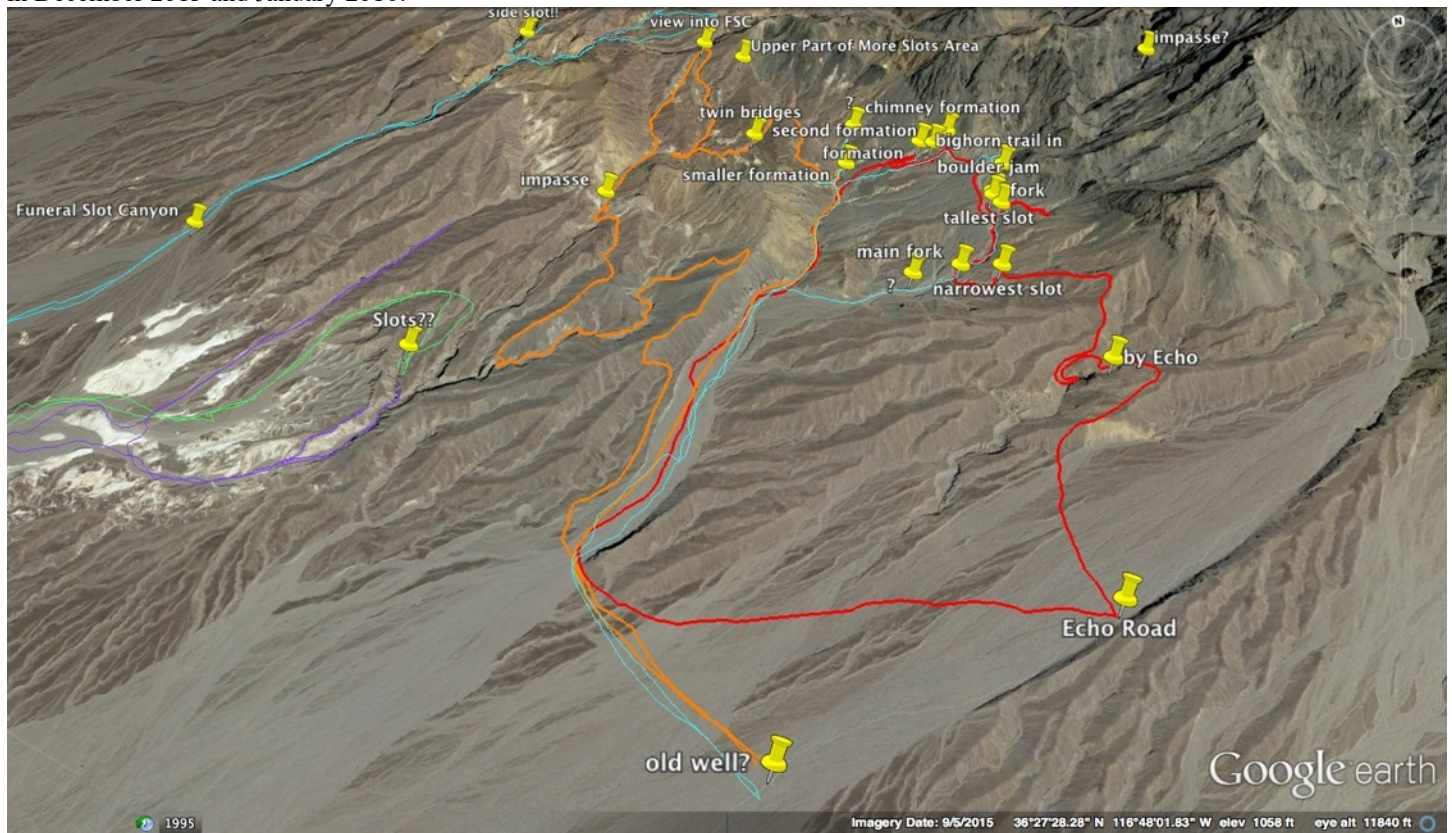


UPPER NARROWS OF THE CANYON JUST NORTH OF ECHO CANYON

We had previously explored this area in December 2015 and January 2016, but we hadn't seen the upper part of the narrowest section in the right (southeastern) fork of this canyon. Our goal for this hike was to check out the rest of those narrows, and to continue up the rest of the right fork of this canyon, beyond the narrows. Unfortunately, the main canyon has a considerable number of large boulders, which makes hiking slow and tedious, so we did not get as far up the canyon as we had hoped. From the ridge above the canyon, however, we spotted an interesting formation, which I hope to return to sometime, to check out further. From there, we dropped into the left (northern) fork of this canyon, to see some potential interesting formations which I had spotted on Google Earth. These turned out to be three (rather small) false natural bridges.

Important note: There are many false natural bridges, sinkholes, and interesting formations (e.g. large stalagmite-like structures) in this area. Please be very careful if hiking here, because one could easily fall into a sinkhole or slip off a cliff. Also, many of these formations could easily be destroyed by an accidental careless step, so please watch where you are walking for this reason as well.

Google Earth maps of this hike; the first is an overview of the area, and the second is a more detailed map of the upper part of the narrowest slot. The light blue line is the route we took on this hike. The red and orange lines show our two previous hikes to this area, in December 2015 and January 2016.





Last year, when we had hiked to the upper regions of this canyon and the one just north it, which is south of Funeral Slot Canyon, we had parked further up the Echo Canyon Road. This time, we parked by what appears to be an old well, or something similar, and the hike across to the mouth of this canyon was easier.



Looking up at Echo Canyon from here.



Looking out towards the valley before dropping into this canyon.



Heading up the wide canyon wash.



Up ahead is where the canyon forks; we have hiked down the left fork twice, and we have seen the upper part of the right fork, but we hadn't yet seen the middle part of the right fork.



This is the left fork, which we've hiked down but have actually never hiked up.



A short distance up the right fork, this large boulder blocks the entrance to a side-drainage, which we didn't take the time to explore.



Here, two side-drainages join the right fork of the main canyon.



The right side quickly ends at a dryfall.



The left one is steep and appears to not be particularly interesting.



Up ahead, we see that we are approaching the narrow area we had found last year.



This side drainage on the left side (north) has an interesting chute-like entrance. I'm not sure how far it continues this way.



The canyon abruptly starts to narrow, although the walls are still shallow.



This is as far as we had hiked down the right fork on our previous trip to this area.



This is the side canyon we had hiked down last year.



Up ahead is the entrance to these very nice narrows.



Probably due to different lighting on this trip, these narrows didn't seem as tall as I'd remembered, but they still are impressive.



In some places, the passage is quite narrow, and there are many boulders in the wash.



Here is where the right fork splits; to the left is a deeper and narrower slot, which is impassable in the middle due to a major boulder jam.



To the right is a smaller side-canyon, which we had explored last year. To get into the upper part of the canyon, we headed up this side-canyon with the idea of gaining the ridge on the northern side of this side-canyon (which is the southern side of the main canyon). This is the route we took up to the ridge.



Looking across from the ridge at the single narrow section we had checked out last year in this smaller side canyon.



Looking down into the upper slot from the ridge.



The main ridge seen to the back in this photo, below the Panamint Mountains, is the one we had crossed on our first trip to this area.



Panorama looking down into this canyon. Notice how wide this part of this canyon is, especially as compared to the narrow slot below.



Panorama of this area. Notice how flat and plateau-like the ridge we are on is.



This is the view looking down the bighorn sheep trail we had spotted from the other side of the canyon on our last trip to this area. It was passable, but not as worn-in as it had appeared from the other side of the canyon.



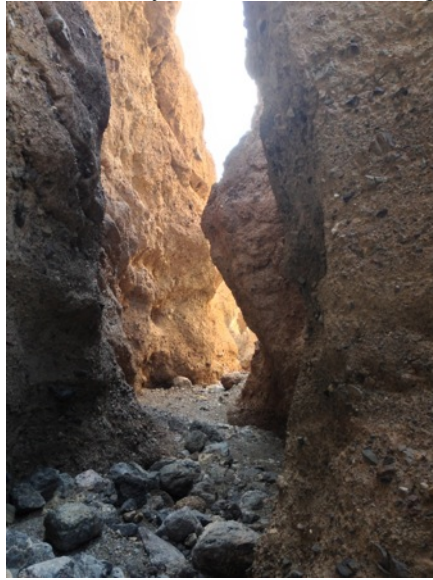
This is the entrance to the narrower upper slot.



Notice how quickly the canyon narrows here.



The walls quickly become tall around the corner, and the canyon floor loses elevation quickly.



Up ahead is the top of the boulder jam which had stopped us. It looks much different than I had expected.



This is one of the largest boulders I have ever seen wedged in a canyon. I would estimate it must be at least 20 feet tall. Note one could try to crawl through on the right side of the boulder, but it wouldn't be advisable because the rocks could be unstable.



Looking back up at the minor boulder jam which we descended to get to the big boulder.



This is the other side of the corner just past the entrance to the narrows.



From here, we decided to continue up the main canyon for a short distance.

