

## PCT, the 2022 Epilogue



After my ignominious departure from the PCT in June, and after a whole lot of thought about hiking the CA desert in the desert heat, I tentatively considered returning to the trail in October and using that [cooler] month to get the desert section out of the way.

Which is why on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, I again find myself on the PCT, very near where I left it in June, planning to RON, then begin the hike again the following morning. One interesting side note, the weather decided to put on a little show for us and all of that part of California had a sand/dust storm that evening just before lights out.

This time, to save funds, and since I had re-installed my homemade shell, we decided to RON in the back of the truck. Which was OK, except that it was a bit sandy due to the atmospheric excitement.

Next morning, I got set up, sis took me to the actual trail intersection where I planned to re-start, and off she went for home. I wasn't on the trail very long and before realizing that the issues that had previously dogged me were far from gone, and my energy didn't take long to disappear like a lonely sparrow. It therefore was a long day, with too many rest stops for only 10 miles. It was a sign, to be sure, but I just couldn't accept it. At this point I couldn't have been nutritionally deficient, and I was chugging water like mad the whole way. So what's the deal?

After camping at the 10-mile point, I plugged on, as I just couldn't face the thought of throwing in the towel again. Since this is the beginning of the slog over Mt. San Jacinto, i.e., up and over 9000 feet, 'hiking up' is the order of the day, and to say that I was struggling would be to master the

art of understatement. But I plugged on, resting frequently, and wondering off and on about the wisdom of getting further up... and further 'into' the wilderness.

At the somewhat late afternoon point, I made the decision to stop and set up camp. However, one of my usual actions at that point is to set up my chair, and take a substantial rest. Sitting where I was, looking up the trail, what to my wondering eyes should appear but a gentleman named Gio and his wife Ali, trucking back down the trail after having hiked considerably further up than I had. Being as this delightful couple was exceptionally personable, we chatted for quite some time before they decided to move on towards their camp, since they still had 6 miles to go to get to the TH.

Off they went down the trail, and my thinking turned to "...maybe I should have asked them if they would give me a ride to town?" Moot point since they were merrily on down the trail. However a few minutes later, back comes Gio as he and his lady were concerned about me continuing on. So I posited whether or not they might be able drag me into San Diego since they were going back that way (...or at least I thought they were 'going my way'). He and his wife had apparently already talked in



that direction as he agreed they could help me out. So he trucked off down to where his wife was waiting, and I packed up my chair and prepared to hike back to the TH, knowing full well that I would never make it all the way to the TH that night. Probably about 2 miles back the way I had come, a large camping area beckoned, and it took me no real long-term intellectual consideration to accept the offer of a bed for the night, albeit one on the ground. Next morning, on down the trail, and about halfway

back to the TH joined up with the previously mentioned couple, since they had also RON'ed on the trail.

Back at the TH they worked with their equipment as well as mine, in order to get everything into their SUV, and off we went towards San Diego. [At this point I have to do a sidebar, to the effect that I had decided without any evidence whatsoever, that since they were Marines, that their base would be in San Diego, so taking me where I needed to go would be minimal out-of-the-way. The reality? They were from Camp Pendleton, which was 1 hour north of San Diego. This wonderful couple had taken me two hours out of their way in order to do what they apparently felt that the Lord had motivated them to do. I am in awe.]

When I was able to get a signal on my phone, I determined the location of the Greyhound station and made a reservation at a nearby hotel. Why the Greyhound station you ask? Because I had previously determined that I was NOT going to ask my sister to make one more trip over to CA. She had done quite enough of that already.

And as well? Were you wondering if Greyhound had spruced up its concept of ideal station environs? Wonder no more, they have NOT! The San Diego station was in Central City Inc., and surrounded by tent communities and other delights. Walking to the station in the morning, at 5 am, oh-dark-thirty, it is safe to say that I was more than a trifle concerned about personal safety [...passed at least two folks sleeping on the ground]. But as should be obvious, I seem to have made it back to Glenwood, alive and well.

Suffice to say that the Greyhound ride was long, 18 hours long, but I was pleasantly surprised that the equipment was in very good shape, and the clientele was much more genteel than I have come to expect on the bus.

Since I arrived at Lordsburg, NM, at midnight, I RON'ed in a motel, then breakfast'ed the next AM across the street, then; on with the pack and off up the road we go to attempt at a 'hitch' to Silver City or beyond. Suffice to say that those leaving Lordsburg were not particularly inclined to pick up any scruffy hikers, so it was what we describe in the hiking community as a 'hard hitch'.

I finally was approached by a young lady who

turned out to be a hiker herself, 'Aspen' trail name, and she transported me to Silver City. After being dropped by my ride, since I knew my sister was leaving home to come for me, I hiked up and out of town, and I do mean up as it climbs quite seriously on its way north, and about the 3 mile point intersected with my sister, and at least for the time, backpacking was over. ☺

And the PCT? What now?

Not sure. I intend to check in with my family practice lady in Boise, and hope for a referral to a sports medicine individual to maybe get a handle on what if anything might be done to made me able to go back to hiking as it has been in the past. My heart has certainly not given up on hiking. My body? Not so sure.



*What the mountains ahead looked like before I turned my back on them and returned to the TH*