

Western Road Trip Newsletter



Does this look anything like the newsletter heading above?

Hello to My Family and Friends

After doing my laundry this morning at Goulding's Laundromat and packing everything up I hit the road about 10:15. I passed through Bluff, Utah where the color and texture of the rock formations began to change, as in the picture below.



I made my way into Blanding, Utah where I shopped at Clark's Market to replenish my food supply and ice for the cooler; A&W for lunch and a root beer float that was almost all ice cream; and the visitor's center where I found two brochures worth taking. They really had nothing at all on Canyonlands.

Still heading north I crossed over a dam that creates Recapture Reservoir. I snapped the picture below because it was so strange to see that much blue amidst all the browns.



This was a weird one I saw on the drive. It is huge and has a doorway carved into the base

Day 15

Saturday

November 9th

Monument Valley

to

Canyonlands N.P.

Needles District

Stats

169 miles today

2349 total miles this trip

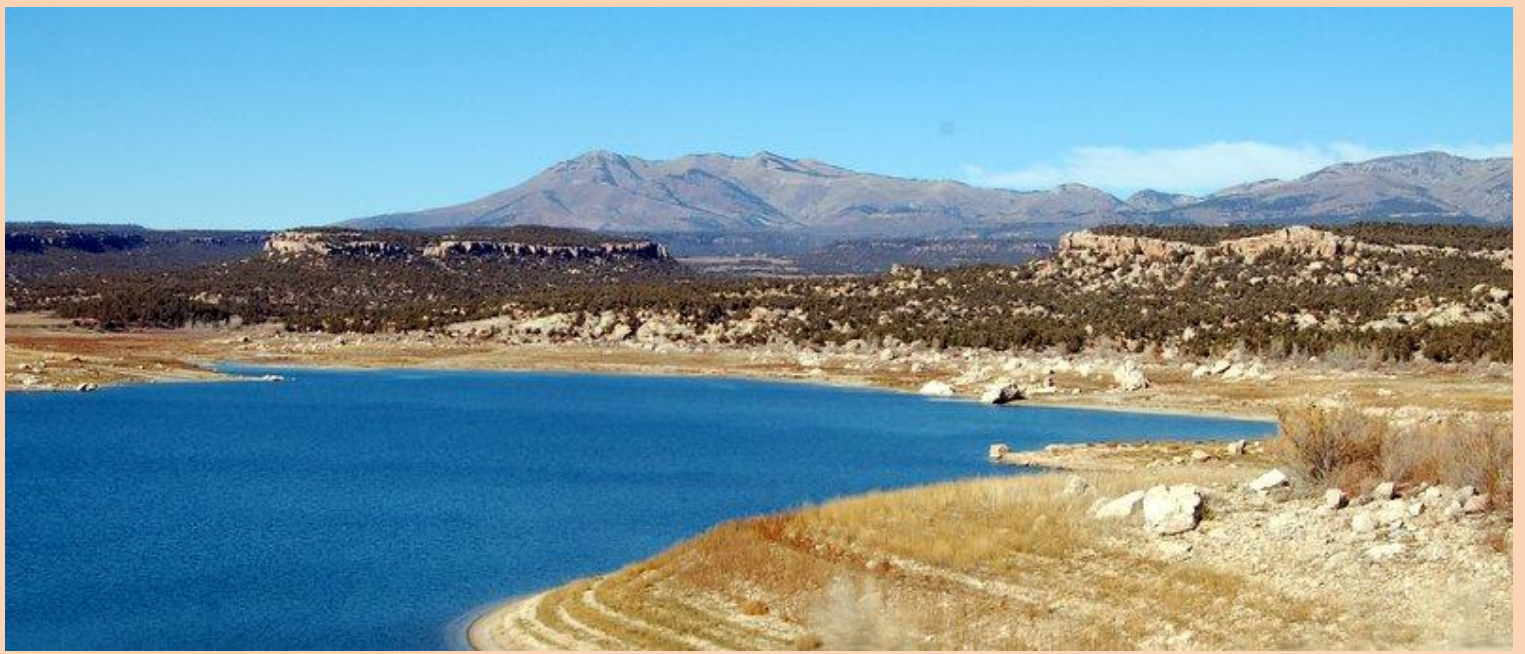
Weather

High Temp: 64

Low Temp: 40's

Conditions: Sunny

"The scenery here is outstanding"



Newspaper Rock Archaeological Site


Newspaper Rock is a petroglyph panel etched in sandstone that records approximately 2,000 years of early human activity. Pre-historic peoples, probably from the Archaic, Basketmaker, Fremont and Pueblo cultures, etched on the rock from B.C. time to A.D. 1300. In historic times, Ute and Navajo people, as well as European Americans made their contributions.

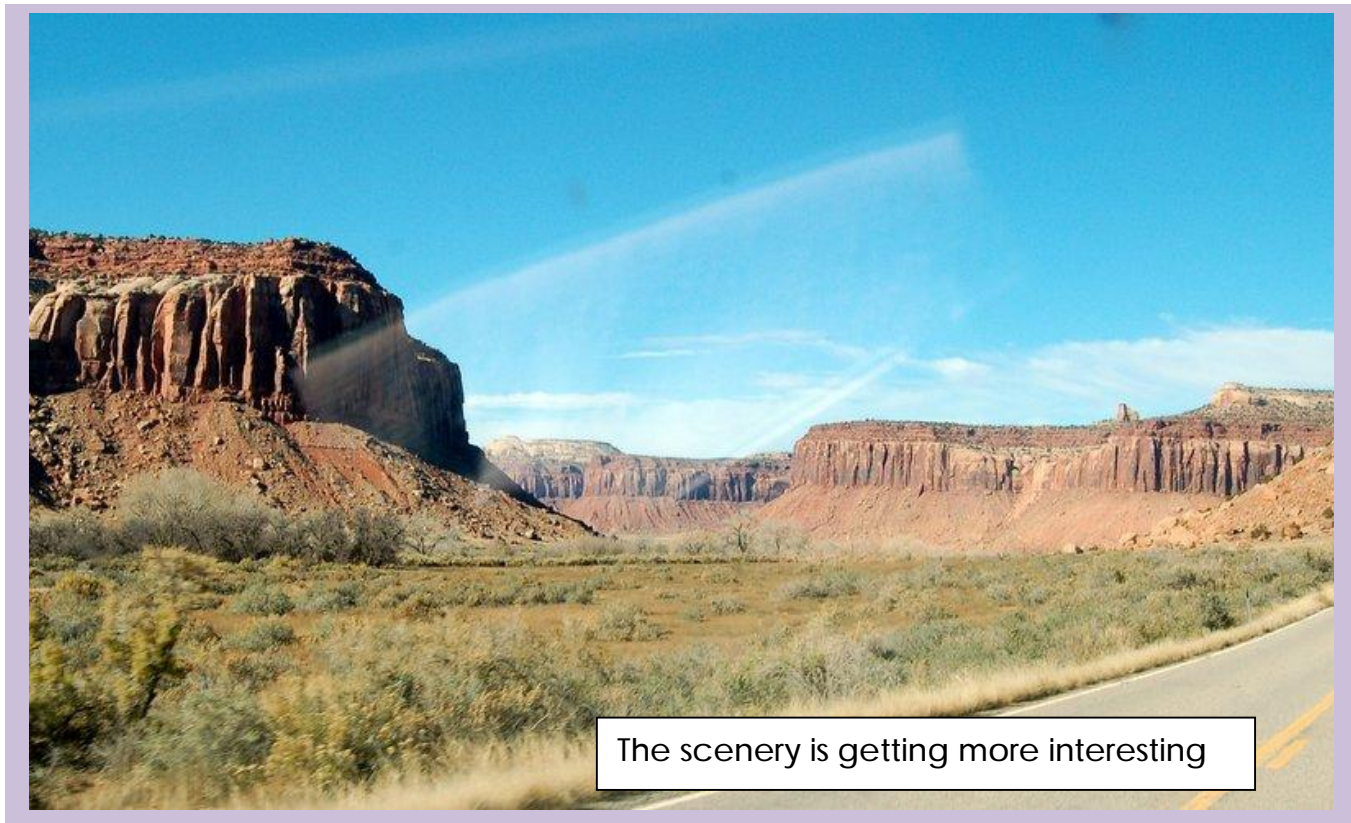
In interpreting the figures on the rock, scholars are undecided as to their meaning or have yet to decipher them. In Navajo, the rock is called "Tie Hane'" (Rock that tells a story).

Unfortunately, we do not know if the figures represent storytelling, doodling, hunting magic, clan symbols, ancient graffiti or something else. Without a true understanding of the petroglyphs, much is left for individual interpretation.

Newspaper Rock is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Please continue to preserve it!





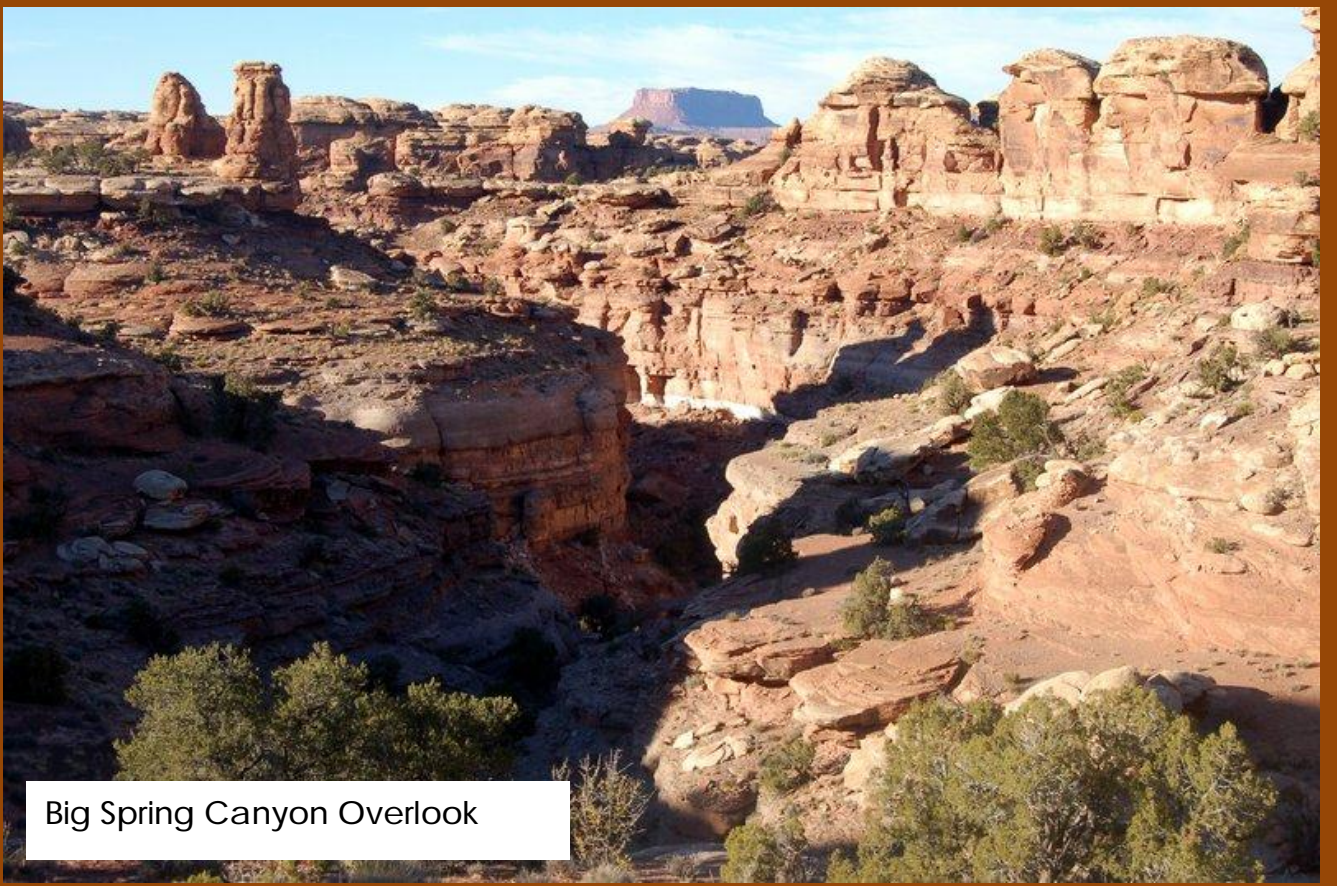
The scenery is getting more interesting



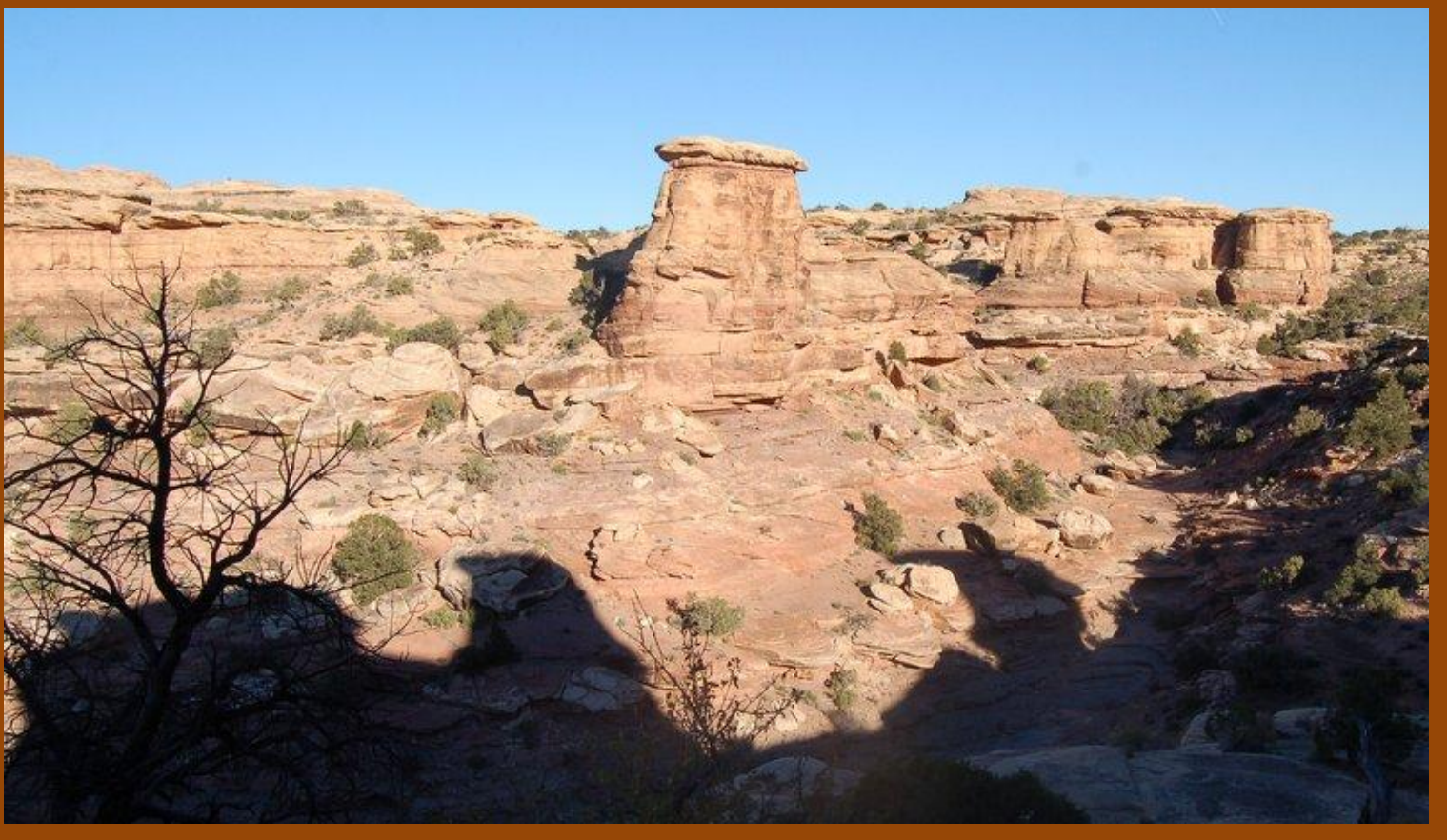
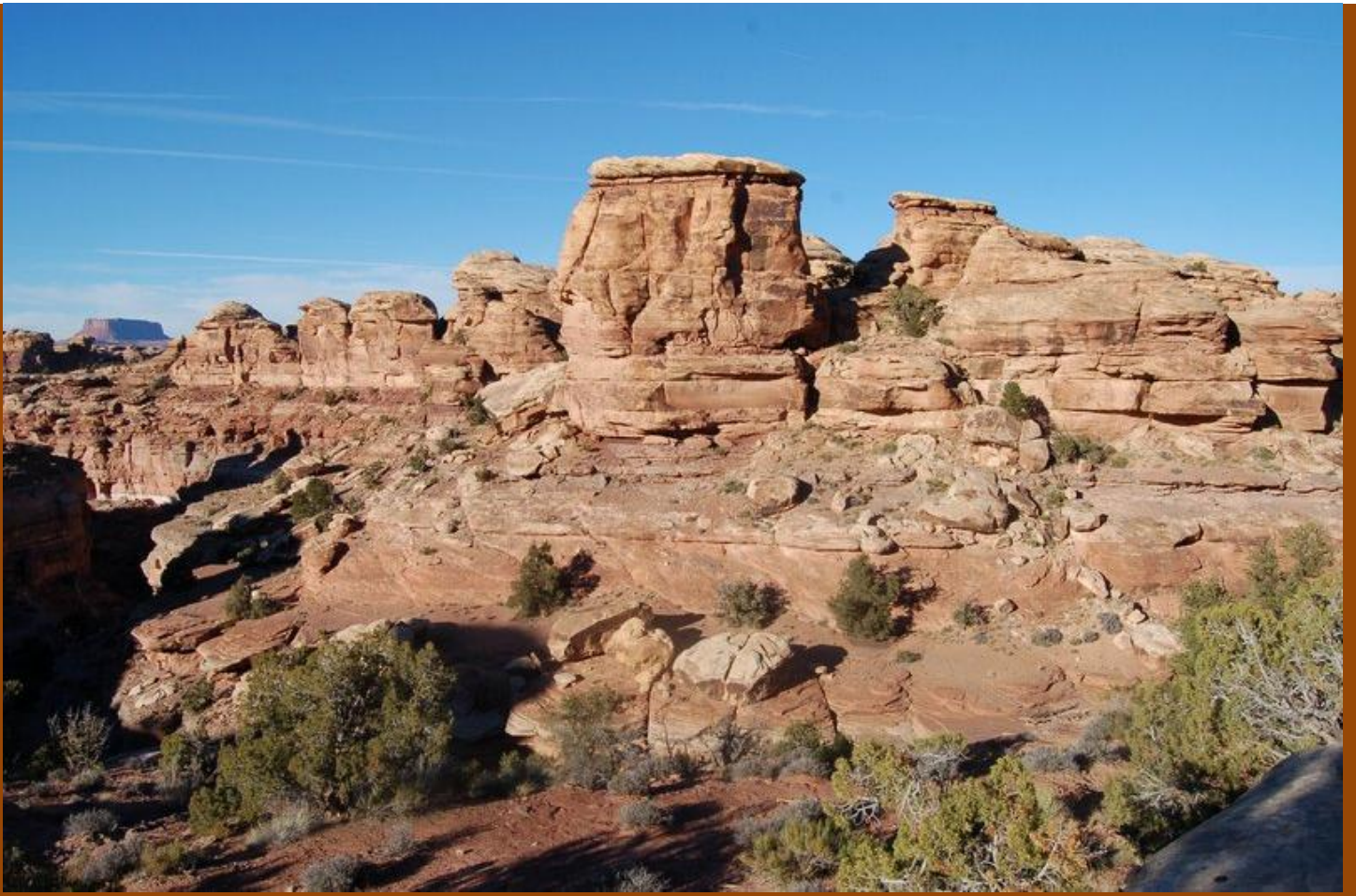
I stopped at the visitor's center, and after looking over all the displays, talked to the three young lady rangers behind the counter. I was given direction on the best short hikes, medium hikes, wildlife (don't get any ideas), 4-wheel drive road conditions and advice on the best sunrise and sunset photo ops.

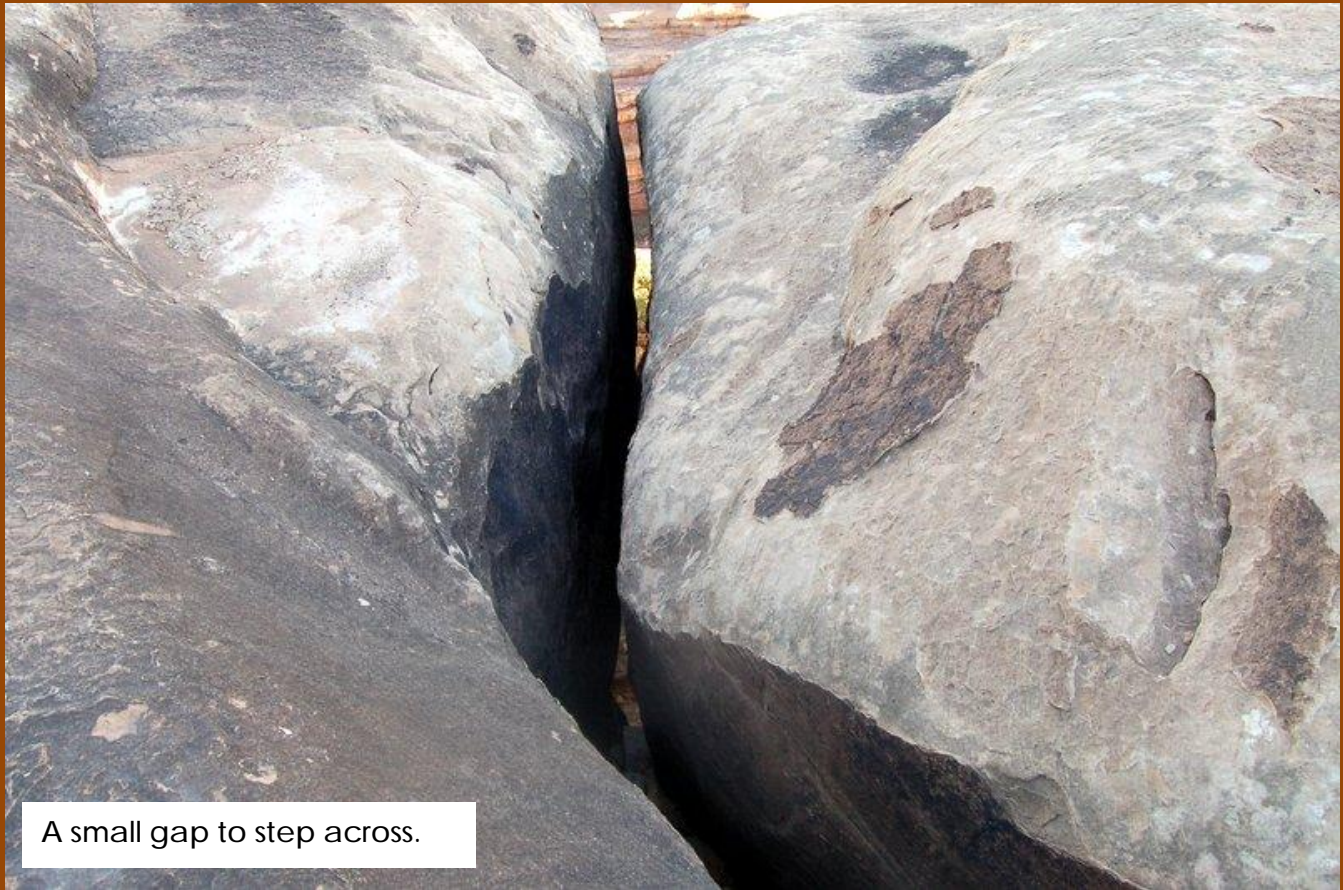
As I headed to the campground I thought about all the cars I had seen parked at various trailheads on the 32 mile drive from US 191 to the park. Then it came to me – It's Saturday! – and there are probably a lot of people here for the weekend enjoying the beautiful weather, it was still 64 degrees at 4:00 this afternoon. So I began to worry that the campground would be near full. Almost forgot to mention, there was no entry fee. The Parks, and I think this includes ALL National Parks, are free this weekend, another reason for the crowds.

So I followed another car into the campground and we both stopped to talk to the Host Ranger at site 10. It turns out the campground is full tonight, but there are two empty handicapped sites that she cannot give out to a non-handicapped camper until 4:15 p.m. Since it was only 3:00 I had some time to kill. I gave her my name and took a gander at the map for a sight to see that would not take too long. I decided on the Big Spring Canyon Overlook. When I arrived I saw the two scavenger Ravens below waiting for something to eat.



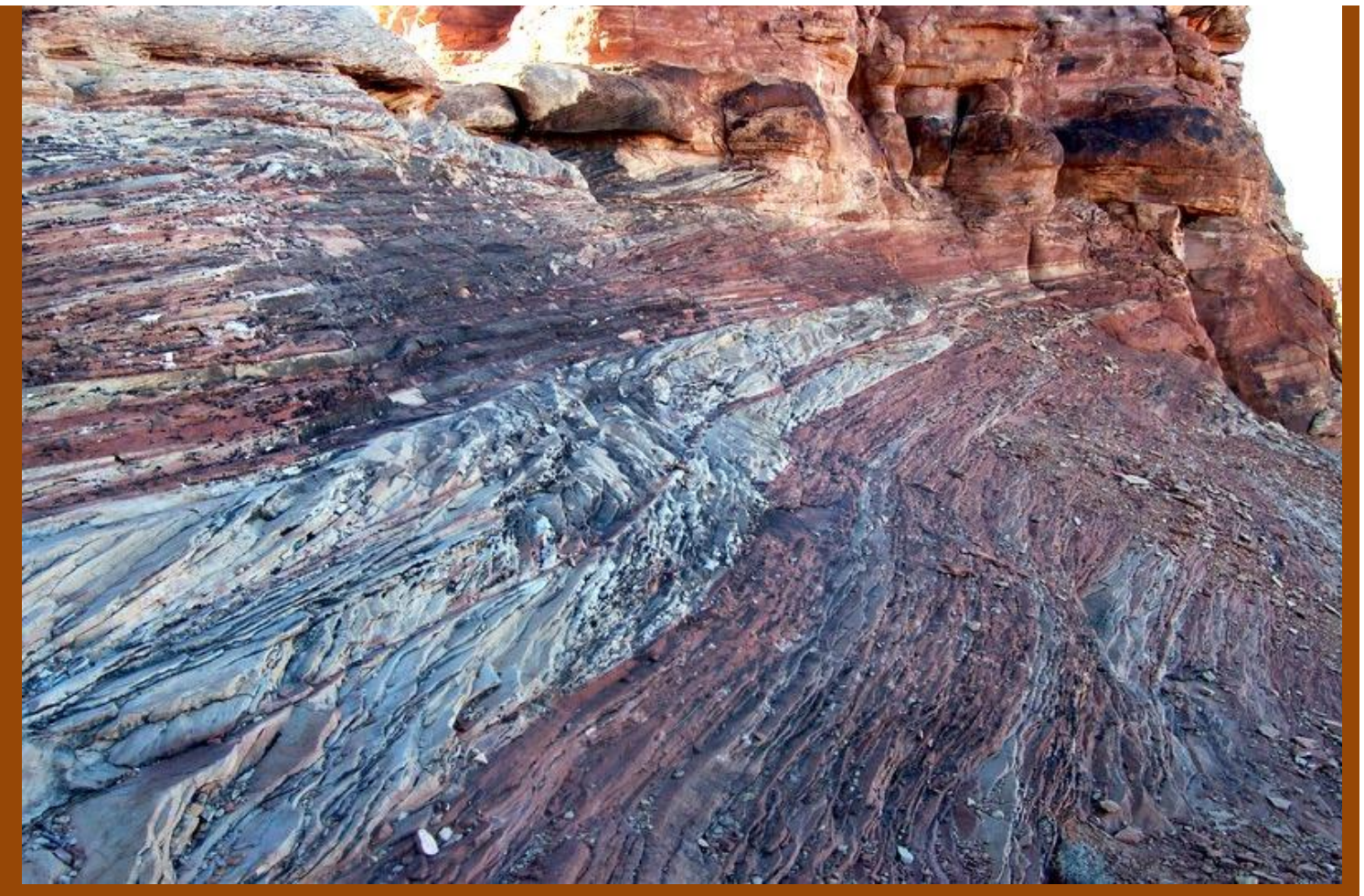
Big Spring Canyon Overlook





A small gap to step across.





Each of those ripples of stone are only about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. These layers of rock were deposited here about 275 million years ago as opposed to the Monument Valley spires and towers which are only 245 million years old.

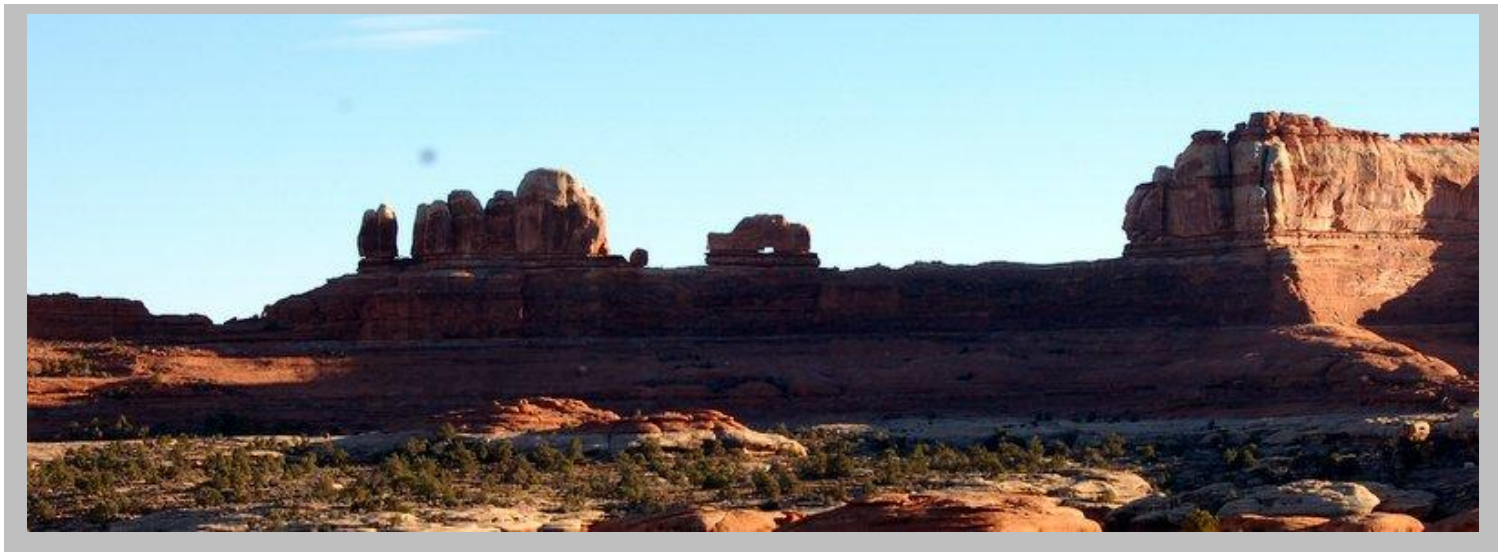
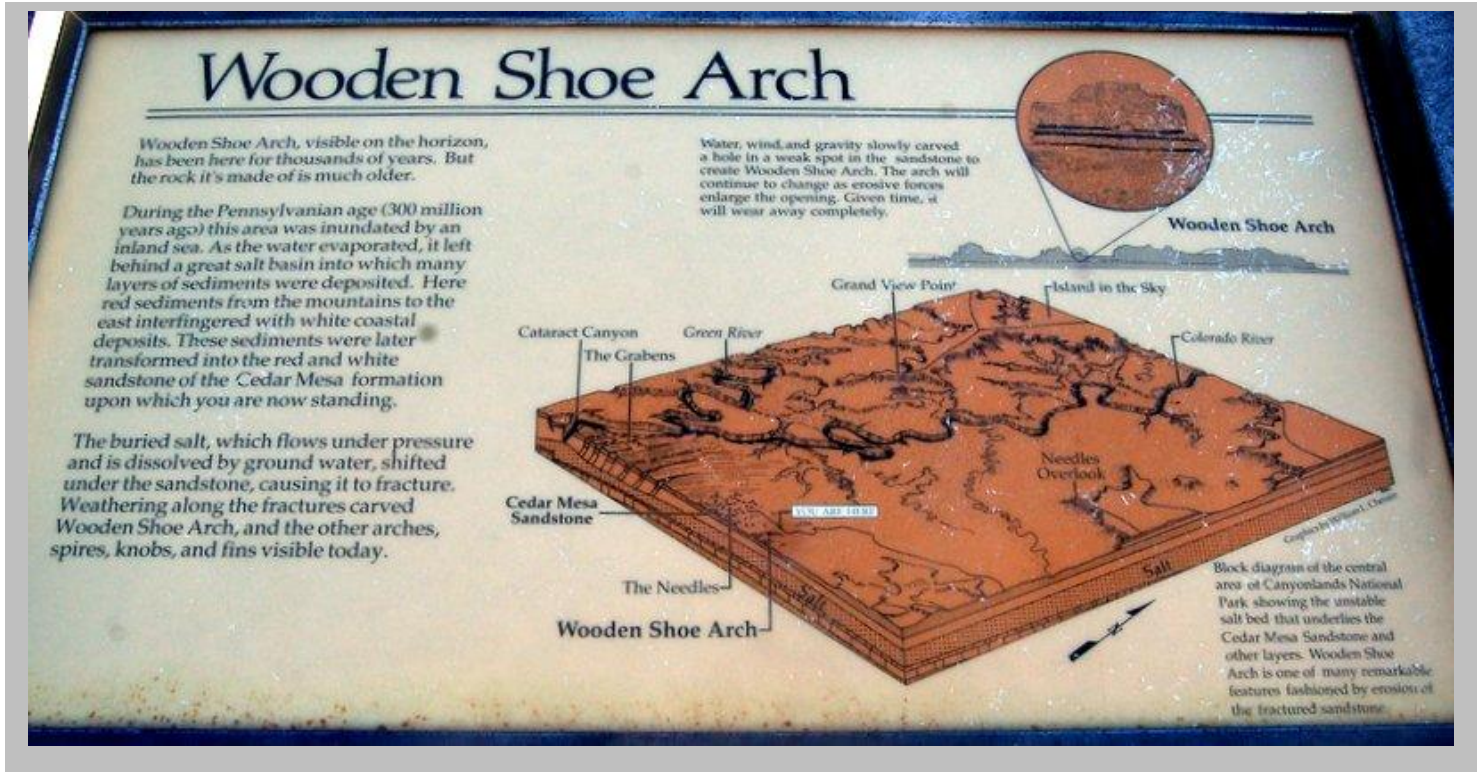


Standing on the edge and looking down into the canyon



I still had some time so I headed for another overlook and took the picture below on the way. You can see why they named it The Needles.





It sure does look like a wooden shoe, does it not?

I took the two pics below to help explain the layers of colors in the rocks. The plaques are a little hard to read, I hope you can make them out.

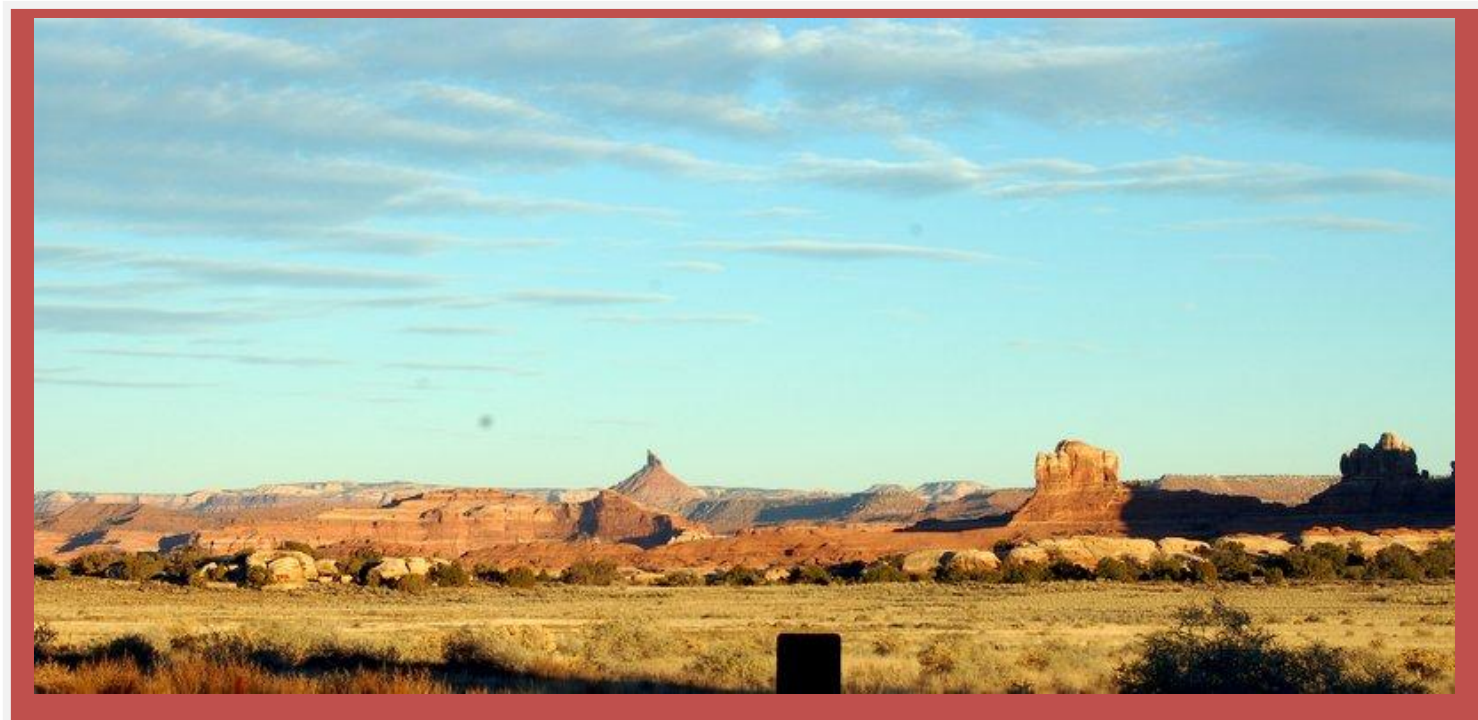
White Sandstone

Sample of Cedar Mesa Sandstone, a member of the Cutler Group, of Lower Permian age (250 million years old). The light color resulted from a lack of iron or other chemical impurities in the sediments from which it was made. The sediments were originally deposited on beaches, and in sand bars and coastal dunes.

Red Sandstone

Sample of sandstone from the Cutler Group of Lower Permian age (250 million years old), the same type of rock which comprises the "wooden shoe." Its red color is caused by the oxidation of iron-bearing minerals. The sediment the rock is made of was carried from the east by streams from the Uncompahgre Uplift.

It was time to check the campground again. Good news – No handicappers. I was given site 7. The concrete pad is about 16' x 50'. It rivals Natural Bridges for beauty. The picture below is only part of the view from my campsite, it would use four photos to show it all.



I started a fire and made a baked potato in the coals, then cooked steak and asparagus on the grill. I got a little tired of all the bread associated with cooking in a pie iron for all those nights before Monument Valley. Starting a fire on the cold mornings; taking hours to get the fire right, then all the time cooking in the pie irons. I decided I would do things simpler and have more time for hiking. A bowl of cereal for breakfast, meat and a veggie on the grill for dinner. The only problem right now is waiting for the baked potato. But I only bought three and will remedy that when I get to Arches National Park.

The scenery here is outstanding. I plan on hiking the Roadside Ruins, Cave Spring and Chesler Park tomorrow. Chesler Park is 3 miles out and 3 miles back. We'll see if I survive.

I was working on this last night but I have no electric here. Just before I inserted the last photo the laptop died. I will finish it today and try and send it out. No reception here but I might make a little road trip to a better signal.

I hope you enjoyed the drive to Canyonlands.