

HIKANATION

UTAH



A GUIDE TO HIKANATION - UTAH 1983

The purpose of this guide is to point out some natural and human history and as much practical information as possible about some of the most remote and interesting country in the United States. You can follow the route descriptions, which are divided into eight segments of about a week each, with a Utah highway map, although we recommend that all hikers carry a topographic map such as Utah multipurpose maps #5 and #1 or the USGS 1:250,000 series (Cedar City, Escalante, Salina, Cortez). From west to east, you will be hiking through the Dixie National Forest (in four separate units), Zion, Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks, the Henry Mountains, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the Dark Canyon Primitive Area, and the Abajo Mountains of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. You will also have the opportunity, on rest days, to make some side excursions by motor vehicle.

Our hike will literally follow the footsteps of the legendary Anasazi, their Indian successors the Ute and Navajo, the obscure mountain men, famous explorers, Mormon pioneers, and celebrated nineteenth century geologists like John Wesley Powell and Clarence Dutton. However, the land itself exposes over 325 million years of geologic time, and the rock records all the eras of life on earth.

The incredible beauty of the land can make us forget that canyons, deserts and mountains are indifferent to human life. Earlier explorers have met their fate here, or come very close, and even today it is possible to re-create their experiences if one isn't careful. So, at the risk of stating the obvious, a few general safety suggestions. With great distances between towns, plan your food and gear inventory well. Temperatures in excess of 100^oF in the low country may cause a few recommended night hikes. Water may sometimes be your most precious possession. Canyon country may present special hazards in the form of sheer drop-offs and some rock scrambling; we have found it helps to mentally recall the probable time (days) to the nearest hospital before doing something risky. Also, flash flooding can occur in a narrow canyon as a result of a cloudburst far away in a tributary, so avoid camping in the streambed. By hiking the mountains

and high plateaus we'll escape some of the summer heat, but in exchange we shall receive mosquito problems of the first magnitude. Also deer flies, which attack until they sample your blood, you kill them, or both. Carry a strong insect repellent. At altitudes of 10,000 feet the air contains only one-third the oxygen you get at sea level, so uphill hiking will be a test of lung power until you're in condition. Finally, water purification is always recommended; if you do not purify (or better yet, boil) all drinking water you run the risk of being colonized by micro-organisms.

Well, that's enough introduction for anybody, maybe too much. Despite the hardships, the 1980 hikers looked back at Utah as one of the most rewarding states of the trip, and you will too, we promise.

⌘ 1ST HIKE ⌘

Entering the state of Utah from Crestline, Nevada on Route 75 we also arrive in the Dixie National Forest. "Utah's Dixie", the area around St. George, is where Brigham Young ordered the establishment of cotton plantations in the 1860's. Along Route 120 to the Mormon town of Enterprise, you will see the intensive irrigation farming that was first established by pioneers who came here from Salt Lake City. Take the opportunity to meet people hereabouts, and you may be rewarded with large helpings of hospitality. After Enterprise, we continue on country roads past the old townsites of Holt and Hamblin, then the settlements of Pinto and New Harmony. Route 144 out of New Harmony affords a view of the Hurricane Cliffs and passes the site of Fort Harmony en route to an underpass where we will cross Interstate 15. Two miles south from here is our destination, the Park Service ranger station. The Interstate crossing also marks our intersection with the return route of the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition, led by two Franciscans in 1776 with the aim of finding a route from Santa Fe to California. Although they decided to turn back on a southerly route along what is now the Utah-Arizona border, the friars were the first recorded European explorers in the Colorado Plateau area and nearly got as far as the Great Salt Lake. The Kolob Canyons section of Zion National Park will be our first rest day, with rides into Cedar City and possibly to Zion Canyon, the main part of the park.

⌘ ALTERNATE ROUTE ⌘

Six miles before Enterprise, turn south on Forest Service Road 006 to Enterprise Reservoir, then east on roads and trails through the Pine Valley Mountains. Mountain Meadow, near where you will cross Route 18, was the site of one of the darker moments of Mormon history when fanatics from Cedar City massacred 128 emigrants who were passing through on their way to the west coast in 1857. Forest Service roads and trails will bring you out to New Harmony. This is a very scenic side trip, although be prepared for deep snow in places and allow an extra day for this route. Map and compass will be a necessity.

⌘ 2ND HIKE ⌘

What geologists call the Basin and Range Province, or the Great Basin, abruptly ends at the west edge of the Plateau Province, or Colorado Plateau, which is marked here by the Hurricane Cliffs. We will hike for the next several months in this region of generally higher elevations and elaborate topography. The Kolob Canyons are made up of Navajo sandstone primarily, which is a thick bed of fossil sand dunes tinted red by deposits of iron. The hike up a paved road to the Lee Pass trailhead will be your first exposure to the monumental "red rock" scenery of giant cliffs formed by the spalling and splitting off of homogeneous slabs of sandstone. The trail along Timber Creek will take you south past Timber Top and Gregory Butte, then eastward and upstream along La Verkin Creek. If possible, take the one mile spur trail to Kolob Arch, a spectacular natural bridge at the head of a perpendicular-walled box canyon. A little less than a mile past this trail junction, another trail leads off to the left up Hop Valley. Do not take this trail if you plan to make Kolob Reservoir the same day as the main group! We will continue straight ahead along La Verkin and then Willis Creek, and then out of the park on a steep trail and road to the Markagunt Plateau and Kolob Reservoir. Be prepared for numerous stream crossings on this route, most of which require wading.

Atop the plateau, you will encounter an abrupt change of scenery with large stands of aspen, frequent outcrops of volcanic scoria and lava, and

numerous flocks of sheep (there are upwards of 30,000 up there). There are multiple routes that will take you through this area to Navajo Lake and thence to Duck Creek Forest Service campground, our next rest stop. Avoid posted private property unless the landowner has given permission to pass through. Some of the route is on stock driveways, which can be confusing to follow without a compass and map.

Rest day activities will include rides to Cedar City and tours of Brian Head, an 11,315 foot volcano which is responsible for covering large areas with lava. A volcanic dam created Navajo Lake, the source of the Virgin River which carved Zion Canyon. Cedar Breaks National Monument, on the road to Brian Head, is a huge amphitheater eroded out of the limestone Wasatch Formation. Here grow some of the oldest living things on earth, the bristlecone pine; the oldest at Cedar Breaks has been dated at 1,600 years. The area of the Markagunt Plateau was first mapped in 1872 by the Wheeler and Powell Surveys, predecessors of the USGS.

⌘ 3RD HIKE ⌘

This segment of the route will take us to Bryce Canyon National Park, via Utah 14 to Long Valley Junction. Anyone who prefers to hike the highway can turn north here along U.S. 89 to Hatch and go to Bryce on Route 12. We will go south two miles from the store at Long Valley Junction, then southeast on a graded road to the settlement of Alton. Forest Service roads and trails lead from here into the Dixie National Forest again, and along the East Fork Sevier River to Ruby's Inn, our rest day campsite. As an alternate route, you can bushwack into the southern end of the national park and follow the park road north to camp. However, no camping is allowed in the park without a permit. Bryce Canyon isn't a single canyon, but the escarpment of Wasatch formation rock which marks the eastern edge of the Paunsagunt Plateau. The fancifully eroded cliffs have proved to be a major tourist attraction, so the trails tend to be crowded in midsummer. We will set aside a day for day hikes and rides in the park; the trails of over five miles in length, such as the Fairyland Trail, can take you away from the heaviest concentrations of visitors.

⌘ 4TH HIKE ⌘

One mile north of Ruby's Inn is a graded road we will take to Widstoe, an abandoned townsite. From there a hike up Birch Creek onto the Aquarius Plateau near Griffin Top, and following old Forest Service trails to the vicinity of Barker Reservoir and east to Blue Spruce Forest Service campground. This high plateau country is extremely beautiful, with incredible long-distance views from the forest clearings. These clearings can cause you to lose the trail sometimes, so watch for rock cairns too. Our rest day will be in Escalante, at the foot of the plateau, with rides to and from camp.

⌘ 5TH HIKE ⌘

Continuing along the top of the Aquarius Plateau, here called Boulder Mountain, we eventually hit Route 117, the Boulder-Grover Road, and follow it north to Oak Creek Forest Service campground. Descending along the creek, we enter a red rock canyon and cross into Capitol Reef National Park. Oak Creek Canyon continues out of the park, where there is a small irrigation dam, and on to Sandy Ranch Junction on B.L.M. land. This campsite has a commanding view of the Henry Mountains, the last-discovered mountain range in the lower 48 states. Rides to the Capitol Reef visitor center and to Torrey will be available on the rest day, and a plan to shuttle everyone to the Capitol Reef National Park campground for an off-route rest day camp is being considered.

⌘ 6TH HIKE ⌘

From Sandy Ranch Junction we will follow roads established by the Bureau of Land Management across the desert to Mount Ellen, and across its southern flank to Utah Highway 95. This 11,522 foot peak is the highest in the Henry Mountains; as a highly recommended side trip the climb to the top may reward you with views of the canyon country and the large bison herd that roams free on these slopes in the summer. G.K. Gilbert, a member of the Powell Survey in the 1870's, was the first geologist to advance a theory of the formation of the Henry Mountains, the now commonly accepted

one that they were originally underground reservoirs of molten igneous rock, that later cooled and were exposed by erosion of the overlying strata of sandstone and limestone. The canyon country, which surrounds the Henrys and similar "laccolithic" mountains in this area, originated because of the uplift and erosion that accompanied their formation.

Leaving the pine and aspen groves of Mt. Ellen for the broiling highway and redrock North Wash, we will camp at Hog Springs rest area and go on into Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and down to Lake Powell. You will have the opportunity to be shuttled from the Colorado River bridge to Hite Marina, a Park Service campground that will be the rest day site. Be sure to look for the Indian pictograph at Hog Springs, called the "Moki Queen" although we may never know what the artist had in mind.

If there is sufficient interest, for approximately \$7.00 per person we can arrange to take hikers by boat up the Colorado arm of Lake Powell to the mouth of Dark Canyon. The trip is scenic in the extreme, with a chance to go swimming in some canyon pools. Also, you will have the option of camping at the mouth of the canyon and hiking the challenging lower section of Dark to rejoin the group further up the next day.

⌘ 7TH HIKE ⌘

The hike to Dark Canyon Primitive Area from the highway will take us across about 12 miles of waterless mesa, so a cache of water cans will be established along the route. We will gather at the canyon rim to join forces for the rock-scrambling descent into Dark Canyon, and camp once we reach the bottom. The hikers that come up from the lake will rejoin here. It will be five hiking days to Gooseberry Guard Station in the Manti-La Sal National Forest, the next outpost of civilization; for most of the way, no evidence of man will be visible except thousand-year-old petroglyphs and Anasazi ruins. At Horse Pasture Canyon, marked by a spring and an old cowboy cabin, we ascend out of the vast canyon system to camp at Gooseberry. Rest day rides will be available to Blanding and the Edge of the Cedars Museum, which contains exhibits of the ancient Anasazi culture. The canyon wilderness, with its pocket paradises and overpowering cliffs, and perhaps a flash flood, will definitely impress.