

# The Little Wild Horse Flash Flood - 1993

In 1993 we spent a couple weeks west of the river, in the San Rafael Swell. It was August and one needs to be mindful of the weather. Here's the account of what happened.

We camped at Goblin Valley and took a drive out through Little Wild Horse dry wash to Muddy Creek, about 20 miles more or less. When we started out from the campground the weather was fine, just a few clouds. As we dropped into the wash, it started to get a little darker up north (upstream) but not really bad. The sun was shining brightly and we even stopped for a picnic.

As you can see from the size of the Jeep in the photo to the right, this is a **big** wash with few places to exit.

At that time, our daughter, Amanda, was 10 years old. She was concerned about the weather and told me several times, "Dad, I think we're gonna have a flash flood!" "Nah, I replied." (Dads know best, don't they?)



We had the awning down on the motor home at the campground, and the windows and doors off the Jeep, but had the rag top on the Jeep to keep us out of the sun. After about 15 miles, we were on top of a big clay hill and it really started to look dark upstream to the north. After some subtle persuasion, I turned around and

headed back. All of a sudden the clouds got darker, quicker and the wind really came up. At one point I was going 60 mph and the wind from the rear was still out pacing us. We got sandblasted.

The further north we went the darker it got. We had to go at least 10 miles more to exit the wash. My concern wasn't about a flood, I didn't think it would happen and even if it did, we could always climb up the side of the wash a little and be safe. My concern was the awning on the motorhome. These winds would not only rip it off, they would probably deposit it in Moab, 50 miles east.



We got out of the wash with out seeing any water. We got to the motorhome before the winds hit. Yup, we out ran the wind - in four wheel drive!! As we stopped to congratulate ourselves and open a beer before rolling up the awning, the storm came around the butte like a bat out of hell and ripped the awning right off! Sonuvabitch! Oh well, we got the awning rolled up and cut off the bent aluminum braces and had a few more beers. Five miles from Little Wild Horse we just got the wind, not one drop of rain.

Later the ranger came by and did the 20 questions number on us about Little Wild Horse since he knew we were there. Apparently, a flash flood hit only a few minutes after we got out of there. 4 vehicles and 10 people were unaccounted for. He wanted to know if we saw anyone. Later that evening the 10 people wandered back into camp after hiking the 5 miles from the wash. They told of the flood hitting and washing their vehicles away.

The next morning we went back to inspect the carnage. We were lucky to get out or **we** might have been on somebody's web page instead! Now we laugh about it -- come to think of it, we did then too! This was the first of three years of "experiences" along Little Wild Horse and the "Big Muddy." [1994](#) and [1996](#) have more stories of this area. Oh yeah, as an incentive to look at the photos (like you probably need one) - at the end of this page is the sign we saw in the way out.





**And to add insult to injury,  
this is what we saw as we left  
Goblin Valley for our next adventure.**

**A few years later I discovered another on-line account of the flood. Click [HERE](#) for that page.**

Created 01/23/99.  
Last Modified: Fri, 02 Aug 2002  
04:11:47 GMT

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