



"SEA KAYAKS" ON THE GREEN RIVER THROUGH LABYRINTH CANYON

This section of the Green River has no rapids. Depending on the time of the year, length of the trip, land water flows the trip is approximately 48 to 68 miles in length. Trip put-in site is either Green River State Park or Ruby ranch with a take out at Mineral Bottom. This journey begins near the town of Green River, Utah, where the Green River flows gracefully into Labyrinth Canyon, the longest stretch of un-dammed flat water in the Southwest. The river progresses slowly through white, yellow, brown and red canyon walls with hairpin switchbacks and towering buttes and mesas rising 1,500 feet above the river's Labyrinth Canyon's walls. 150 years ago, trappers roamed this canyon and now you have the opportunity to enjoy the peace and solitude. No experience is necessary, as touring kayaks are easy to paddle and comfortable to travel in and very stable. Your guides will be instructors throughout the trip offering paddle techniques, zero impact camping and safety instruction. Kayaks may be single or two people as well as the opportunity to ride in the gear boat if you don't want to kayak.

On July 15, 1869, while near Bow Knot Bend, John Wesley Powell named Labyrinth Canyon. Located just south of Green River, Utah and bordering Canyonlands National Park this "tortuous" canyon is famous for its inspiring walls and dramatic bends in the river. The colorful history of Labyrinth Canyon includes Native Americans, trappers, miners, river runners, steam boaters, ranchers and moon shiners.

The first unique geologic feature is the Crystal Geyser. This cold water geyser and its distinctive yellow/orange sheen was caused in the 1930's when Geologist Glen M Ruby was drilling for oil. After passing the Crystal Geyser you will pass through Mancos Shale, the Morrison Formation, (Jurassic time period), and the Somerville Formation. The Somerville Formation forms Dellenbaugh Butte (or the Inkwel or Anvil) named for the youngest member of Powell's second expedition in 1871. As you wind deeper into Labyrinth the 1,000 foot walls are made-up of Entrada, Navajo, Kayenta and Wingate Sandstones. The Chinle formation just under the Wingate sandstone is where uranium is found.

Prior to the Fremont Indians, the Native American history dates back to the pre-Columbian time period. Evidence from this era can be viewed many miles up Horseshoe Canyon. The Fremont Indians, who at one time occupied a large portion of Utah, spent time in the Canyons of Labyrinth. Because of their sudden disappearance 750-800 years ago, and with no written history, very little is known about these people. A part of their story is carved into the canyon walls of Labyrinth for us to admire and to speculate.

Before this territory was acquired by the United States, the Spanish fathers came through in the 1770's to explore and set up missions. Trappers such as Dennis Julien followed in the early 1800's. Dennis Julien left two inscriptions in this canyon that imply he was moving upstream. John Wesley Powell's expeditions of 1869 and 1872 enjoyed the calm pace of the river through Labyrinth Canyon before traveling through Stillwater Canyon and into the rapids of Cataract Canyon.

In the early 1900's, ranchers began moving in along the river, trying to make themselves a life. One ranch called "Peacharosa" had about 40,000 peach trees in 1910. The Ruby Ranch went through eight different owners, each trying to make living in harsh conditions. These and other ranches were typical of the Wild West with gunfights, moon shining and tales of outlaws. Outlaws frequented the rough canyon trails on their way to their hideout at Robbers Roost. Steam boaters also made their marks all along the canyon walls. In 1891 the Major Powell steamboat made it all the way to the Confluence to potentially set up a "hotel". Steamboats such as the Marguerite, the city of Moab, the Undine and the Utah were just a few who also ran this canyon. In the 1950's the Uranium boom hit Moab and Labyrinth Canyon.

Throughout Labyrinth Canyon old equipment and mines can still be seen. The road into Mineral Bottom (part of the old Horse Thief trail) was built to access some mines. River runners such as the Kolb's, Holmstrom & Burg, White & Aleson, and Norm Nevills frequented the canyon adding to its history. Today, Labyrinth Canyon is not nearly as busy giving the current river runners a sense of solitude and time to enjoy the history of Labyrinth.