



SPAN

Arizona

Fall 2010



SPAN

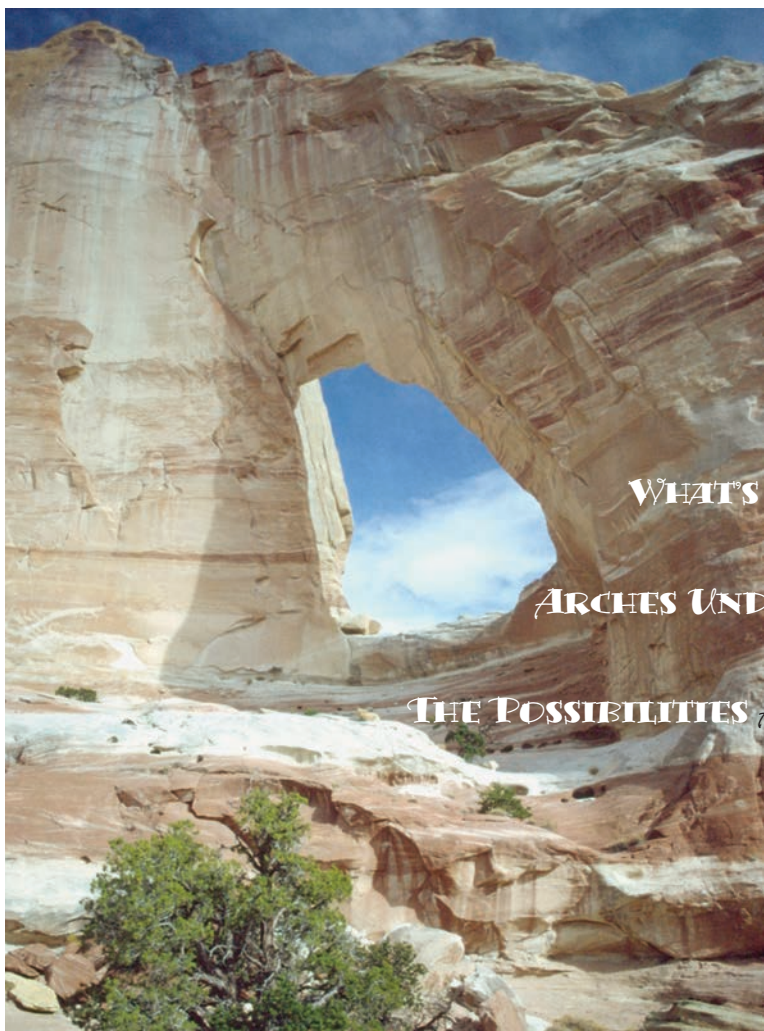
Newsletter of
the Natural Arch and Bridge Society

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PHOTO CREDITS:

Front Cover. Wrather Arch. (Bob Moore)

Above. White Mesa Arch. (Jay Wilbur)

Back Cover. Hope Arch. (Jay Wilbur)

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Editor's Note

Please do these three things right now. Don't put them off.

First, write a note, letter or email to Dave Kennedy and Tom Van Bebber thanking them for their contributions to NABS over the past several years. Unfortunately, both are retiring from the NABS leadership at the end of this year.

Dave has been our Secretary/Treasurer for the past nine years. Thank him for keeping NABS alive and healthy as an incorporated, not-for-profit organization. Thank him for investing our money safely and wisely. Thank him for answering over and over again all those same questions every new member always asks. Thank him for keeping all our membership records, event records, meeting minutes, and all the rest. Thank him for organizing most of our rallies in recent years. Thank him for keeping his good humor.

Tom has been our President for the past six years. Thank him for his leadership. Thank him for the excellent issues of SPAN he edited. Thank him for setting a vision for NABS that was tough to follow, but kept our spirit thriving. Thank him for the helping hand he gave so many fellow hikers along the path. Thank him for thinking of, investing in, creating and maintaining the World Arch Database. Thank him for finding all those arches and sharing them with us.

And thank both of them for the outstanding arch rallies we've had.

Together, Tom and Dave have been the core of our leadership team. They will be sorely missed in those roles. Fortunately, I'm confident they both intend to remain active members. Let's especially thank them for that.

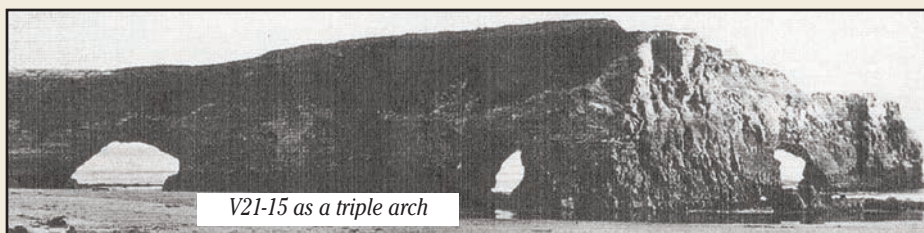
Second, vote. The insert for this issue contains a ballot listing the six candidates running for the NABS Executive Committee, along with their statements introducing themselves and asking for your vote. The winners will be our leadership for the next two-year term. The best way we can thank them for offering to serve is to have 100% of our membership cast a ballot. Read what each has to say and decide who you think will serve NABS best. Then vote. Do it today.

Third, check out the color version of this issue of SPAN on our website. It's in the Members Only area. Without any doubt, the natural arches of Arizona are best seen in full color. Once you've done that, browse through the NABS website and visit the Arizona Gallery and the Arizona Map and List in the GIS area. It's pretty tough to cram the wealth of Arizona arches into 12 pages. But hopefully, this issue has whetted your appetite for more. The NABS website will deliver just that.

– Jay Wilbur

LETTERS

On page 5 of the Summer 2010 SPAN, you mention you could not find an old picture of V21-15. I found this photo in a book called *Then & Now Santa Cruz*. – Nicholas Terzakis



Access to Tonto Natural Bridge at risk

You may have heard that Tonto Natural Bridge State Park was closing due to the budget problems Arizona is having. Fortunately, local groups have come to the rescue and the park will stay open five days a week for at least the next year (through September 2011). The towns of Payson and Star Valley, Gila County, and a private organization called Friends of Tonto Natural Bridge State Park have agreed to fund the difference between operating costs and the revenue from admission fees. This difference is estimated to be \$2,500 per month. Members of NABS who want to help can do so in at least two ways. First, contact the Arizona State Parks Board and tell them we'd like to see this park kept open for good. Second, send tax deductible contributions to Friends of Tonto Natural Bridge State Park, P.O. Box 841, Payson, AZ 85547-0841. You may want to visit their website, tonto-bridge.com. Also, you may want to visit azstateparks.com for additional information and ways to contact the State Parks Board.

– Bob Moore

With heavy heart I report the demise of a beloved and loyal friend of 24 years. Rusty went to that great off-road in the sky on June 10, 2010. Though his heart and soul were strong, he just drank too much, and his body was beyond repair. Goodbye old friend. You will be missed.

– Larry Bouchez



Rusty 1973 - 2010, greatly esteemed attendee of early NABS trips.

Arizona

NABS online database work continues at a good pace. In addition to providing the public with arch information via the GIS area of our website and Tom Van Bebber's World Arch Database (WAD), NABS is adding arch data to the U.S. Geological Survey's Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), a free, online database of named geographic features in the U.S., including natural arches. Our work cataloging Arizona arches may be the "poster child" for the overall effort.

The Arizona map (Figure 1) found in the GIS area of the NABS website is a work in progress. As of August 2010, it plots nearly 200 arches in the state. Thumbnail photos are provided for most of these arches and links to documentation are provided for 68 of them. Over the next several months, more thumbnails and documentation will be added.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The GNIS is maintained by the Board on Geographic Names (BGN). If you go to the GNIS website and do an online search for all the arches in Arizona, you'll get a list of 159 entries. That's quite a few when you remember that the GNIS only includes features with names that the BGN has approved. It doesn't list unnamed arches or arches with names that have not been approved by the BGN.

In early 2009, however, the GNIS arch list for Arizona was only 66 entries long, and one of those was a man-made bridge. Over the past year or so, NABS has successfully registered an additional 94 Arizona natural arches with the BGN. We've also corrected most of the inaccurate data about Arizona arches that was previously in the GNIS.

One of the advantages we gain from providing the BGN with accurate and comprehensive data on arches is a big one, guaranteed longevity. While the NABS GIS database currently provides the public with more information about arches, the GNIS is maintained by the federal government. Data in the GNIS will be there as long as the federal government is around. Should the WAD and the NABS website disappear in the future, the GNIS will remain and continue to serve the public.

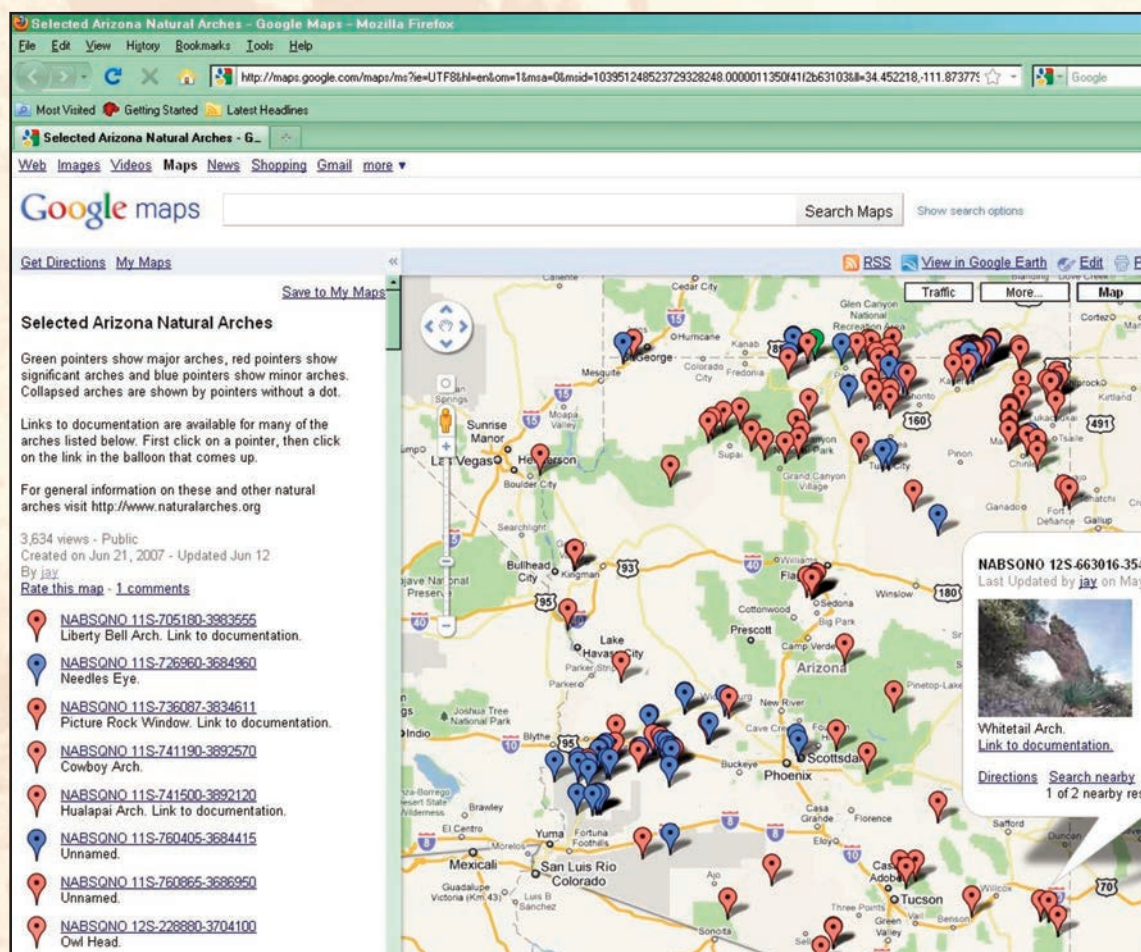


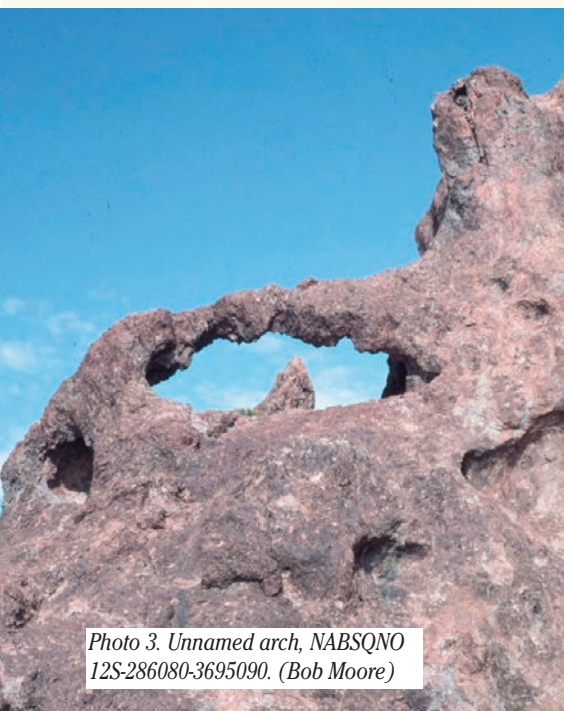
Figure 1. The NABS GIS Map of Arizona Arches.



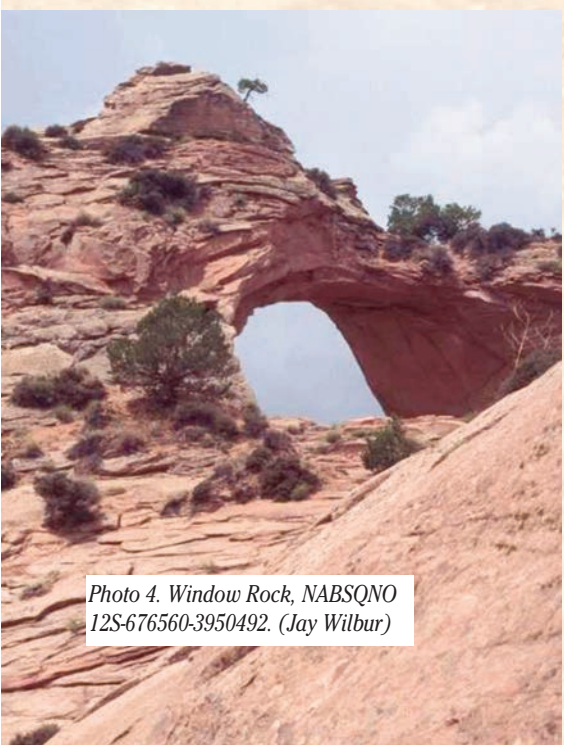
*Photo 1. Natural Arch, NABSQNO
12S-282530-3679490. (Bob Moore)*



*Photo 2. Eagletail Arch, NABSQNO
12S-287915-3896475. (Bob Moore)*



*Photo 3. Unnamed arch, NABSQNO
12S-286080-3695090. (Bob Moore)*



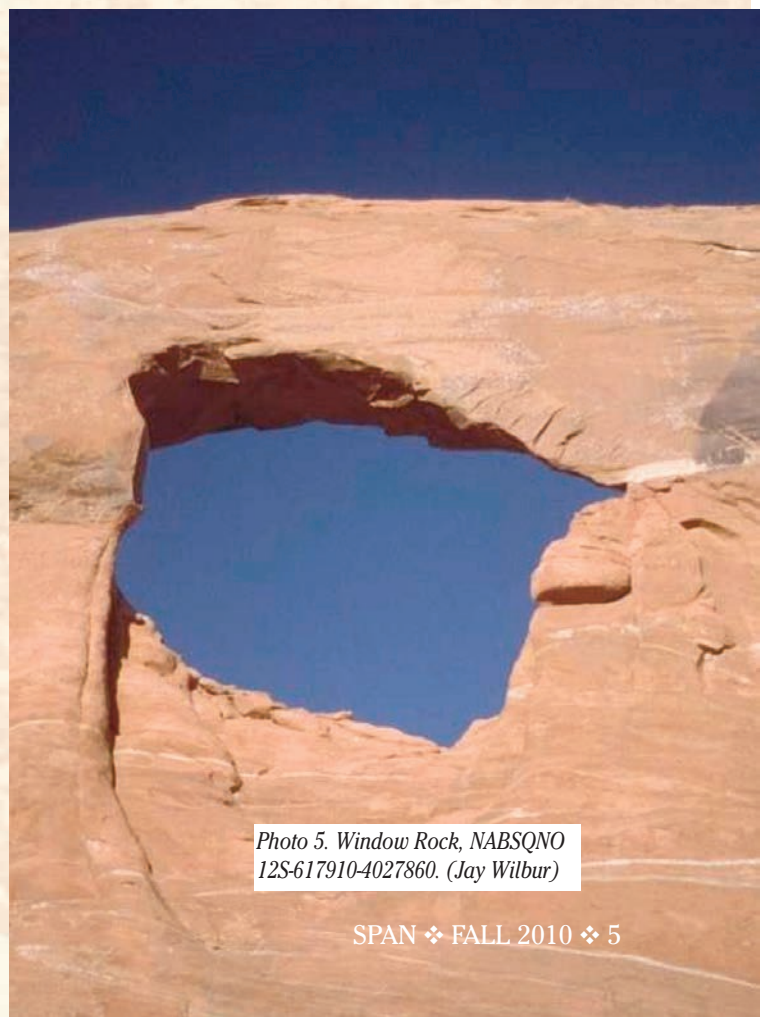
*Photo 4. Window Rock, NABSQNO
12S-676560-3950492. (Jay Wilbur)*

Registering an arch in the GNIS is not trivial. It must have a recognized name that meets all of the rules established by the BGN. That name must be published, preferably on a map or in a document issued by a governmental organization. Even then, the name must be reviewed for rules compliance as well as acceptance by stakeholders. Stakeholders include the appropriate land management agency (if applicable), the local population and recognized authorities. When it comes to arches, NABS is considered a recognized authority.

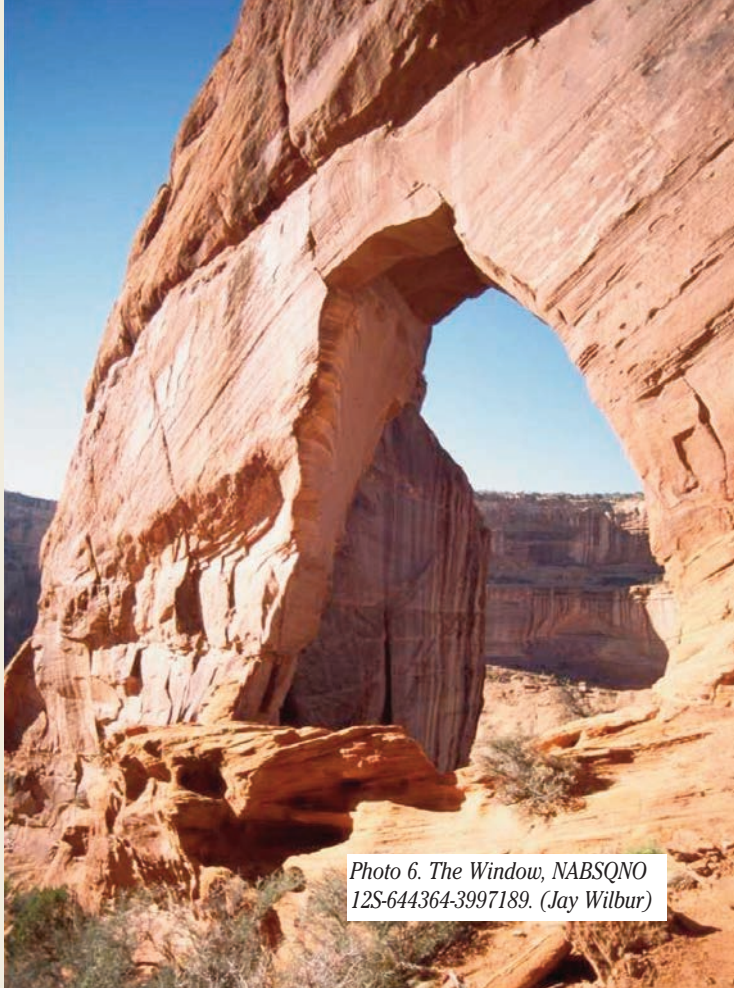
Ironically, the more generic a name is, the more likely it will be approved. For example, the GNIS includes over thirty Arizona arches named simply, "Natural Arch." That term appears frequently on USGS topographic maps, especially in the southwestern part of the state. Because "Natural Arch" is capitalized on these maps, the BGN considers it a proper name. It is also considered authoritative because the map is a government publication.

Most of the GNIS "Natural Arch" entries for Arizona are small and unimpressive arches like NABSQNO 12S-282530-3679490 (photo 1), which is plotted on the Hyder NE topographic quad, but not all of them. For example, NABSQNO 12S-287915-3896475 (photo 2), which is plotted as "Natural Arch" on the Eagletail Mts East quad, is a large triple arch. Fortunately, NABS has successfully registered "Eagletail Arch" as the official name for this beautiful arch. In this case, "Natural Arch" has become a variant name and is retained in the GNIS. But other nice arches, such as the one in photo 3, have no entry in the GNIS because they have no name.

Another generic name that occurs with some frequency in Arizona is "Window Rock." Interest-



*Photo 5. Window Rock, NABSQNO
12S-617910-4027860. (Jay Wilbur)*



*Photo 6. The Window, NABSQNO
12S-644364-3997189. (Jay Wilbur)*

ingly, most of these arches are large and photogenic. (Photos 4 and 5 show two examples shot from unusual angles.) The same is true for the two well known arches named “The Window” (see photos 6 and 7).

Including different arches with the same generic name in the GNIS is a mixed blessing. On the downside, it can lead to confusion. But on the other hand, many arches that are otherwise unnamed get entered in the GNIS as a result. If the BGN did not consider “Natural Arch” to be a proper name, they probably would have to drop other generic names such as “Window Rock,” “La Ventana,” and “Arch Rock” as well. The BGN would have to treat these arches as unnamed. Ultimately, that would mean fewer arches in the GNIS.

Of course, not all the duplicate arch names in the GNIS are generic. Arizona proudly boasts three different arches named “Royal Arch” (photos 8, 9, and 10), and two named “Sunrise Arch” (photos 11 and 12).

Fortunately, variant names can be associated with duplicate official names, even when the official name is a generic one. Variant names still have to follow all the rules, but this does create a way to reduce the confusion. Finally, since the GNIS now includes accurate geographic coordinates for these arches, location can always be used to distinguish between arches with duplicate names.



*Photo 7. The Window, NABSQNO 12S-
383350-3579420.
(David Brandt-Erichsen)*



Photo 8. Royal Arch, NABSQNO
12S-657183-4052730. (Jay Wilbur)



Photo 10. Royal Arch, NABSQNO
12S-252290-3698640. (Bob Moore)

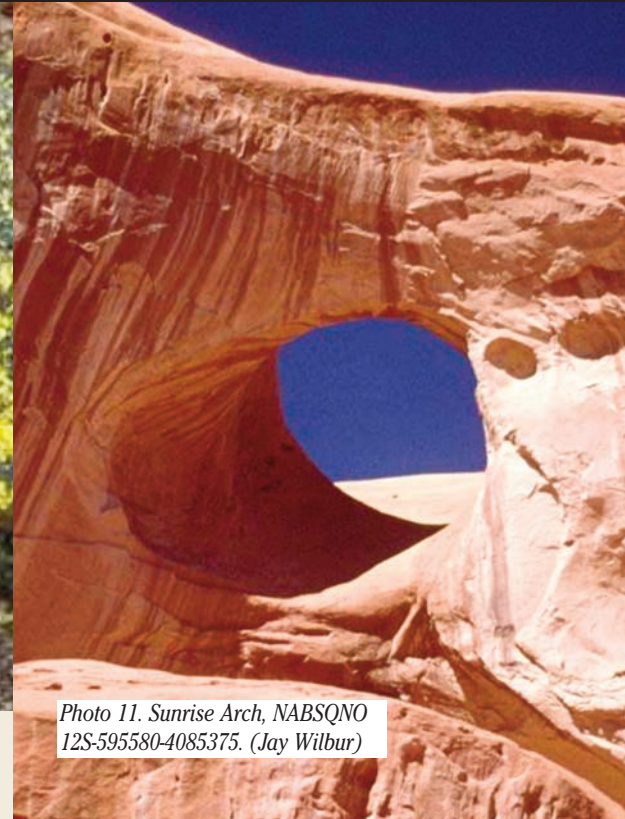


Photo 11. Sunrise Arch, NABSQNO
12S-595580-4085375. (Jay Wilbur)



Photo 9. Royal Arch, NABSQNO
12S-369320-4006150.
(Paul Neiman)



Photo 12. Sunrise Arch, NABSQNO
12S-449960-3712170. (Unknown)



*Photo 13. Needles Eye, NABSQNO
11S-726960-3684960. (Bob Moore)*



*Photo 14. Natural Bridge, NABSQNO
12S-378690-4019420. (Craig Linneman)*

ARCHES UNDER-COVERED

Arizona is home to some of the prettiest arches anywhere. Many of these are very well known. But there are several that deserve better press. The lack of attention for some of these arches is probably due to how difficult it is to get to them. Arizona has lots of remote and rugged territory with few roads to aid access. The Royal Arch shown in photo 9 is one example. Photos 13 through 23 show a few more.

But not every under-appreciated arch in Arizona is all that hard to get to. Why NABSQNO 12S-464110-3828110 (photo 24) hasn't received more coverage is a real mystery.



Photo 15. Kolb Arch, NABSQNO 12S-413042-4015859. (Bob Ribokas)

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

One of the ways natural arches are first found is from the air. For example, Wrather Arch (front cover), the largest arch in the state, was discovered in 1955 by the pilot of a scheduled airline flight. Kolb Arch (photo 15) was spotted by soon-to-be-Senator Barry Goldwater in 1951 during a flight over the Grand Canyon. Others have been found by flights chartered for the very purpose of scouting for arches.

Earlier this year, Google Maps completed its base map of Arizona using a mosaic of aerial photography. This base map is the foundation of the NABS Arizona arch map mentioned at the beginning of this article. It can be explored for arches almost as effectively as chartering an actual flight. Even a few minutes of browsing over this imagery, at least in certain parts of the state, reveals many features that might be natural arches. Figure 2 shows one example in northern Navajo County. Of course, a visit would be required to verify it.

Landform names are another source of leads for those of us who enjoy finding and documenting arches. For example, a feature on a map with the name "The Window" might be an arch. Again, a visit would be required to verify it.

Unspecific eyewitness reports can also trigger an arch hunt. Some reports are pretty vague, like the guy who tells you at a party, "I was standing near so-and-so place when I saw an arch in such-and-such direction." Others are more reliable, like the emails NABS frequently receives with directions or photos, but not enough data to make it certain.

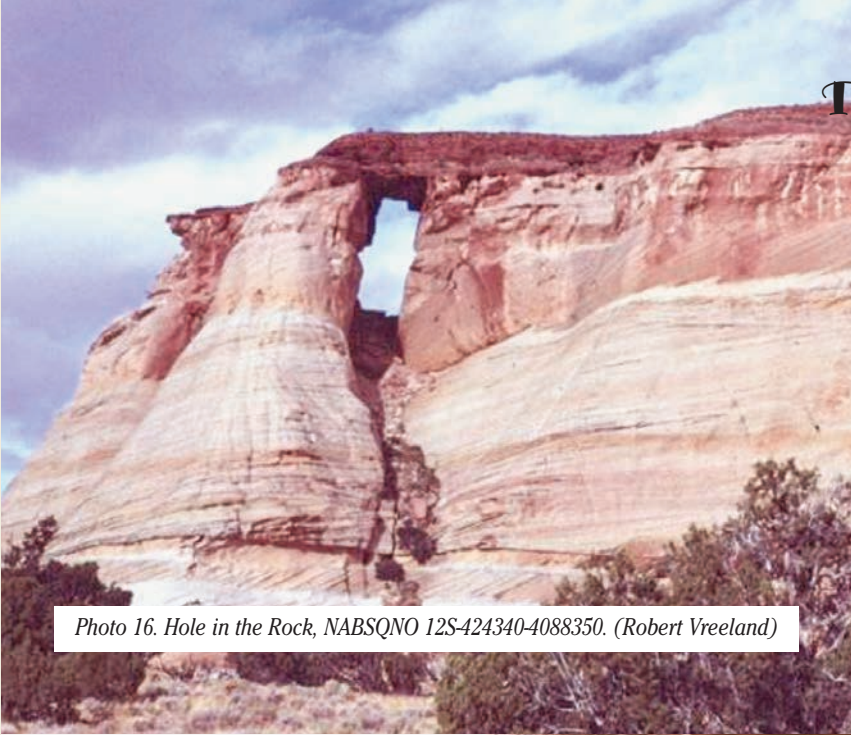


Photo 16. Hole in the Rock, NABSQNO 12S-424340-4088350. (Robert Vreeland)



Photo 17. Eye of the Dove, NABSQNO 12S-584225-4082450. (David Brandt-Erichsen)

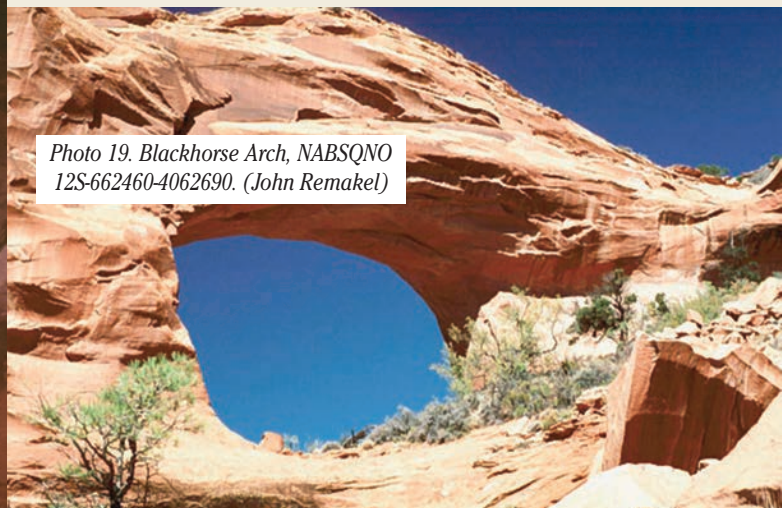


Photo 19. Blackhorse Arch, NABSQNO 12S-662460-4062690. (John Remakel)

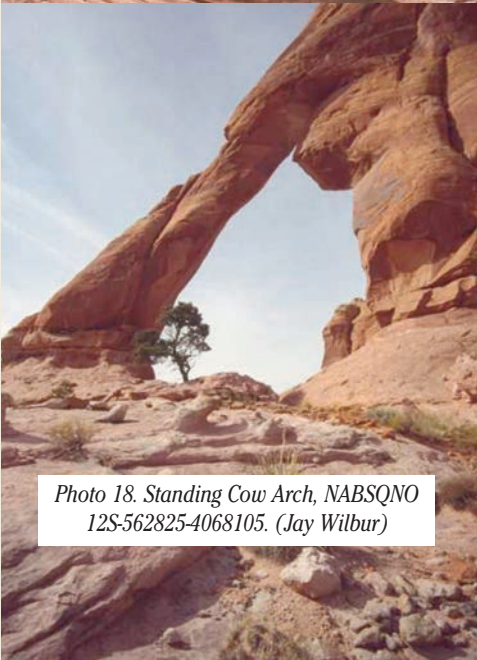


Photo 18. Standing Cow Arch, NABSQNO 12S-562825-4068105. (Jay Wilbur)

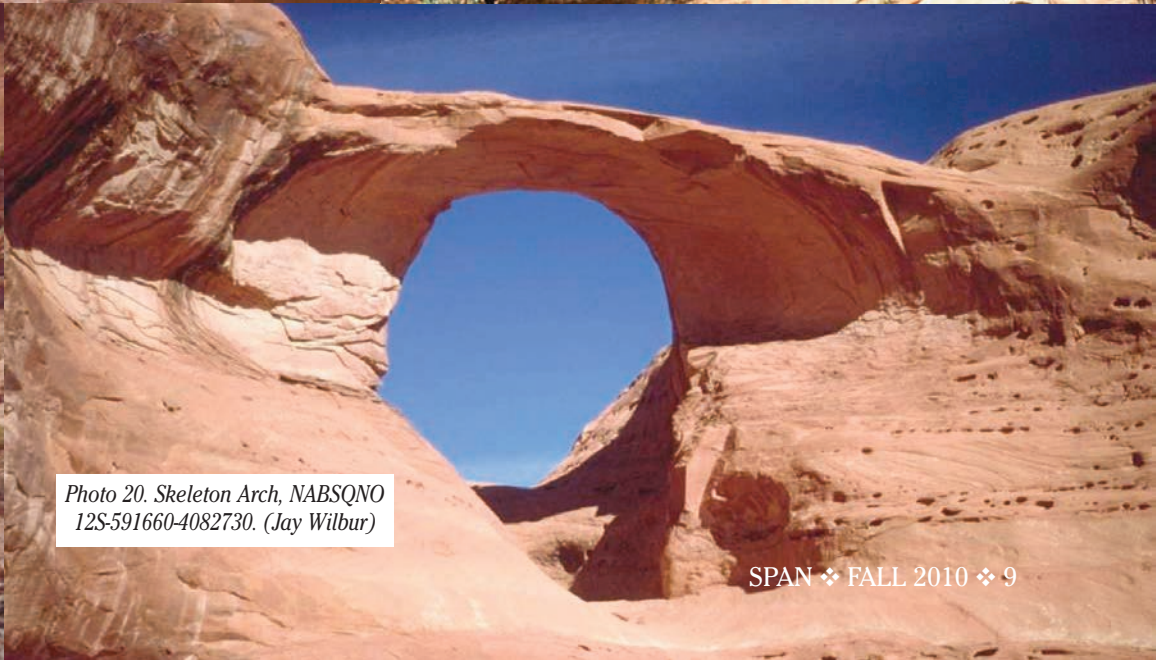


Photo 20. Skeleton Arch, NABSQNO 12S-591660-4082730. (Jay Wilbur)

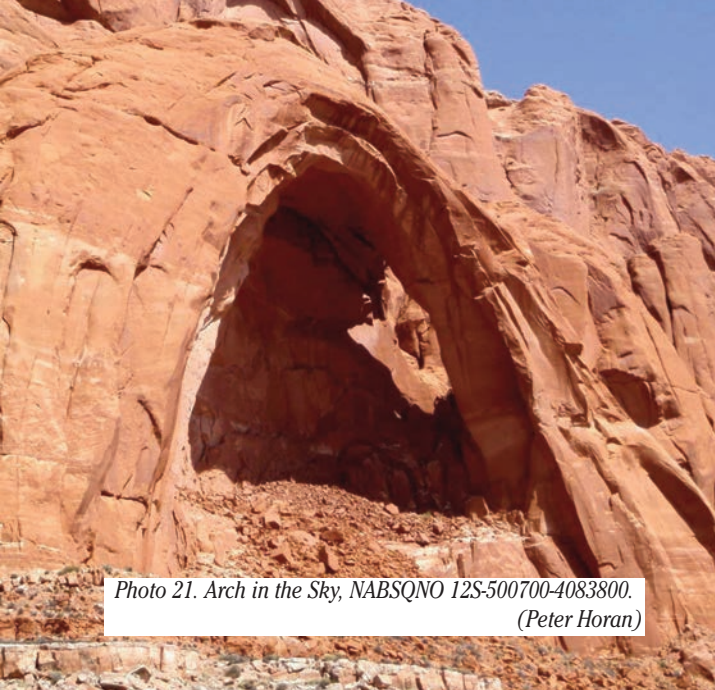


Photo 21. Arch in the Sky, NABSQNO 12S-500700-4083800.
(Peter Horan)



Photo 22. Hell Hole, NABSQNO 12S-550725-3641645. (Bob Moore)

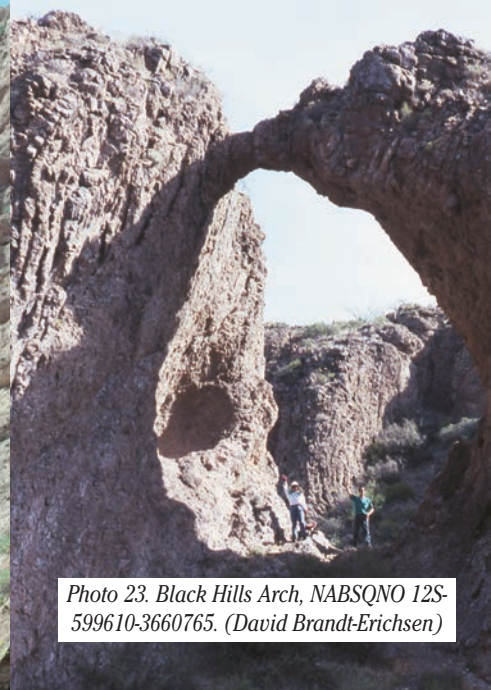


Photo 23. Black Hills Arch, NABSQNO 12S-599610-3660765. (David Brandt-Erichsen)

The table below is a list of geographic coordinates of possible arches in northeast Arizona. Most of them probably aren't, but a few might be. One or two might even be pretty nice arches. Some of the coordinates accurately pin-point the possible arch, while other coordinates only provide approximate locations. Some locations appear to be very difficult to access, maybe even impossible. Others, however, appear to be easy to reach.

Appearances can be deceptive, however. NABS has no knowledge of the dangers and risks that might be encountered in visiting these locations. NABS does not assume any of that risk, nor any liability for any negative impacts of your visit. However, regardless of your experience, if you do decide to visit any of these locations, please do send NABS a report or share it on the NABS Forum. The information you collect and provide will be an important addition to the various cataloging efforts NABS is undertaking.



Photo 24. Unnamed arch, NABSQNO 12S-464110-3828110. (Preston Sands)

Possible Arches in Northeast Arizona

UTM Coordinates (WGS 84)	Location Accuracy	Source
12S-561060-4065600	Approximate	Bob Moore
12S-561080-4083260	Approximate	Bob Moore
12S-579880-4040940	Approximate	Bob Moore
12S-544245-4065610	Approximate	Robert Vreeland
12S-548060-4060070	Approximate	Stephen Jett
12S-562920-4070760	Approximate	Stephen Jett, Cliff Rose Arch
12S-583140-4007195	Exact	Suggestive Name, Wind Rock Point
12S-562735-4070725	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-570425-4094970	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-587165-4081765	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-590815-4082775	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-603150-4044530	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-606400-4095070	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-618255-4028100	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps
12S-635870-4057250	Exact	Suggestive Imagery, Google Maps

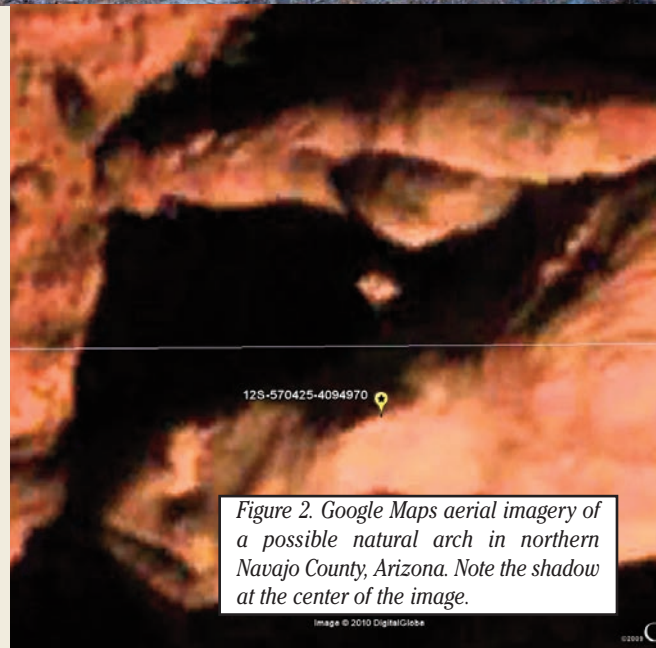


Figure 2. Google Maps aerial imagery of a possible natural arch in northern Navajo County, Arizona. Note the shadow at the center of the image.

A Wrather Fun Day Hike

By Craig A. Shelley

Wrather Arch, one of the largest arches in the world, is a magnificent cave natural arch in Wrather Canyon. The traditional route to the arch requires a backpack of the lower Paria River Gorge. The backpack from the White House trailhead to Lee's Ferry, although spectacular, is about 38 miles. Wrather Canyon's confluence with the Paria is between 20 and 21 miles from the White House trailhead.

The Paria has several flash floods every year during the monsoon season from July to September. Backpackers usually hike in water that is ankle deep, but swimming can be required depending on recent flash floods. The long distance, hiking in water, flash flood potential, and quicksand put Wrather Arch among the large natural arches that are not easily accessible.

There are two alternative routes to Wrather Arch described in *Hiking and Exploring the Paria River*, by Michael Kelsey. In late March of 2007, Richard Jonas, Rob Shelley, Dave Woodbury, Lenard Wright, and I day-hiked Kelsey's southern route into the Paria River Gorge and to Wrather Arch. This article describes the route (see Figure 1). All coordinates reported are in the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinate system using the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83).

The route head, 12 0430389E 4090654N, is at the end of a very remote and sandy 4WD road near the start of the Wrather Canyon drainage. We negotiated the road with two Jeep Wrangler Rubicons and a modified Grand Cherokee. After parking, we descended by a fence, crossing the drainage, and then hiked along the south rim of the canyon. Shortly after beginning our hike, we spied our destination, Wrather Arch, from the rim above.

After hiking quite a bit farther along the rim, we came to the location to start the descent into the Paria, 12 0431893E 4091177N. We were at an elevation of about 5,000 feet. The Paria River below us was at about 3,800 feet. It was a 1200-foot drop. We couldn't see the route. We started down a ridge without really knowing what to expect. Fortunately, our collective group experience in exploring was substantial.

About halfway down was a slot with loose rock. We climbed down the slot. Loose rock was a concern. We left space between us to give time for a warning if someone dislodged a boulder. At first, it wasn't apparent how to proceed further. Rob and Lenard explored for op-



tions. Fortunately, they found the key to the route. It was a crack, a ledge and Moki steps. We added a large cairn at the top of the crack, 12 0431901E 4091626N, to mark the way.

We used a short rope to navigate the crack. Looking down where my friends had just disappeared, I felt the nervousness I often have at the top of an exposed rappel that is new to me. I was glad my more experienced friends led the way. Leaving the crack, we walked to the right on a narrow ledge, 12 0431886E 4091647N. Finally, there were Moki steps just out of sight from the ledge to aid passing around a slick rock cliff with sufficient exposure to get almost anyone's adrenaline up. After the crack-ledge-Moki key, we hiked down a gully. My legs felt the impact of the steep descent. I was glad when we reached the easiest part, hiking down a sand slide to the Paria.

We entered the Paria River drainage at 12 0431682E 4091972N. Hiking upstream, we tromped through the cold March water of the river. Lenard tried to stay out of the water. He found a pole-vaulting stick. It worked for a little while and then, splash, he was as wet as any of us. About one-half mile upstream, we entered Wrather Canyon.

Thick and lush riparian vegetation line this short side-canyon of the Paria drainage. The spring-fed, year-round flowing stream makes this canyon a gem within a hostile

desert environment. After bushwhacking through the canyon, the final approach to the arch climbs steeply up a sandy hill.

At the arch, we all took a rest and ate. Each of us hiked to different vantage points, enjoying the grandeur of the arch. I made some measurements with my Leica Disto laser ranging device. Dave assisted me.

The weather was overcast. I thought about the exposed Moki steps as we all packed up to return. I wanted to get past them before it rained. We didn't want to linger too long. On the way up that last steep slot, Richard nearly got hurt on a loose rock. But all of us reached the rim safely.

We rested after completing the difficult 1200-foot climb. It was now an easy trot back to where we began. It took the better part of a day. It was worth it.

After returning, I shared my photos and measurements with Jay Wilbur. We exchanged a few emails. Based on my discussions with Jay, it was clear I hadn't made the proper measurement for the span of the arch. However, I had determined an upper limit on the span. That upper limit was 181.5 feet. Although Wrather is certainly one of the most spectacular arches in the world, it clearly isn't in the select few with spans greater than 200 feet. Very few arches are. At least it is still the largest span in Arizona.

