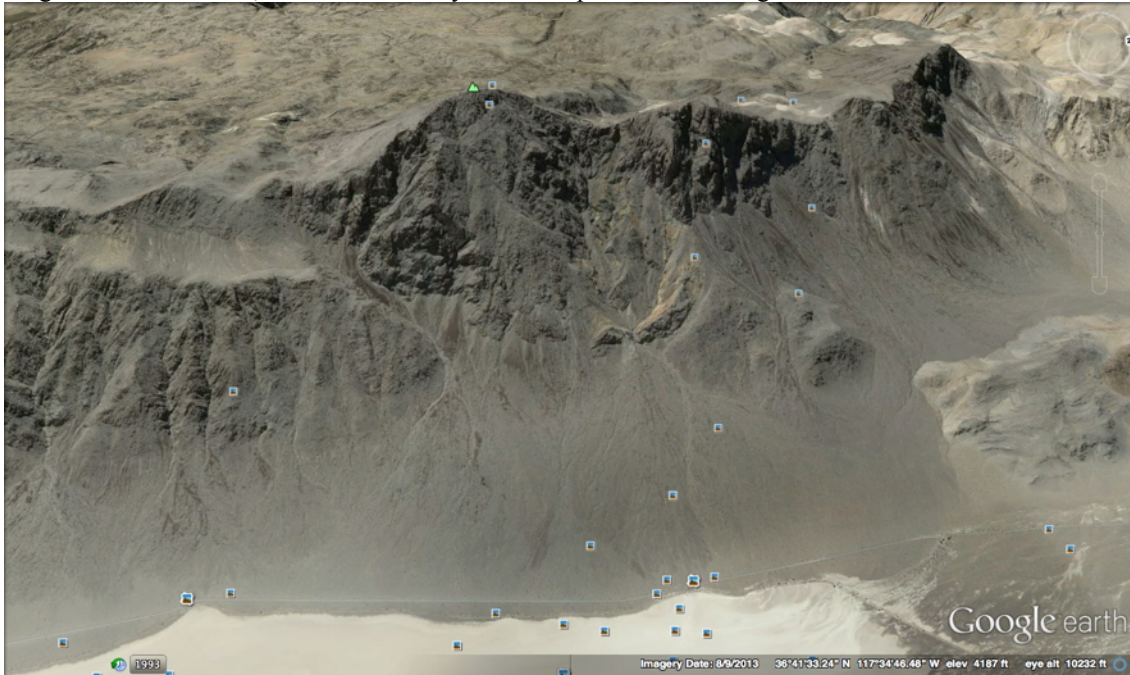


UBEHEBE PEAK

For the second day of our March 2015 trip, we decided to hike Ubehebe Peak, as it was quite hot in the main part of the valley and we had been planning on doing this hike for the past few trips.

Google Earth image of Ubehebe Peak; the trail is actually visible in places in the image:



Passing Teakettle Junction on our way out to the Racetrack:



Our first glimpse of Ubehebe Peak and the Racetrack:



The interpretive sign at the Grandstand parking area; unfortunately, we didn't have time to drive all the way down to the southern end to see the moving rocks on this trip:



The Grandstand in the early morning sunlight:



Panorama of the Ubehebe Peak ridgeline:



Looking back at the parking area for the Grandstand:



The trail heads straight for the peak at first:



Then, it veers off to the north:



The trail is very nice walking and well-defined up to the saddle which is north of the peak that is just north of Ubehebe Peak:



We were able to get some really great views of the Racetrack from our hike up to the saddle in the morning lighting:



It certainly doesn't look easy to get up to the peak going this direction:



The switchbacks of the trail can be seen to the left in this panorama, and the Racetrack to the right:



There was some interesting rockwork along the trail; I think this was an old mining route which donkeys went on, hence the need for such a good trail:



Looking out at the mountains behind the Racetrack as we were gaining elevation:



As we started the switchbacks, we began to increasingly appreciate the excellent trail we were hiking on:



Almost at the last of the switchbacks now:



The switchbacks up to this saddle are typically considered the more difficult part of the hike; however, with the nice trail, I didn't find that part of the hike to be nearly as hard as the part up to the top of Ubehebe Peak from the second saddle:



The views of the Racetrack Valley from this part of the hike are incredible:



The first saddle is finally in sight:



Reaching the saddle, we got our first glimpse into the Saline Valley; from here, one must be careful to choose the upper trail if going to Ubehebe Peak, as the lower trail goes to some old mining operation nearby:



The trail stays nice for a little longer; looking back down at the saddle, there appears to be a trail heading off in the opposite direction along the ridge to the direction we went, though I'm not sure where it would go:



Looking up the Racetrack Valley; there certainly are very nice views on this hike;



Panorama with the Saline Valley to the left and the Racetrack Valley to the right:



There was a lot of this colorful orange moss on the rocks in this area:



The trail continued to be well-defined until just before we descended to the second saddle:



I'm not sure why the trail is so well-built here since we are past any mining operation turn-offs:



There even were these nice rock steps as we ascended to the high point before dropping back down to the second saddle:



We could hike quickly along here:



Switchbacking up to the first high point:



Panorama looking into the Saline Valley from this high point; I think that getting to here is fairly straightforward given the very nice trail—and, the views of the Saline are great from here (and those of the Racetrack excellent from further back down the trail), so if one doesn't want to take the extra time to descend to the second saddle and hike back up to Ubehebe (on the not-as-good trail) this would be a good turn-around point:



The trail crosses along the ridge here, then descends to the second saddle; care must be taken when descending as it is steep and slippery:



The route from here can be seen to be not nearly as easy as the route we had taken up:



Looking down at the Racetrack from a viewpoint on the ridge; this probably would not be an easy way up:



Continuing along the trail with the peak always in sight:



From here we could just barely pick out the use trail to the summit; it isn't as bad as it looks from here, though not something I would want to do on a very windy day:



The trail swings below the craggy ridge at the saddle:



This is the only spot where one might have difficulty figuring out where the trail goes; typically if in doubt stay away from the Racetrack Valley side of the ridge (it's steeper):



Looking down at the Racetrack from here; this also doesn't look like a good route up from the Racetrack:



The trail climbs up through these rocks; this seems to be the only section where one has to do any sort of climbing, and also the most likely spot where one could lose the trail:



Looking back at where we descended from the first high point; note how the trail swings down quite a ways to work around the steeper rock sections:



Looking up at the use trail to the (false) summit of Ubehebe Peak:



The trail isn't so bad here, though it is steeper and not as well-defined as it was previously:



The views, however, definitely make the hike worthwhile, and we gained elevation quickly, soon getting above the other peak:



The trail was a little concerning in places where there was a steep dropoff on one side (I didn't get photos of some of the worse places, but it's fine as long as there aren't strong winds):



The peak register box; this one was more "decorated" than others I've seen:



The view into the Saline Valley from here was amazing:



The benchmark at the summit:



Some fossil-like objects in many of the rocks at the summit:



Looking north along the Ubehebe Peak ridge, noting the snow-capped peaks far in the distance:



Looking down at the Racetrack:



Another great view into the Saline Valley:



Looking down at the other high point north of Ubehebe; it seems like this would be quite easy to get to the top of if one didn't want to go all the way to the the top of Ubehebe but wanted to check out the views (we didn't have time to do both):



Looking down the steep side of the peak towards the Racetrack road:



Looking down the steep trail towards the second saddle:



It might have been helpful if I'd thought to bring hiking poles for the descent:



Looking back up at the one spot where one could lose the trail on the way up:



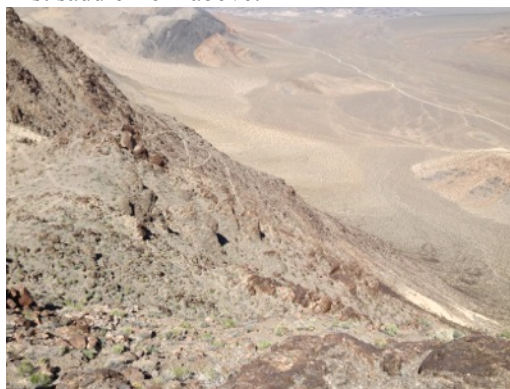
Reaching the first high point of the trail:



Looking down towards the first saddle:



Looking down at the switchbacks up to the first saddle from above:



This green rock was quite interesting:



Upon reaching the parking lot, we took a quick walk out towards the Grandstand:



We didn't have much time for exploring the Racetrack as we wanted to get back to Stovepipe before dark, but we did drive down the main Racetrack road a short distance to get some photos of the playa:



Looking back at Ubehebe Peak; it certainly looks like the best route to the top is where the trail is:



These Joshua Trees are certainly very interesting each time we drive by them:

