

The Hike

From the trailhead, a well-defined trail runs southwest through a gap in the fence. The trail passes the first large pile of red and white sandstone rock and heads towards the second. Just after walking across slickrock, look up and right to see the [Rabbit Ears](#) panels near the top of a rocky crag.

The trail runs through an area of soft blow sand, and it is always fun to look for fresh tracks and see which creatures passed this way. [Beetle](#), [kangaroo rat](#), and [lizard](#) tracks are most common.

The trail, an old road, passes an open area, then passes a low, rounded crag. Just past the crag, a spur trail runs right about 70 yards to [Calvin's Rock](#) Named for Calvin Meyers, an environmental activist and former Chairman of the Moapa Band of Paiutes, who had a special connection to this boulder. Walk over to [Calvin's Rock](#) to see the artwork, and be sure to examine the entire east half of the boulder. When departing, notice petroglyphs on adjacent rock walls.

Back on the old road, the trail continues south towards more rocky crags. Near the end of the old road, the road forks in what becomes apparent as the old turn-around loop and parking area.

Notice the odd number of limestone cobbles in this sandstone area and dark-colored dirt here. Keen observers will recognize this as an old Agave Roasting Pit. Looking carefully on the ground, visitors can find colorful stone flakes chipped when native people were making stone tools such as arrowhead and scrapers. Feel free to pick up and examine the stone flakes (and the occasional pot shard) but be sure to leave them for history and for the next person to experience the excitement of finding them. Standing on this site, a very large native American campsite, it is apparent that for years visitors drove onto the site and damaged it almost beyond recognition, and understanding this fact makes it clear as to why land managers blocked off the old road back at the trailhead -- we need to do what we can to preserve what remains of this archaeological site.

Continuing south and more closely approaching the sandstone crags, a [use-trail](#) departs the old road to the right and heads up towards a tunnel through the cliff.

When approaching, the tunnel can be seen from below. Hiking towards the tunnel, notice the smooth rock face on the left pock-marked with bullet holes. Notice to the small bighorn petroglyph on the rock face. It is hard to understand why someone needed to shoot the rock, but it is nice that they missed the bighorn.

The sandy trail runs up and ends at the edge of the sandstone crag, and from there the [route](#) scampers up the cliffs into the [Tunnel](#). While it is fun to scramble through the tunnel, be sure to notice the rock stories around the entrance, inside, and at the exit from the [Tunnel](#). At the entrance, the "corn plant" glyph is one of the few such corn glyphs in Gold Butte National Monument and might represent the introduction of this crop plant into the area.

After crawling through the [Tunnel](#), the route clambers down a few feet onto a broad ledge on the other side of the crag. The ledge runs south, then bends west. At the corner, there used to be a large stick-nest on a ledge above the trail. This was an inaccessible [Common Raven](#) nest located on the shaded side of the crag and beneath an overhang that protected the nest from wind, rain, and sun -- not a bad place to raise your kids! The Ravens, however, seem to have abandoned this site -- perhaps there are now too many hikers in this area.

Passing below the old nest site and heading out towards the west corner, keep an eye out for the [Falling Man](#) petroglyph, just above head-level on the wall. While there, consider what may have inspired an ancient person to create this rock story. Was it a memorial to a friend or family member who suffered a tragic accident, or perhaps just a warning about being careful on the ledges -- don't back up too far when taking photos of the petroglyph!

Continuing along the Falling Man ledge, the route turns the corner left to head south. Look for a pictograph in the alcove along this wall, then hop up and exit left into the open [Amphitheater](#) site. In addition to grand views west, the walls of the [Amphitheater](#) are adorned with scattered petroglyphs, and there is a curious dimple carved in the stone at the center of the amphitheater.

Walking east through the [Amphitheater](#) and out the other side, the route drops into a broad, sandy area with some [Utah Yuccas](#). A sand-loving species, this kind of yucca is unusual in Nevada.

The route turns right and heads down the wash. Shortly, the sand ends and the route continues down across slickrock where water has carved several water pockets, or [Tinajas](#). There are a few spots of petroglyphs at the tinajas, so keep an eye out while moving through this area.

The last tinaja often holds water long into the summer and provides breeding habitat for [dragonflies](#), [Red-spotted Toads](#), and other aquatic creatures. Please don't mess in the water because this is the only place in the area for these toads and other aquatic species to breed. Dropping onto the sandy area below the last tinaja, the route turns

right and heads downstream. About 100 yards down, the route arrives at [Newspaper Rock](#), on the right. Every archaeological district seems to have a newspaper rock, and Gold Butte National Monument's [Newspaper Rock](#) stands among the best.

From [Newspaper Rock](#), the route turns back a few yards, but quickly (about 80 feet out) crosses the wash and starts up a right-sloping ramp on the adjacent rocky crag. Along this north-facing cliff, notice an overhang with some large boulders in the shade. Inspect the boulders, as this is the [Bigfoot](#) or Hang-Ten Site. There are some very nice glyphs here, including the big feet, one of which was too big to fit atop the rock, so the toes wrap over the edge (as if "hanging ten" on a surfboard).

From the Bigfoot site, the route continues up to a broad ledge on the northwest corner of the crag. Here, a broad, flat ledge provides grand views to the north and west, including views of habitation sites in the not-to-far distance where overhanging rocks provided shade and shelter from the wind to people who lived here. This is also a good place for lunch, but don't sit on the flat-topped boulders while enjoying the view as you may damage the petroglyphs.

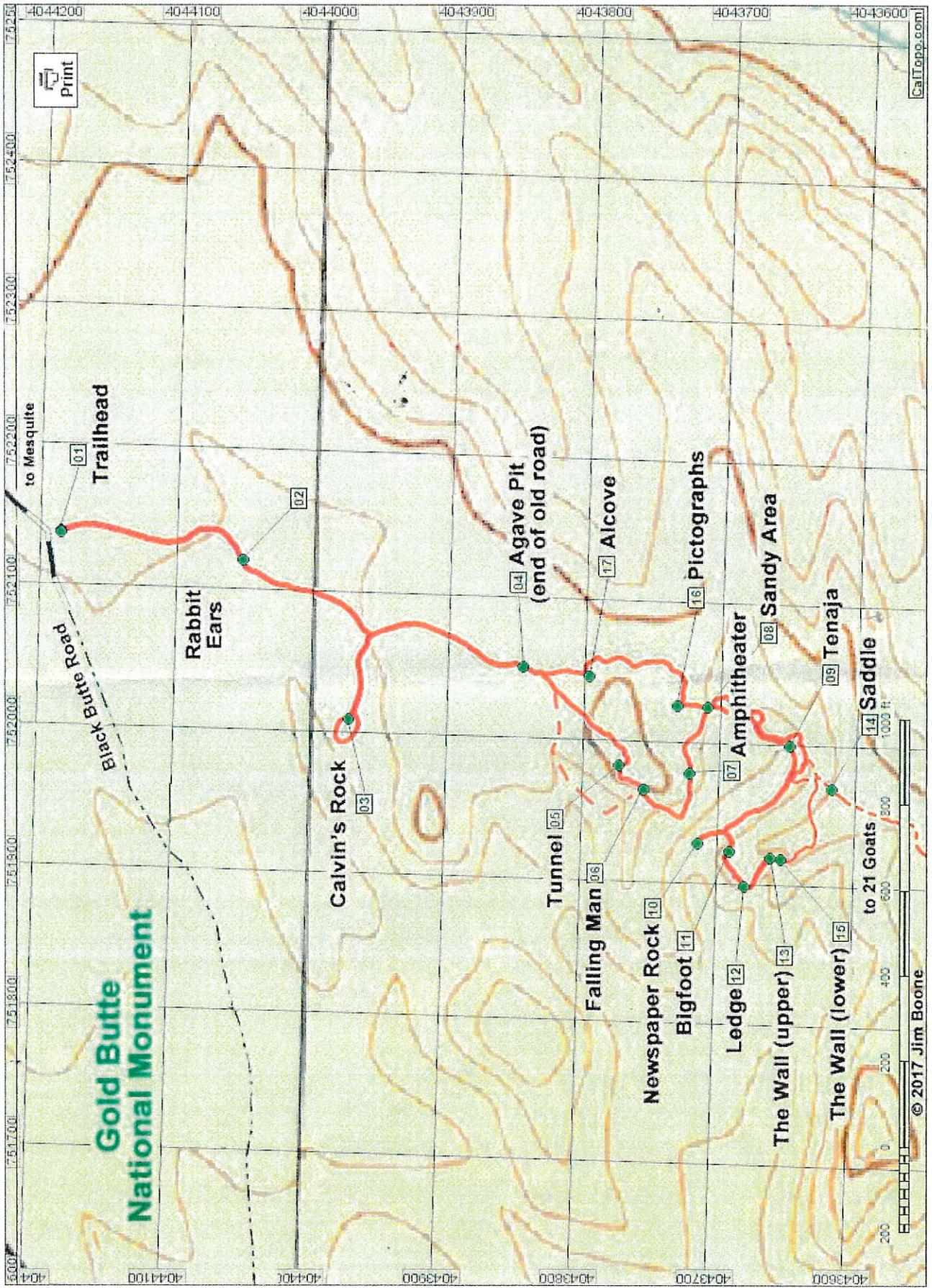
Continuing south from the broad ledge, a narrow ledge runs down and eventually pinches out, but not before arriving at a spectacular petroglyph panel, the [Upper Wall Panel](#). While examining the petroglyphs above the ledge, notice the petroglyphs below the ledge -- this is the [Lower Wall Panel](#) -- but you can't get there from here.

To really see the [Lower Wall Panel](#), return back up the ramp to the broad ledge, descend past the [Bigfoot](#) panel, hike up the wash to near the Tinajas, and circle around the crag to the right. Continue west across sandstone slickrock to an edge, then scamper down the broken cliff and around north to below the southwest corner and the [Lower Wall Panel](#).

Don't stop there. Wander around among the rock piles and look for more petroglyphs. Consider walking down to the [21 Goats](#) panel and on to [Black Butte Dam](#). When finished in the area, wander back to the trailhead. For the return, see [Returning to the Trailhead](#), but don't miss the [Alcove Site](#) along your way. Regardless of where you are in the rock piles, if you walk north, you will hit [Black Butte Road](#); then turn right and walk back east to the trailhead.

Rewards for exploring hidden petroglyphs. The area around Falling Man is loaded with petroglyphs. Hikers are free to wander around and experience the history but be careful not to trample the vegetation and don't touch the petroglyphs.

More rewards for exploring grand scenery and interesting vegetation. This part of Gold Butte National Monument is in the Upper Sonoran ([Mojave Desert Scrub](#)) vegetation zone where [creosote bush](#) and [white bursage](#) dominate the landscape, but many other species of shrubs also are common. Around the rock piles, look for [Joshua trees](#), and keep an eye out for our common [Mojave yucca](#). In sandy places, look for uncommon [Utah yucca](#) and unusual [birdcage evening primrose](#) with the sprawling stems all rolled up like a wire birdcage.



Gold Butte National Monument

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