

Native American Legend

The unique beauty of Fantasy Canyon inspired the following Native American legend, written by George E. Stewart over an interview with Muse Harris, Indian Chief Red Moose.

“ONE DAY, the story goes, the evil creatures of the nether regions, tired of living in the dark and dank, decided to dig up to the surface and take over everything above and below the earth. They dug and the ground trembled and rumbled in their work.

Two coyotes heard the rumble, and curious, as all coyotes are, couldn't resist the urge to investigate. The pair discovered the plot of the creatures from down under and in a trice howled the alarm to all their fellow mortals round-about.

A great council was held to decide what to do; it would take more than mortal power to stop the invasion of these supernatural beings, this they understood. Finally, they determined to send for the greatest medicine man they knew.

TWO EAGLES flew with the summons, and on the very first day, they found the great one in his mountain fastness.

The wild horses set up a relay of the fleetest stallions on earth; they bore the mighty one with the speed of the wind over mountains, rivers, valleys and plains. And it was none too soon, for as he came up White River the Sachem could see the red light in the sky where the underworld denizens had broken through.

Without sleep or rest or food the Medicine Chief went to work. First, he called on the Wind of the West and a great hurricane blew, carrying dust, dirt, rocks and trees to fill in the awful hole. But all this went for naught, it fell through to be burned in first down below.

Then the Rain God was asked for help and he sent water in clouds and torrents, but it vanished away in steam and mist, while the Devil Chief laughed loud and long and his minions screamed with glee.

THE SACHEM called to the God of the North, "Help us, help us," he chanted and drummed, "Oh, Great Lord of Ice and Snow."

Help came as swift as an arrow; intense, deep, bitter cold. The North God caught the denizens of the deep as they gathered to spread over the world. In the wink of an eye he turned them all to ice. The Devil Chief, the Great Mother Witch, the magician and all the rest stand there just as they stood at the instant the cold struck long ago.

When the warmth came back, again the West Wind blew and as the ice melted, the dust took its place and now the monsters stand in the pit they dug all of them turned to stone. It is a warning to the evil ones down in hell to leave the good green earth alone." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, July 16, 1972)

For your safety and the preservation of Fantasy Canyon, please remember to ...

- Carry plenty of water with you.
- Carry a first aid kit in your car or backpack and know how to use it.
- Protect yourself against heat exhaustion. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid extreme midday temperatures in the summer. Wear a hat and lots of sunscreen.
- Follow and remain on the marked rock trail at all times.
- Tread carefully and watch your step as portions of the trail may be slippery due to loose rock.
- Pygmy rattlesnakes are at home in Fantasy Canyon. While these snakes are not aggressive, they are venomous! Always watch where you step or sit while in Fantasy Canyon.



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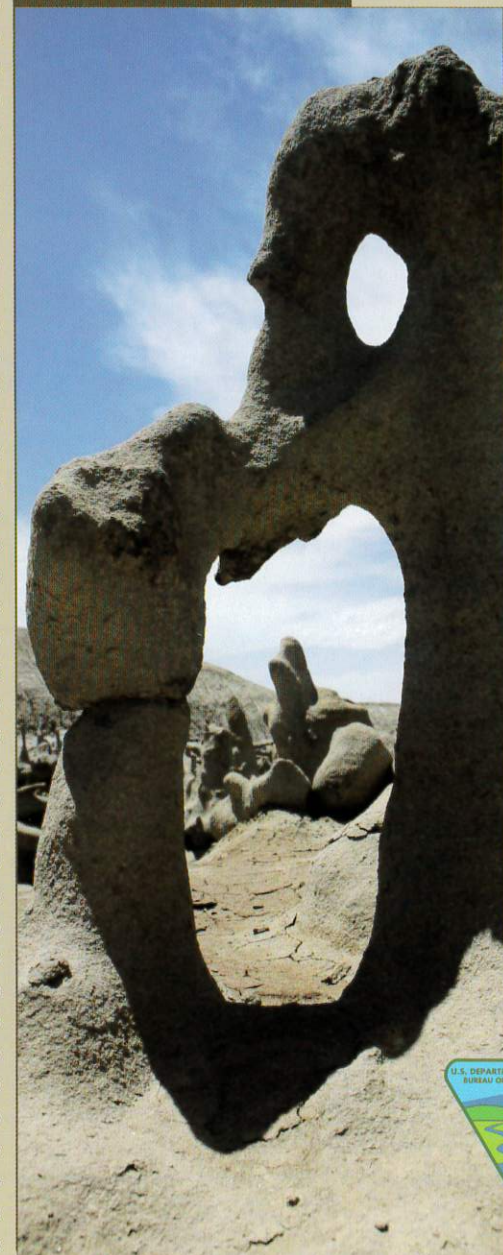
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Fantasy Canyon



Fantasy Canyon Information

Fantasy Canyon is an area comprised of unique erosional features located about 30 miles south of Vernal, in northeastern Utah. Ten acres in size, Fantasy Canyon contains some of the most unique geologic features in the world. The site was first documented by early explorer and paleontologist, Earl Douglass, who published photographs of Fantasy Canyon in a 1909 publication called "The Columbian Magazine."

Look But Please Do Not Touch

Be careful! Fantasy Canyon's fantastical formations are extremely delicate. Eventually, these amazing geologic formations will give way to the same forces that created them. The area is truly nature's china shop. Please look, but don't touch.

How Fantasy Canyon Was Formed

Fantasy Canyon's rocks were deposited during the Eocene Epoch 38 to 50 million years ago. At that time the Uinta Basin was occupied by an enormous lake 150 miles wide and nearly half a mile deep! Located on what was once the eastern shore of ancient Lake Uinta, Fantasy Canyon's sandstone formed over thousands of years as the lake's sediments were buried under tons of sand and dirt, eventually compacting until they became solid sandstone, siltstone and shale.

Some of the sandstone in Fantasy Canyon is harder than the other stone surrounding it. As natural forces eroded the rock over thousands of years, the softer, weaker siltstone and shale were blown or washed away, leaving behind the more durable sandstone. As the stones weathered at different rates, Fantasy Canyon's weird and wonderful sculptures emerged from the landscape.



Fantasy Canyon Fossils & Minerals

The Uinta formation is an important part of the fossil record for this area. It contains the widely scattered bones of creatures, mostly mammals, which roamed the Basin during the Eocene Epoch. Fossilized turtle shells are even visible in the area.

Thin black ribbons of coal-like magnetite can be seen in some of the small washes along the trail or as horizontal stripes in many of Fantasy Canyon's rocks. Magnetite is

the only mineral which exhibits strong magnetism.

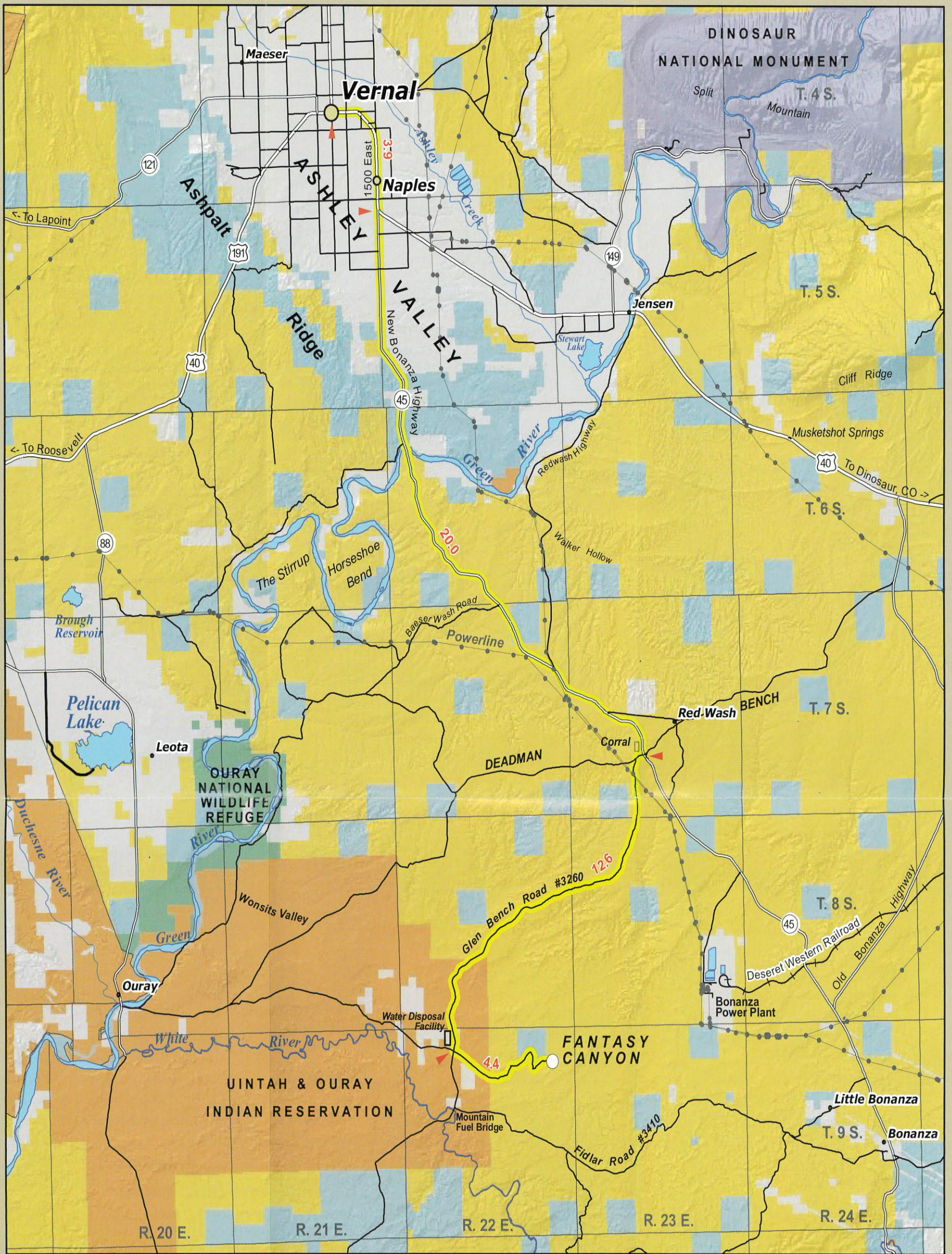
Running northwest to southeast through some of the Fantasy Canyon formations are black, inch-wide vertical veins of Gilsonite. Named after U.S. Marshal Samuel H. Gilson, and sometimes called uintahite, this unique mineral was discovered

What's the Difference?

Sandstone, siltstone and shale are all sedimentary rocks formed as layers of sands, silts and clays are compacted by the pressure of overlying deposits, before cementing into solid rock over thousands of years. What makes them different, however, is the size of the grains in the rocks themselves. While the grains in sandstone range from 1/16 millimeters to 2 millimeters, siltstone grains are much finer—so fine, in fact, that the individual grains cannot be seen with the naked eye. Shale is even more fine-grained than siltstone and was originally made up of clays and mud.

in the Uintah Basin in the early 1860's. A natural form of asphalt that resembles obsidian, Gilsonite is found nowhere else in the world but Utah.



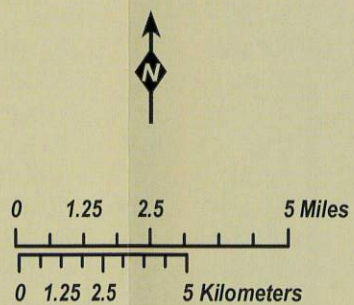


How To Get There:

Fantasy Canyon



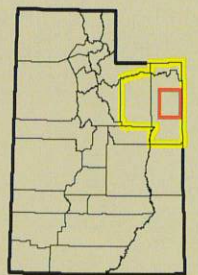
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- Drive carefully - heavy traffic conditions may occur
- Follow signs to Fantasy Canyon after leaving Hwy 45
- The last 4.4 miles of travel is on gravel, which includes a wash crossing that may be impassable when wet

- Route**
- Route Distance Marker
Distance in miles, indicated by red numbers
 - Route to Fantasy Canyon
Distance: 40.9 miles / 65.8 km
- Major Roads**
- Paved Route
 - Improved Gravel or Paved Route

- Surface Ownership**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - Indian Trust Lands
 - National Park Service
 - Private
 - State
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Utah counties,
Vernal Field Office
boundary and,
mapped Area

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