


A ROUTE GUIDE TO

Scenic Byway



*Guide to Attractions and Activities
Along Utah's All-American Road*





Congratulations and welcome, you made it to Scenic Byway 12! If you are planning a trip, or about to drive Scenic Byway 12, you will discover that the drive alone is an extraordinary experience unto itself. As you prepare, take this guide along, and remember Scenic Byway 12 is about time—landscape that has been carved through geologic time, human evidence of historic and archeological times, and wonders that have survived over time until today—it takes time to savor the sights. So, relax and enjoy your journey through terrain and time!

Scenic Byway 12 spans a route of 124 miles, and travels through some of the most diverse, remote and ruggedly beautiful landscapes in the country. It runs through Utah's Garfield and Wayne Counties and is home to two national parks, three state parks, a national recreation area, a national monument, and a national forest.

Along the way you will also discover that Scenic Byway 12 takes you through memorable landscapes, ranging from the remains of ancient sea beds to one of the world's highest alpine forests, and from astonishing pink and russet stone turrets to open sagebrush flats. The history and culture of the area blend together, making Scenic Byway 12 a journey like no other.

*Adventure is not in the guidebook,
beauty is not on the map.
Seek and ye shall find.*

Terry and Renny Russell
On the Loose

Your experience driving Scenic Byway 12 will be an adventure worth remembering. Make sure you enjoy the stops along the way. Each town along the byway has a character all its own, the shops and accommodations offer unique experiences as well.

Remember because of the terrain, the driving may take a bit longer than in other areas. But you will get the most from your journey if you stop and explore the wonders in the landscape before you. Safe travels!

- A **FOLD-OUT MAP** is located at the back of the guide. The map will help you to locate Towns, Points of Interest, Scenic Backways and Visitor Centers featured in the Route Guide.
- The Route Guide is oriented for the visitor going **west to east** on Scenic Byway 12.
- **Colors and numbers** are used throughout the guide and the map to locate and highlight:
 - Visitor Centers
 - Points of Interest
 - Scenic Backway Routes
- **Mileage marker posts** along the byway give you your location on the road as you travel and are also referenced at the bottom of the fold-out map.
- **Mini-maps** are provided on some of the pages in the guide to highlight trails and backways.
- A table of available **services and activities** is located on pages 38–39 of the guide.



Additional information can be found on our website located at www.ScenicByway12.com and by inquiring locally.

While it may appear that this immense landscape is impervious to our collective footprints, in fact, the opposite is true. The desert is arid and surprisingly fragile. And since these lands belong to everyone, we each have a responsibility to be good stewards.

Pack out all trash. There are trash collection facilities in all communities along the byway.

Don't bother the wildlife. (A telephoto lens is your best friend when you're photographing wildlife.)

Leave artifacts, fossils, rocks, plants, and other natural objects as they were when you found them. Contrary to your momentary temptation, that chunk of rippled sandstone will not look better in your garden than in its current natural setting. And besides, collecting in national parks and monuments is not allowed, and collecting artifacts and dinosaur fossils on all public lands is illegal.

And finally, when in doubt about whether your planned activity is allowed at a particular location, check with any of the visitor centers along the way.

A Few Things You Should Know

Travel Planning

Scenic Byway 12 is 124 miles long. As you estimate the time necessary to travel the length of the byway, use an average speed of 40 miles per hour.

Cellular Service

Cell phones do not work along many miles of Scenic Byway 12 due to the rugged terrain and remoteness. Plan accordingly and make calls while stopped in one of the locations with service.

GPS Navigation Systems

Travelers entering the region should be particularly careful about trusting GPS navigation systems. Units programmed to provide the most direct route may lead you into the backcountry.

Scenic Backways

Many of the backcountry roads in this region are **very rough and remote**. High-clearance and/or four-wheel drive vehicles are needed to travel some sections of these roads, many of which are seasonally maintained and impassible when wet. All are far from emergency road service so travel prepared for anything.

Travel Safely

Use the pullouts and waysides along the byway where you will find interpretive sign panels with local area information. Never block the road by stopping in the traffic lanes to take photographs. When you find yourself overwhelmed by the spectacular scenery on Scenic Byway 12, pull off the road where it is safe to do so.

Share the Road

Many segments of Scenic Byway 12 have sharp curves and narrow to no paved shoulders. Give cyclists and school buses space and pass only when it is legal and safe.

Open Range

You may encounter livestock or wildlife on or near the roadway. Slow down or stop as required and proceed only when it is safe to do so.

Flash Flooding

Even small rain storms can cause dangerous flash floods in streams, drainages and canyons along Scenic Byway 12. Be aware while hiking. Do not attempt to walk or drive through flood waters. You or your vehicle can be swept away causing injury or death. Inquire about current weather conditions at one of the area visitor centers.

Fire

From spring to fall, travelers may encounter smoke in the area. Land management agencies use fire to reduce overgrown understory in the forest and minimize the risk of larger, more catastrophic forest fires. You may see signs indicating a prescribed burn is in progress.

Emergencies

Travel with water, food, spare tires, maps and extra clothing in case of roadside emergencies, especially if driving backways.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the rocks red?

The red color is caused by the combination of iron and oxygen (an iron oxide). Different shades of red result depending on the other elements present in the rock and their exposure over time to water and sun.

When I drive through those tunnels am I in Bryce Canyon?

No, you are in Red Canyon in the Dixie National Forest.

Are Sunset Point and Sunrise Point the best places to watch sunset and sunrise in Bryce Canyon?

The two best overlooks for watching sunrise are Bryce Point and Sunrise Point. For sunset in the Park, we recommend Fairyland Point or Paria View.

Can I take the Cottonwood Canyon Road as a shortcut?

For most, the answer is no. Travel along this route is typically extremely rough, and when rain or snow occurs, it becomes impassable. Do not trust your GPS navigation system to determine the best route to take in the area.

Where is the Grand Staircase?

There is no staircase per se. The National Monument's name is a reference to the series of cliffs rising from south to north from the foot of the Kaibab Plateau (adjacent to the Grand Canyon) to the rim of Bryce Canyon.

What kind of wildlife lives here?

Wildlife commonly seen in the area include elk, mule deer, pronghorn (antelope), jack rabbits, ground squirrels, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, ravens, jays, finches, lizards, and bull snakes. Black bear, bobcats, and mountain lions are rarely seen.

What is the elevation range along the byway?

From 5,223 feet to 9,636 feet above sea level.

What is the average annual precipitation here?

This amount varies by elevation, but the range is 10–15 inches of precipitation per year, a good portion of which comes in the form of snow in the winter.

Why isn't there much water in the riverbeds?

Rivers in the area are fed by springs and seeps, and much of what naturally flows is diverted for agricultural purposes in the growing season. But during the "monsoon season," typically in late summer, the region experiences isolated afternoon thunderstorms capable of exceptional downpours across a broad catchment area. As rainwater flows down ever widening channels in the landscape, those broad rivers with just a trickle today will fill to capacity for several hours and recede again.

Yes, This Land Is Your Land

Along Scenic Byway 12, you will be exposed to rolling slickrock, variegated buttes and mesas, snaking canyons, and rock walls varnished with mineral stains. You may see hawks, eagles, and vultures soaring overhead; deer or elk grazing in a high alpine meadow; or even an elusive coyote slipping furtively through a patch of rabbit brush.

Around each bend, there are surprises: wind- and water-shaped towers and ramparts as ornate as medieval castles; dense forests of aspen and fir that yield to grassy meadows; mingled scents of pinyon or sagebrush that define the open spaces of the American Southwest; and turbulent storms that spill over distant vistas, painting the formerly blue sky an indescribable shade of purple.

Fortunately, this rich trove of scenery along Scenic Byway 12 belongs to each of us.

Most of the lands surrounding the byway are public, meaning they are owned by the American people and managed by different federal and state agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and Utah State Parks. Each agency's mission differs, but all share a common objective of caring for the lands and protecting them for future generations to enjoy.

Panguitch



What not to miss: Tour of historic homes and Main Street Quilt Walk – June
Hot Air Balloon Festival – June

Panguitch is located along Utah Heritage Highway 89, 7 miles north of the junction with Scenic Byway 12 and is the eastern gateway to Highway 143 Patchwork Parkway National Scenic Byway.



Visitors with an interest in historic buildings will enjoy the distinctive brick architecture of the town's historic homes and commercial buildings.

Hatch



What not to miss: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum

Hatch is nestled next to the winding Sevier River on Highway 89, 8 miles south of the junction with Scenic Byway 12. The town hosts several services and lodging options.

Come on in. The earth, like the sun, like the air, belongs to everyone – and no one.

Edward Abbey
The Journey Home



What not to miss: Ride or walk on Red Canyon bike path
Botanical Garden
Thunder Mountain Trail
Casto Canyon Trail

Cut into the sculpted Claron limestone of the Paunsaugunt Plateau, Red Canyon's most immediately striking natural feature is its variety of weirdly sculpted erosional forms variously described as turrets, hoodoos, pinnacles, or spires. These geologic features extend along the byway for almost four miles, ending on top of the plateau edge.

In addition to its scenery, Red Canyon offers many easily accessible hiking and bicycling trails, a campground and a U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center.

To access the world-class Thunder Mountain Trail and a five-mile-long bicycle path, begin at the first parking area along Scenic Byway 12. Scenic Byway 12 Gateway interpretive panels are located here.



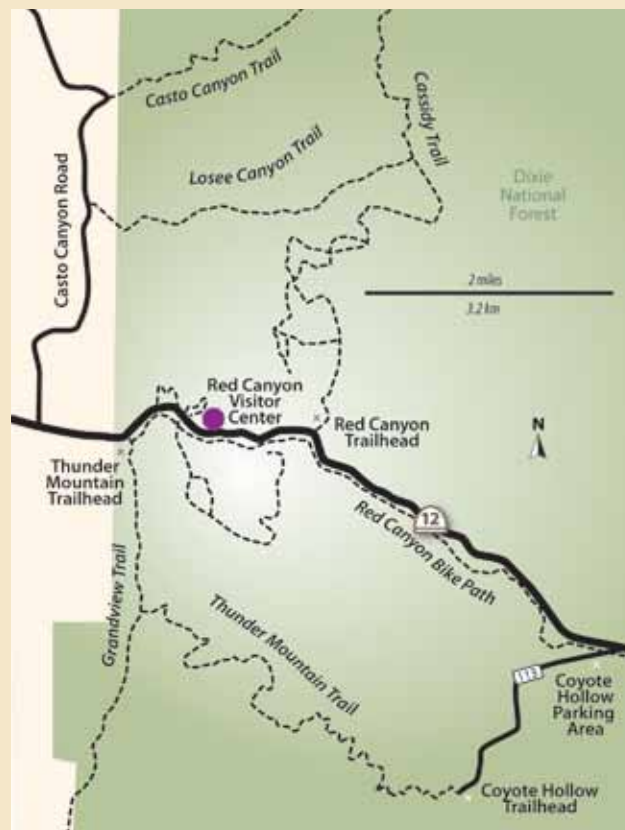
Red Canyon beardtongue (Penstemon bracteatus), a rare plant found only in Red Canyon.

For ATV enthusiasts, the Casto Canyon Trail on the north side of Red Canyon is accessed off the Casto Canyon Road from Scenic Byway 12 at lower Red Canyon. Losee Canyon Trail is a popular mountain bike and hiking trail offering spectacular scenery amidst a backdrop of pinyon and ponderosa pines.

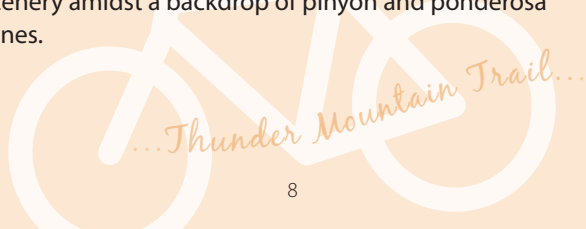


What you'll find here: Open seasonally
Interpretive trails and programs
Maps, books and souvenirs

The Red Canyon Visitor Center is located along Scenic Byway 12 in the heart of Red Canyon. Take time to stay and explore in this area which has been called the "most photographed place in Utah." Find out why, while you explore Red Canyon with its brilliant red soil contrasted with the green pines.



Richard Costigan





Dixie National Forest, at almost two million acres and stretching from east to west for approximately 170 miles across southern Utah, is the state's largest national forest. Scenic Byway 12 weaves in and out of Dixie National Forest – *The Dixie* – three times, crossing three ranger districts: the Powell District to the west, the Escalante District in the middle, and the Teasdale District to the east. The Dixie provides a backdrop for much of the byway's length, as it reaches its highest point of 11,322 feet at Blue Bell Knoll on Boulder Mountain, between the towns of Boulder and Torrey.

Not surprisingly, given its size and varied topography, the forest offers myriad of recreational experiences, including hiking, viewing scenery, biking, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, riding ATVs, snowmobiling, hunting, canoeing, swimming, and fishing, to name just a few.

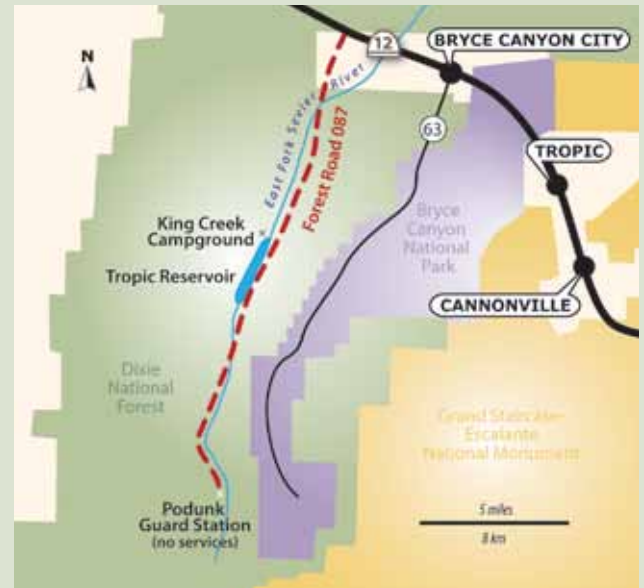
Fire : Once regarded as a destructive force to be suppressed, land management agencies now recognize the ecological role fire plays in promoting healthy forests. The benefits of the prescribed burning of forests include reducing the risk of catastrophic fires, stimulating understory vegetation, and encouraging the natural regeneration of ponderosa pine and other native plants. If you see smoke on the horizon as you travel, look for signs that a prescribed burn is in progress and proceed with caution along the byway.



What you're in for: Gravel road
 Passenger cars in good weather
 17 miles (one way)

The East Fork of the Sevier River Scenic Backway stretches south of the byway for 17 miles along the edge of Bryce Canyon National Park before arriving at Tropic Reservoir, an oasis on hot days that offers trout fishing, a boat ramp, picnicking, and camping.

The King Creek Campground is a spacious developed campground. The nearby Podunk Guard Station, built in the 1920s to house U.S. Forest Service personnel, sits in a narrow mountain valley beneath a stand of mature spruce trees. In addition to wildlife viewing, the dirt roads in this area are ideally suited for ATV use, horseback riding, and 4WD excursions. During the winter season, snowmobilers will discover excellent marked trails.





What not to miss: Bryce Canyon Rodeo
Horseback rides
Cross-country skiing

Bryce Canyon City is the gateway to Bryce Canyon National Park. The area was originally homesteaded by Ruby and Minnie Syrett along with several other ranching families on the north end of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. What began in 1916 as a few tent camps and outdoor cookouts, has now become one of Utah's newest towns, with a variety of year-round tourist facilities.

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Bryce Canyon Visitor Center



What you'll find here: Interpretive exhibits
Award-winning park history video
Maps, books and souvenirs

The park entrance and visitor center are located three miles south of the byway's junction with Highway 63. Park rangers offer regular interpretive programs during the summer on the park's geology, wildlife, flora, and history.



What not to miss: Queen's Garden/Navajo Loop Trail
"Dark Ranger" program on night skies
Bryce Canyon viewpoints

Bryce Canyon is actually not a canyon, but a series of amphitheaters that are etched into the pink Claron limestone of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. Many of the multicolor hoodoos, pinnacles, buttresses and columns are visible from the 37-mile round-trip scenic drive through the park, which offers numerous viewpoints, photographic opportunities and access to hiking trails.

Bryce Canyon offers more than 50 miles of hiking trails, including routes that wind around hoodoos and majestic pines, offering a close-up perspective on some of the park's remarkable natural artistry. In the winter, the park offers abundant solitude, as well as opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Wally Pacholka/AstroPro.com



Night Skies: One unanticipated consequence of our increasingly urbanized world is the illumination of

the night sky by artificial light sources, which decreases the visibility of stars and other astronomical phenomena. Here in the remoteness of Bryce Canyon's beautiful night skies, which have been described as "among the darkest in the Southwest," the stars shine bright. Bryce Canyon regularly offers multi-media astronomy programs, telescope viewing, full moon hikes, and an Annual Astronomy Festival. Check at the visitor center for details and dates.



What not to miss: Ebenezer Bryce cabin
Tropic Heritage Center

Located under the pink and salmon colored cliffs of Bryce Canyon National Park, lies the pleasant town of Tropic. Tropic is one of three towns in Bryce Valley along Scenic Byway 12. Tropic's unusual name originated with the claim made by the town's first settlers that the climate here was much more temperate than that in nearby settlements.



Ebenezer Bryce's cabin in Tropic



Dorthea Lange, Courtesy Library of Congress

Waterworks : The lack of water was a major problem in arid Bryce Valley when the area was settled. Early pioneers spent two years excavating

the East Fork Canal, also known as the Tropic Ditch, relying primarily on hand tools. The ditch diverted water from the East Fork of the Sevier River to the Paria River drainage and allowed settlers to successfully farm, grow orchards, and raise livestock. The nearly 10-mile-long ditch was completed in 1890 and is a testament to the perseverance and ingenuity of the area's early pioneers.



What not to miss: Grand Staircase-Escalante Visitor Center
Half-marathon – July

Yet another charming little town in Bryce Valley, Cannonville was settled in 1876 and named after early Mormon leader George Q. Cannon. Cannonville is home to the annual Old Time Fiddlers and Bear Festival. Check with local businesses for the exact date, time and other specifics. The town's park makes for a lovely picnic spot.

Henrieville



What not to miss: Old schoolhouse

Originally settled in the 1870s, this appealing town, Henrieville, retains much of its pioneer charm. The old town school, constructed in 1881 of rough-cut timber harvested on a nearby mountain, functions today as a senior citizen center and town hall. Many of Henrieville's residents are still engaged in farming.



Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is a flagship unit of the National Landscape Conservation System, one of the nation's newest conservation initiatives, which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. This 1.9 million-acre monument was set aside in 1996 to preserve its wide open spaces and intact ecosystems that allow for a treasure trove of scientific opportunities. It is surrounded by national parks, wilderness areas, national forests, state parks, and additional BLM public lands, that when combined, make up one of the largest publicly managed land masses in the lower 48 states.

The Monument's spectacular scenery is made up of three distinct regions: the Grand Staircase, the Kaiparowits Plateau, and the Canyons of the Escalante. Extending across the southwest corner of the Monument, the Grand Staircase is a series of massive geological steps that descend toward the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The five cliff formations—Pink, Gray, White, Vermilion, and Chocolate—are classic examples of biological diversity, spanning five different life zones and harboring a surprising array of birds, mammals, and plants. The Kaiparowits Plateau is the Monument's central section. A massive, isolated region of mesas and canyons, the Kaiparowits is rich in Native American archaeological sites and paleontological resources. The Canyons of the Escalante are a series of labyrinthine canyons through sandstone that feed the Escalante River as it makes its way to the Colorado River.

Light and shadow play out here on a grand tableau, enormous blue skies stretch into eternity overhead, and rock is a constant. Where water is present in this arid land, there are signs of life: cougar tracks, insects skating across potholes, swallows nesting in an alcove.

Regardless of which region of the Monument you visit, this is a land of silence, space, and scenery that defies description and inspires the imagination.

What you'll find here: Open seasonally
Interpretive displays
Maps, books and souvenirs

The GSENM Visitor Center in Cannonville interprets the human geography of the Grand Staircase-Escalante region through displays and oral histories of early settlers and Native Americans. The building's design and surrounding "rip-gut" fence is reflective of the local architectural character.

Dinosaurs : The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's fossil records stretch for about 200 million years, from approximately 270 million to about 65 million years ago. During at least part of this time period, known as the Mesozoic Era, the area had a climate like today's Louisiana or Florida.

Recent discoveries include the giant *Gryposaurus monumentensis*, or "duck-billed lizard of the monument;" a feathered, raptor-like dinosaur called *Hagryphus giganteus*, two swamp-dwelling horned ceratopsids, *Utahceratops gettyi* and *Kosmoceratops richardsoni*; and the most

ornate dinosaur ever discovered, a bizarre plant-eating relative of *Triceratops* that has upwards of 15 horns.

Dinosaur tooth





What you're in for: Dry-weather road (open all year)
Never suitable for RVs or trailers
Impassable when wet
46 miles (one way)

This Scenic Backway runs for 46 miles traversing southward through Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) from Cannonville to Highway 89. The road is paved for 9 miles between Cannonville and the turnoff to Kodachrome Basin State Park. Thereafter, the road is graded dirt with an underlying clay base making it impassable when wet. Inquire about weather and road conditions at the nearby Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Visitor Center in Cannonville to be prepared.



Grosvenor Arch

The backway provides access to Kodachrome Basin State Park, Grosvenor Arch, the Cottonwood Narrows, and Hackberry Canyon. Grosvenor Arch, located about 10 miles south of Kodachrome Basin and 1 mile east of the backway on a side road, is a superb double arch named in honor of a former National Geographic Society president. A bit less than 5 miles south of the turnoff to Grosvenor Arch is a parking area for accessing the Cottonwood Narrows, an easy 3-mile round-trip hike. Eight miles farther south on the backway is the trailhead for Lower Hackberry Canyon, a moderately easy in-and-out day hike along the canyon floor with gently flowing water, or a moderately difficult route for several days of backpacking depending on how far into the canyon one goes.



What not to miss: Exhibits in the entrance station
Full service campground
Panorama Trail

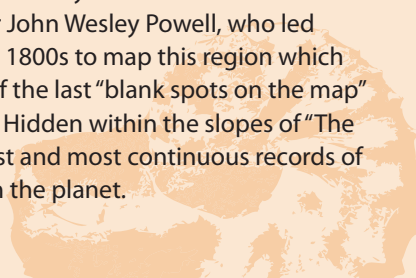
Kodachrome Basin was named during the late 1940s by a National Geographic Society Expedition in honor of the then revolutionary Kodak film that was celebrated for its color accuracy. The park draws visitors fascinated by the area's unusual geological forms, including a series of upright cylindrical chimneys called sand pipes. More than 60 sand pipes ranging in height from 6 to 170 feet have been identified in the park.

The must-do 2.9-mile Panorama Trail weaves through the most spectacular scenery. Several short and moderate hiking trails throughout the park take you to interesting rock formations, box canyons, and viewpoints.





The Blues Overlook sits across from the delicate pink limestone ledges of Powell Point, which rises to an elevation of 10,188 feet, and above “The Blues,” a badland of gray-green shales deposited some 80 million years ago when the area was covered by an inland ocean. Powell Point was named after John Wesley Powell, who led expeditions in the late 1800s to map this region which at that time was one of the last “blank spots on the map” of the continental U.S. Hidden within the slopes of “The Blues” is one of the best and most continuous records of Late Cretaceous life on the planet.



What not to miss: Hiking in petrified forest
Boating in Wide Hollow Reservoir

This 1,000-acre Utah State Park is located adjacent to Wide Hollow Reservoir and has a full-service campground that accommodates small and large groups. It also offers one of Utah’s best and most accessible displays of petrified wood—fossilized trees from millions of years ago. The visitor center offers displays of plant and marine fossils, petrified wood, and fossilized dinosaur bones.

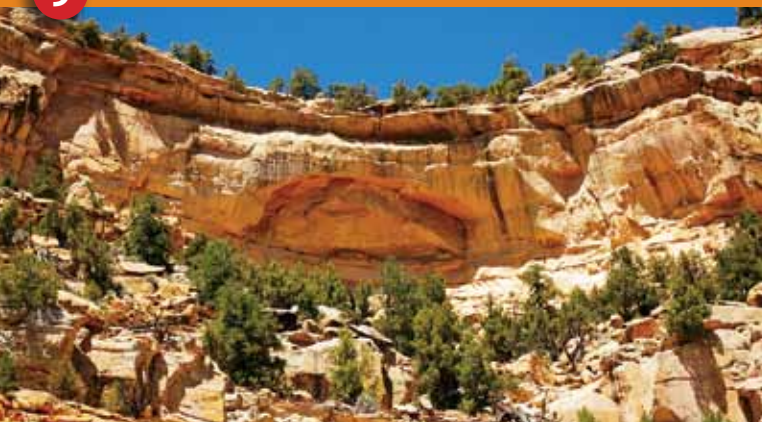
Escalante Interagency Visitor Center



What you’ll find here: Interpretive exhibits and film
Maps and books

The Escalante Interagency Visitor Center focuses on the ecology of the 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The center provides information for enjoying and exploring the Monument, Dixie National Forest, and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. It was opened to the public in 2005 and is one of the Department of Interior’s first Gold LEED-rated facilities.

Upper Valley Granaries



Tucked into the cliff face above this wayside is a small stone-and-mud-daubed structure constructed by Ancient Puebloans. The structure is thought to be a storage place for corn, grain, and other foods grown and harvested nearby. A viewing tube directs visitors’ eyes to the granary that would otherwise be hard to see as it blends so well into the landscape.



What not to miss: Escalante Interagency Visitor Center
Hole-in-the-Rock Heritage Center
Historic home and barns walking tour

Escalante was settled in 1876 by Mormon pioneers who were advised by members of the second Powell Expedition to name the town after the river running through the valley. The river had been named a few years earlier for Silvestre Velez de Escalante, a Spanish priest and explorer who had travelled through the region searching for a route between Santa Fe and California.

Escalante is often called the "Heart of Scenic Byway 12" as it is nestled between the elevated meadows of the Aquarius and Kaiparowits Plateaus and the low desert country surrounding the Escalante Canyons in the middle of the byway. Festivals honoring both the area's rich heritage and its ability to inspire artists are held annually.

What you're in for: Gravel road / 40 miles (one way)
Closed in winter

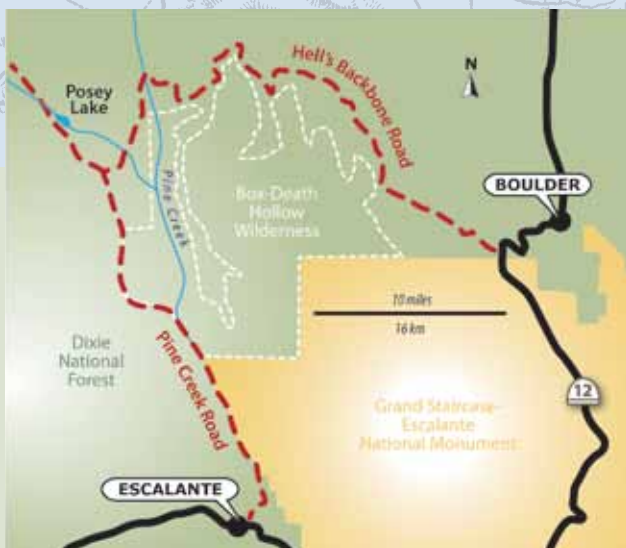
Pine Creek Road heads north out of Escalante and climbs onto Escalante Mountain in Dixie National Forest. This backway provides access to Posey Lake and Campground as well as many forest roads ideal for exploring by ATV or mountain bike. Posey Lake and many others on the mountain are stocked with rainbow, brown, or brook trout which makes for excellent fishing.

Hell's Backbone Scenic Backway



What you're in for: Gravel road / 44 miles (one way)
Closed in winter

Construction of Hell's Backbone Road was completed in 1933 by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), allowing vehicle traffic between Escalante and Boulder for the first time. Hell's Backbone Bridge, a must-stop for taking photographs, allows travelers to pass above Sand Creek with views of the spectacular Box-Death Hollow Wilderness Area.





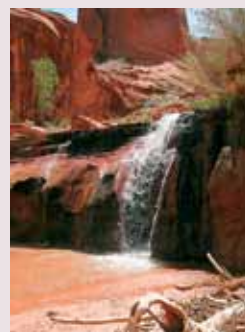
What you're in for: Dirt and gravel road
 Passenger cars in good weather
 4WD required for last 7 miles
 57 miles (one way)

Beginning 5 miles east of Escalante off Scenic Byway 12, the 57-mile-long Hole-in-the-Rock Road is a gravel and dirt road that closely follows the route taken by Mormon pioneers in 1879–80 in an attempt to establish a shortcut across the Colorado River between established communities in the center of the state and the Four Corners area. Today, Hole-in-the-Rock Road provides access to a number of recreational and historic sites in both Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Devil's Garden and the Dry Fork slot canyons are popular recreational destinations. Visitors interested in pioneer history should see Dance Hall Rock and Hole-in-the-Rock at the end of the road.



Dance Hall Rock

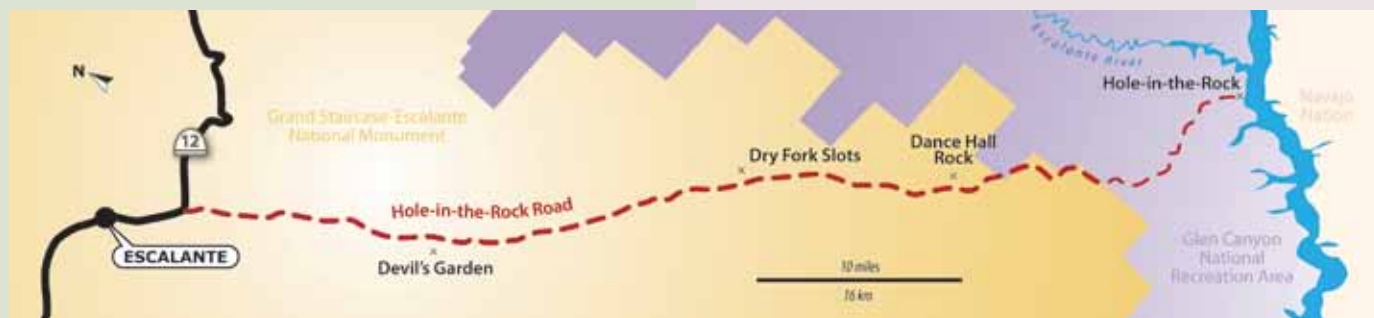
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area's central feature is Lake Powell, a 200-mile-long reservoir created by the damming of the Colorado River in Glen Canyon in the 1960s. From Scenic Byway 12, the nearest route to Lake Powell is via Hole-in-the-Rock—a Mormon pioneer historic site 57 miles out to the end of the rugged Hole-



Coyote Gulch

in-the-Rock Road where a steep, jagged gouge in the sandstone walls drops about 600 feet to the waters of Lake Powell. The recreation area includes more than a million acres of canyon country that encompasses the lower two-thirds of the Escalante River and its winding side canyons, many of which are accessible from trailheads off Hole-in-the-Rock Road.

One of the many popular hiking destinations is Coyote Gulch, a 13-mile side canyon and a photographer's paradise of brilliant sandstone natural bridges, arches, as well as a sandy, shallow streambed that provides a respite from the summer heat. Check at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center for information, current conditions, and permits for this backcountry experience.





Head of the Rocks Overlook provides expansive views out across the Escalante Canyons where colorful slickrock stretches almost as far as the eye can see. Some 168 million years ago, these striated cream-and-red sandstone formations were sand dunes. Today, this landscape begs for visitors to grab their cameras to record the expansive vista as well as the meandering path of Scenic Byway 12 below. In the distance one can see the southeastern edge of the Aquarius Plateau (i.e. Boulder Mountain) to the north, the Henry Mountains (i.e. Mt. Ellen, Mt. Pennell, Mt. Hillers, Mt. Holmes, and Mt. Ellsworth from north to south) to the east, and Navajo Mountain and the eastern edge of the Kaiparowits Plateau to the south and west.

Million Dollar Highway :

Imagine travelling through this wild and rough terrain as the earlier inhabitants, settlers and explorers did before us. Before the highway was built, traversing this region was slow and sometimes hazardous. From 1935 to 1940, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews toiled on the Lower Boulder Road, segments of which are now part of Scenic Byway 12, to provide year-round vehicular access between Escalante and Boulder. The road was nicknamed the "Million Dollar Highway" and was a result of back-breaking labor and tons of dynamite blasting through



Sheratt Library, Southern Utah University



Boynton Overlook gives visitors a bird's-eye view of the riparian area along the twisting Escalante River. Flowing water and native vegetation offer ideal habitat for small birds and animals, including river otters which were reintroduced here in 2005.

The overlook was named for John Boynton, a cattleman caught in a lawless confrontation involving a disagreement over livestock and a murder in 1878. Today, the overlook serves as a welcome stop to experience the sights and sounds of the Escalante River Canyons.



slickrock terrain. In the days before heavy machinery, construction debris was removed with

horse-drawn scrapers or by hand with pick and shovel. On June 21, 1940, dignitaries including Utah Governor Henry H. Blood and local officials joined community members for a barbecue and all-night dance to celebrate the completion of the first all-season automobile road between the two communities. Today, most of the pavement between Escalante and Boulder still rests on original base material, and the drainage structures put in place by the CCC crews continue to move water under or away from the travel surface.



Larry Glickman

What not to miss: Escalante Natural Arch
Escalante Natural Bridge
Playing along Escalante River

The Escalante River Trailhead is located adjacent to the byway on the upstream side of the Escalante River Bridge here in the heart of the Escalante Canyons region of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Hiking or backpacking either up or downstream from this trailhead is through a canopy of cottonwoods between the stunning walls of burnished sandstone towering above the river. The Escalante Natural Bridge and Escalante Natural Arch are just two of the geologic wonders accessible via this trailhead. During warm-weather months, the Escalante River is normally fordable, but visitors should check current conditions before exploring the many popular riverside and side canyon routes.

Flash Flood : Flash floods can arise suddenly without warning. Rains miles away can produce a flash flood far downstream in a dry wash resulting in a torrent of thick, foaming, debris-filled water. If you are traversing across or along a wash, dry river bed, or streamside trail, seek higher ground immediately and wait for flood waters to subside; do NOT drive or walk through flood waters. Flash floods can occur at any time of year, but be especially attentive from July to October, when thunderstorms can develop rapidly and without advance warning. Check with any of the area visitor centers for current weather conditions during flash flood season.



What not to miss: Hike to Lower Calf Creek Falls
Spring and fall wildflowers
Fall colors

Calf Creek Recreation Area is a premier stop along Scenic Byway 12 in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. This desert oasis includes a 13-site campground, a day-use picnic area, and trailhead. The campground provides small sites nestled along Calf Creek on a first-come, first-served basis. Lower Calf Creek Falls Trail is an almost 6-mile moderately strenuous round-trip hike to a stunning 126-foot waterfall.

The Hogback



Between Calf Creek Recreation Area and Boulder Town is an internationally famous stretch of byway known as "The Hogback." As the asphalt clings to this thin razorback ridge of slickrock, the terrain spills steeply off to each side toward winding creeks and canyons below, where cottonwoods provide ribbons of green, gold, or gray depending on the season. Driving here is slow and cautious, but the vistas are incredible.



What you're in for: Paved (30 mi.) and gravel road
 Passenger cars in good weather
 May be impassable when wet
 66 miles (one way) to Utah 276

The Burr Trail Scenic Backway winds through deep slick-rock canyons and rolling desert forests while providing access to the eastern portion of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the southern half of Capitol Reef National Park, and a northern section of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The backway passes by Deer Creek Campground and Trailhead, through Long Canyon, into the heart of the Circle Cliffs, and down the Burr Trail Switchbacks that drop nearly 800 feet in about a mile while zigging and zagging down the Waterpocket Fold. Various vista points along this backway offer thrilling views of sprawling scenery—of buttes, mesas, plateaus and mountain peaks. The Burr Trail connects with Highway 276, just north of Bullfrog Marina on Lake Powell.

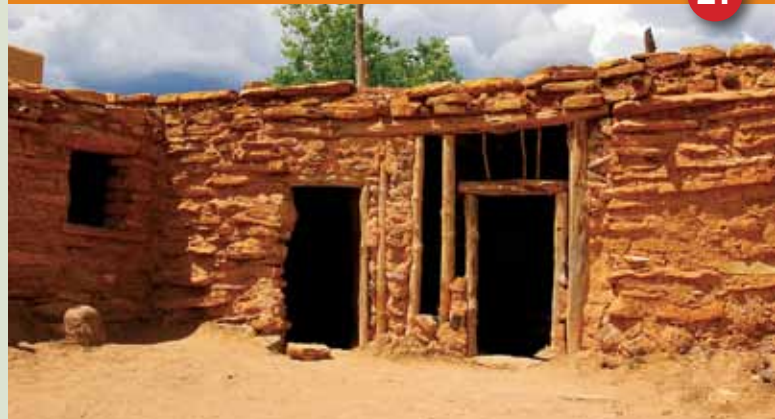


What not to miss: Small farms and local cuisine
 Old schoolhouse / Town hall

Boulder Town was long known as the “last frontier in Utah,” and for good reason—the high-elevation settlement was so isolated that, until 1935, mail was delivered by horseback rider and fresh milk was delivered by mules to the nearby town of Escalante. That milk often turned into butter on the rough routes over slickrock. First settled in 1894, the town was named for the volcanic boulders scattered across the slopes of nearby Boulder Mountain.

Anasazi State Park Museum

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What not to miss: Museum and pueblo

Anasazi State Park Museum is located on the site of an Ancestral Puebloan habitation that archaeologists believe was occupied between A.D. 1050 and 1175. This partially excavated and reconstructed village consists of almost 100 rooms. The visitor center has a display of artifacts excavated on-site, a welcoming gift shop, and a theater that often exhibits local art and photography.



What not to miss: Homestead, Larb & Steep Creek Overlooks
Hike to a mountain lake
Golden aspen trees in autumn

As it winds along the east flanks of Boulder Mountain, Scenic Byway 12 climbs to an altitude of more than 9,000 feet and affords breathtaking views of the rugged, rainbow-hued landscape stretching out below. The mountain was first plotted on an 1872 map by Almon Thompson, the cartographer with the John Wesley Powell Survey. However, the area was already well known to various Native American people, who left behind



Bull elk

evidence that they lived and thrived in the pristine hills and hollows.

Immediately surrounding the highway is a landscape of glistening aspen, pine, spruce,

and fir. Wildlife, including deer, elk, mountain lion, and numerous small mammal and bird species, thrive here. Alpine mountain meadows are dotted with countless small lakes, reservoirs, and streams that attract trout fishing. Many forest roads and trails provide access to these thousands of acres of forest.



Homestead Overlook provides dramatic panoramic views from a 9,400-foot-high vantage point. From this lookout visitors can see the five peaks of the Henry Mountains to the east, the magenta wedge of the Waterpocket Fold below, and the striated face of the Kaiparowits Plateau to the west. Far off in the distance, the slopes of Navajo Mountain stand as a reminder of Native American history. Above and below the overlook are thick groves of quaking aspen.

Wildcat Guard Station



What you'll find here: Open seasonally
Maps and books

Wildcat Guard Station is a quaint log building constructed in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Years ago it housed seasonal U.S. Forest Service employees. Today it is staffed during the summer by friendly volunteers and serves as a seasonal visitor center where information, maps, and books are available. Stop here to enjoy a picnic under the shade of tall pine and spruce trees.



byways.org

What not to miss: Old schoolhouse

Torrey is the Eastern Gateway to Scenic Byway 12 and lies about 9 miles west of Capitol Reef National Park. It was settled in the 1880s and reportedly named after Colonel Jay Torrey, one of Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders. The town’s original log schoolhouse is located along the cottonwood tree-lined Main Street (Highway 24) and offers a look into the past depicting pioneer education. The Big Apple, an open-air dance hall, is the site of regular community events and is also located along Main Street in the center of town.

Torrey Visitor Center



At the junction of Scenic Byway 12 and Highway 24 in Torrey, you will find the Wayne County Travel Council and U.S. Forest Service Visitor Information Center where maps, brochures, and area information are available. Relax in the center’s patio garden where Scenic Byway 12 information and orientation panels are located.



**What not to miss: Fremont Indian petroglyphs
Fruita historic area
Gifford Homestead**

The signature feature of Capitol Reef National Park is the Waterpocket Fold, a 100-mile-long monocline, or fold, in the Earth’s crust that towers as much as 2,000 feet above its eastern base. There is much to do and see here in this quarter million acre park. Along the Fremont River, there are ancient pictographs and petroglyphs painted or carved into the sandstone by some of the area’s



Historic Gifford Homestead at Capitol Reef.

early native inhabitants hundreds of years ago. More recently, 19th-century settlers colonized a village they called Fruita, named for the fruit orchards

they established under the crimson and cream-colored Wingate and Navajo sandstone cliffs. Visitors today still enjoy the “fruits” of those efforts during summer and fall when they pick and sample the harvest of peaches, apricots, plums, pears, and apples. The old Fruita Schoolhouse and Historic Gifford Homestead, pioneer dwellings that provide a glimpse of 19th-century Utah farm life, are located along Highway 24 near the park campground.



What you'll find here: Interpretive exhibits and film
Maps, books and souvenirs

The Capitol Reef Visitor Center, constructed of native stone, has been welcoming awestruck visitors since 1966. Information on travel, weather, trails, and backcountry conditions are available here. A short orientation video is shown in the small theatre.

Art : Beautiful landscapes surrounding Scenic Byway 12 have always attracted and influenced painters, writers, craftsmen, photographers, and varied artists.

Some better-known artists include celebrated painter Maynard Dixon who seasonally lived and painted in a studio in the area; Everett Ruess, a native of California who created stark block prints of buttes, mesas and other iconic Southwestern scenery before his still unsolved disappearance in 1934; and Zane Grey who traveled through the region composing his western novels. Contemporary artists continue to create, inspired by landscapes and scenery that often defy description.



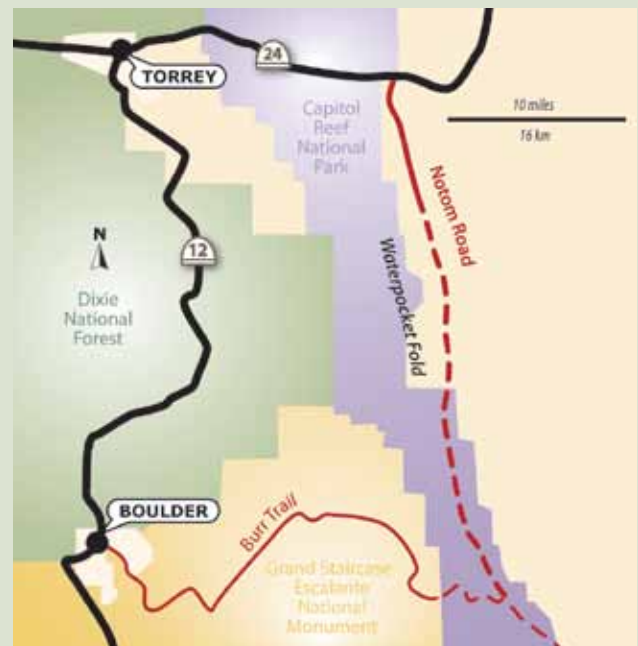
Maynard Dixon painting



What you're in for: Paved (11 mi.) and gravel road
Passenger cars in good weather
May be impassable when wet
34 miles (one way) to Burr Trail

The Notom Road Scenic Backway leads from Highway 24, along the east side of Capitol Reef National Park to the junction of Burr Trail Road in the southern section of the Park. Plan for up to two hours of drive time one-way.

Relish the views along this backway as it skirts along the eastern edge of the Waterpocket Fold, a geologic wonder that runs the length of this road. Several narrow canyons cut through this tilted strata and the effort spent exploring them is well rewarded by the spectacular geology.



Scenic Byway 12 Services and Activities

SERVICES

	Panguitch Hatch	Red Canyon	Bryce Canyon City	Bryce Canyon National Park	Tropic	Cannonville	Kodachrome Basin State Park	Henrieville	Escalante	Escalante Petrified Forest State Park	Calif Creek Recreation Area	Boulder	Anasazi State Park Museum	Boulder Mountain	Homestead Overlook	Wildcat Guard Station	Torrey	Capitol Reef National Park
Auto Repair	●		●		●			●									●	
Bank/ATM	●		●		●			●									●	
Campground	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Clinic/Hospital	●							●										
Dump Station	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●							●	●
Fuel	●	●	●		●	●		●			●						●	
Grocery Store	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●						●	
Lodging	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●						●	
Picnic Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Post Office	●	●		●		●		●	●		●						●	
Public Phone			●	●	●	●	●	●			●						●	●
Restaurant	●	●	●	●	●			●			●						●	
Restroom	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Showers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●							●	
Visitor Center/Ranger Station	●		●		●	●		●		●		●			●	●	●	
Water	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	

Some Activities and Services are available seasonally. Please inquire locally.

ACTIVITIES

	Red Canyon	Divide National Forest	Bryce Canyon City	Bryce Canyon National Park	Tropic	Cannonville	Grand Staircase-Escalante N.M.	Henrieville	Kodachrome Basin S.P.	Upper Valley Granaries	Escalante	Escalante Petrified Forest State Park	Gen Canyon National Recreation Area	Head of the Rocks	Escalante River Canyons	Calif Creek Recreation Area	Boulder	Anasazi State Park Museum	Boulder Mountain	Homestead Overlook	Torrey	Capitol Reef National Park	
Archaeological Sites						●				●		●	●	●			●					●	
Bicycling	●	●	●	●		●						●					●		●		●	●	
Boating		●									●	●							●				
Cattle Drives		●		●	●	●	●	●		●						●			●				
Cross-country Skiing	●	●	●	●															●				
Equestrian Trails	●	●	●	●		●		●				●		●					●		●	●	
Fishing		●									●				●				●		●	●	
Hiking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Interpretive Information	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Interpretive Trail	●		●			●		●			●			●			●		●		●	●	
Off Highway Vehicle Use	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		●						●		●	●		
Pets on Leash Only	●		●					●			●	●		●	●		●					●	
Snowmobiling		●																	●				
Swimming		●		●							●	●									●		
Wildlife Viewing		●		●		●		●			●	●		●	●				●				●

Points of Interest

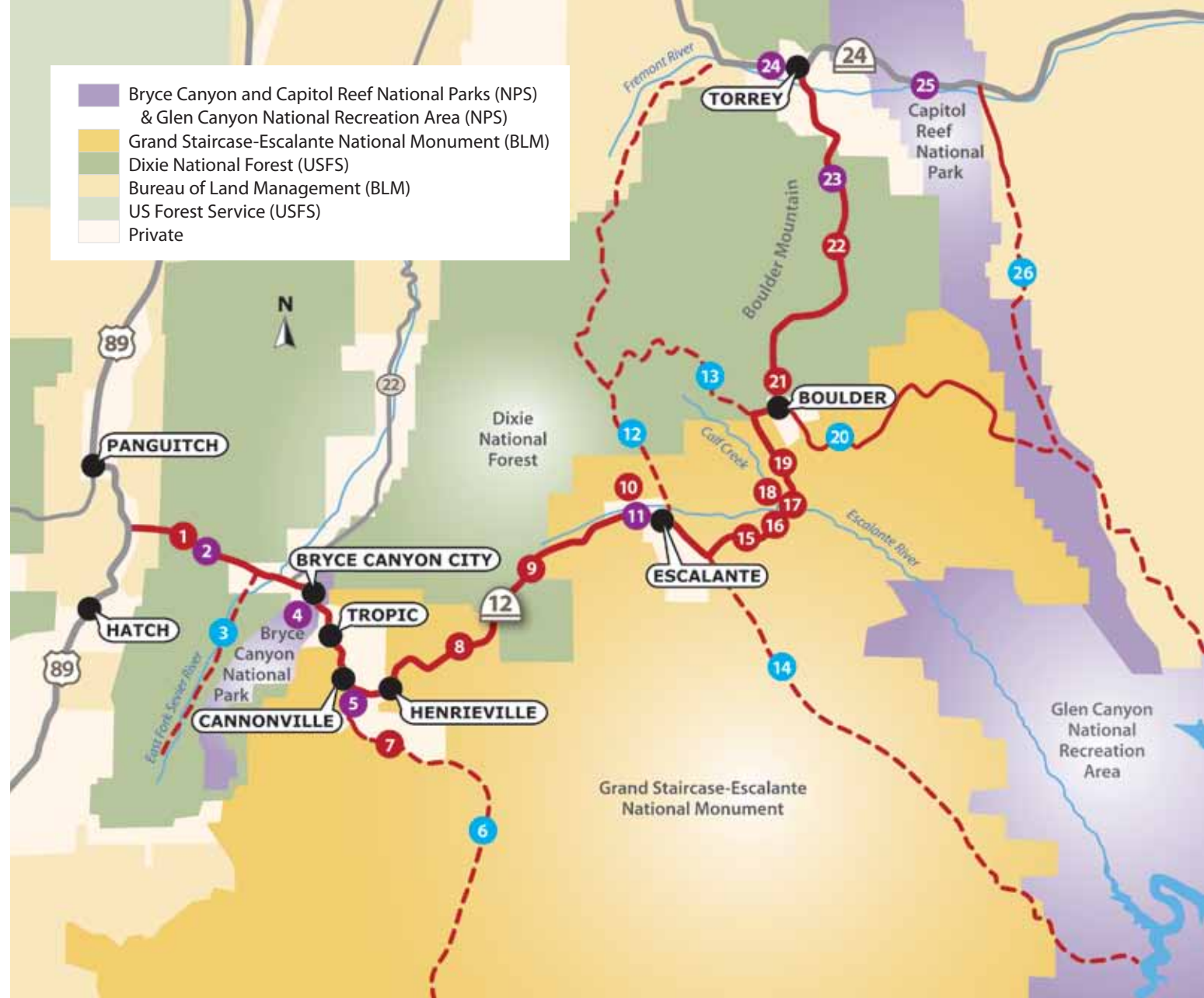
- 1 Red Canyon
- 7 Kodachrome Basin State Park
- 8 The Blues / Powell Point Overlook
- 9 Upper Valley Granaries
- 10 Escalante Petrified Forest State Park
- 15 Head of the Rocks Overlook
- 16 Boynton Overlook
- 17 Escalante River Trailhead
- 18 Calf Creek Recreation Area
- 19 The Hogback
- 21 Anasazi State Park Museum
- 22 Homestead Overlook

Visitor Information

- 2 Red Canyon Visitor Center
- 4 Bryce Canyon Visitor Center
- 5 Grand Staircase-Escalante N. M. Visitor Center
- 11 Escalante Visitor Center
- 23 Wildcat Guard Station
- 24 Torrey Visitor Center
- 25 Capitol Reef Visitor Center

Scenic Backways

- 3 East Fork Sevier River
- 6 Cottonwood Canyon Road
- 12 Posey Lake / Pine Creek
- 13 Hell's Backbone Road
- 14 Hole-in-the-Rock Road
- 20 Burr Trail Road
- 26 Notom Road



Mile Post Map of Scenic Byway 12

Time Zone – Mountain
Area Code – 435

NPS – National Park Service
USFS – US Forest Service
BLM – Bureau of Land Management
GSENM – Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Travel Councils

Garfield County Office of Tourism 1-800-444-6689
Area information and free interactive tour app at:
• www.brycecanyoncountry.com
Wayne County Travel Council 1-800-858-7951
• www.capitolreef.org

Visitor Centers

Red Canyon • Highway 12 (USFS - seasonal)
Bryce Canyon National Park • Highway 63 (NPS)
Grand Staircase-Escalante N. M. • Cannonville (GSENM)
Escalante Interagency • Main St. (GSENM, USFS, NPS)
Torrey • Highways 24 & 12
Capitol Reef National Park • Highway 24 (NPS)

National Park Service

• www.nps.gov
Bryce Canyon National Park 435-834-5322
Capitol Reef National Park 435-425-3791
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area 435-826-5499

Dixie National Forest

• www.fs.fed.us
Supervisor's Office 435-865-3200
Regional Office 435-865-3700
Powell Ranger District 435-676-9300
Escalante Ranger District 435-826-5400
Fremont River Ranger District 435-836-2811

Utah State Parks

• www.stateparks.utah.gov
Kodachrome Basin 435-679-8562
Escalante Petrified Forest 435-826-4466
Anasazi Museum 435-335-7308

Scenic Byway 12

• www.ScenicByway12.com

A ROUTE GUIDE TO

Scenic Byway



www.ScenicByway12.com

Produced by the Scenic Byway 12 Foundation

*Guide to Attractions and Activities
Along Utah's All-American Road*

