

Barren

By Stephen Eginoire

The high desert of the Colorado Plateau is a place filled with refuge, warmth and unmatched beauty. The rivers and lush canyons found here bring abundant life to an otherwise inhospitable country. Where you find water, you'll discover an oasis filled with diverse flora, fauna and evidence of human use from centuries past. Where there isn't water, you'll find extreme desolation. Here's a look at the harsh reality flipside of a water-dependent ecosystem:



Power lines stretch across a bleak desert within the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona.



Death is as much a part of the landscape as life in these lonely open expanses.



Even a small pot-hole filled with water can support a multitude of thirsty desert inhabitants.



Desolate and beautiful, a swath of dunes and slickrock benches surround Utah's Escalante River.



A houseboat sits high and dry near Bullfrog Marina, an ironic reminder of a shriveling Lake Powell.