

Western Road Trip Newsletter



This is supposed to be the main attraction for today

Day 7
Friday

November 1st

Day 2

In

Mesa Verde

Stats

73.8 miles today

1811 total miles this trip

Spent the day in Mesa Verde National Park

Weather

High Temp: 50

Low Temp: COLD

Conditions: Sunny

"The little electric one was just not doing the job"

Hello to My Family and Friends

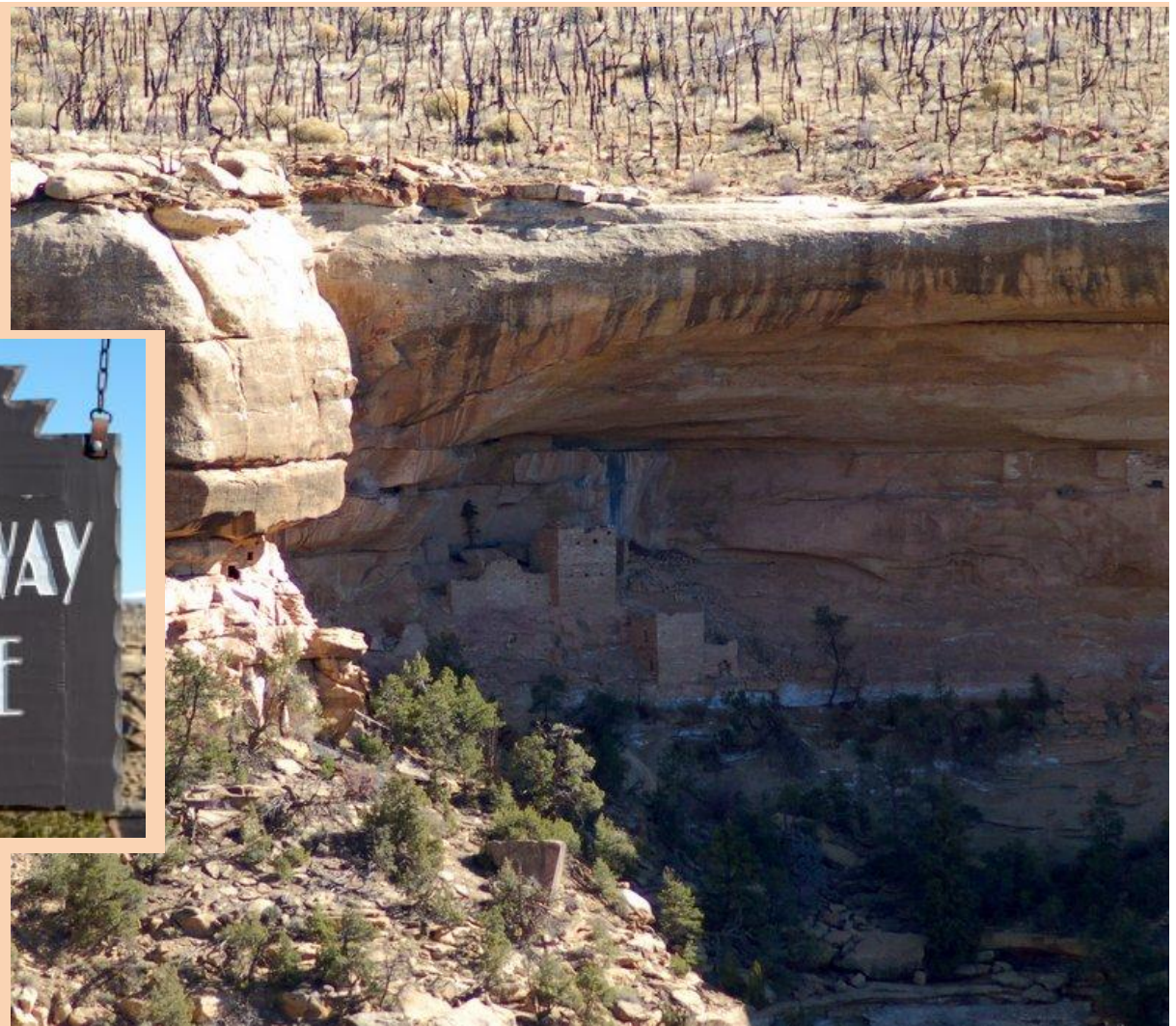
Today actually starts last night. Well, since it was after midnight I guess it technically is today. And I know you are receiving this a day late. Anyways, I was lying in bed reading when I suddenly heard a coyote howl. Then it was a pack, at least 4 or 5 different howls all at the same time. It went on for about 5 minutes as the sound moved from my 10:00 to my 1:00 position. I think they must have been chasing something, probably a deer.

This is the first night it got really cold. I slept in insulated socks, pajama pants, a t-shirt and a stocking cap. After all, about 90% of the heat that escapes from your body does it through the top of your head. I even had gloves on while I was reading my book.

This was also the first night I fired up my new propane heater, the little electric one was just not doing the job. The heater worked great. Since I worked on the 4 episode newsletters for 5-6 hours with the heater going on high and suffered no ill effects, I decided it was ok to leave it on while I slept. Believe me, there is enough air seepage in the camper to not worry about the heater. I did turn it down to low for the night.

I made a bacon & cheese pie iron sandwich with a sausage patty for breakfast. I did have a little problem at dinner last night. I found that the maple syrup in the bottom of my Grub Hub must have leaked a little, getting the potatoes, jellies and pizza sauce a little sticky. With only cold water from the restroom it was not the easiest mess to clean up.

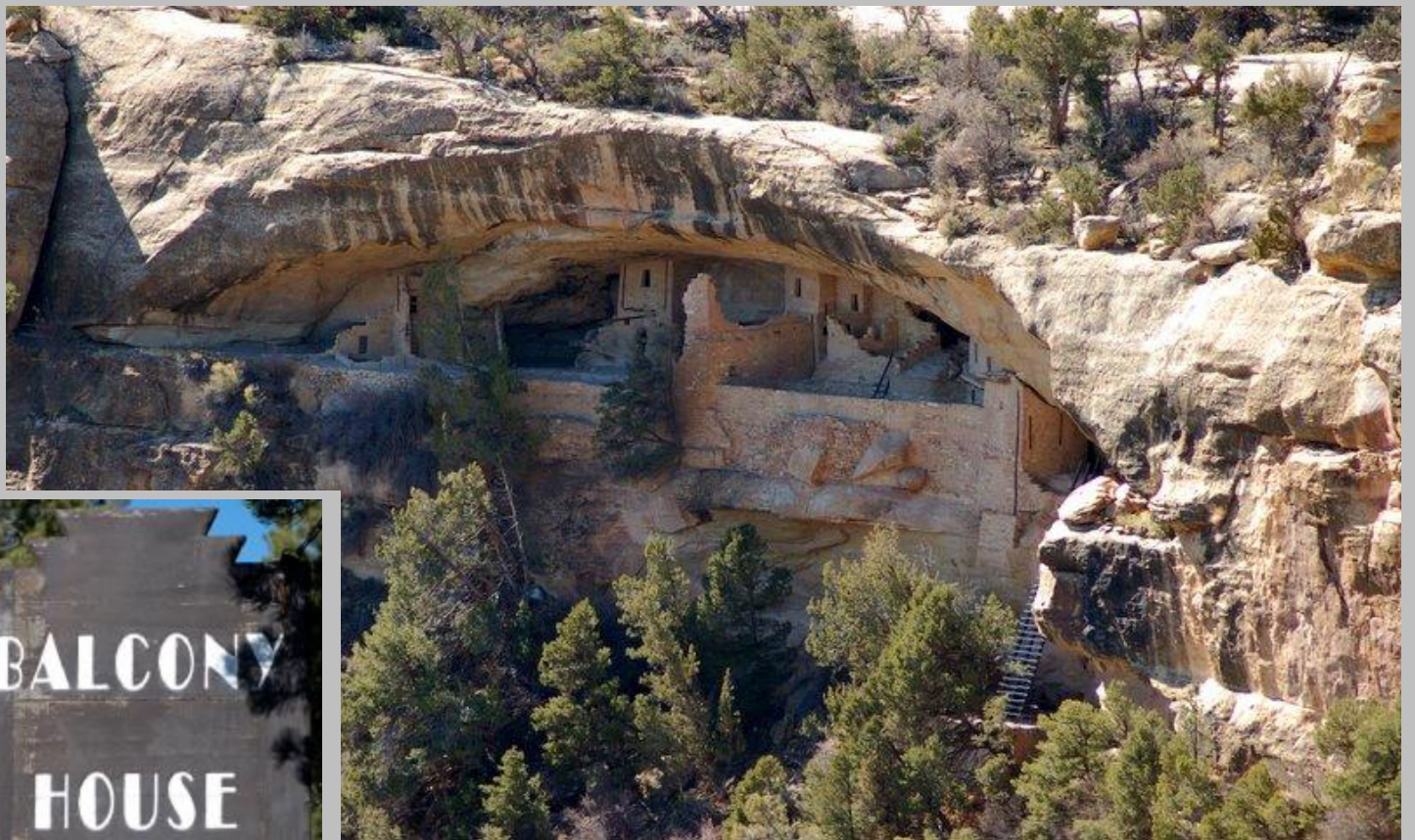
I didn't have a picture for this spot today.



When I arrived at the Hemenway House overlook and was on my way back to the truck after taking the picture, I noticed water dripping from the front corner of the truck box. I opened up the back and found that my 5 gallon drinking water container had tipped over during the hair-pin turns and I had lost almost 4 gallons of water. Aaargh! Fortunately I had filled both my water bottles before hitting the road this morning.



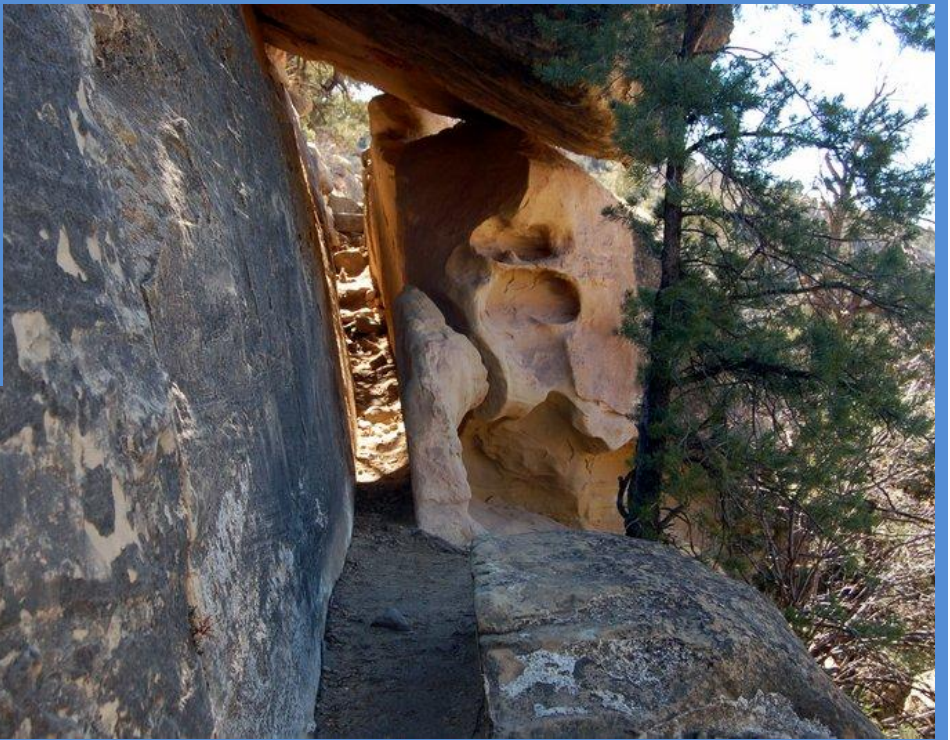
At this time of the year, physical access to Balcony House is no longer allowed. The best view is from the Soda Canyon Overlooks. The sign is deceptive. It is a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile hike to where the trail splits, a couple hundred yards to the Balcony House Overlook, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile across to the other two overlooks (no pictures) then back to the trail split and another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile back to the parking area. Probably is a little over 2 miles round trip.



I'll toss this picture in again, since the road was open today.



The hike starts from the Spruce Tree House trail seen yesterday.



I took the Petroglyph Trail – 2.4 miles. It was a pretty strenuous trail. I bought a trail guide at the trailhead which had 34 sites marked with a description of each one.

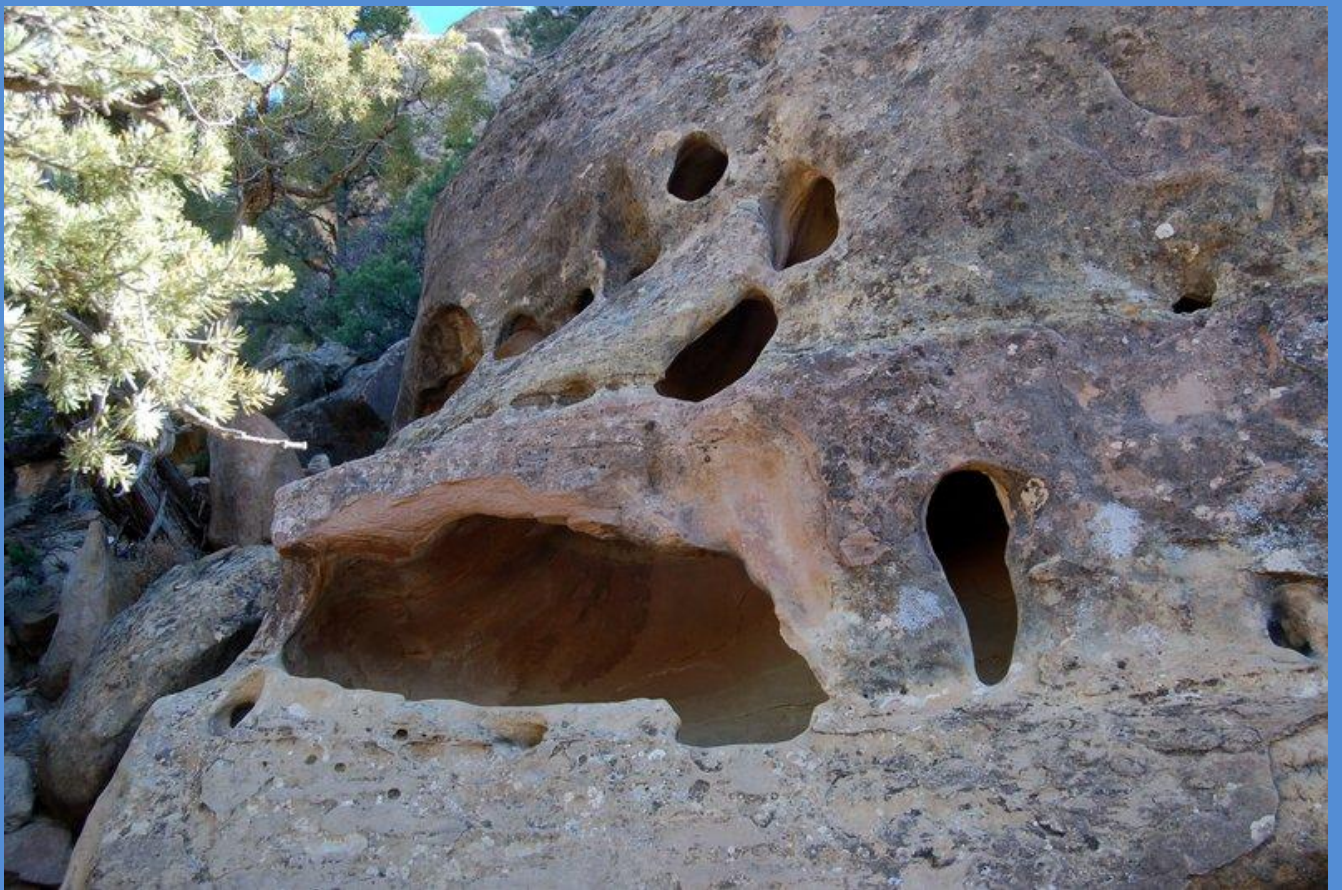
Speaking of the trailhead, there is a register there you are supposed to fill out with name, vehicle type, license number, number in party and starting time. I guess this is so that when the Rangers are leaving for the day and they see a vehicle still parked in the lot, they can check the register to see if that person is still out on the trail. I picked up the pen and tried to fill a line in. No ink. I was not about to walk back up to the museum to ask for another pen so, I just shrugged and decided that if I my vehicle was still in the lot, they would find me one way or another.

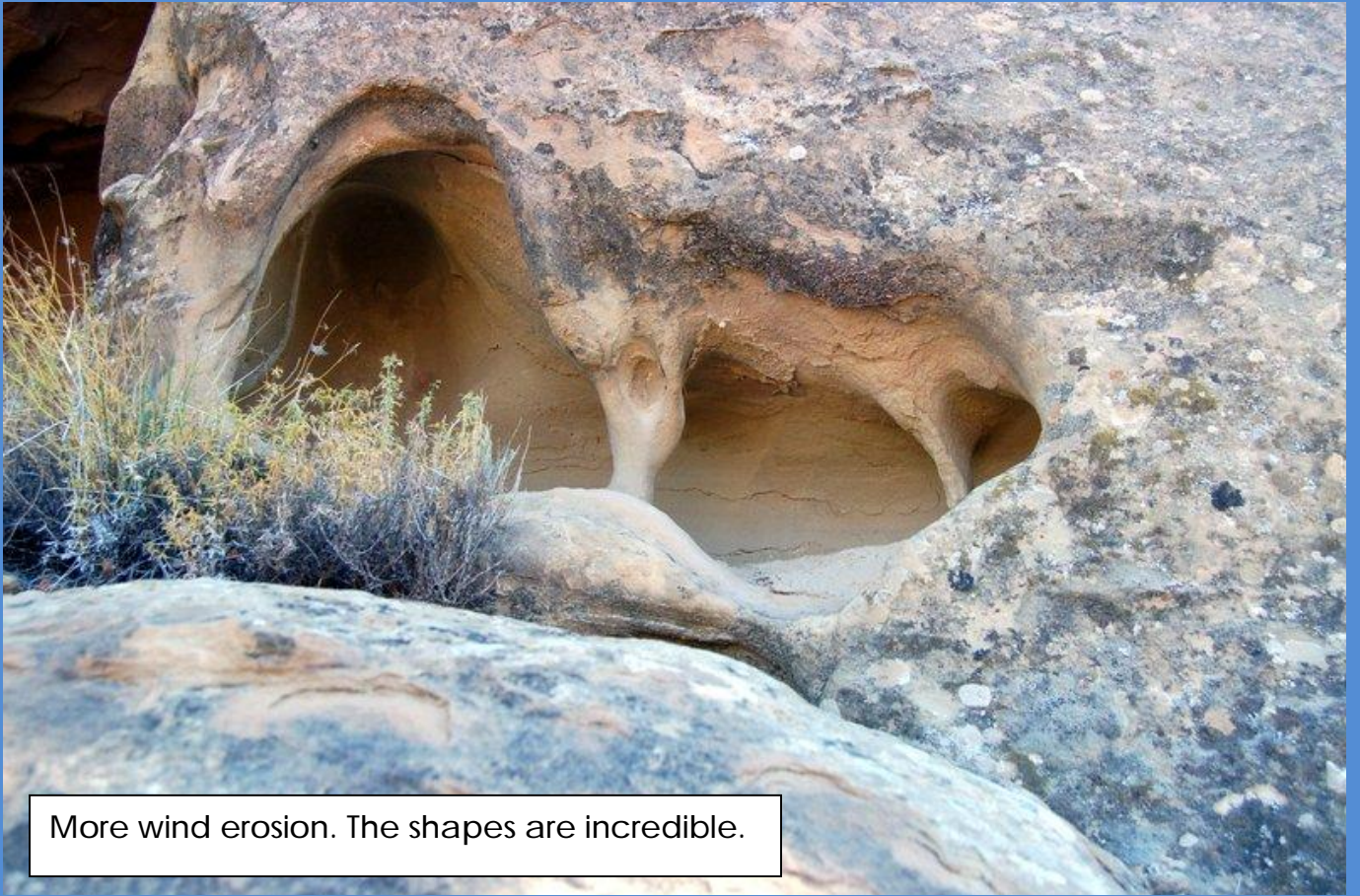




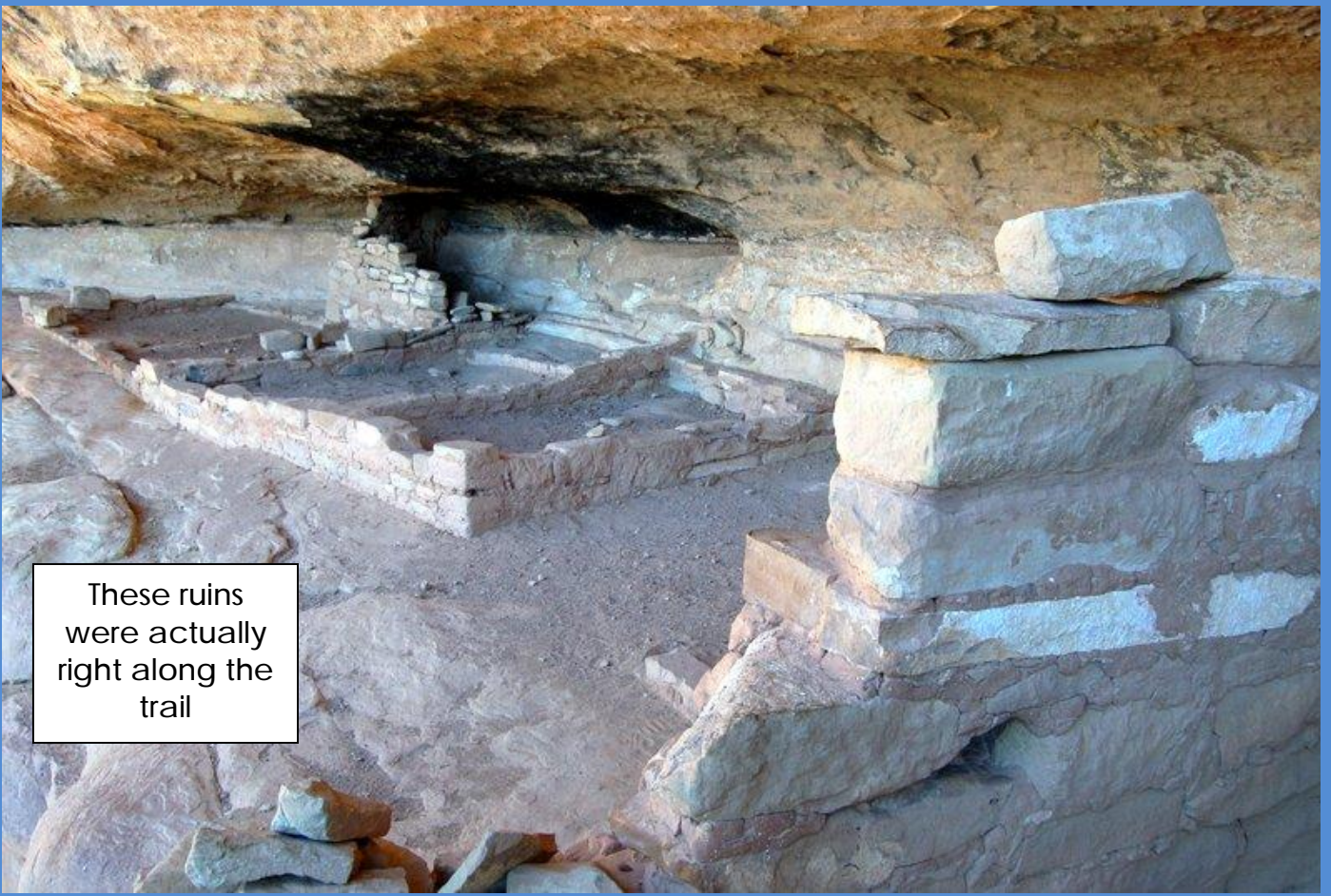
Above: I thought this might be the only spot where it feels you are right under that cliff face. Note: The trail is the steps.

Below: These holes, shapes, artwork, whatever you want to call them are formed by wind erosion.

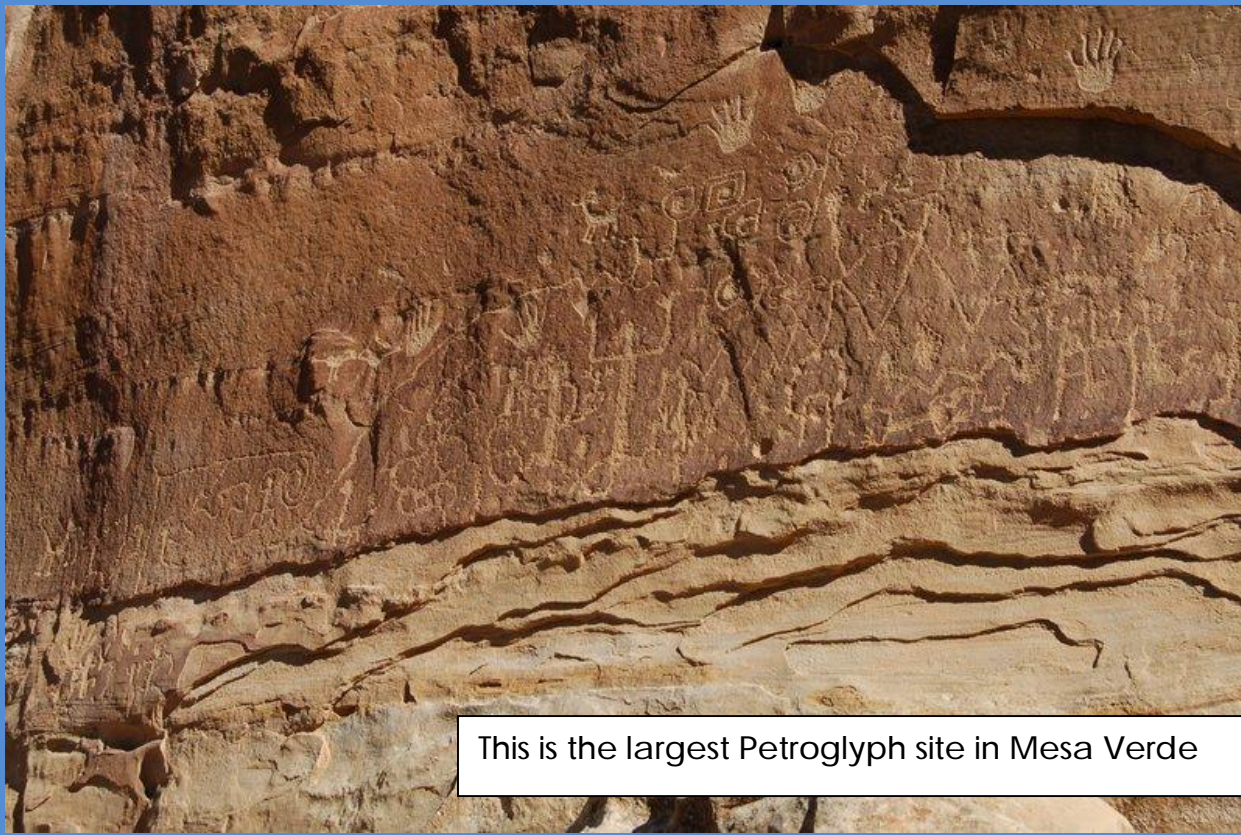




More wind erosion. The shapes are incredible.



These ruins were actually right along the trail

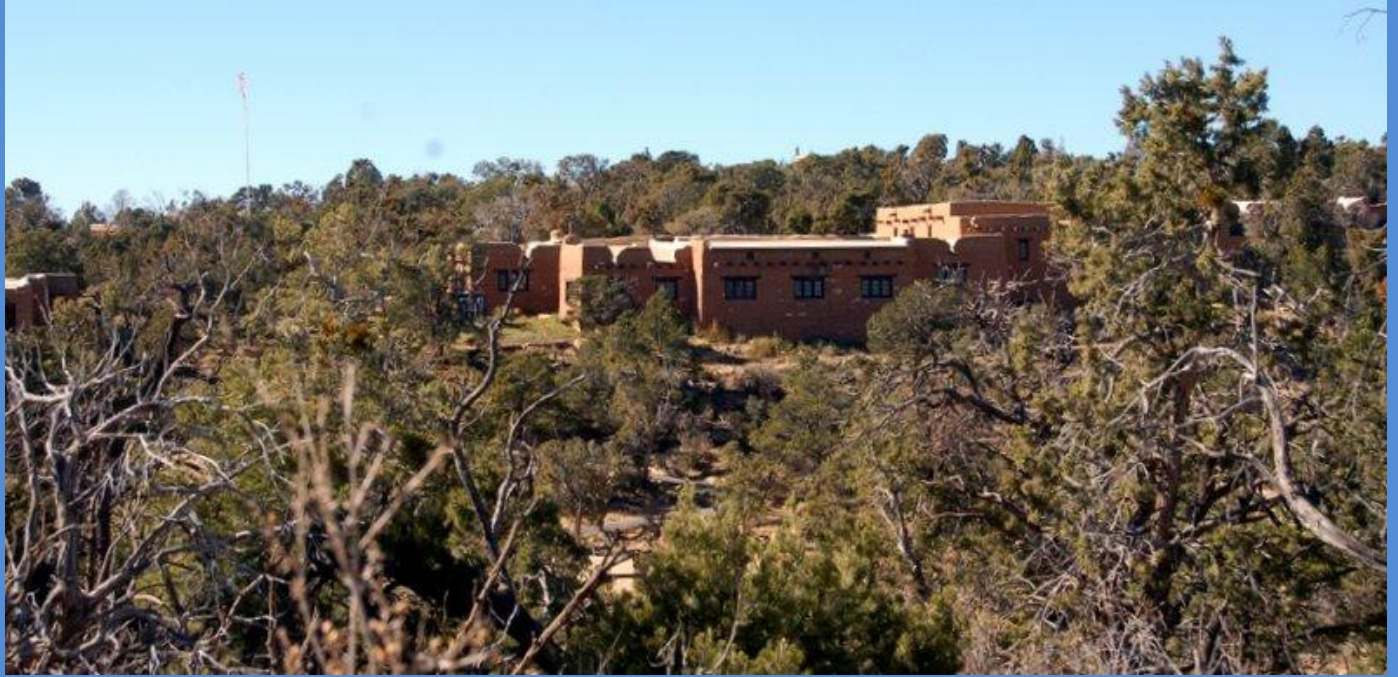


This is the largest Petroglyph site in Mesa Verde



A view of the valley

A view of the Spruce Tree House Museum across the valley and the end of the trail



My lunch time view



I did have plans to do the Knife Edge Trail and Point Lookout, the trail to the top of the butte behind the Visitor's Center, but the wind has been so strong from the north during my entire stay that I am a little tired of fighting it. While I was having lunch I turned the truck so that the wind was hitting the passenger side. I left the driver's door open as I made my lunch using the truck as a wind break. A gust of wind closed my driver side door, even though it was on the leeward side.

After a power nap I drove into Cortez and visited the WalMart to get some more water and gas. As I was entering the park again, I stopped to send out yesterdays newsletters and had a conversation with Morgan. Had to do it before I lost all contact at the campground.

The stars last night were fabulous. It literally looked like someone had hung a piece of black velvet with holes poked in it and a light behind, it was that bright. And yet, there is still some light pollution from Cortez 9 miles away and the restroom lights about 60 feet from me are also on. Maybe tomorrow I will be able to get a shot of the stars from a special place. There is a meteor shower scheduled for sometime in the next few days also I think, I will have to double check.

Had the second half of my steak warmed up in a pie iron and pineapple for dinner. Just had a s'more for dessert. The wind finally died down.

Tomorrow I pack up and head southwest.