

**Sent:**

Tuesday, September 16, 2008 4:52 AM

**Subject:**

Postcard

We hit the road to Navajo National Monument, an obscure National Park on the Rez at the end of state route 564. There are three visitor trails at NMM. Sandal Trail (judging by the many signs it is also called Stayonthe Trail) is the main trail that overlooks Betatakin ruins.



This is the view down the canyon from Aspen trail. Aspen Trail is short but drops 300 feet in about half a mile. The forest here is called a relict, meaning it is a leftover ecosystem from bygone ice-age days – consisting of deciduous trees, aspen and birch, that have been replaced by conifers almost everywhere else at this altitude.



We don't know if the lizards here are relicts, but Godzilla they ain't:



Along Canyon View trail.



Had lunch at a picnic table in the park, fought off the bees who wanted to share, and left for Monument Valley.



Monument Valley is home to majestic red rocks that rise up from the desert floor and try to touch the clouds. We remembered this peaceful

drive through the valley and looked forward to soaking in its serenity.



Hmmm, busy road. Oh look, a new Navajo Tribal Park, only 10 bucks, let's go look:



It was the cheesiest, junkiest, most overpriced "Trading Post" we'd ever visited. You almost know what you're going to see next:



The good news is that the Navajos are probably actually making some money from their own resources. The bad news is, somewhere in a

tribal office, on the wall, is the Monument Valley Tribal Park mission statement:

Bus 'em

Rob 'em

Leave 'em for dead.

The drive is still beautiful. Made it to Bluff. Ensnocned in our casita.



D&S

Travel Note – On this trip we checked off Pipe Springs, Rainbow Arch and Navajo from our list of Southwestern National Parks. Just three more to go (all in Texas) to finish the book.