



Halls Creek Narrows



Halls Creek Narrows

Between the high cliffs of Hall Mesa on the east and the steep slickrock slopes of the Waterpocket Fold on the west, the hike through the Halls Creek drainage (known as Grand Gulch) explores the park’s southern reaches. Along the way, hikers can explore numerous side canyons that join the Halls Creek drainage. At the remote southern tip of the park is the 3.8-mile (6.0 km) Halls Creek Narrows, deeply incised into the white Navajo sandstone. A perennial stream and shade from the arching canyon walls create an oasis in the midst of surrounding desert.

The route is largely unmarked; carrying a topographic map is recommended. The route is extremely hot in summer. Water can usually be found at the Fountain Tanks and in the narrows. Use caution in narrow canyons, particularly during the flash flood season (typically mid-June to mid-October). Hiking through the narrows requires wading through water that occasionally may be deep enough to require swimming.

The round-trip hike is best done as a three- to four-day trip. Free backcountry permits are required for all overnight trips and can be obtained at the visitor center.

This route is not an official, maintained trail. Route conditions, including obstacles in canyons, change frequently due to weather, flash floods, rockfall, and other hazards. Routefinding, navigation, and map-reading skills are critical. Do not rely solely on unofficial route markers (rock cairns, etc.); they are not maintained by the National Park Service (NPS), may not indicate the route in this description, or may be absent.

Trailhead Location

From the visitor center, travel 9.0 miles (14.4 km) east on Highway 24 to the Notom-Bullfrog Road, then south 43.2 miles (69.4 km) via the partially-paved Notom-Bullfrog Road and unpaved Burr Trail Road. Then turn right (south) at an intersection with a paved road (shown on some maps as “Eggnog Junction”), and drive 0.9 mile (1.5 km) to the turnoff for Halls Creek Overlook. Turn right (west) and drive 2.8 miles (4.5 km) to the rough spur

road leading to the trailhead at Halls Creek Overlook. Total distance from the Capitol Reef Visitor Center is 56.1 miles (90.3 km).

The unpaved portions of the Notom-Bullfrog and Burr Trail roads are hard-packed dirt and usually passable to passenger cars, but can be impassable due to mud and/or flash flood damage. The final 3 miles (4.8 km) leading to Halls Creek Overlook are rough and require high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Route Distances

Halls Creek Overlook (trailhead) to canyon bottom.....	1.2 miles (1.9 km)
Bottom of Halls Creek Overlook Trail to beginning of narrows loop.....	7.3 miles (11.8 km)
Halls Creek Narrows (west portion of narrows loop).....	3.8 miles (6.0 km)
Hall Divide route (east portion of narrows loop).....	1.7 miles (2.7 km)
Total round-trip.....	22.4 miles (36.1 km)

Hike Description

The hike begins at Halls Creek Overlook. From this spectacular viewpoint, a steep trail marked with rock cairns descends 800 feet (244 m) over 1.2 miles (1.9 km) to the Halls Creek drainage. Pay attention to landmarks as no signs mark the point where this route climbs out of the canyon; it would be easy to walk past the route on your return trip. The remainder of the route is largely unmarked but it is simply a matter of walking down canyon (south) to the narrows. An old wagon trail followed this same route and is still visible in many places. Cutting across many of the wide meanders in the wash, it provides a convenient path for much of the route to the narrows.

At the narrows, Halls Creek abandons its logical path down the wide canyon separating the Waterpocket Fold and Halls Mesa and cuts into the Navajo sandstone on the west side of the canyon. The change is sudden and dramatic. A large grove of cottonwood trees is located near the entrance to the narrows. For the next 3.8

miles (6.0 km), the creek meanders through a deep, narrow canyon that always requires some walking in water. The depth of the pools can vary greatly from year to year and from season to season. Flash floods periodically scour out the sediment, leaving pools that may require deep wading or short swims.

If you choose not to enter the narrows and want to continue south in the main drainage, or if you want to bypass the narrows on your return trip, follow the route over Hall Divide which blocks the main canyon just beyond (south of) the entrance to the narrows. The easiest way to negotiate the 1.7-mile (2.7 km) Hall Divide is to look for the old wagon route and follow it over this obstacle. The hike across Hall Divide can be hot and shadeless; make sure you have adequate water. An alternative is to hike over Hall Divide first, during the cooler part of the day, and return via the narrows. To return to the trailhead, simply retrace the route back up the canyon to Halls Creek Overlook.

Additional Information

Best season:
Spring and fall.

For more information:
Contact the Capitol Reef Visitor Center at 435-425-3791.

Maps:
USGS 7.5-minute series: Deer Point, Stevens Canyon North, and Hall Mesa.

Rules and Regulations

- Free permits are required for backcountry camping, and are available at:
 - ◆ Capitol Reef Visitor Center
 - ◆ Bullfrog Visitor Center (Glen Canyon NRA)
 - ◆ Anasazi State Park (Boulder, UT)
 - ◆ Escalante Interagency Visitor Center
- Dispersed/at-large camping with vehicles is prohibited within the park, including at or near trailheads. Dispersed/at-large camping is allowed on federal lands (USFS, BLM) adjacent to the park.
- Pets are not permitted on trails or in off-trail or backcountry areas. Pets are permitted on roads and in designated campgrounds.
- Fires are prohibited.
- Collecting or damaging any park resource (plants, animals, wood, rocks, bones, antlers, artifacts, etc.) is prohibited.
- *Violation of these regulations may result in a citation.*

