eat a supper of nachos and cheese, pepperoni beef sticks and Airhead.



THE DOLLHOUSE





A BEARS EAR

Thu 6:41 UT the top blows off my deodorant can. We took a team pic at the campsite and headed south on the Butler Wash then up the Comb Wash road to the Moki steps turnaround. We find some rock art but no Moki. On the way in we passed a broken-down biker and offered him a ride but he turned us down choosing to walk out. Leaving we saw him on the return trip with some assistance. We drive to River House and on to the Kachina Panel. I visited River House on 3 occasions and made it there twice. Once sticking the Jeep in a muck hole and requiring a tow out. I still get nervous driving down this trail, but it all went well. This is the first time I made it to the rock art. It was huge but high and the light wasn't perfect. I need to return and camp here.





COMB RIDGE











I got to take some better pics at River House and the little triangle topped granary but moved quickly to the Kachina panel. Driving through the trees we stopped occasionally to inspect some of the rock art at ground level and a lot of that was eroded. There was a little bit of vandalism but the rock art had those unique atonements that I saw in the Spider Woman book written by Carol Patterson.

The Kachina panel is huge and the petroglyphs are high. I tried to position myself to capture a wide panorama but to see it all you have to step back quite a ways. The sunlight was pretty harsh also. I need to be here at sunset and sunrise.

Leaving we visited Bluff and made a stop to see Carol Patterson. We visited a bit, she showed me her camera and explained some of what we saw. Refueled after the visit and headed back to the wash to see Double Deck ruin. Easy to find we searched for sweat houses on the return trip and walked out at the wrong location and had to search for the Jeep as the sun was going down. Thursday was a full day.





FRI 7:40 UT the tent is down, and we drive south on the wash road, head through Bluff and point toward Blanding. We stopped at Sand Island and spent a sunrise there taking pics. Many of these are similar to the Kachina panel, both are along the San Juan River and in the same area. This is very accessible, highly visited, rightfully fenced off, but a great panel and glad we stopped.

9:25 UT 82F and 2,730 miles driven.

We visit the Edge of the Cedars Museum, was is an excellent stop. We bought some souvenirs including some Bo Earls arrowhead knives. I bought an obsidian knife online once and these were very affordable in comparison, so I bought two. When we got home, I gave one to Ayden for his collection.

We head on to Moab and stay in a cabin, take a shower and chill. A storm kicks up and blows through Moab. We drive down along the river and make a couple stops then back to the cabin.

SAT 7:30 it's been raining all night, nice and steady, and just cloudy now. Not a lot of people around we drive along the river and hike to find the Moab Queen. We make the hike but a few dozen yards short it starts to lightning pretty frequently. It's heading our way so we scramble down and get back to the Jeep just in time to beat the storm, but it pours down hard. We drive back and get as far as Moonflower when it starts to hail, so we pull under the big tree at Moonflower and take a break. 20 minutes later, the sky cleared up and we drive to the Island in the Sky.

Our goal is to be at the Needles park headquarters tonight and to meet Bonnie Carson but first I wanted Dawson to see the Canyonlands from the Island perspective.

2:12 UT we head to the Needles and stop to see the gas station ruin at Spanish Valley, Newspaper Rock and the Scorpion Panel. It is 71F and very pleasant.



Large black scribble

SYAN RATO

THE OCCULT FIGURE SOCIETY

1985 FUN HOUSE

Blue graffiti on the side wall



MOAB QUEEN SITE - BEFORE THE STORM



RAIN IN THE CANYONLANDS



SAT 5:40 PM UT we get bad news at the Needles Visitor Center. The rangers seem excited to be back at work and are talking to visitors. The road to Peeakboo is closed. Our permit is to stay there 3 nights but once it is closed it is closed for weeks. I call Bonnie Carson and update her, and she heads to another location. We hike to Chesler Park and back then drive toward home the way we came; Monticello, Blanding and we stop at Hog Springs for a late snack. Then to Hanksville and we get to the Great Gallery trailhead about midnight. For all that highway travel outside of the town traffic I think we saw one car and one motorcycle. It is eerily apocalyptic due to Covid.

There is one truck in the parking lot with a tent out. Another Jeep sleep night tonight.

SUN 5:00 AM UT we are up and ready to hike to the gallery.













SUN NOON – 74F we head north and wander toward home via 9 Mile Canyon. I have heard only good things about this canyon but it wasn't quite what I expected and wasn't prepared to stop and hike. It is raining again so we bale on this and head toward Vernal with a goal of getting to Rock Springs WY.

We fuel up in Vernal, get snacks, and head north up the mountain. About half way up as the sun goes down, the canyons are tiered with what looks like smoke. I assume there is a fire ahead, but it turns out to be snow. And then the pass closes heading to Rock Springs. After considering our options, we head back to Vernal and surrender to the weather in a Holiday In Express.

We decide to take a different route back, route 40 which heads east toward Cheyenne. This is the direction my GPS keeps trying to take us, so we give it a shot. It is 49F cloudy and pleasant and the drive is very nice but seems longer. At 7:45 UT we hit the Colorado state line and we reach route 80 at Fort Laramie at 11:20 UT at 80F. We head to Cheyenne. 3:22 we reach North Platte and it's 89F. I drive until 3:00 AM and reach the Love station in Decater IN and sleep for 3 hours. By 7:31 OH it is a light rain and we are 344 miles from home. We hit OH at 12:07 96F driving on a 2-lane State Route 36, just because I hate the traffic on the highway.

2:47 PM we are home and try to find a place to eat, but ever place is Covid closed; boarded up, no virus allowed so we get a Wendy burger and eat it in the parking lot. I drop Dawson off and head home; 5,302 miles driven.















RYAN RATS

THE





