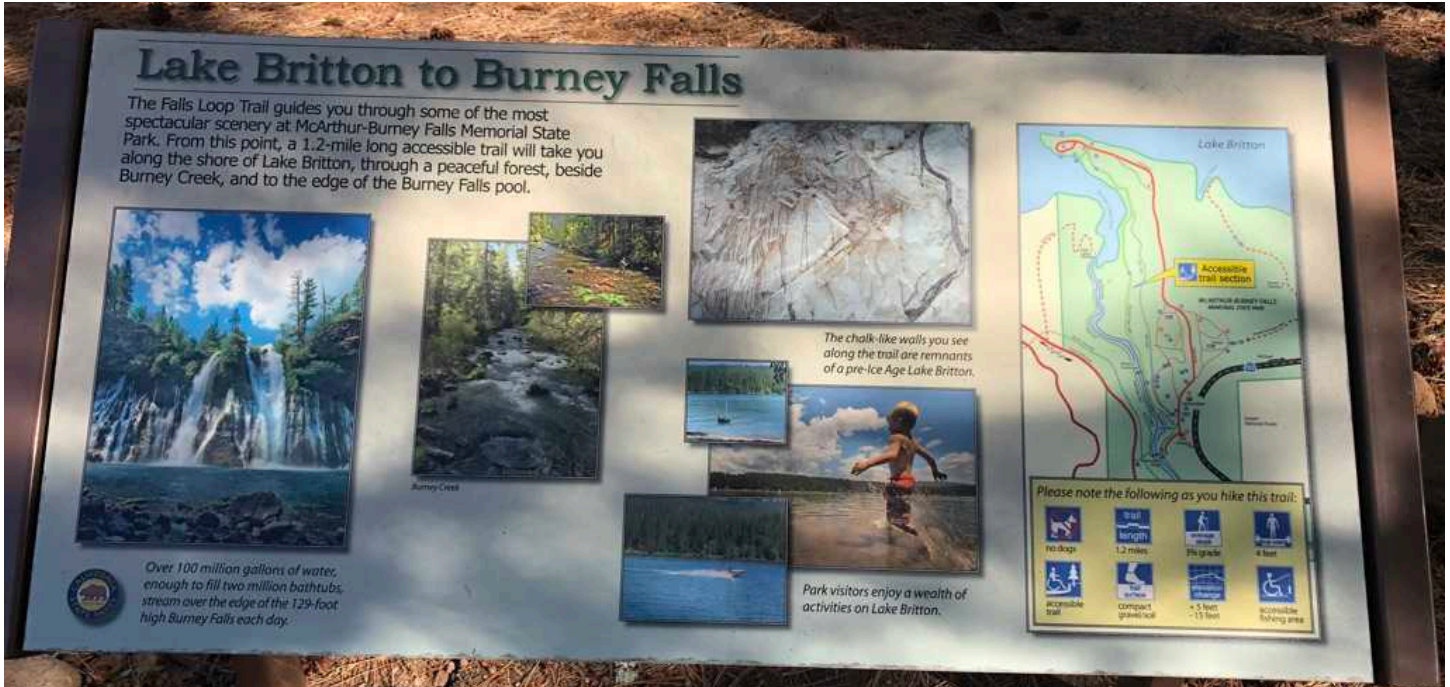


Road Art – 1st Trip – Days 31-40

Day 31 – 9/24/21, Lake Britton, CA to Black Butte Lake Recreational Area, CA

I woke up energized and took the trail down to the Burney falls. 50 feet from there, I realized I left my iPhone in the van, so no pictures. Afterwards, I finished my coffee and went to the boat launch to go on a paddle around Lake Britton and Burney Creek. A very relaxing start to the day.



Lot's of algae in the water, but clean and totally calm giving symmetrical reflections of the landscape.





After Lunch I headed south, I wanted to see if by chance Lassen Volcanic National Park was reopened, No such luck, fires are still torching parts of it, very sad.



I got a very far away glimpses of what I was missing through my windshield. Next summer for sure.



I got to Black Butte Lake tired, way too much driving after getting conflicting directions from my Tom Tom navigation and Google maps. I had a quick avocado-pastrami wrap, stared at some stars, it was pretty dark, but not as clear because of the ashes in the air. I went to bed early.

Day 32 – 9/25/21, Black Butte Lake Recreational Area, CA to Sacramento, CA

I woke up early, and took this nice picture of the moon and the trees



Unfortunately, because of the draught, the lake is mostly swamp. All the green that you see is normally covered with several feet of water. They had this life preserver near the normal full shore for those that fall in, obviously it is now just a reminder to conserve water.



My next stop is to complete the trio of West Coast Capital Buildings, so I headed to Sacramento, CA has a stunning building, although it is closed to visitors on the weekends.



After the capital building, I went and found an Apple store and synced my photos and updated the website for days 21-30. I found a great boondocking space to park and spend the night on a quiet residential street very near the Apple mall. Had a great night sleep,

Day 33 – 9/26/21, Sacramento, CA to South Fork Camp Ground, Groveland, CA

Ok, its been 32 days, throughout the trip I kept buying socks and underwear. I have many times told my kids that the reason you don't need to wash your pants every day is because we use undies, or at least I do. LOL. I found this awesome laundry facility in Sacramento, you could choose machines between 1 and 8 loads. I asked the lady at the counter what she thought and she pointed me to the 3 load machine. I chose the 4 for an extra buck. 26 minutes later it was all done. While waiting I met this very interesting hiker, his name was Kevin. He hikes all over the US picking up other people's trash. Once he carried 100 Lbs of floats from an area in NW Washington.

Makeshift cloth line to air dry stuff. I put this on my list of things to do for my next trip.



One of the coolest things of traveling without a schedule is you can stop anywhere, so I saw this trail next to an irrigation water canal and stopped. After talking to a random individual, he suggested I go upwind first making the return trip easier. I took his advice with a goal of doing at least 7 miles upwind. I over achieved as usual and had a blast continuing until I couldn't any more. The return was as promised, far easier. I am glad I got my exercise for the day. I try to do something (and more) every day.



After the bike ride, I drove for a bit and then stopped to make my crockpot meal for the evening. A typical western CA country road.



I cut up some garlic, onions, used baby carrots and a center cut pork loin, almost forgot the tomatoes, filled in the crockpot and I wish I had a picture of the finished product, but it was delish. I thought I would have leftovers, but it was so good that I ate it all.



The drive toward Yosemite National Park was beautiful. I drove on the bridge crossing Don Pedro Reservoir, a great recreational area, but notice how far down the water level is.



As the dinner cooked, the scent made me so hungry, I stopped in Senora for a while to get distracted. Cute little town.





For a small town, they had lots of churches and very nice ones.



The road into the campground was beautiful, and the river pristine.



Biked around for a bit and had my snacks/crock pot dinner, wrote down my thoughts for the day and had a quiet night sleep.

Day 34 – 9/27/21, South Fork Camp Ground, Groveland, CA to Stanislaus National Forest, CA

I awoke to a clear sunny morning and the drive on 120 toward Yosemite, it was beautiful.



So, I get to the gate, whip out my pass and am promptly asked if I have a reservation. WHAT? Me, mister plan NOTHING, didn't know you needed reservations to get into Yosemite. The only WiFi available is at Rush Creek Lodge, about a mile back. Once on WiFi, I quickly found out that they were sold out of camp sites, but could enter a lottery for Camp 4, only caveat is that you have to camp, not stay in your van, but it allows you to enter the park. I figured that once inside, I can probably get a RV site and if one wasn't available, I could always drive out the 45 minutes and stay at the same forest road I plan on finding and staying tonight.

So I entered the lotto for Camp 4 and climbing the Half Dome the following day. I found forest road 2s30 behind Rush Creek Lodge and explored places to stay, it was perfect, nearby, secluded and just me and the bears.

I did a nice hike and walked back to Rush Creek Lodge to get on WiFi and check on the lotto results.

Success/failure, I got 2 nights at Camp 4, guaranteeing my entry to the park and a **NO** on the Half Dome climb.



It was so quiet there, organized my plans for the next couple days then watched a movie with skinny pop and some wine.



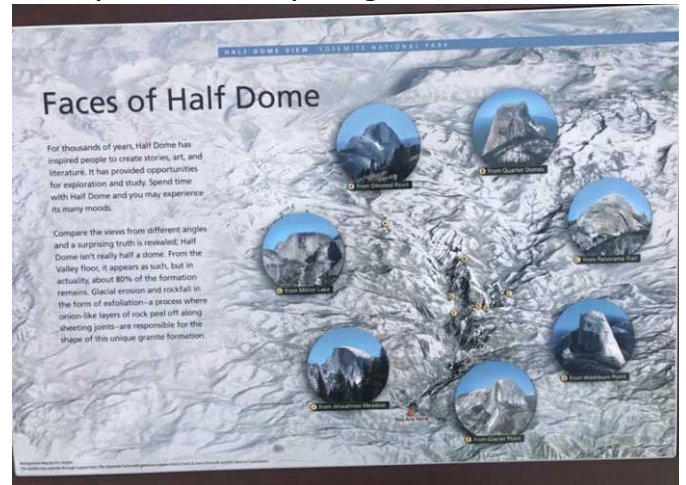
Once dark, I went outside to check out some stars, not too many due to clouds, but total darkness. Soon after it was bedtime and I had a very restful night sleep.

Day 35 – 9/28/21, Stanislaus National Forest, CA to Yosemite NP, CA

The pictures speak for themselves. Entering the Yosemite National Park.

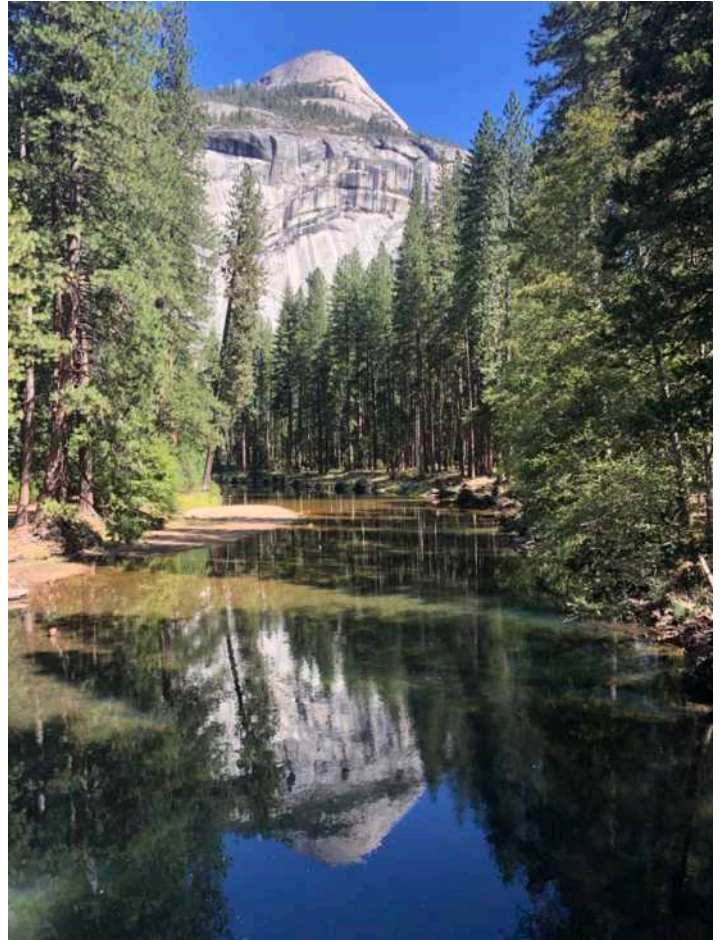
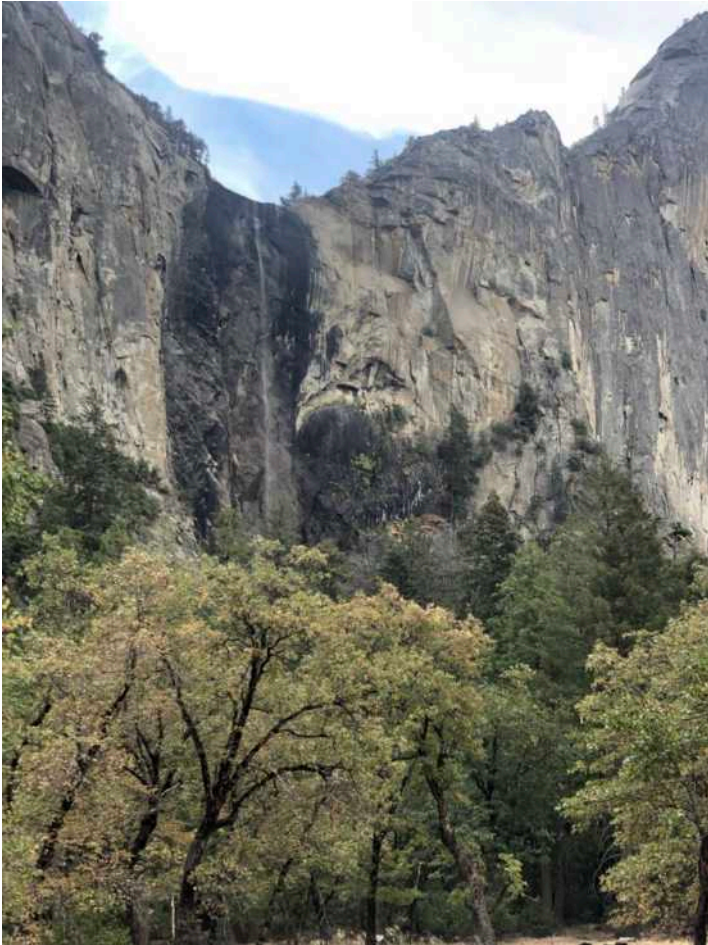


Half Dome, applied for another lottery climb opportunity on Thursday, fingers crossed.

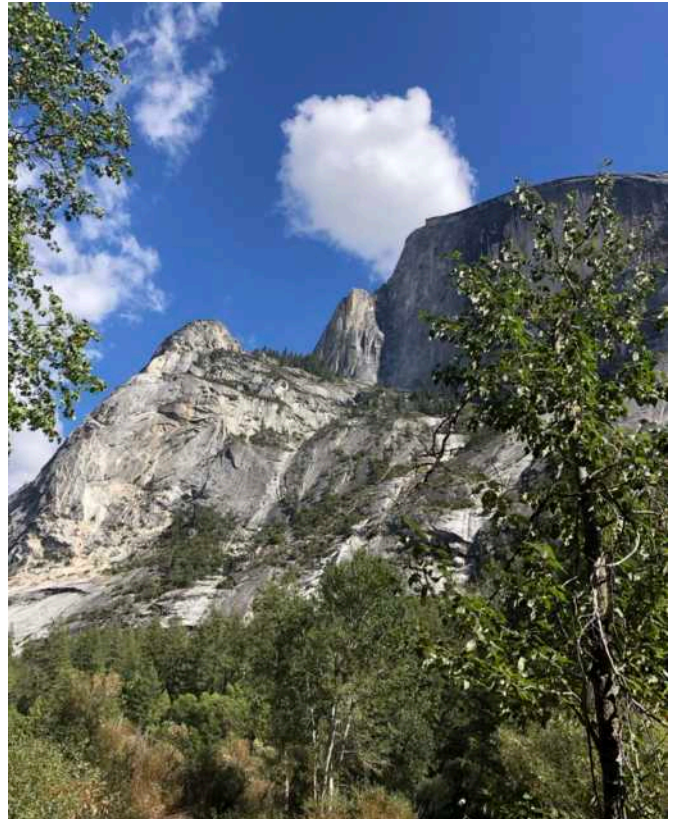


Hard to capture the grandness with a picture





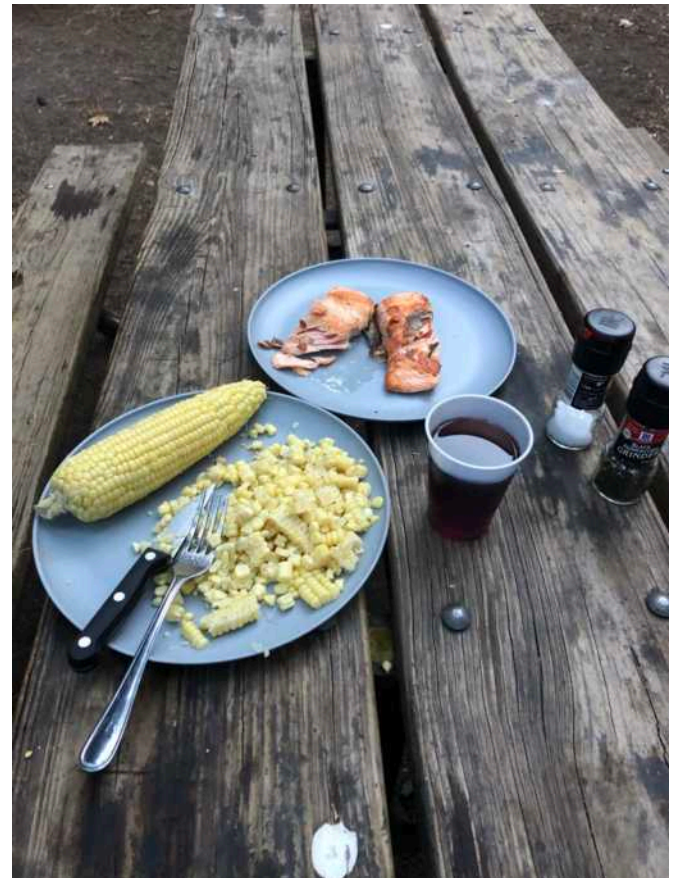
They even have their own post office zip code 95389.



As I biked the outer loop, I noticed a sign for Mirror Lake, and I explored, the lake was dry, but I did run into these stone monuments, tens of them. Technically, you are not supposed to touch, remove, gather anything, as they say "leave no trace".



I was able to get a dry camp RV spot, so I cooked, some salmon and corn on the cob for dinner. I was delish.



Unfortunately, I did not win the lottery for the Half Dome Climb, so I plan on doing 4 Mile Trail tomorrow. After socializing with some of my neighbors, another movie night, I went to bed and had a great night sleep.



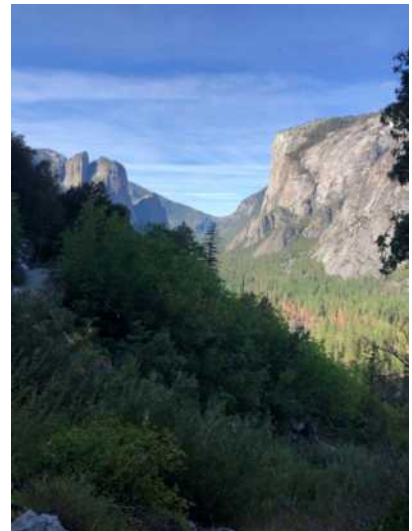
Day 36 – 9/29/21, Yosemite NP, CA

It's so nice waking up to these view in the morning and a deer crossing, creating a traffic jam.

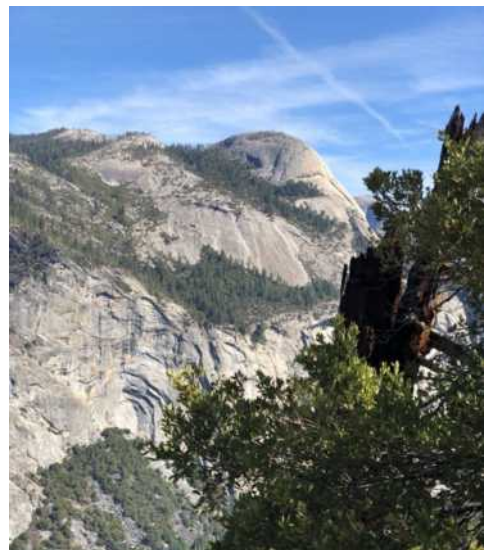




4 mile hike to Glacier Point, 4.6 miles with 3,200 ft of elevation gain.



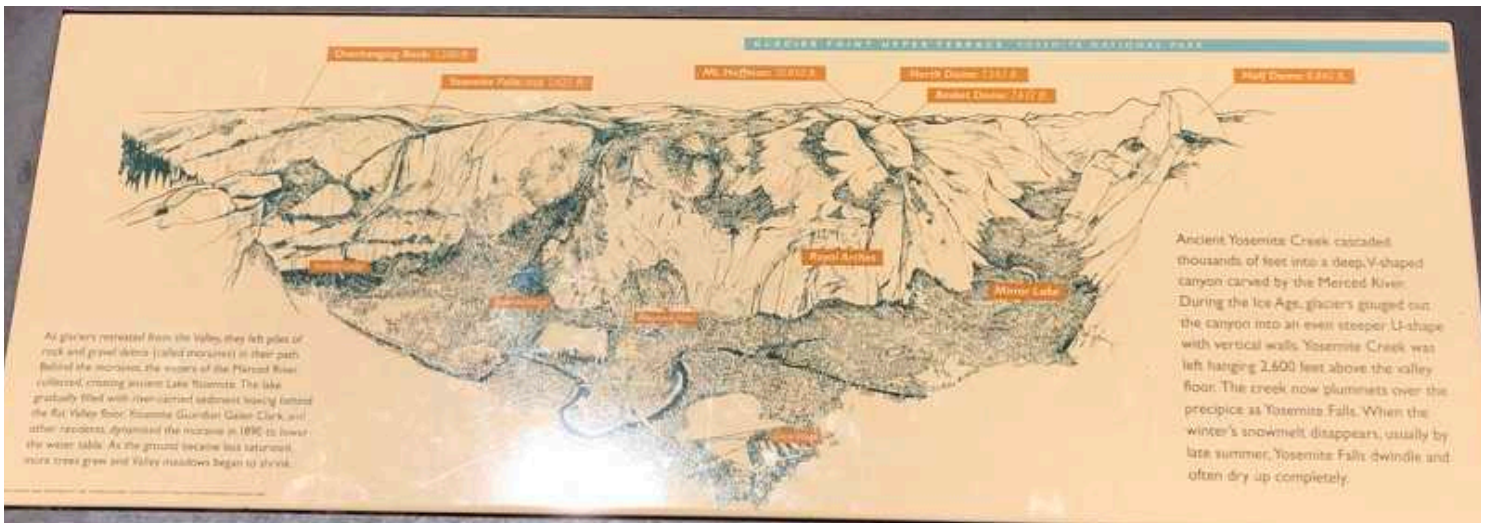
As you climb, the views continue to improve, and a glimpse at Half Dome.



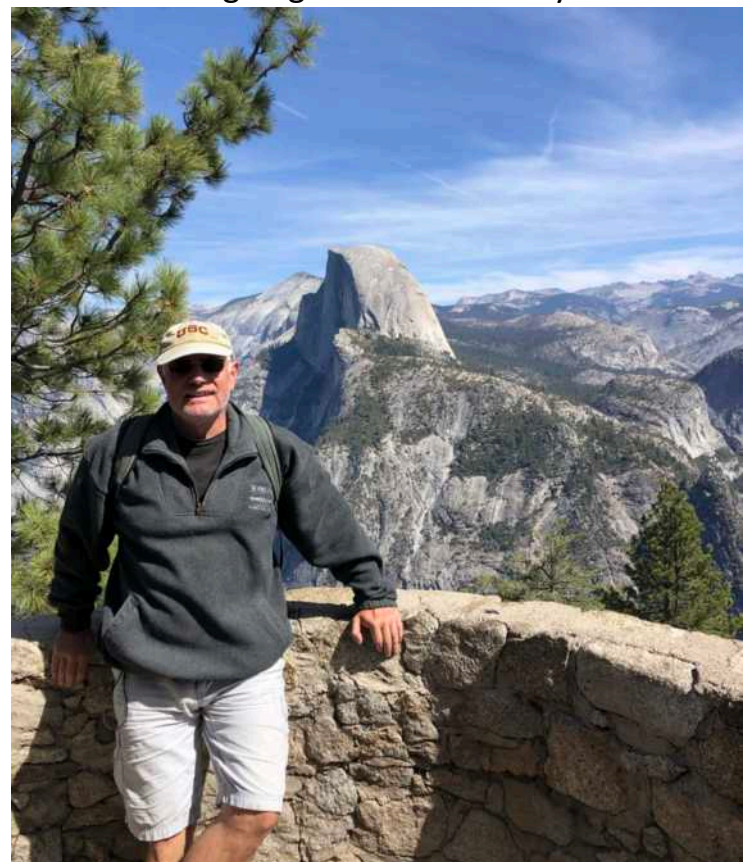
As one nears the top, they energy begins to dwindle, but the views keep you going.



I saw only a couple of handfuls of hikers including 3-4 that turned around about ~1/3 of the way up. And finally at the Glacier Point.



As you can tell, I am a bit obsessed with Half Dome and I am going to climb it on my next visit.



On the way down, you experience different views and the hike is far easier. As the sun hits from different angles, the reflection give way to new view. My van is near the RED dot



And what I didn't want to happen, happen. I triped on a rock and hit my knee full on. I always fear this because I have do most activities alone and in semi desolate places. While I was in a quite a bit of pain, I had to push through, and as I did, I saw my knew swell up and yellow from the hit as it bruised. No ice or emergency patrol on 4 mile trail.



I made it down, took a great shower at Camp 4 and nursed my knee for the rest of the day. Since I had to move RV spots, I had new neighbors and more socializing. The late afternoon gave way to the evening and after cooking a burger I called it an early night hoping that my knee would be better the next day.

Day 37 – 9/30/21, Yosemite NP, CA to San Mateo, CA

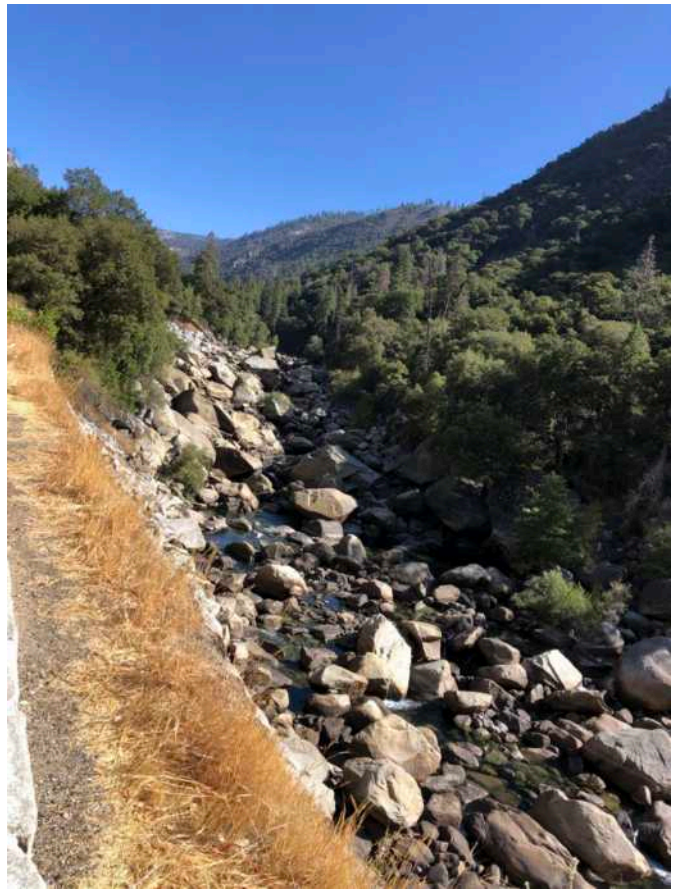
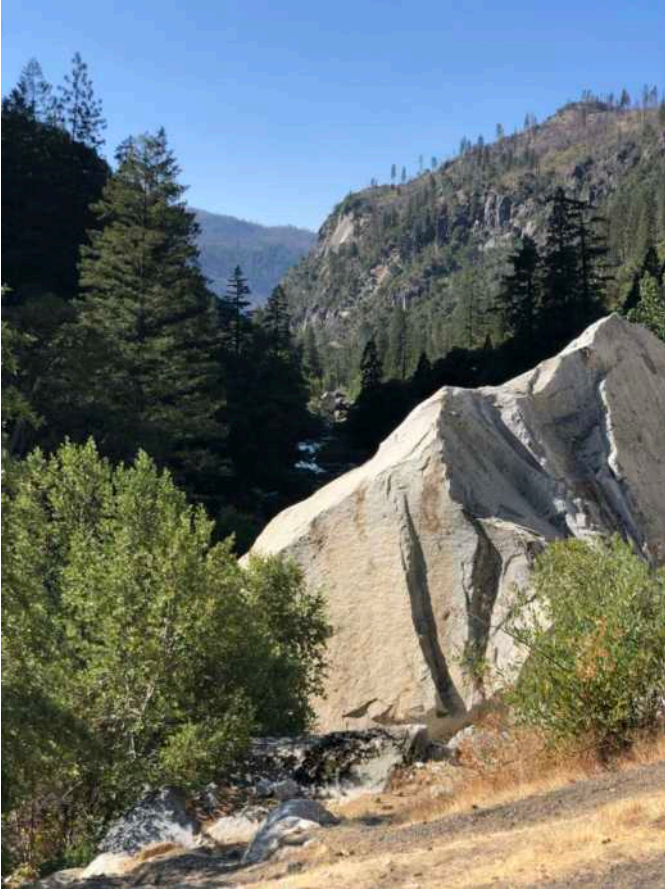
I was able to sleep well, the knee still swollen and quite painful getting in and out of the van. I went for a short cycle to work the knee a bit. The stretch made it better. As I was cycling, I notice lots of people by the Nose Formation and looking through binoculars; there were 2 climbers scaling the nearly vertical rock. They looked smaller than ants xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx



I took 140 out of the park, on the way a very cool rock overhanging the road.



This river drops 350 feet per mile, so when its full, it rages.



Bye Bye Yosemite, I will be back.



I headed back to the bay area to then go north to the Sonoma and Napa wine regions. Since I was familiar with San Mateo, I decided to visit Albertito's old stomping grounds and boondock there. I went to one of our favorite sushi restaurants, Old Town Sushi and had a nice meal, although indoor dining is closed. They are totally renovating the entire downtown area and traffic and detours are a mess.



I went to bed a bit sad as I remembered and replayed the my time there a few years ago.

Day 38 – 10/01/21, San Mateo, CA to Sonoma, CA

I always wanted to bike the Bay Trail in San Mateo park heading north, almost to the airport. The weather was perfect and the ride was good with my knee feeling much better and the swelling almost gone.





I continued north on the west side and it routed me through some of San Francisco's beautiful townhouses, and eventually the Golden Gate Bridge.



I pulled over Vista Point and biked across the bridge taking my time and enjoying the experience. And the tunnel I am about to go through.



Just a few miles north-east was Sonoma wine country. Everything has changed since Covid-19. Most wineries now require appointments for tastings and their winery tours are closed or downsized. Still fun to visit.



Wine country pictures



After stopping at an information center, this most helpful lady suggested to go to the town center and visit some wine tasting venues there. Beautiful town center.





5 P.M.

MAY
WINE
WINE
WINE

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WINES

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FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

KAMEN
ESTATE WINES

Fiddle & Wines ↑
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WOMEN'S APPAREL

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TRATTORIA • ROSTICCERIA • PASTICCERIA

LOVE ↑
BY SONOMA

SOJOURN ↑
CELLARS

WOOF!
SONOMA, CA

KAMEN
ESTATE WINES

Bear Moon

I had lunch at HARE and HATTER SAUSAGE, it was flights accompanied by a flight of local beers



I also tasted ADASTRA's wines, served by the owner, a retired physician, 79 years old with a passion for his wines and wine making. It was a very relaxing experience. I had made a booking with BoondockersWelcome.com so I headed there next. The host was a super nice person and had a great place to park for the night.

After a wine country style dinner, a bit of chocolate, I turned in after surfing the news for a bit.



Day 39 – 10/02/21, Sonoma, CA to Napa, CA

After my usual morning coffee and breakfast, I left for Napa town center. The sleepy little town I remember from the late 1990's is now a bustling town and obviously a total tourist destination. To my surprise when I got there, tents, food vendors and band stages were being erected everywhere. I stopped at the visitor center to inquire and was told that its one of their most thought after events and that it will fill up with people at around noon. I decided to hang out there and enjoy my lucky day.

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12th ANNUAL NAPA
DOWNTOWN NAPA ASSOCIATION

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2nd OCTOBER
SATURDAY
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NOON ~3:00 **Nancy Wright** and the Rhythm & Roots Band
3:30 ~6:00 **The Daniel Castro** Band

ZYDECO STAGE • RANDOLPH ST.
NOON ~3:00 **I*ko YaYa**
3:30 ~6:00 **Andre Thierry & his Accordion Soul Music!**

GOODMAN LIBRARY
NOON ~3:00 **Johnny Smith** Trio
3:30 ~6:00 **The Smart Fellers**

EIKO'S STAGE • FIRST & FRANKLIN
NOON ~3:00 **Tia Carroll & Frankie G-Acoustic**
3:30 ~6:00 **Marshall Law Band**

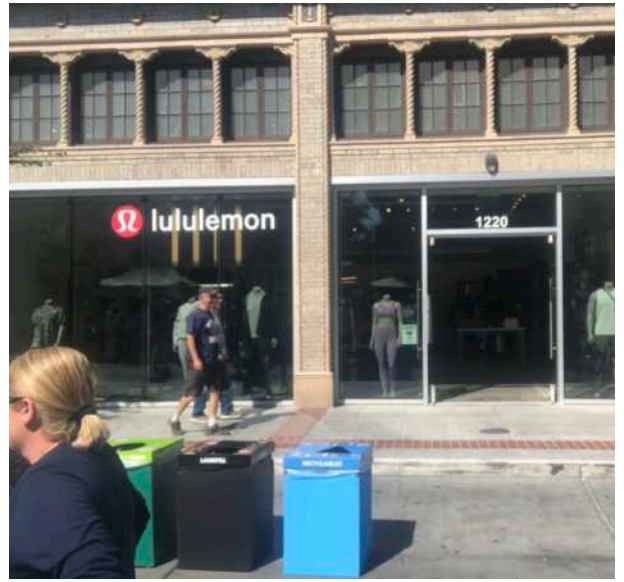
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I walked around the town before things got started



I always take pictures of Lululemon store fronts for Christina. Lululemon Napa!



Yes it was a festival for sure, people enjoying a beautiful day in Napa. **Blues bands:**



Brews:



And BBQ:



I boondocked nearby on a quiet street and slept like a baby.

Day 40 – 10/03/21, Napa, CA to Pinnacles National Park, CA

Early to bed, early to rise. Made some coffee and breakfast and was on my way south, Monterey perhaps. Sunrise and along the way heading south.



A bit after Gilroy, garlic capital, I saw a sign for Pinnacles National Park and it quickly got my attention. Never really heard of it.

At the camp ground there were random turkey's walking around, also lots of deer.



I decided to go for a bike ride to explore the trails for tomorrow's hiking and get some exercise. I found a much better welcome to Pinnacles NP sign. Read a bit of history and what made this place special. I was a bit underwhelmed, but I was here.



A Faulty History

You are standing near an ancient crack in the earth within the San Andreas Fault Zone. The Chalone Creek Fault divides the volcanic rock in front of you from the sedimentary rock behind you. Millions of years ago, this fault and its sister - the Pinnacles Fault - created steep cliffs as the land in front of you was uplifted and the land behind you dropped below

sea level, creating an inland sea. As the volcanic rock began to erode away, sand, gravel, and boulders washed down into the inland sea and formed a stack of thick sedimentary layers. The stark contrast of the Pinnacles spires to the west with the rolling hills behind you is a result of the geologic forces that have shaped the land and tell the story of the San Andreas Fault.

The San Andreas Fault

The San Andreas Fault may look like a clean line on a map of California, but if you zoom in to the Pinnacles area, a zone of faults several miles long, splitting and rejoining, active and ancient, is revealed. The Chalone Creek Fault and Pinnacles Fault were once the main players in the fault zone, but were abandoned about 6 million years ago when the main fault transferred to the eastern part of the zone. As time passes, active faults become extinct and new faults are formed.

In the evening I was experimenting with the LED lights, it sure attracted some curious onlookers



And it was a good thing because they shared with me that the bats will be coming out shortly and it was a good show. Sure enough, right at dusk, 15-20 bats were flying around feeding on mosquitoes. Quite a scene but impossible to photograph.

Tomorrow, I will share why Pinnacles merits to be a National Park.

To Be Continued