

*The Kokopelli Trail  
Mountain Bike Guide*

*Fruita to Moab  
142 miles you'll never forget*

*Alex Hearn*



## You need maps with this book!

This guide is designed to be used with two maps from [Latitude 40 - Fruita & Grand Junction](#) and [Moab East](#).

These are available at your local shop or online.

These are simply the best maps we've found for the trail, there's a full breakdown of different map options on page 8.

← This overview map is great for planning purposes but you'll want a real map in the field.

Why?

You're gonna take a few wrong turns, it happens to everyone. The difference between a 5 minute mistake & a 1 hour mistake is having good maps.

There are about 1000 other reasons but if you don't get it by now it won't matter what we say. ☺



## Why are we giving this book away?

This guide is the product of 1000's of hours of work and recognized as the most thorough & accurate KPT guide in existence. It was sold commercially from 2006-2012 which is kind of a pain in the butt when you're not a bookstore.

We've sold a couple thousand copies & have been happy with the return. Now it's time to focus our attention elsewhere - rather than selling guides & maps - and take on new projects, new rides, new events. So we're putting this info out to the world to be freely distributed in hopes it will promote responsible and safe use of the trail.

Below is the entire guidebook, the whole shebang, no charge. If it's helpful in your trip planning, riding or just an entertaining read we've got a tip jar [here](#), throw in a few bucks to say thanks.

Something we've learned thru the years, even tho everything is here for you to build your own supported trip it won't take long to realize it's a lot of work! A lot of those folks end up riding with us - so much simpler, so much fun, a great community & ultimately costs about the same.

Some take our word for it, some have to learn the hard way. Either way is fine with us so long as you're getting out there & having fun. See our website for details, we'll be adding more in summer 2013 if the stars align right.

Please note that we only host two Kokopelli trips per year, always the first two weekends in May. We don't do custom guided ventures - there are lots of quality operations in the Moab & Fruita areas that can help you with that and we're happy to recommend someone if you like.

So it's our hope that you'll take these pages & go enjoy the trail. Tailwinds, we'll see you out there ☺.



### **Warning!**

Mountain biking is inherently dangerous. Traveling in remote terrain is also dangerous. Doing both together elevates the peril exponentially. The information in this guide is provided to help you minimize these risks but should not take the place of experience & good judgment. Every effort has been taken to provide accurate details of this ride but remember that landmarks, trail status, water locations, mileages and many other factors are subject to changes that may not be noted here.  
Use your head & be safe!

Guide text, editing and graphics by Alex Hearn

Unless noted, all photographs courtesy of Bikerpelli Sports archives. Big thanks to the countless riders who have donated their personal photos. We'd credit you if we knew who you were!

Add'l photos by Tony Goffredo; Mike Sorum; Marty Huntington; Eric Lennert; and a blogger named Marni  
Guinea-pigging courtesy of Bikerpelli-ers (thanks all!)

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## Introduction

This guide is the fruit of many years of effort both riding the Kokopelli Trail & orchestrating large and small, multi-day group rides thru Bikerpelli Sports. We've done this trail every which way imaginable and hope to condense the wisdom gained into a usable format for you to put together your own epic adventure. I hope your trip is every bit as enjoyable & rewarding as ours have been.

Something to bear in mind - **Riding Kokopelli is never a quick affair**, you're talking about around 140 miles of bumpy terrain. If you plan it right, you'll have a minimum of hassles & the experience of a lifetime. For that reason expect to spend some time putting your trip together - read the whole book - like training, the more prep you put in, the better the final outcome will be.

And also a request - this trail required thousands of volunteer hours to create & maintain. It is special because it's well cared for & pristine. Let's keep it that way by not shortcutting, camping illegally, damaging the natural resources and of course please observe local practices & minimum impact guidelines. The **Golden Rule** is to **leave the desert the way you found it** - that's not too much to ask.



Brenda rips down the Rabbit Valley Trail #2

Those of you new to the desert are probably unfamiliar with the impact a single rider can have when deviating off the trail to avoid an obstacle or pass a rider. Those tracks will be there for months, at a minimum! We have **Cryptogamic soil** here, sort of the beginning of all life in the desert, and a footprint in that stuff takes about 100 years to erase. **Watch for it - it's the black-encrusted sand that grows in colonies - do not damage it with feet, tires or tents!** It's my hope that your trip to the desert will be a chance to learn more about what makes this area tick, because it's truly fascinating.



A bad picture of Cryptogamic Soil

There's a big difference between seeing the beauty of the desert and understanding that beauty. At the very least just stay strictly on-trail and only use existing campsites - that effort will go a long way to keeping Kokopelli intact. Thanks in advance.

## How to Use this Guide

Read the whole book cover-to-cover (not including the mileage log) to gain a good overview of what you're getting into. Then assess what type of support you'll need & how long you want to spend on trail. Finally, maps in hand, put together your plan using the specific info throughout this guide.

This guide is designed to be used in tandem with **two maps from Latitude 40** ([www.Bikerpelli.com](http://www.Bikerpelli.com)) - Moab East & Fruita/Grand Junction. They're about \$12 each. Don't attempt this without quality maps!



Loma Trailhead

Watch the margins for the following icons:

Water



Cache



Camp



Support



A **Water Spot** means there *should* be water there. Remember to treat and/or filter all backcountry sources. **Cache** is a convenient place to stage gear, food, water etc. Be sure to seal food in sturdy containers to keep critters out & place everything in the shade if possible. Also advisable to keep hidden from human intrusion. **Camps** are the designated spots only - there are lots of backcountry sites around if you look. Be sure to leave them the way you found them. **Support points (SAG's)** are traditionally the best spots to reach your riders. This should be based on your riders' needs before our recommendations.

## All about The Kokopelli Trail

Whether it was the story an old salty desert rat told to you late one nite, a written account of someone's epic ride, or just driving past the signs saying "Kokopelli Trail - that way," most, if not all of us have at least heard of the ride.



In the La Sals just above Moab

**The trail was conceived & built** in 1989 by the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association, a small group of committed mountain bikers who envisioned a single, contiguous trail stretching from Grand Junction, Colorado to Moab, Utah.

**It was named for Kokopelli**, the magical flute player who wandered the desert and was able to drive back winter, as Hopi legend holds. On his back he carried a pack full of corn seed, which he sowed liberally throughout the Four

Corners area. Other legends claim when Hopi women could not bear children, they would seek him out because he was able to restore their childbearing powers. According to Hopi legend, Kokopelli spent most of his time sowing seed and seducing the daughters of the village while his wife, Kokopelli Mana, ran after the men!

Without any additional loops, the trail covers approximately **142 miles total**. Most is on remote BLM property, with a few confluences on private or state-held land and a short jaunt thru the Manti-La Sal National Forest. It is most frequently ridden east to west, or Loma to Moab. That's not to say it has to be done that way, many claim the opposite route is as enjoyable.

**The terrain** is classic Colorado Plateau and will vary frequently. Those familiar with Moab riding will feel right at home, those new to the area will encounter trail surfaces unlike anything they've ever seen. You'll start off skirting the Colorado River outside of Fruita, CO, following increasingly technical singletrack on hardpack and occasional slickrock.

Later that day, the trail climbs out of the Salt Creek area to gentle hills and rolling jeep trail past enormous Entrada formations reminiscent of a moonscape from a Dr Seuss book. Past the entrada sandstone formations, the trail drops into the Cisco desert. This is a typically less colorful section passing **a ghost town** frozen in time on smoother 2wd roads eventually narrowing into singletrack that dips so close to the Colorado river you can almost kiss it - a great time to put it on autopilot & score some fast miles while soaking up the desert.



This is an 8 of 10 on the tech scale



Once you reach pavement at Utah highway 128, the trail crosses over into Yellow Jacket Canyon for a fun climb before a fast sandy descent to the historic Dewey Suspension Bridge, once the only passage across the Colorado. From Dewey Bridge, the rider is again confronted by numerous photo ops as the trail climbs - sometimes steeply - thru sage & juniper forests into the Fisher Valley, passing thru several canyons (both named "Cottonwood") and a slickrock playground if you're willing.

From Fisher Valley, Kokopelli carries the riders thru an extended climb into the **pine & aspen forests** of the La Sal's and above Castle Valley. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> summit, the views of nearby Moab are spectacular, and it's all downhill from here! Descend thru rollercoaster singletrack to Sand Flats

Road, and choose between the traditional casual descent past the Slickrock trail or for those feeling strong, the daring descent along Porcupine Rim.

A common question is "how hard is the trail?" It's probably easier to ride than answer that question. The terrain varies immensely between gentle, meandering & smooth-as-silk double-track to steep, rocky and technical single track. It's also long. 95% of the trail is completely rideable by a strong intermediate rider with average technical skills and a solid base of endurance training. Still, this is considered a **strong-intermediate to advanced ride**.



Wide open spaces in Westwater

The vast majority looks like this on a scale of 1-10:

- Technical skill - 6
  - (how well you can navigate tricky trail)
- Strength - 7
  - (how much pedaling power you can generate)
- Endurance - 8
  - (how long you can sustain that power)



You're going over those - the La Sal Mtns

There are some very technical pieces, but are short enough to walk. Remember that one rider's 4 is another's 11, so these numbers are subjective. Also know that **these rankings are an average**, NOT an indication of the hardest obstacles you'll face. Be sure to train appropriately for your individual strategy - we've included a sample training guide for you to customize.

A bit more **about technical riding skills** - while this isn't considered a technical ride, there are some very technical sections that rank around 8-10. Without respectable technical ability, you'll find yourself walking quite a bit, especially on day one. It can be done, but will add several hours to your ride time. This is real mountain biking and is

not a beginner trail! You should be comfortable riding narrow singletrack with large "babyhead" rocks littering your path, and also good at negotiating 6-12" ledges & steps.

Remember, **this is a marathon, not a sprint**. The urge to hammer mostly comes during the first 3 hours of day one & the last 3 of the final day because they're the most singletrack-intensive. Between those points something happens to make you forget miles & times



You're never alone in the desert

and just settle into a rhythm with the desert, and that's when the Kokopelli becomes pure magic.



Cisco Singletrack

**Why Loma to Moab?** Previous guides to the Kokopelli Trail emphasized riding from Moab to Loma, or west to east. My guess why is the rigs they were riding in the late 80's/early 90's - minimal (if any) suspension. Today's bikes have **huge technology improvements** like larger tires, lighter weight & efficient full suspension that make trails like the Fruita singletrack and Porcupine Rim much more viable.

Also remember the trail is a dynamic linkup of existing & new roads, trails & paths - it is not static, and has evolved over the years. Having ridden the trail in both directions, it's my feeling that it's simply more fun &

rewarding to travel from Loma to Moab. That doesn't mean it can't be enjoyed the other way, but you'll miss

the Porcupine Rim descent into Moab, several fun downhill runs in Fruita and you'll probably be walking several miles uphill in deep sand thru Yellow Jacket Canyon (it can be ridden completely from north to south, not the other way due to sand). Riding from Loma, CO to Moab, UT, or northeast to southwest eliminates these problems.

**Elevation charts** read like an EKG after espresso - but remember you're looking at almost 150 miles of climbing & descending condensed so don't be intimidated. There are several short, steep climbs & descents, and a couple very long climbs & drops at a more moderate grade. **The single longest climb** comes towards the Moab end, and rockets to over 8500 feet into the La Sal Mountains. While that may sound grueling, remember that a large percentage of riders rank that climbing experience as the high point of their trip. The elevation low is about 4000'. Most of the ride stays around a mile high. Very important that each rider see the conditioning info for altitude in this guide.

**Routefinding:** The entire trail is well-marked at every junction (in theory), and there is no reason why any rider should expect to lose their way so long as they follow the signs and don't wander off trail. Still, it is essential that each rider carry a map & compass and know how to use it. A bike computer with accurate odometer can prove invaluable when following route descriptions, and can provide a great deal of peace-of-mind.

**Water:** There is no potable water on the trail, so this will be a key part of your planning. Water may be filtered at a few isolated spots, cached ahead of time, or provided by support vehicles. Watch the margins of this text for good cache or filter spots. There is fresh well water (potable) available at the Westwater Ranger Station just off trail about 20 miles into UT, but everywhere else requires a filter/pump.



Views of Castle Valley

**Weather:** The ideal time to be on the trail is spring or fall. You can generally expect daytime temps to be mid 60's-80's down low, and cooler as elevation increases. Nights will be cool, in the 30's-50's. Remember this is the desert, and the weather can change quickly & drastically so be prepared. Generally speaking tho, it's pretty predictable. The best months are usually April/May & Sept/Oct given the average temps for those times. They are also the most popular months so don't expect to be alone. Spring is typically a bit wetter, fall has shorter days - choose wisely.

Winter is an option, but expect it to be cold and the La Sals will ~~probably~~ *definitely* have snowpack. Same with summer - it can be done, but it'll be **dangerously** hot & dry - like 100+. Once you enter the higher elevation areas temps can drop as much as 30 degrees. And while that may be a welcome break from a hot day, know that there could still be snow on the ground in the mountains, making the trail impassible to all but the hardest souls.

### Building Your Trip



There are lots of different ways to construct a trip on the Kokopelli Trail. Options range from 1-7 days on trail, and include many different support options, not to mention side trails. We'll try to cover as many options as possible while confining ourselves to the routes & methods that are the most rewarding.

The first thing you should know about Kokopelli Trail is that it's all about options. There are an infinite number of ways to structure a ride based on the experience you're looking for & what kind of ability you have, how much work you're willing to put in, and of course how much time you've got. The

first thing you have to ask yourself is **what kind of experience do you want?**

We've structured this guide to help you take advantage of all the options. Note that this is not a grab-n-go guide, it is meant to be read in entirety to help you setup your trip before you head out! It's structured to help you put together the big pieces first then work out the details of those decisions last. Finally there's a trail log with a mile-by-mile breakdown to help determine any specifics. Throw that part in your pack for the ride.

#### Different ways to ride the trail

You've got a few options on how to set up your ride, listed in terms of easiest to most work.

- **Hiring a guide** - The easiest way is to hire a guiding operation to set it all up for you. There's no shortage of qualified commercial guiding companies that



Every meal an adventure all its own

regularly run Kokopelli trips. Simple as making a phone call.

- Pros - They'll structure all your logistics, provide all the food & camping gear, shuttles, on-trail guides, cook for you & even provide the bikes if you'd like. They tend to be very flexible and will work with you on whatever your needs & time schedule may be. This is a great way to focus exclusively on the trail, to find all the local secrets & just have a blast with a minimum amount of hassle.
- Cons - Expect to pay in the neighborhood of \$900-\$1200 per person for a 5-6 day tour.

One thing to check when hiring a guide - do they have a **BLM & NFS permit** to guide on this trail? It's a minimum standard of professionalism you should require, sort of like a licensed electrician to work on your house. There are a lot of fly-by-nite folks calling themselves guides. If they're too slack to get proper permits imagine how they'll treat you ☹.

Having a permit means they'll have the bare minimum of training, experience, insurance, emergency preparation & gear, medical certifications and more.

Not having a permit means they don't meet the above standards. This is not who you want to hang your vacation time on. You wouldn't believe some of the stories we've heard...

Permits are inexpensive and easy to get for anyone serious about guiding. The funds from fees go into trail maintenance and help prevent abuse, overuse & crowding. **If someone charges money for operations on public land they need a permit** & owe a portion of profit to the folks maintaining that land. It's only about 5% and it's the right thing to do.

The BLM is happy to check this for you, just call.  
Utah - 435.259.2100    Colorado - 970.244.3000

- **Pre-planned event** - There are a few bike clubs in the area offering spots on a pre-planned multi-day tour. Check the web or your local bike club.
  - Pros - This tends to be cheaper, from \$250-\$500 per person, no logistical hassles, meet lots of like-minded bikers in a larger group
  - Cons - You'll be confined to their schedule & choices on everything
- **Do it Yourself (supported)** - If you're looking for the added challenge of designing your own trip you can provide your own support network & set it up any way you want.
  - Greatest flexibility, lowest cost
  - Cons - lots of planning, you'll need someone willing to drive support.
- **DIY (unsupported)** - you either stage all your gear in caches across the trail at regular intervals or carry it with you.
  - Pros - this is the least expensive

- Cons - it's the most work. This tends to be more a test of determination than a mountain bike ride but has its own rewards as well. It's also the most risky - you need to know what you're doing.

### Some Kokopelli Basics

- There are NO amenities on the trail - no water faucets, no Seven-11's, no bike shops. If you don't bring it, it ain't there.
- There are several spots to filter water but are few, far between & require a lot of pumping. **You're better off caching** a supply ahead of time if you're self-supported. Carrying lots of water is not fun.
- Much of this trail is remote, meaning if you are injured or have a serious mechanical you've got a long walk out. Come prepared & be cautious.
- Ideal time to ride is late spring or early fall. Temps are historically perfect but unpredictable. It can snow in the La Sal's in summer, it can be hot down lower in winter.
- **If it rains hard the trail is mostly impassable** - the mud's simply too thick. Be smart & wait it out. It tends to dry quickly.
- Most of the trail is on BLM property. In most areas you can camp where you please (following their rules of course), but for logistical & preservation purposes we'll only list what we believe are the best established sites. If you choose to deviate, please erase all traces of your camp. This is important.
- A good bit of the trail is drivable with a capable 4wd & pilot but it's slow-going and there are numerous bottlenecks. See notes in mileage log.



Bentonite clay + water = cement



Hwy 128 - The Colorado Riverway

### Maps

You'd be foolish to attempt this without a **quality map & compass and the ability to use them properly**. The best maps of course are the USGS quads, but this is unwieldy. Next best options are the **Latitude 40** maps - a scaled down version of the USGS series with full topo lines and trail markings, plus it's in color, amazingly accurate and even have the trail marked on them. You'll need two maps from them: Fruita & Moab East. This covers 95% of the trail. Bikerpelli sells these or ask your local bike shop, most carry them.

There's also a free map produced by COPMOBA (the folks who built the trail) and distributed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). While it's not a great riding resource it gives an excellent overview of the trail as a whole & is very useful for planning purposes. Call the Grand Junction BLM office, ask for the Kokopelli Trail Map. These maps are expensive for them to produce & mail, they're gracious enough to do it for free. Please don't take advantage of this, consider donating a few bucks in return.

NatGeo also has a series of maps covering the area but again, not nearly as dedicated or useful as the Lat40 maps.

The **inside cover maps [our 'overview' map at the top]** in this guide are great for planning purposes but won't help if (or when) you take a wrong turn, that's what real maps are for.

### Landmarks

Once your maps are in hand there are a few landmarks you should find & commit to memory. **Those in bold** are the minimum you should know, listed East to West:

- **The roads**

- **I-70** major east/west artery between Colorado & Utah.
- **Highway 128** (AKA the Colorado Riverway) from Cisco & I-70, heads south to Moab.

- **Loma Trailhead** (mile 0)

- Where it all begins. Loma is one exit west of Fruita, exit 15 on I-70. Head south, bear right, then an abrupt left up the hill just before the truck weigh station. The trailhead's about a quarter mile in. Big lot with a pit toilet here.



- **The Fruita Loops**

- The first 11 miles or so, very singletrack intensive. Some of the best singletrack riding in the country. Starts easy, becomes progressively more technical. You'll weave between 4 different loop trails, route finding is important here. No vehicle access on trails before Rabbit Valley access rd.

- **Salt Creek** (mile 11)

- Valley west of Loma, there's a bridge & railroad crossing. 2 hike-a-bikes after this up a steep hill. Bad water to drink.



View of Salt Creek foot & rail bridges

- **Rabbit Valley** (mile 21)

- Exit 2 off I-70, easy trail access from road. Great sag or camp spot. Vehicles can 2wd approx 7 miles east on trail from here.



- **Western Rim turnoff** (mile 26)

- Just into Utah, a key 5-way intersection, turn left here for the Western Rim Trail

- **Bitter Creek Overlook** (mile 33)

- First campsite into Utah, good spot, pit toilet. I-70 exit 227, Westwater. See maps, Subaru-accessible. (Be aware that some maps mark this as exit 225, not 227)



- **Trestle intersect** (mile 42)

- On road to Westwater Ranger station, an obvious train bridge where the trail shoots off west from the paved road under the bridge.



- Westwater Ranger Station (mile 42 + 2)
  - A few miles off trail, popular campsite on the Colorado River. Usually a ranger.



Beautiful campsite and potable water.

- Cisco Takeout (mile 58)
  - Boat ramp & CO river junction. EZ drive in from Cisco.



#### Fish Ford (mile 62)

- Access from Cisco for vehicles, scenic, an established campsite w/ no services.



- McGraw Bottom (mile 70)
  - Where the trail intersects Utah Hwy 128 at approx mile marker 34.5



- **Yellow Jacket Canyon (YJC)** (mile 70.3 - 80)
  - 10 mile piece west of Hwy 128, excellent if ridden north to south, frequently miserably sandy the other way. No vehicle access from south or past halfway point (heading south).

- **Dewey Bridge** (mile 80)
  - Remains of suspension bridge from 1916. Half way point of trail, crosses over CO River. Great sag under the cottonwoods. Also public campground with public trash but no amenities.



Dewey Bridge (now burned down)

- **Entrada Bluffs Rd** (miles 80 - 91)
  - Tough 11 mile climb from Dewey Bridge thru Cottonwood Canyons. 45 min drive to top, VERY rocky.

- **Cowskin Campground** (mile 83)



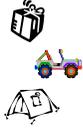
- Fairly large site just off Entrada Bluffs Rd, only 3-4 miles up from the hwy. If full, camp at Dewey Bridge.

- **Cottonwood Canyons 1&2** (mile 85 & 91)
  - (There are 2 of them with the same name. Go figure.) The first is fairly short in & out, rocky. Don't try to drive this. Use the long way around in a vehicle.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> is at the summit of Entrada Bluffs rd, leads to Fisher Valley. Pro drivers only.

- **Rose Garden Hill** (mile 93)
  - Extremely technical short descent between Entrada Bluffs Rd summit & Fisher Valley, short & usually walked but can be ridden. A rock-crawler Jeep can drive thru, slowly.

- **Fisher Valley (mile 98)**

- Amazing high desert valley. Think "Bonanza" in the desert. Good camping, sag. Mostly private property & well marked. Leave cattle gates as you find them. The public land is on the south end.



Onion Creek Rd

- **Onion Creek Rd**

- Access to Fisher Valley from Hwy 128, 45 min to top. About 20 creek crossings, high clearance vehicle recommended. Don't drink this water - it's contaminated from the mines. 2wd accessible but a little tricky.

- **Hideout Canyon (mile 101)**

- Campsite accessed thru Fisher Valley. Very tricky vehicle access, steep & rocky. 4wd & capable pilot required, don't attempt in rain or snow, you'll get very stuck. From here you can 4wd all the way to Moab.



- **North Beaver Mesa (mile 113)**

- False summit after long climb from Fisher Valley. Good water just down the hill.



- **Bull Draw (mile 116)**

- Lots of camping up here, all National Forest land. High altitude, cool temps. The summit before Castle Valley. Pavement starts.



- **Rock Castle (mile 122)**

- Great campsite at the top of Castle Valley rd, easy vehicle access, all paved. Even a hidden spring under the cottonwoods. Don't confuse with Castle Rock in Colorado! Between the Nat Forest boundary & the La Sal Loop road intersection at Castle Valley. Easy to miss, it's waaay back in there.



- **Cold Springs Camp/Mason Draw (mile 128)**

- The summit of the La Sal Loop Rd, 8400', watch for a gravel pullout on your right.



- **Upper Connector (mile 128)**

- Begins just past summit pullout, easy to zip by. Drops you to Sand Flats Rd. Vehicles should skirt this using the Sand Flats intersection another mile or so down.



- **Upper Porcupine singletrack (mile 130) aka UPS**

- NFS trail offshoot with stellar winding singletrack, starts just past the narrow pedestrian cattle guard thru a fence.

- **Lower Porcupine singletrack** (mile 132) aka LPS
  - The more tech continuation of UPS towards Porcupine Rim proper, begins at a 2wd doubletrack crossing, about 2.5 mi to PR overlook proper.
- **Sand Flats Rd** (mile 132)
  - 2wd dirt rd into Moab past SlickRock Trail. Also passes Porcupine Rim Trailhead at stocktanks. 🚗
- **Lazy Man's Put-in** (mile 136)
  - A short-cut from Sand Flats Rd to Porcupine Rim, it eliminates some of the stocktanks uphill.
- **Porcupine Rim** (mile 138)
  - The more daring, alternative end to Kokopelli. Gonzo downhill technical run. Accessed from 2 points on Sand Flats rd or UPS/LPS. No vehicles thru here. Ends on Hwy 128 (3) miles from Moab.
- **Slickrock Trailhead** (mile 142)
  - The official, historical end to the Kokopelli & one of the most unique trails in the world. 🏕️ 🚗

### Water spots

There are 2 primary spots for water refills if you're using a support vehicle - Fruita & Moab.

- **Fruita** - The Colorado Visitor Center, exit 19 from I-70 (Fruita exit). Turn south 50 yds to the 2<sup>nd</sup> traffic circle, loop around, it's on the east side with a tricky entrance that looks like you're going back on the interstate. Water refills are at the RV dump area, bring a short hose if you have lots of water jugs, it's much easier.
- **Matrimony Spring** - Hwy 128, 100 yds north of the intersection of hwy 191 in Moab. Roadside spring on east side of road, can't miss it. Excellent natural water source. Keep in mind that while thousands of users drink this water every year, it is not tested or officially maintained. If you have concerns, treat before drinking.



#### Also:

- **Colorado River** - Prepare for some serious pumping, treating is not enough. The river is always thick with silt. Wrapping your filter inlet with a bandanna helps. Numerous access points, look for the Water Spigot symbol in the margin under "Landmarks."
- **Westwater Ranger Station** - They have a ranch spigot tapped into a low-flow well but it's officially for the campground only. Personal use is always OK, the flow is too small for commercial use.
- **Hideout Campsite** - Not entirely dependable and a long stretch from the road, water can sometimes be had behind this site. Don't attempt to drive into here unless you really know what you're doing.

- **North Beaver Mesa** - A pretty clean & dependable backcountry source but treat it anyway. This is located in the valley bottom between Bull Draw Campsite & the Polar Mesa Trail proper, approx  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east of FS 207 on the trail. Also good for a quick head-dunk. Look for the short bridge by the cattle corral.
- **Rock Castle Campsite** - there's a hidden spring deep in the site, also dependable, you'll have to walk in. Head for the cottonwoods downhill past the pit toilet structure. Treat this, as you'll probably be standing in cow pies when you scoop it up.
- ! **DO NOT** use water from Onion Creek - it is polluted with runoff from old mining operations & is not safe!

Understand that backcountry water sources in the desert are rarely dependable. Caching a supply ahead of time is recommended if self-supported, it will save a lot of time in the long run.

### Sample Itineraries

Your trip itinerary should **consider your fitness** & level of riding proficiency over the number of vacation days you've accumulated. Plan wisely, when in doubt take an extra day. Any of these plans can be broken up with a rest day as well. Mileages are an approximation for planning purposes.

- **5-7 days** - this is mostly relaxed, leaving time to enjoy the camps, explore side trails & doesn't require much training. Expect to spend about 2-4 hours on trail per day. Good for the recreational cyclist, strong riders may be bored with this.
- **3-4 days** - the most common option. You'll need to be in solid shape to spend between 5-8 hours per day in the saddle
- **2 days** - you'll ride about 75 miles per day. You'll be tired. You need to be in excellent shape for this. Being young helps.
- **1 day** - Expect to ride approx 24 hours straight. It's been ticked in under 14 hours last I checked. Don't even attempt unless you're in phenomenal shape & ready to suffer. Some people think this is fun...

#### 7 Day tour

- This is the classic Kokopelli tour, very relaxed. You'll only ride around 2-3 hours per day average. There are no sags designated, as most days are only around 20 miles. You may want to have the support vehicle 4wd the trail on day 6 to help if necessary - it's a long climb & the hardest day.
  - Day one - Loma to Rabbit Valley 21mi
  - Day two - Rabbit Valley to Westwater Ranger Station 23mi
  - Day Three - Westwater to Fish Ford 20mi
  - Day Four - Fish Ford to Dewey Bridge 18mi
  - Day five - Dewey Bridge to Fisher Valley 18mi
  - Day Six - Fisher Valley to Rock Castle 24mi
  - Day Seven - Rock Castle to Moab 20mi

## 6 Day Tour

- This is just a variation on the 7-day plan, still pretty casual. In addition to trailing the riders on day 5, you may want to add a sag station to Day 2 - easy riding, but a lot of miles. Sag at Trestle Intersect. This is the 2-4 hour/day plan.
  - Day one - Loma to Rabbit Valley 21mi
  - Day two - Rabbit Valley to Fish Ford 41mi
  - Day Three - Fish Ford to Dewey Bridge 18mi
  - Day Four - Dewey Bridge to Fisher Valley 18mi
  - Day five - Fisher Valley to Rock Castle 24mi
  - Day Six - Rock Castle to Moab 20mi



View off the rim at Bitter Creek Campsite

## 5 Day Tour

- Getting a little more intense now. Riders should be fit & capable. Plan on riding 4-5 hours per day. Frankly, this isn't a great plan because of the camp & sag points. More support work will be needed.
  - Day one - Loma to Rabbit Valley 21mi
  - Day two - Rabbit Valley to Fish Ford 41mi
    - Sag at Trestle Intersect
  - Day Three - Fish Ford to Cowskin 21mi
  - Day Four - Cowskin to Bull Draw 33mi
    - Sag at Fisher Valley - long day!
  - Day five - Bull Draw to Moab 26mi
    - Sag at Upper Connector if needed

## 4 Day Tour

- Riders should be fit & capable, having trained specifically for the ride. Plan on riding 5-6 hours per day. This is the most popular plan.
  - Day one - Loma to Bitter Creek 33mi
    - Sag at Rabbit Valley
  - Day two - Bitter Creek to Cowskin 50mi
    - Sag at Fish Ford
    - Consider cutting off YJC
  - Day Three - Cowskin to Bull Draw 33mi
    - Sag at Fisher Valley - tough day!
  - Day Four - Bull Draw to Moab 26mi

## 3 Day Tour

- Riders should be strong, having trained extensively for the ride. Plan on riding 6-8 hours per day.
  - Day one - Loma to Westwater RS 44mi
    - Sag at Rabbit Valley
  - Day two - Westwater to Fisher Valley 56mi
    - Sag at Dewey Bridge

- This is a LONG day
- Day Three - Fisher Valley to Moab 44mi
  - Sag at Rock Castle
- Day 2 is particularly tough with a lot of climbing. Consider cutting off Yellow Jacket Canyon or shuttling up Entrada Bluffs Rd (better)

## 2 Day Tour

- If you're considering this, you don't need me to tell you to train...a strong rider will spend around 9+ hours per day in the saddle.
  - Day one - Loma to Cowskin 83mi
    - Sag at Rabbit Valley & Fish Ford
  - Day two - Cowskin to Moab 59mi
    - Sag at Fisher Valley & Rock Castle
  - Day Three - get a massage.



Hoodoos in the valley

## 1 Day tour

- Uber-athletes only! Expect a solid 16-24 hour adventure.
  - Day 1 - The whole chimichanga. Ride the Fruita loops & Porcupine Rim in daylight for safety reasons - they're the most technical & least accessible to vehicles.
    - If you're doing this, your sag needs are probably less than most riders. At minimum, sag at Westwater, Dewey Bridge & Rock Castle.
    - Needless to say, this is a dangerous undertaking. Please know what you're doing.

## Gear

### Vehicle supported:

This is the most popular option. The most-common mistake is not enough vehicle & too much gear. A full-size pickup can support 4 riders & 1 driver, OR LESS!

What you'll need:

- A good friend with a good vehicle, preferably 4wd. It'll have to carry all the rider's camping & resupply gear for the duration with few opportunities to run to town, which can be up to 2 hours away. Most resupply areas can be easily accessed by a 2wd vehicle, while some require at the minimum high clearance to drive into. **Please read the notes before each section on vehicle accessibility.**
- Camping gear adequate for the season. Don't forget a **shade tarp** if it's hot.
- Lots of **sunscreen**, especially thru the mountains (altitude). Sunburn is a 1<sup>st</sup> degree burn and usually means dehydration.



- Large water carriers - count on being able to fill water containers only once per day, **2-3 gallons per day/rider** total is a good rule of thumb, more if it's hot out or you're a messy cook. Don't forget to add for camp showers.
- A good bike repair kit with a few spare parts - tubes, a spare tire, a chain, a few spokes, something to clean your drivetrain to name a few.
- A tuned bike - this is a tough ride! Your bike needs to be prepared for a good 24 hours of riding, so check your brake pads, tire tread, wheel true etc.
- Maps: These are important for the driver as well as the rider - it's a good idea for everyone to have the same set of maps to coordinate meeting points. Drivers may want the DeLorme Atlas books for Utah & Colorado also but they're not necessary. Separate copies of this guide would be more useful.
- What you'll want:
  - A camp shower - these are a real comfort at the end of a long day. Plan enough extra water to fill them. An average camp shower uses at least a gallon.
  - A cold beer - this is a nice bonus if you have cooler space & ice. Remember alcohol is a powerful diuretic, so drink lots & lots of water if you plan on imbibing.
  - Chamois lube - expect to chafe your "parts" if your chamois bike shorts are dry. Vaseline or Bag Balm work fine & can be a godsend. You'll wish you had some by day three.
  - A camera. Photo ops wait around every turn. Ideally something that fits in your jersey pocket for easy access.
  - Camp chair - after a long ride, it's the simple pleasures in life that really matter.



### Self-Supported

You'll either need to devise a way to carry all your camping & riding gear with you or carry your camping gear & cache the resupply. Obviously one's simpler than the other, it's also more work on the bike. Expect to spend some serious time planning your itinerary & resupply points as a mistake could be serious. Be honest - how far can you travel per day realistically? Safely? Leave yourself a comfortable margin of error.

- What you'll need - Some serious panniers & racks or a bike trailer to haul gear & water.
- What you'll want - ultralite camping gear - sleeping bag, cook stove, etc

Expect the extra weight to cut your average speed & daily range by at least 30%. Expect your water & food needs to jump by that same amount. Expect to suffer thru the technical sections.



Skirting yet another rim

Camelback HAWG  
 w/100oz  
 2 tubes  
 small pump  
 patch kit  
 tire patch (lg)  
 2 tire tools  
 4,5,6mm Allen wrenches  
 spoke tool  
 chain tool  
 3 chain links  
 1 master link  
 1 chain pin  
 2 alloy nipples  
 1 brake pad  
 1 chainring nut & bolt  
 1-5mm bolt  
 lg bandanna  
 spare contact lenses  
 whistle  
 1 pedal cleat bolt  
 very small lube  
 4 Clif-Bars  
 2 Emergen-C's  
 tiny Swiss Army knife  
 matches  
 LED headlamp  
 2 small McDonald's salt

## Riding Gear

- At a minimum, a hydration pack with 80oz or more water, food, bike multi-tool, several tubes & patch kit, pump, chain tool & spare links, anything else you'll normally ride with. Add a small headlamp & whistle in case of emergency. If you're riding the 3-4 day plan or less, you'll want a 100oz reservoir in your pack.
- Obviously, the more you carry, the slower you'll move. The trick is to bring only what you believe you'll need & what you're not willing to risk being without. Here're the contents of one Kokopelli rider's pack - (this is a for-example only)

packets  
 Small bag w/Cytomax  
 powder  
 Sunscreen  
 map  
 compass  
 H2O bottle  
 w/concentrated  
 Cytomax  
 7 med zip ties



**Bike** - Ideally, full suspension's the way to go, it's simply more comfortable over a long haul. It's not necessary though. Plenty of riders have completed the trail on entirely rigid bikes. Full Suspension rigs can be rented in Fruita, Grand Junction or Moab for reasonable rates. Consider outfitting your ride with a quality bike computer, one with accurate mileage. This can be invaluable when trying to assess exactly where you are.

### Route Finding

The entire trail is well-marked (in theory) and is relatively easy to follow. **Again, in theory.** The signs, like everything else in the desert, are subject to forces of nature and sometimes human interference. There is one sign in particular that appears to be pointing left at an intersection, but if you look at the base, you'll see that it has been subjected to constant winds that have twisted it 90 degrees. Consequently, it points you in the wrong direction. These signs are constantly maintained but there are no guarantees that either nature or ill-tempered passersby haven't altered them. For this reason it's imperative that you carry a quality map of the area, a compass, and most importantly know how to use the two. A wrong turn can really mess up your day. Take a little extra time at each intersection to be sure which way you should be going, this will save you hours of hassle & worry down the trail. **Most riders will miss 2-3 turns over the whole trail, it's that common.**



The trail is rough on gear - check your ride!

### Altitude

Most of the trail lives around a mile high but the pieces thru the La Sal Mountains will take you **well over 8000'**. If you're coming from low altitude, you need to prepare yourself for this appropriately. Most acclimatization takes place in the first 48 hours so if you're able to arrive a couple days early it'll really help. If not, expect the miles to go about 10% slower than you're accustomed to and remember to take it easy. Altitude acclimatization is far too broad a subject to take on here - talk to your local mountaineering shops for good advice on what to expect, they're usually pros.



Fruita Singletrack dances along the rim

### Food

Don't plan to survive on cheese dogs, you'll need some quality carbs to feel good each day, and some protein to rebuild muscles. You'll also need to replace electrolytes, so Gatorade or Cytomax is a good idea throughout the day & at camps.

The key to this ride outside of the training is food & water. If you only eat in camps & SAG, you will simply

run out of gas & won't want to finish. I recommend eating at least **1 Clif-bar type snack per hour of riding**. That's about 18-24 cardboard-tasting pet chew-toys, I know, but feeling strong will make the ride much more enjoyable.

Also be sure to get in a fairly large breakfast - don't worry, you'll burn it off - and a respectable dinner. Pasta's good, bean & rice burritos have a lot of protein, chips/salsa/guacamole provide salt & quality fuel for the next day, PB & J is tough to beat for an easy, calorie-packed lunch.

In the desert you'll sweat a lot more than you realize so you'll need to replace electrolytes each day too. Powdered drinks like Accelerade & Cytomax are excellent, so's Gatorade. Throw some salt on your food for sodium, eat a couple bananas for potassium.



**Electrolyte replacement** powders are great to add too. I like Emergen - C, they're cheap, light & work well. You can carry a separate water bottle with your drink mix concentrated in it, it'll save you from having to clean out the hydration pack bladder each day.

While it may sound excessive, starting off by **slugging a quart** of Cytomax before leaving camp is a good idea, especially if you're a coffee drinker. It's easier than carrying the extra water on your back & will "prime the pumps."

#### **Tuning up your bike**

The trail's no place to find out your bike doesn't fit. You'll spend around **18-24 hours in the saddle** total so minor hindrances can become serious annoyances. If you've never been professionally fit for your bike, it's worth the \$60 or so at a shop. While you're at it, get a fresh chain, tune up the shifting, brakes (new brake pads?) & cables.

Also consider some new tires - the **undisputed favorites for this area** are large volume, 2.3" to 2.4." There's a small weight penalty but they payoff big with the multitude of sharp rocks, float thru deep sand and will feel like you've got an extra inch of suspension. Don't even think of bringing your ultra-lite racing tires, they'll get shredded. A tubeless setup is a bonus, we're partial to retrofit systems like Stan's NoTubes over UST for a whole bunch of reasons. Be sure to get it dialed before heading out on trail.

#### **A Few Other Tips & Tricks**

Sometimes the hardest thing about spending long hours in the saddle is spending long hours sitting on your saddle. Cycling shorts with a good chamois pad are a must, but if that pad is dry, expect it to chafe your "parts" to the point of rug burns later in the ride. Two solutions to this - first, as awful as it may sound, scoop out a tablespoon of Bag Balm or Vaseline before the ride & smear it under your parts or on your chamois - same effect. The rug burn you're experiencing is from friction, your bum vs.

your shorts. This helps tremendously. Second option is to wear 2 pairs of shorts at the same time. Then the rubbing happens between the shorts, not you. Use both options, you're pretty bulletproof.

When it comes to **spacing yourself**, the trick is to never put yourself into the red.

If you're into **HR monitors**, think about how long you can sustain riding at 85% of your max - maybe an hour or so for most. Back that down to 75% and you're probably good for 3+ hours. At 65%, a fit rider should be able to ride over 6 hours given that they're eating & hydrating well. That's where you need to be for the 4-day or less plan.

A couple foundations for that - first is your training. Riding at 65% of your max shouldn't be taxing to your muscles if you've trained right. What I mean is that you're not breaking down the muscles while you ride the way you would doing squats or lunges in the gym. Easy if we're talking about flat ground, **but we've got hills out here**, so you'll need to condition yourself to riding long stretches using a lot of power.

Once the legs are OK with this, the other keys come into play, that's eating enough calories & drinking lots of water. I can't tell you how much you need to eat per hour - play that by ear. I can say that you'll never eat too much but you can definitely eat too little. And a word of warning here: On trips like these, there's always someone thinking this will be a great way to lose weight & won't eat anything. Don't be that person. **That person is a candidate for an ambulance ride.**



The trail is marked by these brown signs, approx 4' tall



**About the water**, the best gauge is how often you have to pee. You should be stopping behind a rock about once per hour. If not, you're not drinking enough & should expect the miles to be slower & tougher because your heart has to work harder. **The first sign of dehydration is fatigue.**

If you're not into HR monitors, a good indicator of how hard you're working is the ability to carry on a conversation without breaking up sentences to breathe. If you have to stop mid-sentence, you're working harder than 65%.

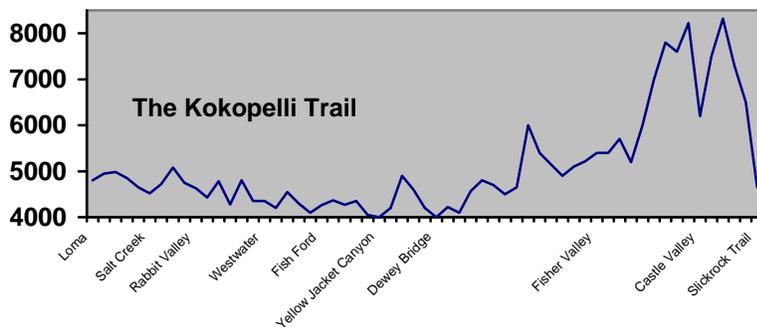




## Mile by Mile breakdown

How this works -

Sections are broken down to the lowest common denominator based on access, camps and distance. They may be combined as needed to fit your schedule. **Each piece has three rankings - Technical difficulty, mileage and strength & endurance and measured on a scale of 1-10, ten being the most difficult. Tech & strength ratings for each section are an approximation of overall difficulty, not a ranking of the most difficult trail aspects. A section that's mostly a 4 in technical difficulty with a few short pieces of 7 will be ranked as technical 5. Make sense? These rankings are subjective, remember that one person's 4 is another's 9, so gauge yourself appropriately. Every effort has been made to provide accurate mileages, but bike odometers vary based on many factors, so the mileages given are to be considered **approximations only**.**

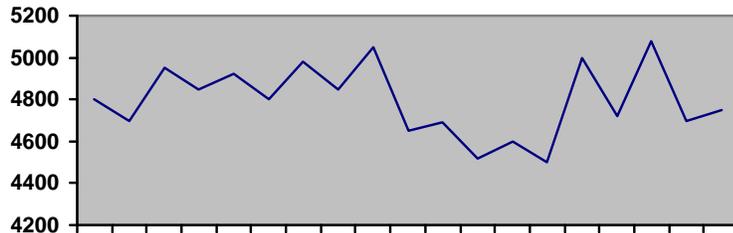


Beginning & end points of each section all have relatively easy vehicle access and are easily identifiable on the map. Certain sections may be driven by vehicle and each description will have specific notes about this. Obviously it's best not to have vehicles on-trail, but it's your call. For reference there are three driving designations - **Jeep only** refers to a small, high-clearance & nimble vehicle with 4wd. Subaru-accessible means your basic **Subaru Outback** with 4wd & decent clearance should have no problem. Finally there's 2wd, meaning the average **Honda Accord** can make it (carefully).



## Section 1 - Loma to Rabbit Valley

- 21 miles
- Technical difficulty - 8/10
- Strength & endurance - 6/10
- Avg time - 4 hrs
- Map - Fruita



The first 13 miles from Fruita are **the most technical and singletrack-intensive** of the entire trail. It's screamingly fast & exciting. While the distance to Rabbit Valley may seem short, these miles will take longer than the rest of the trail. This is some of the best singletrack in the nation, take care of it by not shortcutting or deviating from the established trails.

This section starts off fairly easy and becomes increasingly more technical as you go. Use it as a gauge for your riding ability - if the first few miles tap you out, you're probably in over your head. Watching the signs & maps is important thru here, there are many turns to negotiate.

There are two parts to this piece, the first flirts with stellar views of the Colorado River and surrounding geography while crossing Mack Ridge (the formation, not the trail) on a great sampler of interlaced trails called the Fruita Loops. Bring the camera! You'll start on Mary's Loop, link to Lion's Loop, then to Troy Built Loop.

From the western end of the ridge, the trail drops dramatically to Salt Creek & the rail line, crosses over and becomes a short & strenuous hike-a-bike out of the wash. Once across & up, the trail links with a graded 2wd access road offering easy passage to Rabbit Valley. You'll be cruising thru here, so watch the turns. There is NO vehicle access from mile 0 to mile 13.

For added excitement, add in the Handcuff's loop off of Steve's Loop (use the shortcut). Horsethief Bench is a worthy excursion also. **Maps - Latitude 40, Fruita & Grand Junction**. This map will take you all the way to Dewey Bridge, the trail's halfway point. The front offers the full view with several more detailed insets on the backside.

To reach the trailhead, take exit 15 (Loma) and head south & bear right, then take an abrupt left up the hill. If you reach the truck weigh station you've past it. Parking is plentiful and not monitored so hide your goodies. I've never heard of any incidents here but best not to tempt fate. There is a bathroom here. There are lots of camping spots in Rabbit Valley, most are accessible in any vehicle. Choose one of the designated spots or explore.

- 0.0 Zero your bike odometer & head up the 2wd hill, loop around towards east then back west & down. Another switchback, pickup the little singletrack on your right paralleling the road at .4 miles.
- .6 Abrupt right on Mary's Loop (easy to miss - next parking lot is too far). Start climbing on wide single track thru 6 tech to a mesa. Slickrock & babyhead terrain, a good place to gauge your skills & decide if you're in over your head.
- 1.4 Summit first climb on a mesa, start doubletrack cruising on easier terrain.
- 2.0 Horsethief bench on left, don't turn here unless you want an interesting side route.
- 3.6 Gate, keep it closed. Rim running, 5 tech with a few harder problems
- 4.5 Pass Steve's loop on left, continue right
- 5.0 Access road on right, bear left
- 5.6 After wide & fast descent, trail appears to climb the side of a 25' levee. Shoot up this, then turn around & view the climb up Lion's Loop. Tough, steep, rocky & narrow - that's where you're going. Get a running start back down the side of the levee.
- 5.9 Summit of short climb on Lions Loop, begins to widen. Expect much tougher technical terrain from here.
- 7.9 Note - the following has been slightly re-routed and is easier to follow now. Below is the former description of the intersection:  
T-intersection with 4wd road, go right up hill (sign maybe missing). Steep & rocky but fairly short.
- 8.6 Troy Built Loop intersection, go left into rocky & tricky descent, cross several washes. Pretty technical (8), watch your speed.
- 10.3 Pass a unique sandstone marker pointing right
- 10.7 Overlook to Salt Creek, tracks & bridge you're about to cross.
- 11.2 Beginning of hike-a-bike, a short section down. Tech 10 + hiking
- 11.4 Cross Salt Creek on footbridge. Follow trail under rail bridge & thru dense sage. No signs thru here but it's easy to follow.
- 11.6 Short hike-a-bike up & descent back to wash, follow trail thru dense sage & willows on sandy single track
- 12.4 Start a tough hike-a-bike up steep hill, only 80yds or so.
- 12.8 True hike-a-bike begins up side of hill. Grit your teeth. This will take about 15 minutes, it's roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile.

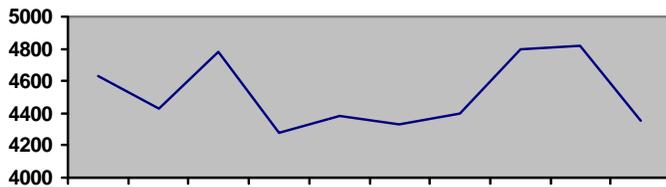


Expect some big exposure at times

- 13.0 Top of hiking, rideable beyond here.
- 13.5 Intersect w/ rabbit valley access road, bear left
- 13.8 Intersect with overlook on left, head right towards highway.
- 15.9 Intersect w/dead end on left
- 16.0 Road forks, go left (away from highway) up hill. This is an easy bailout point to the interstate.
- 16.7 Intersect w/rabbit ears trailhead on left, go right & start descent and fast miles.
- 20.0 Numerous campgrounds can be found on side roads between here & Rabbit Valley exit.
- 21.0 Bathrooms on right, Rabbit Valley exit from I-70 to the north. End of Section 1.

**Section 2 - Rabbit Valley to Westwater**

- o 16.6 miles
- o Tech - 5/10
- o Strength & endurance - 5/10
- o Avg time - 2.5 hrs
- o Map - Fruita



By comparison to Fruita this is a much easier piece. Starting from Rabbit Valley, you'll drop into McDonald Creek following enormous contoured Entrada formations. As you climb out thru smooth sandy doubletrack and enter Utah you'll cross thru the Bitter Creek Wash, fairly easy & less scenic miles taking you to a 400' mesa with a steep ascent. From the summit here, camp at the Bitter Creek Campground or continue down thru fun roller coaster jeep roads to Westwater. This entire section can be driven - Jeep only - , but is extremely difficult & rough. It will take longer to drive than bike. Don't attempt unless an emergency.



Castle Rock past Rabbit Valley

The end of this piece is Westwater, exit 227 from I-70, not exit 225 as indicated on some maps. The exit is approx 5 miles west of Rabbit Valley, and the trail

intersection with this road is roughly 4 miles south from the interstate (not well marked for drivers traveling

south). Camping is found at the Westwater Ranger Station & river put-in, approx 2 miles past the Trestle Intersect, or along this road in primitive sites. Potable water is available at the Ranger Station. Expect river-rafting crowds in season.

More good camping happens at the Bitter Creek Overlook, a few miles before the end of this section. Subaru-accessible, from exit 227 head south 1/3 mile & go left up the hill on a gravel road just before a pipeline station. Right at 1<sup>st</sup> fork, left at next. Follow signs south. On the map it's the red line, not the black.

Start biking at Rabbit Valley (exit 2 on I-70), turn south and enter McInnis national conservation area parking with message & info boards. Just south of here at the first intersection is another parking area & a pit toilet. Zero your bike odometers here.

- 0.0 Intersection w/trail from east, head south, there's a parallel ATV trail on right, only 200m or so
- .2 Bear right at fork, there's a sign saying "high clearance vehicles only" (Currently no sign for Kokopelli trail here)
- .5 Camp/sag spot on right
- .6 Designated camp on right, trail gets rougher
- 1.0 Singletrack offshoot on right
  - This is an interesting & a bit more challenging parallel route, it is untitled on the Latitude 40 maps but can be seen as the northernmost of the two parallel tracks. A moderate route, mostly wide mototrack - tech 6, strength 7. Follow signs indicating "Trail 2." They will not be marked as Kokopelli Trail but will reconnect several times. Your mileage will be roughly the same on either route.
- 1.1 In riverbed, bear right, typically dry & sandy. Potentially muddy if it's been raining. Almost always rideable.
- 2.0 MacDonald creek conservation area, trail intersection on right, go straight
- 2.5 Coke Oven-looking rock formation, pit toilet, McDonald Creek TH, Nature Trail, campsite. The access for vehicles here is the trail you've just ridden - it's rough.
- 2.6 Trailhead for alternate hiking, no bikes, interesting rock art panels 2 miles in.
- 2.7 Cattle guard, **trail 2 intersects on right**
- 2.8 Climb out of creek on smooth sandy road towards Castle Rock, deep at times
- 3.2 Camping on left at fork, trail goes right, Knowles Canyon overlook turnoff is here.
- 3.5 Three-way intersection, trail veers left, right goes to parallel trail (more **Trail 2**)
  - From here parallel **trail 2** becomes noticeably more strenuous and less enjoyable for most. Stick to the Kokopelli proper, there will be better challenges soon.
- 4.8 Top out to smooth doubletrack. You're now in Utah...
- 5.0 Key intersection - you'll come into this piece fairly quickly & it will look like the trail just disappears into a round dirt lot. Kokopelli goes west from here; **Trail 2** intersects again from right. Continue straight for Kokopelli off rock shelves, or turn left off one of several drops south that converge into a single road heading south to **The Western Rim Trail** (alternate route)
  - **The Western Rim Trail** is a great singletrack deviation from the trail proper if you're looking for something more challenging than the last five miles. Expect several miles of rim-running with technical problems and huge fun! The '**best bang**' option below is becoming the de facto route for most Kokopelli riders and will add about 5 miles & 1 hour total to your day. It's absolutely worth it! Tech & Strength 5+
    - To access the Western Rim Trail, head left (south) at this intersection, bear left at 1<sup>st</sup> fork, then right @ 2<sup>nd</sup> fork (narrow & sandy), begin dropping towards your right to the rim.
    - **Best bang** for your buck - take Western Rim approx 6 miles to an ATV junction about 1 mile after climbing away from the rim & into some tall grass. Turn right (north) & go approx 1 mi to return to Kokopelli, you'll run right into it.

- If you miss this turn you'll continue west thru a large wash towards a mesa in the distance, it's VERY easy to get lost out here. You can reconnect with Kokopelli around mile 16 this way but it's not a great option. Once at the mesa, follow the steep motocross track up to the summit (altitude mark 4802 on map). Continue west to intersect with Kokopelli or bear north along the rim (The Overlook Trail) to Bitter Creek Campsite.
- 6.2 Dry wash, views of rim trail below
- 6.7 Side trail on left, may access Rim Trail?
- 7.1 Fork, go right
- 10.1 Seasonal water flow, very muddy when wet
- 10.8 ATV trail on right, 4wd straight, Kokopelli goes left towards mesa. Yes, you're climbing up that.
- 11.2 Begin climb up Bitter Creek Mesa, short & steep about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile climb, 400 vertical feet. Can be driven in 4wd with good clearance
- 11.6 Intersect at top of climb, Bitter Creek Campsite on left, Kokopelli heads right
  - .3 to camp, bear right at fork, pit toilet, amazing views, Subaru accessible from Westwater exit.
  - From this camp there is a singletrack route - The Overlook Trail - that parallels the trail by following the rim most of the way to Westwater with numerous access points. It is not signed and is mostly WhoopDeDooLicious moto tracks.
- 11.8 Fork, bear left (right takes you to paved Westwater road at I-70)
- 15.8 Intersect with Western Rim/Overlook trail access on left
  - 1 mile up this side road to the alternate descent into Bitter Creek wash from the Overlook Trail towards the Western Rim Trail. Basically this is where the not-recommended route from Western Rim will end up.
- 16.6 A fast descent leads to paved Westwater road. Go left towards Trestle Intersect & the Westwater Ranger Station to continue into section three.

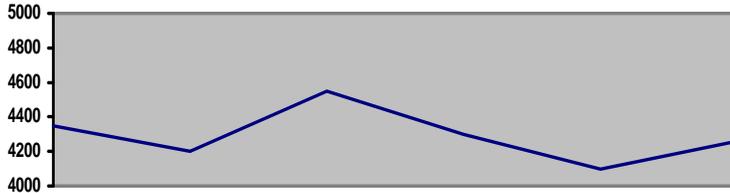
To reach the Westwater Ranger Station & campground, continue past the Trestle bridge towards the left - stick to the pavement heading away from the Kokopelli once you pass the trestle. It's a quick couple miles downhill to the river, you can't miss it. Total about 6mi from the above point.

THEY HAVE COLD POTABLE WATER THERE!  
that probably sounds good about now, no?



### Section 3 - Westwater to Fish Ford

- 24 miles
- Tech - 3
- Strength & endurance - 4
- Avg time - 1:45
- Map - Fruita



This section is far less scenic than the dramatic cliffs & topography of the surrounding areas but in true desert fashion it has a solace and a magic all its own. The terrain is almost exclusively 2wd roads, some as doubletrack and a bit paved. You'll find that while this piece starts off slowly, it's a welcome rest from the technical challenges you've faced before now and the miles will begin to roll by very fast. If you're lucky, the desert here will put you in a trance and you'll wonder where the last 15 miles went. Not because they weren't enjoyable, but because you achieved a real desert high.

Follow the paved road under the Trestle Intersect, hang a sharp right and do some gentle climbing on 2wd terrain. You'll enjoy the rail grading as you follow the tracks thru some fast miles before hitting the pavement again. A few steep rolling hills and you're almost to Fish Ford. This entire piece can be driven with high clearance.

From I-70, vehicles can access either Fish Ford or Cisco Boat Landing from the ghost town of Cisco, exit 214 (exit recently renamed 'Danish Flat'). Head south about 5 miles & take a left on Pump House Road in downtown Cisco. This will intersect the trail a few miles in.

Camping can be had at Fish Ford on the Colorado River, but if wet the entrance can be a mud bog.

- 0.0 Intersection of Westwater road & Kokopelli from Bitter Creek (east). Follow this paved road downhill south
- 4.0 Trestle intersect, recognizable by the rail bridge overhead. The trail takes a sharp right here across seasonal water flow onto smooth gravel, begin easy climbing.
- 5.4 Fork, bear left
- 9.2 Following tracks & powerlines
- 9.6 Occasional seasonal flow, crossable by Subaru
- 10.6 2wd confluence, bear left - trail gets very fast
- 13.1 Castleton view dead ahead, la Sals on left
- 14.7 Great overlook, Slickrock playground on left
- 16.1 Cisco Boat Launch road, go right
- 17.8 Pump House road, go left towards Fish Ford

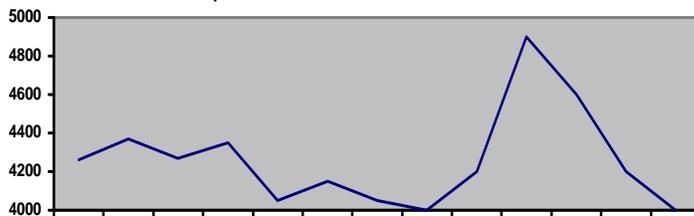


Flirting with the Colorado River just before McGraw Bottom

19.3 End of Section 3, Kokopelli breaks off to the right, easy to miss. Look for the trail climbing a hill on the right, just past another trail on the left dropping in. Fish Ford Campground is one mile past this intersection on the paved road.

#### Section 4 - Fish Ford to McGraw Bottom/Hwy 128 & Yellow Jacket Canyon (YJC) to Dewey Bridge

- Miles - 8 + 10
- Tech - 5 (with a couple 8's)
  - YJC - 7
- Strength & endurance - 5
  - YJC - 7
- Avg time - < 1 hr
  - Avg YJC time - 1:45
- Map - Fruita



This is really two pieces joined together. Many people opt to shortcut past Yellow Jacket Canyon because numerous guides characterize it as miserably sandy. It's not. In reality they're missing out on a great stretch of trail that's very rewarding. It's fairly short and is usually ridden in under 2 hours. You definitely want to ride this piece from north to south which will point you downhill thru the sandy sections and make it rideable. If you're traveling south to north expect some hiking. The geography and views are spectacular and well worth the trip, the riding both exciting and moderately challenging. The sandstone bluffs are 170 million yrs old! Nonetheless, if you need a break or want to shave a few miles off the ride this is the easiest place to do it.

So from Fish Ford, picture the Westwater section in your mind, stir in some sharp basalt, shale & green sand, add a bit of technical singletrack, a few short steepes, and a sweep by the CO River into a low willow branch that your buddy won't warn you about. This is a short piece & will go quickly. Leave the pavement on an easy-to-miss right turn and traverse some rougher terrain. Not technical, just rocky.



Descend towards the river, check out the cool green rocks & put one in your buddy's pack when he isn't looking (remember, he won't warn you about the willow branches coming). At one point you'll get so close to the river you'll swear you're going in which probably isn't a bad idea by now. Scale a short singletrack wall and follow the edge of the river thru willows until emerging on a jeep road with rollers to Utah Hwy 128 at McGraw Bottom. From here continue across Hwy 128 to Yellow Jacket Canyon or shortcut down the highway to Dewey Bridge (a quick 4 paved miles).

Leaving Yellow Jacket Canyon towards Dewey Bridge

If taking YJC (you should be), start by climbing away from 128 a bit south of where you came in over moderately rocky jeep track, cross a short slickrock wash, boogie on & keep your eyes peeled for a tricky abrupt left at about mile 4½ - you'll be moving quickly & the turn is obscured by a juniper. Race up & right thru a huge slickrock slab and begin some sandy rollers leading to a fast semi-technical descent along a beautiful Entrada face. You'll end this section by dropping thru a small private development to Hwy 128 and Dewey Bridge - be respectful. You're halfway to Moab!

Neither YJC or the Fish Ford stretch are entirely driveable due to bottlenecks approx halfway in. Easy camping found at Hwy 128 - Dewey Bridge or before reaching the highway from Fish Ford in any number of backcountry primitive sites with huge cottonwoods.

- 0.0 Climb away from paved road on easy rocky terrain
- .6 Bear left
- 1-2.0 Noticeably rougher, loose & rocky - tech 6
- 3.3 End of double track, road getting rougher & narrower.
- 4.1 Reach river, bear left at steep hill or walk straight over. Short tech sections for ¼ mi, then willows overhanging trail. Neat section.
- 4.7 End willow narrows, start double track on casual run towards 128.
- 5.4 Bear right here & continue on easy, occasionally steep rollers
- 7.4 That's Hwy 128 in front of you - you're at McGraw Bottom which really just means where the river turns south which you can't see anyway.
  - Hwy 128 & Kokopelli Trail intersect at approx hwy mile marker 34.5 - the trail is not marked when traveling the highway from the north.
  - From here you can shortcut to Dewey Bridge by descending south on Hwy 128 for approx 4 miles. Look for the large white suspension bridge on your left. Cross there or camp across the street on the river.

#### **Yellow Jacket Canyon (still in Section 4 from above)**

- 0.0 From the confluence with 128 at approx MM 34.5 (on highway), travel south approx 1/3 mile to a turn-off on your right heading up a hill. There is a sign just before the turn heading south, but not north. Look for an old cattle corral to the west, if you make it to an old bus with a lodgepole porch built onto the side you past it. Trust me on this one.
- .5 Small parking area, trail goes straight past an offshoot on right. There will be several smaller intersections coming where you'll follow the signs to the right, all while climbing increasingly rockier terrain, 6 tech with slickrock.
- 2.1 First summit. Start short descent & climb some more.
- 3.6 Super cool section of slickrock wash, makes good pictures. Go straight across - follow cairns.
- 4.5 Sharp left & down turn at abrupt intersection as you roll down this hill. **THIS IS AN EASY TURN TO MISS!**
- 4.7 Large slickrock playground, stay towards the right, descend & climb back up the other side.
- 4.9 An offshoot road at the top of slickrock on right. No sign, but the only place to go. Take it.
- 5.2 Bear left again, do not continue up slickrock on right unless you're looking for extra credit. Begin rolling up & down thru fast & smooth doubletrack with occasional sand. This is the beginning of a beautiful few miles.
- 5.4 Bear left, more sand. Cruise thru it by pulling up on your bars & shifting your weight back. Stellar views of Fisher Valley & the La Sals.

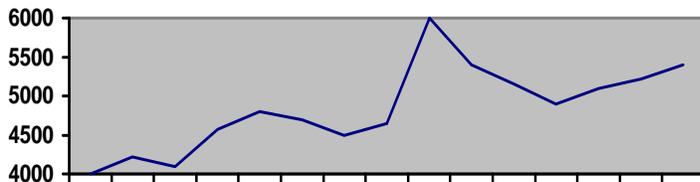
- 5.9 Left again at intersection. You'll get some speed thru here - be careful of unexpected ledges & rocks as you fly along.
- 7.0 Small offshoot for side trip into the bluffs on your left.
- 8.7 Base of canyon on slickrock, follow cairns thru gate, swoop around towards left. Entering private property, be nice.
- 9.9 Intersect with gravel road, continue towards Hwy 128, pass the large cable suspension bridge remains by heading south on 128 just over the bridge, then immediately left. Neat piece of history here. Bridge was built in 1916 and used by vehicles until 1986 and designed to hold the weight of 6 horses, 3 wagons & 9000# of freight. Burned down in 2008.
- 10.0 Begin Entrada Bluffs road section ahead past bridge. Great picnic spot to your right under the cottonwoods. End of Section 4.



Entrance to Onion Creek Canyon

**Section 5 - Dewey Bridge to Fisher Valley**

- o Miles - 17.5
- o Tech - 7/10++
- o Strength & endurance - 8/10
- o Avg time - 3 hrs
- o **Map - Moab East**



This is a long climb whose rewards include exhilarating exercise and a brilliant pair of short downhills. You'll pass a Slickrock playground and Cowskin Campground before dropping into the first of 2 canyons, both named "Cottonwood." The first is a quick drop in & a steep shot back out to reconnect with the same road further up the hill. The climbing steepens & gets rougher until you reach the turn for the Delores River Overlook. From here you'll drop into the second canyon on progressively faster & more technical jeep trail to the infamous Rose Garden Hill, a steep & VERY technical line usually walked but sometimes cleaned. Finally a short climb to rollers



Dewey Bridge before the fire

thru sage & juniper drop you into Fisher Valley, a breathtaking high desert cleft in the mesas with stunning views.

Do not attempt to drive into either canyon! The rest can be driven easily in a Subaru, tho it will be rough. Vehicles should access Fisher Valley via Onion Creek Road from Hwy 128. A Honda can make it but expect to cross a creek some 20 times as you climb an unforgettable canyon. Onion Creek Rd makes a great & easy bailout point for riders not wanting to continue past Fisher Valley.

You may camp in Fisher Valley in primitive sites but please not on the private property towards the south. If you do stay here take extra care to preserve the untouched beauty of this place and leave no trace. There is a designated BLM site about a mile past the valley called Hideout Canyon but is not recommended due to the difficult vehicle access. Many cars have become stuck down there. If it's wet, spank yourself for even thinking it.

- 0.0 **You're on the Moab East map now!** Pass Dewey Bridge to a gravel road & start a long climb towards Fisher Valley.
- .5 Begin skirting large Entrada bluffs on left.
- 1.1 Intersection, continue straight (right)
- 1.8 Short steep downhill into wash, watch for deep mud. Just past there's a small slickrock playground on the left.
- 1.5 Road steepens, begins to get slightly rockier, like pedaling up smooth river bed.
- 3.4 Cowskin Campground on left, trail continues right. Begin to leave Entrada formations into pinion growth
- 5.1 Trail veers right at intersection. This is the first of 2 canyons. Do not attempt to drive this canyon, vehicles will need to skirt around the canyon on Entrada Bluffs road to the left. This is also the beginning of the Top of the World trail, an interesting side trip but long & strenuous. It deserves it's own day.
  - Somewhat easier alternate route - riders may opt to follow Entrada Bluffs Rd to the left. While it's technically easier, it's much longer and ain't much fun.
- 5.3 Follow signs straight into a steeper, rocky descent. This was originally a jeep trail but rock accumulation has created a single track thru obstacles. It is not technical so long as you avoid the obstacles. Kind of like life.
- 6.5 A sharp adjustment in angle - start climbing back out. There is a thin spring flow crossing the trail here sometimes. The climb ahead will be steep & rocky but mostly rideable.
- 7.3 At the T-intersection with Entrada Bluffs Road, go right. The hill will become rockier & looser as you go and is strenuous. This is a granny gear climb to the top.
- 10.9 You're on Seven Mile Mesa, the road begins to flatten & ambles downhill after a couple false summits.
- 11.1 Entrada Bluffs Rd turns abruptly left towards Delores River Overlook, Kokopelli goes straight towards Rose Garden Hill. Do not attempt to drive beyond this point! Begin descending on gentle grade that will become increasingly more tech & steep.
- 12.1 Bear right away from Seven Mile Canyon, going a little faster now.
- 13.3 Begin a sharp descent into Rose Garden Hill, a fiercely technical drop usually walked. This can be cleaned if you're good - give it a shot! Stay to the right early on. This is a tech 10.
- 13.5 Bottom out & start a more gradual climb back out
- 14.5 At a "T" intersection, hang a right & continue climbing
- 16.1 Another intersection, bear right again

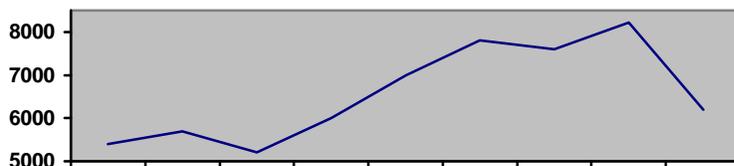
- 16.6 Top out & turn south to drop into the valley on beautiful rollers
- 17 turn left here to find a hidden campsite under the mesa, maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off-trail. This is a great low-impact spot to sleep under the stars.
- 17.5 Intersect with Onion Creek Rd, trail goes left, end of this section.



Rose Garden Hill - the easy part

### Section 6 - Fisher Valley to Rock Castle Campground

- 17 miles
- Tech - 5/10
- Strength & endurance - 7/10
- Avg time - 4 hrs
- Map - Moab East



This is an amazing section. This is what a long climb should be. Many riders rank this as a high point of their trip. It is about 17 miles of pure uphill, you'll gain 2400 vertical feet in the process. Much of this hill is middle-chainring territory with occasional forays into the granny depending on your freshness. Start with a short jaunt over a saddle taking you out of Fisher Valley, then a short & steep descent to Hideout Campground. Start your ascent. Follow jeep trail thru occasional rocks & sand on the Thompson Canyon Trail until intersecting with the Polar Mesa Trail. Hang a right & climb easy terrain past several false summits, a short screaming downhill across a valley and back up the other side. A few easier miles thru the National Forest takes you to pavement, a big dinosaur footprint & a faaaast downhill to the Castle Valley intersection & Rock Castle Campsite. Don't zip by it!

During this climb you get to experience the transition from desert to alpine terrain. Watch for the pinions, sage & juniper to eventually give way to scrub oak, pine and fir that smell like vanilla up close. The air will cool considerable, there's abundant shade & great backcountry camping. Before you know it you'll be surrounded by aspens & in a whole new world. Be prepared for cooler weather & altitude up top.

If you're feeling in over your head, a great alternate route can be had by descending Onion Creek Rd to Hwy 128 into Moab. This canyon is one of the most scenic routes you'll ever ride & has numerous fast creek crossings past wingate walls and hoodoos. Continue downriver on Hwy 128 into Moab, lots of miles but fast & easy in another amazingly scenic valley.

There are numerous campsites along the trail proper including Bull Draw, Fisher Mesa & Rock Castle, plus a plethora of backcountry sites around mile 13 (roughly 10 miles from the Rock Castle site, working backwards). This entire piece can be driven in a Jeep (or a Subaru if you're good), but the best access to the end is up Castle Valley from Hwy 128 - all paved. Beware of cattle in Castle Valley. It's easier for vehicles to circle down & around from Fisher Valley to Castle Valley via Hwy



Fisher Mesa area

128, then drive in to the above campsites than it is to drive the trail proper.

- 0.0 Onion creek & Kokopelli Trail intersection from Rose Garden Hill - bear left.
- .4 Enter Taylor ranch - private property. Please be respectful, these people are really nice.
- .9 Intersection, turn left, head for saddle
- 1.7 Crest saddle, start STEEP descent
- 2.6 Turnoff to Hideout Campground, trail goes straight/left, campground is up & right. Water is frequently available behind the campsite.
- 3.3 Starts to steepen, between middle & granny ring
- 7.8 Fork, go right around bend
- 8.2 On a shelf road, view on right into Fisher valley, in the distance is Fisher Tower.
- 10.1 National forest boundary
- 11.4 1<sup>st</sup> false summit, short descent from plateau, road opens up & descends
- 11.8 Intersect with Polar Mesa trail, hang a right, climb thru rollers
- 13.9 Lots of good primitive camping on small roads off trail, explore. Truly alpine setting.
- 14.2 North Beaver Mesa, begin descent at false summit #2. Across valley you can see the trail continuing up the other side. Between here & there is a good water source.
- 15.6 Ranch entrance, stock loading corral, small bridge with reliable water flowing under.
- 15.8 Gravel graded road climbing up to another summit.
- 16 Intersect with Gateway Road, still graded gravel. Easy climbing comparatively. Stay right.
- 17.5 Amazing overlook of canyon country below
- 18 The true summit! Road becomes paved, begins to descend fast towards Castle Valley.

- 18.3 Gravel turnout on right, good meeting spot for sag, great picnic area, lots of overlooks for pics. Take a peek behind the gate, about 10 yds in for a possible large dinosaur footprint in the black volcanic rock...
- 18.6 Turn off for Fisher Mesa campground & trailhead past cattle guard. Tough to spot coming from top, easier from bottom.
  - Campground is just a little ways in, a separate trail continues on a long descent to Fisher Mesa, a great side trip. You'll need several hours for it.
- 23.1 Manti La Sal national Forest boundary sign. Watch for Rock Castle campground on right, it's coming quick
- 23.7 Rock Castle camp on right, waaay back in there. Look for the pit toilet. There are really only 2 sites here, but one is very large and can handle many folks.
  - ! If you reach a paved road on the left & a Moab directional sign, you've PAST Rock Castle Campground. The road you are on does NOT "T" into this intersection as the map suggests - it continues many fast miles down Castle Valley. It's easy

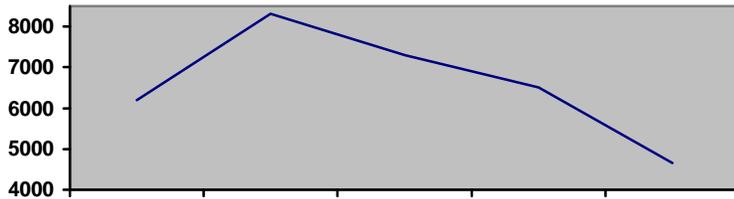


The La Sals are visible from Fruita, Keep your eye on the big goal.

to get sucked into this at 40 MPH. Keep your eye out for the National Forest boundary, it's a good landmark.

**Section 7 - Castle Valley to Moab**

- o Miles - 21
- o Tech - 3/10
- o Strength & endurance - 5/10
- o Avg time - 3 hrs
- o Map - Moab East



You're almost there, the payoff will be huge after a short & steep paved climb. Leave Rock Castle Campground, go right then a quick left up the paved road. Climb slowly to a false summit & enjoy the huge aspen stands along the way. Zip down a short hill & back up to the final summit with a gravel turnout on the right. From here take the Upper Connector for a fast drop onto Sand Flats road, shoot out of the National Forest & choose between the daring real Porcupine Rim Trail (tech 9.89) or the more casual & scenic Sand Flats Road descent into Moab (tech 2). There's a shortcut that eliminates most of the Porcupine Rim uphill, The Lazy Man's Put-in, watch for it (tech 8). If this shortcut feels

too challenging, you can go left & link back into Sand Flats Rd at the stock tanks parking area. It'll make sense when you see it on the map.

You'll pass the turns for Upper & Lower Porcupine Singletracks just below the connector as well. As Kokopelli evolves the de facto finish for many (and a real highlite!) is the Porcupine linkup. Keep in mind that for many riders this linkup is a full day's ride; for you it's just the last leg. It'll take longer than expected and that's not a bad thing.



Above Sand Flats Road

Please don't be fooled into thinking Porcupine will be easy because it's downhill. This is strenuous, bumpy, technical downhill by any metric and there's no easy escape once you're below the rim. If you're feeling whooped this trail will be here tomorrow, let's make sure you are too.

Camping in Moab is extensive. You're probably ready for a shower at one of the private campgrounds, so splurge, then grab a beer at the brewpub. You've earned it.

Vehicles can access the Slickrock parking area for rider pickups for free from Moab- tell the BLM gate staff you're there for Kokopelli riders, they'll usually let you thru no charge. Don't abuse this - if you plan to use the area please pay. From Moab, follow signs to the Slickrock Trail. Riders taking the Porcupine Rim finish will end up on Hwy 128 a few miles north of Hwy 191 & Moab. This exit is roughly at the Negro Bill Canyon Trailhead at Hwy 128, about 3 miles in. Vehicles can also shadow riders on Sand Flats Road in a Jeep just fine. Ain't no cars going down Porcupine Rim.

- 0.0 Rock Castle Campground & Loop Road - go right down the hill - BRIEFLY
- 0.1 Head left on La Sal Loop road just past Rock Castle Campground. This turn is easy to miss. There's a sign that directs you towards Warner CG, follow that.
- 1.9 Enter National Forest again. Lots of prime camping up here if you explore.
- 3.0 False summit, amazing view of Castle Valley, begin gentle downhill before final climb (it's easy from here)
- 4.6 Pass a turn for Miner's Basin
- 5.3 Dense aspen stand, great in fall for colors
- 6.1 Mason Draw Campground on left
- 6.2 Gravel pullout on right with the #1 view - Castleton Towers, Fisher Towers, Castle Valley, Moab, Colorado riverway, etc. Sometimes a port-a-potty up here.
- 6.4 Kokopelli turns right off pavement onto Upper Connector, begin a very fun & fast descent from here. This turn is easy to miss. If it's been wet up here lately this trail has ballistic mud making it unrideable. You'll know in the first 100 yards or so. It's usually only the first  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile but if bad, go back up & continue to the alternate route
  - (8.6) If you continue down the Loop Road past this turn, this is the Sand Flats Road intersection with Loop Road. This is the route for vehicles. Also during wet times, this road tends to dry before the connector trail, so if mucky, go this way - you'll know in the first 300 yds if this is the right call.

- 7.1 Bear right at this fork towards Mason Draw
- 7.4 Now keep left at another fork, overlooking Castle Valley
- 8.1 Keep straight past confluence on left
- There is a small raised cattle guard you'll cross here, this is your landmark for the beginning of Upper Porcupine Singletrack (UPS). 50 yds past the cattleguard look for a singletrack on your right with a bare post in it. Go that way for UPS.
  - UPS → LPS is the technical singletrack connector to the upper rim of the Porcupine Rim Trail. Following this will eliminate all the uphill on Porcupine Rim. It's a PHENOMENAL finish to Kokopelli if you've got the juice left. If not, exit Porcupine Rim proper by descending the climb from the rim overlook (where everyone takes pictures) back to the stocktanks on Sand Flats.
  - UPS & LPS should be a no-brainer, they are absolutely worth the extra effort. As for finishing on Porcupine Rim proper, gauge your energy at the overlook & assess whether you have another 17 miles of strenuous descending left in the bones - it will take some work & you're committed deep in the backcountry.
  - In general, UPS is winding & tech-moderate. LPS is it's evil little brother, throwing a few technical temper tantrums as you descend. Even tho they're both short expect them to take around an hour. Both are big fun.
- 8.2 Pass an abandoned landing strip on your left.
- 9.1 Enter denser brush, begin to rocket downhill on a roller coaster of hardpack with stellar banked turns & washouts, tech 6
- 9.7 Drop off a short ledge and dead end into Sand Flats Rd. Go right here. Continue on cushy 2wd track thru a couple gentle climbs.
- 10.6 Start to shoot steeply downhill & bear left at the next few side roads
- 12.9 Lazy Man's Put-in on your right. This will shortcut most of the Porcupine Rim uphill from the stock tanks. This turn-off is almost exactly 1.8 miles past the National Forest boundary you just shot thru and is not marked.
- Pass thru the fence opening here, bounce downhill on a short & rough connector - tech 8 - and "T" into the Porcupine hill climb. Go rt for Porcupine, left back to Sand Flats.
- 13.2 Still descending steeply towards a series of switchbacks and onto a shelf road cut from the side of the hill
- 15.0 Stock Tanks - don't drink this water w/o treating extensively! This is the trailhead for Porcupine Rim, continue downhill on wide & easy 2wd road. There will be lots of offshoots, you're staying on the main road.
- 21.4 Slickrock Trail parking area on your right - You made it!



Take a quick lap on the Practice Loop before packing it in, or do the whole trail if you've got a lot of water left. Otherwise connect with your shuttle here or continue down Sand Flats into Moab, it's almost all downhill from here, about 3.5 miles.



**Have fun  
Be safe  
Take pictures  
Make memories  
You will never forget this experience!**