



In Search of Eldorado

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



Hello to Family & Friends

Another good night with the river and the frogs, but very windy to start out with. I mean VERY windy. The RV was rockin' to the point I hit the wrong keys on the keyboard once or twice.

I first visited the Whitewater Preserve on Friday, but since they said it would be crowded over the weekend I waited until today to do my hiking. Wasn't I surprised by the number of vehicles flying past my campsite on the way to the Preserve?

By the time I arrived at the parking lot there must have been 20+ cars there already. Good thing I planned on doing the trail in the opposite direction again. Boy was I glad I did.

When I asked the Ranger where the trailhead was for the other end she told me most people do it the other way because of the switchback. Thinking there was only one set of switchbacks I asked her "but it's all downhill from this side (pointing to the map) and it's better to get the hard part out of the way first and make it easy on the way back." She agreed but seemed doubtful.

The difficult part was not the switchback, if the trail is done the traditional way, the last 3/8 of a mile are uphill though sand and loose stones. I got that out of the way first and it was downhill while I did it. Then a switchback up the mountain; a few ups and downs across the top; and a steep switchback down at least three times as long as the one I ascended.

I did the trail the easy way. When I was done I was not tired at all.

Day 25
Monday,
January 27th

Sand to Snow NM
To
Santa Rosa and San
Jacinto Mountains NM

Weather
50's to 80's and Sunny

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan 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?'

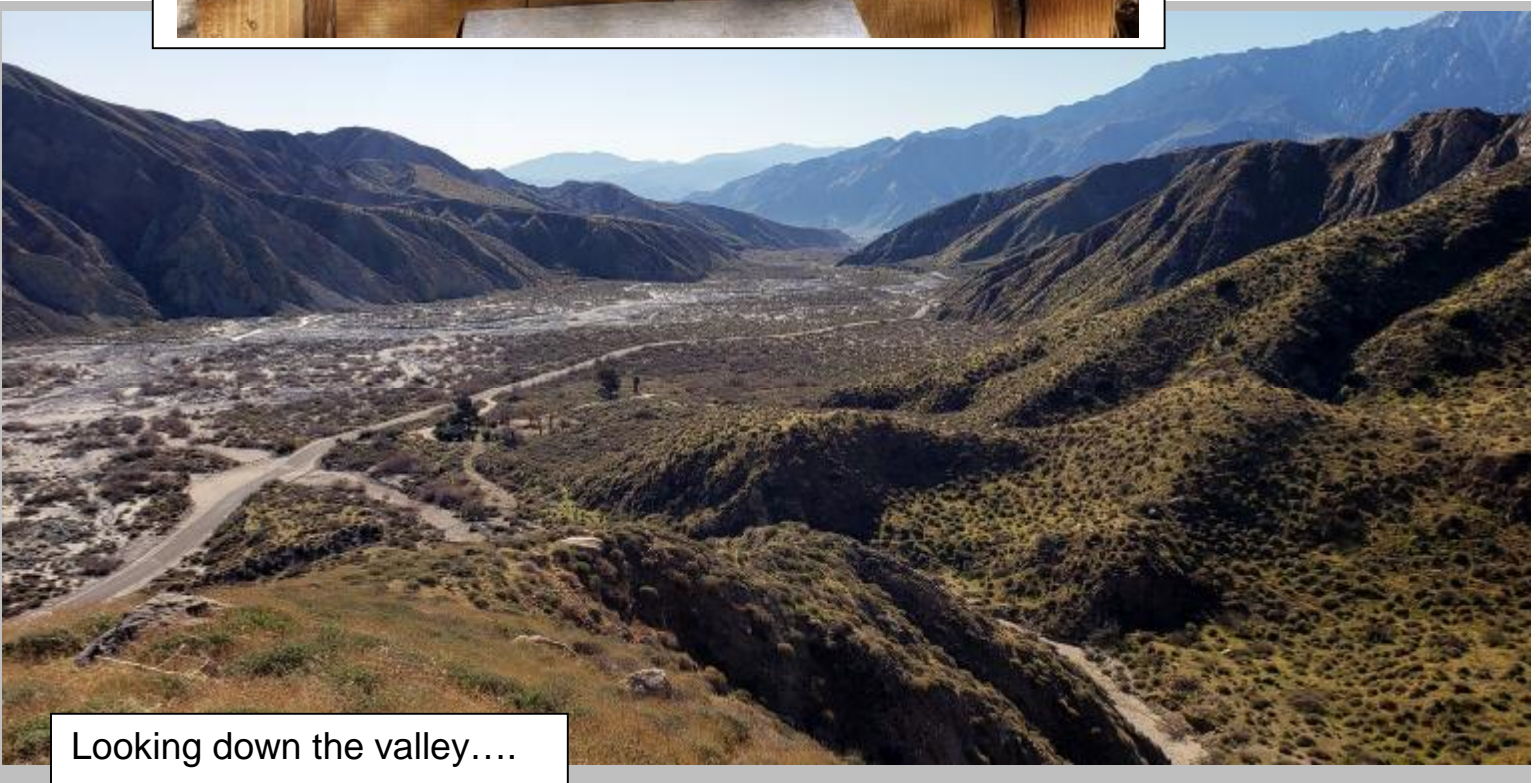
'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



A very nice Ranger Station and VC



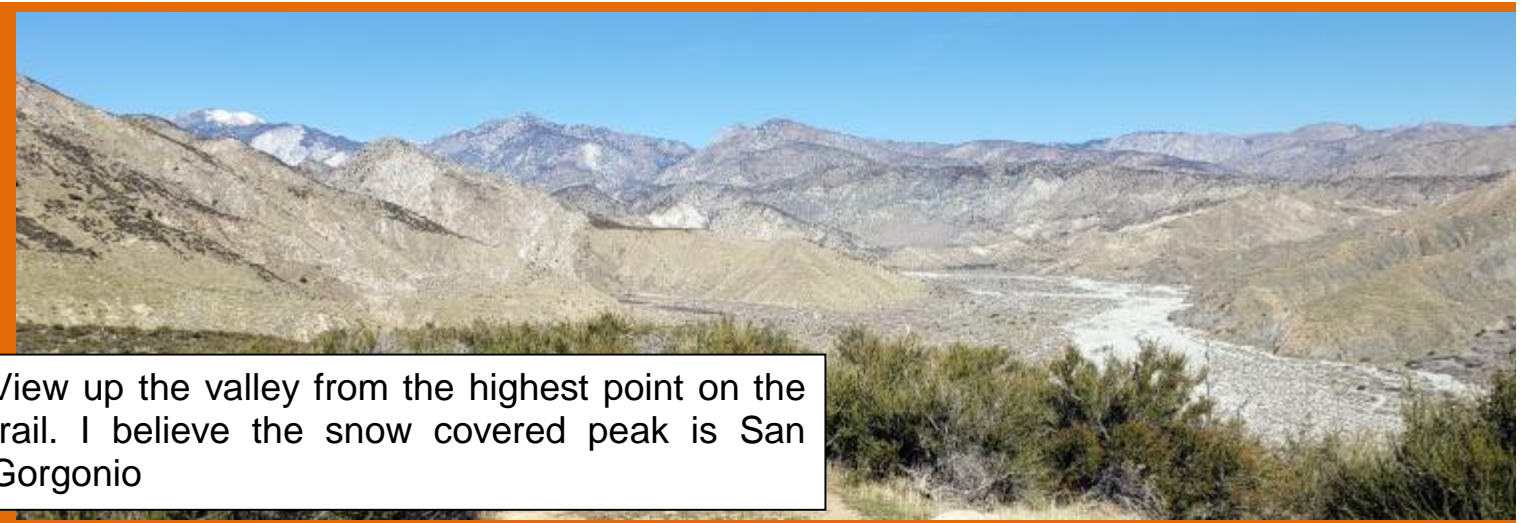
Cross another National Monument off the list. This is the only access to it.



Looking down the valley....



....looking up the valley



View up the valley from the highest point on the trail. I believe the snow covered peak is San Gorgonio



The trail below is the end of the steep switchback



I believe this is the first time I've been on the Pacific Crest Trail. I join it here for a little over two miles.

The foot traffic on the PCT is definitely higher than the Canyon View Loop I just finished.



My goal is the Red Dome, but it's pretty neat that I could keep on going and not stop until I reach Canada.



This is where the Red Dome ends and the PCT continues on. You can just see the post in the middle of the picture



There is no plaque, but I guess this is why they call it the Red Dome Trail



Or it might be because this entire hill is red rather than the gray and brown of everything else around it.



A final look down the valley

I ate lunch in the RV at the parking lot. It was almost a seven mile hike. A couple days ago I mentioned hiking the San Andreas Fault, so I headed over to Thousand Palms and the Coachella Valley Preserve. The Fault runs right through the middle of it. The palms below were my first thought for why the area is called Thousand Palms, then I learned there are about twenty oases like this in the preserve.



Seriously, if you know anyone that has worse luck than I do finding visitor centers closed when they get there, please let me know. I'd like to meet them.



I sat in the RV for awhile trying to find where the Fault crosses the road. I read that the Fault crosses the Paul Wilhelm Palm Grove. Why, that's just around the base of the hill across the street. Gear up, head over, the sign states this is not a through trail. That was it. I had a headache, it was 84 degrees (sorry Wisconsin) and too hot to go traipsing off into the desert. I exited the RV and took the following photos.



According to sanandreasfault.org, this is the path of the San Andreas Fault....



....crossing right between my feet....

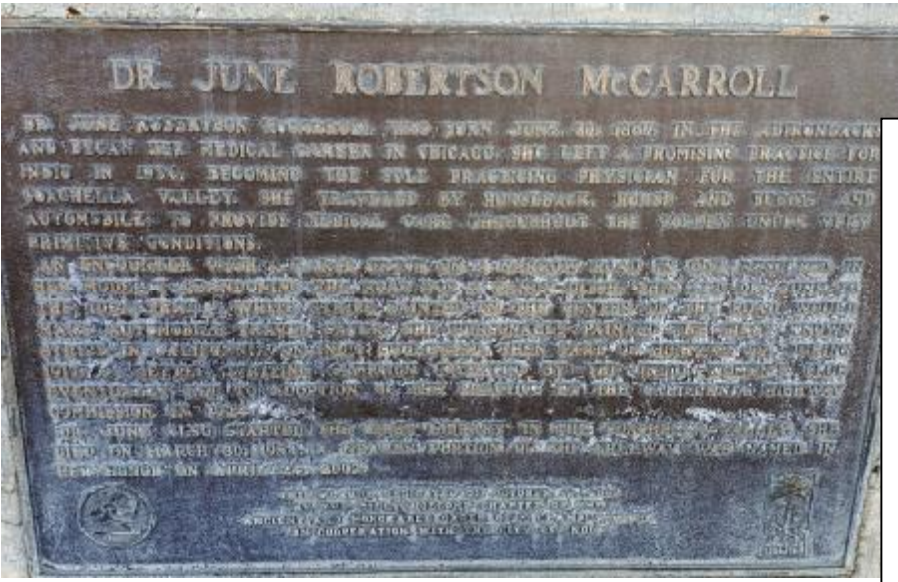


....and continuing towards the Salton Sea.

I made a short side trip back to Indio for a look at the marker below



The little park was very well kept, and GREEN. I'm not used to green anymore. I know, there are 100 golf courses in Palm Springs, right? But they're all behind walls, rocks and houses.



Hard to read, isn't it? I couldn't read it when I was standing right in front of it. This is a marker celebrating Dr. June Robertson McCarroll, a doctor for the Coachella Valley in the early 20th century. She was almost in a head-on collision with a truck while on her way to see a patient. Afterwards, she came up with the idea to paint centerlines on the highway. She is credited with the invention of the highway centerline. I don't have internet here, but the info is on Roadside America if you're interested in the facts.

Hahahahahahahahahahaha, and maybe a tear or two. I arrived at 4:45. I raced to get here before five because the national park/monument VC's are always open until five. Yes, the gate is still open. There was some kind of a program going on in another building, the VC was closed.



It looks like a very nice visitor center too.

Well, The Good: I can cross another National Monument off the list (that's two in one day). The Bad: I won't be around here for three more days until the VC opens on Thursday. And, The Ugly: The look on my face when I saw the 'Gate locks at 4:00 sign'.



The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains NM is operated by the BLM. According to what I could find, as long as the area is not posted 'No Overnight Parking', I should be able to pull off for the night.

The drive through the NM is via the Pines to Palms Highway, a very scenic drive here in California. Since it was getting dark I found this spot and pulled over. There's a pickup here also. As I write this I hear music coming from that direction. At least if it's not legal to park here, the ranger will have to kick us both out. That might be incentive to leave us alone.

Originally I was only driving a short way into this Monument, then turning back and going around the Salton Sea. But since I already did that, I think I'll stick to the scenic drive. I read it's about 40-50 miles of twists and turns. Should be fun.

With no internet and no visitor center, I have no maps of the area. There was one outside the VC but it's not very detailed. I'll have to rely on my AllTrails app. I guess, when I was at the BLM in Palm Springs asking about this NM and being told, "There's a visitor center there." It would've been nice to have also been informed that it was only open five days a week. But the customer service at that location sucked anyways.

Until next time.....