

Meander Canyon – September 8-13, 2024  
as reported by Karen A.

**Pre-Meander (Day 0):**

This report gives details on the Meander Canyon trip that 11 RMCC members did in mid-September. I reserved 2 nights at the Group B site of Lower Onion Creek Campground to give a good location to camp the night before Meander and for most of us to take a day paddle from Dewey Bridge to Onion Creek. Kathryn, Chet and Russell's wife, Karen joined most of the Meander crew for that paddle. We had temperatures hitting 100 degrees while we were there, but had a very laid back day paddle with views of monumental rock structures to enjoy. Note that the camp fee has increased from \$50 to \$150 since COVID, but you can only reserve these large camps and not the individual camps that are along the Colorado River above Moab. The 2<sup>nd</sup> evening included a tasty potluck with 4 Dutch Ovens. Day paddle photo:



## Monday - Day 1:

We converged at Tex's Riverways in Moab at 7:30am. It was fairly crowded and we shuttled the 3 cars with trailers plus Janet's car to Janet's house as Tex's is only storing 1 car for every 3 people on their premises. The guy loading boats was not accepting much help, so finally we bussed to Potash (Jackson Bottom Boat Ramp at mile marker 47), unloaded and packed our canoes and we got onto the river at about noon. Weather was nice, and we landed on river right (MM37) at the petrified wood location to check it out. Mud at the landing was knee deep and a couple of us temporarily had our shoes sucked off. This is the most impressive set of petrified logs that I have ever seen, so I waded through mud even though I had seen them about 15 years ago. We paddled almost 13 miles and found a nice, big sand bar to camp on in the late afternoon. Petrified wood pictures:



## Wednesday - Day 2:

We launched and in only a tenth of a mile saw a jetboat's large crew carrying a Steinway piano up to an acoustic canyon where people pay \$400 for a concert. Launch and piano photos:



After 9 miles of paddling we pulled over at MM24 on river left to see Puebloan Structures across from the Lathrop Ledges camps. We saw 2 ruins and petroglyphs and could have explored further but saved it for another day:



We paddled, wanting to get to the Indian Creek Camp if possible. 20mph winds came up, so it was slow and we fought through waves to pass rafts. Finally we got to Indian Creek to find that other boaters had gotten there shortly before us. We were tired, but continued for a 19 mile day to find our camp on a sandbar on river left at MM15.3, right across from Guillotine Arch:



### **Thursday - Day 3:**

We knew it would be very windy all day, so launched with an eye out for a big enough camp as we were tired from the prior day's paddle and did not want to paddle in big wind. Most of the camps marked on our river maps would not handle 9 tents, so big camps were hard to find. After 4 miles we pulled over at MM11 on river left. This was the Upper Loop Ledges camp and the 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 trails to view a doubled-back meander. It had a tight spot to stash canoes, but we decided to call it our camp. We were visited by crows wanting food and well-dressed hikers who had bundled the concert with a Cataract trip. Most of us hiked to the top where you could see the river at MM7. Photos of the crow and views at the top:





We had a great sunset:



## **Friday - Day 4:**

The jet boat came early to pick us up, forcing us to load the toilet last. Janet had brought an extra large umbrella that we leaned on the ground in front of the toilet for privacy, and that worked pretty well. The journey of 36 miles by canoe and kayak had taken us about 15 hours of paddling downstream. But the ride out upstream by jet boat took less than 2 hours. The bus pulled us and the loaded jetboat in to Tex's where we transferred everything to our vehicles. It was a good trip except for the wind.



## **Summary and Suggestions:**

Members of the Meander Canyon trip included Doug H., Sally E., Janet M., Leslie T., Russell D., myself, Kit/Henry, Naseem/Mike (new to the RMCC), and Pam N. who had her own permits but mostly paddled and camped with us. While the trip was enjoyable, here are several improvements that could help it be better next time:

1. Consider going 2 or 3 weeks later to avoid the 100 degree heat.
2. Perhaps limit the trip to 6 boats (likely 6 tents) to make it easier to find big enough campsites. And/or get 2 Tex's permits and 2 from the National Park Service. This would allow the groups to paddle together (or apart) and have more choice of camps.
3. Put in at Potash and leave our vehicles there; so only use Tex's for the jetboat out and the toilet rental. This would save time and money and avoid having to park a few vehicles at Janet's house. There is ample parking and 2 sources vouch for it being safe to leave cars there.
4. Do it as a 5 night trip as 3 was clearly not enough to get to the confluence and see most of the sights listed in the river map. We went from 47 to MM11; confluence is at MM0.

We have lots of photos taken by Sally, Mike, Russell, Kit and myself. These are all included in a Google album which you can access and browse at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/JFMQepc2KmFkpaQP6>