HANDOUT

DESERT EROSIONAL FEATURES

1) **Desert Pavement** - thin veneer of stones several stones thick, results as deflation lowers the surface until only heavier particles remain

2) **Desert Varnish** - thin, shiny, bluish-black coating composed largely of Fe & Mn oxides formed on stones & cliffs. Not sure how it forms

3) **Ventifacts** - wind-carved rocks; have concave surfaces (facet) that meet in sharp edges & corners

4) **Arroyo** - steep-sided, flat-floored channel of an intermittent stream

5) **Plateau** - broad relatively flat or gently rolling region at high elevation exhibiting "layer cake geology" (horizontal layers of sediment)

6) **Mesa** - large flat-topped remnant of a plateau that has been eroded down

7) **Butte** - similar to a mesa but smaller

8) **Badlands** - rough, steeply gullied terrain usually found in dry areas

9) **Pediment** - an erosional bedrock surface that slopes away from a desert mountain range

10) **Inselberg** - isolated residual hill that rises abruptly above the surrounding plain in a dry region (ex: Ayers Rock)

Desert Lakes

Playa Lake - seasonal lake in the center of a desert basin, usually very shallow & temporary

Playa - dried-up playa lake consisting of clay & silt or sand & soluble salt deposits