

Lunch Time!!

Western Road Trip Newsletter



The next leg
of my trip

Day 4

Tuesday

October 29th

Dodge City, Kansas

To

Pagosa Springs,

Colorado

Stats

527.5 miles today

1566 total miles this trip

Just over 10 hours on the
road

Weather

High Temp: 68

Low Temp: 33

Conditions: Sunny, rainy,

"You have got to
be kidding me!"

A Day of Ups, Downs and Wild Weather

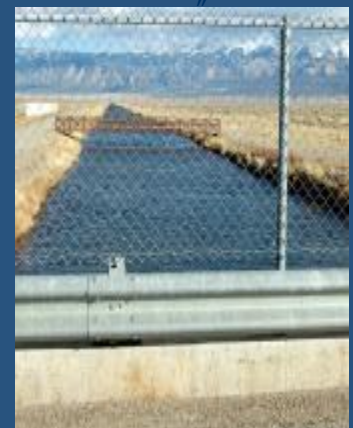
After last night's rain, this morning was very foggy. I had my free breakfast at the hotel again but could not even finish both pancakes. Fortunately, they had bacon this morning instead of sausages,

I hit the road by 8:30 heading west. My original plan was to camp for free at an out-of-the-way spot off of Park Creek Road, about 30 minutes north of Wolf Creek Pass. However, when I checked the future weather forecast before leaving home the high for that area was supposed to be 29 degrees with a low in the teens. Since it was only another 45 minutes or so to Pagosa Springs, I decided to make that my next overnight.

I imagine because of the wide open prairies there are a lot of windmill farms down here. Some of the pictures below are of a windmill manufacturing plant in Kansas, Those blades are huge.

Once I crossed into Colorado the skies began to clear, the sun came out, the temperature rose from 45 to 68, and the wind kicked up like you would not believe. There were warning signs on the highway that stated high winds for the next 15 miles, so it must be a regular occurrence there.

I also got my first glimpse of the Rockies. At first I thought, "it must be since the mid-nineties since I last saw the Rockies, on a family trip to Yellowstone.



There was no water in the
lake, but plenty in this
canal



The windmill photos



My first view of
the Rockies
since 2006





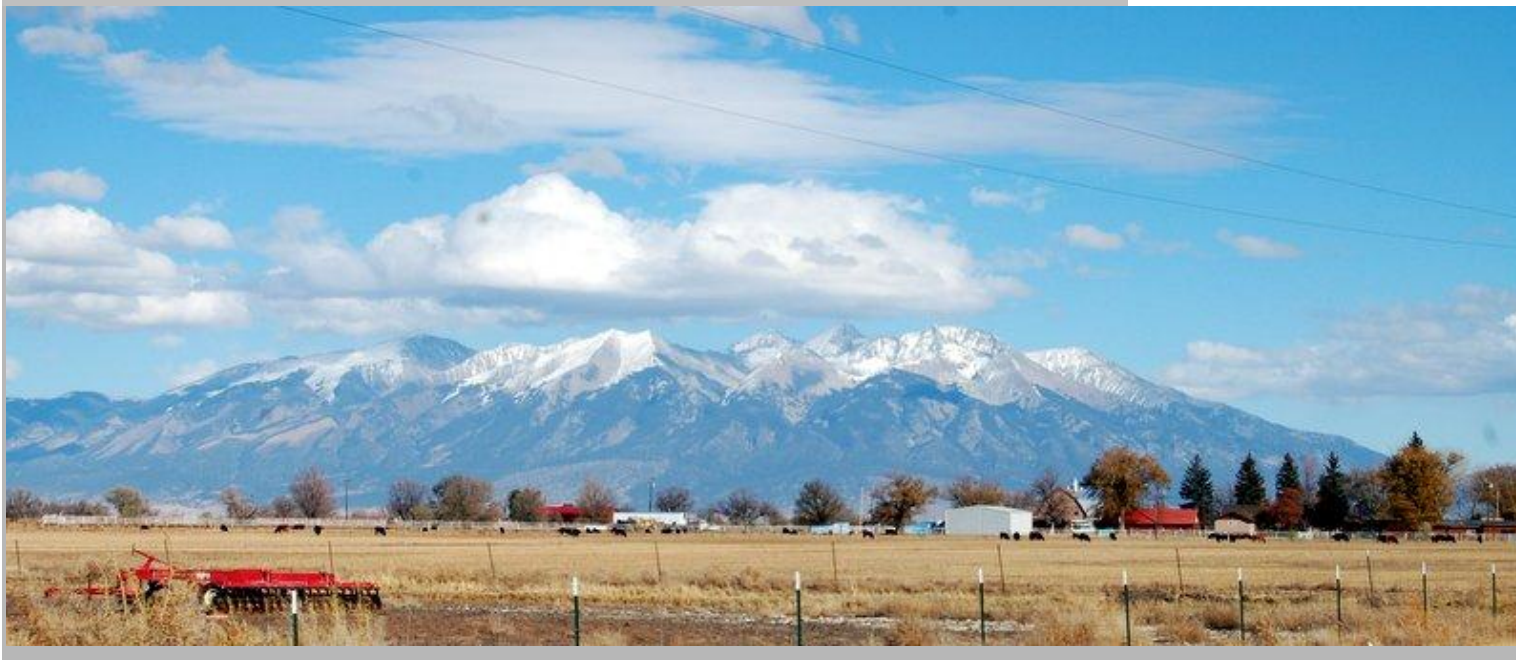
Above: My view for lunch

Below: Beautiful Snowcapped Mountains

Then I realized it was actually in 2006 during the group trip to Alaska and Canada. Mount McKinley especially sticks in my mind.

So I drove a little further and decided to have lunch at a rest area. I again made and ate my lunch standing by the truck, but the view this time was very nice.

As I turned from south to west the wind really took hold. I was down to 35 mph on one incline, that's all I could muster.



As I drove through Alamosa I pulled over to do some research. Since it was already approaching 3:00 I thought I might find a campground nearby for the night. It was also 55 degrees and that is nice for camping. I had checked with Homer earlier and found a shortage of campgrounds around Pagosa Springs and was hoping to be luckier here. What I found was a campground in Mosca, about 10 miles north. But I could not find them on my GPS. Next best was the San Luis Lake State Park. My AllStay app told me they were open all year, so I headed north. Homer brought me up about a ¼ mile short, but I kept going and found it. As I turned in, I met the sign below.





You have got to be kidding me!

The gate was open so I drove in anyways, hoping to find a Ranger who would take pity on me and let me stay the night. This is a weird area. It is a valley surrounded on all sides by high mountains. The valley is virtually flat and the winds howl across the barren landscape whipping up dust and sand storms. I drove past the entrance and all the way up to the ranger station. The door was locked.

I could see this dust from 10 miles away. It seemed to just hover there. I was more curious about the dust that I was upset at the closed campground. I drove back near the entrance where there were signboards and found what apparently is the Lake of San Luis. That sign to the right states only 15 minutes allowed on boat ramp. Unless it's a sand boat, I don't think it would go anywhere. All the signboards talked about were the local wildlife.



I still have no idea what is causing the dust, why it stays in that area or why the lake is virtually dry.



So now what to do? I checked my AllStays App and Homer again and decided on a campground in South Fork. Things were looking good. The temp had dropped to 43, but I can handle that. I was 2 miles from the campground when it started to rain. That's it. I am not setting up in the rain unless I absolutely have to. I set Homer for Pagosa Springs and decided to check every campground I came across, or most likely get a hotel in Pagosa Springs, since it would be dark by the time I got there.

My view of
Wolf Creek
Pass summit –
10,857 ft
elevation



After a somewhat perilous descent from Wolf Creek Pass in the snow, I found the Pagosa Riverside Campground. A little expensive but I am finally using the camper. It is also only 105 miles to Mesa Verde National Park, my next stop. What I didn't realize was the change in time zone. I gained an extra hour of daylight to set up and start cooking. Right now it is raining and getting colder, but I have heat. Might not be much fun packing up when everything is wet tomorrow morning, but I'll let you know how it goes.



This one is for Bob 2. He wanted a picture of the camper.

