



National Park Service

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area AZ, UT

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/ [History & Culture \(https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/index.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/index.htm) / [Places \(https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/places.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/places.htm)
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Hole-in-the Rock



Mormon pioneers faced a daunting task in an inhospitable landscape.
NPS

The Expedition

Leaving their homes east of the Mississippi River because of religious persecution, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) began arriving in the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847. By the 1870s, they had expanded settlements into the southern portions of what is today the state of Utah. Few LDS families, however, were living in the region east of the Colorado River, and the area was void of any major settlement. In order to establish a stronger foothold, the Mormon Church organized the San Juan mission to select a site for settlement in the region.

A call to fill the mission was issued by the LDS Church in 1878-1879. A scouting party under the direction of Silas S. Smith left Paragonah, Utah, in April 1879 to determine a route and search for a suitable place to establish the new colony. A site at the mouth of Montezuma Creek on the San Juan River was selected, but a viable route was still uncertain. If the expedition chose either route used by the scouts, it would mean a trip of nearly 500 miles (800 km). A short-cut, thought to be simpler, was chosen with a rendezvous at Forty-Mile Spring, south of the town of Escalante. The expedition, consisting of 250 men, women, and children, 83 wagons, and over 1000 head of livestock, gathered at the appointed place in November 1879.

Down The Hole

The "short-cut" proved to be deceptive, and the pioneers spent the winter at Forty-Mile Spring. A portion of the group camped at the top of the Hole-in-the-Rock, a narrow crack in the canyon rim 2.5 miles (4 km) downstream from the mouth of the Escalante River. It was through this notch that the party intended to make its way. Throughout the winter, they worked on the crack, enlarging the opening.



Mormon pioneers descend the hole they had blasted into the rock.
NPS

Work was slow and tedious with only pick axes, shovels, and limited quantities of blasting powder available. The precipitous drop to the river below was nearly 2000 feet (610 m) with an average grade of 25 degrees, although some places were as steep as 45 degrees. At last, on January 26, 1880, the expedition made its way slowly down the precarious road. A ferry built at the river by Charles Hall and others was used to cross the river.

San Juan Settlement

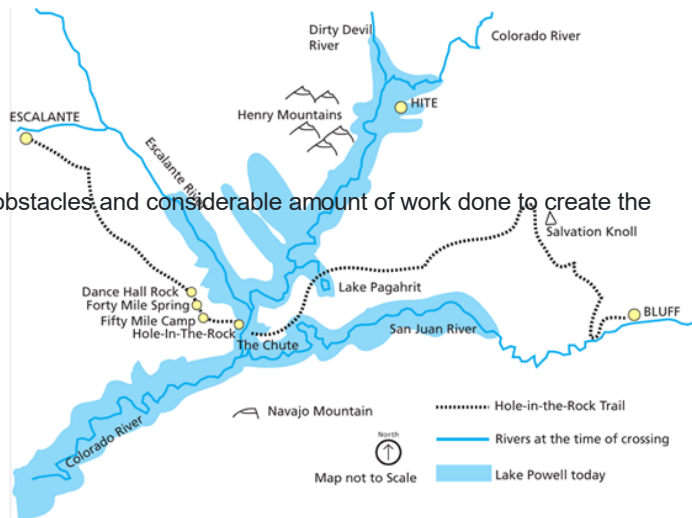
Once across the river, the pioneers discovered that their problems had only just begun. Through a rough, perilous, uncharted wilderness the group made its way. Remarkably, no lives were lost. In fact, two babies were born. After long months of hard work and deprivation, the party reached the San Juan River. Though several miles short of their goal, the determined but weary travelers founded their new home at the current site of Bluff, Utah. A journey that was to have taken six weeks took six months instead. The Hole-in-the-Rock Road continued to be used as the primary link between Bluff and the established settlements to the west for several years. It was eventually abandoned in favor of a better route.

Hole-in-the-Rock Today

Most of the original Hole-in-the-Rock trail is visible today and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It remains a silent monument to the faith and tenacity of those first LDS pioneers.

Whether you approach it from land or water, much of the original trail is visible, though approximately one-third is now under the waters of Lake Powell. Visitors may hike the passage - 0.5 miles (.8 km) each way.

Carry water and plan on a minimum of one hour for the round trip. The trail is very rocky, so wear sturdy hiking shoes. Time and the elements have sent large boulders and other debris into the passage, making it difficult to identify much of the original road. On the other hand, this may make it easier to appreciate the obstacles and considerable amount of work done to create the road in the first place.



Map of Hole-in-the-Rock Trail
NPS

Exploring The Trail

BY LAND: Follow the driving guide below or on the NPS App for information on history along with scenery. At times the road is accessible to two-wheel drive vehicles with good ground clearance. Four-wheel drive is recommended and will be required after heavy rains. Check at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center before proceeding. Always respect the law and help preserve the land by staying on designated roads. Off-road travel by any vehicles, including mountain bikes, is prohibited.

BY LAKE: Hole-in-the-Rock is accessible by boat from Lake Powell. It is located at buoy 66, which is 66 miles (106 km) uplake from Glen Canyon Dam or approximately 30 miles (48 km) downlake from Bullfrog and Halls Crossing. Boaters may tie up along the rocky shoreline. The trail is to the right and is easier to follow above the high water mark. Look for the informational exhibit on the right-hand slope. When hiking, be sure to notice the miners' stairs, added by the Hoskaninni Mining Company around the turn of the century, as well as grooves and gouges from the wagon wheels and hubs of the original pioneers.

Showing results 1-1 of 1

Sort By:

GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Driving the Hole in the Rock Road

(<https://www.nps.gov/thingstodo/driving-the-hole-in-the-rock-road.htm>)

Type: Scenic Driving

Duration: 1-14 Days

Reservations: No

Pets: Yes

Location: Hole-in-the-Rock Road, Escalante District

Season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Time Of Day: Day, Dawn, Dusk



<https://www.nps.gov/thingstodo/driving-the-hole-in-the-rock-road.htm>

The Hole-in-the-Rock road is an historic pioneer trail turned path to adventure. This 62 mile (100 km) one-way section runs from Escalante, UT to the western edge of Lake Powell. This road is rough, impassable in inclement weather, and 4WD only for the last 7 miles. Along the way are quite a few trailheads for the Coyote Gulch and other Escalante River trails in Glen Canyon.

Tags: [hole in the rock \(https://www.nps.gov/media/article-search.htm?q=hole in the rock\)](https://www.nps.gov/media/article-search.htm?q=hole%20in%20the%20rock)

[scenic drives \(https://www.nps.gov/media/article-search.htm?q=scenic drives\)](https://www.nps.gov/media/article-search.htm?q=scenic%20drives)



Escalante Interagency Visitor Center

This center is jointly run by Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (Bureau of Land Management), Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (National Park Service), and Dixie National Forest (National Forest Service). It features outdoor exhibits focusing on trip planning and interior exhibits on the scientific research surrounding the Escalante region. Permits for hikes into Glen Canyon Wilderness must be obtained here in person. Call ahead for permit status and road conditions. 435-826-5499.

ADDRESSES

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

755 W. Main
Escalante, UT 84726

MAILING ADDRESS

755 W. Main
Escalante, UT 84726

DIRECTIONS

Off State Highway 12 at 755 W Main in Escalante, UT

HOURS & SEASONS

Open today: 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Sunday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Monday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Friday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM–4:00 PM

DESCRIPTION

Open from Thursday thru Tuesday. Closed Wednesdays. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day

CLOSURES & SEASONAL EXCEPTIONS

Holidays

2023–2024

Holiday	Date	Hours
New Year's Day	January 1, 2024	Closed
Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	January 15, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Washington's Birthday	February 19, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Memorial Day	May 27, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Juneteenth National Independence Day	June 19, 2024	Closed
Independence Day	July 4, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Labor Day	September 2, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Columbus Day	October 14, 2024	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Veterans Day	November 11, 2023	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Thanksgiving Day	November 23, 2023	9:00 AM–4:00 PM
Christmas Day	December 25, 2023	Closed

Closed Christmas Day

DECEMBER 24–DECEMBER 25

Sunday	Closed
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed

AMENITIES

Automated Entrance

Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Benches/Seating

Bicycle - Rack

Cellular Signal

Electrical Outlet/Cell Phone Charging

First Aid Kit Available

Gifts/Souvenirs/Books

Historical/Interpretive Information/Exhibits

Information

Information - Maps Available

Information - Ranger/Staff Member Present

Information Kiosk/Bulletin Board

Internet/WiFi Available

Parking - Auto

Parking - Boat Trailer

Parking - Bus/RV

Permits Issued

Picnic Shelter/Pavilion

Picnic Table

Recycling

Restroom

Restroom - Accessible

Restroom - Seasonal

Scenic View/Photo Spot

Supplies - General

Tactile Exhibit

Toilet - Flush

Trailhead/Hiker Register

Trash Dumpster

Trash/Litter Receptacles

Water - Bottle-Filling Station

Water - Drinking/Potable

Water - Hookup - Boat/RV

Water - Non-Potable

Wheelchair Accessible

CONTACT INFORMATION

EMAIL ADDRESS

[Send this visitor center an email](#)

PHONE NUMBERS

Rangers are inside the building answering the phone even when the building is closed to the public.

 Voice

[\(435\) 826-5499](tel:(435)826-5499)

IMAGE GALLERY



La:

Was this page helpful? Yes No

An official form of the United States government. Provided by [Touchpoints](https://touchpoints.app.cloud.gov/)
(<https://touchpoints.app.cloud.gov/>)

CONTACT INFO**Mailing Address:**

PO Box 1507
Page, AZ 86040

Phone:

928 608-6200

Receptionist available at Glen Canyon Headquarters from 7 am to 4 pm MST, Monday through Friday. The phone is not monitored when the building is closed. If you are having an emergency, call 911 or hail National Park Service on Marine Band 16.