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: 2025.09.19
"Boondocking the Goose"
Goosenecks State Park, southern Utah



Moab is always a tough place to leave. Good bars, good eateries, good vibes, and even a good laundromat. But, with the Big Five Victory Tour complete, Blue Maxx and I could make a beeline home to Key West.

Exxxxcept that Goosenecks State Park was "*kinda* on the way." On a map, it does not appear to be "on the way", but as we VanLife nomads know, that all depends on which "way" you choose to be "on."

Besides, I wanted to check out what the legal boondocking situation was down in those public lands. To that end, I paused my southerly ride down the wonderfully scenic

UT-191, and stopped in at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the crossroads town of Monticello. The woman at the desk – a “contemporary of mine” – had wisdom befitting her years and filled me in on more places than I could fit in my memory.

The one that latched itself in there, though, was Valley of the Gods. I had driven the area a couple of decades ago and loved it. The fact that it was boondockable surprised me.

I mentioned Goosenecks and said that Plan A was to secure one of their on-site campsites for the night. She gave me this amused look and somewhat kindly told me, “Just drive past the designated sites, and park anywhere you want. Those are nothing more than fire rings in the ground anyway.” So, armed with those sage words, BM and I roared back off into the desert

Utah highways 12 & 95, through Escalante and Glen Canyon NRA, get most of the hype when scenic drives are mentioned, but the ride on UT-191 south from Moab to Bluff (100 miles), then UT-163 west from Bluff to the turnoff to Goosenecks (another 25 miles) and continuing southwest into Monument Valley more than holds its own.



I told you about the ride and the park in one of my September 2022 posts – complete with a very cool Google Earth satellite photo of the area -- so I won’t repeat it.



Goosenecks State Park



No one was on duty in the tiny booth at the entrance to the big dirt lot that constitutes the State Park aspect of the place. I drove right in, forgetting to drop my fee in the white box. I wasn't sure how long I'd be staying; if a long visit seemed imminent, I'd go back and pay, right? Riiiight.

I did as my BLM woman had said: drove right past the ten or so fire rings (a few did not appear to be taken) and out towards the long eastern arm. It looks flat in photos, but it was bumpy and rocky as all get-out, and I swerved and dodged my way to a spot close to the rim, but not at all close to any other park visitors.

Despite the rugged going, I might have trundled us all the way out to the end – another quarter-mile or so – but somebody was already camped almost all the way out there.

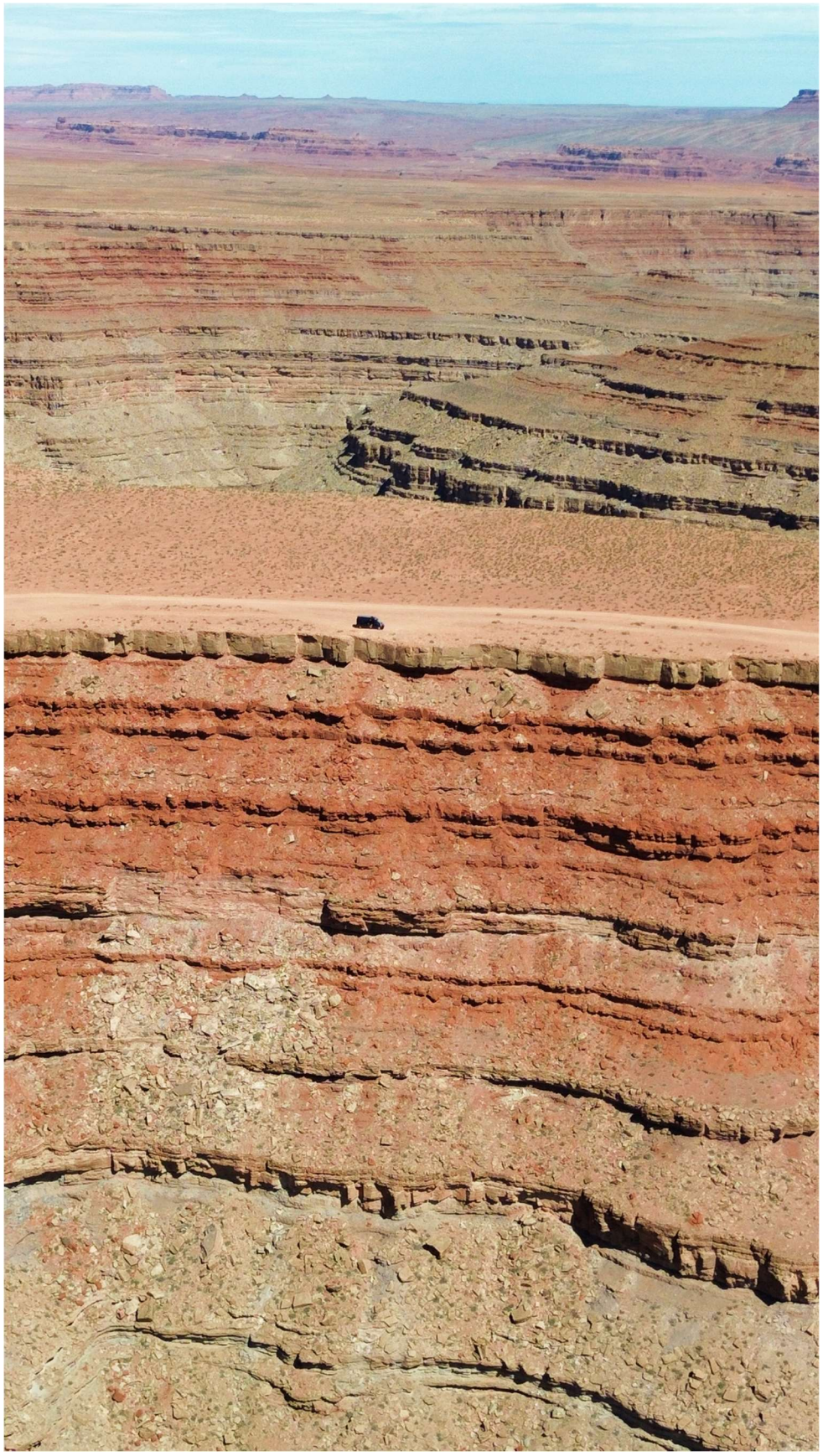
It was hot! Late day temps had to be near 100˚ still, and the breeze was just blowing 100˚ air around. Same with the USB fans I had. Being in a closed metal box in such heat made little sense, so I opened Maxx's slider door to the lowering afternoon sunshine. If you can't hide from the heat, revel in the heat. (Mindset makes a big difference.)



I had come back to Goosenecks, primarily, to get drone images of the place. Last time here, I did not yet have a drone. The Utah State Parks web site said something about drone flight only being allowed only after a certain date. But right now, I could not, for the life of me, recall which date it was. So, I assumed it was yesterday's date and got my Little Birds ready for flight.

The views were even more spectacular from above, especially looking back at BM and I, so puny over there on the rim.

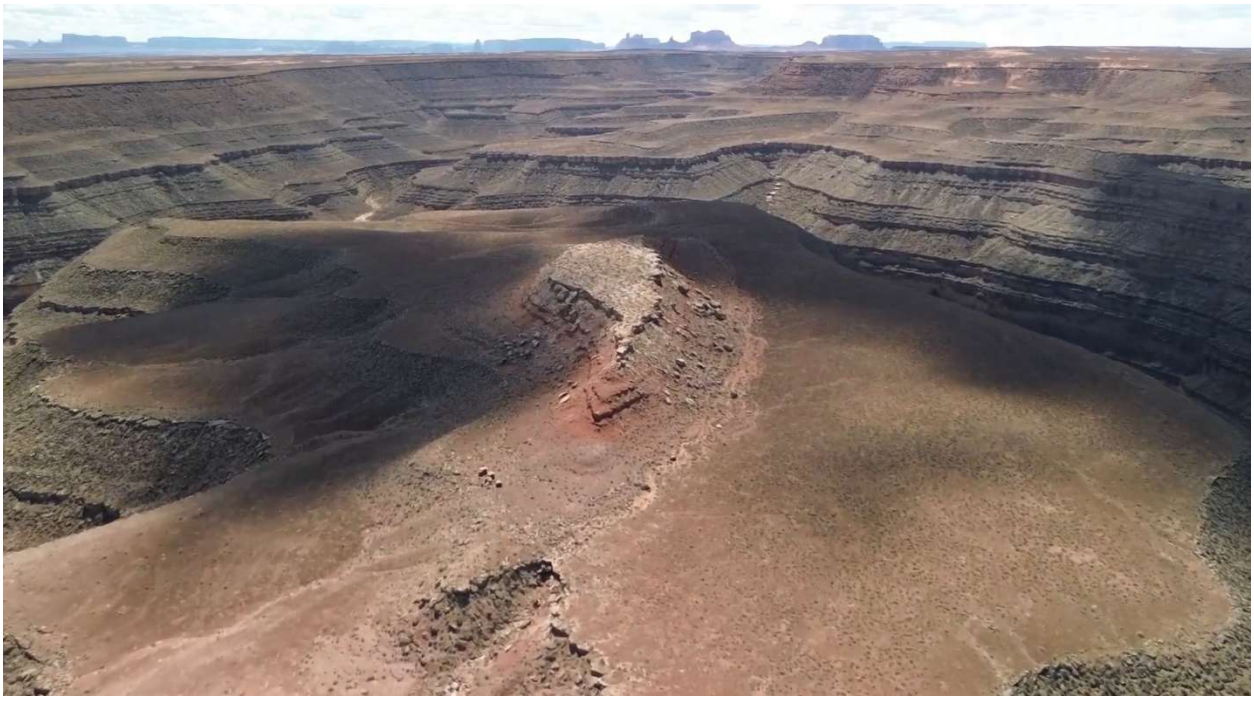




The best views of all, though, are the videos. Here are the links from my *Little Bird Video* channel on YouTube (I'll set them up as hyperlinks, but I'm pretty sure you'll have to cut and paste):

Goosenecks 1: https://youtu.be/PUEbxzjYako?si=qKcmxY5A50mpc_Pq

Goosenecks 2: https://youtu.be/ZwH6nUct6pI?si=iX0Ngkln-GoUtVxf







Goosenecks State Park camp area (above) entry road and overlook (below)



I took video #1 – after a couple of short practices runs, on which I took photos – and soared out to the central prong, flew right over the mound on the very top of it, then around and back home. I felt that I had nailed it. Mission accomplished, let's go find a Site For The Nite.

But I wanted more and sent Little Bird Junior up to get some other angles.



Above: Blue Maxx, left edge, ¼ of the way down. *Below: Blue Maxx, looking south*



By this time, the sun was getting far enough down in the sky that it no longer felt killer hot. There were clouds on the horizon and moving this way. A gray haze hung under the clouds: rain. It didn't look like it was coming our way, but it was going to pass not too far east of us.

That was when I decided I was home for the night. I unfolded my folding chair, poured myself a fresh Captain-and-Coke and set up my tripod to take a time lapse of the passing storm. It came out great. I even caught a couple of lightning flashes.



What a great place to spend the night! The clouds hung around so I was denied a killer star show, but waking up there was almost surreal.







And, yes, I was up before sunrise. I know, pretty damn unusual, but I had a plan. Sixteen more miles down UT-163, just before it crosses into Arizona, the road enters Monument Valley. Most specifically, there is what is titled “Forrest Gump Point”, where that iconic scene from the movie was shot … at sunrise. Off I went.



I cropped this photo, but there were several campers and vans parked in a roadside turnout. I wondered if they had been there all night. Guess I'll never know.

So, the day began with a ride through Monument Valley in brilliant sunshine. Pretty damn nice.

I was, however, driving west, which was not the most expeditious way home…



