

Western Road Trip Newsletter



Same view as yesterday, but the weather is a little different.

Day 6
Thursday
October 31st
Cortez, CO
To
Mesa Verde

Stats

64.4 miles today
1737 total miles this trip
Spent the day in Mesa Verde National Park

Weather

High Temp: 43
Low Temp: 25 so far
Conditions: Party sunny

“Why should a little closed gate stop me?”

Happy Halloween

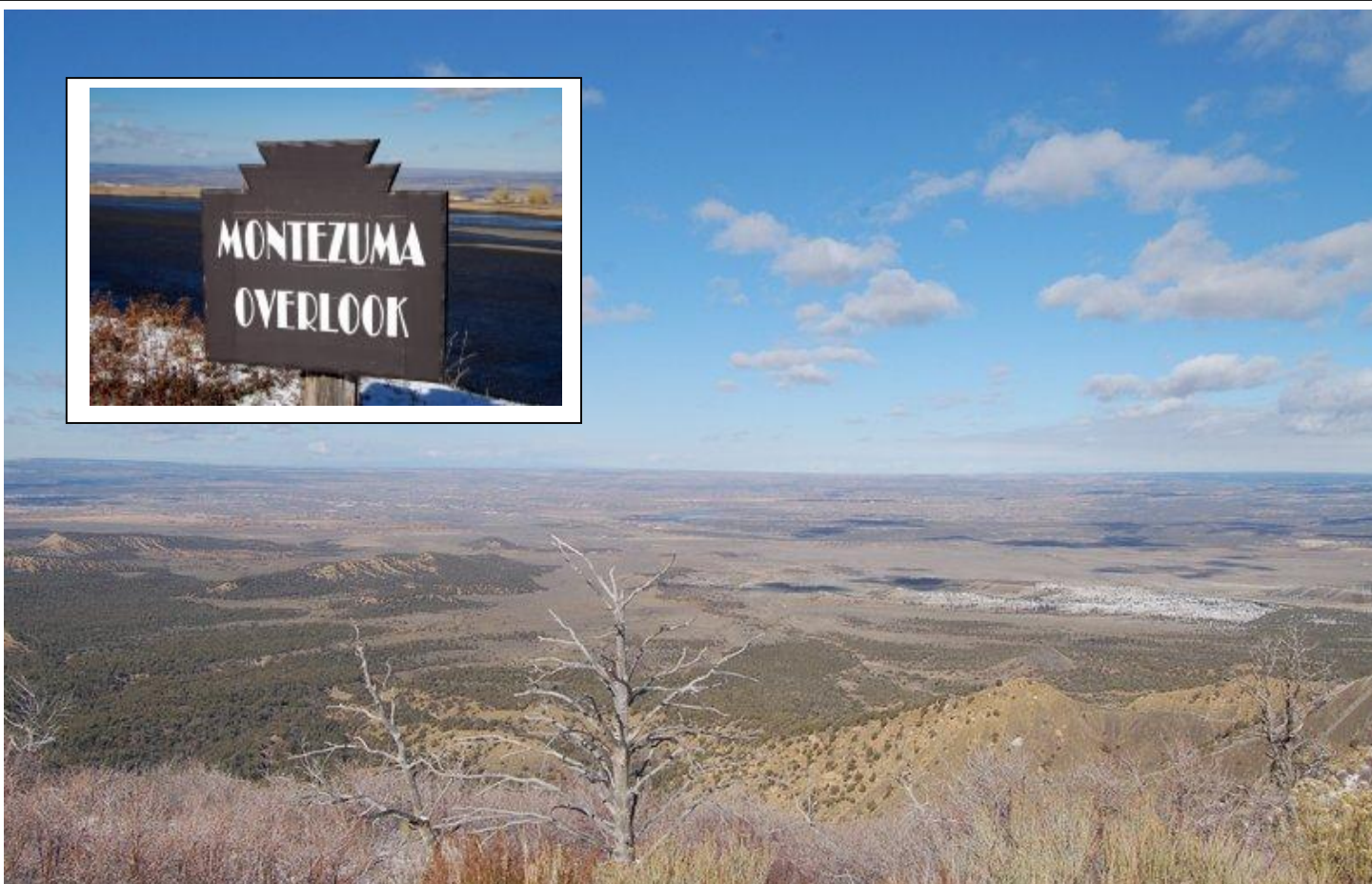
I accomplished almost all the hiking goals I had for today, believe it or not. I left the hotel in Cortez about 9:30 after indulging in their continental breakfast. I made a stop at the gas station across the street to replenish the ice in my cooler. Some of the original was still left. Good thing I have the cooler, it keeps my food from freezing.

Drove back to Mesa Verde, bought my tour ticket for Cliff Palace, paid my entrance fee and headed for Morefield Campground. It took me about an hour to find a spot, pay and get set up.



I saw some cacti near the Santa Fe Train tracks, but they were dead.

I took about a hundred photos today. They total about 10.9 MB, even after reducing them to a smaller size, which is probably too much to send all in one newsletter. So I hope no one minds if I break them up into groups. They won't be fancy and there will probably be only a caption if any comment at all.



KNIFE EDGE ROAD

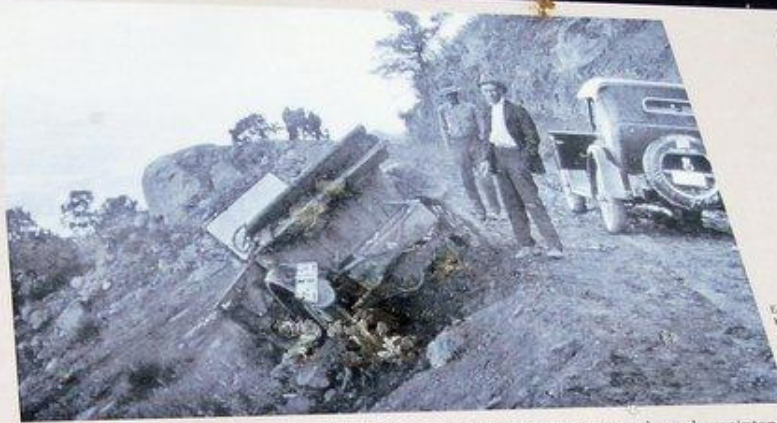


Much like today, work crews in the 1930s were kept busy clearing the park road.
— Photo courtesy of Denver Public Library — Western History Department

“Knife Edge” was an apt description for this precarious access into Mesa Verde.



Clearing the Knife Edge Road in the 1920s.
— Photo courtesy of National Park Service



Early travel on the Knife Edge Road was perilous at best.
— Photo courtesy of National Park Service, 1927

In the early 1900s, America's obsession with the automobile reached Mesa Verde National Park and quickly influenced the park's development. In 1914, a narrow dirt road was completed into the park. Two Studebakers, two Fords, one Reo, and one Hupmobile were the first automobiles to make the arduous journey from Mancos to what is now the Park Headquarters. The trip took three hours and visitors were charged \$1.00 per car.

Improvements and yearly maintenance became a necessity on the narrow park road. Eventually, the Knife Edge Road was surfaced with asphalt. This section of the road was abandoned in 1957 when the Morefield-Prater tunnel was constructed.

© Interpretive Design, Orange, CO

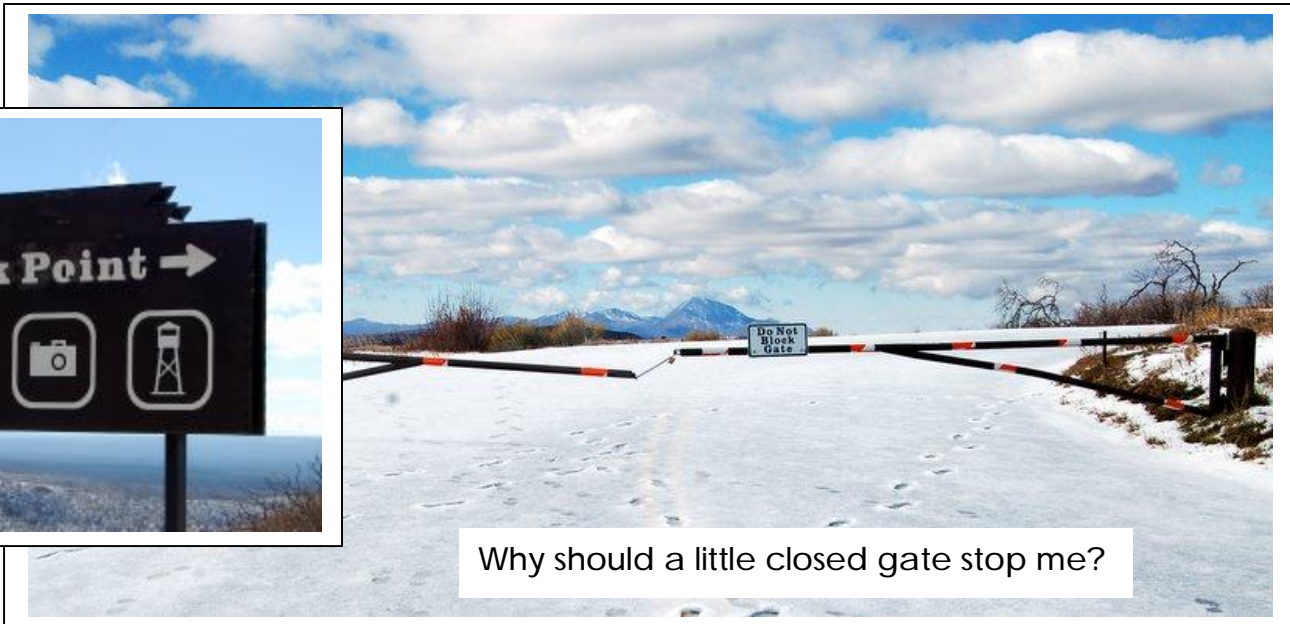
PREVIOUS
A.D. 550

PRESENT
A.D. 750

Historic Site
A.D. 1100

Old Pueblo
A.D. 1300

Present
A.D. 1900



Why should a little closed gate stop me?

Hiking

Mesa Verde National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Park Point Trail

This short, gentle trail leads to Park Point, the highest point in Mesa Verde National Park at 8,572 feet (2,613m) above sea level. Park Point offers spectacular views of the surrounding area. On a clear day, four states are visible: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.

Distance is 0.2 miles (0.3 km) round-trip to the fire tower.
Elevation change is 32 feet.
Time required is 15 to 30 minutes.

For Your Safety

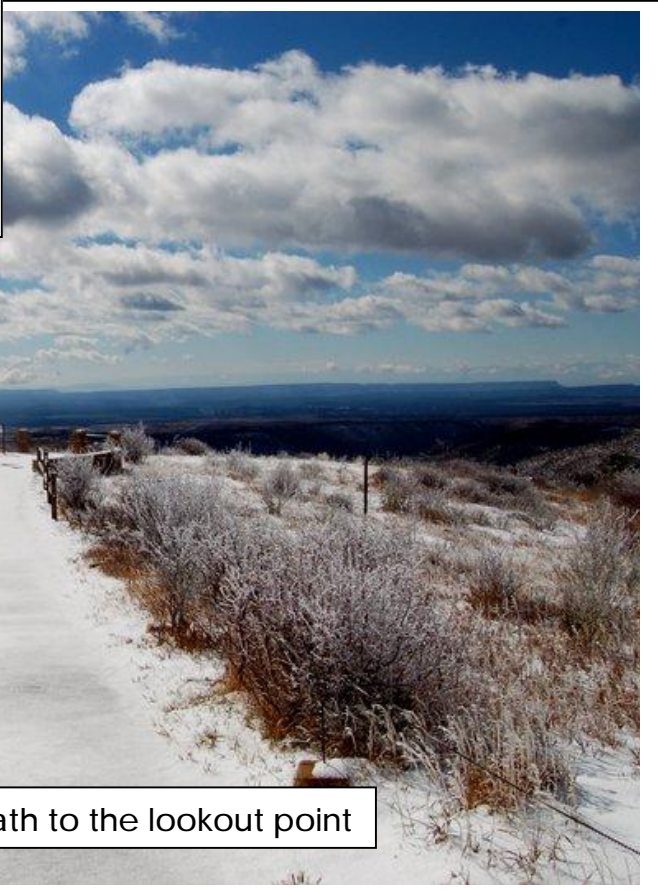
- Dehydration and altitude fatigue are common problems at Mesa Verde. Drink water and rest often.
- Please respect wildlife by observing them from a distance.
- Pets are not allowed on trails.
- Trails are day-use only. You must be out of the trail area by sunset.
- While hiking, remain on the trail and avoid walking along unstable cliff edges.

Please respect these places by leaving archeological sites, artifacts, plants, and animals undisturbed for all those who will follow you.

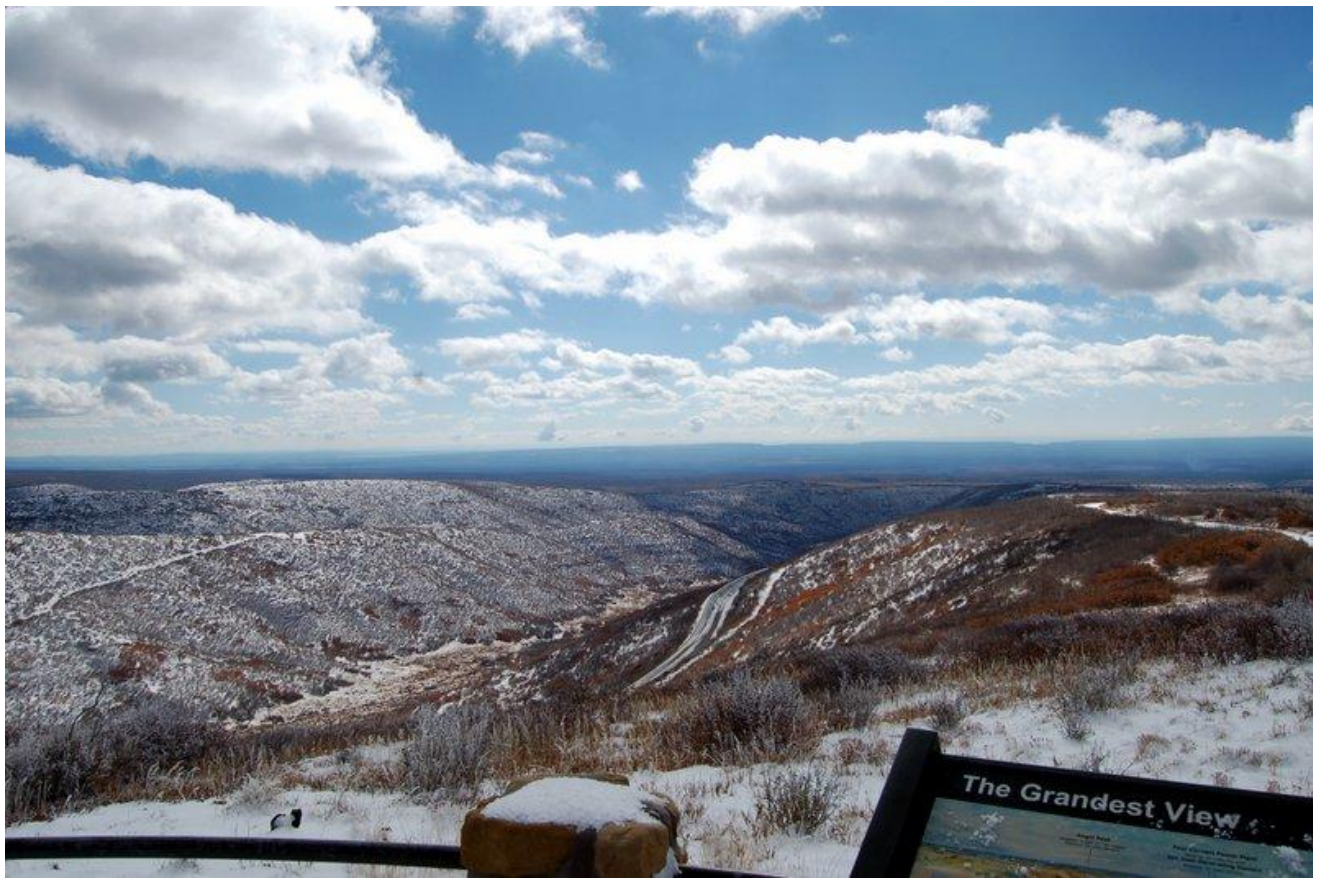
North Overlook
Park Point Road
Park Point Fire Tower
South Overlook
The Knife Edge

Sleeping Ute Mountain

This is the road that was closed. I had to hike to the parking area, then hike to the highest point.

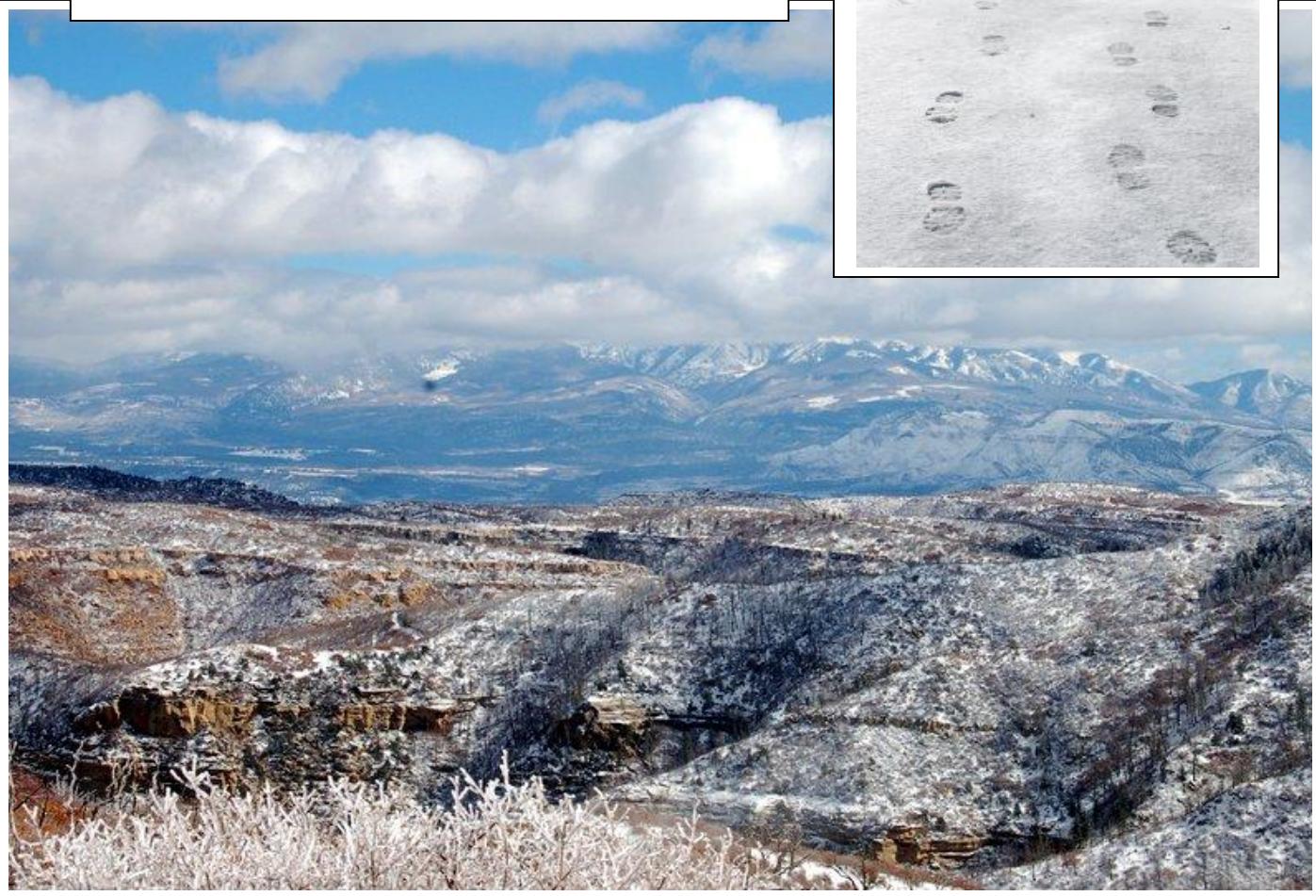
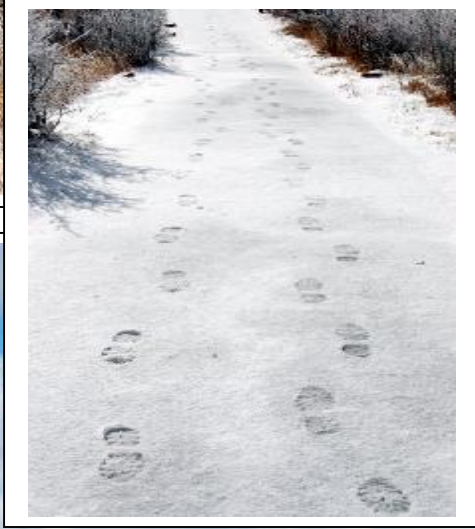


Below are four views from Park Point





Mine are the only footprints – down and back



My lunch time view



This is the Far View Center that is now closed



WETHERILL MESA ROAD
VEHICLE RESTRICTION
MAX WT. 8000 GVW
MAX LGTH 25 FT.
12MI. WINDING ROAD
& STEEP GRADES

The Wetherill Mesa Road is closed from September 2nd to May 24th



This will be the end of episode I: A morning in Mesa Verde
Check your in box for episode II: The Mesa Top Loop Drive