


# TOM'S UTAH CANYONEERING GUIDE

## Archive

### Little Wild Horse & Bell Canyons San Rafael Swell, Eastern Reef

<b>Rating:</b>	2A II-III 
<b>Best Season:</b>	Spring, summer or fall. The canyons are well shaded, but the hike in and out is in full sun.
<b>Time:</b>	2 to 4 hours.
<b>Access:</b>	Route starts and ends at the Little Wild Horse Canyon parking lot.
<b>Permit:</b>	Not required.
<b>Equipment:</b>	No technical equipment required.
<b>Map:</b>	USGS 7.5' Little Wild Horse Mesa. Navigation is pretty easy.
<b>Cold Protection:</b>	None required; after recent rain expecting wading and muddy conditions.
<b>Drinking Water:</b>	Bring plenty.
<b>Flash Flood Risk:</b>	High—do not descend with thunderstorms in the area, this canyon has extensive headwaters area that is not visible from the trailhead.
<b>Skills Required:</b>	After bad weather, the canyons can be choked with mud and require extensive, mucky wading.

**CLASSIC.** No other way to say it. Bell and Little Wild Horse are THE CLASSIC San Rafael Swell canyon loop hike. Little Wild Horse is a wondrous, sinuous, intriguing and just plain fun journey through the rock. Bell's not so bad either, it's just a lot shorter. Quite an amazing place, and it works great for everyone. This makes a great half-day circle trip in fall or spring. If it is scorching out, consider just going up Little Wild Horse and returning the same way.

**Approach:** From Temple Junction, take the Goblin Valley Road southwest along the face of the reef to the junction just short of the entrance to Goblin Valley State Park. Take the good dirt road to the right for 5.0 miles to the prominent parking lot at Bell and Little Wild Horse Canyons. Do not park in the wash.

**Just Do It:** From the parking lot, traipse up the prominent wash about 1/2 mile to the first narrows section. This can be attacked directly for maximum drama, or avoided by climbing a trail to the left ( Left Up Canyon LUC ). Though not hard, the trail is somewhat exposed. (This section is the most difficult spot until near the top of Little Wild Horse Canyon). Thirty feet above the narrows, the canyon opens into a brief glade. Straight ahead is Bell Canyon; turn right for Little Wild Horse Canyon. Most people will choose Little Wild Horse first. The turn is easily missed.

Follow LWH through various sinuous turns deep into the reef. It is narrow and twisty. Loads of fun. It opens out in a few spots. Near the head of the canyon, the first obstacle requires a wee bit of athletic ability. Surmount the lip and pouroff using stacked rocks. This can also be clambered around on the side. The canyon then opens out. Many will want to return through LWH.

At the end of the canyon, follow a prominent path and jeep trail to the left between a crag on the right and the bulk of the reef on the left. It ascends to a pass, then down the other side and into Bell Canyon.

Information courtesy [CanyoneeringUSA.com](http://CanyoneeringUSA.com) ©2011 Imlay Canyon Gear All Rights Reserved



Narrows in Little Wild Horse Canyon

**Descend Bell Canyon.** There are a few minor obstacles, but nothing too strenuous. Bell is about half as long as Little Wild Horse. You pop out back at the intersection. Return to the car.

Once or twice a year, after a good rain, both these canyons will be messy and require wading. Check the logbook at the parking lot to see the latest comments. Flash Floods in this area are especially awesome, do not descend with thunderstorms forecasted or in the area.

