

THE RIMROCKER TRAIL



Part 4 - Colorado-Utah State Line to Moab, Utah

Zero your trip meter as you cross the Utah state line. You are now on San Juan County Road 176, a wide and well-maintained road which is also known as Geysers Creek Road. Although one could imagine Geysers Creek was named for a hot geyser like those found in Yellowstone National Park, such is not the case. In reality, it was named for Al Geysers, a rancher whose cattle grazed in the area in the late 1800s. The entire area you are entering is still open range, so watch out for cattle and be cautious around corners. Also, note that all Rimrocker Trail signs in Utah are brown, regardless of changes in jurisdiction.

Continue on, ignoring lesser roads on both the left and right sides, toward the La Sal Mountains. Although the tale isn't confirmed, these mountains were named by Spanish missionary and explorer Silvestre Valez de Escalante during his 1776 expedition. His name for them was the Sierra La Sal, or Salt Mountains, being certain that their white tops couldn't possibly be snow in late summer.



Next, turn left onto well-maintained Two Mile Road instead of continuing on Geysers Creek Road (GPS N38 27.84 W109 06.92).

An interesting side trip would be to instead go straight and then take the Geysers Pass Road up to a saddle between Haystack Mountain and Mount Mellenthin. That saddle is known as Geysers Pass, and is also the headwaters of Geysers Creek.

At the turn onto Two Mile Road the signage indicates a connection to Highway 46, but you won't go that far. Continue for approximately 16 miles. Part of this stretch of the trail is in the South La Sal Block of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). Unlike public lands, SITLA lands are properties held in trust for eventual lease or sale. The financial

proceeds from these properties support 12 state institutions, including schools, hospitals, teaching colleges, and universities. After the SITLA land, you will enter the Utah portion of the Manti-La Sal National Forest and continue past the turn for Dark Canyon Lake Road. While this road is not part of the Rimrocker Trail, you may find it interesting to explore if time allows.

On Two Mile Road at approximately 16 miles from the state line, make a right hand turn onto FSR 0073 (aka La Sal Pass Road and County Road 123). This turn is well marked and signed for La Sal Pass.

If you instead continue on Two Mile Road you'll reach Highway 46 in about two miles. Approximately two miles west on Highway 46 is the community of La Sal. The infamous Wild Bunch gang of outlaws used La Sal as a hideout in the late 1800s, in addition to their Robbers Roost hideout near Green River. Butch Cassidy, Matt Warner, the McCarty brothers (whose last robbery was a bank in Delta, Colorado), and many others were known to have spend time in La Sal. The members of the Wild Bunch were sometimes cowboys and ranchers, in addition to being bank robbers and cattle rustlers. Perhaps their most famous robbery was the bank in Telluride, Colorado in 1893. Tom McCarty married Matt Warner's sister. These two, along with Butch Cassidy, became known as the Invincible Three notorious outlaw gang.

Continuing on the La Sal Pass Road, the Rimrocker Trail does not go all the way to La Sal Pass (10,400' elevation). However, that is a nice drive worth doing at another time, perhaps to see fall colors. In about another mile, at 17.1 miles from the state line, you will make a left turn at signage for Doe and Pole Canyon Trailheads (hiking trails with trailheads a

little less than 2 miles ahead). This turn will place you on one of those "lesser" roads (FSR 0128) which have been not been used up to this point. FSR 0128 is rougher than Two Mile Road and La Sal Pass Road but would only be rated a 2 on a scale of 1 to 10. It is akin to an overly rough cobblestone road. At 22.2 miles and at 22.5 miles you will want to ignore side roads FSR 717 and FSR 4717. This area is remote and gets little use, so pay particular attention to both your map and signage here. See Inset 2 on the Rimrocker Trail map for details of turns in this area.

The day we drove the route the weather was cloudy and rainy, so we could only get a taste of the views in this area, primarily to the driver's side. On a clear day these views would be spectacular, and one would be able to see a very long way.



After traversing down a switchback and heading south, turn right onto FSR 4764 (GPS N38 21.22 W109 16.09). A couple of gates will be encountered along this stretch of road. Please be respectful and leave the gates as you found them (open if were already open; closed behind you if were closed on approach). Continue along the Rimrocker Trail with turns onto FSR 4753 and FSR 4757, enjoying awesome views. After leaving the national forest and continuing through BLM land you will turn right onto Black Ridge Road, which is well maintained. Stay on this road as it skirts the west side of the La Sal Mountains in a northwesterly direction with many curves and side roads. Turn right onto Pole Canyon Road (GPS N38 23.28 W109 24.32), which is also known as BLM Road 173 and County Road 173. Follow Pole Canyon Road as it winds down toward Highway 191.

At approximately 2.8 miles from the turn you will pass the main entrance to the privately owned 4x4 playground known as Area BFE (GPS N38 24.23 W109 24.48). Continue to the parking area next to Highway 191. If your vehicle is legal on highways in Utah and you are ready for pavement, a right turn leads north to Moab, and a left turn leads south to La Sal Junction. Otherwise, head northeast from the parking lot on a trail which runs parallel and next to Highway 191. See Inset 3 on the Rimrocker Trail map for details of this turn. The Rimrocker Trail diverges from the highway to follow an old railroad grade curve called Yellow Circle Road, and then makes several turns before heading north to a right turn onto Kens Lake Road. Shortly thereafter you'll make a left turn onto the La Sal Mountain Loop Road. Head north on the La Sal Mountain Loop Road, which eventually becomes Spanish Valley Drive. Gas and other supplies are available at a Shell convenience store at the intersection of East Spanish Trail Road (a left turn) and Highway 191. The Rimrocker Trail continues north on Spanish Valley Drive and ends at the Moab city boundary, approximately 54 miles from the Colorado-Utah state line.