Arizona Landscapes Assignment  
Discovering a Special Place  
Example 2: Locust Point, Rainbow Rim

Name of place: Locust Point, Rainbow Rim  
My name: Ron Dorn

1. Location and directions from ASU Tempe Campus

Locust Point is on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, but it is not in the National Park. It is in the Kaibab National Forest, just outside of the park. As indicated in Figure 1, you would follow the same route to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon National Park. However, about 10 miles before you reach the park boundary, you turn on dirt roads into the national forest. It takes about 24 miles of dirt road driving to reach Locust Point (Figure 2).

Most visitors to the Grand Canyon do not bother to take the extra 3 hours it takes to reach the North Rim. They settle for big crowds and less driving. Those who do make it to the North Rim experience something special inside the park, but those to make it to the Rainbow Rim are in for a true treat. The last time I visited, my wife and I camped right on the rim all by ourselves – nobody around (Figure 3).
Figure 2. Locust Point trailhead map. Photo by Ron Dorn.

Figure 3. Camping on the rim of the Grand Canyon at Locust Point. The image on the right of the Grand Canyon was taken during breakfast – with nobody around. Photos by Ron Dorn.

2. **Reason why this place is special**

I think that Locust Point on the Rainbow Rim (Figure 3) is a special spot to visit for several reasons. The view from Locust Point is made even more special by the chance to avoid crowds, and the trail that connects five viewpoints brings you into the forest and then back out on the rim (Figure 4). The Rainbow Rim trail is multiuse. There
are a lot of mountain bikers, but hikers and equestrians are also welcome. You can take a virtual ride of the trail by clicking on this link: http://www.mtbproject.com/trail/3392750

Figure 4. Screenshot of Locust Point, taken from a virtual ride of the Rainbow Rim Trail in Google Earth. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) has a nice website devoted to this multi-use trail, where I encourage you to explore the potential views along the trail: http://www.mtbproject.com/trail/3392750.

3. Two Selected Elements of Physical and Human Geography

Components of Physical Geography

Components of Human Geography
The Locust Point area and associated views around the Rainbow Rim trail exemplify aspects of both Landforms and Biogeography. Figures 5, 6 and 7 all show views of the Grand Canyon. In terms of landforms, I will focus on just the “stair-step” nature of the Grand Canyon. Notice how all of the views have slopes that consist of cliff faces and then ramps. The cliff faces are made up of rocks that are harder – more resistant to decay and erosion. The ramps are made up of rocks that are weaker. The erosion of the ramps up into the harder cliff faces causes landsliding – that keeps the cliff faces steep.

Please look at Figure 5, and focus now on the plants. Up on the high Kaibab Plateau of the North Rim, elevations of 8000 ft bring winter snows and lots of summer rains during the monsoon season. This allows fir and spruce trees to grow at the higher elevations, while Ponderosa Pine and juniper grow along the lower elevations of the rim. As can be seen in Figure 5, the dark green disappears down into the canyon. This is because less precipitation and warmer temperatures keep trees from growing down in the canyon. Thus, Figures 6 and 7 of the canyon lack the dense trees up high.
Figure 7. View of the Grand Canyon from around Locust Point. Note that there is a lack of trees down deep in the Grand Canyon, as hot temperatures and less precipitation create a desert inside the canyon.

4. Additional information of interest

If you visit the Rainbow Rim and Locust Point, I also urge you to certainly visit inside the national park on the North Rim. It is a great treat to have dinner overlooking the Grand Canyon. If you plan ahead, you can make reservations. Visiting during the summer monsoon season often allows you to see the thunderstorms moving across the Grand Canyon at sunset. Perhaps you can make the trip to celebrate graduation from ASU.

Figure 8. Dining at the North Rim is a treat:
http://grandcanyonforever.com/north-rim-dining
Source of photo.

5. Sources used to write this assignment

Instructional Note: your sources can be hyperlinks embedded in the text – as seen above. Or, they can be compiled in his bibliography. You can use any consistent format for the bibliography.

The following used in writing this report were accessed August 1, 2014:

Dining on the North Rim
http://grandcanyonforever.com/north-rim-dining
Google Maps
http://maps.google.com

International Mountain Biking Association Rainbow Rim website

Photo Editing Software
http://pixlr.com/editor/

Route to the North Rim
http://www.arizona-leisure.com/gfx/maps/grand-canyon-ns-area-map-1.gif