

Trails

The hiking routes in the Toroweap area require navigational ability as they are sparsely marked with cairns. Self-rescue is the only dependable option available in the event of an injury or illness. Shade and water are scarce; heat exhaustion is common. All trails are closed to pets, bicycles, and vehicles.

The **Tuckup Trail** begins on the Tuckup Road, 5.3 miles / 8.5 km south of the park boundary. Use the parking area 0.1 mile / 0.2 km after the left turn onto the Tuckup Road. The first 2 miles / 3.2 km, an old jeep road, is the area's best day hike. After this section, the trail is difficult to follow, requiring route-finding skills. Hikers use this trail for either a multi-day hike (permit required) or as an out and back hike. Bring adequate water for this sun-exposed trail.

The **Saddle Horse Canyon Trail** is a 1.6 mile / 2.6 km, round trip hike (1 hour). The trail starts 0.3 mile / 0.5 km south of the Tuweep Campground (6.3 miles / 10.2 km south of the park boundary). This easy walk requires some route finding (follow the cairns) and brings you to the rim of Saddle Horse Canyon.

The **Vulcans Throne Route** provides a challenging 1,000 foot / 300 m ascent up the cinder-covered slopes of a volcanic cone, rewarding hikers with a dramatic view of the expansive esplanade and distant Shivwits Plateau. Park at the south end of the Vulcans Throne spur road and look to the east for the faint trail. This short hike, less than a mile, gains significant elevation. A register marks the top (go past the first "false" summit).

The **Esplanade Loop Trail** starts from Tuweep Campground Site 10. This easy walk of 2.9 miles / 4.7 km (1–2 hours) requires some navigational skill; watch for the cairns. Follow the two-track road to the old Tuckup Road. Upon reaching the Tuckup Road, turn left (west) and walk until you reach the Tuckup Trailhead. At the trailhead follow the main road south to the Tuweep Campground completing your loop.



Pinyon

For more Grand Canyon National Park information:
www.nps.gov/grca/ or 1-928-638-7888

Geology

The geologic history of the Tuweep area is similar to the rest of Grand Canyon, but includes a more recent chapter of volcanism. The Toroweap Fault underlies the valley, crosses the Colorado River, and continues south up Prospect Canyon. Volcanic activity began along this fault around seven million years ago. Over time lava issued from more than sixty vents. Beginning about 750,000 years ago, some flowed into Toroweap Valley, forming the flat-bottomed valley we see today. Vulcans Throne, Mount Trumbull, and the Uinkaret Mountains also formed through volcanic activity.

More than a dozen times lava spilled over the canyon rim, damming the Colorado River. Remnants of these flows and dams are easily visible just west of the overlook. Sediments clinging to the canyon walls high above the river indicate the formation of large lakes. The river eroded the lava dams and continued its downward cutting. It is now 50 feet / 15 m deeper than the base of the dams. Despite its name, Lava Falls rapid formed from debris washed down Prospect Canyon, not from remains of the lava flows.

At less than one mile across the canyon to the Hualapai Indian Reservation on the South Rim, this is one of the narrowest and deepest segments of the inner canyon. The colorful redrock of the Hermit shale and Supai sandstones to the east contrasts with the black, basaltic lava flows to the west, making Toroweap Overlook a memorable, and often-photographed, viewpoint in Grand Canyon.

National Park Service Regulations

Visitors are responsible for knowing and following all park regulations including:

- Collection or disturbance of natural and archeological resources is prohibited.
- Collection of any firewood is prohibited.
- Vehicles must stay on open roads and in parking areas—no cross-country travel. Signs, posts, or vegetation block CLOSED roads.
- ATVs, dirt bikes, UTVs MUST be highway/street legal (MC license plate for Arizona; license plate for Utah).
- Camping permits are required except at Tuweep Campground.
- Food, scented items, and trash must be securely stored or locked in a vehicle when your campsite is unattended.
- Campfires are prohibited except at Tuweep Campground.
- Pets must be restrained and are prohibited off the roads and within the inner canyon.
- All hunting is prohibited.

Walk on durable surfaces—established trails, routes, or slickrock—as the soil is a living biological crust. A single footstep damages the microbiotic crust for decades.

History

The first humans in the Tuweep region were likely ice-age hunters who lived a nomadic hunting-gathering existence in what was a milder climate. The ancestral Puebloans farmed in this area, arriving about 2,000 years ago and migrating eastward around A.D. 1300. The most recent American Indian group to live here is the Paiute, who have a reservation to the north.

John Wesley Powell visited Tuweep in 1870 while unsuccessfully searching for missing members from his 1869 river expedition. He mapped and named many of the local features. While ranchers used this valley seasonally in the early 1900s, the first year-round homestead was the Lower Kent Ranch, built in 1927, located just north of the park. Other pioneers in the region include the Schmutz, Cunningham, Craig, and Bundy families. Henry Covington herded sheep and mined on the Esplanade off and on for more than twenty years. Many sites still exist that speak of his determination to live and prosper in this arid region.

In 1932 the Tuweep area was protected within Grand Canyon National Monument. Congress added the area to Grand Canyon National Park in 1975. Tuweep ranger John Riffey, one of the best known residents of the area, worked here for 38 years. His helpfulness, longevity, and airplane "Pogo" contributed to his legendary status. Today, the area is managed for preservation of the abundant natural and cultural resources and for the enjoyment of the few who venture to this remote corner of Grand Canyon.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona



Toroweap Tuweep



View east from Toroweap Overlook
NPS photo

The view from Toroweap Overlook, 3,000 vertical feet (880 m) above the Colorado River, is breathtaking; the sheer drop, dramatic! The volcanic features, cinder cones and lava flows, which make this viewpoint unique within Grand Canyon National Park, are equally impressive. Lava Falls, one of the river's most challenging rapids, is just downstream, easily seen and heard from the overlook.

Toroweap / Tuweep

Toroweap, a Paiute term meaning “dry or barren valley,” refers to many local features including the geologic formation and fault, the valley, and the overlook. *Tuweep* came into use to describe the local settlement and, later, the park ranger district. Tuweep refers to “the earth,” but this place name may be derived from a longer Paiute word meaning “long valley.”

Getting There

Road Conditions

All routes are secondary county roads, graded occasionally, and generally in fair condition. Dust wallows several feet deep may appear during dry periods. The last three miles across the slickrock are the roughest, requiring a high clearance vehicle (*above right*). Allow two to three hours travel time from the highway to the overlook. RVs, trailers, or low-clearance vehicles are not recommended. All routes may be impassable after heavy rains and are subject to flash flooding. Twenty-five percent of visitors experience one or more flat tires. Dangerous curves are often unmarked, and posted mileages may be inaccurate. Cell phone coverage is spotty or nonexistent in this area. Since there are few, if any, year-round residents, assistance is not guaranteed on any route.

For these reasons, no one should attempt the trip without ample preparation and knowledge of the hazards associated with remote desert travel. Travelers should carry:

- Extra WATER, FOOD, and GASOLINE;
- GOOD TIRES including AT LEAST one usable spare;
- and PARTS, TOOLS, and KNOWLEDGE to handle vehicle and tire repairs including tire plugs and a portable air compressor.

A tow costs \$1,000 – \$2,000.



Routes

The Bureau of Land Management *Arizona Strip Visitor Maps* are sold at the Arizona Strip Information Center in St. George, Utah, at nearby Pipe Spring National Monument, and at the Kaibab National Forest office in Fredonia, Arizona.

The area can be reached from Arizona Highway 389 near Fredonia or Colorado City, Arizona, or from St. George, Utah.

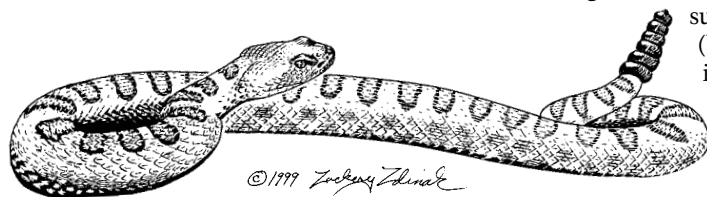
Sunshine Route (BLM Road 109), the primary route, leaves Highway 389 about 8 miles / 12 km west of Fredonia (6 miles / 10 km east of Pipe Spring National Monument). It is 61 miles / 98 km long and is the most reliable route, but is subject to washboarding and dust.

Clayhole Route (BLM Road 5) leaves Highway 389 at Colorado City. It is 56 miles / 90 km long, but is impassable when wet.

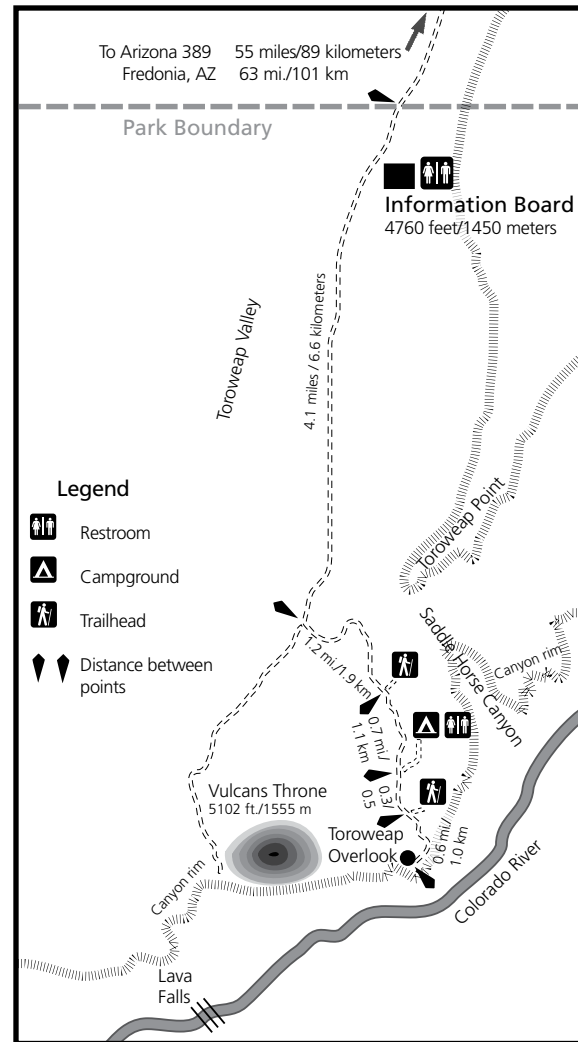
Main Street Route (BLM Roads 1069 and 5) from St. George, about 90 miles / 145 km each way, is the most scenic route. It is impassable in winter due to snow on the slopes of Mt. Trumbull.

Winter Travel – December through March

These roads, including the main Sunshine Route, become muddy and impassable when covered by melting snow. Travel may be possible when the road surface freezes at low temperatures (below 20°F / -7°C), but roads become impassable again as the temperature rises. During the winter roads, roads often are passible only between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., if at all.



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Your Visit

Tuweep is managed for its undeveloped recreational experiences: solitude, natural history exploration, photography, camping, and hiking.

Services

No gas, food, water, lodging, garbage collection, or other services are provided. A National Park Service ranger is stationed here year-round, but is not always available. NO telephone nor cell coverage is available at Toroweap.

Fees

The National Park Service charges no entrance fee for Tuweep, nor for the campground. A permit and fee are required for backcountry camping.

Campground

Camping is allowed only in the Tuweep Campground within the Toroweap/Tuweep vicinity. Nine primitive sites (sites 1-9) for up to six people and two vehicles are available on a first-come, first-served basis. (*below*) Camping is FREE. Sites may fill during spring months and during holidays and weekends. Picnic tables, fire grates, and composting toilets are provided. Bring your own water and firewood. Collecting firewood or kindling from the national park is strictly prohibited.

One group site (Site 10) for 7–11 people and up to four vehicles is available via reservation only up until noon the day it is needed. The group site may be reserved, free of charge, up to four months in advance by e-mailing grca_bic@nps.gov.

Ravens, mice, skunks, and ringtails are common. Always store your food, scented items, and trash securely or in your vehicle when leaving your campsite unattended.



Backcountry Camping

Permits are required for backcountry camping and can be obtained at Pipe Spring National Monument, the Arizona Strip Information Center in St. George, Utah, or by calling the Backcountry Information Center at (928) 638-7875, between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Online reservations are not available, but you may e-mail grca_bic@nps.gov for further information.

Airstrip

Arizona has closed the Tuweep airstrip.

Weather Forecast

Check <http://forecast.weather.gov/zipcity.php>
Type in: Tuweep, AZ for local weather