Arizona Landscapes Assignment
Discovering a Special Place
Example 3: A virtual trip to Lees Ferry

Name of place: Lees Ferry
My name: Ron Dorn

ASSIGNMENT NOTE: A requirement of this assignment is to visit a location – ideally in person, but virtually is also allowed. Thus, this example illustrates the use of Google Street Views to carry out a virtual visit.

1. Location and directions from ASU Tempe Campus

Lees Ferry is located just off U.S. Highway 89. You can visit Lees Ferry in person on your way to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon (Figure 1). Lees Ferry is important today as the gateway to boating opportunities along the Colorado River. However, in the past, it served as one of the few ways to cross the Colorado River.

Google Street Views has collected imagery of the Colorado River that includes the Lees Ferry area. I virtually “boated” along the Colorado River and looked around.
You can do this through this direct link to the Lees Ferry beach\(^1\). The Google Street Views raft used the same boat ramp as the other expeditions (Figure 2). You can virtually float up and down the river between Lees Ferry and Highway 89, with Figure 3 providing a different view of Lees Ferry from the air.

Figure 2. This image is a screen capture of Google Street Views raft trip down the Colorado River, from this location. You can see the camera in the lower left and boats entering the water on the lower right. The striking sedimentary red rocks can be seen in the cliff face.

\(^1\) I am aware that some of your computers will not be able to create a hyperlink by clicking. I know this. It is an issue between computers. You can copy and paste this links: https://www.google.com/maps/@36.864753,-111.588116,3a,75y,240.35h,90t/data=!3m5!1e1!3m3!1sa1UO92x4ntMxnlFsAuHC7Q!2e0!3e5 and if you are not carefully copying and pasting, you may have to copy and paste this in sections into the URL line.
Figure 3. This aerial photograph of Lees Ferry shows the stark contrast between the water of the Colorado River and the surrounding desert. It comes from the website for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area: http://www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/lees-ferry.htm

2. Reason why this place is special

I used Lees Ferry as an example of a virtual visit to a special location, because it shows you the ability to virtually boat down the Colorado River. Taking a raft trip down the Colorado River is something that very few ASU students will attempt. It is expensive. There are also long waiting lists. However, taking this trip virtually is free. It exposes you to the landscape around the Colorado River.

3. Two Selected Elements of Physical and Human Geography

I focus on two elements of geography at Lees Ferry. One is hydrology in physical geography. The other is historical geography in human geography. There is a lot of history associated with Lees Ferry, illustrated in Figure 4 and 5. When you visit this place in person, you can look at interesting buildings and artifacts of a time before you could cross via a bridge.
Figure 4. The ferry across the Colorado River operated between 1872 and 1928. This image comes from the website for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, of a time when it was operated by Spencer. 
http://www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/lees-ferry.htm

Figure 5. John Lee, a Mormon leader, traveled to this spot with Major John Wesley Powell and Brigham Young. John Lee’s posting was to establish a ferry crossing at the Colorado River. A practicing polygamist, Lee built stone and wooden homes for two of his families that lived with him. His life ended when he was executed for his role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. This photograph and more information can be obtained from this website: http://www.nps.gov/glca/historyculture/leesferryhistory.htm

Hydrology is an important part of physical and human geography. Some think of the Colorado River as the ‘jugular vein’ of the southwest. It transports a lot of water from mountainous terrain down into parched deserts. Dams along the Colorado River offer recreational opportunities, but they also alter the hydrology. Figure 6 presents the view of the Colorado River at Navajo Bridge. I encourage you to learn about the hydrology of the entire Colorado River Basin and its importance, by looking at this website: http://www.coloradoriverbasin.org/about-the-colorado-river-basin/.
Figure 6. Hydrology is the obvious theme in this view of the Colorado River, looking up at Navajo Bridge that you can cross by foot and look down at the River.

4. Additional information of interest

If you make the trip to Lees Ferry in person, you might want to consider kayaking around the area for the day. There are several different outfits that can give you lessons and rent you an inflatable kayak, such as this one: http://kayakthecolorado.com/. You can also take a boat trip from Glen Canyon Dam down to Lees Ferry with outfits such as this one: http://raftthecanyon.com/. However, just going for a swim at the beach at Lees Ferry is fun too.

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:

Colorado River Basin
http://www.coloradoriverbasin.org/about-the-colorado-river-basin/

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area – Lees Ferry Location
http://www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/lees-ferry.htm

Google Maps
http://maps.google.com

Google Street View Link to Lees Ferry Location
Historical information about Lees Ferry
http://www.nps.gov/glca/historyculture/leesferryhistory.htm

How to use Google Street Views
https://support.google.com/maps/answer/3093484?ctx=c2n_sv1

Kayaking or Boting in the Lees Ferry Area

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

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