



Red Rock Canyon NCA Environmental Education Program

Moenkopi Loop

Location: Just west of the Visitor Center near the picnic area

Length: 2 miles round trip

Difficulty: Easy

Estimated Minimum Hike Time: 1½ hours

Facilities: Full restrooms at Visitors Center. Drinking fountain near picnic area before trailhead.

General Description:

This trail offers Triassic fossils, various desert flora, and panoramic views of the Calico Hills, the Spring Mountains, and La Madre Mountains. It is an open country trail that traverses a prominent limestone ridge.

Background:

Moenkopi is a Hopi word meaning place of running water. While the odds are unlikely that there will be water on the Moenkopi Loop, the trail itself and all of Red Rock Canyon NCA was once underwater.

600 million years ago, Red Rock Canyon NCA was the bottom of a deep ocean. A rich variety of marine life flourished in these waters and left behind deposits of shells and skeletons more than 9,000 feet thick. These were eventually compressed into limestone and similar carbonate rocks. Moenkopi is that last outcropping of this limestone. The sidewalk-like remnants of the ancient sea floor make up the middle portion of the Moenkopi Loop.

In 2005, there were heavy rains in the spring. This led to the Moenkopi Loop being washed out, as well as a drastically increased population of non-native grasses. In July, lightning struck. The combination of strong winds, low humidity, and the excess growth of these grasses fueled a fire that burned 859 acres. While restoration is in progress, the contrast of the land previously burned and the unburned land is quite visible while on the trail.

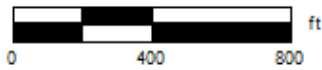
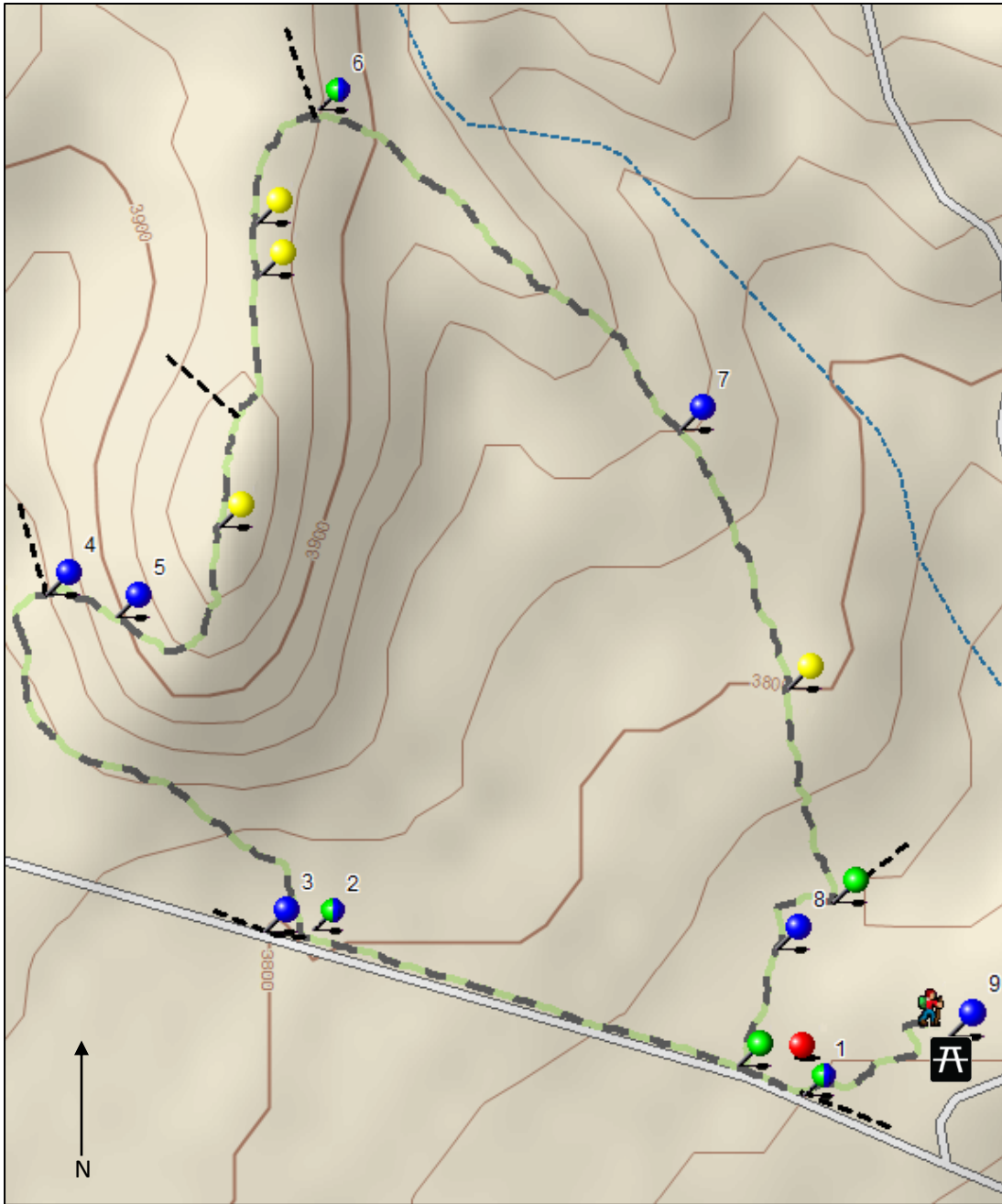
About the Hike:

While the trail can be hiked in either direction, it is recommended to hike the trail clockwise. This makes the steepest, rockiest section of the trail uphill, where students are less likely to fall, as well as increases the visual impact of the fire damage to the landscape.

The following trail map includes markers for suggested activity stop locations. It is not necessary to use any or all of these locations, and depending on the activities you choose you may only use a few. Please see each activity for which stops are suggested for that particular activity's location.

While location 3 is just past the Moenkopi trail turnoff on the Grand Circle trail, it is a short and easy detour and an excellent open area ideal for activities.

Moenkopi Loop Trail Map



Legend			
	Trail		Trail Signs
	Other trails		Wayside signs
	Trailhead		Weather Station
	Suggested Activity Stop Locations		Picnic Area