



COTTONWOOD WASH RUINS - EASTERN REEF



Rating: Easy Hiking

Length: 7 miles (3-5 hours)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: Crows Nest Spring, UT;

Water: None.

Season: Spring, Fall, Winter (when no snow)

Waypoints:

Trailhead	12S 543817mE 4280712mN N38° 40' 26" W110° 29' 47"
Gate	12S 544420mE 4280737mN N38° 40' 27" W110° 29' 22"
Ht yokey	12S 544152mE 4280280mN N38° 40' 12" W110° 29' 33"
Small Narrows	12S 544126mE 4280234mN N38° 40' 11" W110° 29' 34"
Fence	12S 544754mE 4280450mN N38° 40' 17" W110° 29' 08"
Small Narrows	12S 544853mE 4280543mN N38° 40' 20" W110° 29' 04"
Ruin	12S 545429mE 4280421mN N38° 40' 16" W110° 28' 40"
Pictograph	12S 545488mE 4280437mN N38° 40' 17" W110° 28' 38"
Dot Petroglyph	12S 545859mE 4280293mN N38° 40' 12" W110° 28' 22"
Boulder Petroglyph	12S 546472mE 4280308mN N38° 40' 13" W110° 27' 57"
Exit	12S 546773mE 4280481mN N38° 40' 18" W110° 27' 44"
Small Arch	12S 546781mE 4280266mN N38° 40' 11" W110° 27' 44"
Cowboy Signature	12S 546818mE 4280271mN N38° 40' 11" W110° 27' 43"

Hype

How many Cottonwood Washes are there in Utah? I can think of many, and at least two in the San Rafael area. This one is just east of UT-24 on the way to Hanksville. From the highway, the area appears to be rolling sage brush plain and not particularly interesting. Up close, however, the area contains several canyons, slickrock cliffs, and relics of when the ancient people passed through and lived in the area. This hike meanders down Cottonwood Wash, visiting a ruin and panel en route before circling back to the car.

Though interesting, this is not a hike I would highly recommend. The ruins are small and mostly destroyed. There are certainly better panels to visit in the Swell. This hike does offer solitude, in a very seldom visited area just off the highway.

Tags: *hike, indian ruins, dog friendly, access: 4x4*

Trailhead

Reaching the trailhead starts by getting to mile post 140.5 on UT-24. If coming from I-70, this is about 20 miles south after taking exit 149 from I-70. If coming from Hanksville, this is about 25 miles north of Hanksville.

- Reset your odometer as you turn off to the east at milepost 140.5. (12S 541266mE 4282174mN / N38° 41' 14" W110° 31' 32")
- 1.7 straight (12S 542686mE 4280765mN / N38° 40' 28" W110° 30' 33")
- Trailhead - 2.4 miles. Shallow drainage north into Cottonwood wash (12S 543817mE 4280712mN / N38° 40' 26" W110° 29' 47")
- Gate (12S 544420mE 4280737mN / N38° 40' 27" W110° 29' 22")

Route

From the trailhead, head due south finding any easy path to the bottom of Cottonwood Wash. Once in the bottom, go down canyon. Shortly, an old signature is under an overhang on the left. H.T.Yokey and J.Hub. It would be fascinating to know the age and story behind them!

Just below the signatures is a very small narrow section. The open, wide walled canyon is easy going. Shortly a fence and second small narrows is passed. Begin watching on the left below the second small narrows. A small side drainage that ends in an overhang appears to have very well worn ruins. Just down from this less than a minute on the left is the main attraction, a panel and signs of old habitation.

Continuing down, there is another dot petroglyph on the left just around a small bend.

Next up is a petroglyph on a large boulder next to the wash bottom. It is hard to miss. Just past it a side drainage comes in that provides easy exit. This is the exit.

Side Trip: It is worth continuing down an additional 5 minutes or so to a small arch and cowboy signatures on the left, then return back up canyon to the exit.

Exit: The drainage provides easy access to the rim of the canyon. At the rim, head due north, reaching a road within 10 minutes. Follow the road west back to the trailhead, passing through a gate just before the trailhead.

