

Western Road Trip Newsletter



My next
overnight

Day 9
Sunday
November 3rd
Natural bridges
to
Goosenecks
State Park

Stats
131.5 miles today
2123.6 total miles this trip
Spent the day in and around
Goosenecks State Park

Weather
High Temp: 65
Low Temp: COLD
Conditions: Sunny

"I thought the
camper might
get blown right
off the cliff"

Hello to My Family and Friends

Well, none of the star pictures turned out, just as I expected. Maybe next time. I left that great campground at Natural Bridges National Monument and headed back to the southeast. I had to take that same twisting, turning gravel road back down off of Cedar Mesa to get to my next stop. I originally had thoughts of staying at Goosenecks for two nights and just visiting Natural Bridges for a day, but I did not want to travel the road more than once, especially with the trailer. After stopping at the first overlook and taking a panoramic picture with the cell phone, I decided to try something new. I grabbed the cell phone and took video of my entire drive down that bluff. It came to 7:41 and I am attaching it to the email. You can view it if you feel like it. Considering I was holding the phone with one hand, practically in front of my face, and steering with the other hand, then switching hands on each switchback, you will understand my comment at videos end.



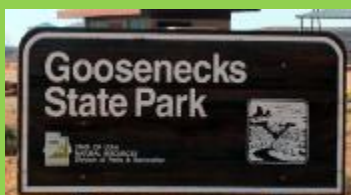
One of the rock
formations in
Valley of the Gods

The view from the topmost scenic overlook



This was part of the road below.

As I walked to the overlook I saw an older couple. Mrs. was about to take a picture of hubby with the view in the background. I asked them if they wanted me to take a picture of them both, and Mrs. responded by taking my picture.



Experience life on the Edge!

The spectacular view you see represents over 300 million years of geologic history. You are standing on the edge of the Goosenecks of the San Juan, one of the most striking examples of an entrenched river meander in North America. Take a moment to experience the solitude, feel the vastness of open space, and enjoy the pristine beauty of this special place.



Goosenecks State Reserve

geology: Approximately 1,000 feet beneath the sand surface that now stands within the San Juan River, a river meander from the Pliocene epoch (late Pliocene) is visible. The elevated San Juan has been entrenched by cutting into deep, winding, sharp, meandering valleys. This process is called the "entrenchment" of the San Juan River.

Geologically, this area is the edge of the "Colorado Plateau" of "southern Colorado" and is one of the "Colorado Plateau".

The meandering pattern and entrenched river valley were formed by the river cutting down into a relatively flat plain, possibly as the present-day Mississippi River.

The San Juan River meander entrenched when the entire Colorado Plateau was slowly uplifted. Cutting downward, the river followed its initial pattern and thus created the canyon you now view.

The process continues to this day as the San Juan River cuts ever deeper into prehistoric geological formations.

Wildlife: Animal life is limited, probably because of the arid climate. The local bird population includes the golden eagle, raven, red-tailed hawk, horned lark, vesper sparrow, and vesper sparrow hawk.

plant life: The surrounding area is dominated by the blackbrush plant community which grows on granitic terrain and sandy soils. Included among the blackbrush are Indian cholla, creosote, sage, juniper, sagebrush, prickly pear, Russian thistle, sand sage, common yucca, and spiny cholla plants.

climate: This is an arid region characterized by summer thunderstorms. The most abundant precipitation occurs from July through October with a comparatively drier period during the winter and spring months.

Elevation: 4,971 feet
Annual precipitation: 6.3 inches
Average high temperature: 87.6° F
Extreme high temperature: 108.0° F
Average low temperature: 29.5° F
Extreme low temperature: -40° F



This was my campsite for the night. I am about 40 feet from the cliff edge. Camping is free here but there is no electric and only a pit toilet. Since it was getting towards noon I decided to eat lunch. I set up Bob's chair and made myself a peanut butter & jelly sandwich. It was with some trepidation that I locked the camper (tongue lock also) and drove away to see other sites. There are no gates and no one to keep the camper from being stolen. As I returned over the last hill I let out a sigh of relief, the camper was still there.

My view for lunch today.



MEXICAN HAT ROCK →



Mexican Hat, Utah, a metropolis of a gas station, inn & lodge and a couple restaurants, was named after the rock formation to the left. It appears to be an upside-down Mexican Hat or Sombrero.



Seven Sisters?

Valley of the Gods is a mini-Monument Valley. The rock formations are not as impressive as their more well known big brother. The map box was empty so I only remember a couple of the names.





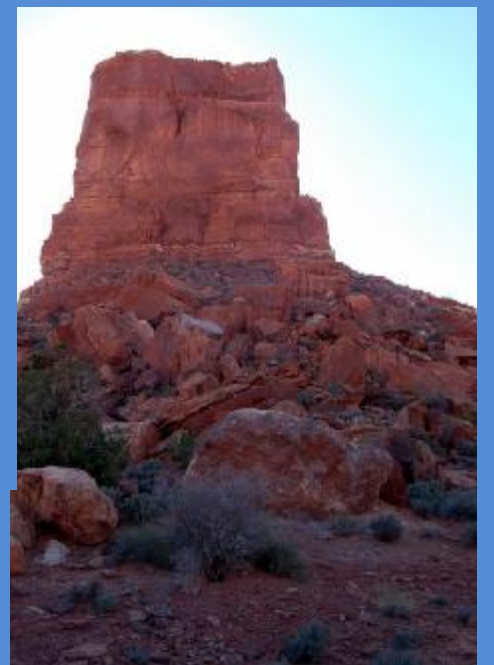
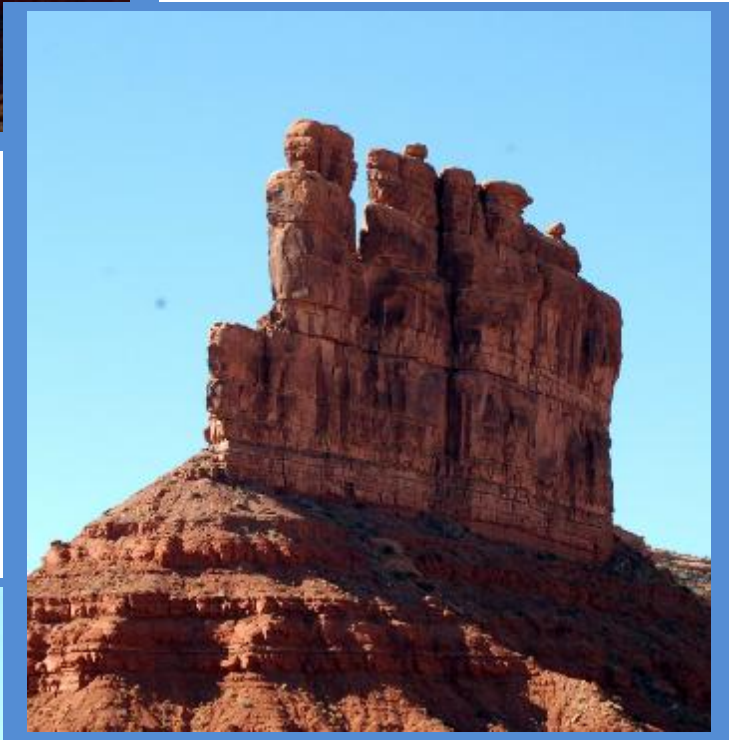
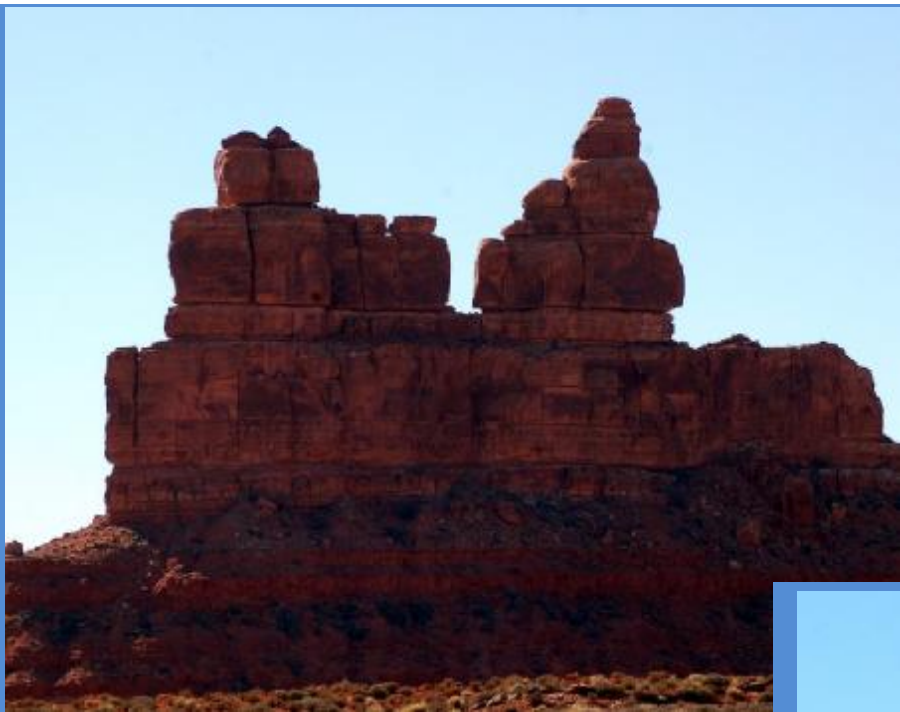
The Soldiers?

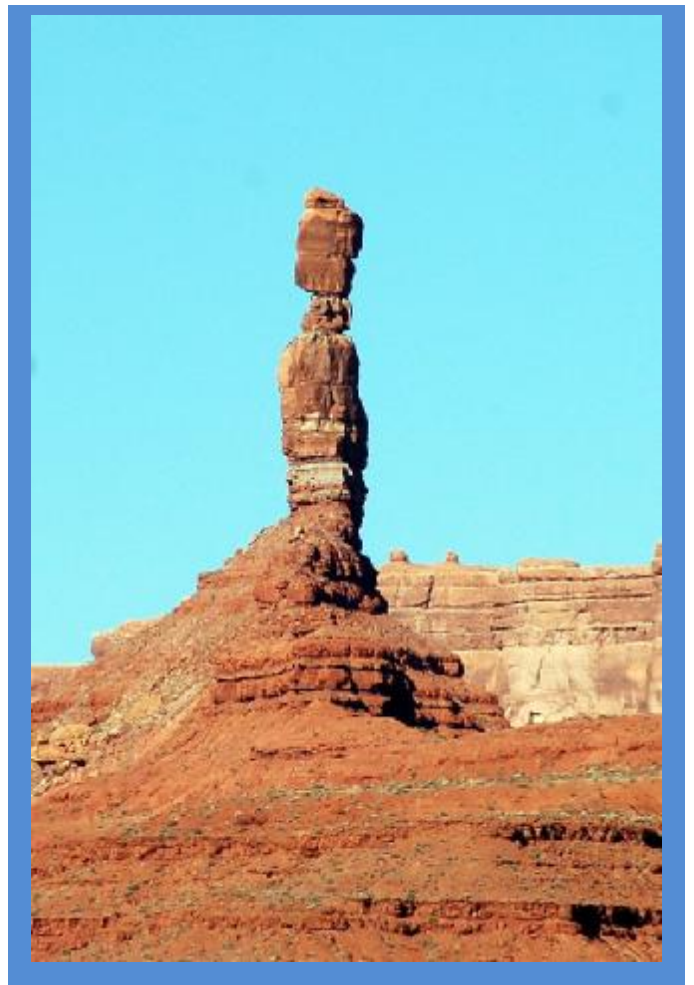




Part of the top has fallen. The boulder lying on the slope is bigger than a house.



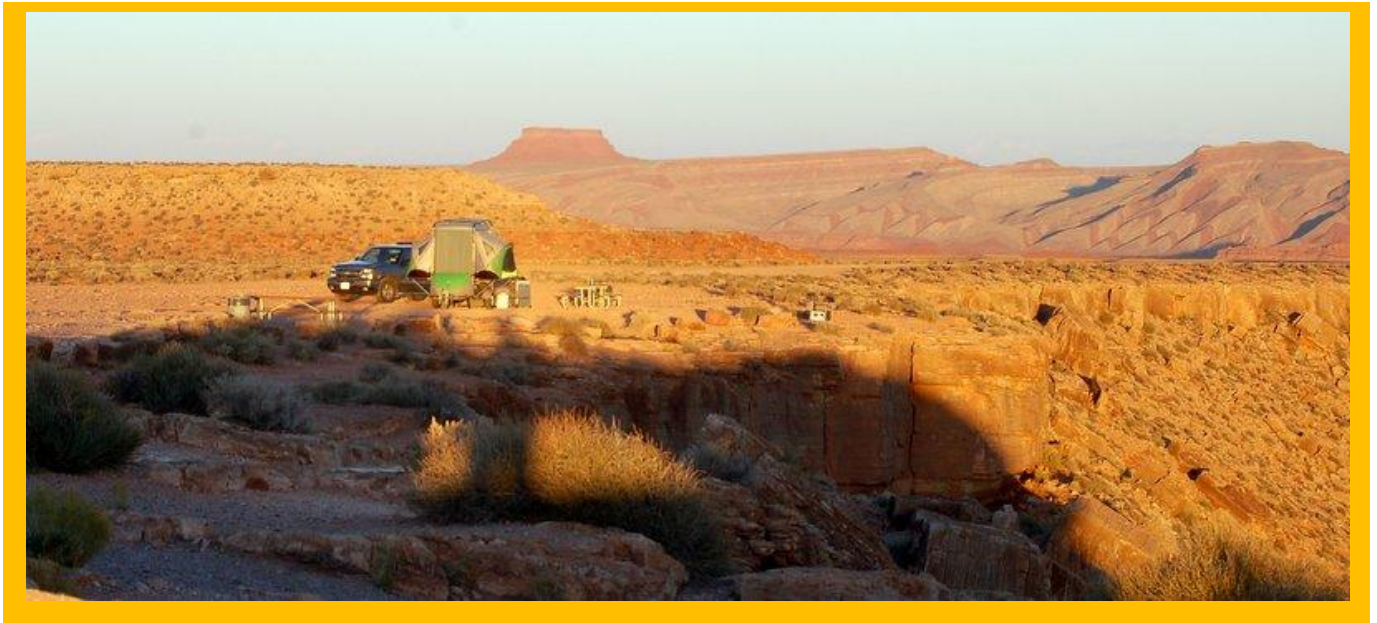




It's amazing how thin and fragile some of these rock formations look. Its deceiving in the photos because you don't realize they are hundreds of feet tall.



Sunset at the Goosenecks. See if you can find Bob's chair in the photo below.



Next step is Monument Valley, the spot that started this whole trip in the first place. There is not much to see between here and there and it is only 20 miles. I will see what I can find to keep me occupied. I probably would have gotten this off last night, but the laptop ran out of juice and I was too lazy to get the generator out and fire it up. So, with no internet or text messaging on my cell phone and no internet to search or games to play on the laptop, I went to that old stand-by, Solitaire. With the time change and nothing much to do, I planned on going to bed early and getting up to take some sunrise over Goosenecks photos.

I have to relate another story. Most of the day, especially when I set up the camper, there was very little wind. As the sun was setting it started to blow, and it kept getting stronger and stronger. I thought the camper might get blown right off the cliff (not really). I moved the storage bin and the Grub Hub under my bed, which was getting the most abuse. I also moved the truck about a foot away and parallel to block the wind. I even opened up the side access to deflect the wind up over the camper. I was truly worried that I would not be able to sleep in the camper and would have to spend the night in the truck, with no heat. As I stood back to assess how things looked, the wind died down to nothing and stayed that way all night. Go figure.

Until Tomorrow....