

**Moab Area
Mountain Bike Trails**



**Moab Area Travel Council
Internet Brochure Series**
Available from:
discovermoab.com

INTRODUCTION

Each year, thousands of people flock to the Moab/Green River area with one thing on their minds: mountain biking. Numerous primitive trails and abandoned roads in the desert and mountains combine with undulating sandstone to provide terrain for every ability. Cyclists should expect to meet vehicles on many trails. Etiquette dictates that cyclists should yield to hikers, drivers, or horseback riders. Information on cycling is available at all visitor centers. There are many guides and outfitters who offer guided cycling adventures, as well as, numerous places to rent bikes.

Essential Equipment Checklist

- helmet (head injuries can cost \$500,000!)
- two water bottles plus a large reserve bottle
- high energy food
- sun visor, sunscreen, and sunglasses
- route map
- tire pump, tire irons, and patch kit
- bike repair tools
- first-aid kit
- riding gloves and sturdy shoes

- riding shorts, T-shirt, and wind shirt

For cool season or high elevation rides add:

- riding pants or long underwear
- sweater and gloves
- earband
- rain gear

Riding in Remote Areas

If you have an accident in a remote area, it may take medical help hours to arrive. Travel with a group so that someone can be sent to obtain help and another rider can administer first aid. On a hot day, you will want to have more water than your frame mounted bottles hold. Carry a large refill bottle on your rack. If your bike breaks down, it can be a long push back to town. Carry appropriate tools and know how to repair your bike.

SLICKROCK BIKE TRAIL

The Slickrock Trail possesses a terrific combination of challenging riding and scenery. The practice loop offers an introduction to riding on slickrock. Length: 9.6 miles (main loop); 2.2 miles (practice loop)

Type: Slickrock; Loop Ride

Trailhead: On Sand Flats Road, 2.3 miles from the intersection of the Sand Flats Road and Mill Creek Drive in Moab. The trail is marked by white dashes painted on the slickrock. Intersections, points of interest and caution zones are indicated with yellow paint.

The Slickrock Trail was originally designed for motorcycle use. The trail is

open to both motor and pedal bikes.

The Slickrock Trail is the most difficult trail described in this brochure. It is both technically demanding and strenuous. Novice riders should test their riding skill and stamina on the practice loop prior to attempting the main route. Be certain that your brakes are in good working condition.

MONITOR & MERRIMAC TRAIL

Halfway House Stage Station and the Mill Canyon Dinosaur Trail. Length: 7.4 miles for the basic loop and 13.4 with the Monitor and Merrimac extension.

Type: 4-wheel Drive Trails, Wash Bottom, and Slickrock

Trailhead: Drive north on U.S. 191 for approximately 15 miles, then turn left onto a dirt road just north of highway marker 141. Cross the railroad tracks and follow the dirt road for 0.1 mile to the trailhead parking area.

From the trailhead (mile 0.0), continue to the first intersection and go left (mile 0.5). Ride south to the next intersection and go left (mile 1.0). At the next intersection go right (mile 1.1). As you approach the gap between Courthouse Rock (on the left) and Mill-Courthouse Mesa, you will pass the remains of the Halfway House Stage Station (mile 1.3).

Continue up the road that parallels Courthouse Wash. At mile 1.5, pass a spur on your left and after a short downhill go through a gate (leave it open or closed as you find it - mile 1.7). Go up through a short sandy section and follow a slickrock ramp up along the east side of the base of Mill-Courthouse Mesa. The ramp ends at a large flat slickrock area at the head of the mesa (mile 2.6). Ride south across a large, open, gently climbing slickrock area to the east side of next butte to the south. Take the easternmost slickrock ramp up around the side of the butte to its southern end (mile 3.5). Avoid riding through cryptobiotic soil areas. Ride around to the west side of the butte and then drop down to a huge expanse of slickrock (mile 3.8). Go down (northwest) across the slickrock towards the head of Mill Canyon. At the far end of

Trail Data				
Name	Rating	Miles	Time	Loop
Slickrock Bike	difficult	9.6	1/2 day	Yes
Hurrah Pass *	easy	33 (round trip)	1 day	No
Gemini Bridges	moderate	13.5	1 day	No
Monitor/Merrimac	easy	13.2	1/2 day	Yes

* This ride maybe shortened by selecting a beginning point along the route closer to Hurrah Pass such as the entrance to Kane Creek Canyon.

the slickrock area, take an old jeep route to its intersection with the Mill Canyon trail near the head of Mill Canyon (mile 4.7).

From this intersection, you can ride left (south) 3 miles up to the large slickrock plaza between the Monitor and Merrimac buttes. There are some long sandy sections on the Mill Canyon trail up to the buttes. If you take this extension, you will need to retrace your route down to the head of Mill Canyon.

If you decide not to ride up to the Monitor and Merrimac buttes, continue down Mill Canyon through a gate (leave it open or closed as you find it - mile 5.4). The next junction on the left (mile 5.7) goes a few hundred feet to the parking area for the Mill Canyon Dinosaur Trail. Please leave your bike at the trailhead.

From the Dinosaur Trail follow the Mill Canyon trail to the next junction at mile 6.4. Go left (north) retracing the first mile of the ride back to the trailhead.

HURRAH PASS TRAIL

Views of the Colorado River, petroglyphs, scenic canyon. Length: : 33 miles round trip from Moab

Type: Paved Road and Graded Dirt Road; Out and Back Type Ride

Trailhead: The junction of Highway 191 and Kane Creek Boulevard in Moab. From the junction of Highway 191 and Kane Creek Boulevard in Moab, follow Kane Creek Boulevard west to its "Y" with Fifth West. Go left. In about 0.5 mile, the road reaches the Colorado River. The pavement ends after 2 miles at the mouth of Kane Creek Canyon. The road initially parallels the stream, then climbs high above it. Stop at the turnout before the road heads down the switchbacks for a view of the canyon and its surrounding ocean of rock. Try to pick out the route of Kane Creek as it meanders toward the Colorado River. From the pass, it is a quick ride down through a pair of steep switchbacks to Kane Creek. Below the switchbacks is a grove of shady cottonwoods and pouring from the wall along the left side of the road a spring. In

another mile, the road passes the mouth of Hunter Canyon. Beyond Hunter Canyon, Kane Creek Canyon opens up into a huge amphitheater. The high point ahead is Anticline Overlook. Hurrah Pass is located below and to the right of the point.

Follow the road over a low hill by some colorful rock formations to where it crosses Kane Creek (may be dry). Ride straight ahead to the "Y" junction. The Kane Creek Canyon 4-wheel drive trail goes left. Take the right fork to Hurrah Pass. From here, it is nearly all uphill. The road follows one of those improbable routes found only in Canyon Country as it snakes its way up a series of narrow Moenkopi Formation ledges. On the way to the pass, you will be rewarded with spectacular red rock country views.

This ride may be shortened by starting at a point farther along the route such as the entrance to Kane Creek Canyon.

GEMINI BRIDGES TRAIL

Gemini Bridges, a pair of natural rock spans; spectacular views of Behind the Rocks; and colorful rock formations. Length: 13.5 miles

Type: Dirt Road; Shuttle Required

Trailhead: On Highway 313 at a point 0.9 mile west of the Mineral Bottom turnout (12.6 miles west of the Utah 313/US191 junction).

The Gemini Bridges Trail is well known to local riders for its scenery and long descents. Starting from Utah 313, the trail, except for the climb out of Little Canyon, is nearly all downhill back to Highway 191.

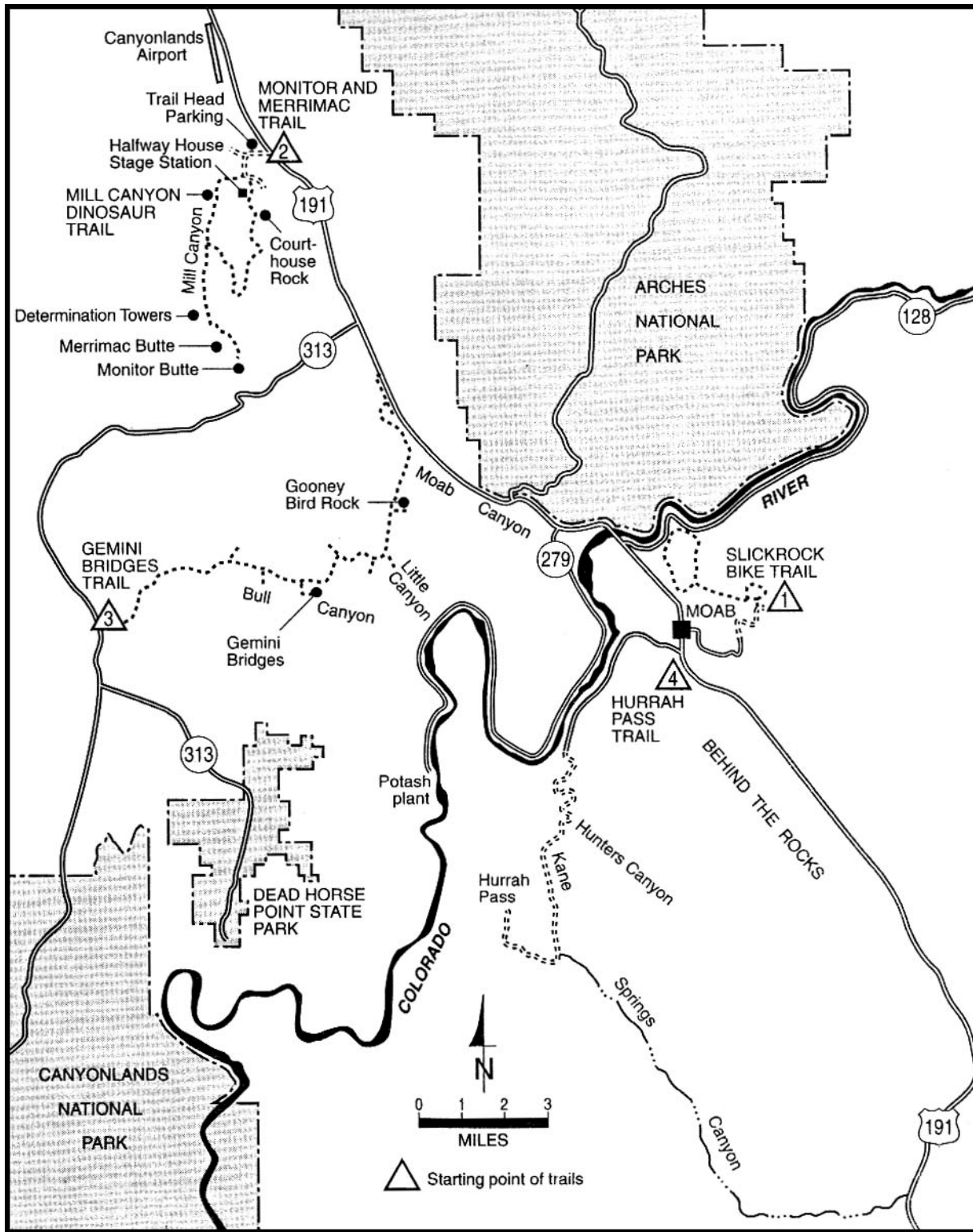
The first section of the trail is a rapid descent for 3.8 miles along a graded road through pinyon-juniper woodland. Just after the road enters a huge open flat, turn right off the main road and go past an abandoned drill site (note the large metal post). Ride under a power line and descend into a wooded area where, after 0.9 mile, you will come to the intersection with the Four Arches Trail.

From the intersection of the Four Arches Trail and the Gemini Bridges Trail, continue to parallel the Bull Canyon system (on your right) until just before the end of the large open area. At this point, which is 0.6 mile from the Four Arches intersection, another trail crosses your route; go right at this intersection and then up over a low sandy hill and descend to the Gemini Bridges. The Gemini Bridges are located at the end of this spur which is about 0.2 mile long.

After viewing the bridges, return to the main trail. The next stretch of the trail winds through a wooded area and is mostly slickrock. After 1.4 miles, you rejoin the road that you left at the drill pad. Go right and descend into Little Canyon. After 0.8 mile you will come to the intersection with the Bull Canyon Trail. Go left to stay on the Gemini Bridges Trail. Continue the descent into Little Canyon down a steep section of slickrock and loose dirt. At the bottom of the hill is the intersection with the Gold Bar Rim Trail. The Gemini Bridges trail goes left and crosses a large sandy wash. Ahead you will see Gooney Bird Rock. Beyond Gooney Bird Rock, the main trail continues its gradual ascent through Little Canyon. Much of this section is fairly sandy as the road keeps crossing the wash.

Near the head of the canyon, the road leaves the canyon bottom and climbs a fairly steep grade. The road then contours high above Highway 191. At this point, from your narrow perch on the road, you will have a spectacular view over Arches National Park. The road then quickly descends to the railroad tracks and Highway 191.

If you have left a vehicle here, then it is time to begin your shuttle. To avoid highway traffic in Moab Canyon, ride south on U.S. 191 for about 200 yards from the lower Gemini Bridges trailhead, then turn left onto a dirt road. Cross the yellow cattleguard and then follow the road to the right for a scenic ride through Moab Canyon that ends about 1/2 mile North of the Arches National Park entrance road. Some riders prefer to ride back to Moab.



Minimum Impact Biking Practices

Each year, individuals take hundreds of thousands of mountain bike rides in the Moab area. You can help protect this fragile land by adhering to the following minimum impact biking practices, and the Canyon Country Minimum Impact Practices.

- **Ride only on open roads and trails** - Riding cross-country, taking shortcuts, and playriding around campsites damages plants and soils. Don't be a trail pioneer by leaving a poorly chosen path for others to follow. Help land managers keep areas open to biking by staying on established routes.
- **Learn to recognize and preserve cryptobiotic soil crusts** - This delicate, often black, crusty-looking, complex of soil and slowly growing algae, mosses, bacteria, and lichens retains water, reduces erosion, and provides a stable base from which higher plants can flourish. It takes many years for cryptobiotic soil crust to recover from the ruts created by one bike. If you don't know what it looks like, ask someone to point it out!
- **Avoid skidding your tires** - Locking your wheels needlessly damages trails and leaves ugly tire marks on slickrock. Stay in control by "feathering your brakes".
- **Avoid clay-like surfaces and stay on rocky, slickrock, and sandy areas when it's wet** - Soils with high clay content, e.g. the first several miles of the Monitor and Merrimac Trail, turn to slippery, chain-clogging mud when wet. Riding through these areas under wet conditions leaves deep ruts that accelerate trail erosion.
- **Refrain from riding through and camping in riparian areas** - Riparian areas, the communities of water-loving plants along streams, are precious to wildlife. Wildlife concentrate in these areas and can be displaced by recreation use.
- **Protect water sources** - Washing mud off bikes and bathing can introduce lubrication, soaps, and oils from sunscreen into water sources critical for the survival of small animals.

Canyon Country Minimum Impact Practices

- **Tread Lightly when traveling and leave no trace of your camping.** Drive and ride only on roads and trails where such travel is allowed; hike only on established trails, on rock, or in washes. Camp at designated sites or, where allowed, at previously used sites. Avoid placing tents on top of vegetation and use a camp stove instead of making a campfire. Unless signs indicate otherwise, leave gates open or closed as you find them.
- **Help keep Canyon Country clean.** Pack out your trash and recycle it, clean up after less thoughtful visitors, and dispose of human waste properly.
- **Protect and conserve scarce desert water sources.** Camp at least 300 feet from isolated water sources to allow for wildlife access. Where possible, carry your own drinking water. Leave potholes undisturbed and wash well away from pools and springs.
- **Allow space for wildlife.** When encountering wildlife, maintain your distance and remain quiet. Teach children not to chase or pick up animals. Keep pets under control.
- **Leave historic sites, Native American rock art, ruins and artifacts untouched for the future.** Admire rock art from a distance and never touch it. Stay out of ruins, leave artifacts in place, and report violations.

Moab Information Center

Main & Center St, Moab

Moab & Green River Visitor Information

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