

MYSTERY CANYON

(We used a short description written by Mowry and Jefferies, September 1978. This is an update due to changes in the route).

SUMMARY:

You need two 150' ropes, maybe 50' of webbing to cut and replace runners on rappel anchors, at least 3-4 quarts of water in warm weather per person, and a bolt kit. You may not need the bolt kit, but several of the existing bolts have been placed in locations where they get pounded by flood debris. If they get washed out or damaged you would need to replace them. Some persons doing this route after rains have reported lots of pools to swim and they needed wet suits.

The best time to do this is after periods of long dry weather. You wouldn't want to be in this canyon during rainy weather. It took us 9+1/2 hours to complete the route, and we hiked and set up the rappels fairly fast.

You start this route at Weeping Rock and finished at the Temple of Sinewava, so make ride arrangements as necessary.

The upper end of this route requires some route finding and a safe demeanor on steep, loose slopes. It can be very hot and sunny in this area. The end of this route requires setting up rappels on slippery rocks under cool or wet conditions. At one point you have to detach from rappel rope in the water and swim a cold pool. This could be repeated several times if there is water in the potholes. You complete the hike in the Zion Narrows where you have about a 1/4 mile hike to the Gateway to the Narrows trail.

THE ROUTE:

From Weeping Rock hike toward Observation Point. Take the East Mesa trail about 1.5 miles to where it nears the head of Mystery Canyon. Find a route to the edge, then pick a decent route that roughly follows the drainage bottom and avoids the small ledges. As you get down in the canyon you reach a series of small drops (8'-15') all of which we by-passed to the right.

About 100 yards from where the canyon turns West you enter the Narrows and make the first of 12 rappels.

RAPPEL #1 has 2 bolts on the right for an anchor and is about 70'

RAPPEL #2 has 1 bolt on the right and is about 40'

RAPPEL #3 has 1 bolt on the left and is about 35'

RAPPEL #4 is about 25' and we used a log as an anchor

RAPPEL #5 has 1 bolt on the left and is about 25'

RAPPEL #6 we used the previous anchor and it was about 15'

RAPPEL #7 was about 45' and was a low angle that really consists of 3 little rappels using the same driftwood anchor at the top.

At this point we left the Narrows. A shortway on is 2 short dropoffs with 1 bolt on the right wall. We bypassed these by traversing to the right and going back down in a brushy gully.

RAPPEL #8 was from a bolt in the wash bottom and was a 30' low angle rappel

Soon you come to an amazing rock slide blocking the canyon. It is probably 200' high and contains a lot of loose rock which is difficult to climb up.

To get to the rockslide you may have to swim up to 75 yards if the lake is full. It sometimes contains a lot of stagnant, slimy water. If you're lucky and timed your hike right, it may be dry.

RAPPEL #9 was from a bolt on a boulder and down about 100' into a pool that forms the start of Mystery Springs.

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RAPPEL #10 was from a bolt on the right wall, under a large chockstone then down 40' into a pool with active fresh flow into it. You then detach from your rope and swim the pool.
RAPPEL #11 we by-passed by shinning down a log. With hindsight it may have been easier to rappel the 10'-15'.

RAPPEL#12 was from a tree at the South side at the top of Mystrey Falls. It is 120' into the Virgin River and the rock is very slippery with algae etc.

Walk downstream to the Gateway trail then on to the Temple parking lot. You've made it!

Bob Lunbeck / Mark Magnuson 6/86

