

## Colorado River from Moab Bridge to Potash – May 10-13, 2026

as reported by Karen A.

15 people stayed 3 nights in the Gold Bar Group site and did 2 day paddles as described below. In addition to that 4 of us stayed at Janet Mallory's house ahead of the trip and did a prior day paddle.

### Sand Beach to Big Bend Campground - Day 0:

Jackson, Doug, Janet Marks and I paddled a 5 mile section of class II water in 2 tandem canoes. It had a half dozen fun rapids and we explored a side canyon that could be paddled for 200 yards or so. There is a camp in there with scattered tent sites hidden away from the river. Then we drove down to the Gold Bar Group camp where everyone arrived before dark. I was the only 1 in a tent; others were in campers and vans. We did fill up the parking area and set up my huge tarp for shade as it got up to 98 degrees on day 2. We had a nice campfire as Dave and I brought wood. Tracy/Janet, Doug/Janet and Jackson were our musicians who played until curfew at 10pm.

### Monday - Day 1 – Moab Bridge to Gold Bar Group Campground:

At 8:30am we drove the 10 miles to the "Moab Bridge" launch site. It was a reasonable place to unload boats, but there was no structure for where to park cars so we guessed at where to let cars sit and not affect the water trailer being used for construction at the launch site nor the jet boat trailer. The safety talk breezed through the normal items and focused more on avoiding sand bars as the gauge was at just 2400cfs. Picking the deepest water route was important, and I saw 3 people get out of their boats to get off of sand bars.

The paddling was pleasant even though there was not much current. We entered the portal and eventually landed on river left, just past the creek coming out of Moonflower Canyon, had a quick lunch and most of us waded across the creek and up to see the petroglyphs near the road at Moonflower Canyon. We saved the canyon hike for another time.

By mid afternoon we arrived at the spot to haul the boats up a sand bank and park them overnight and hiked a good tenth of a mile into our camp. Even though there is a "boat ramp" in our campground, water levels would need to be about 40,000cfs for the water to create an island and let us use the ramp. Nobody wanted to hike up to 3 nearby arches as it was too HOT. We retrieved the cars and settled in for a potluck. Leslie and Jackson created casseroles in Dutch Ovens while Deni heated her beef posole and we enjoyed the cool pasta and pea salads made by Jeanne and Janet Mallory.

## **Tuesday - Day 2 – Gold Bar Group Campground to Potash:**

We shuttled the cars down to Potash and hiked the tenth of a mile from our campsite out to our boats. 11 boats today as Jane was going to paddle. We got on the water and paddled to the Jug Handle Arch for our pre-lunch petroglyph hike. It was muddy; we went through a cool tunnel under the road followed by a steep rocky trail, and most of us made it up to some nice petroglyphs. After our lunch in shady spots we looked for the Goat Head petroglyph that was part of the “Billboard” rock art, but we could not find it. We paddled lazily to the takeout at Potash as we knew it would be hotter in camp. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> potluck included Jane’s homemade salsa and chips followed by Jeannes cold shrimp and my Pineapple Upside Down Cake. And other goodies.

## **Wednesday - Day 3:**

We scattered the last morning and headed home or to further adventures. Some trip photos are included here in chronological order.















