



# UPPER BLACK DRAGON WASH - **CENTRAL SWELL**



**Rating:** 3B

**Length:** 1-2 hours (1.5 miles)

**Gear:** Standard Technical Gear, Pothole Gear

**Maps:** SPOTTED WOLF CANYON, UT

**Rappels:** 4+ to 25 m ( 83 ft. )

**Water:** Generally quite a few pools, wetsuit in cold conditions.

**Flash Flood Danger:** Moderate

**Season:** Spring, Summer, Fall

**Notes:**

**Waypoints:**

Trailhead	12S 544818mE 4310226mN N38° 56' 23" W110° 28' 58"
Canyon Bottom	12S 544002mE 4309587mN N38° 56' 03" W110° 29' 32"
Down Climbs and Possible Keepers	12S 544214mE 4309808mN N38° 56' 10" W110° 29' 23"
R1	12S 544262mE 4309871mN N38° 56' 12" W110° 29' 21"
R2	12S 544298mE 4309908mN N38° 56' 13" W110° 29' 20"
R3	12S 544354mE 4309935mN N38° 56' 14" W110° 29' 18"
R4	12S 544539mE 4310174mN N38° 56' 22" W110° 29' 10"
Exit	12S 544679mE 4310214mN N38° 56' 23" W110° 29' 04"

## Hype

If you are a canyoneer looking for deep, narrow slots, big rappels, and a hardcore adventure, pass on Upper Black Dragon. This short roadside canyon excels in its colors, shapes, and ease of passage. The shallow canyon has, with persistence, routes to scramble out and around any of the obstacles. This ease of escape makes it an excellent place for beginners to practice anchor skills in a low-risk environment.

Though confident in my anchor skills, I enjoyed the canyons colors and many pools of this Coconino Sandstone beauty. In wetter and warmer times of the year, it is a water park! Pool after pool to rappel, wade, and romp through. The canyon is open and gets quite a bit of sun. No wetsuit required unless cool/cold temperatures.

Note: On my trip, after recent rains, pools were all full. Several of the pools, however, seemed likely to be keeper potholes in lower water levels. All the potential keepers had routes to climb around them if needed. It would be a great place to practice skills!

*Tags:*

## Trailhead

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From Green River, travel west on I-70 about 42 miles to the signed Black Dragon Canyon Viewpoint. The viewpoint has a large parking area and restroom. This is at mile marker 142.8. There is no access if traveling eastbound on I-70.

## Route

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### Approach (30 minutes / 0.8 miles)

The approach is made trickier by the barb wire fence. The easiest route to walk would crisscross the fence, but nobody wants to cross the fence more than once!

From the parking area, skirt around the fence, then follow the rim of the canyon southwest. It is generally most comfortable to stay high but within sight of the canyon. You will cross several shallow drainages. After about a half mile (15 minutes), the canyon starts to become more shallow. If you see the green mileage sign on the highway, I recommend dropping into the canyon about the time you see the sign. Scramble down in, putting you right about the start of the pools.

### Canyon (0.65 miles)

Head down the canyon! Shallow pools are curved narrows abound as the canyon slowly deepens and becomes more entrenched.

Soon a couple of downclimbs and possible keepers present the first obstacle. These are easy to attack directly or bypass.

R1 - 4 m - Into potential keeper.

R2 - 10m - There are two pools before this drop that could potentially be keeper potholes. Bypassable on the left if needed.

R3 - 25 m - The drop is only about 15 m, but you will likely use an anchor 10 m back from the drop.

R4 - 15 m - Anchor high and right seemed the most convenient.

Below R4 is a short 3 m downclimb that looks harder than it is. This drop is an excellent place to practice spotting or bypass on the right.

Continue down with the view area becoming visible soon. Climb out anywhere convenient.

Note: It is possible to continue down canyon. The canyon continues to be a mix of short drops into pools but widens enough that the small drops are easy to walk around.

