Toadstool Hoodoos

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Overview

This hike is very popular when its not too hot out, possibly for its proximity to Page, AZ. But also, the hike is fun and easy, the area its set in is unique and almost unreal, and the Toadstools themselves are quite impressive.

Driving directions

Accessed from pavement

From Kanab drive 44 miles from the visitor center east toward Page, AZ. It will be 1.5 miles past the Paria Contact Station. From Page, it is 28 miles past the Glen Canyon Dam. The trailhead is just off the highway on the north side of the road. There are 2 porta potties there and it is signed.

Hiking route

An easy 2 miles round trip

From the trailhead head north along a braided trail. Many walk through the wash and there is also a trail that stays mostly out of the wash. Eventually you will see the stunningly perfect toad stools. This is the main attraction, but there are some more toadstools closer to the cliff. Along the cliff is a great area to wander and explore. To the right has a nice view and to the left there are some other interesting erosional features. Return the way you came.

Hazards

Heat

There is some shade provided by the rock formations but other than that it is very exposed. There are no tall trees or water here. This area is at lower elevation than much of rest of the monument and as a consequence it is very hot in the summer. Best time to visit is on a nice winter day, or mild spring or fall day.

Regulations and considerations

Human waste disposal

At the parking lot there are porta potties. This is a heavily used trail, do not cat hole here.

Dogs should be on a leash, and make sure to pick up after them!

Along the trail

There are no trash facilities here so please pack it out. No collecting of any object other than trash is allowed. Bikes are not allowed off road in GSENM. Do not build cairns. Be considerate of the biological soil crust.

Camping and fires

Camping is not allowed within 1/4 mile of the trailhead but one can find other roads nearby to camp along. Fires are allowed by your camp but only if you bring your own firewood. If making a fire, be aware of current fire restrictions. As this is a short and highly used trail, it would not be appropriate to camp along it or at the toadstools.

Area restrictions

Do not climb on the hoodoos or disturb fragile rock formation.

Amenities

There are porta potties at the trailhead. There is no drinking water or trash facilities. Kanab and Page have supermarkets. For medical issues Page and Kanab have hospitals with Page's being a little closer to this trailhead. In Page: Page Hospital, 501 N Navajo Dr and in Kanab: Kane County Hospital, 355 Main St. For search and rescue and non-emergency evacuations call the Kane County Sheriff's Office: 435-644-2349. For emergencies call 911 or hit the SOS button on your inReach.

Geology

Toadstools are spire-like features capped with a boulder. The Boulder typically is more resistant to erosion than the spire it sits on. The Boulder shelters the spire from eroding away allowing the boulder to stay perched. Here, the tap stones are made of the Dakota Formation and sit on the less resistant Entrada Sandstone. Underneath the Entrada is the Carmel Formation.

The Carmel Formation (about 175 million years old) formed while the shallow Carmel Sea was transgressing and receding, forming deposits of limestone, sandstone, gypsum, and more.

The Escalante Member of the Entrada Sandstone (about 160 million years old) was deposited in beach and back-beach environments. The sandstone has high angle eolian cross stratification, meaning the sand was accumulated in windblown sand dunes.

The Dakota Formation (about 90 million years old), the lower member, is made up of interbedded mudstone and shale, sandstone, mudstone, claystone, coal and conglomerate. It often appears as a medium gray slope but can be many colors and can have bands of ledges.

Flora

Salt desert scrub

Here you'll find a high desert community of plants capable of withstanding the fierce baking sun of the summer as well as freezing temperatures in winter. This region gets fewer than 10 inches of rain per year, and supports only hardy, drought-resistant plants. Prickly pear (a group of species that all look similar) and claret cup are the most common cacti found here. Narrow leaf yucca, another succulent, is related to agave. Common grasses include spike dropseed, Indian rice grass, cheat grass and blue grama. In this high desert, flowers typically bloom from April to June, potentially with a second showing following monsoons. Some common flowers are globe mallow, penstemon, evening primrose and hoary aster.

Fauna

Mammals, fish, reptiles, birds and even amphibians all make their home in the desert and the streams that course through it. There are many species of birds in GSENM, some of the more notable ones include turkey vultures, ravens and pinyon jays. Mammals that roam these parts include coyotes, foxes, bob cats, mountain lions, badgers, mule deer, bighorn sheep and many species of mice. Some insects you may encounter are the creepy Jerusalem crickets and sand trap building antlions. Likely you will see collared lizards, with a black band around their neck and you may see whiptail lizards with tails up to 2.5 times as long as its body. Some poisonous animals to watch out for are rattlesnakes, scorpions, black widows, and velvet ants.

Rattlesnakes are not common and not aggressive but they will stand their ground. If they are rattling they're agitated and if they're also coiled up they're ready to strike. They can strike a distance 2/3 the length of their body. If someone is bit, request a medical helicopter evacuation immediately.

Scorpions hide under rocks during the day and come out mostly at night. Their sting is painful similar to a bee sting. No medical attention is necessary, but if it's the first time someone has been stung, watch out for anaphylaxis. Just like with bee stings some people have severe allergic reactions. If their throat starts to swell administer Benadryl and, if possible, find an EpiPen in case its necessary. Get to a clinic unless the situation resolves itself.

Female black widow spiders have a distinct red hourglass shape on the back of their black body. They are not aggressive and build very sticky webs in nook of canyon walls. Their bite may require medical attention, drive to the nearest medical facility.

Velvet ants look like fast moving ants with a brightly colored patch of hair, however these are not ants. They are wasps and should be treated as such because they do have a powerful sting.

Ravens look very similar to crows but ravens are significantly larger. Their distributions overlap but crows are very rare in GSENM. Ravens often hang out in pairs and they are scavengers so don't leave your snacks unattended!

Turkey vultures have a wingspan of up to 6 feet and do not flap their wings very much. They are expert at finding rising warm air currents and gliding in circles all day as they look for carrion.

Pinyon jays, related to blue jays, like to hang in large flocks in pinyon/juniper forests. This species of jay is endemic to the Colorado Plateau, it doesn't exist anywhere else!

Flickers are related to woodpeckers

Mountain lions, like all large predators, were hunted and poisoned almost to extinction. Today, the best place to see one is in the desert southwest; however, you will be very lucky if you do. Mountain lions range far to find prey, mostly mule deer, and kill efficiently with a bite to the back of the neck. If you do encounter a mountain lion, make sure you don't have it cornered. Make loud noises and raise your arms, fight back if necessary, and do not run away!

Nearby attractions

Wahweap Hoodoos, if you want more funky spires, check these out!

Cottonwood Wash Road takes you along a dramatic monocline (steeply angled geologic strata) that defines the separation of the Grand Staircase and Kaiparowits sections of GSENM.

Cottonwood Narrows offers a short and exciting hike with big walls.


The Rimrocks
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Rimrocks Trailhead
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The Cockscomb Wilderness Study Area
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Toadstool Hoodoos Trailhead
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