

**LOWER VERMILION CLIFFS NATIONAL MONUMENT:  
CATHEDRAL WASH, LONELY DELL RANCH, COLORADO RIVER, AND NAVAJO BRIDGE**

As we had previously hiked Buckskin Gulch and other locations in the upper part of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, we decided to check out the lower area of this national monument. We were not able to do much hiking as it was very hot, but we did see a few very interesting locations. Our first walk, after having stopped at some locations along the side of the main road (Alt. 89) to get photographs of the amazing cliffs, was Cathedral Wash. This is a relatively narrow (but definitely not a slot) canyon that reaches the Colorado River 1.5 miles from the road. We also checked out Lonely Dell Ranch, near the Paria River, and walked down to the Colorado River from near there. Finally, we stopped at the Navajo Bridge to get some photos of the bridge.

Panorama looking north towards the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument from a viewpoint on the road between Kanab and Jacob Lake:



Looking up House Rock Valley; we had only driven House Rock Valley Road from the north, and only to the Wire Pass Trailhead, as we had read that the road can be very sandy in places:



Panorama looking towards the Vermilion Cliffs:



The Vermilion Cliffs are quite spectacular as seen from the road:



There does not appear to be many routes to the top of the cliffs from below:



Panorama of the western end of the Vermilion Cliffs:



Looking south from here, it appears quite flat; however, the Colorado River cuts through somewhere out there:



The road to Page must go way south around the cliffs seen in the distance:



Some interesting rocks on the side of the road:



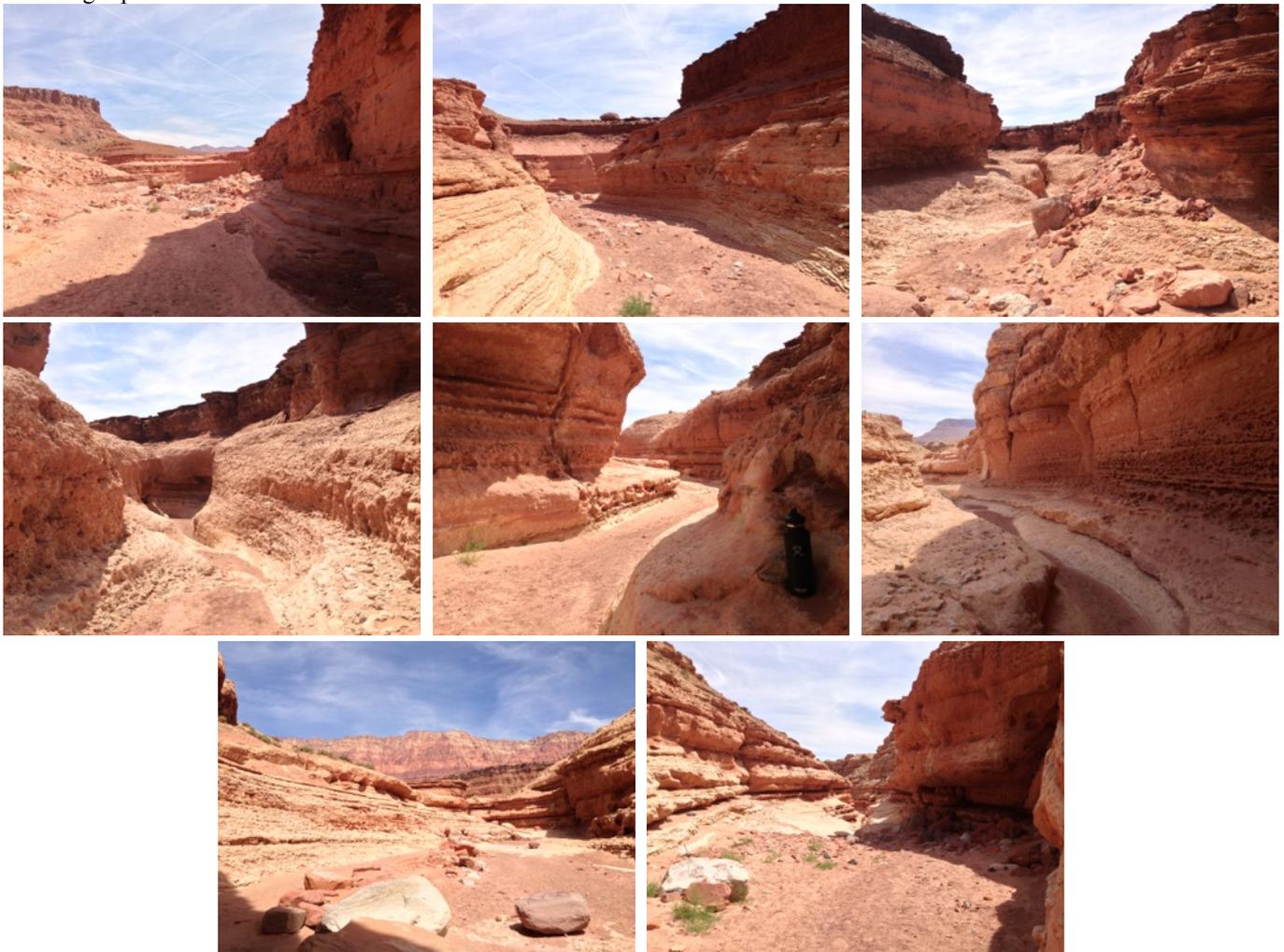
Panorama just after we enter the turnoff road which goes to Lee's Ferry:



Panorama of the Vermilion Cliffs and Upper Cathedral Wash from the parking area for the Cathedral Wash hike:



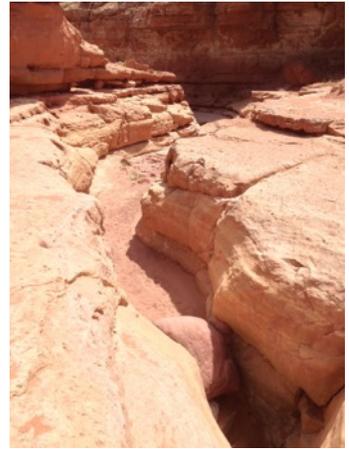
The next eight photos show our walk down Lower Cathedral Wash:



We spotted a very photogenic horned toad, who seemed to be posing for the camera:



Eleven more photos of our progress down Cathedral Wash, as the walls began to get taller:





This is the first major dropoff in Cathedral Wash, which must be bypassed on the right. The easiest route appears to be to drop down to a lower ledge as soon as possible; however, another route would be to continue along the upper ledge then climb down some boulders once the ledge ends (I did not attempt this second route, so I cannot guarantee that it will work). The first photo shows the ledge to follow (to the right), the second photo is a view down-canyon from the upper ledge (I dropped down to a lower ledge just before where this photo was taken; for hikers not used to bypasses such as this, it may seem a little exposed, but to experienced Death Valley hikers this is a very simple workaround), the third photo is looking back at the impasse from the lower ledge, and the fourth photo is of an overhang which we crawled under on the bypass route:



The canyon gets a little more difficult to navigate, though nothing serious, with some short falls and potholes which require walking on ledges on the side of the canyon to get around:



This is the second major impasse, which must be bypassed on the ledge to the right (seen in the first photo; I walked back up-canyon to get the second photo of the impasse):



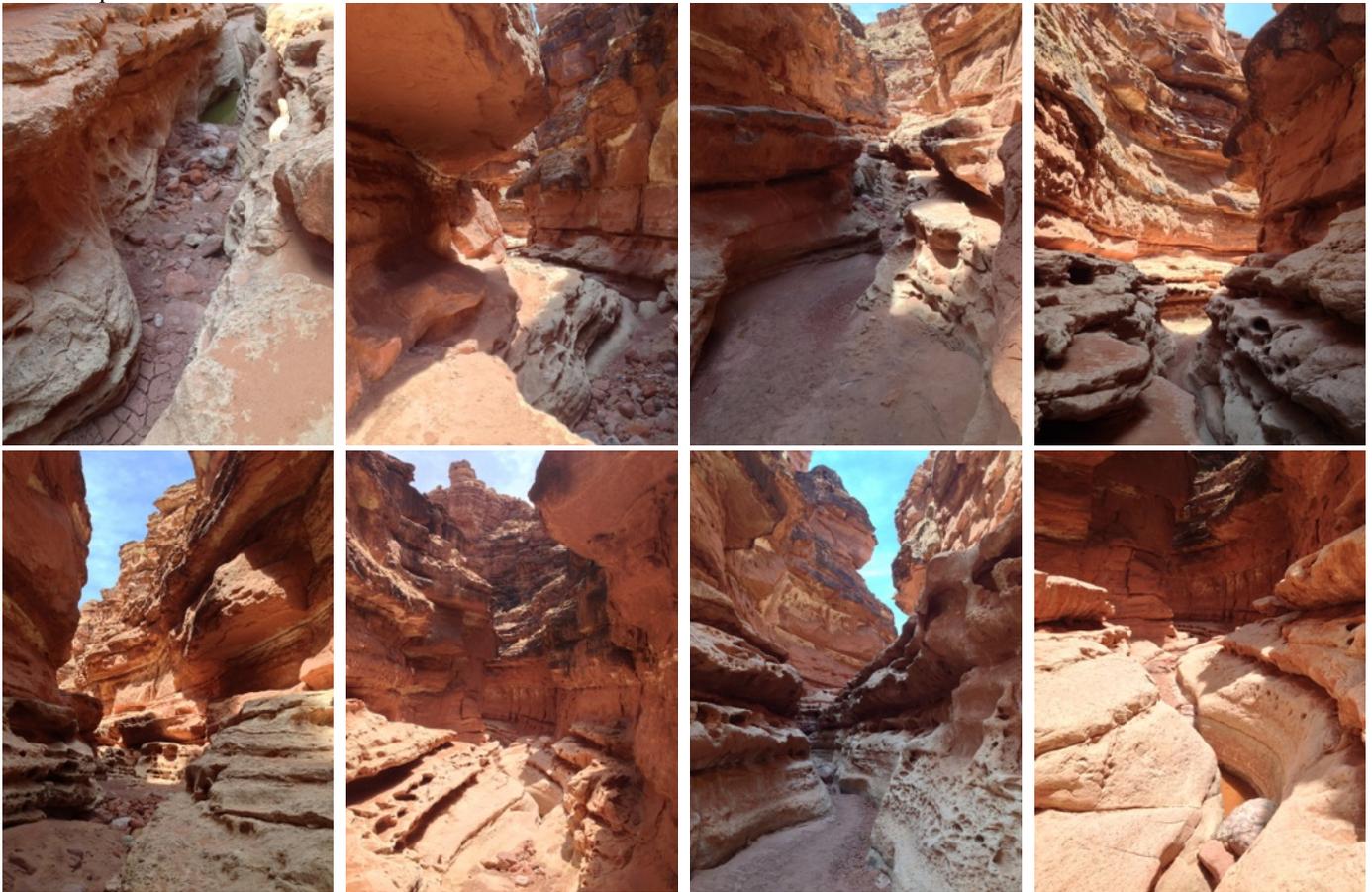
Four more photos as the canyon gets deeper and begins to have more dropoffs:



This section of canyon must be bypassed on a ledge on the left side (note the narrow ledge to the left in the photo, which is a common feature in many Death Valley bypass routes but may seem difficult to some hikers not familiar with routes such as this):



The next twelve photos show more of Cathedral Wash, as it changes in character and becomes trickier to navigate—we were walking more on ledges on the walls than in the canyon itself, and the walls began to get taller and steeper. Overall, this was a quite spectacular part of the hike:





Finally, the wash opened up and we could see that we must be near the Colorado River:



The Colorado River is on the near side of the cliff seen in the center of the first photo; however, there is a bit of bouldering that is required to reach the river from here, so I decided to stop here as it was quite hot when not in the shade; the second photo is looking back up-canyon from here:



One final photo in Cathedral Wash on our way back to the trailhead, of the bypass route of the first major impasse:



From here, we continued to the end of the road where we could check out the lower Paria River Canyon and Lonely Dell Ranch:



There were two lizards climbing this tree near the ranch:



Looking up the Paria River Canyon; it would be an amazing backpacking trip to hike all the way down to Lee's Ferry from the White House entrance (or maybe even starting from further north, near Cannonville):



Panorama of Lonely Dell Ranch:



Another view up the Paria River Canyon:



Two panoramas of this area from near Lonely Dell Ranch:



The orchard:



Our next stop was to check out the Colorado River from near the end of the road. The notorious jumping frog of the Colorado River:



Panorama of the river:



Looking up towards the Paria River Canyon from here:



We also checked out Navajo Bridge; there were three condors under the bridge when we were there, but we were unable to get a good photograph of any of them:





One last photo of the Vermilion Cliffs as we drove by them on our way back to Kanab:



As the sun angle was better at the end of the day, we stopped again at the viewpoint we had checked out on our drive in and took another photo looking towards the Vermilion Cliffs:

