



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Hello to Family & Friends

With the exception of the idiot who started off-roading near me about 9:30 p.m. then came back at 10 and I could hear his buddy laughing, it was a peaceful night.

My plan is to cross the road, then head uphill and enter every dry wash I come across and see if I can find some interesting ones like yesterdays. I have no internet here so I can't search for marked trails or where they start. And I don't want to be riding here and there, so I will hopefully just have some fun.

The photo above is a slab of asphalt which has been washed from the road by some past flash flood and deposited here. The hiking pole is open to about 4 feet and the slab is almost a foot thick. There are slabs like this all over the sides of the road. Yesterday I passed a bunch of dead branches wrapped around a post 5 feet from the ground. It is hard to imagine the entire width of this area under five feet of rushing water. That must be a sight to behold.

I will tell you now that my phone/camera died, so there really are very few pics as I mentioned yesterday, just not for the same reason.

Below is the start of dry wash/canyon #1



Day 17
Sunday,
January 19th

*Hiking in the
Mecca Hills
Wilderness*

Weather
50's to 70's and sunny

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



So far, so good



A little bouldering to do, but that's ok.

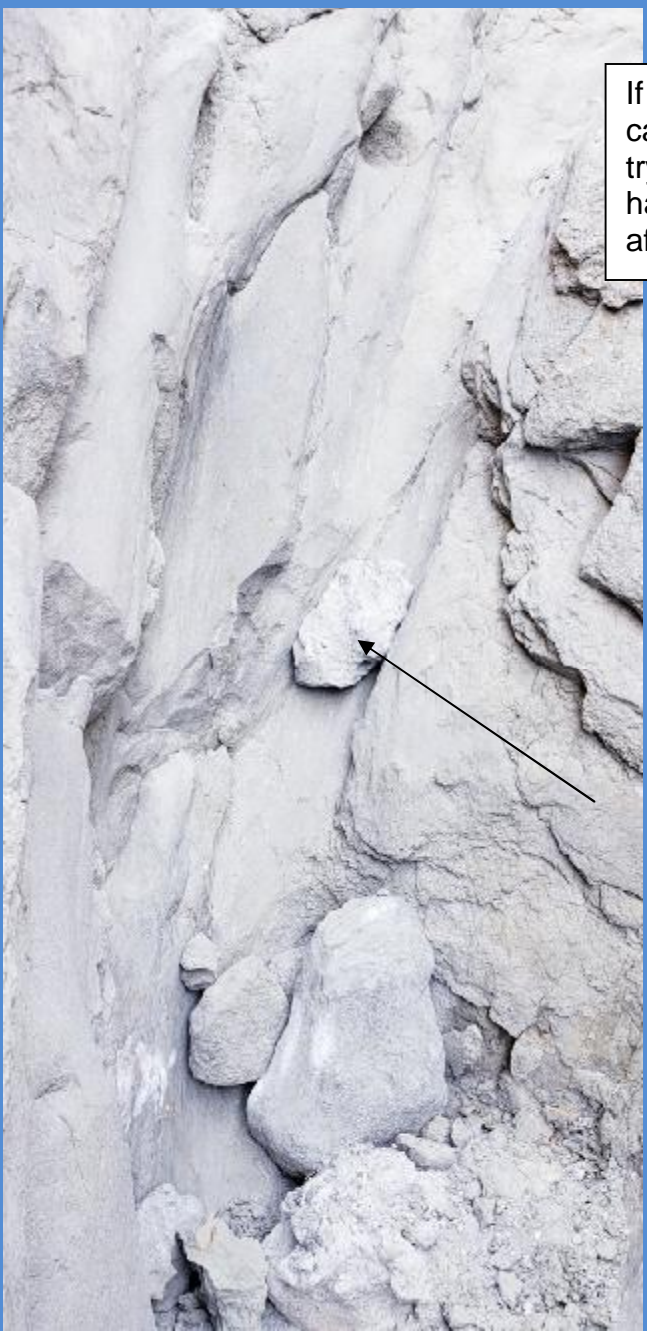


Ok, I'm not sure which one I'm in anymore. Could be 1 or 2, but that looks like a tight squeeze



I actually think this is number 3. It was amazing. I had to climb walls three times and get under a boulder the size of a car. I was stymied at this spot. It's about seven feet high and there was nowhere to get purchase with my foot to make the top. I was able to climb up a little to the right, just to get a glimpse of the trail ahead. That's when I saw the boulder to crawl under. I studied this problem for awhile, almost turned around, then went searching for a stone.

If you compare this photo with the one above, you can see where I added the stone. It was my second try, the first crumbled under the pressure of just my hand trying to wedge it in. This one seemed solid, and after testing my weight, I made the next level.



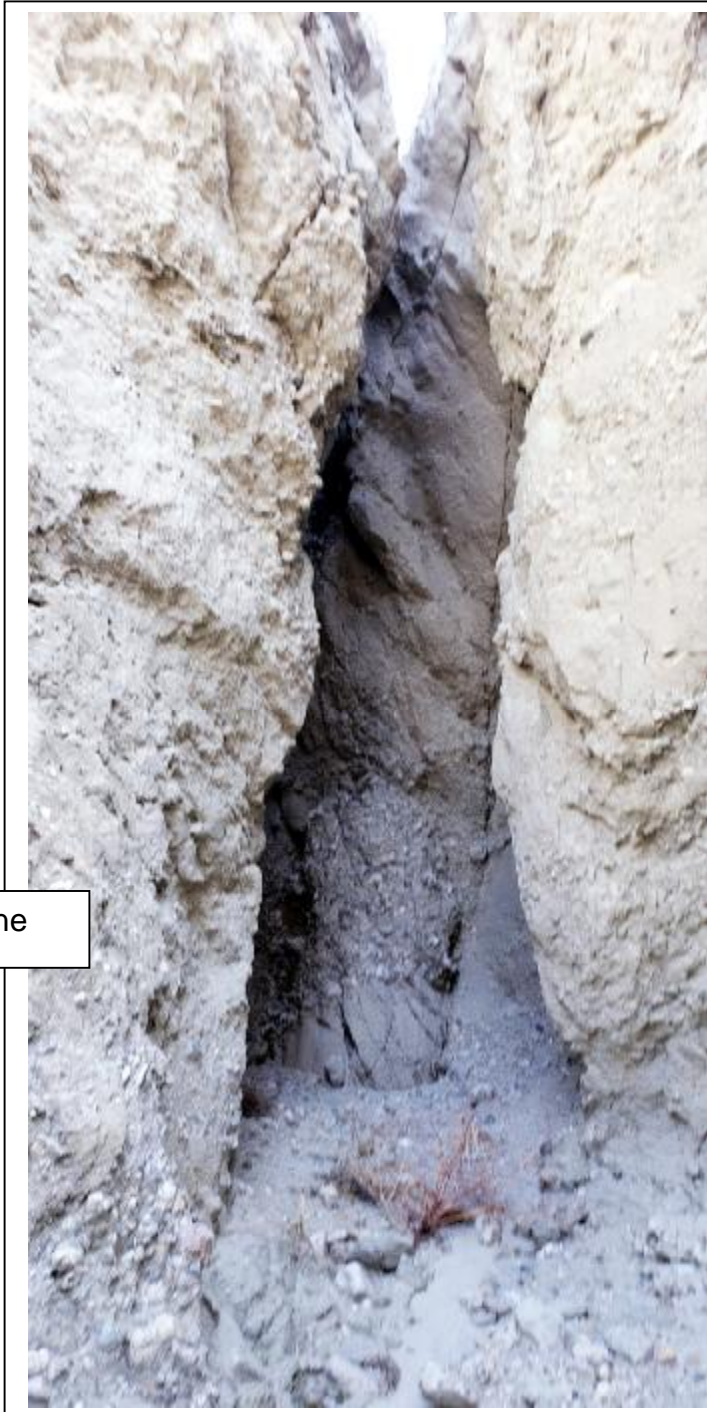
I know I took a picture of the boulder making a tunnel to crawl through. I took it both coming and going, but I can't find them. Too bad, it was great. Below is another space I had to wiggle through. This canyon was probably close to half a mile like yesterdays.



Around the tree and continue to climb



Looks like the end of the line



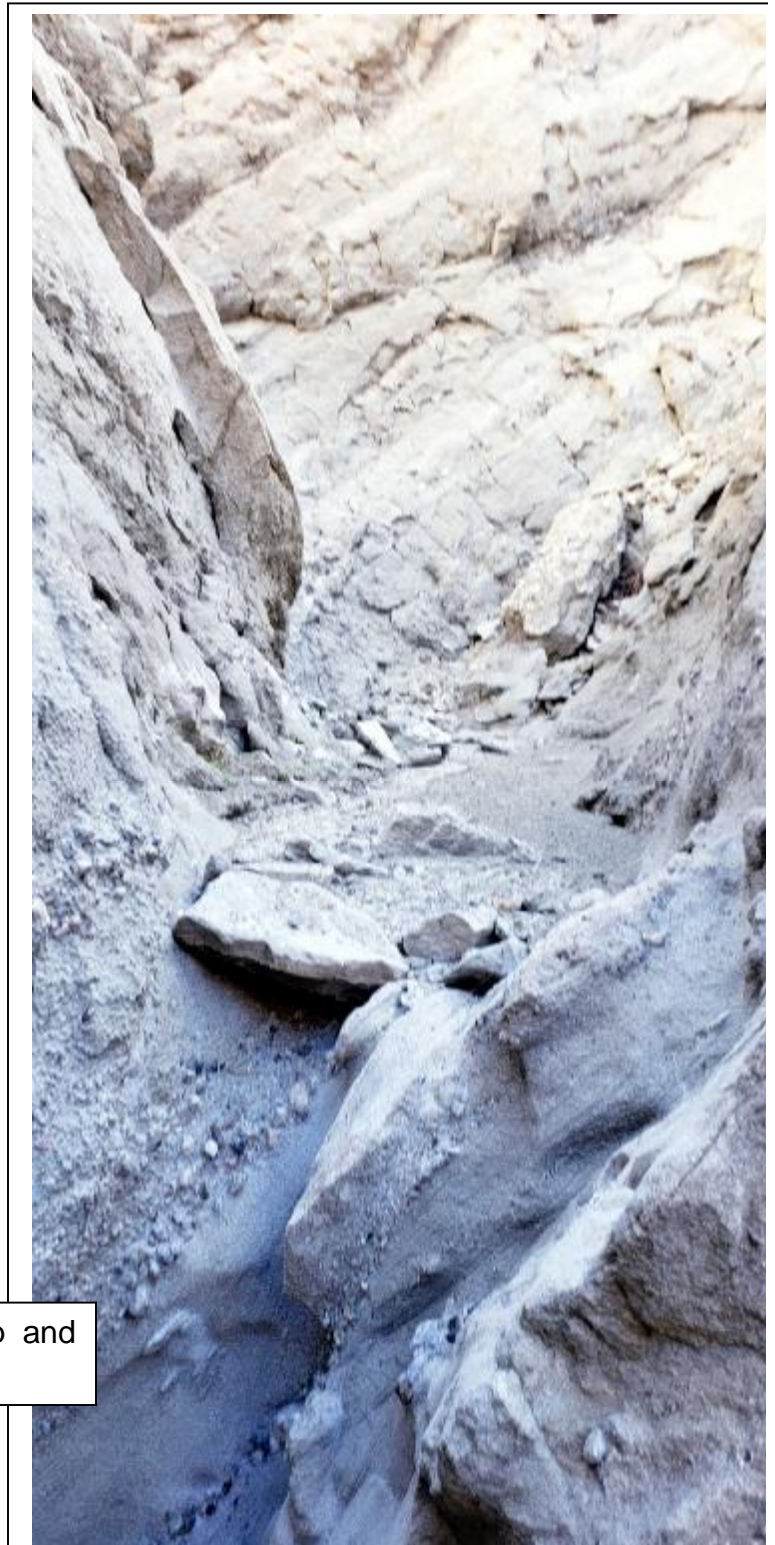
This was a boulder I could NOT get by



Decisions, decisions. Should I take the right or the left fork? Easiest decision there is. Do one, then on the way back do the other. That's exactly what I did.



Darn, looks like the end of the line again. But wait, on the right opposite the hiking pole is an opening....



...and it is. A step up and keep on going



The photo above is just to give you an idea of the width of the canyon I'm following. This was pretty typical.

And this is where the battery died, unfortunately. There were some amazing places I hiked into today.

There was one so thin I had to take my pack off to be able to squeeze through.

Another where the water was so powerful it actually ate through the rock and created an arch. In fact I think it was the arch one where I started to see a little garbage, then a pair of underwear laying on a rock, then a pair of jeans, then heard what I thought might be snoring, and then I turned around and headed back. Who knows what that person might be like when suddenly awakened.

Speaking of garbage, there was a lot scattered around: broken glass, wrappers, cups, plastic bottles, a VCR. And I noticed, not to be mean to off-roaders at all, but where there were tire tracks, there was the most garbage. I learned to avoid the washes that were large enough for an OHV, because I knew I would be hiking through garbage rather than nature. The trails with only foot traffic were much cleaner.

Another canyon at the end had walls over 200 feet high that I was hiking through, with blue sky above.

In the last one I ran into a wall that was about five feet high, but it was undercut by water and there was no place to place a foot. So after probably ten main canyons and half a dozen tributaries, I called it a day. That's not bad for 3.5 hours. It was a great time.

I hiked back to the RV, cleaned up, drove into Indio for the slaughter on TV, and am now parked in a casino lot for the night. There must be a hundred rigs here.

Tomorrow back to Joshua Tree.

Until next time.....