

### CANYON NORTH/EAST OF BLACK POINT

For the last hike of our March 2015 trip, we returned to the canyon which is just north/east of Black Point (the most major canyon between the main Black Point Canyon and Stretched Pebble Canyon; see my report from December 2011 for photos of the lower section of this canyon). We ascended a different ridge than we had hiked in the 2011 trip, which wasn't quite as steep or slippery but we missed some views of the lower canyon, to access the upper part of the canyon; as can be seen from the map below, the canyon splits into multiple forks beyond the section of impasses. We briefly explored the right fork first until the wash began to get relatively steep, as this is the fork which we descended into from the ridge. Then, we headed down-canyon and were successfully able to get to the top of the ~50 foot impasse which had blocked our progress in the lower canyon in 2011, by following what appeared to be a bighorn "freeway". As it was getting quite hot in the canyon, we weren't sure how much more exploring we were going to be able to do, but we still wanted to see some of the left fork of the canyon. So, we hiked up the main left fork, then took the side canyon towards the yellow pin on the map below (which I marked because it looked from Google Earth like there were some good narrows there, but it turned out to be just a steeper part of the canyon). Then, we continued up the main canyon, which turned out to have a very nice arch just past the fork (which looks very close to being a bridge as it may have been water-carved, but it is above the canyon floor), as well as some spectacular, though steep, narrows (which continued beyond where we were stopped by a ~15 foot dryfall which may be bypassable but it was too hot on that day to look for a workaround).

Map of the upper part of this canyon:



The sun angle wasn't very good for getting photos of where we were heading on our hike towards the canyon, but one can see that the ridges here are somewhat convoluted so having a good map is necessary to ensure you don't end up on the wrong ridge:



We saw a number of these nice flowers on our walk across the alluvial fan:



We ascended the ridge to the right in this photo; we came down the small canyon in the center of this photo on our way back:



The small canyon seen in the previous photo looked to have some nice narrows from the ridge:



Another view into this short canyon:



The ridge walking was nice and flat here, as opposed to the steeper and slipperier route we took in 2011:



Looking out towards the valley; we came up the ridge to the left, and the one to the right is the one we hiked up in 2011:



Panorama, with the upper part of this canyon we were exploring to the right:



Looking down into the canyon with the major left fork just below:



The upper part of the (shorter) right fork:



Most routes down into the canyon from the ridge work, though some are less steep than others; for this route here that we took, hiking poles were helpful though certainly not a necessity:



We were surprised how colorful the canyon was once we dropped into the wash:



Nice rock in the canyon walls:



There was a small dryfall (photo further below because the sun angle was better on our way back down), then a short narrow-ish section in the canyon :



This fork of the canyon got steep up ahead, and we still had a lot to see in the rest of the canyon, so we turned around here:



The rock formations in this area are very interesting:



There were lots of these flowers on the canyon floor:



This is the short dryfall just before the narrower section above; it's about 8 feet tall and quite simple to climb:



We continued back down-canyon in hopes of being able to get to the top of the ~50 foot dry fall that had stopped us in 2011; we were surprised at how colorful the canyon walls and surrounding area were as we continued down past where we had descended into the canyon:





The canyon leveled out more and we could see that there would be a dropoff up ahead:



The canyon steps down through some pavement/conglomerate sort of rock:



We could see this interesting spire from many locations around this canyon:



Looking back up-canyon at the weird rock we just walked down through:



The canyon then pours over this fall, which is about 15 feet tall in the first drop and about 20 feet in the second:



There appeared to be a bit of greenery at the base of this two-stage dryfall, and there appeared to be a fallen boulder that created a tunnel just past that; around the corner, it looked like there were some narrows—definitely worth trying to find a workaround for this obstacle:



The spire we'd been seeing now looked like a face from this angle (depending on one's imagination):



There were a lot of wind caves above this section of the canyon, but unfortunately it looked to be too steep to try to hike up to them:



We were quickly able to find a very well-defined sheep trail on the right side of the canyon, which we followed, assuming that it would lead into the part of this canyon which we had so far been unable to access:



This section of the canyon began to look nicer as we hiked above it:



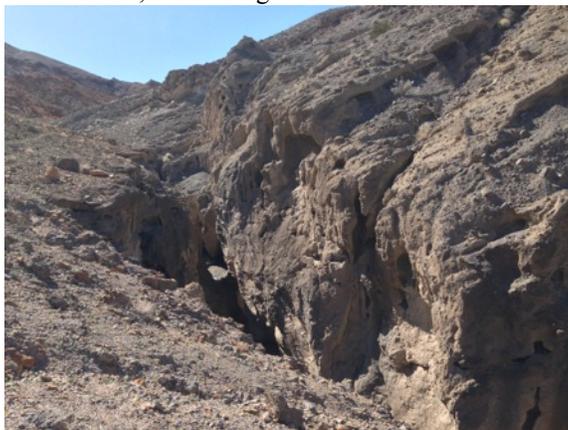
Looking down into the (short) narrows below:



Panorama of this part of the canyon; note the spire in the upper left, the narrows below, and the sheep trail (fainter here) that we were following:



Looking back at the upper part of this narrow section; the leaning boulder can be seen in the center of the photo:



Looking up at the oddly shaped spire:



It was possible to drop into the canyon here, but it is much easier to continue a short distance to where the bighorn route enters the wash:



Just nearly reaching the canyon floor; we were very excited to be able to see more of this interesting canyon:



There were lots of little wildflowers in this open stretch of the canyon where we dropped in:



This is the easy route into the canyon; we were quite surprised to be able to simply walk along a bighorn trail to bypass the middle impasses:



Now heading up-canyon to see as much of the narrows as we could:



The rock formations in this part of the canyon are quite interesting:



Rounding a corner, we could see that there was an impasse just ahead, with the leaning boulder just beyond (so we really only didn't get to see the spot of the canyon with all the greenery between the leaning boulder and the two-stage dryfall):



This impasse was only about 18 feet tall, but it was slick and didn't look easy to get up or back down:



From this angle you can just barely see the leaning slab of rock that must be walked under to get to the top of this dryfall:



Zooming in on this rock slab; it must have made a lot of noise when it fell:



Exiting the narrows and heading down-canyon to see if we could get to the top of the big dryfall:



Looking back up the wash at an interesting rock formation:



Heading down-canyon over some more of the pavement-like rock:



There is an interesting side canyon draining into the main canyon here, which we checked out on our way back:



Looking back up at where we descended into the canyon (left of center); somehow it doesn't look like it would be all that easy just to walk into this part of the canyon:



The top of the major impasse was around just a couple of turns in the canyon:



Looking down over the top of this impasse:



This certainly isn't an easy dryfall just to walk around:



Heading back up-canyon, we could always see the big spire above the narrowest part of the canyon:



The side canyon we spotted earlier was narrow at the beginning, but steep (as we didn't see the end it may go further than it looks):



Looking back out of the side canyon at the bypass route:



This was another attempt to photograph all the little flowers growing in the canyon wash; the greenery can barely be seen in the photo, unfortunately:



This photo shows the well-defined bighorn trail we were following to bypass the two upper impasses:



Another look at all the wind caves (and some small arches) in this part of the canyon:



We next headed back up-canyon to check out the left fork; here's where the left and right forks split:



This overhanging dryfall provided some shade for our lunch stop, as it was a rather hot day:



Bypassing the impasse, the wash appeared to stay level for a short distance:



Looking back up the left fork at where we had descended into the canyon:

