


TOM'S UTAH CANYONEERING GUIDE

Archive

Lower Straight Wash San Rafael Swell, Eastern Reef

Rating:	II Class 2 
Best Season:	Spring, fall or winter.
Time:	2 to 4 hours.
Access:	Route starts and ends at the mouth of Straight Wash.
Permit:	Not required.
Equipment:	No technical equipment required.
Map:	USGS 7.5' Arsons Garden, Greasewood Draw.
Cold Protection:	Expect some wading through pools.
Drinking Water:	None, bring plenty.
Flash Flood Risk:	Low.
Skills Required:	Difficult navigation to get to the start. A little light scrambling.

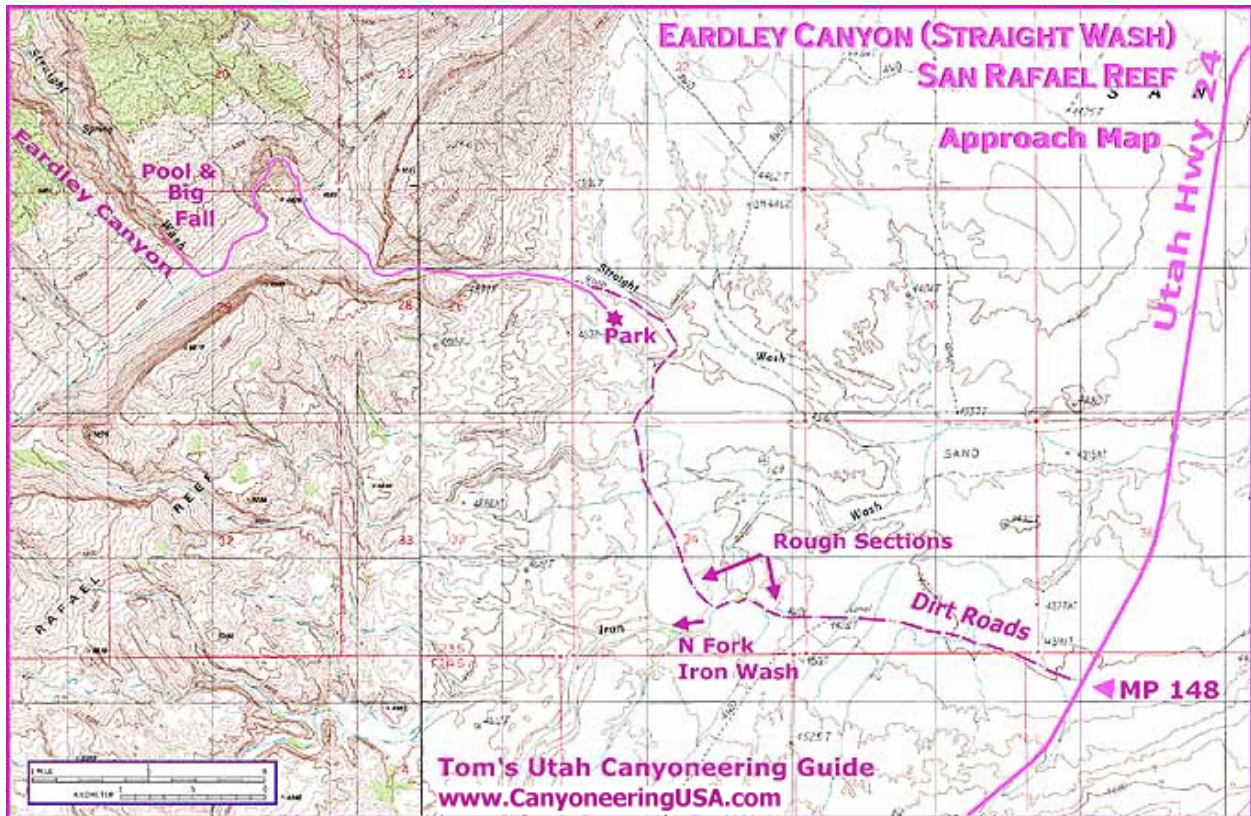
A good way to while away a few hours, the lower part of Straight Wash offers an interesting geology lesson and a stroll to a very nice pool. The hardest part may be finding the start.

Getting There: Turn off Highway 24 at milepost 148, go toward the reef: 1.1 miles Corral on Right, road heavily washboarded; 1.3 miles Very Rough Spot; 1.6 cross wash; 1.7 split - turn right for easier road; 1.9 rejoin main track; 2.5 small track on L; 2.6 cross wash (rough); 3.0 cross wash (very rough); 3.3 track on R to cottonwoods & camping; 3.6 track on R to wash; 3.7 end of road, park. This road is suitable for aggressive high clearance 2WD vehicles when dry. Camping is poor at the bottom. UTM: 0544410E 4293146N

The Goods: The first 1/2 mile of the wash is a little cowed up. But not for long. The wash soon plunges into the reef, and the scale is grand. The wash quickly penetrates the Navajo and Wingate portion of the reef, enters the gravelly Chinle, Moenkopi and Sinbad formations, then tries to penetrate straight ahead into the Coconino Sandstone, and fails. It curls back around left into the Chinle/Moenkopi/Sinbad and heads south. The very steep dip of the layers gives a delightful geologic display.

Follow the wash through the turn and back into 'straight wash'. Follow south 1/2 mile to a modest canyon coming in from the right. This puts you back in the shade. Whehhhh. Hike back dramatically into the Coconino 1/4 mile or so to a wonderful pool. Well, wonderful when full. After a few months of 'vaporating off, it can get pretty skanky.

It takes about an hour to get to the pool. This makes a poor running route, as the footing is too rough and gravelly for good running conditions. There are Desert Bighorn Sheep in the area, and the occasional piece of Petrified Wood. On the way back, you can cut across the gooseneck for a shorter return.



Joe Smith kicking back in
Lower Straight Wash