



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Friday, March 5th 2021 Day 47



I wanted to do some hiking today and it didn't take me long to find this National Wildlife Refuge with at least a half dozen different trails. Of course the VC was closed due to Covid, but they had a box of trail maps and a large info board with another map of the trails.



Ahh, just the way I like it, an empty parking lot. First up is the Cactus Rocks Loop Trail. It connects to a couple others, so I will play it by foot.

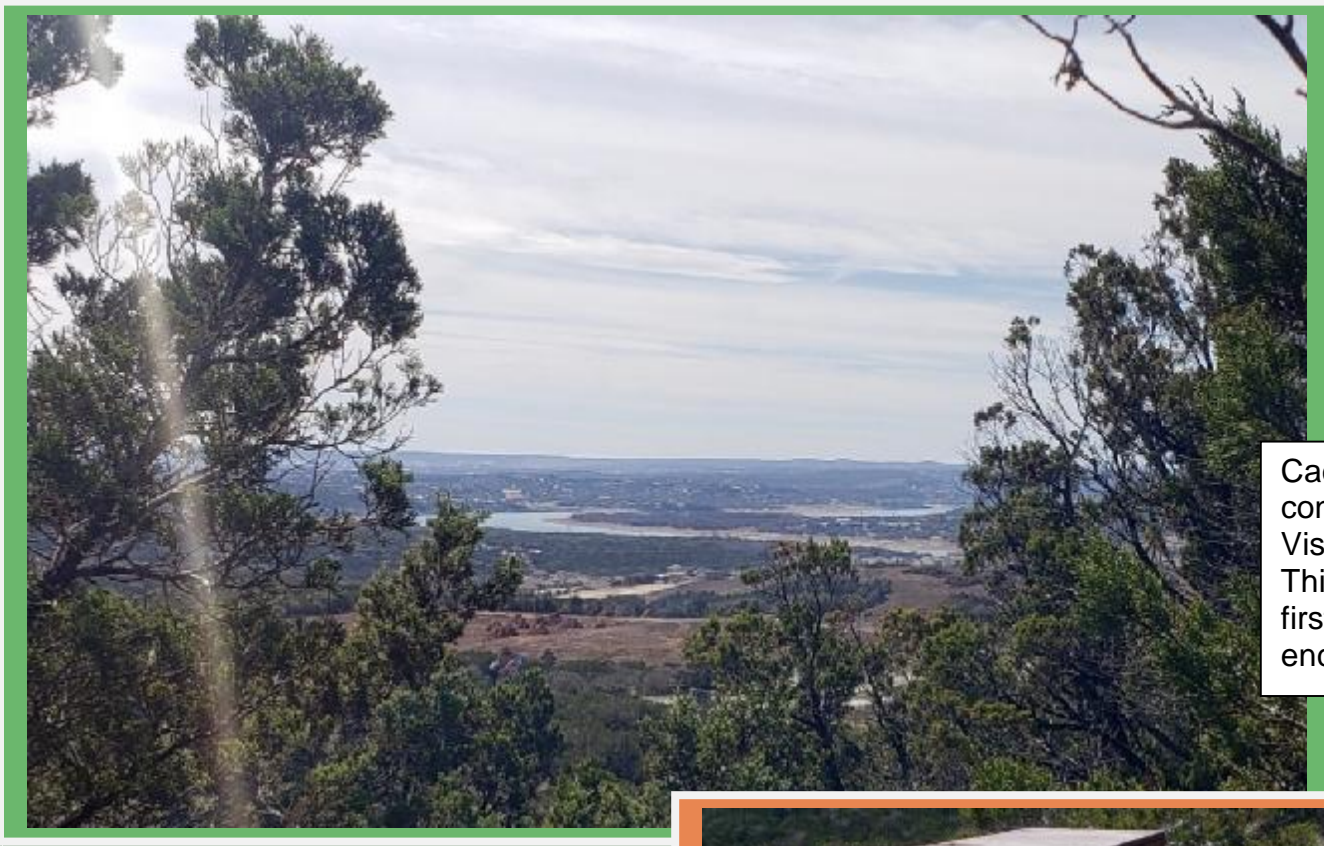
Partially shaded (not the thick undergrowth of the bird sanctuaries), a very nice breeze, no humidity and temps in the upper sixties. It really was a perfect day for hiking.



I'm not exactly sure what someone was trying to accomplish here.



The proverbial 'fork in the trail'. I stuck to Cactus Rocks because the Ridgeline is out and back and I wanted to hike that last then take the road back to the RV.



Cactus Rocks connects to Vista Knoll. This was the first vista I encountered.

Cody Curley of Troop 198 conveniently provided this look-out perch as part of his Eagle project. Thanks Cody! It gave me additional height to get the panoramic photo below. I almost forgot, that is the (Texas) Colorado River in the distance.





Well, there is no Quarry Canyon trail on the map or in AllTrails. An unknown trail?
– Right up my alley.



You can tell that I'm in a canyon, the land rises to both right and left.

Below – I am guessing this is the old quarry.



What have we here? - Another trail that is not on the map? The lower parking lot is just a short walk down the Quarry trail, so I took a left turn on Boulder.



This would make a neat little waterfall, if there was any water.



I will assume these are the boulders that give this trail its name.



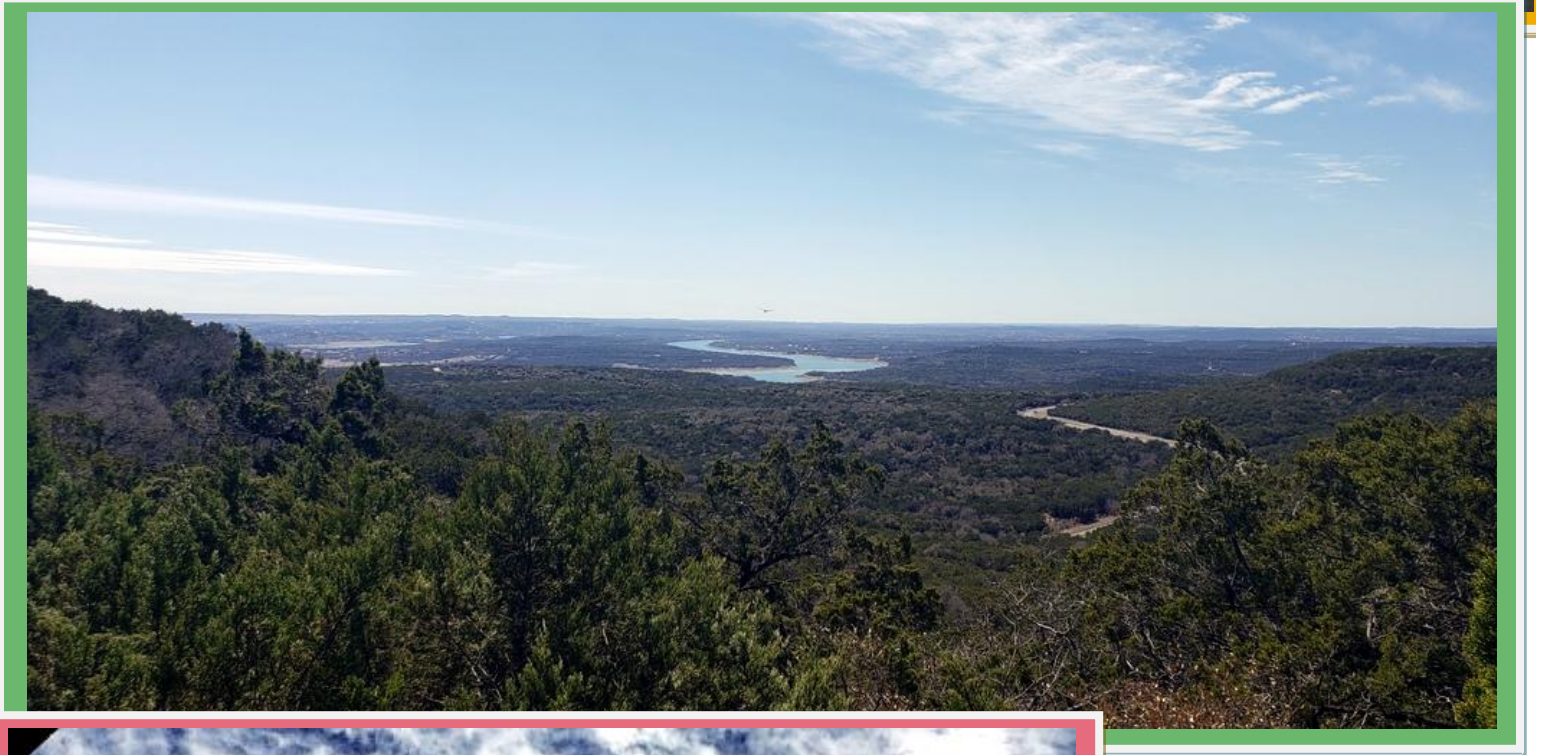
Cactus Rocks is a loop trail of which, in my normal course of life, I did backwards. Vista Knoll intersected at the farthest point so I did not get to the lower Cactus Rocks portion. Amazingly, Boulder Trail ended at lower Cactus Rocks and I headed back towards Vista Knoll and the Ridgeline Trail. Along the way I began to encounter these numbered and painted rocks. Alright, I know what you're thinking – If I had taken Cactus Rocks the right way there was probably an explanation at the start of what these signs are for. Where is the fun and mystery in that?

That's a good sized tree that came down, and just recently too. The wood cut is fresh and the sap is just oozing from wood. I thought you would be able to see it glistening in the sun, but I guess not. After #16 I turned onto the Ridgeline Trail.





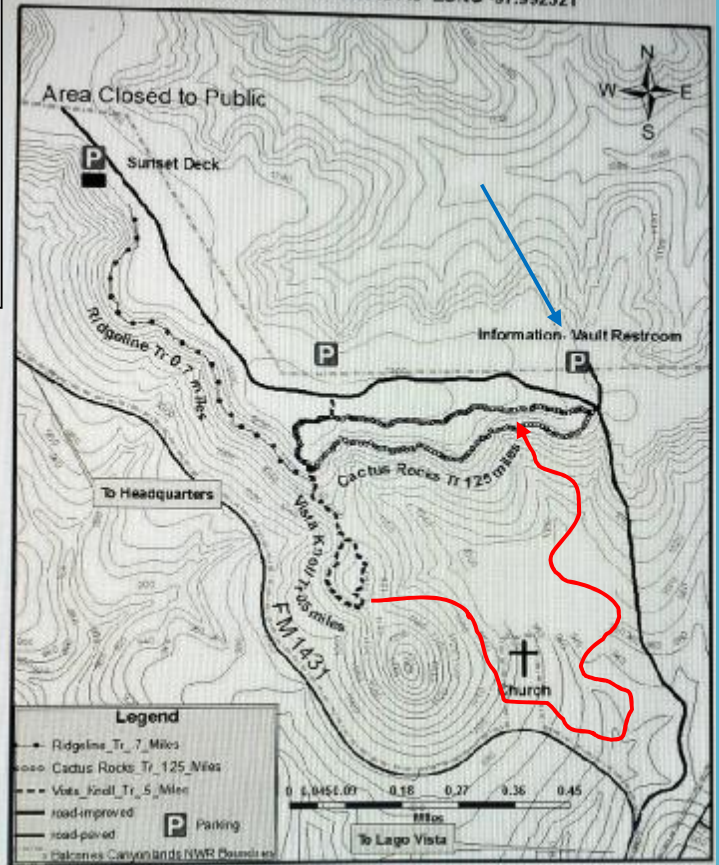
The Ridgeline Trail was back on the ridgeline, obviously, so the cool breeze was fantastic and welcomed after Quarry Canyon, Boulder and Cactus Rocks. The trail leads to the Sunset Deck, a perfect place for lunch.



I caught these two right as I walked up. I'm not sure if they are eagles or hawks, they disappeared over the roof rather quickly.

Since the Sunset Deck can be driven to, I took the road back to the RV as planned. Right is the trail map. The red line is the Quarry Canyon and Boulder Trails, the blue arrow is where the RV was parked. This made the first phase about four miles. It took me awhile to find the second phase because they had north pointing to the left and I didn't notice it right away. I headed north on a small narrow road, never getting above 25 mph and making several one vehicle wide river crossings like the one below.

Warbler Vista Trail - Balcones Canyonlands NWR
GPS Location LAT 30.510140 LONG -97.992321



The plan is to take Rimrock to Shin Oak to Indiangrass to Shin Oak to Rimrock and back to the parking lot. There is another map later on showing the trails.





This is a last look at the trail that got me here, just before I enter the woods. If you follow the arrow you might be able to make out the RV in the parking lot.



One of the reviews on AllTrails mentioned the fire damaged areas, this is part of it here. From what I can find this was a controlled burn and not accidental.

After the strenuous (ha ha) 100 yard hike over the hill I headed down the Indiangrass Trail.

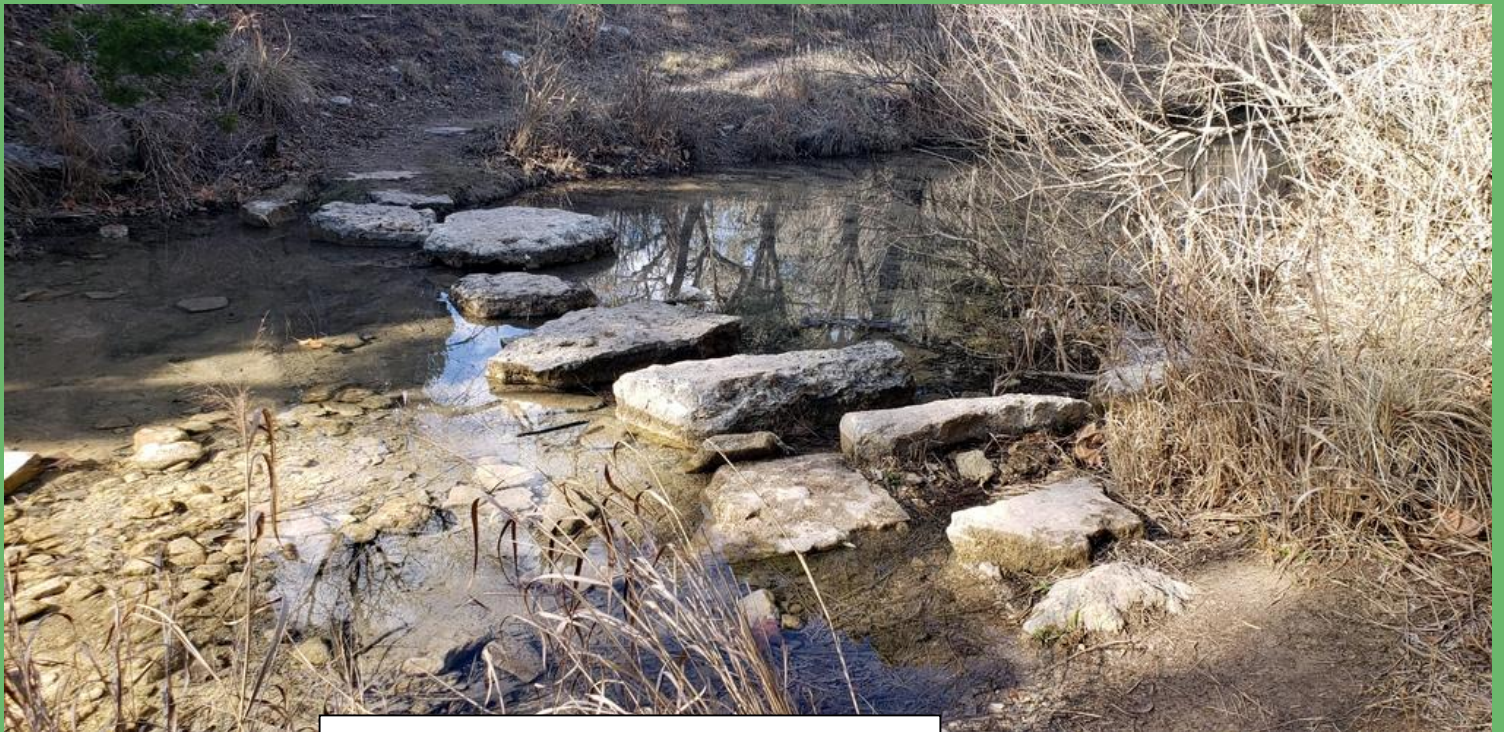
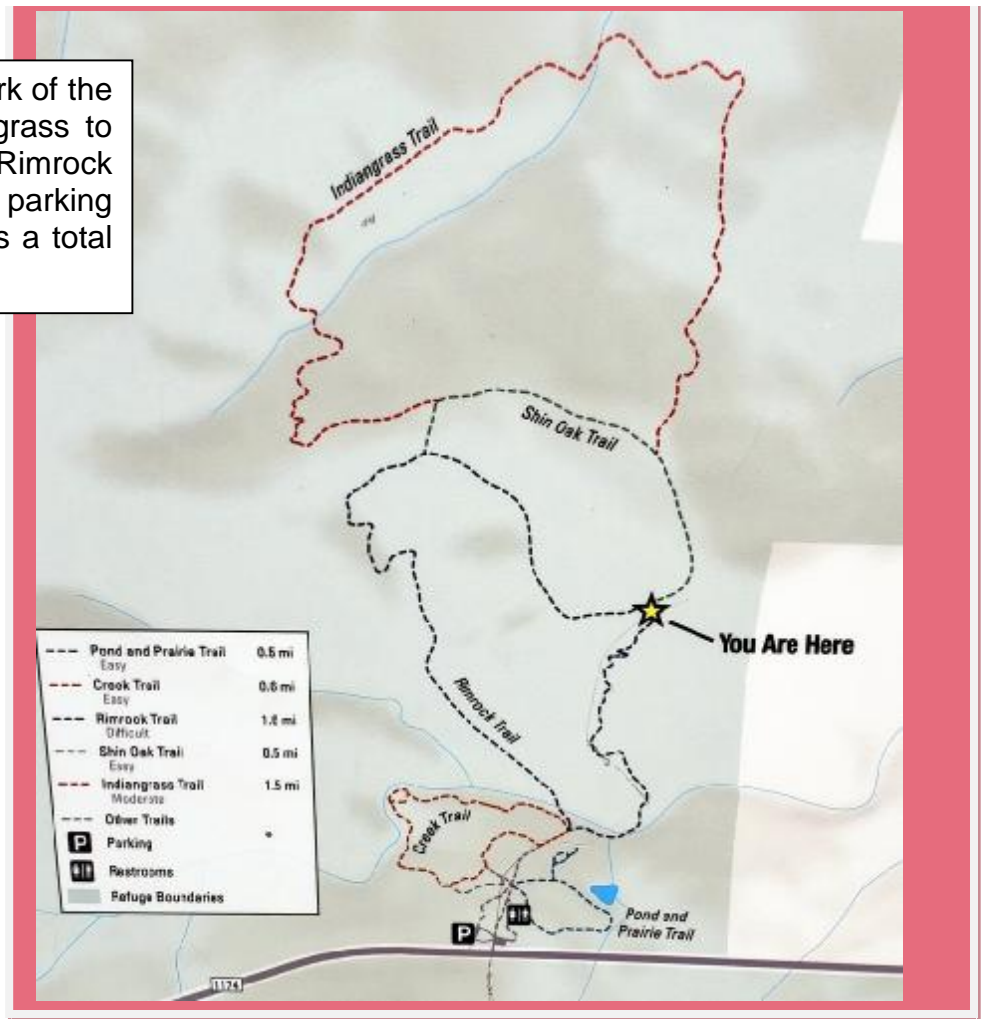




It doesn't show as well as I had hoped, but the arrows point out the trail I took across the burn.



From the parking lot to the left fork of the Rimrock to Shin Oak to Indiagrass to Shin Oak to the right fork of the Rimrock (You are here) and back to the parking lot. About five miles. That makes a total of about nine miles today.



I would say I was crossing a creek, but the water was not moving. Any floating leaves did not move at all. But it was fun to cross.



In early 1935 a group of prominent citizens in Bertram decided the town needed a theater. The Globe was constructed of the same Red Granite as the state capital and Galveston Seawall. The Globe's last showing was in the early 80's. It sat vacant until 2009, went through a six year restoration process, and had a grand re-opening February 27th, 2016.

I received an email reply from Austin City Limits to my request for a refund. Signed ACL, they refunded my money and offered me a free personalized tour for free tomorrow, Saturday afternoon. I agreed, so that is on the schedule. Maybe on a Saturday I can find some street parking downtown.

This was certainly a back to nature day and I am looking forward to more of the same as I move north and west. I will make the drive back to Austin tomorrow, but then I head back to the hills.

I did nine miles today and feel perfectly fine. I have to get in shape for the nine miles at Guadalupe Peak in a couple weeks, a 3000 foot elevation gain.

Texas is dropping all of the Covid mandates as of Tuesday or Wednesday next week. But I still plan to avoid museums as much as possible, unless there is something really interesting. I think I will be hitting a lot of Roadside America and Atlas Obscura points of interest, so I will be zig-zagging my way through central Texas. I really enjoyed the curving country roads today also and will be looking for those along the way.

A good day, I hope you enjoy the scenery as much as I did.

Until next time.....