

## **EXPEDITIONARY NOTES**

Landscapes of the Upper Escalante

*September 28-October 3, 2009*

In the Escalante region as elsewhere backcountry conditions change from season to season and week to week--we look forward to approaching the area with a willing heart and a taste for adventure, challenges, and the unexpected. Our fall trip in the upper Escalante River country may take us through a variety of weather conditions.

Elevations range from 6800 feet on the mesas and upper rims to 5000 feet on the canyon floor. This and the relatively high elevation Colorado Plateau climate make the area prone to extremes. Temperatures should be comfortable and warm overall, although there is potential for lots of sunlight and daytime temperatures reaching into the 70s. We should expect cool nights, and be prepared for any possible late storm bringing very wet and cold conditions. Early morning temperatures should be comfortably cool, but potentially can reach down towards or even below freezing. It's important to be well prepared with versatile and adequate gear, against wet and cold conditions as well as to be prepared for the sunny and warm to hot days we are more likely to find.

Clothing should be appropriate for layering so you can put it all on if the weather turns cold, or strip down to a light layer if it's hot. Lightweight, light-colored cotton clothing is coolest in the hot sun. Cold weather gear like long underwear, sweaters, and jackets can be one of the versatile and light synthetics such as polyester fleece, capilene, etc., or wool or perhaps down. Rain gear that will keep both upper and lower body dry is a must. Be prepared for rainy nights with a tent and good rain fly. Comfort and safety are key to an enjoyable outdoor experience.

Stream flow in the Escalante is generally calf- to thigh-deep, and is reasonably crossed with care. Rarely, and depending on runoff conditions in the uplands, it can be deeper and can constitute a serious obstacle, in which case we would make any necessary or prudent itinerary changes. We'll plan to hike into the main Escalante canyon and narrower side canyons, crossing the bottom in several places. Our boots or shoes may get wet some days.

We'll be spending our evenings in a comfortable base camp, so bring a camp chair for sitting by the fire. If you have such, we recommend packing your cloths and sleeping bag in a large dry bag or water resistant duffel bag. The Museum will provide camp meals and water, trail snacks, and camp cooking gear. Please let us know if you have any food restrictions, and we will do our best to accommodate. Happy trails!