



Cow Dung Road & Blue Valley Spire

Henry Mountain Field Station
380 W 100 S
Hanksville, UT 84734

This driving tour will take you through an otherworldly desert with a peak at the Mars Desert Research Station, one of two places commonly referred to as the “Bentonite Hills”, and an exploration around an active paleontology dig. In addition, you can take a short hike to the enigmatic Blue Valley Spire nearby. There are no restrooms or facilities along this route, please plan ahead and be prepared.

When you embark on a self-directed experience you are accepting that your safety is your responsibility.

- Many routes are not marked and require navigation skills, GPS and maps are recommended as cell coverage is generally scarce in the region.
- This route crosses through different land designations, pay attention to signage and be aware of state regulations.
- Most roads in this area are clay-based and can become impassable quickly after rain and snow, always check the weather forecast before departure.
- Stay on designated routes and tread lightly. Practice responsible Leave-No-Trace principles. Pack it in, pack it out!

Getting There

From Hanksville

The beginning of Cow Dung road is an unmarked turnoff on your right shortly after passing mile marker 113.

Mars Desert Research Station

MDRS is located 3.2 miles down Cow Dung road and has a designated viewing area to park at, note that the station is not open to the public; please observe only from the viewing area. Drone flights are not allowed at MDRS.

Bentonite Hills

While there is no singular spot designated as the bentonite hills, many of the most colorful examples of this shale are located around 4 miles in. Keep foot traffic to established paths please.

Burpee Museum Dinosaur Quarry

The trailhead is 7.3 miles down the road with an information kiosk detailing some of the fossils discovered on site. This is an active dig site with ongoing surveys, removal of fossil materials is not permitted.

Blue Valley Spire

BLM Rd #1574 is located between mile markers 109 and 110 on the north side of Hwy 24. In approximately half a mile in a road branches left for an additional 0.7 miles to a wooden fence serving as the trailhead. Round trip the hike is 1.6 mi and sun exposed, bring water is even on this short hike.

For emergencies call 911 or Wayne County Sheriff Office at (435)-836-1308



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