

ADVENTURE 2013

THE YEAR OBAMA CLOSED THE NATIONAL PARKS
AND WENT GOLFING



- **Some notes were lost**
- **Sunday 10/6 2013 First trip with my own Jeep, with Meggan leaving from NC**
- We entered Utah from the south, but the road from Amarillo to Mule Canyon took a long time. We were running a tad late, so we didn't drive into Monument Valley thinking that we may return on the trip home. We drove through the Valley of the Gods looking for a BLM campsite, saw some, but most had people already camped out. We looked down Cigarette Springs Road and Snow Canyon and were encouraged that these roads were open. They were talking about possibly opening up the parks soon, but that most BLM sites were still open, and so far so good. We slept at the Mule Canyon rest-stop, it was cold and uncomfortable but we had an out-house.





10/7 - We were up at 3:00 AM, couldn't sleep due to the cold so just headed towards Hanksville. Our plan was to head into the Maze, if it was open. We stopped at Hog Springs to find the Moki Maiden. We walked down the valley for about an hour, found the spring and saw gas bubbling up, smelled like sulfur. We walked down some side canyons but never did see the Moki Maiden, so we headed out. A woman was cleaning the restrooms, and we talked to her briefly and she asked if we were here to see the Maiden, and she then pointed us in the right direction. We were in Hanksville by 11:00 AM and we then drove into Goblin Valley, and were out of there by 7:00 PM. We were looking for the cave there, never found it. We did take some sunset 360 panoramas.

This night we camped in Hanksville, it was the first time I got to lay down since leaving. My legs cramped so badly that I couldn't sleep. Tried to walk it off, but seemed to make it worse. First and last time this has happened to me.

10/8 – Up at 6:00 to see Factory Butte sunrise at 7:30. We gassed up and headed to the Butler Wash and the Comb Reef and got there about 11:30. We found the official Butler Wash ruins at noon and the dirt trail heading south down the Comb side, realized we wanted to be on the other side, and reversed ourselves. We found Monarch Cave at noon and spend 3 hours there. The Jeep was getting pretty muddy. We went to Bluff to refuel and Meggan didn't buy the Indian basket. We got back to Hanksville at 6:30 PM and watched the sunset at Factory Butte from 7:00 to 8:00 PM.



10/9 – Took down the tent, couldn't find my tripod. I realized I left at Factory Butte, so we back-tracked heading out at 8:00 AM. Found the tripod, headed to Escalante. This was supposedly open, but evidently only to out of state tourists. They stopped us, but then let us in. The National Parks were still closed, the governor of Utah was threatening to open the parks anyway. We setup a camp right in Escalante, it was crowded, at 10:50. We then set out for the Devil's Garden, found it took some pics, headed to the end of Hole In The Rock Road. It was the worst wash-boarded road I have ever been on, shook the Jeep to pieces. Something to do with tires and wheelbase, but I was getting passed by kids on bikes. No smooth speed to be found. We made it to Coyote Canyon area and we hiked to find the Zebra tunnel, found it, couldn't climb into it, and I got a mark on my elbow for my effort. It never went away, is still there. I figure it is some kind of freaky Utah bacteria living in my left elbow now. It left a mark. We went back to camp, and it rained all night.



10/10 – Still raining. On the road at 7:30 we were heading back toward Canyonlands stopping at Cathedral Valley seeing the Temples of Sun and Moon, dark skies and dirt roads pushed us out a little early, but didn't rain much. Back to Hanksville at noon, restocked, set camp, headed to Little Wild Pony, took some lightning shots. Headed back to Hanksville, so a Back-Way Highway and drove it up into the Henry Mountains. A sign said that Eagle Landing was on top, so we found it, it was an airport. It was cold, but a nice view. Headed back to camp. Stopped & got gas, the attendant said that they were going to open the parks tomorrow.

10/11 – Fueled up and headed to the Canyonlands Maze area at 7:00 AM. 3355 miles driven on this trip so far. Jeep full and 7 gallons in tanks. Met the ranger on the road to Hans Flat, he said that it would be another day before the parks open. We head back to Cedar Mesa and Cigarette Springs road. We can't find a clear trail, to anywhere, we walk around at a few stops but pack it in and head to the Butler Wash and Split Level Ruin. We find it, talk to some crazy guys camping out, it's about 1:30 PM and we spend about 3 hours in this area. To Bluff for gas then back to camp in Hanksville; racking up the miles.



10/12 – 5:45 showered and headed to Hans Flat, we get to the park entrance at 6:30 and at the ranger station at 8:30. It's a long dirt road. 9:00 heading toward the Maze, new territory, one of the objectives of the trip. 10:30 we hit the top of the Flint Trail. Meggan get's out and looks downhill, the rule is that whoever is going down, has to backup if there is a problem. We head down the Flint trail, it is rougher than I expected. Worried that I can make it back out from here, or anywhere else. We never had to climb out of a canyon before. We hit the Maze turnoff at 12:45 and turn left to the overlook. It is equally rocky, rough, and ... appears unpredictable. We keep heading down, lots more loose rock, eroded edges, sharp drop-offs and we bottomed out on the frame 2 times. The Jeep is making noises I never heard before, possible the frame flexing. We make it no problem, at our campsite by 1:45 PM setup our camp and enjoy the afternoon taking photos, panoramas and time lapse with the Go-Pro. The wind blows our tent down, we put rocks in the corners to hold it down.





The Chocolate Drops – Canyonlands National Park – Maze District





10/13 – 9:48 packed to head out. At 12:15 we make it back up the first set of obstacles, took us over 2 hours, some of the obstacles were steep and twisty. Meggan had to scout ahead and walked up some of the hills. Coming up the last obstacle, our tailgate carrier breaks off the back, welds broken, too much flexing I guess. We pack what we can and shove the carrier aside, but then remember we have to carry everything out, and they would probably fine us if we didn't so we hillbilly the thing back into the hitch receiver and secure it with ropes. Everything that was on the back, is now in the back seat. We turn left and head to Waterhole Flat, it is from here that we go to our second destination, the Wall. We see a ranger, he tells us that we can drop our carrier at Waterhole and pick it up on the way out.

We head toward the Wall; new territory, and the first sign is a warning of rough trails ahead. They were. After getting in I worry that the carrier would have ever made it in, or out. We would be 20 miles deep and then broke. In retrospect, we are lucky it broke when it did. At the Wall camp by 5:45, there is no dirt, it is all rocks. As soon as we setup the tent, crazy wind blows through, a cold wind, it knocks our tent down, Meggan is inside trying to hold it down. I was outside throwing rocks inside, and then it started with the lightning. We knocked the tent down, packed, and slept inside the Jeep watching the lightning storm and taking lightning photos. It was thundering and raining a lot, and I being the worrier that I am, get concerned that the road out will be impassable.

In the morning, no signs of a storm, dry as a bone. We hike to some of the feature rocks in the area. We start our exit at 9:20, the drive is half the fun, and due to our lost reservations we could only stay one night. Problem, never saw another soul in the park, and probably could have stayed as long as we wanted. 7 Hours later we are on pavement on route 95 in the Glen Canyon and heading towards Moab. We take the route through Hanksville having driven 4,000 miles and we arrive at Moab at 6:45 PM. We cleaned the Jeep, the tent, and did some laundry.







The Land of Standing Rocks – Canyonlands National Park – Maze District





10/14 – 5:45 breakfast at Denny’s. We drive to Island in the Sky and hike up Aztec Butte. It is very vertical hike, and the rim trail is pebbly. We find the ruins, take some photos, Meggan isn’t happy with the trail, she worried that I will fall. She is supposed to protect me. From Aztec Butte you can see Mesa Arch, and the parking lot full to take that great Mesa Arch photo that everyone has to have. I think it is silly, but I already have mine. We drive to Gemini Bridges, wanting to take a panorama on the bridge. It’s pretty busy, so we hike to the back side and look around, then take off. We head down Long Canyon to Jug Handle Arch and then onto Moab. We go shopping and look for a coat, it’s cold out and I have been freezing my ass off regularly. Can’t find a coat I like and won’t pay 200 for the one I do like. We drive to Poison Spider trail, head up, but it’s choppy and I am exhausted. We try to find a good sunset location so we drive to Fisher Towers, it’s a nice drive, the sky is colorful. We head back to camp at 7:00 PM and I am crapped out by 7:50 PM.





10/15 – On the road at 5:50 and at the Needles ranger station by 7:15 AM. We take a drive to the Needles Overlook because we have some time to spare, it is freezing out. We stop at Newspaper Rock for a pee break and photo. We drive to the ranger station and inquire about Davis Canyon, with good news, the road is dry. We drive down the trail looking for ruins, but don't see any. We take a wrong fork, get lost, reverse course and just drive in the river bed for as long as we can. The trail runs in and out of the river in several places. We find the back entrance to the Canyonlands at noon and start our hike to the 5 Faces. We spot some small ruins, scout the area, and find the 5 faces but it is late, and the sun paints a shadow across the faces, too hard to photograph, more light coming our way, so we explore a little more and then Jeep out. We head back towards Moab it is 2:15. We hit 4500 miles, head on to Fisher Towers for sunset. We are back at camp at 7:30 PM cleanup and organize.





The Five Faces – Canyonlands National Park – Needles District





The Moki Maiden – Glenn Canyon

10/16 – 7:00 we head back to Davis Canyon to photograph the 5 faces in the correct light. We hit the trailhead road which is at the split between Davis and Lavender Canyons and are at the 5 Faces trail by 9:00 AM. We are out at 10:30 with our photos. That's the last stop, from the 5 Faces trail we head south and then east to NC, headed home by 11:10. We are in Gallup NM by 4:30 PM, Albuquerque at 6:30 PM.

10/17 - Leaving OK at 7:00 AM 5451 miles traveled. Little Rock at 1:40 PM. By 9:00 PM I am napping at a roadside rest, 658 miles to home. We are home the next morning, drove 6,845 miles.

