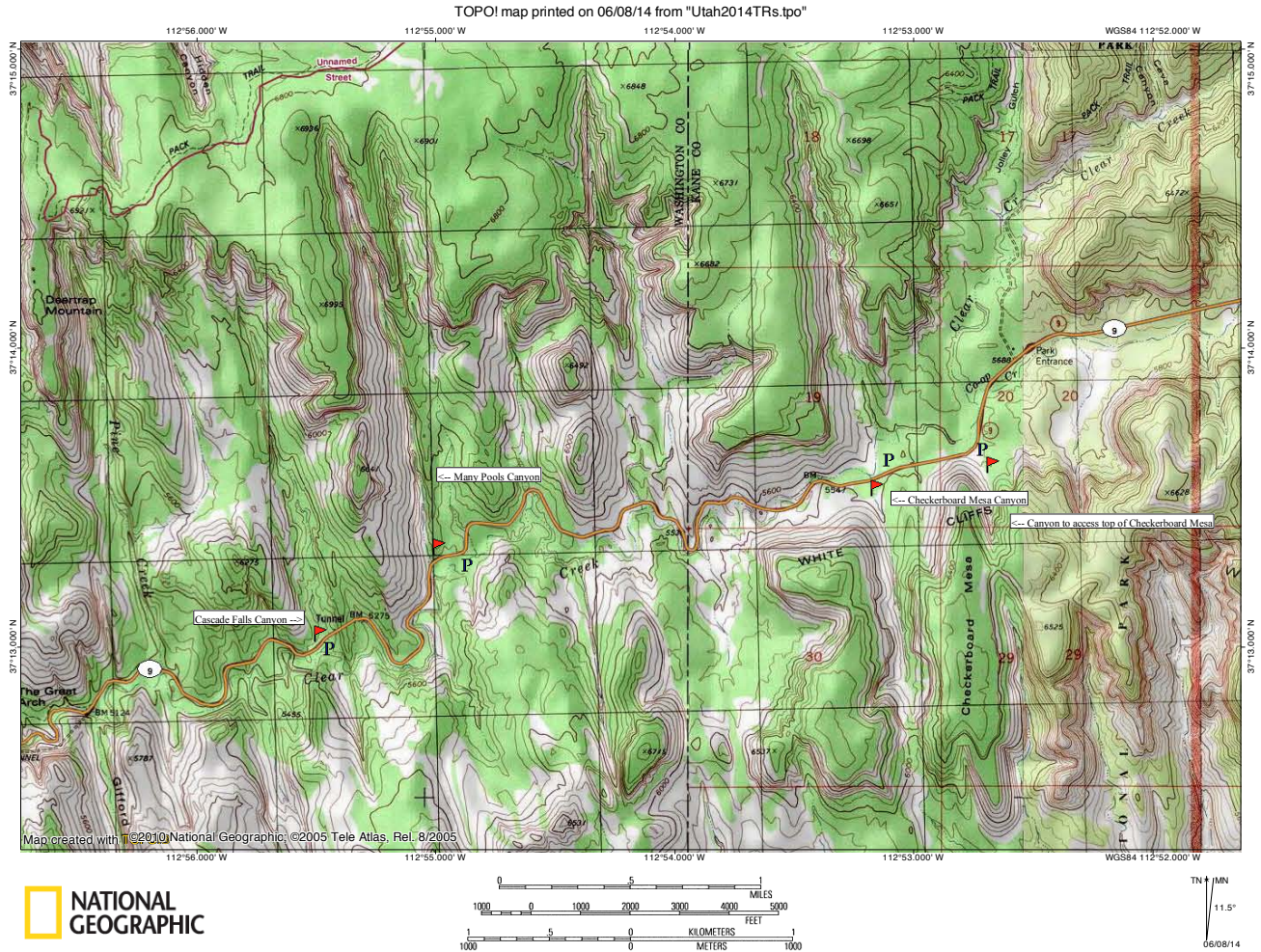


CHECKERBOARD MESA CANYON, MANY POOLS CANYON, AND ZION CANYON OVERLOOK, ZION NATIONAL PARK

Checkerboard Mesa Canyon is the canyon just west of Checkerboard Mesa; Many Pools Canyon is the next major canyon east of the smaller tunnel on the Zion–Mt. Carmel Road. The Zion Canyon Overlook is the popular hike from the east side of the Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel, which gives a view of Zion Canyon from above the Great Arch of Zion.

TOPO map of the East Zion canyons area, with Checkerboard Mesa Canyon and Many Pools Canyon labeled:



View of the Elkhart Cliffs on our drive from Kanab to Zion:



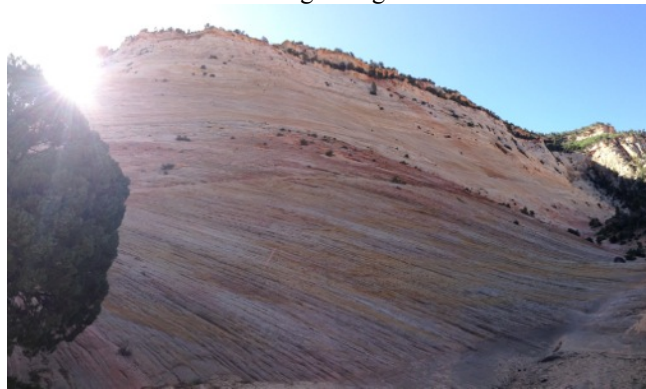
Looking back up the road at a prominent temple-like feature from where we parked for Checkerboard Mesa Canyon (note that we were actually parked as if we were planning on hiking to the top of the mesa, taking the route up the canyon to the east of it, and we could have parked further down the road for Checkerboard Mesa Canyon):

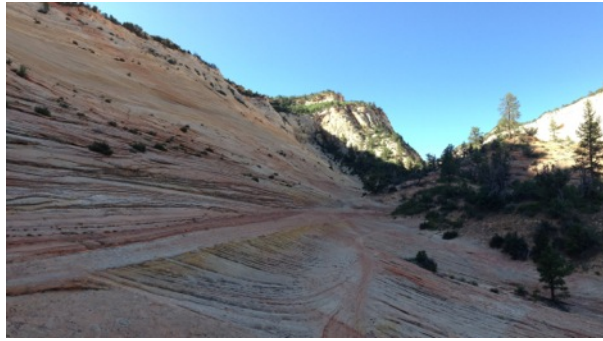


Checkerboard Mesa:



We first checked out the small wash to the east of Checkerboard Mesa Canyon but to the west of the mesa itself, and got some spectacular photos of the pastel colors of the rocks in the morning sunlight:





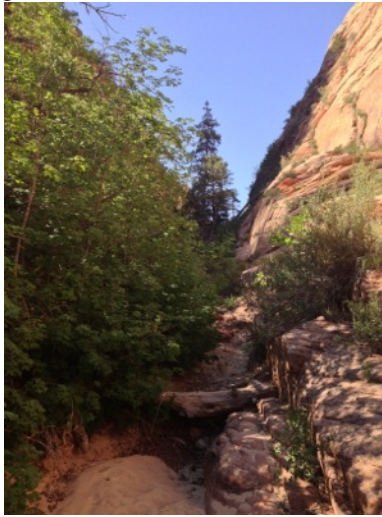
We ascended the small ridge between the wash we were in and Checkerboard Mesa Canyon; this is the view looking north:



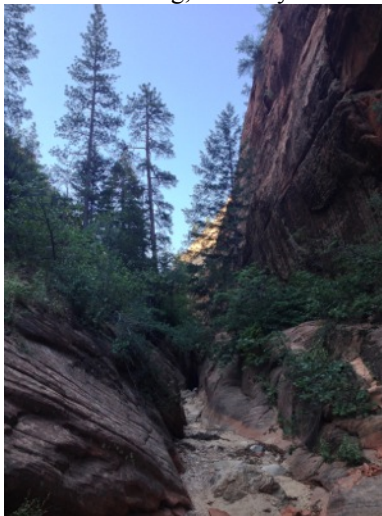
Our first glimpse of Checkerboard Mesa Canyon from this small ridge:



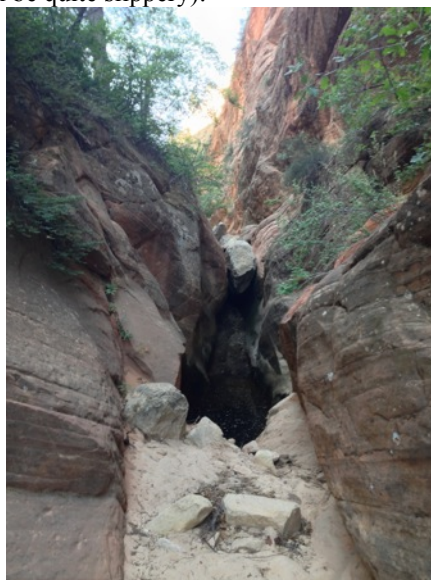
View up-canyon once we dropped in from the ridge:



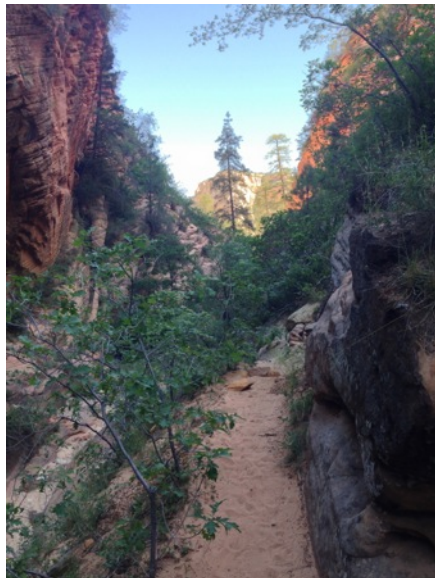
Continuing up-canyon, it was nice, shady, and cool in the morning, and very reminiscent of Hidden Canyon:



This is the only major impasse in the canyon; there is a clear use-trail bypass to the left (note that some of the slickrock here has lots of sand on it from foot traffic and therefore can be quite slippery):



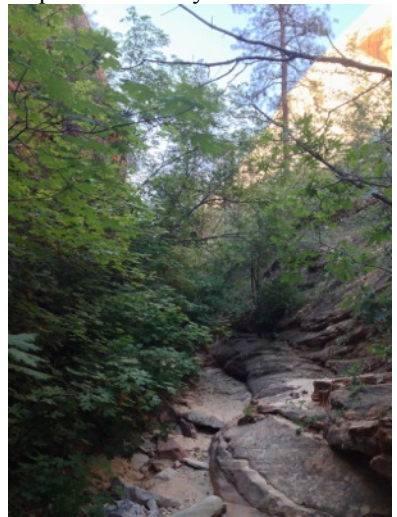
Looking back at the bypass trail on the ledge:



The sand is soft here, so stay away from the edge (which isn't at all difficult since the trail is not narrow):



The next five photos are of our continued progress up this nice canyon:

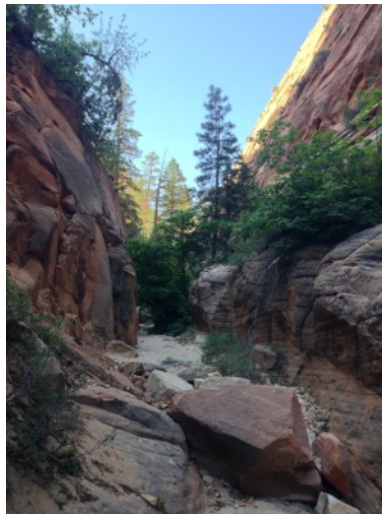




A interesting overhang section in the rock:



The canyon has some areas that are less overgrown than others; luckily, however, there seems to be the perfect balance of enough vegetation to provide shade later in the day but not so much that travel is at all difficult:



Another impasse, this one climbable but more easily bypassed on the left side:



A small boulder jam:



This is the only somewhat major side canyon of Checkerboard Mesa Canyon:



Up ahead we see the head of the canyon; we ascend to the ridge seen in the center of the photo:



This is a very well-worn use trail at the end of the canyon; note that it is quite sandy (it actually felt like I was climbing a sand dune!) and therefore is much faster to descend than to ascend:



Looking back down Checkerboard Mesa Canyon from near the ridge:



Panorama from the top of the ridge; unfortunately, it does not appear possible for a hiker to ascend to the top of either of the two mesas/peaks on either end of the ridge:



Looking back down the pseudo-sand-dune we had just climbed:



This is a butterfly we spotted in the canyon on the return hike:



Panorama of the Checkerboard Mesa Canyon area from near the main road:



Checkerboard Mesa:



Another panorama of the Checkerboard Mesa Canyon area:



This is the beginning of the small canyon which is typically the route used to ascend to the top of Checkerboard Mesa:



The canyon appeared more overgrown than Checkerboard Mesa Canyon (though this could be an illusion), so we decided to get some lunch while it was so hot in the middle of the day, then do another hike later:

