

Thursday, November 10th – Friday, November 11th

Thursday night I had some minor scooter maintenance to do so my exploration was limited to visiting a few sights near Hurricane. I had Friday off however, so I took the opportunity to explore the amazing Snow Canyon State Park.



Petrified Sand Dunes in Snow Canyon

Thursday night I headed to see Quail Creek Reservoir in part because open bodies of water are so startling out here.

Snow Canyon



Moon over the reservoir.



Quail Creek Reservoir.

Not as much hiking around there as I'd hoped, although I bet the overlook trail was cool. I asked a parking attendant and she said there wasn't much here but try just up the road. So off to Red Cliffs I went!



DINOSAUR TRACKS!!!

Picked a random (short) trail in part because it mentioned there were dinosaur tracks. Sure enough, there's a little spur and a sign noting the tracks. They're just right there in the rock! Super cool.

Snow Canyon



Red Cliffs



Red Cliffs: pretty much exactly what the name says. Seemed like a fun park to explore but the sun was setting and the next day I had other plans: Snow Canyon State Park.



Petrified Sand Dunes.

So, the petrified dunes. They are lovely. They are amazing. You are able to climb up them and they go on for a good distance. This is a truly amazing area to spend a few hours scrambling around. Just don't slip.

Snow Canyon



Marbles

Snow Canyon

The not slipping part is harder if you end up on top of a dune that's excreting these lovely round little rocks.



Snow Canyon



There's actually a fair amount more to this park than the petrified sand dunes, but they're so lovely and fun to climb around on I spent hours here.

Snow Canyon



Canyon: yes. Snow: not so much. Apparently named for a Mormon with that last name.



Snow Canyon

Burnt looking bits in above two photos are black lava rock, which also has a presence in the park.



Obligatory cholla shot.

Snow Canyon



A sign like this can only lead to good things!



Snow Canyon

Climbing up to the overlook.



Snow Canyon State Park



Lava Tube Entrance

One of my housemates had told me to bring along my flashlight in case I wanted to check out some of the caves. It turns out he meant the collapsed lava tube, which has multiple entrances. This is by far the easiest entrance, if you want to casually explore, the one near the observation point is the way to go.



Lava Tube

The entrance closest to the parking lot is a much more difficult descent, you have to climb and drop down the hole before getting to branching set of paths. You should really not explore this one on your own. And bring a few flashlights per person just in case.



Daylight

That being said, it's a lot of fun to explore, and you can wiggle and climb your way into a few chambers relatively easily. Being way down here alone (although I did end up meeting some other explorers) was fun but also really scared me. There were multiple times I dropped down into a space not sure I'd be able to get back up and only having one light (plus bonus cellphone lamp!) with an unknown amount of charge was in my mind a lot. I had a great time, but highly recommend going with a buddy (even if it's a new parking lot friend) and some extra lights.

I spent a glorious day at the park and had a complete blast. The petrified sand dunes are amazing and once you finally move from them the other hiking is lovely. Unfortunately the combination of all the scrambling and lava tube exploration totally broke me. I didn't realize it at first, I just felt a bit sore that day. But the next several days I was in a startling amount of pain, enough that I avoided longer hikes or rock scrambling even as I visited one

of my all time favorite parks: Joshua Tree.



Snow Canyon

Bonus picture: statue in Hurricane depicting model family of Mormon settlers.