



The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America

RICK'S ROADS

Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What



BLOG POST: 2022.09.22
Goosenecks



From the exit of Canyonlands-Needles, Goosenecks State Park is a 121-mile ride, which Google Maps lists as 2 hours and 13 minutes. It looks pretty close on the map, but all this empty space takes up a lot of space. Good thing about that is that you can zoom along at a good clip with very little to slow you down.

Once south of Monticello, back on US-191S (photo, below), southeastern Utah just spread out wide before us. Blue Maxx was digging these open roads, rolling along in cruise control at 65 or so. We easily could have gone faster – the cars that blew past us suer were – but there was no rush. Plenty of daylight left, and plenty of soothing sights to soak in.





Down the hill into the small town of Bluff (population 340)



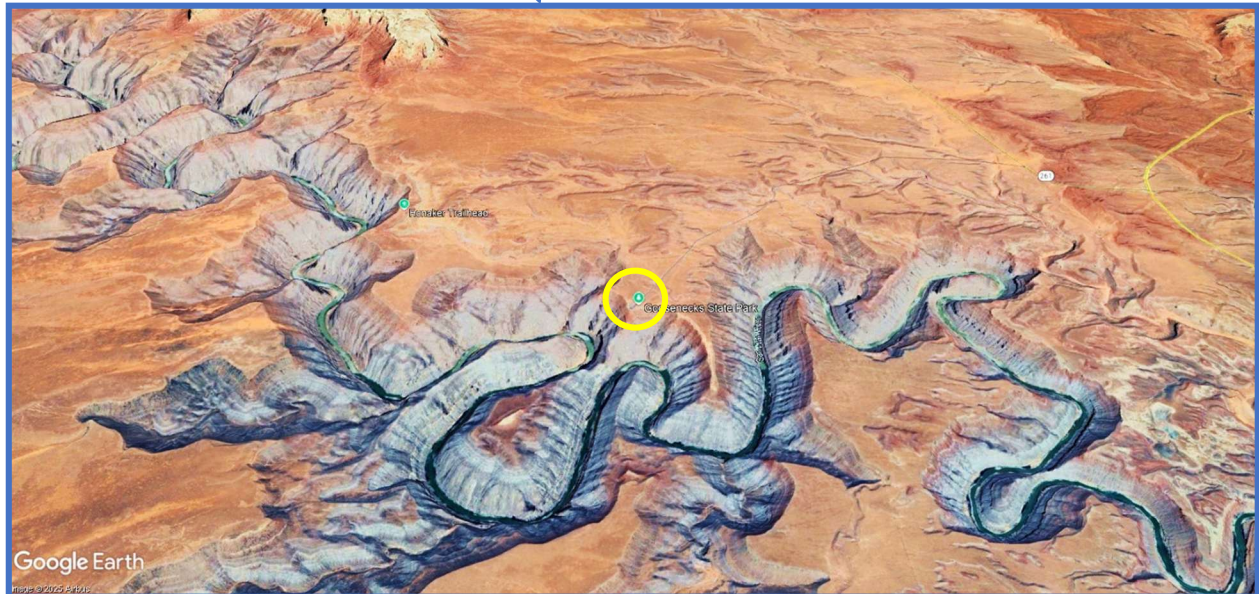
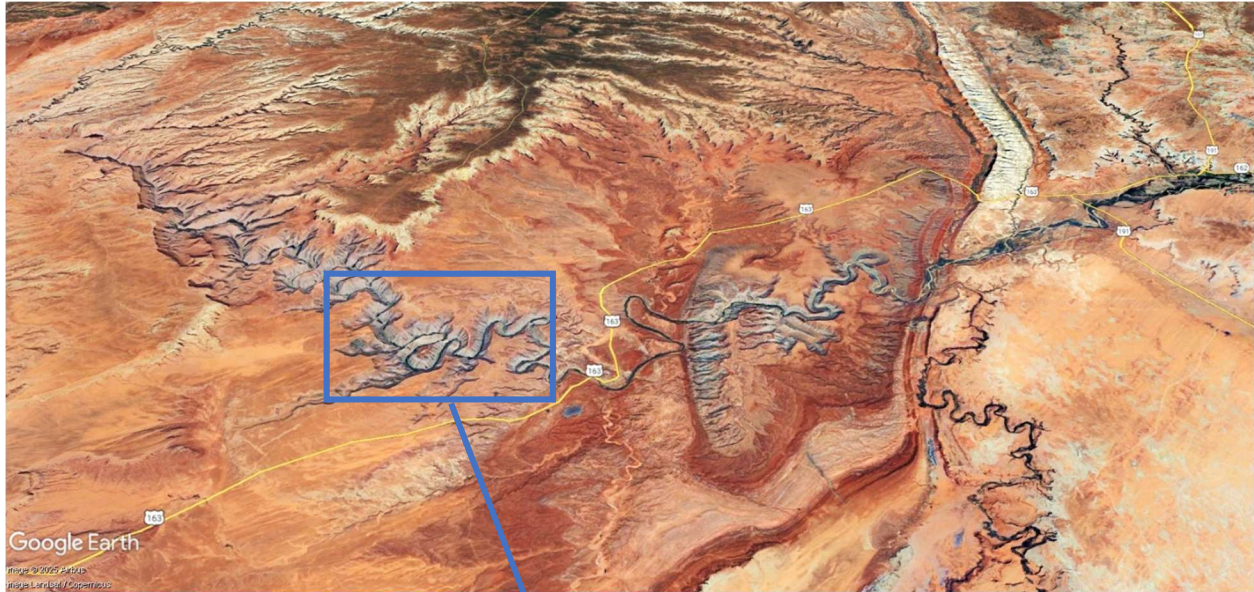
And out the other side, onto US-163W



After passing through the hustle and bustle of Bluff, and leaving US-191S in favor of US 163-W.

From there, it was just a handful of minutes to the UT-261 right turn, and then the short dirt road into Goosenecks State Park. But, really, the word “into” seems odd. You don’t drive “into” a damn thing. There is a cheap wooden booth with a bored attendant in it. You pay \$10 and you can move ahead into the open dirt parking lot.

There are a couple of low walls and a walkway to give you that “park overlook” feel. It’s all good, though, because this view is tremendous. Apparently, a few campsites are available on a FCFS basis. There are no hookups and nothing to do, but I’m betting the sunset and sunrise are good, and the nighttime stars are incredible. I also bet some drone footage here would be spectacular. However, drone use is only allowed in the State Park from November through April.



In the top image, US-191 is the yellow thread in the upper right, then US-163 cuts diagonally across the center. Goosenecks State Park is in the blue box, which is enlarged in the lower pic.

Wikipedia has this to say:

Millions of years ago, the Monument Upwarp forced the river to carve incised meanders over 1,000 feet (300 m) deep as the surrounding landscape slowly rose in elevation. Eroded by water, wind, frost, and gravity, this is a classic location for observing incised meanders.

Goosenecks State Park is largely undeveloped. Primitive campsites with picnic tables are scattered back from the edge of the cliff, and vault toilets are available. Campers are advised to bring their own water, food, and other necessary gear.

The park received International Dark Sky Park designation by The International Dark-Sky Association in March, 2021. Night photography and stargazing are popular activities because there is little light pollution due to its remoteness.



There are no developed hiking trails in the park, but the Honaker Trail, a few miles to the northwest, provides access to the San Juan River.









Next time here, I am definitely camping. But today, I had to be on my way. There was another place that I needed to get to: Page, Arizona.

Again, it seemed close on the map – that’s what happens when you live on a small island, I guess, your mental map scale gets skewed – but, to my surprise (and a mild degree of consternation), it was going to take another 150 miles and 2.5 hours to get there.

But, once again, it was going to be a terrific ride! US-163 southwest through Monument Valley. At sunset.



Did you know that the place on 163 where that famous scene in *Forrest Gump* was filmed has a name? Yup, it is called – are you ready? – *Forrest Gump Point*. Clever, yes?

That's it in the previous photo. Sunset is not a good time for this place. You're heading west, so the spires, buttes and mesa are all just silhouettes. Sunrise would be excellent.

That turnout you see on the right shoulder was built because so many people were stopping in the middle of the road to snap the photo.





Awesome ride. Look at that road!!!

I got to Page after dark, found a suitable hotel (wink, wink) and enjoyed a great night's sleep in the dry, cool, desert air.