

# Western Road Trip Newsletter



A drive  
along the  
Colorado  
River

Day 22  
Saturday  
November 16th

Arches  
to  
Avon, CO

Stats  
306 miles today  
3278 total miles this trip

Weather  
High Temp: 61  
Low Temp: 20's  
Conditions: Mostly Cloudy &  
Rainy

*"Magnificent!"*

## Hello to my Family and Friends!

I packed up and left Arches National Park by about 9:20. I drove into Moab to pick up a new multi-plug charging unit for the truck, so I could use or charge the GPS, phone and laptop all at the same time. The one I had died a couple days ago.

I also did some research while I was there: weather along the route; things to see; mileage to Avon, CO; and another call to Goulding's Lodge about my phone charger. I was informed that nothing matching that description had been turned in. I find that hard to believe but, what can I do? I can charge the phone while driving but I can't download the photos.

Scenic Byway Utah 128 is a loop along the Colorado River from Moab, south into the La Sal Mountains on the La Sal Mountain Loop Rd, then back to Moab. Since I would be seeing mountains, higher than the La Sal Range as I drove through Colorado, I decided to only take the Loop Rd to Castle Valley, then backtrack to 128 and continue northeast until I hit 170. So that's what I did.

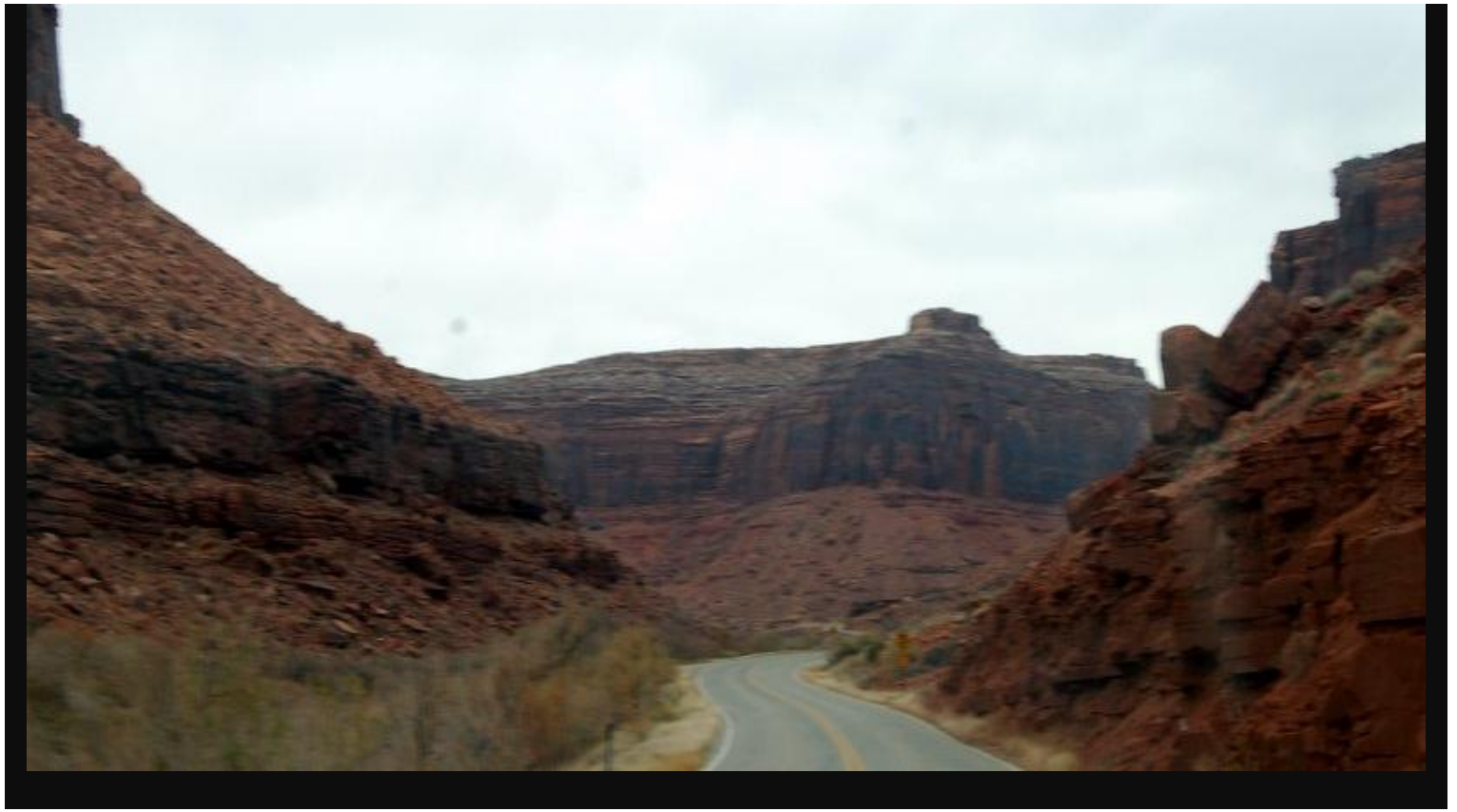


After 21 days I am  
heading East



This drive was like an optical illusion. The road I was on seemed to be going downhill. The strata of the canyon walls across the river rose from left to right. The river really, and I mean seriously, appeared to be flowing uphill. I knew the river was flowing right to left, it had to be. It flowed from here past Dead Horse Point, Island in the Sky, The Confluence Overlook and on to The Grand Canyon. I could not believe my eyes. I finally confirmed it was right to left when I saw some minor rapids. But it was mind boggling (not hard to boggle my mind). Either way it was beautiful scenery, a little different from the rock I had seen in the parks.





This was an old ranch, near a new ranch, that advertised itself as a winery. How they grow grapes in this rocky soil I have no idea. I could find no grapevines anywhere.

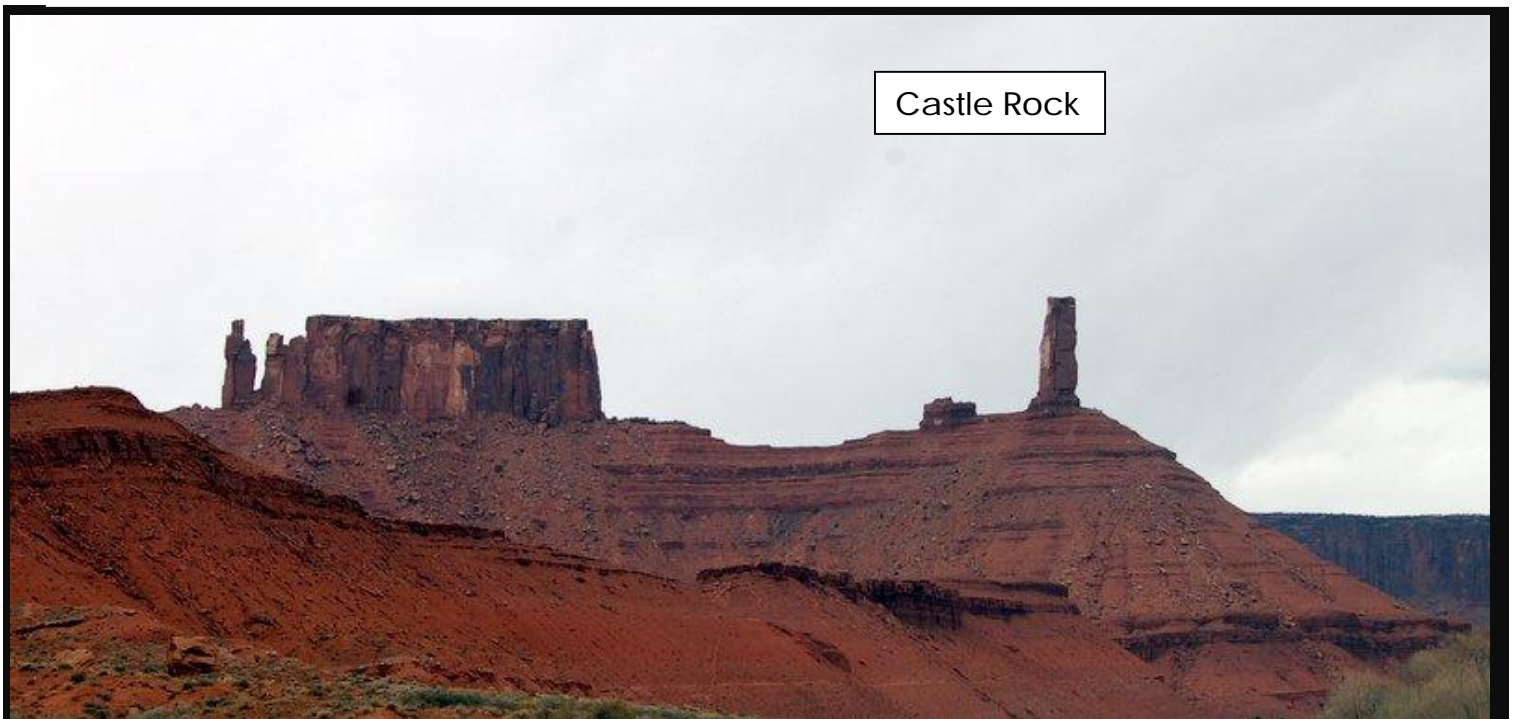




Since the day was overcast and a little misty, the colors really jump out.



I turned onto the La Sal Mountain Loop Rd towards Castle Valley and received this view of the La Sal Mountains.

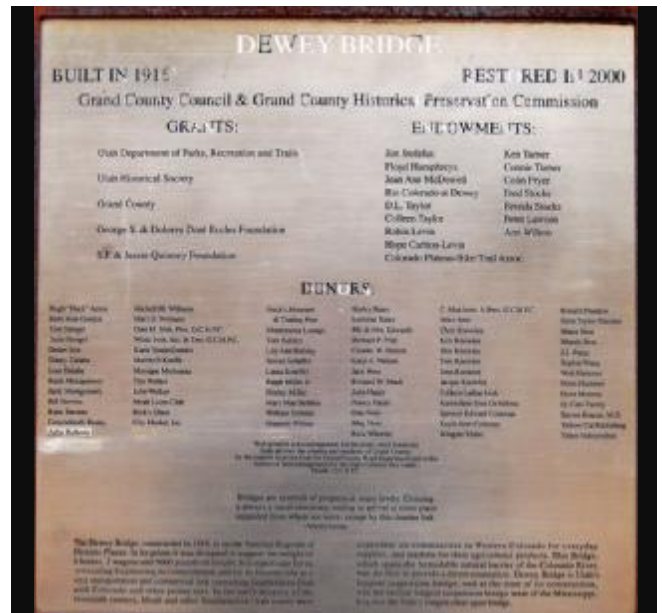


Castle Rock

I turned around and got back on 128 east. The next view was that below.



Notice how the canyon walls are getting lower and lower. Pretty soon it will be plains again.



Below: The paragraphs at the bottom are the interesting part of the plaque, so I blew them up.

Bridges are symbols of progress at many levels: Crossing is always a small ceremony, ending in arrival at some place separated from where we were, except by this slender link.  
-Anonymous

The Dewey Bridge, constructed in 1916, is on the National Register of Historic Places. In its prime it was designed to support the weight of 6 horses, 3 wagons and 9000 pounds of freight. It is significant for its outstanding Engineering Accomplishment and for its Historic role as a vital transportation and commercial link connecting Southeastern Utah with Colorado and other points east. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Moab and other Southeastern Utah towns were

dependent on communities in Western Colorado for everyday supplies, and markets for their agricultural products. This Bridge, which spans the formidable natural barrier of the Colorado River, was the first to provide a direct connection. Dewey Bridge is Utah's longest suspension bridge, and at the time of its construction, was the second longest suspension bridge west of the Mississippi. It is also the State's longest clear span bridge.





I know we see a lot of turkeys back home, but there must have been 50 or more crossing the road



My lunch time view



on I-70 and headed east towards Colorado. After a few miles there was a stoppage of traffic. It lasted for about 30 minutes. When we were allowed past it turned out to be a maintenance truck blocking both lanes (we had to pass on the shoulder) but no flashing lights and no accident. I could not figure out why he was there slowing traffic down. Everyone sped up and about 5 miles later we were topped again at the photo above. This time it took almost two hours before I started rolling, so I took the time to eat lunch and work on a newsletter. I would guess that the earlier stoppage, which was adjacent to an exit, was just in case they had to divert traffic from the interstate.



It looked like a 4 door pick-up truck, with either a travel trailer or truck bed camper, took a bit of a spill. The camper portion was just a pile of rubble, indeterminate as to its original shape and size.

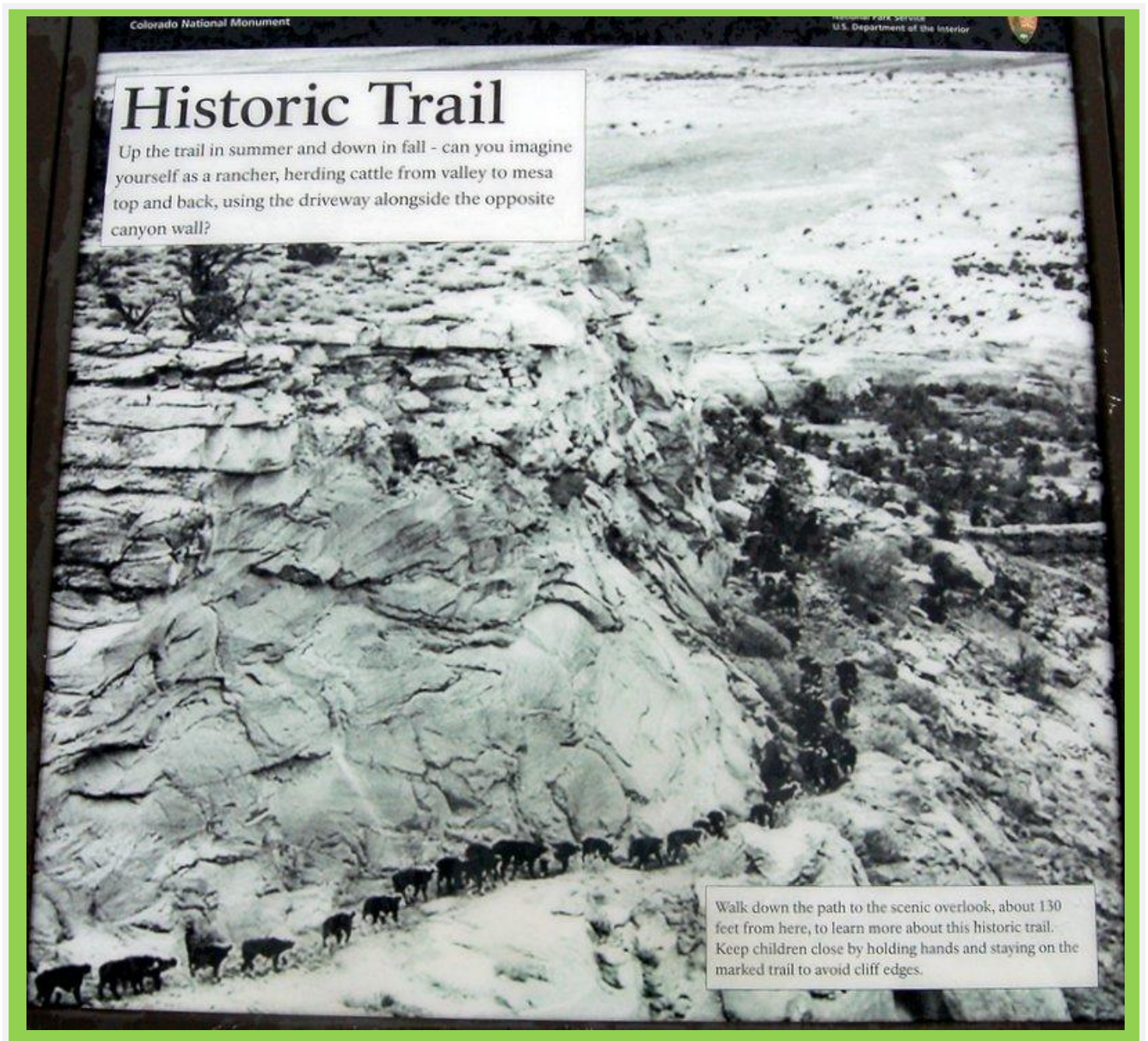
I crossed into Colorado and took the first exit to the Welcome Center. I informed the gentleman behind the desk of the accident, and that he would probably be getting a rush to use the bathroom, just as I was there for. Although I did see a few guys disappear over the hill for a few minutes while traffic was stopped at the accident.



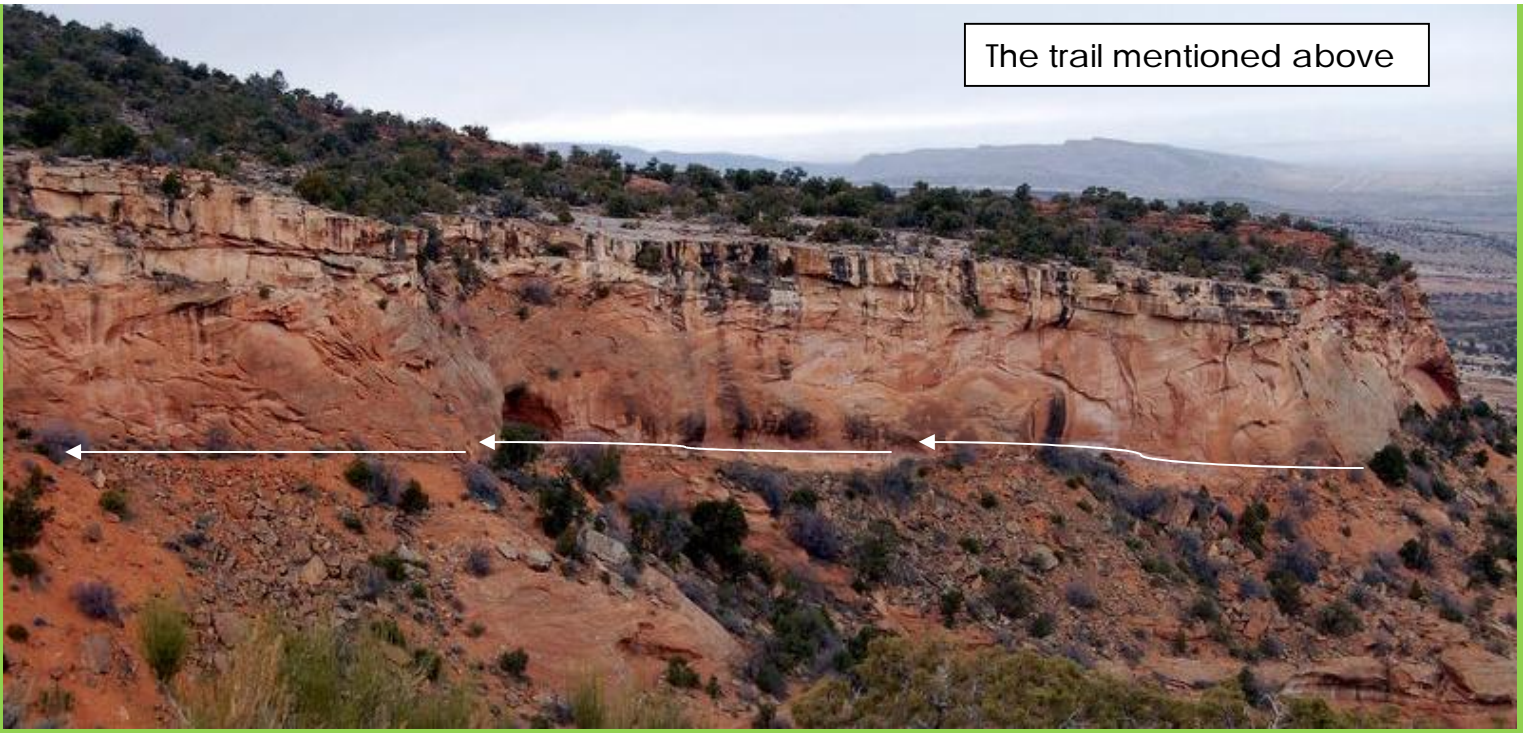


It just so happened that this exit, Fruita, was also the road to Colorado National Monument. I had almost forgotten about that part of my trip.

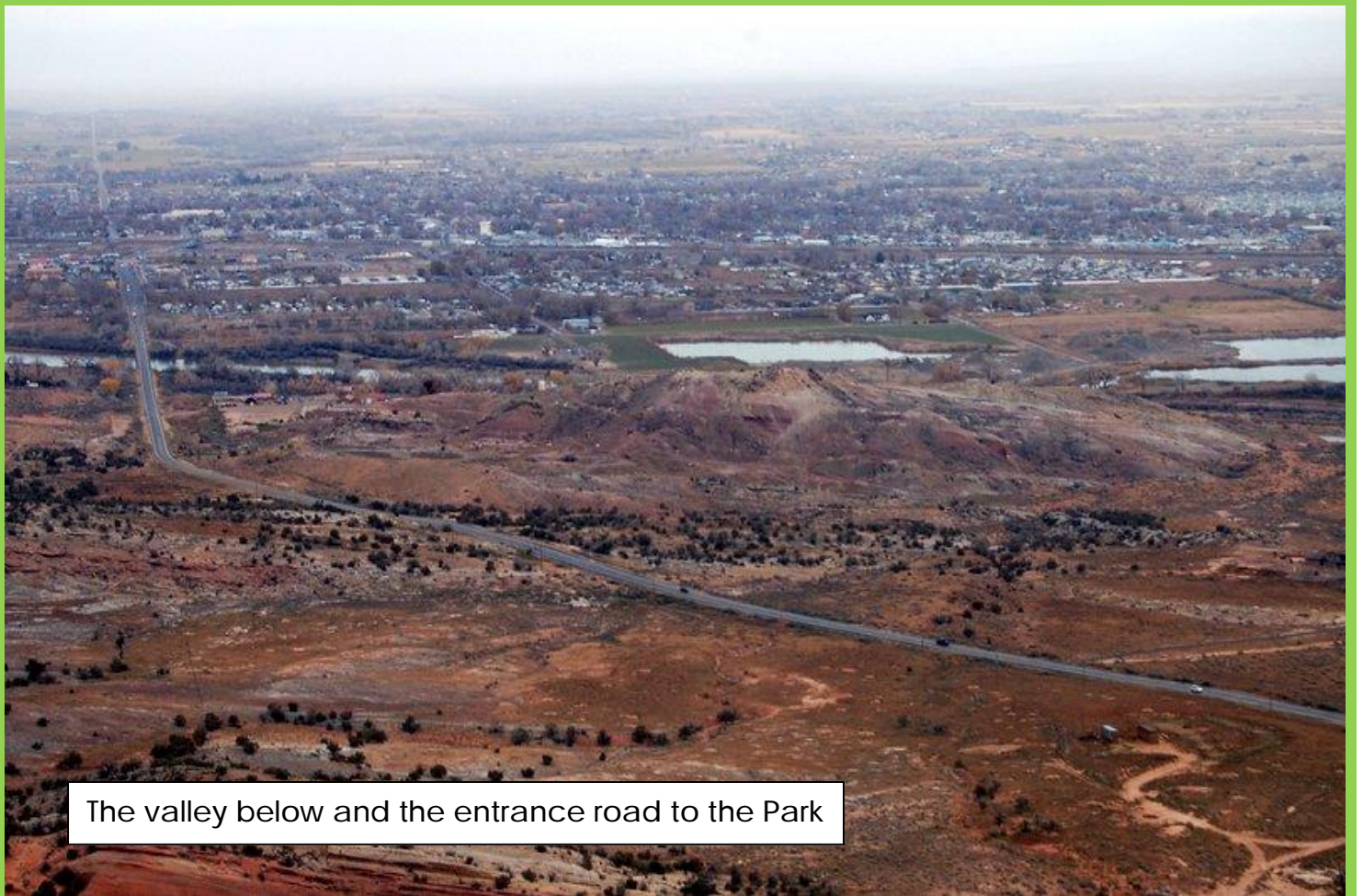
It was just starting to rain and getting colder. I was glad of my decision not to camp here. It would have been miserable. Plus, I would have had to stop and find a place to fill a propane tank.



The trail mentioned above



The valley below and the entrance road to the Park





All through The Needle District and Arches I asked about and watched for the Big Horn Sheep supposedly living in the park. I was told both times that they are very hard to find. As I came around a curve here I spotted these two just being scared off of the road by my arrival. I quickly grabbed the camera and took this photo.

To my surprise they stopped and did not disappear down the mountainside. Instead, they seemed to look back across the road and up, so I did too and saw the fellow below waiting to cross the road.



Of course by this time I had the window open and I heard a noise back to my left. Surprise! The ram below came up from the mountainside and gave me a look like "what are you staring at? Haven't you ever seen a sheep before?"

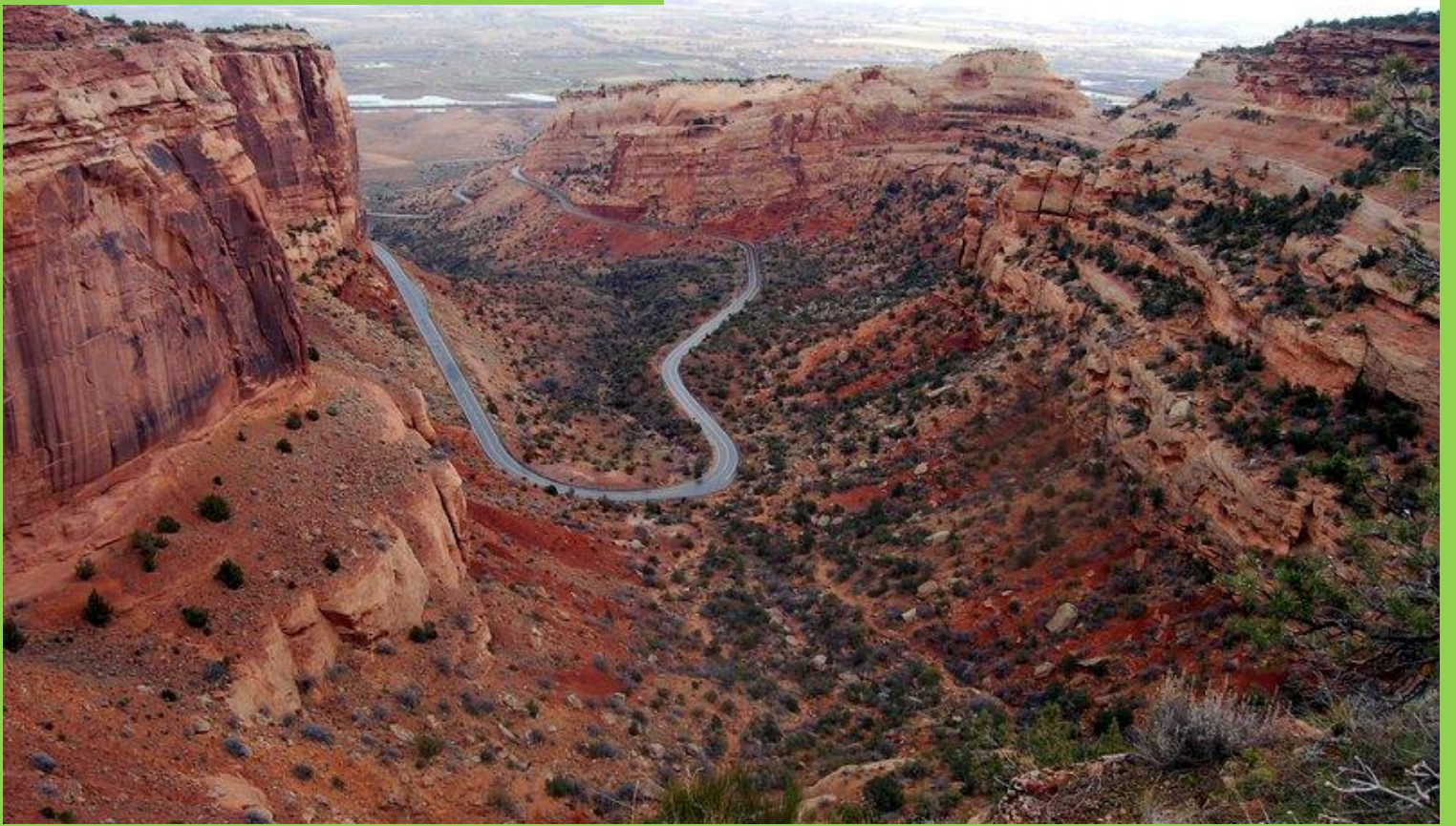


Majestic!



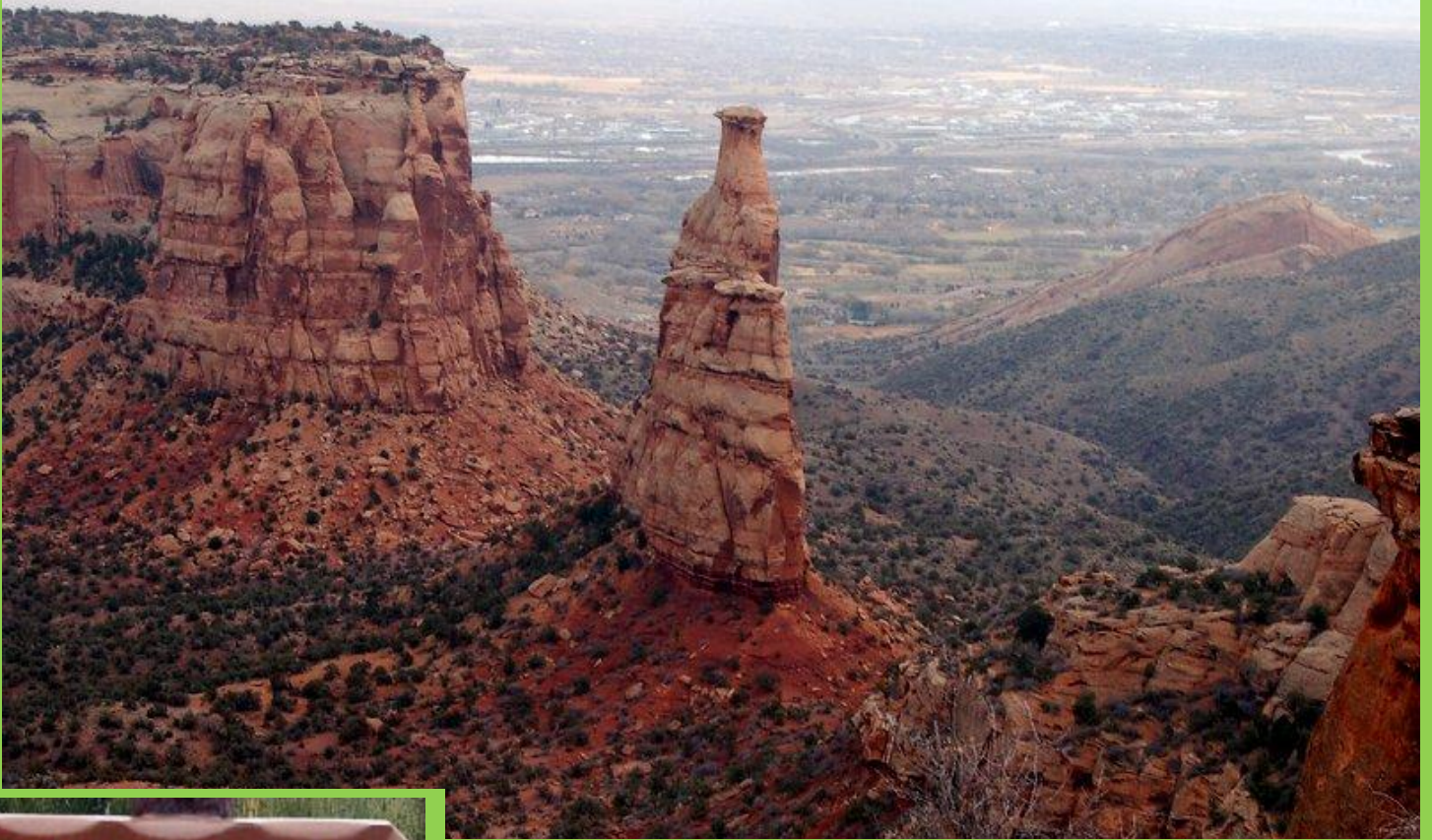


I have seen Big Horn Sheep before, probably in Yellowstone, but not this close. That one to my left above is only about 15-20 feet from my window. At that point I said to myself how glad I was that I had decided to visit Colorado National Monument and that the \$10 entry fee had been recouped more than once by the great animals I was in the presence of.

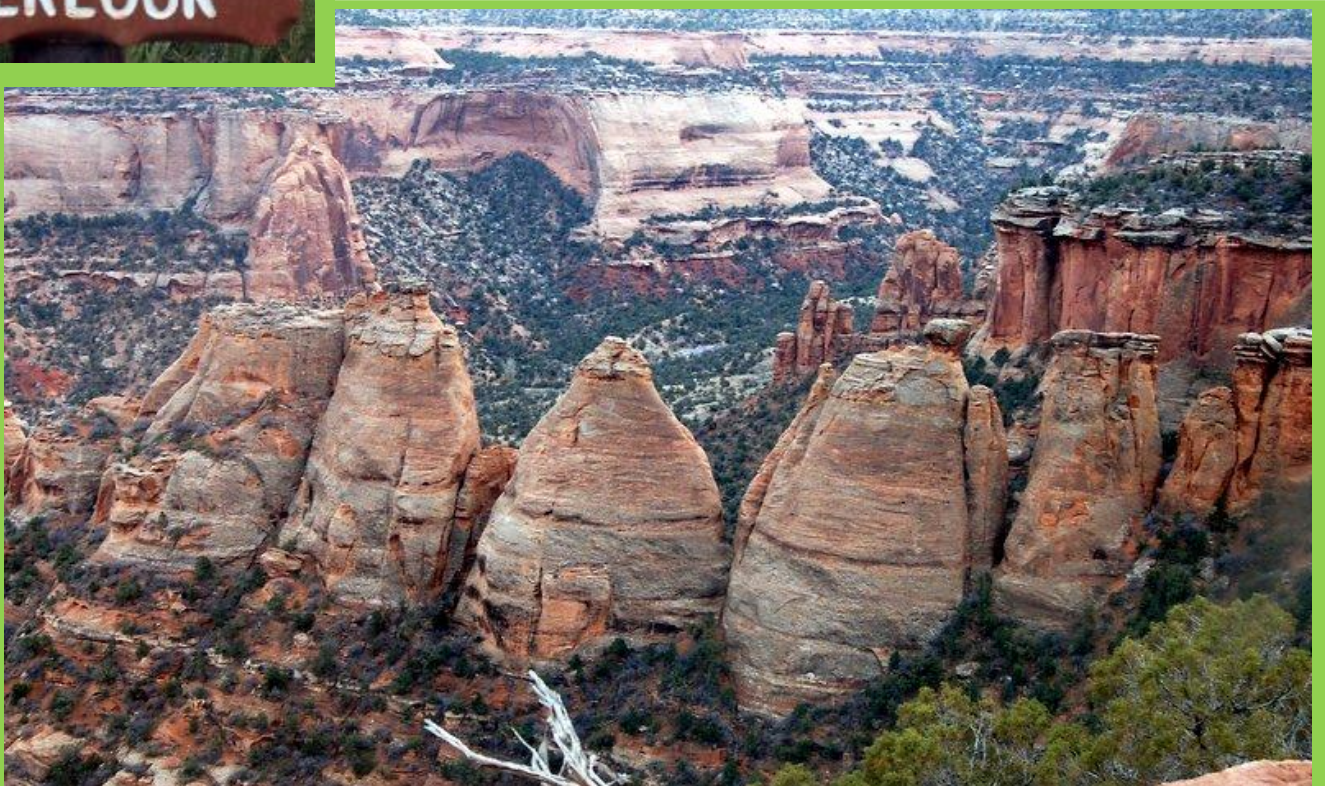


Looking back from the overview, car I passed now stopped at the Big Horn. See that I saw.

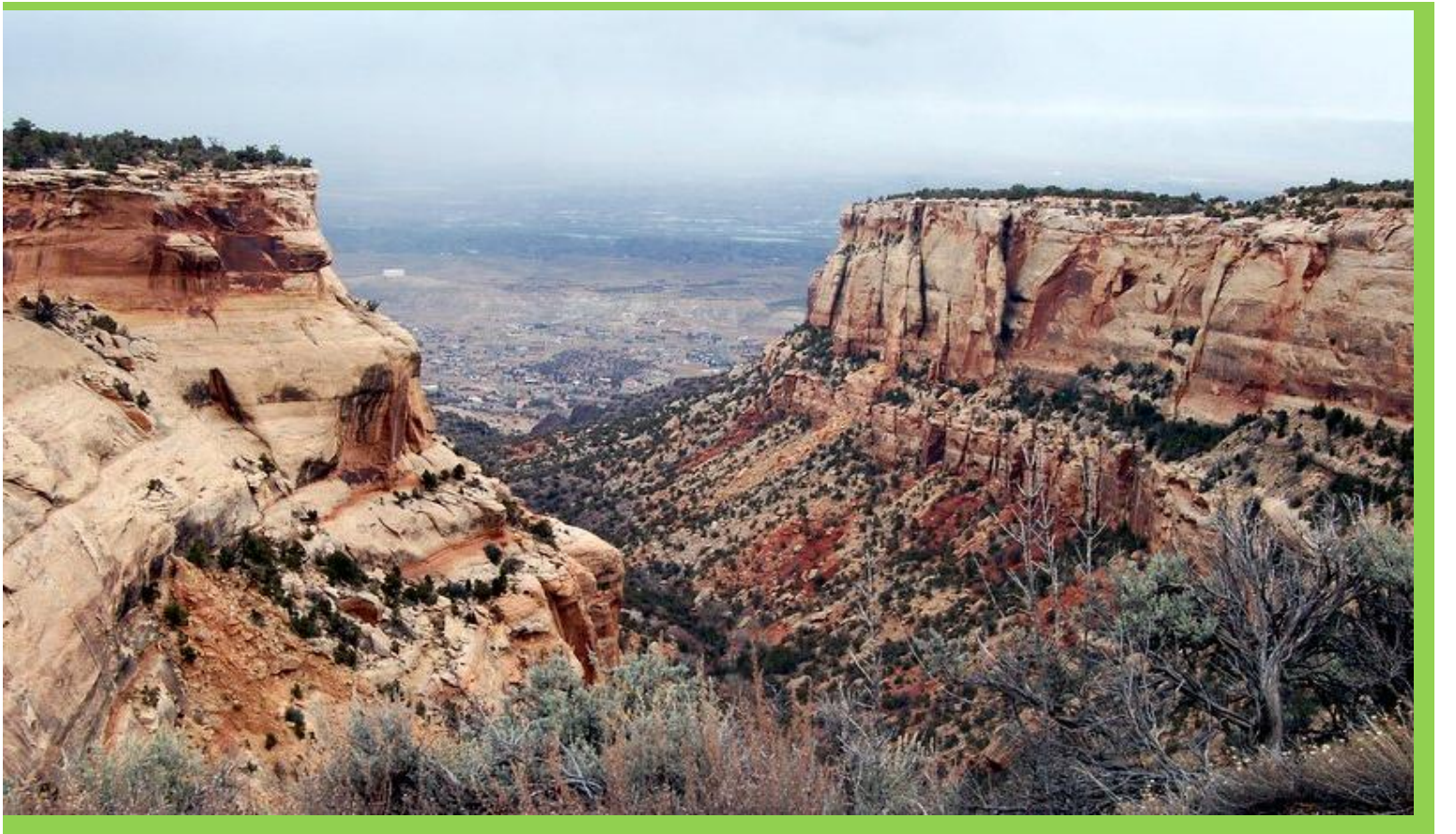
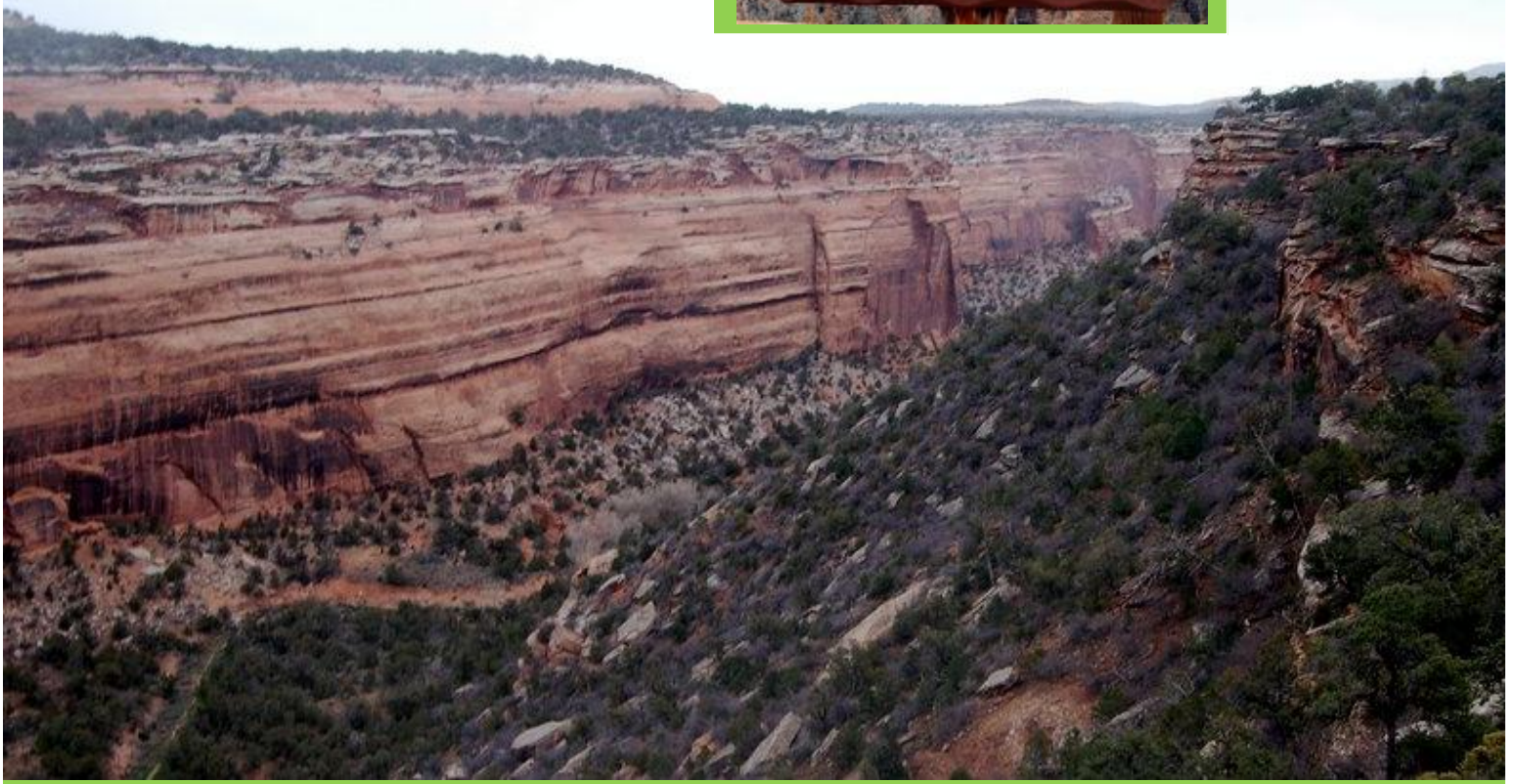
INDEPENDENCE  
MONUMENT



COKE OVENS  
OVERLOOK



UPPER UTE  
CANYON VIEW







As in Alfred Hitchcock's *North By Northwest*, the tunnel signals The End. Not the end of my trip, but the end of any more mountains that I will be able to photograph. I made my way down out of Colorado National Monument, stopped for gas in Grand Junction, then rejoined I70 east.

Part of my research back in Dead Horse Point and Moab were contact with Kevin. Kevin had issued an invitation to stay at any one of his son's places in Colorado. Either Jeremy in Avon; Ben in Denver or Pat in Boulder (I think). Timewise Jeremy was the best plan, as Kevin said, saving me the drive through the mountain passes in the dark. Yowsa! There were enough mountain passes in the dark and blizzarding conditions just to get to Avon. Temperature dropped quickly to 32, but never went any lower. Of course we all know, living in Wisconsin, that snow at 32 degrees is really just slush, freezing on the roads and hardening into ice at the edges of footprints and tire tracks. There were times when I could see no more than 30-40 feet in front of me. My eyes were glued to the solid white line on the right as I followed the twists and turns at only 40-50 mph, sometimes slower.

I wanted to hold off and treat Jeremy to dinner once I got there, but the weather slowed me down so much I was unhappily forced to eat at a McDonald's. I reached Jeremy's without incident, took a much needed shower, and spent the evening talking with Jeremy about my trip, our jobs, his condo and our lives in general. A Pleasant time, and Kevin, please pass my thanks on again to Jeremy for his hospitality.

Tomorrow is Vail Pass, The Eisenhower Tunnel and Idaho Springs Pass before I hit Denver and head for home.