

RMCC Lake Powell Trip - Oct. 9-18, 2020

Day 0 (Oct. 8):

by Karen Amundson

Doug Hurcomb, Lin Hark and I left Fruita and headed to the Starr Springs Campground in the scattered Henry Mountains after a stop in Green River, Utah for melons and a lunch at their City Park. The **Starr Springs Campground** was a good option to escape the heat and be just 40 minutes short of Bullfrog. We took the newly remodeled Group Site for just \$10 on the Senior Pass. We hiked the Nature Trail and then Carol and Werner Duecker arrived. We did some stargazing (Jupiter and Mars and Dipper) with binoculars and absolutely no light pollution. Anne Fiore and Gary Cage rounded out the crew for Lake Powell, but stayed at the **Staunton camp** nearer to the marina.



Day 1:

We drove to the Anasazi Restaurant for breakfast. They have good views and slow service. Then we went to the **Bullfrog marina** where we parked 1/4 mile from the houseboat. It



took an hour and 30 minutes to do paperwork and then get boat instructions from a young

lady new to the job. We loaded up all gear and kayaks and I backed it out. Werner drove essentially the rest of the trip. Tracy and Janet Hays did a self-support 177 mile trip similar to ours, finishing about a week before our trip. They gave us photos of their maps with notes about camps and hikes. Tracy spoke highly of Iceberg Canyon, and we wanted to check it out; but no camps were near enough to **Iceberg** to be good in winds up to 25 mph Friday-Sunday so we continued to **Bowns/Long Canyons** and parked near the end of Long Canyon. There were no tent sites, so Anne and Gary took the upper deck and Doug was on the front deck. With only 7 people we could all have semi-private sleeping spaces. Werner did a tasty Paella - Spanish seafood and rice dish - for dinner.



Day 2:

We paddled to the end of Bowns; then came back to a trail that looked tough, so we did



not hike. At noon we left our camp and headed into the **Escalante Arm**. Nice views, and many photos. We passed on **Indian Creek** (must exit and reboard kayaks in deep water to do its hike) and **Clear Creek** and turned into **Davis Gulch**. Slim pickens on camps. This time we had no chairs on the beach as it was too rocky. Doug fixed some salmon and a Nicoise

salad and I did a strawberry shortcake. Dinner and starwatching were off of the back deck with its good view. Carol played the Indian flute.



Day 3:

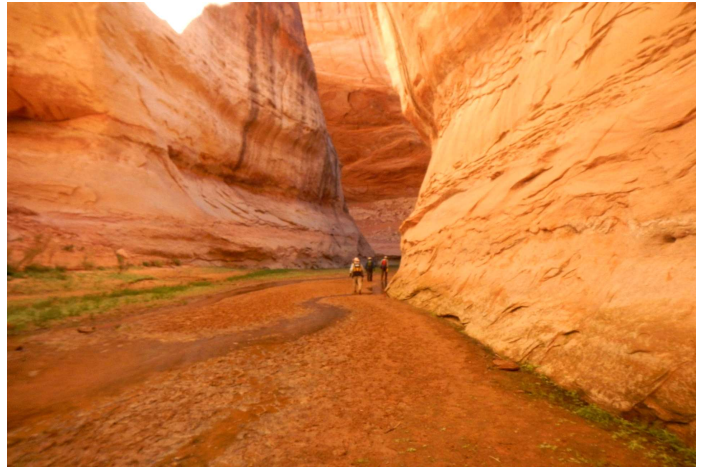
We paddled 1/4 mile to the end of **Davis Gulch**. We hiked near **La Gorce Arch** and continued < 1 mile to a waterfall. I hung out there (knee surgery Aug. 21 kept me limited) while others went further. Carol/Werner, Doug, and Lin got to the nice petroglyphs with



much bushwhacking and climbing. It was a lovely 2/3 day of hiking. Anne and Gary fixed dinner - appetizers of fried asiago cheese and peppered pork; then grilled veggies, and chicken marsala on noodles. We had adjusted the boat before paddling as wind was moving it some. Paddle / hike / happy hour / eat / sleep / repeat. Oh, what a good life!

Day 4:

My birthday! We paddled ~ 4 miles down **Davis Gulch up the Escalante and up 50 Mile Creek** until we ran into a huge sand dune blocking the canyon's water. We got out of our kayaks and everyone but me dragged theirs 50' to the next water. After more than 2



hours, the others returned. They had hiked through mud and beyond; claimed it was nice. They did not get to the narrows, but said it would be worth doing sometime. The dune was a perfect place for a houseboat camp in the future. We paddled back to our camp; 8 miles RT for me and ~9 for others. We packed up and headed for **Willow Creek**. Got 1+ miles

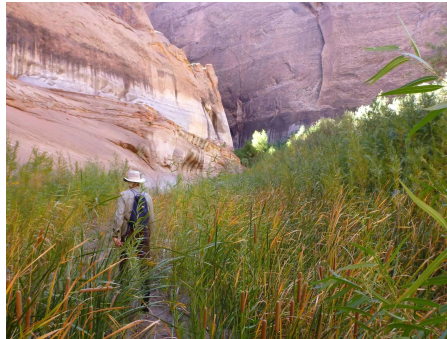


into it and the left engine died. It was in deep sand/mud. Werner fought trying to back out for 10+ minutes and we finally escaped. We went back to the mouth of **Bishop Creek** and went up it <1 mile to find a nice, sandy alcove and set up camp. Lin did chicken enchiladas.



Day 5:

We had a slower pace for breakfast and got on the water at 10am. We paddled just 25 minutes **down Bishop and up Willow Creek** and landed 200 yards past yesterday's engine failure. I hiked for 1.5 hours (1 way); Anne/Gary continued 1.8 hours RT to the Waterfall. The other 4 went pretty far, maybe 6 miles RT. Most of them saw a bighorn sheep with a



3/4 curl. I saw a dragonfly, frog, crawfish, and Blue Heron. We got back to camp at 4:00. It was leftover night, so we had good food again. Doug and I tried Carol's Indian Flute.



Day 6:

The usual "7:30 Werner starts the generator" alarm got me up and he also made the coffee. Before 10am we headed **to the Escalante and went North**. Saw what was probably Indian ruins 1/3 mile before the **Three Roof Ruins**. The 3 Roof looked nice perched up on a cliff,

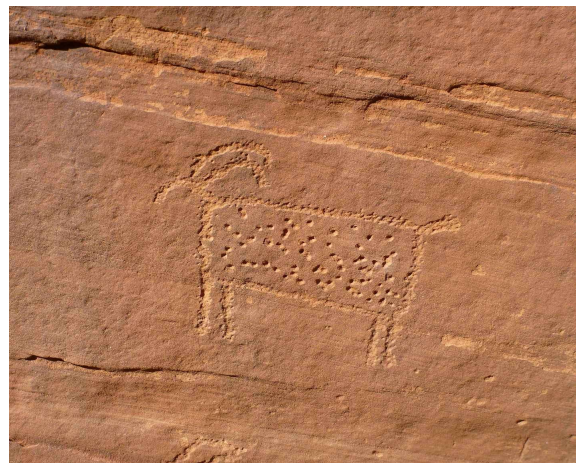


but it was marked off as Closed. You would only be able to access it at high water unless you brought climbing gear. We went further and Carol spotted some Moki steps. Then we went to the **end of the Escalante Arm**, 1/2 mile short of **Explorer Canyon** at the currently low water level. We saw a few grebes and an osprey and returned to the 1st ruin for lunch. Back to camp, and 4 of us did the end of water in **Bishop Canyon**. Anne had wonderful appetizers and a blue cheese and red onion pasta and grilled veggies after Werner fixed the grill. Apple crisp was excellent. Carol and I sang harmonies to her guitar and Doug's mandolin. Then we had friendly chat on the back deck until bed time. We talked about future places to kayak: **Navajo Reservoir, Lake Tahoe, Bear Lake in UT/ID, and the Baja**.



Day 7:

We got going and pulled up anchors by 9am. I cooked up a half batch of GF brownies while we went **down the Escalante**. The toilet at the mouth of Escalante was missing pump handles and connector pieces. I hope we do not fill the gray or black water tanks. The joy of having 2 bathrooms! We looked at **Hole-in-the-Rock "road"** at mm 66 and then drove through **Cottonwood Canyon**. Many camps there. Then we went to **Llewellyn Gulch** where there was a beautiful camp just 1 mile in. We all went paddling up Llewellyn to its muddy end. Then Lin and I hiked for 3 hours. We did not find the Cowboy Camp or 3 sets of



Petroglyphs. Werner/Carol/Doug found the 3 sets of Rock Art but not the Cowboy Camp. Lin and I whipped up appetizers, 2 salmon loafs, 3 acorn squashes from my garden, and a cucumber salad. Doug baked Ghirardelli brownies. Everyone was tired, so early to bed.

Day 8:

Carol and Werner had mice rustling in the recycle bag in the middle of the night as we had forgotten to put up the gangplank during the previous paddle. Doug finally slept on a tarp in the camp (was tired of slumming on the wet and sandy front deck). We headed out at 10am for a big paddle. We first went to the **Hole-in-the-Rock road** and we were enlightened by an old man and his wife about the ins and outs of that 1879-80 migration. He clarified where the Register Rock was. About 10 of their kids and grandkids were climbing up the "road", their annual pilgrimage. Then we crossed the lake over to the

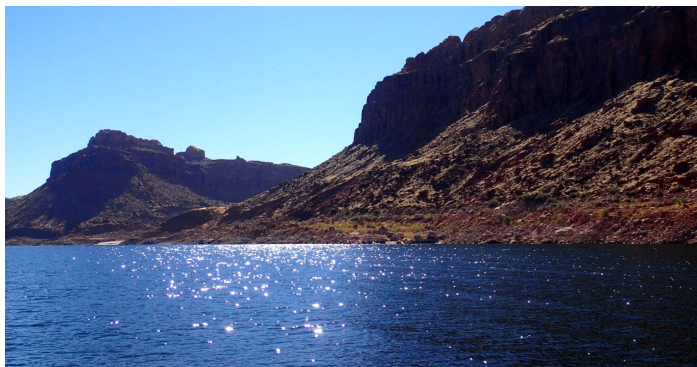


Cottonwood Canyon side. We saw some weathered (had been under water) inscriptions on **Register Rock**. We explored a few arms of Cottonwood and returned to camp. We ate Carol's chicken verde, and watched 2 frisky bighorn sheep across the river. I followed Lin on her solar shower. Lovely! There was mouse trouble again, so we went to bed early.



Day 9:

Overnight Werner trapped 2 mice and the 3rd must have gotten off the boat. He and Carol slept upstairs (where Anne and Gary found it to be more pleasant than a tent) as they needed to sleep without mice. We left **Llewellyn Gulch** at 9:30 and headed for the **Rincon**. Found a nice enough camp near where we wanted to start our hike. We put 2 anchors in gravelly dirt (1 pulled out during the hike) and 2 in rocks. We ate lunch and started our



hike at 1:00. We found a few bits of petrified wood (no logs) but no dinosaur track rock and not the miners camp of the 1950's either. We were entertained by about 15 Jeeps driving up and over the canyon wall which did not appear to be at all drivable. There were some tight turns and big rocks for them to climb over. Fun to watch. We came back about 4:40



and had happy hour. The 10 blocks of ice we put into the humongous houseboat cooler had finally melted. Cold beer/drinks every day, and 2 fridge/freezers too! Then we started our potluck: stuffed shells (took 1.5 hours to cook due to the solid freezer), mac 'n cheese, rice with pesto sauce, BBQ'd chicken thighs, and lots of appetizers. Carol, Doug and I played music (guitar and mandolin) and sang on the back deck. It was a big, wide sky here, so I saw the full big dipper for the 1st time.

Day 10:

Our last day. We got under way at a leisurely 9:40 and stopped to explore **Slick Rock Canyon** by houseboat. There were at least 4 camp spots near the mouth at this low water level - 3945' or less I think; and 2 appeared to have tent sites. We checked out **Annie's Canyon**, but did not go into the 4 side channels. Kelsey says 1 or 2 arms have camps. We



then headed to sandy beaches on the big **Hall's Creek arm** on the North side of the main channel. With low water it was a maze and we finally took a tiny beach for lunch. Did not get to see the long beaches that are further in. We had some trouble finding the seawall entrance to our gas station, and went to the North entrance leading to the executive boats. Gas was \$4.86/gallon!, so good thing we had a \$250 credit on the \$312 bill due to paying for the boat in January. We did not damage the propellers or anything else, so we will get our \$600 deposit back. We packed the 4Runner and headed to Green River where we loaded up on melons and had dinner at Ray's. The wait staff were not wearing masks. Utah's COVID numbers were rising. We got to Fruita at about 9pm, and slept well before our final leg to drive home.

It was a fun and successful trip. With the low water levels, the hikes were longer than expected. This was the first time that we camped where there was no tent space; probably due to the very tall, vertical canyons in this part of Powell. But it wasn't a problem because we had just 7 people and room to spread out vs. the 12 people that the boat theoretically can hold. We brought all of the fresh food, drink, clothing, and musical instruments that we wanted, and tried to imagine Tracy and Janet eating another package of freeze-dried whatever. Perhaps we are getting soft and pampered at this point in our life, but we all enjoyed the trip immensely and will definitely do the houseboat supported trip again and hope for a repeat of the excellent weather.