

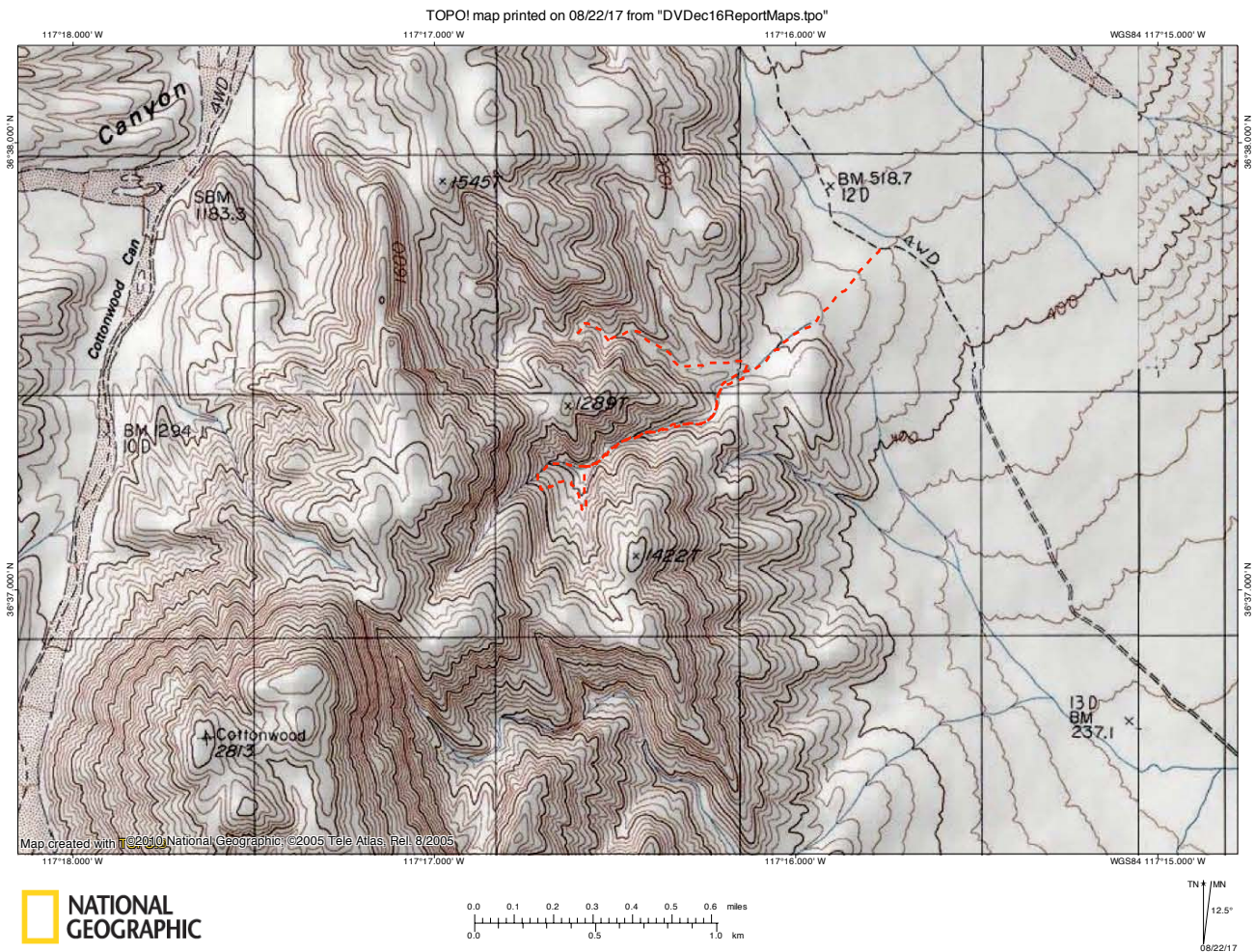
## "CANYONS 1 AND 2" IN THE COTTONWOOD MOUNTAINS

Canyons 1 and 2 are the two northernmost canyons of the "Ten Canyons" region of the Cottonwood Mountains. (Note that there are some additional drainages in this area which are worth exploring, such as "Canyon 0.5", which is near the Cottonwood Arch.) Steve Hall has a report on Canyon 1, which he calls Spectrum Canyon, on his website. (Steve also created the "Ten Canyons" labeling, which I have been using.) It appears that Canyon 2 is referred to as Warthog Canyon by some canyoneering groups; I found this out when looking online after doing this hike. (To my knowledge, none of these canyons have been officially named by the park service, so all of these names are unofficial. In my opinion, the choice of which name to use to refer to these canyons is simply personal preference, so I have included for completeness all of the names I am aware of for these canyons.)

Canyon 2, which we visited first, has a gorge-like narrow section with a steeply slanted chute-like canyon floor (almost like a dryfall, but not quite steep enough). In this narrow section are some interesting rock formations (such as a formation like the Devil's Bathtub in nearby Mosaic Canyon, and some Moki-marble like rocks embedded in the canyon walls). There are also many small arches on the canyon walls before the gorge section. Beyond the first gorge section, the canyon splits into a northern and a southern fork. The northern fork soon enters another gorge section, which has many steep dryfalls. The southern fork has some interesting rocks and is also worth seeing. There are some spectacular views looking out at the valley from the ridge between the two forks of the upper canyon.

Canyon 1 also has some nice rock formations, but due to running out of daylight we had to turn around at the first set of dryfalls.

TOPO map of these two canyons. Canyon 1 is to the north, and Canyon 2 is to the south.



Panorama looking towards the part of the Cottonwood Mountains between Cottonwood Canyon and Lemoigne Canyon.



Looking back down the Cottonwood Canyon Road towards the Pothole Canyon area.



Heading towards Canyons 1 and 2.



Canyons 1 and 2 share the same entrance. Up ahead, to the left in this photo, is where these two canyons split, with Canyon 1 on the right and Canyon 2 on the left. Cottonwood Benchmark is the prominent point in the background above the canyon fork.





Panorama of the canyon fork. We chose to explore Canyon 2 first, since we didn't know what could be in this canyon.



This canyon starts out with the lower part cutting between conglomerate walls and the upper part being a wide wash between tall hills, just like most of the other canyons in this area.



There were many sweeping bends in the conglomerate lower part of the canyon, though the distance between the hillsides making up the canyon walls stayed large.



The scenery through here is quite nice.



There began to be more boulders in the canyon wash, and we expected that up ahead the canyon would get steep and perhaps impassable.



We are now approaching the first narrower section of the canyon.



We spotted this nice arch up on the hillside. (We actually spotted more arches on the way back, as they were more apparent in the afternoon sun angle. There is a surprisingly large number of arches in this area of the Cottonwood Mountains; I'm guessing it's because of the kind of rock typically found in the southern Cottonwood Mountains.)



Notice the brown stripes in the blue rock here.





This is an impressively large section of "tiger-striped" rock. I had seen a similarly impressive chunk of rock like this in a canyon on the eastern side of Tucki Mountain.



Here there are even more boulders in the canyon wash, which can't be avoided and must be climbed over.



The first narrow section of canyon is shorter than I'd expected it would be.



Notice the interesting rock colors which are apparent in the morning lighting.



In this canyon, we encountered many interesting patterns in the rocks. Unfortunately, I don't know enough about geology to identify what they might be, but they are certainly fun to photograph.



There is a single dryfall in this first narrower section of canyon. It is fairly short, about 8 feet tall, and is slanted enough that it should not be difficult to climb.



Here is another nice arch we spotted on the hillside near this narrower section of canyon.



Up ahead, the canyon briefly widens. We can see that around the corner it must narrow and become steep, however.



Yet another arch we spotted up on the hillside here.



The hillsides in this canyon certainly are interesting.





Notice the red, orange, yellow, blue, and brown colors in these rocks, which are noticeable in the morning lighting.



Here we are approaching the narrow and steep section which we had expected to encounter based on looking at Google Earth maps.



We had been concerned there would be at least one major dryfall in this part of the canyon which would force us to turn around. However, the canyon floor is only steeply slanted here.

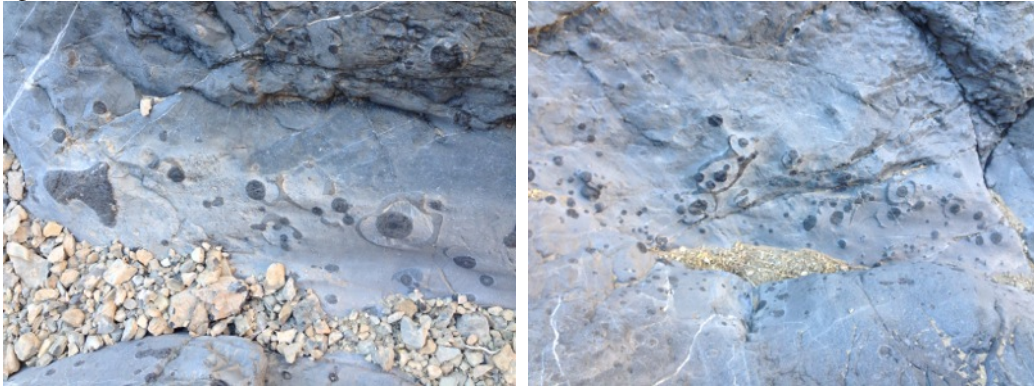




Panorama of the interestingly tilted rock in this chute-like part of the canyon.



There are many small, round rocks embedded in the canyon walls and floor through here, which reminded me of the "Moki marbles" commonly found in parts of Utah.



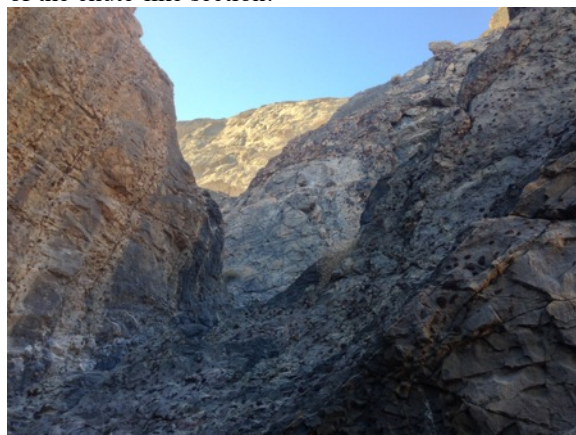
This formation midway up this chute-like part of the canyon reminded me of the "Devil's Bathtub" formation in nearby Marble Canyon, only a little smaller.



Looking down-canyon from just above this formation. Care is required when ascending this part of the canyon, and sticky-soled shoes certainly help in the climb.



This is the view up-canyon from the top of the chute-like section.



Here, the rock has almost completely eroded around one of the lighter-colored "Death Valley marbles".





Just up-canyon, we leave the narrow section and the canyon forks. Due to the morning sun angle and the nature of the canyon fork being just past the narrows, I couldn't get a panorama of the canyon fork. This is the left (south) fork, which we checked out briefly on our way back (more info later in this report).



This is the right (north) fork, which we hiked up first. Notice in the background right of this photo that the canyon appears to enter a narrow gorge-like area again.



The cliffs up ahead are very steep, and we know it is unlikely that we will be able to progress much further in this canyon.



Looking back at the narrow section of canyon we have just left.



Notice the interesting indentations in rock forming the hillside here.



Around the corner, just before the entrance to the narrow section, this dryfall stopped us. I would estimate it is about 12 feet tall, with some small rocks at the top, and the rock chute is slippery.



Looking across at a small peak (labelled 1289 on the TOPO maps) on the north side of the canyon, and at the colors in the hillside below.





From here, I was able to ascend the south side of the canyon wall (which is slippery and the rock is sharp, which actually is helpful in getting traction to climb). This is the view looking out towards the valley. I think the Kit Fox Hills may be visible from here.



Looking down into the part of the canyon above the dryfall. It appears to be a steep chute for a short distance, broken by a couple larger drops. It doesn't look like it is possible to drop into the canyon here.



From here, it is relatively straightforward to continue up to the ridge to get a view further up-canyon.



Here, one can see that there are more taller dryfalls up-canyon, and perhaps even one very tall one at the far back.



Another view of the major dryfall in the upper canyon. I couldn't determine if there is a back-to-back dryfall or if there is just one big dryfall and perhaps some short and steep narrows above it. It doesn't appear from TOPO maps that the upper part of this canyon is at all easy to access, however.



At this high point on the ridge, we were able to get excellent views of the southern Grapevine Mountains and the northern Funeral Mountains, and the Death Valley Buttes.





Panorama from here, with the north fork of this canyon to the left and the south fork to the right (it was difficult to photograph in that direction because of the sun angle).



From here, I descended the ridge a short distance to make sure we could get down into the south fork of this canyon, before having lunch at the excellent view spot up on the ridge. This photo is looking back up at the ridge from which the last few photos were taken (which is the ridge just below the patch of shade that is covering the canyon gorge).



Panorama of the rocky outcroppings that the (north fork) canyon gorge cuts through.



Looking across the south fork at a peak labelled 1422 on the TOPO maps.

