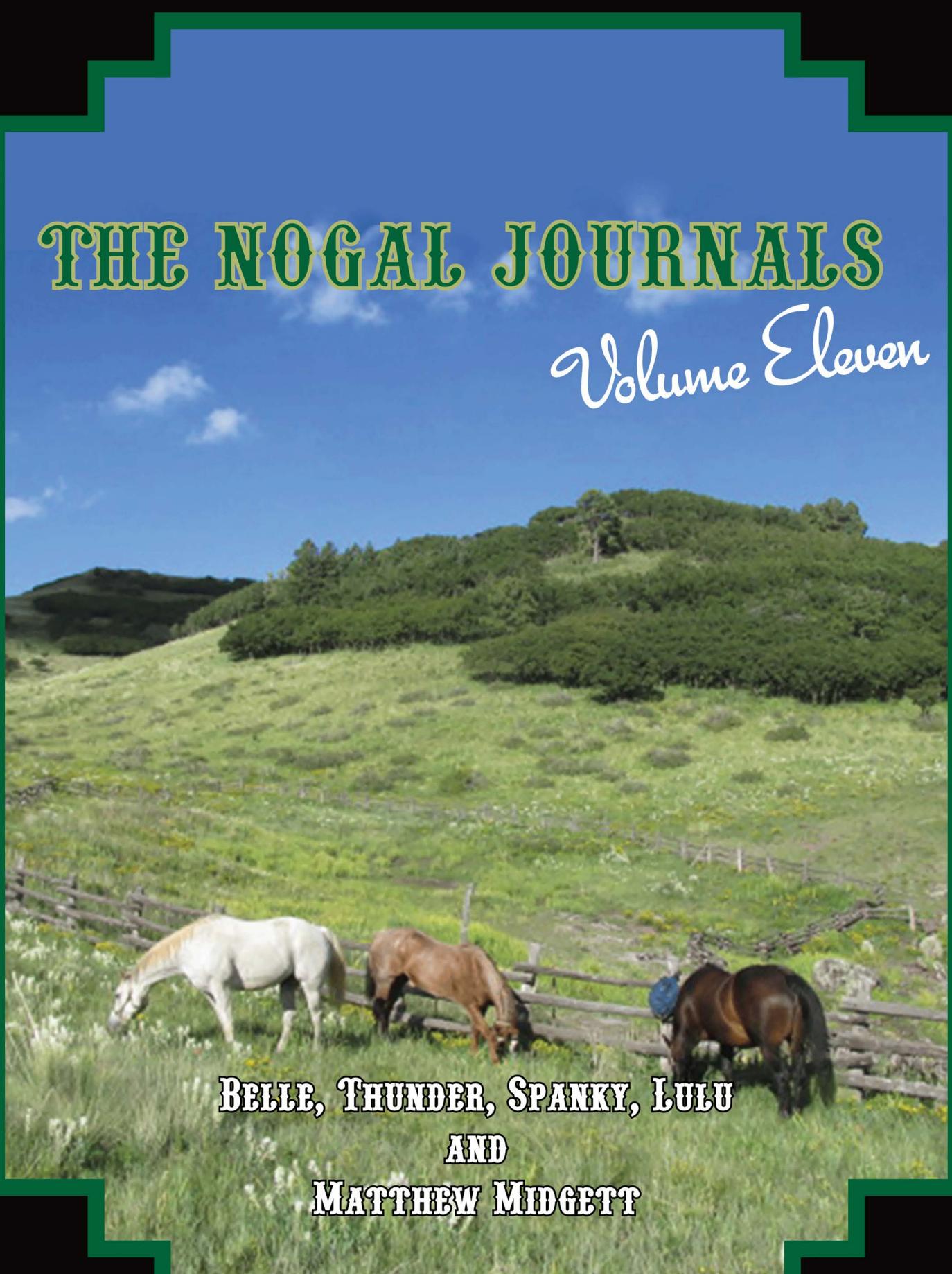


# THE NOGAL JOURNALS

*Volume Eleven*



BELLE, THUNDER, SPANKY, LULU  
AND  
MATTHEW MIDGETT

# THE NOGAL JOURNALS

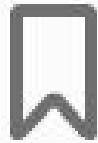
Volume XI

Part 1 of 3

With sincere gratitude  
to Randy Clarke-Ianiero and Clem Ianiero-Clarke  
whose technical expertise and tireless efforts  
made this publication possible.

*Cover Design: Laura Reynolds  
Printing: PrintStar San Diego  
First Edition February 2018  
All photographs (c) Matthew Midgett. All rights reserved.*

Please use the BOOKMARKS TOOL:



for your active TABLE OF CONTENTS  
(located on the far upper right corner of the  
window).

## 2016-07-14 – *Dusk With The Gang*

Page 1 of 6

It really was time for their supper . . . but the horses convinced me it was a perfect evening for a little dusk ride behind the house. The sun had set behind Nogal Peak, leaving a dim twilight so quiet, it seemed like nature was holding her breath. Supper could wait.

*As we crested a hill, a wonderful sight awaited us.*



## 2016-07-14 – Dusk With The Gang

Page 2 of 6

We were suddenly in the middle of a large elk herd. The light was so poor that most of the photos came out too blurry, but I was able to salvage these to share with you. This was a "new moms" group. Lots of babies (and you can see that the cow closest to the camera is pregnant).



What an extraordinary experience. I guess these "phantoms of the forest" have gotten so used to us that our riding through the herd didn't even create a stir. They accepted the horses and me in their midst. I was very proud of Lulu - she just stayed quietly with us.



## 2016-07-14 – Dusk With The Gang

Page 3 of 6

*There were many more elk than these photos show (about 80 in all) - again, most of the pictures were too blurry to share (like this one).*



*. . . but in this shot, you can make out the "fawn spots" on this new baby calf - only days old. I was especially surprised that they allowed Lulu to get so close.*



## 2016-07-14 – Dusk With The Gang

Page 4 of 6

*The moms kept a protective eye on us, but no one moved. The horses just ambled along, grazing with the elk.*



*Lots of babies here. The light is fading fast.*



## 2016-07-14 – Dusk With The Gang

Page 5 of 6

*Eye-to-eye. What a treat!*



## 2016-07-14 – Dusk With The Gang

Page 6 of 6

*We bid them farewell - silhouetted against the twilight sky.*



This was very special - and feeble though the photos are, we are grateful we could share with you a glimpse of this extraordinary encounter.

MM

## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 1 of 7

As the days have gotten warmer, our rides have gotten later - the evenings are ideal this time of year.

*For whatever reason, Thunder decided to let someone else "do the driving" this time . . . he lolled along at the back of the line (with loyal Lulu following him).*



*So Belle took the lead through the shady forest.*



## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 2 of 7

*"I get to do more sightseeing this way."*



*It was a pretty ride.*



## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 3 of 7

*Belle takes advantage of her position - she gets to the good grass first!*



*Thunder enjoys a little side trip.*



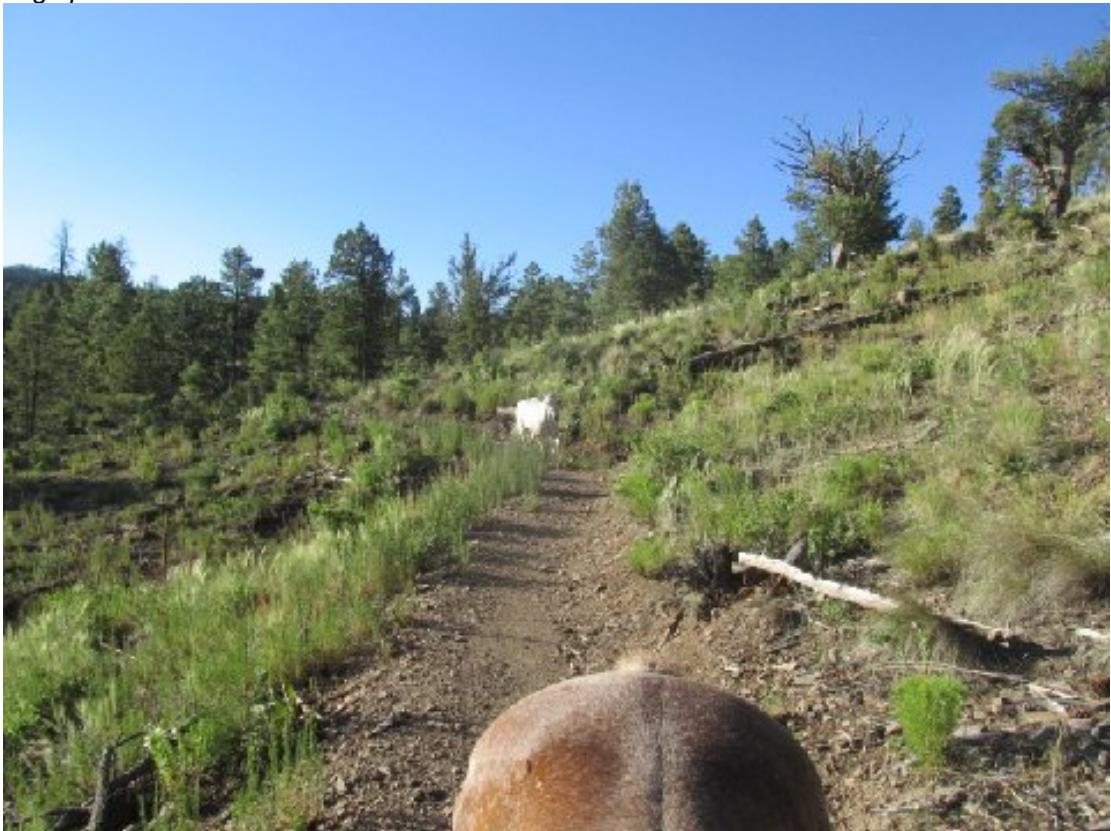
## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 4 of 7

. . . and Lulu keeps an eye on us all.



*Catching up.*



## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 5 of 7

*A cool drink along the way . . .*



*. . . and a snack, too.*



## 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 6 of 7

*Riding into the sunset.*



*"This was nice, but I think I prefer it up front."*



# 2016-07-14 – *Mellow Thunder*

Page 7 of 7



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-07-15 - Sociable

Page 1 of 4

As if to come for a neighborly visit, the elk herd we encountered on our ride two days ago showed up at the ranch this evening - right in front of the house. Once again, the lack of light makes the photos sub-par, but please share this extraordinary visit!

*It was nearly dark, and the deer were completing their evening snack, when the elk herd began to arrive. These "phantoms" walked right up the driveway and onto the grass.*



*The deer (in the foreground) went about their usual business, while the elk enjoyed grazing just a few yards away.*



## 2016-07-15 - Sociable

Page 2 of 4

*There were old ones, young ones, and real babies, only days old. An "elk village", come to call.*



*What a view from the living room window. Oh, how I wish the light had been better!*



## 2016-07-15 - **Sociable**

Page 3 of 4

*Please bear with me, I know this is terribly dark - but what a special moment. A baby elk came up to the fence, where Nacho's yearling deer were eating in front of the house. I have never seen deer and elk interact.*



*One of the deer "bambinos" (as we call them) came up to greet the elk calf, and they touched noses. What a special meeting to witness.*



## 2016-07-15 - *Sociable*

Page 4 of 4

*Then the other little deer joined them for a friendly hello.*



*They all stayed until my camera could no longer capture the remarkable scene.*



Thank you for appreciating this extraordinary gathering . . . and the young ones touching noses - reaching out across literal and figurative barriers, in order to know one another - an inspiration.

MM

## 2016-07-18 - Neighborly

Page 1 of 6

The horses, deer and elk have established a very nice "neighborly" friendship.

*Belle and Spanky sensed the elk were on their way. The horses stood like this long before the elk appeared down the driveway.*



*If you look closely, you will see (over Spanky's back) two deer near the elk.*



## 2016-07-18 - *Neighborly*

Page 2 of 6

*Yup. They "all get along . . ."*

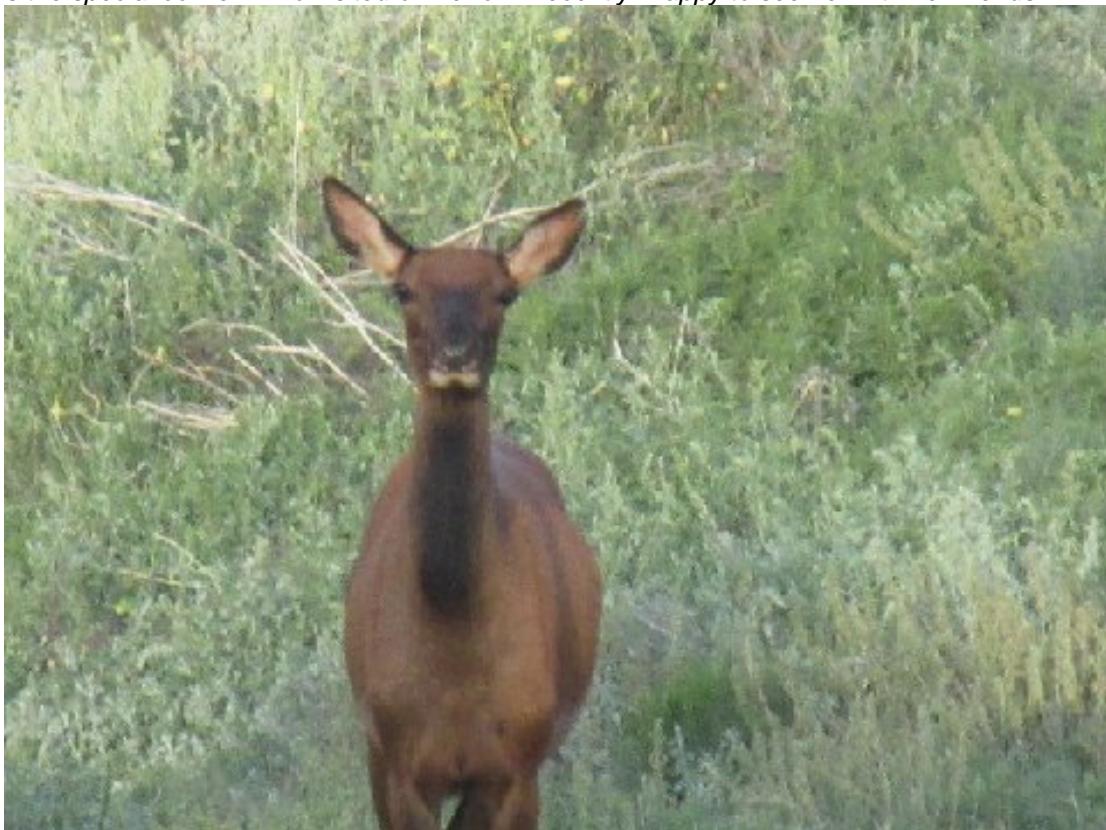


## 2016-07-18 - *Neighborly*

Page 3 of 6



*This is the special cow elk who visited on her own recently. Happy to see her with her friends.*



## 2016-07-18 - *Neighborly*

Page 4 of 6

*Later in the day . . . grazing above the well house.*



*A near-newborn, still weak in the hindquarters.*



# 2016-07-18 - *Neighborly*

Page 5 of 6



## 2016-07-18 - *Neighborly*

Page 6 of 6



It is a real privilege to see these magnificent (and famously elusive) animals this way.  
Glad you could see them, too!

MM

## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 1 of 10

Nearby Pennsylvania Trail had become tough going, due to dead fall (downed trees) and other obstacles - but we heard that the Forest Service recently cleared it, so . . .

*The monsoon rains have returned. Clouds start building around noon, with some rain midafternoon.*



*So, after the short rain I gathered up the horses for our ride. The elk watched as we loaded into the trailer.*



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 2 of 10



"There they go again. Where do you suppose they are off to this time?"



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 3 of 10

*Pennsylvania is a good trail, but the last time we rode it, we had to jump lots of downed trees, etc.*



*"This is a lot easier", sez Spanky.*



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 4 of 10



*It climbs up to a high ridge. Lots of snacking along the way.*



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 5 of 10

*Wonderful views, but it looked like the rain might be headed our way again.*



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 6 of 10

So, after a quick snack, we headed back down.



"Hey! Did you feel that? Raindrops!"



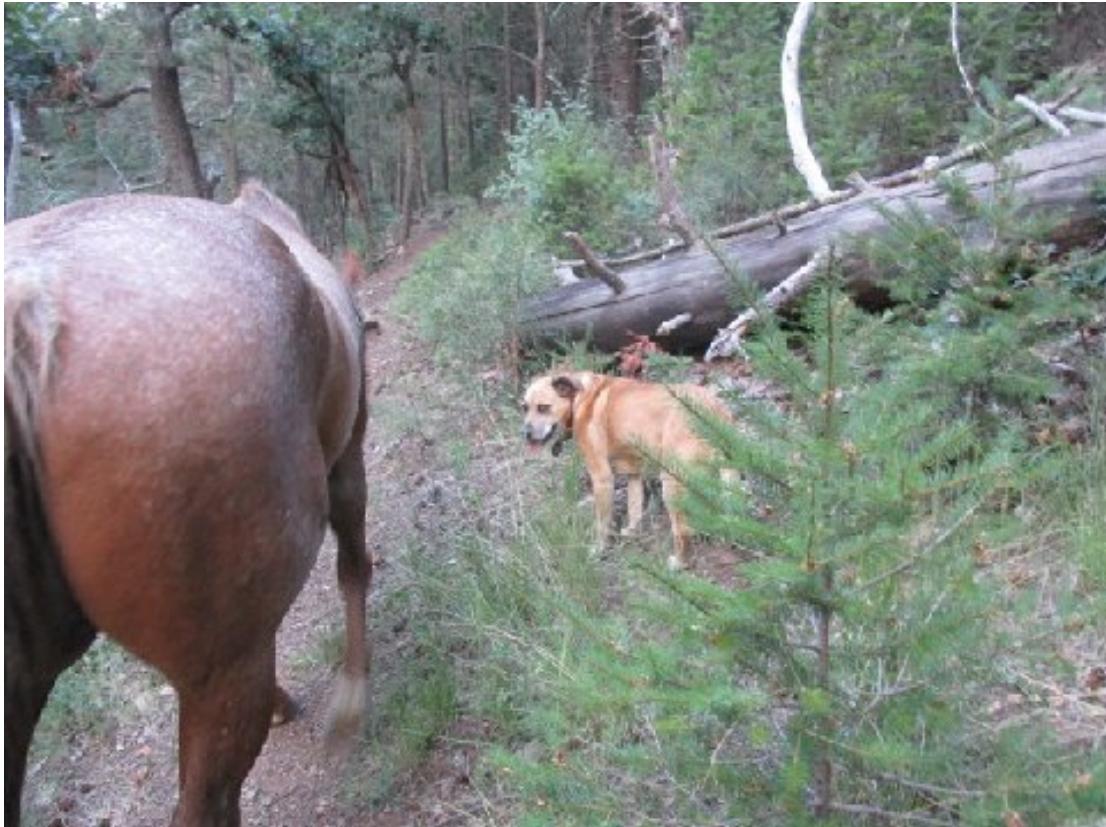
## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 7 of 10

Ooooh!

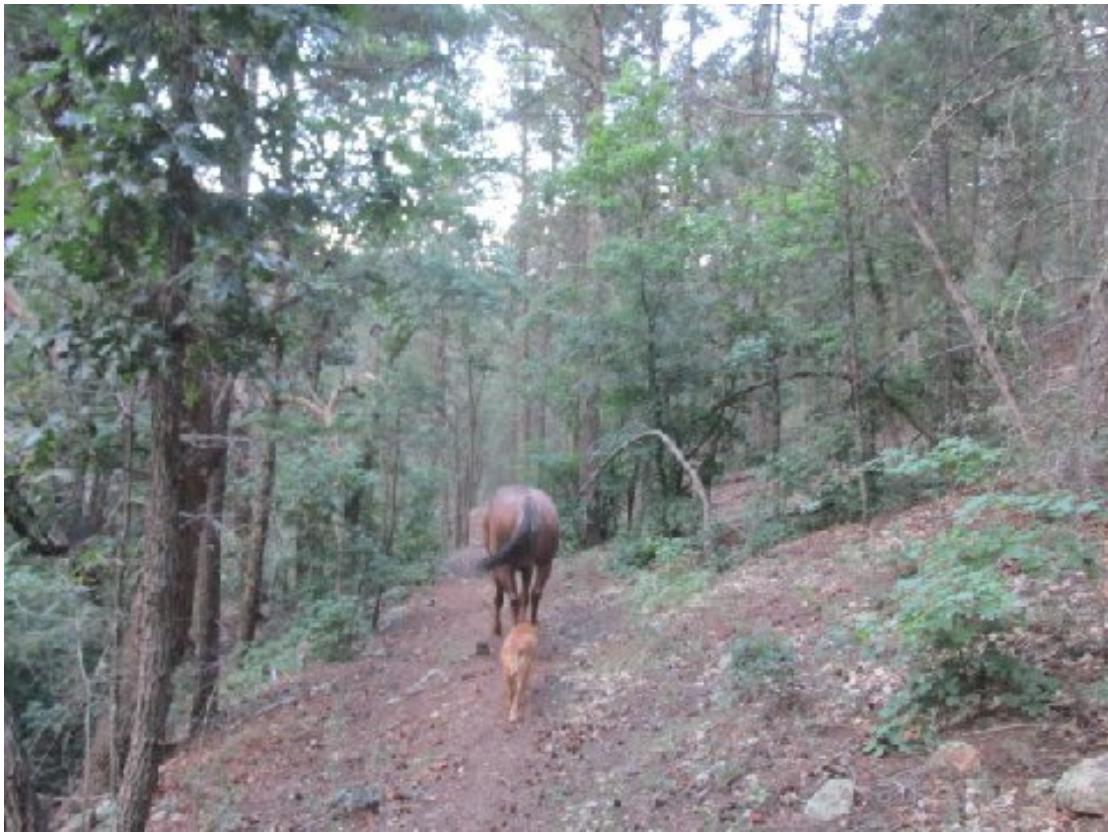


"Come'on!"

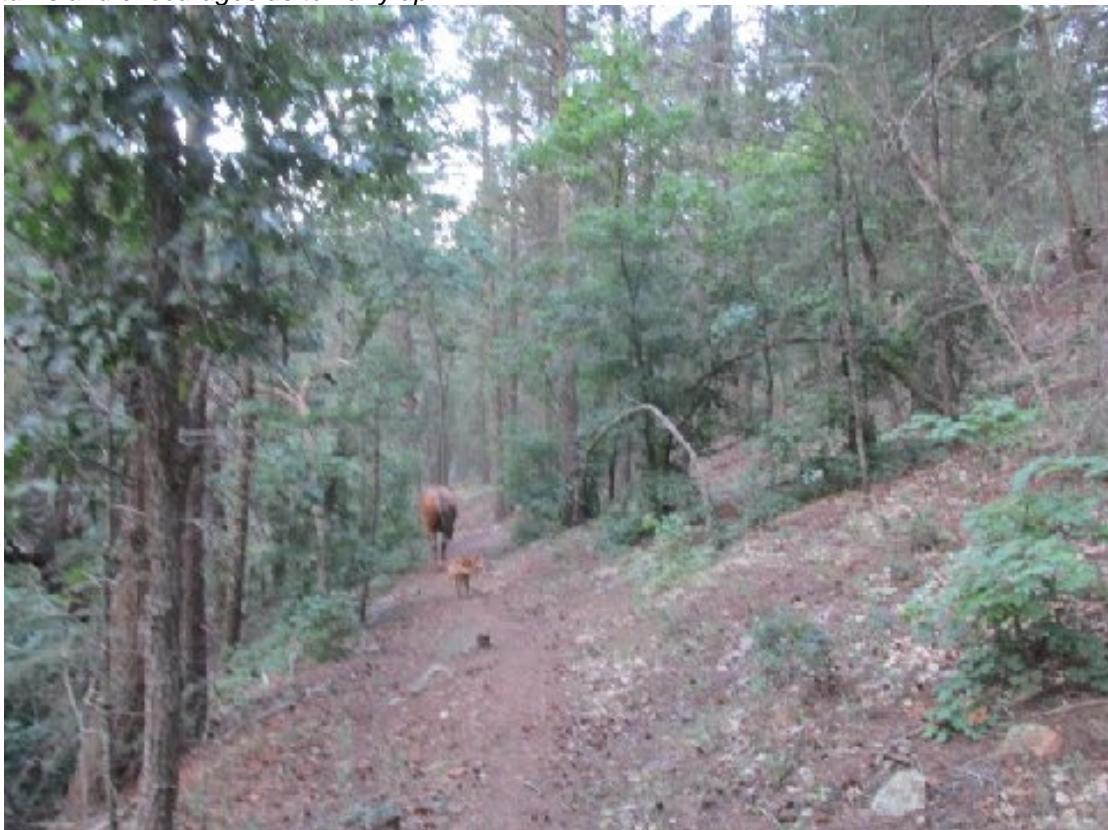


## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 8 of 10



*Lulu turns and encourages us to hurry up.*

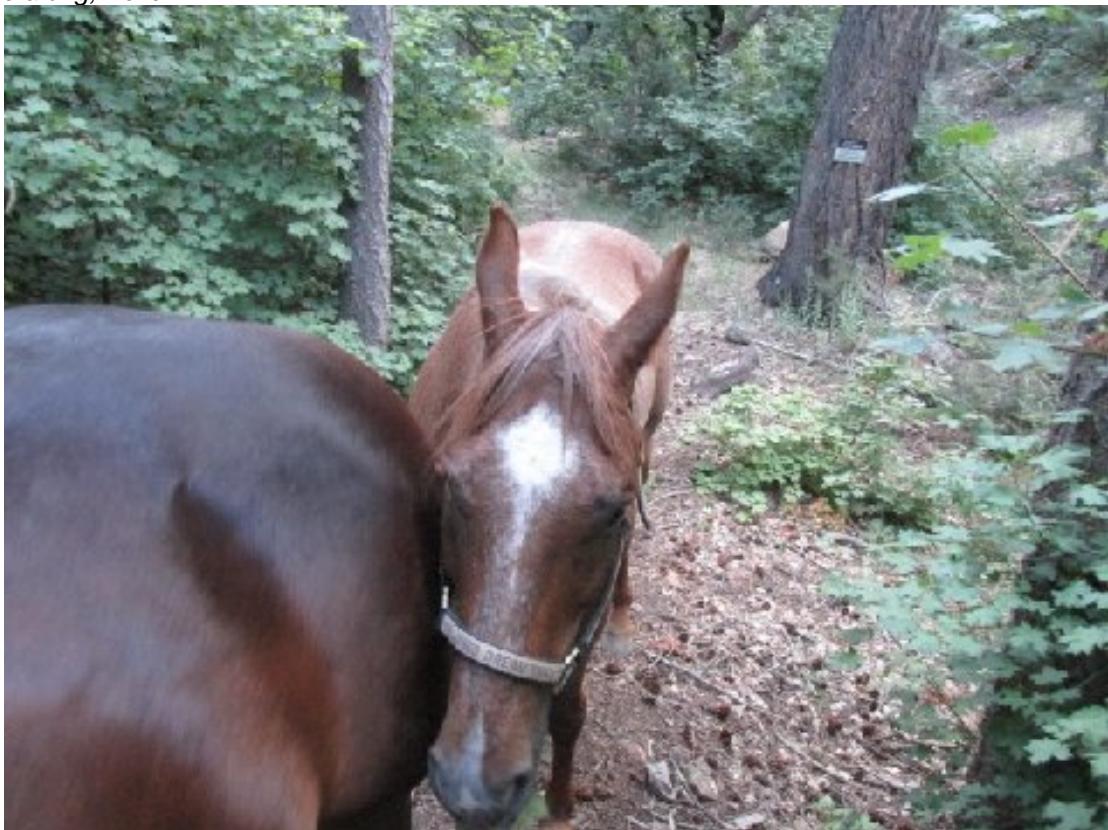


## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 9 of 10



"Move along, Belle!"



## 2016-07-18 – Pennsylvania Trail

Page 10 of 10

We made it down before the rain came.



Many thanks to the Forest Service folks who restored this trail!

MM

## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 1 of 9

Baby elk are very noisy. When separated from mom, or just to be annoying, they let out with a screech which is a combination sea bird call and air raid siren. They especially enjoy doing this at dawn. Since it is calving season, with lots of little ones, our mornings have been starting very early (it goes on all through the night, too).



*Last evening, we came back from our ride after dark, and they were all over the driveway like this then, too. They are used to our truck and trailer, and just moved out of the way like cattle do.*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 2 of 9

*They sure are fun to watch. These are gathered around the metal deer sculptures. They all seem curious of them at first (a cow elk is sniffing the nose of one in this shot). See the little one with its "fawn" spots? Those spots serve as camouflage, and gradually disappear during the summer.*



*Keeping up with mom. Calves generally are brought into the herd at two weeks, and remain with mom for nearly a year.*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 3 of 9

*These are grazing right in front of the house.*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 4 of 9

Awww. Nodding off on the lawn.



A new one, covered in baby fur.



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 5 of 9

Gotta itch . . . can't . . . quite . . . make . . . it . . .



"Who you look'in at?" They don't seem much bothered by Lulu (who lies quietly on the veranda) or me. Even the babies have attitude.



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 6 of 9

*A mom, keeping an eye on the horses.*



*Sniffing the air is a defensive technique for identifying predators. Lotsa spots on this one.*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 7 of 9



*Mom and baby have a drink of cool water together from the pasture tank.*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 8 of 9

"Whew! That feels better!"



*Breakfast time. Mom keeps an eye on me. (Elk calves are weaned at two months).*



## 2016-07-19 – Wake Up Calls

Page 9 of 9

*A mother's love.*



Sure is a nice way to start a day. Hope you enjoyed it, too!

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-07-21 – *Mama Nacho*

Page 1 of 6

We have had a lot of monsoon rain the past couple of days, but it hasn't hindered our guests.



*The elk are happily grazing above the old barn at sunset.*



## 2016-07-21 – Mama Nacho

Page 2 of 6



*See the little one, napping on the lower left?*



## 2016-07-21 – *Mama Nacho*

Page 3 of 6

. . . and Nacho is back after giving birth! She undoubtedly has her newborn fawn(s) tucked safely away nearby.



*So many female celebrities brag about how quickly they regain their figures after childbirth . . .*



## 2016-07-21 – *Mama Nacho*

Page 4 of 6

. . . but we think Nacho is looking good!



## 2016-07-21 – Mama Nacho

Page 5 of 6

The late-blooming "dream-sickle" red hot poker flowers are enjoying the rain, too.



**2016-07-21 – Mama Nacho**

Page 6 of 6



MM

## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 1 of 8

Each morning we awake to the screeches of baby elk! New little ones appear every day, it seems.

*An alert mom.*



*The youngest have distinctive fuzzy "fawn coats".*



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 2 of 8

*A pair of moms have a drink together. ". . . and I can't get mine to mind me worth a darn these days . . ."*



*"Does anyone know if it's Easter?"*



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 3 of 8

*Mom brings baby up for its first drink from the tank.*



*Oops! Down into the water it goes.*



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 4 of 8

"Hey! That was weird!"



No problem - that's how they learn.



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 5 of 8

"Hey, this is cool!"



"What's that bug?" Everything is new to them.



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 6 of 8

*A little friend joins in.*



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 7 of 8

*Dad keeps an eye on them, . . . from a distance.*



## 2016-07-23 – Morning - Elk - Routine

Page 8 of 8

*Off they go for their mid-morning siesta.*



Figured you would enjoy these morning moments.

MM

## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 1 of 6

Yesterday we had a neighborhood pot luck . . . everyone was invited.



*One little elk calf was sure intrigued by the horses.*



## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 2 of 6

*Then he went back to his snacking; although still nursing, the calves begin eating grass as youngsters.*



*As night fell, more guests kept arriving, coming down the hill.*



## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 3 of 6



*Then today, we ran into the same crowd on our evening ride. Thunder was the first to spot them (you can just make them out in the distance).*



## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 4 of 6

*As we got closer, they didn't seem bothered by us. "Hey, we had a great time at your place last night!"  
"Yeah, thanks a lot!"*



*Awww . . .*



## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 5 of 6

*This was quite a party!*



*Mostly moms and babies - but there is a very young bull, with his first set of antlers, in the middle of this shot.*



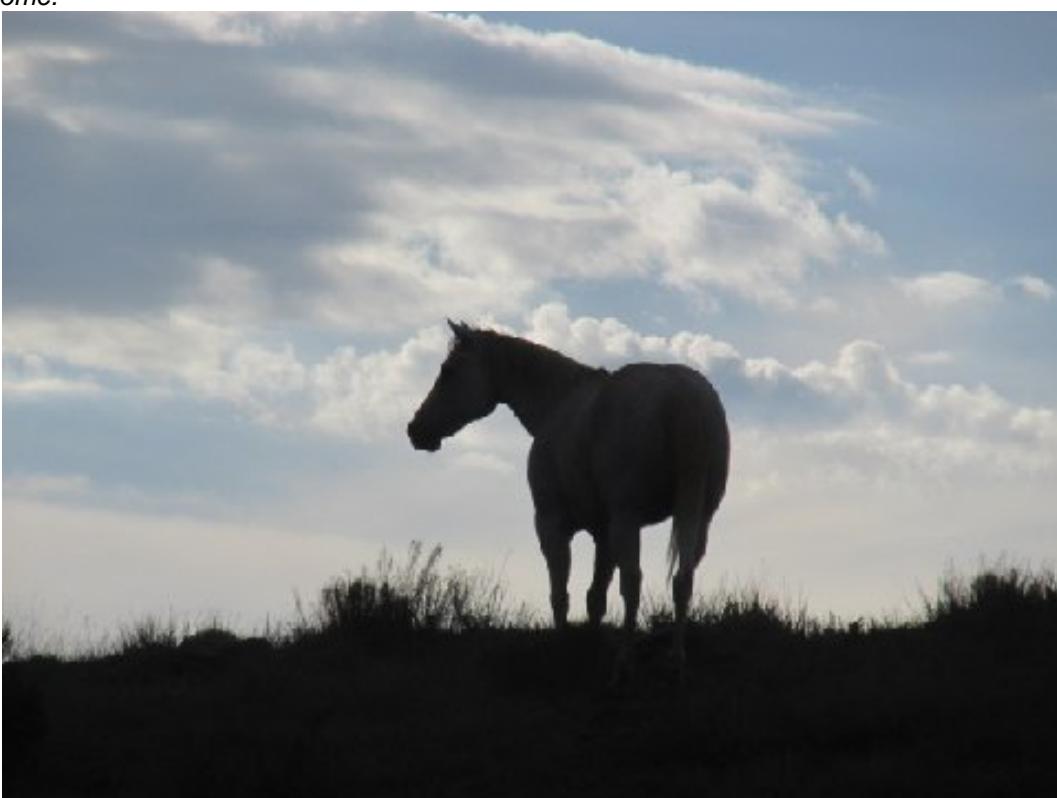
## 2016-07-25 – Pot Luck

Page 6 of 6

*Just hanging out.*



*We stood with the elk until it was nearly dark. Everything was still and quiet (except for the calves' whining) - the horses calmly grazing, the elk doing the same (and Lulu sniffing around, looking for lizards to chase; I'm surprised the elk moms tolerate her so close to their babies). We've gotten pretty friendly, and will miss them when they go back up the mountain. Thunder says his goodbyes as we head home.*



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 1 of 13

This time of year (especially), something magical happens when the bright daylight surrenders to the velvet night. Everything becomes quiet. Even the birds seem somehow muffled. The air is so still, it feels as though the forest is holding its breath, waiting for the moon.

*Hushed flowing water as the suns goes down.*



# 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

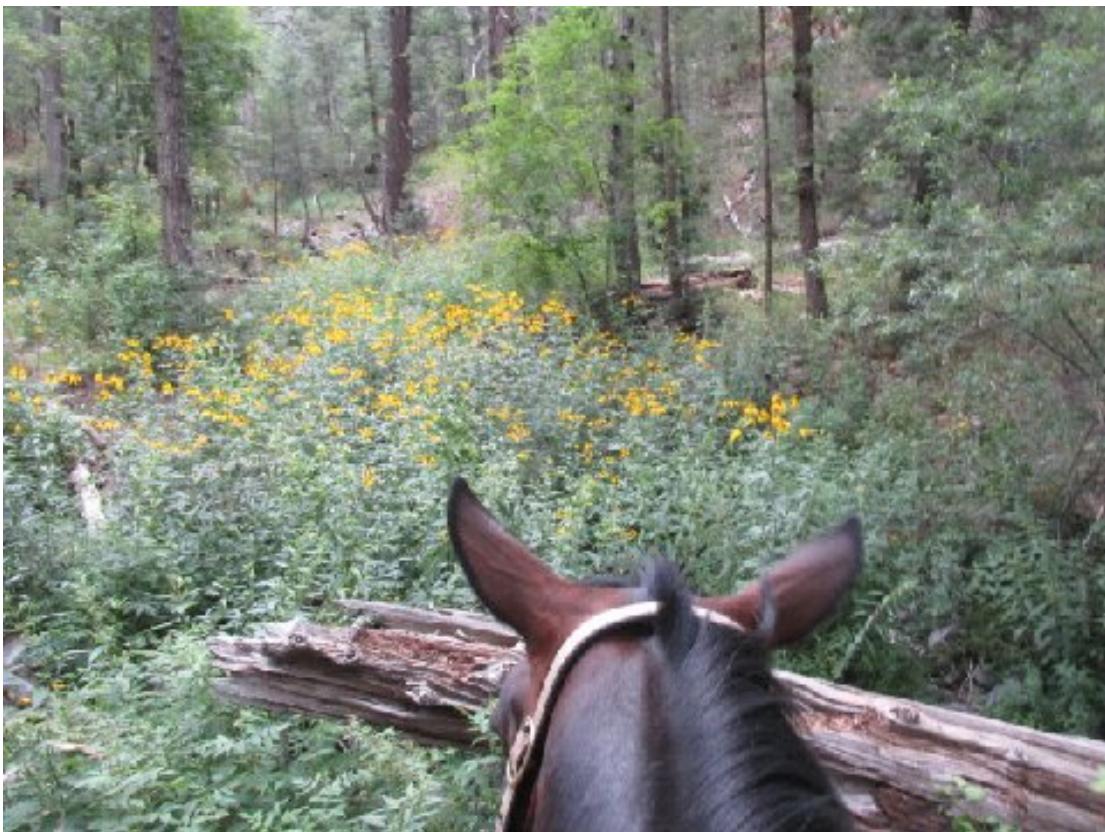
Page 2 of 13



# 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 3 of 13

*Off we go, into the deep forest.*



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 4 of 13

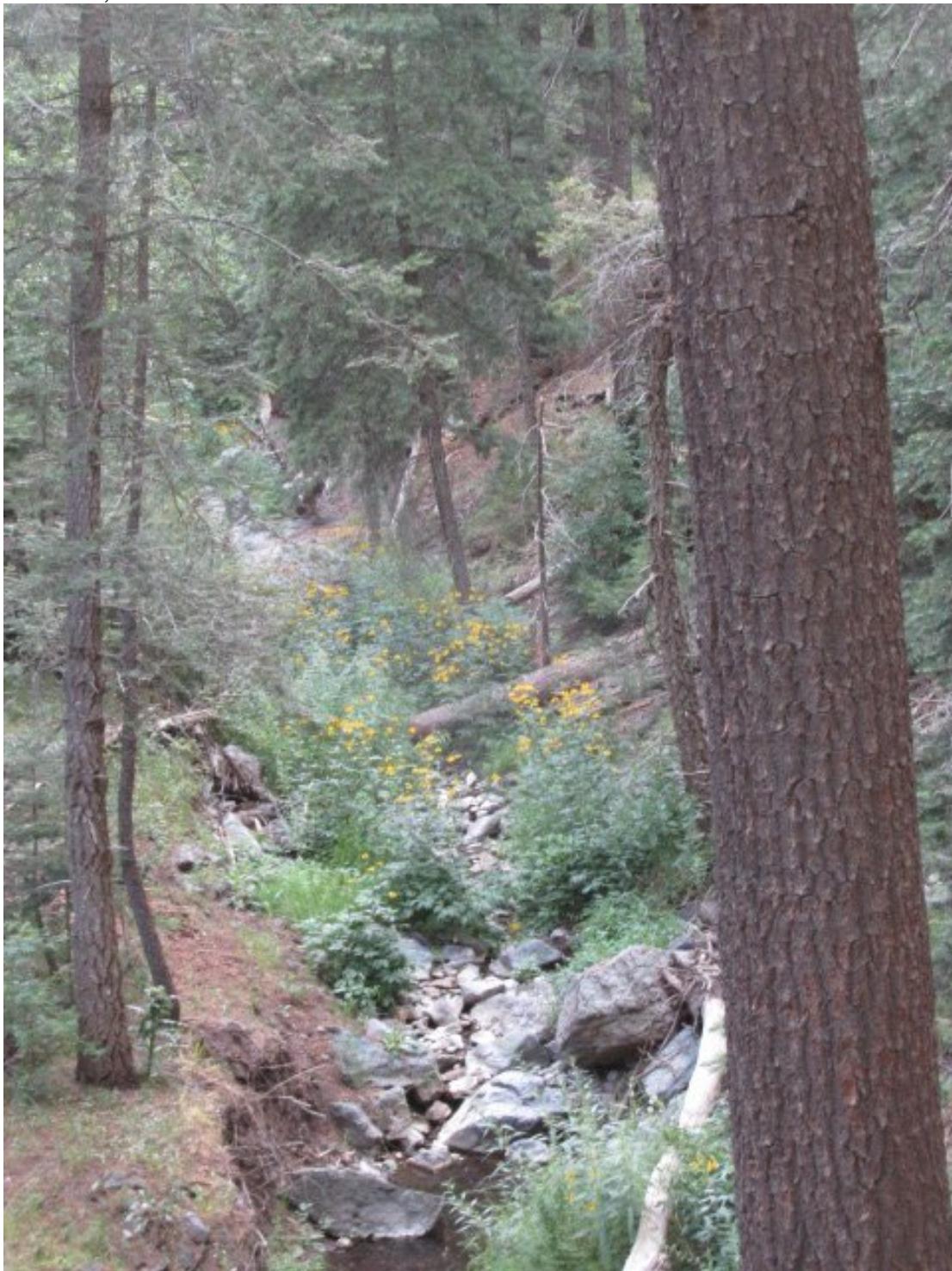
*The horses sense this quiet time - their day is winding down, too.*



## 2016-07-27 – *When The Deep Purple Falls*

Page 5 of 13

*A hidden brook, few will see.*



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 6 of 13

*In the shadows, green leaves nod off into sleep, their chlorophyll-making done for the day.*



**2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls**

Page 7 of 13



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

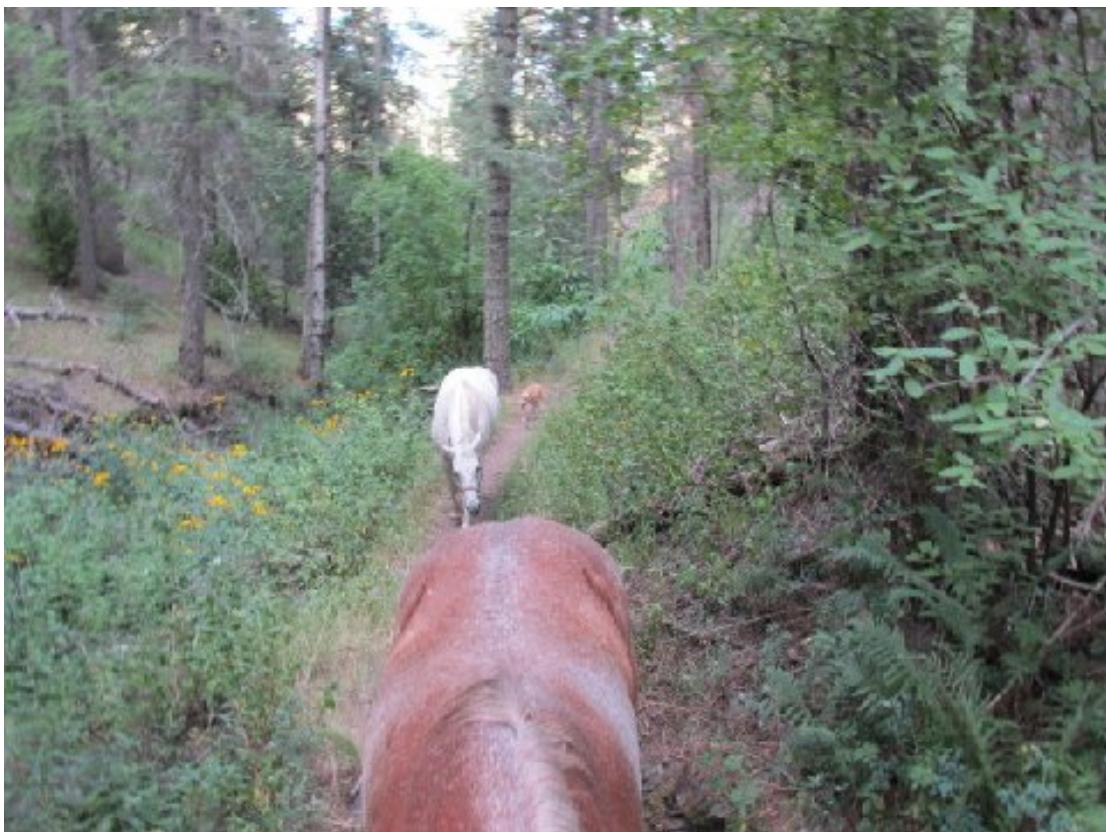
Page 8 of 13

*Another little brook, flowing softly down.*



# 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 9 of 13



# 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 10 of 13



*Nature's bouquet.*



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 11 of 13



## 2016-07-27 – When The Deep Purple Falls

Page 12 of 13



## 2016-07-27 – *When The Deep Purple Falls*

Page 13 of 13

*Heading home in the purple twilight.*



A little peace . . . so valued.

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 1 of 9

After a trip into town, a quiet ride with the family.

*Lulu gets a head start.*

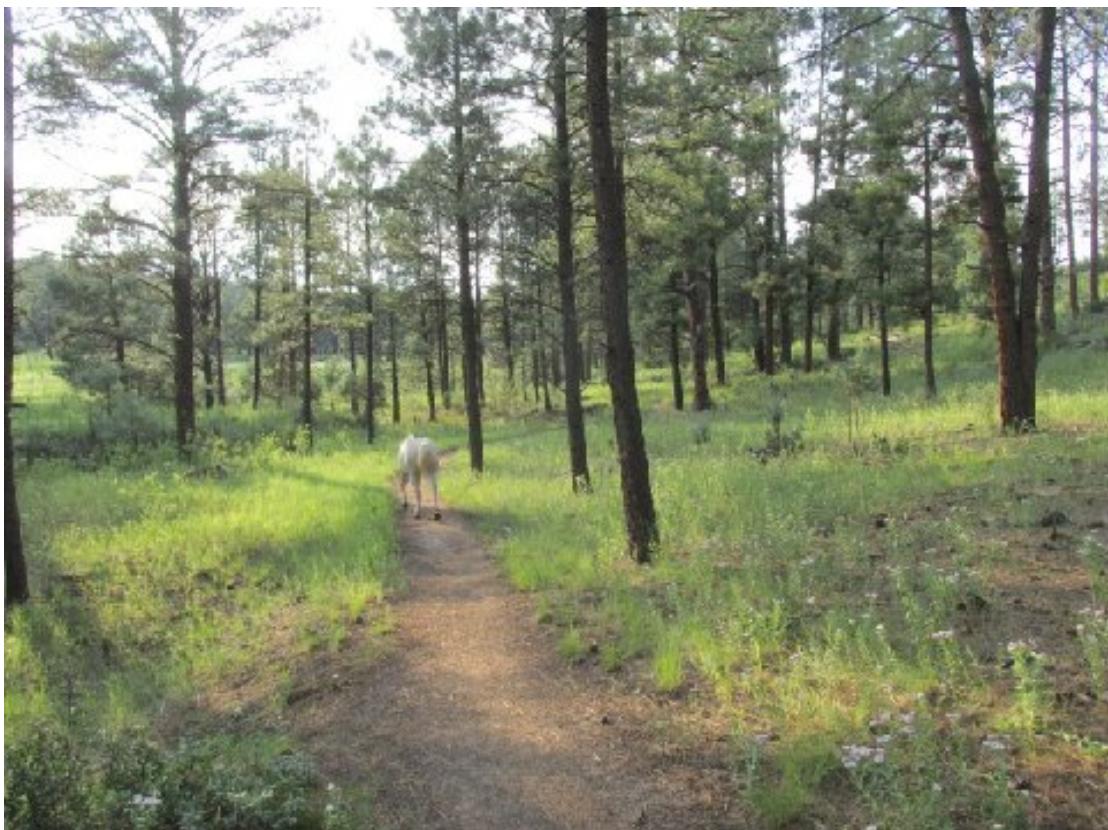


*Leaving the parking area, Thunder crosses the little wooden bridge all by himself.*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 2 of 9



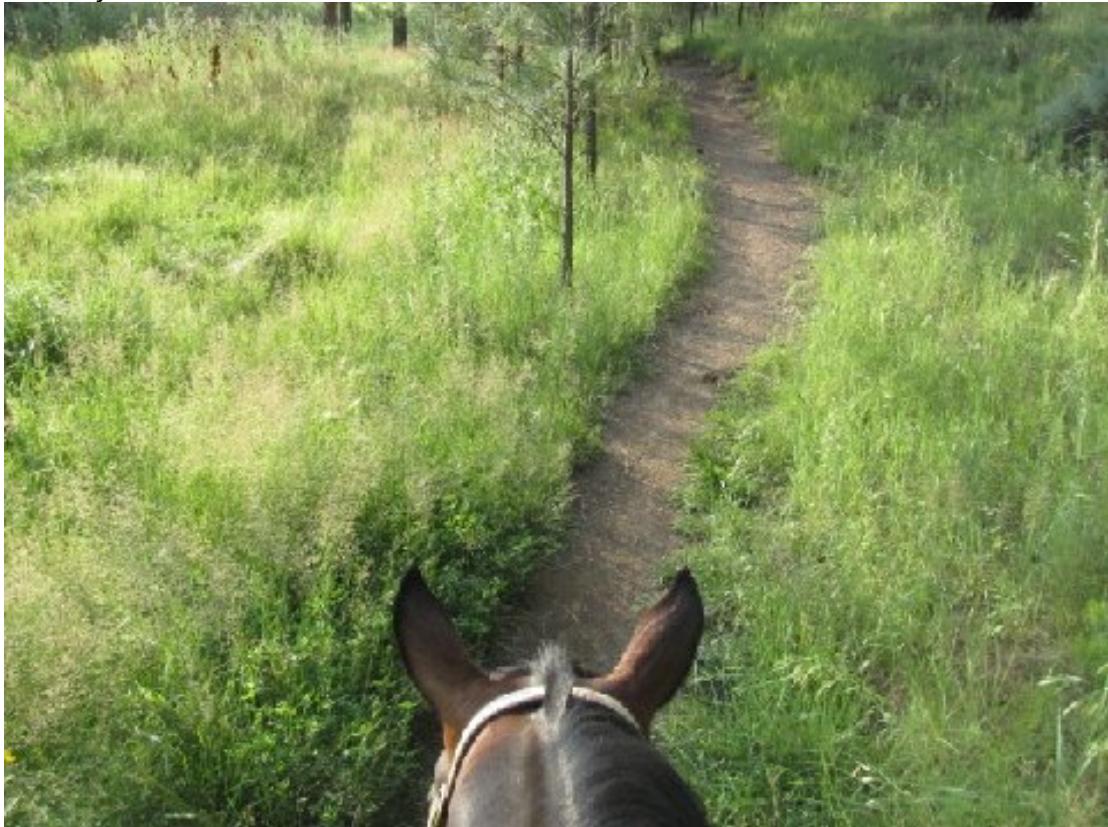
## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 3 of 9

*A drink and a snack.*



*The Belle's-eye-view of the trail ahead.*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 4 of 9



*Caught with her mouth full.*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 5 of 9



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 6 of 9

*Thunder took a different route - keeping his eyes on us - then catches up. He likes to accelerate.*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 7 of 9

*At the end of the day.*



*All by himself, Spanky stands at attention (?)*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 8 of 9

*On the way back to the trailer. "If Thunder can cross this scary bridge, so can I. Hmmm . . . not so scary after all".*



## 2016-07-29 – Cedar Creek In The Evening

Page 9 of 9

A deer watches Belle have a last snack before heading home.



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 1 of 10

Starting at dusk, the elk roam around most of the night, and finish their grazing at dawn - before sleeping much of the day.

*The sun hasn't quite crested the mountain, as Belle grazes near the elk in the pre-dawn light.*



*This very young bull elk has discovered an apple tree. They eat the leaves, and trim branches to the height they can reach, so that the trees looked pruned that way.*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 2 of 10

*He is joined by a buddy. "Guess what I found!"*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 3 of 10

*Thunder treats them as part of the family.*



*Here comes a mom and her calf, right up the driveway.*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 4 of 10

*Behind them is our now-familiar "Elke Summer".*



*She comes right up to the house gate . . . "Hmmm", she seems to be thinking. "Should I venture in?"*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 5 of 10

*"Hey, you guys want to see what's in here?"*



*She's on her own. "Well, maybe just a couple more steps".*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 6 of 10



*Keeping an eye on her friends, back grazing with the horses. She didn't approach the water tank (but I know they drink there during the night).*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 7 of 10

*It is unusual for her to be this adventuresome in the daylight.*



*"I don't know . . ."*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 8 of 10

*The bronze cat doesn't faze her.*



*"I better head home".*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 9 of 10

*Off she trots, to join the herd.*



## 2016-07-30 – Dawn Patrol

Page 10 of 10

*Back to the forest they go.*



MM

## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 1 of 10

Summer mornings around here are clear and cool; as the day goes on, the temperature rises - often to be suddenly cooled back down by gathering monsoon clouds and rain.

*So it was, as we set out in an area near Capitan we had not ridden before. Lulu takes advantage of the shady pinon pines. Not many clouds . . . yet.*



*Bushwhacking cross country, Thunder leads us through an open meadow.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 2 of 10

*This might be a great spot to build a house, with wonderful views and surrounded by the forest - but it is public land, protected from development.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 3 of 10

*We emerge onto what I would call a savanna: open grassland dotted with trees - cattle country.*



*This is a real treat. Miles of soft, rock-free cattle paths to follow.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 4 of 10

. . . and so is this little fresh-water tank on a warm summer's day.



*With a little help from me, Lulu gets into the swim of things. Gee . . . that sure looks refreshing. Hmm . . .*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 5 of 10

*Well, why not. We are in the middle of nowhere, without even cattle around to offend. Lulu tactfully looks away as I undress.*



*"Come on in. The water's fine!"*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 6 of 10

*Ahhh - that's nice! A cool dip in a cowboy hot tub.*



*Back on the trail, the clouds are gathering - so we speed things up.*



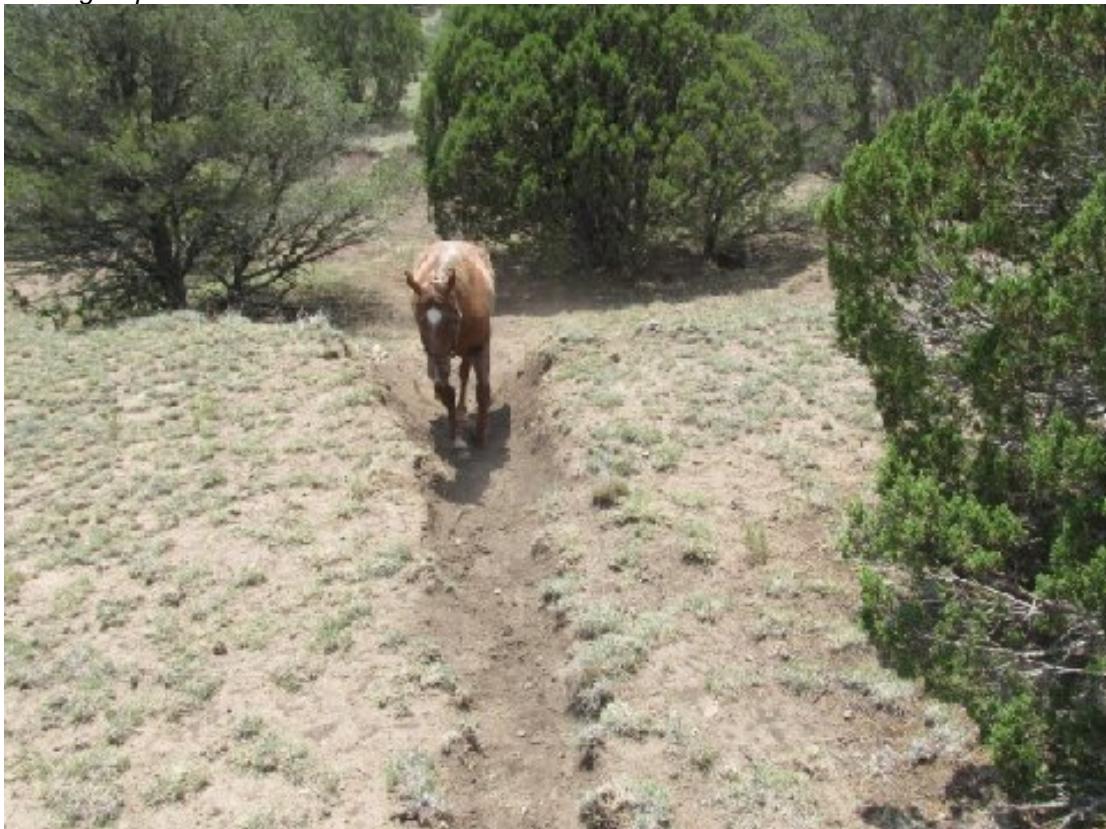
## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 7 of 10

*Careening along . . .*



*. . . at a full gallop.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 8 of 10

*Yee haw! Thunder is just a white dot ahead. Belle struggles along, with me hanging onto her back.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 9 of 10

*Time for a little snack before hurrying home.*



## 2016-07-31 – Cowboy Hot Tub

Page 10 of 10

*We just made it. The horses were out of the trailer and into the barn before the sky opened up. That's monsoon!*



MM

## 2016-08-04 – *Monsoon Sunsets*

Page 1 of 3

The monsoon has settled in - with lots of rain (at times), cooler temps, and interesting sunsets.



## 2016-08-04 – *Monsoon Sunsets*

Page 2 of 3

*Things are greening up again.*



## 2016-08-04 – *Monsoon Sunsets*

Page 3 of 3



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## **2016-08-09 – *Mid Summer***

Page 1 of 6

Belle and I were honored once again to carry the American flag in the annual historic Lincoln Days Parade. Although the evening outdoor Billy the Kid Pageant was rained out (for the first time in memory), it was a grand day for a parade, and Belle did beautifully.



## 2016-08-09 – Mid Summer

Page 2 of 6

(First presented in 1940, *The Last Escape of Billy the Kid*" is considered the country's longest continuously running outdoor folk pageant.)



A local WWII vet (93.y.o.) is shown appreciation for his service.



## 2016-08-09 – Mid Summer

Page 3 of 6

*Miss Mescalero Apache - there are no politicians or commercial entries in this parade.*



*Lots of horses, though.*



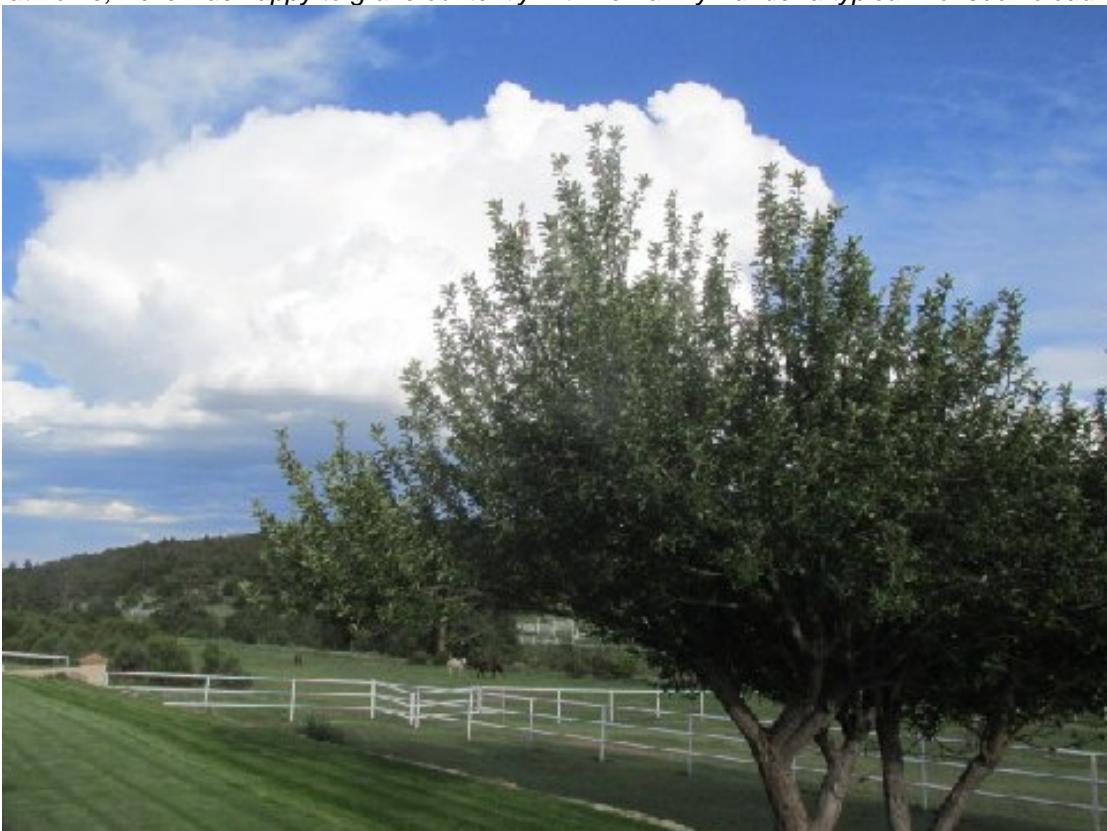
## 2016-08-09 – Mid Summer

Page 4 of 6

*This year, little Lulu came with us - staying close along the entire route.*



*Back at home, Belle was happy to graze contently with her family - under a typical monsoon cloud.*



**2016-08-09 – *Mid Summer***

Page 5 of 6



**2016-08-09 – *Mid Summer***

Page 6 of 6



MM

## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 1 of 9

The monsoon rains come like peals of laughter at a party. They suddenly burst forth, intensify, and then drift away. We try to take little rides during the clear periods, when it seems less likely that we will be drenched.

*After a morning rain, things looked good. Nogal Peak, wearing its green mantle, peeks ("peaks"?) at us from a distance.*



## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 2 of 9

*It doesn't take long for Thunder to assume the lead.*



*He trots ahead . . .*



## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 3 of 9

. . . and then races toward the sun. (Our little camera has trouble with light contrast).



The rest of us just mosey along behind.



## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 4 of 9

*We come upon a special meadow.*



*Lulu explores the perimeter.*



## 2016-08-11 – *Little Ride*

Page 5 of 9

*Spanky sees an opportunity.*



*"Ahhhh . . . soft fresh grass".*



## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 6 of 9

"Grass angels! Whee!"



*Too good to pass up.*



## 2016-08-11 – *Little Ride*

Page 7 of 9

"YUM!".



*Dusk. We trot towards home, as the clouds re-form overhead.*



## 2016-08-11 – Little Ride

Page 8 of 9

*Spanky breaks into a full gallop.*



*We all do.*



## 2016-08-11 – *Little Ride*

Page 9 of 9

*Almost home.*



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-08-12 – ***Big Bucks***

Page 1 of 6

Mature mule deer bucks can be as elusive as elk - they are wary. "Ours" have recently been coming for their snacks mostly after dark. So it was nice to see them in daylight.

*Their antler racks are still growing - covered in a blood-rich, fine "velvet".*



*Here's his buddy - with some old war wounds on his shoulder.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Big Bucks*

Page 2 of 6



*They do enjoy their apples.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Big Bucks*

Page 3 of 6

*They have come to trust Lulu, who was quietly watching from the veranda.*



"Who dat?"



## 2016-08-12 – *Big Bucks*

Page 4 of 6

*Here come some more. "We heard there was a party . . ."*



*Three big bucks, hanging out. Soon they will be competing for females during the mating season, or "rut".*



## 2016-08-12 – *Big Bucks*

Page 5 of 6



## 2016-08-12 – *Big Bucks*

Page 6 of 6

. . . and of course, Nacho gets her treats too!



MM

## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 1 of 14

We have been just itching to ride the high country . . . but that's where the monsoon rain hits first and hardest, so it can be risky. REALLY muddy trails are no fun.

*It looked promising in the morning.*



*The heavy clouds gathered to the east. We figured Nogal Trail to the west might be okay - so we took a chance, and off we went.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 2 of 14

*Thunder enjoys a snack along a little brook at the trail head.*



*Water along the trail is always a treat.*



# 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

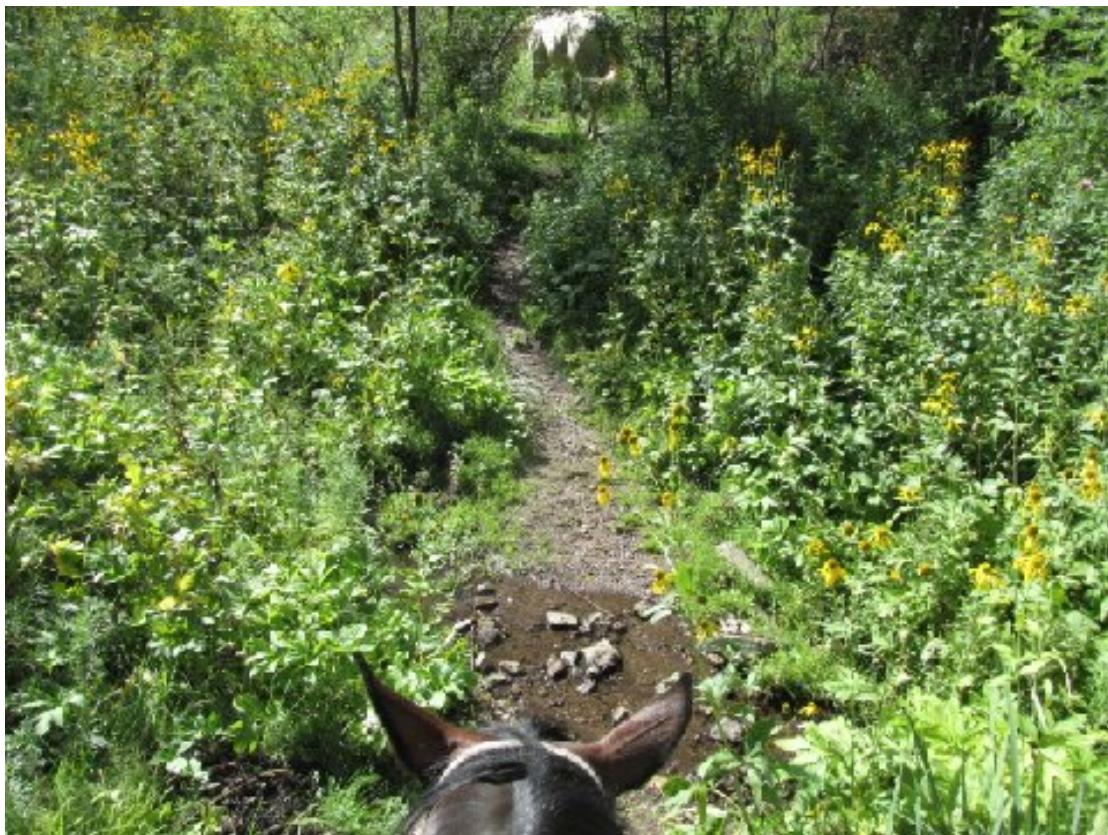
Page 3 of 14

*So far, so good!*

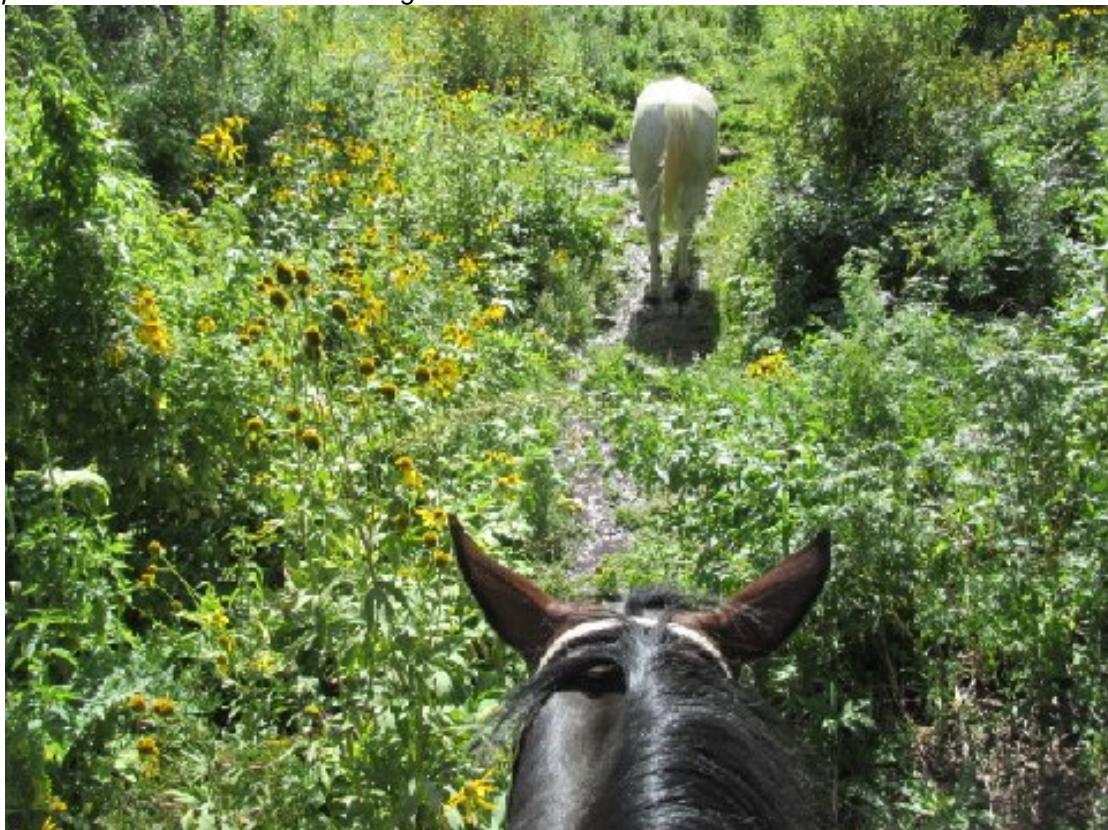


## 2016-08-12 – Risky Business

Page 4 of 14



*This part of the trail is more of a running creek now.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 5 of 14



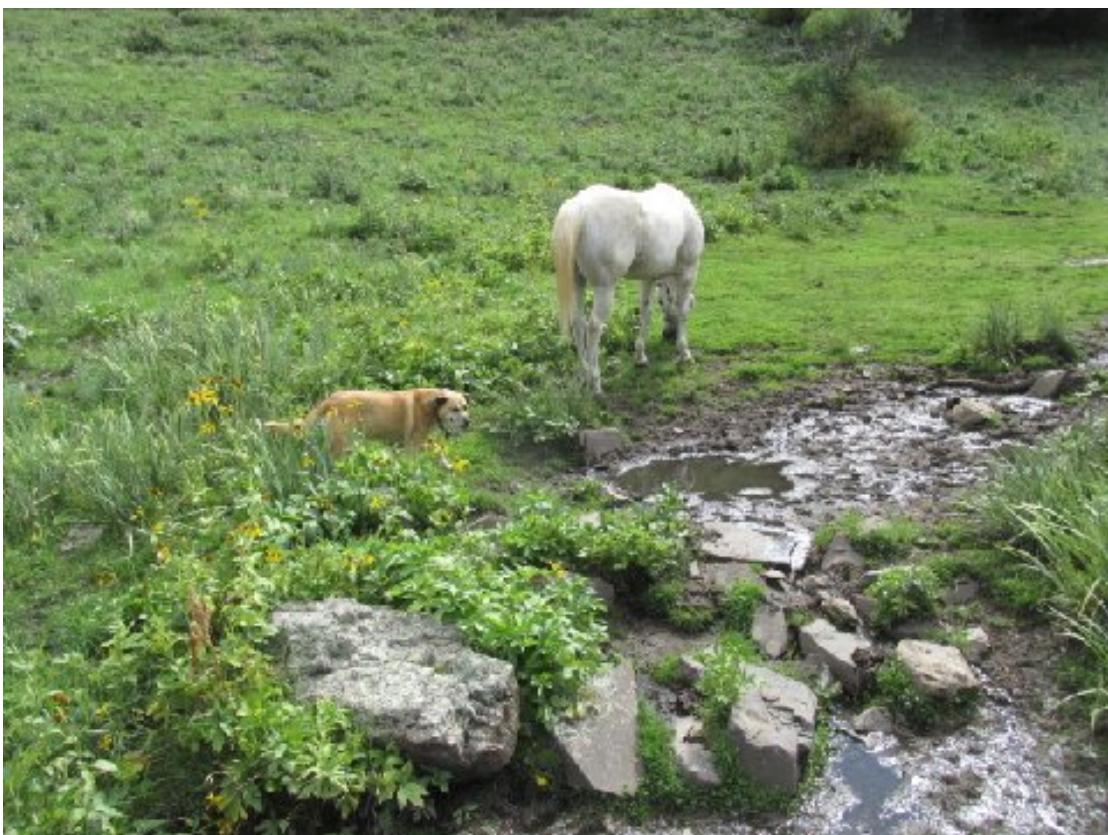
*Masses of yellow flowers along the way.*



## 2016-08-12 – Risky Business

Page 6 of 14

I think these are wild elderberries. If so, it's a good crop this year - there will be lots of homemade elderberry wine around here.



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 7 of 14

*Skies look pretty good to the west . . .*



*Just don't look back!*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 8 of 14

*So up we go.*



*Thunder surveys things from the top.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 9 of 14

*Family picnic. It's great to be back up here.*



*Belle enjoys a high mountain meadow. I keep an eye on those clouds.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 10 of 14

. . . and of course, Spanky has his fun.



*Splendor of the high country.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 11 of 14

*Thunder in solitude.*



*That's a real monsoon sky (see the rain coming down on the right?)*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 12 of 14

*Happy girls.*



*The boys graze contentedly, but I see rain in the distance.*



## 2016-08-12 – *Risky Business*

Page 13 of 14

*We reluctantly head back.*



*Lulu always keeps an eye on everyone. "Are you coming???"*



## 2016-08-12 – Risky Business

Page 14 of 14

An industrious bee. He pays us no mind; he's busy.



A natural Van Gogh.



We made it with no rain. Thank you for joining us on a very special ride!

MM

## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

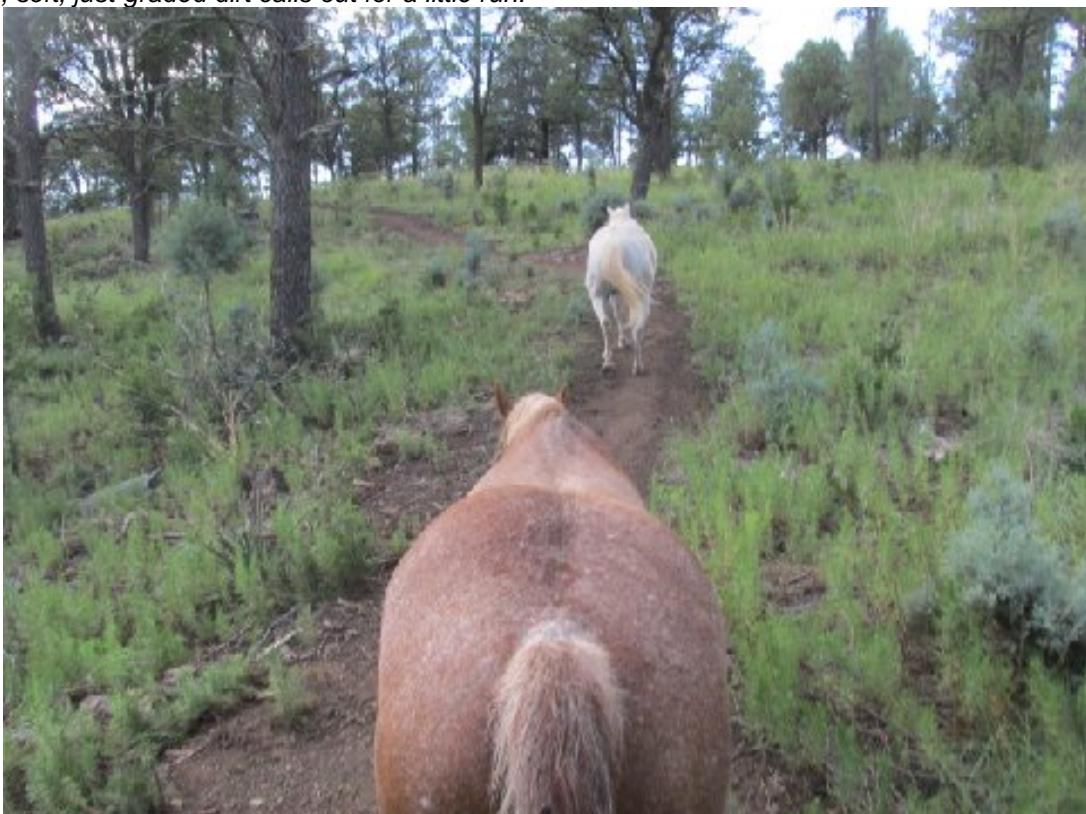
Page 1 of 7

A new trail is always fun (and this one is so new, it doesn't even have a name!). Come on along as we try it out.

*This trail was recently completed by the Americorps Ecoservants.*



*Fresh, soft, just-graded dirt calls out for a little run.*



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 2 of 7

We climb into the tall pines.



Lulu takes the lead - she likes to explore.



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 3 of 7



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 4 of 7



*Yup. Tall pines.*



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 5 of 7



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 6 of 7

*Headed back downhill.*



*As the horses load into the trailer, Lulu takes a break.*



## 2016-08-13 – New Trail

Page 7 of 7

*At home, a beautiful monsoon cloud greeted us.*



Thanks for inaugurating the new trail with us!

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-08-14 – Zozo Parade

Page 1 of 4

Little Carrizozo, N.M. is the community that tries. A once-prosperous railroad town, the place pretty much dried up when the trains quit stopping. Today a dedicated group of locals is working diligently to revive the whistle stop as an artist colony and retirement destination.

*Among their many efforts is an annual festival and parade. Belle and I were asked to carry the flag . . . and Lulu came along as well. The festivities included these colorful folkloric dancers (Lulu waits patiently with Belle) . .*



*. . . and some lovely ladies on great big horses (black Friesians, which have wonderful dispositions, and are actually graceful and nimble for their size - the horses, I mean!).*



## 2016-08-14 – Zozo Parade

Page 2 of 4



Members of the "Cloud Riders" club, they made a beautiful posse for our ride along the parade route.



## 2016-08-14 – Zozo Parade

Page 3 of 4

*Lulu was tuckered after tagging along in the sun.*



## 2016-08-14 – Zozo Parade

Page 4 of 4

*It was a perfect afternoon for the parade, but as we arrived back home, heavy clouds promised rain (it did). Spanky and Thunder ran ahead of Belle in greeting. "She's home! She's home!"*



We were honored to participate, and wish 'Zozo every success!

MM

## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 1 of 14

Most folks say autumn is the best time in New Mexico. But it's hard to beat summer when it looks like this. Give your eyes a nice rest.

*Grazing at home, near the "sunset tree".*



*Hey, guys, wanna go for a ride? "Well . . . I'm in the middle of my lunch, but okay".*



## 2016-08-15 – Splendor In The Grass

Page 2 of 14

*Off we go to nearby Ranchman's Camp. Spanky scopes out the possibilities.*



*A wise horse.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 3 of 14

*Everyone likes this!*



*Thunder and Lulu seem to be in a little friendly competition.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 4 of 14

*Old timer.*



*This is cattle country.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 5 of 14

*We are all frisking along.*



*Belle and I race to catch up.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 6 of 14



*The freedom . . .*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 7 of 14

*Fast climb out of an arroyo.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 8 of 14

*Splendor in the grass.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 9 of 14

"Hey, guys, come on!" "Okay - just one more bite".



*Trotting together.*



## 2016-08-15 – Splendor In The Grass

Page 10 of 14

*This is what is meant by "contented cows".*



*... and that's a pretty contented horse, too . . .*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 11 of 14



*Bang! Up we climb.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 12 of 14

*Thunder leads us right home.*



## **2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass***

Page 13 of 14

*Last snack.*



## 2016-08-15 – *Splendor In The Grass*

Page 14 of 14

*Back at the ranch, a young elk couple greet us.*



"O tender yearning,  
The eye sees the open heaven,  
The heart is intoxicated with bliss;  
O that the beautiful time . . .  
Could remain green forever."

*Johann von Schiller 1799*

Indeed!

MM

## 2016-08-20 – Nacho's Babies

Page 1 of 5

Finally got some photos of Nacho's new twins. She hasn't brought them to the house yet - deer moms usually keep the babies secluded for 3-6 weeks after birth. She comes several times each day for her snacks - and the little ones stay put where she tells them to. They sure are cute!



*They stay pretty close to mom.*



## 2016-08-20 – *Nacho's Babies*

Page 2 of 5



## 2016-08-20 – *Nacho's Babies*

Page 3 of 5

*Everything is new and interesting.*



## 2016-08-20 – *Nacho's Babies*

Page 4 of 5



Awwww.



## 2016-08-20 – *Nacho's Babies*

Page 5 of 5

*After we saw the babies, we took a little ride around the ranch. Just nice and easy.*



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH

## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 1 of 10

We had planned to ride up on the mountain this weekend - preferably along the Big Bonito Trail. But intermittent rain yesterday gave us pause, so we opted out and hoped today would be different. It sure was.

It rained steadily all night. Then a call came in early this morning from our search and rescue dispatcher - a horseback rider had been reported missing overnight. I did a little research of my own and discovered that the state police had first been notified by a concerned friend at 2:30 am. Then, a 9-1-1 call was received at about 7 AM from two hikers who had spent a soggy night in a tent on the mountain, and were headed down as soon as it was light. Along the way, they had heard a woman yelling for help from a distant ridge (so at least there was some idea as to her location). The hikers couldn't get to her, but found a place with cell reception for their call. A search mission had begun.

It was still raining, and I knew the trails would be very muddy - difficult and dangerous for my horses to join the search. Then I learned that two "ground-pounder" (foot) search teams had been hastily formed and were already on their way. So, somewhat reluctantly, I left the horses in the barn and Lulu and I headed to the mobile command base, set up at the Big Bonito Trail head.

*There was plenty of rain. Even the paved portion of the road was flooded.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 2 of 10

*Lulu and I made it, joining the base crew coordinating communications and logistics from a specially-equipped SAR van. We were a small group at first, but more and more folks arrived to help out.*



*It is remarkable how many agencies can respond to a remote location in such a short time. There were personnel from the state police, incident command, forestry service, local search and rescue teams - as well as friends of the lost rider.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 3 of 10

*Modern search and rescue requires a lot of equipment - radios, GPS, packs, etc.*



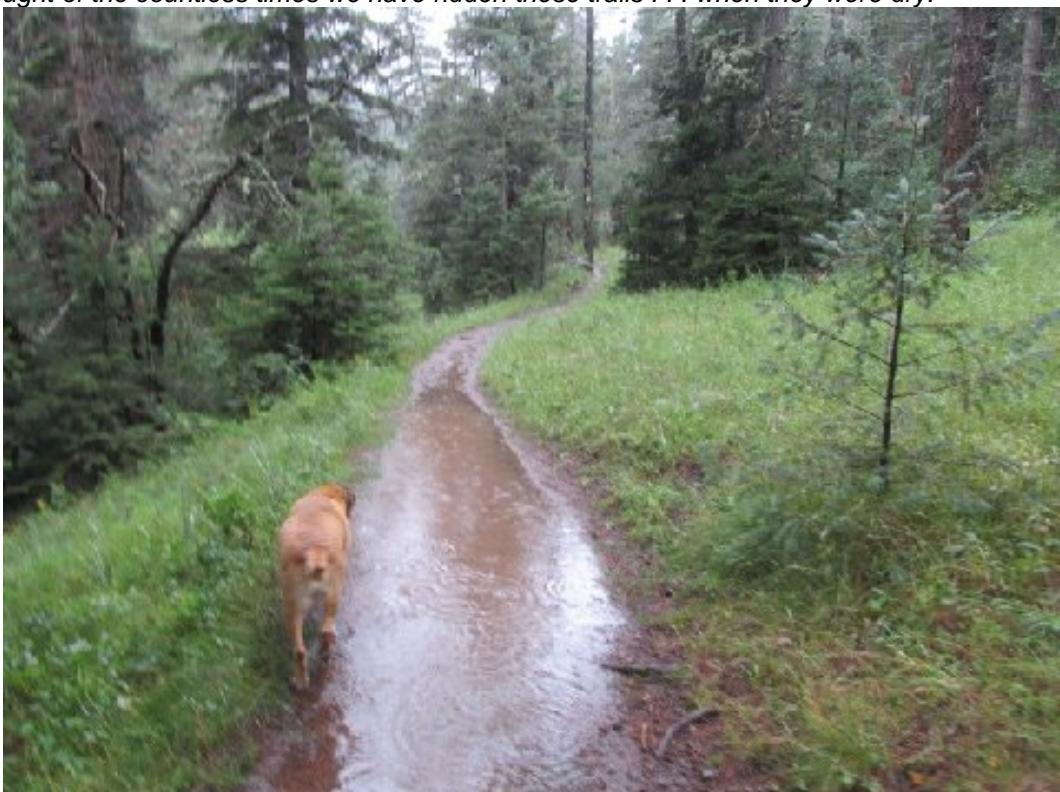
## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 4 of 10

*The search team was already climbing toward the most likely location of the lost rider. Radio reception is very poor in this rugged terrain. We waited, and held our breath every time the speakers squawked some barely-discriminable static. Hours passed. Finally, word came through - both the rider and the horse were alright! The team was escorting them down the muddy trails to our location. Rather than sit and wait, Lulu and I decided to head up and join them part way, in case we might be of help. I was very glad our horses were in the dry barn. All that rain had turned the trail into a slippery mire.*



*We thought of the countless times we have ridden these trails . . . when they were dry.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 5 of 10

*All the streams were running swiftly - there would be numerous water crossings for the returning team.*



## **2016-08-21 – Lost & Found**

Page 6 of 10



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 7 of 10

*Even while slogging through mud, the forest was beautiful.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 8 of 10

*Lulu was a champ.*



*Along the way, we encountered the real heroes of the day - the hikers who had heard the rider's cries for help. Their 9-1-1 call made all the difference.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 9 of 10

*Then we heard voices in the distance.*



*The team, with the found rider and horse, was nearly home.*



## 2016-08-21 – Lost & Found

Page 10 of 10

*There were thanks to all, for a job well done. It was the result all search and rescue efforts work toward - successfully finding the lost alive and healthy - bringing them home safely.*



*So, as it turned out, we made it to the Big Bonito Trail this weekend after all! When we got home, we received a curious welcome from a young bull elk in the east pasture.*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 1 of 8

I am very proud of little Lulu. When she first arrived here, she instinctively chased the deer - but quickly came to understand that we share this place with our special friends.

*Now it is a non-issue. Deer, cats, Lulu - they all get along just fine.*



*Later in the evening, I was fixing my supper when I looked out the kitchen window and . . .*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 2 of 8

*A herd of elk was headed our way.*



*They were grazing closer and closer (my supper could wait).*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 3 of 8

*Among them was a majestic old bull.*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 4 of 8

*Battle-scarred and resolute, he dominated the herd with his stoic presence.*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 5 of 8

*In this blurry shot (it was nearly dark by now), there are two late-born elk calves, still with their "fawn" spots.*



## 2016-08-22 – Late Supper

Page 6 of 8

. . . and a very young bull, with oddly fragile-looking spike antlers.



*This trio came all the way into the paddock beside the barn (while the horses were eating their supper just a few feet away).*



## **2016-08-22 – *Late Supper***

Page 7 of 8



## **2016-08-22 – Late Supper**

Page 8 of 8

*There was something so noble about the big bull elk's commanding presence. In the fading light, he looked like a painting of a great, veteran warrior.*



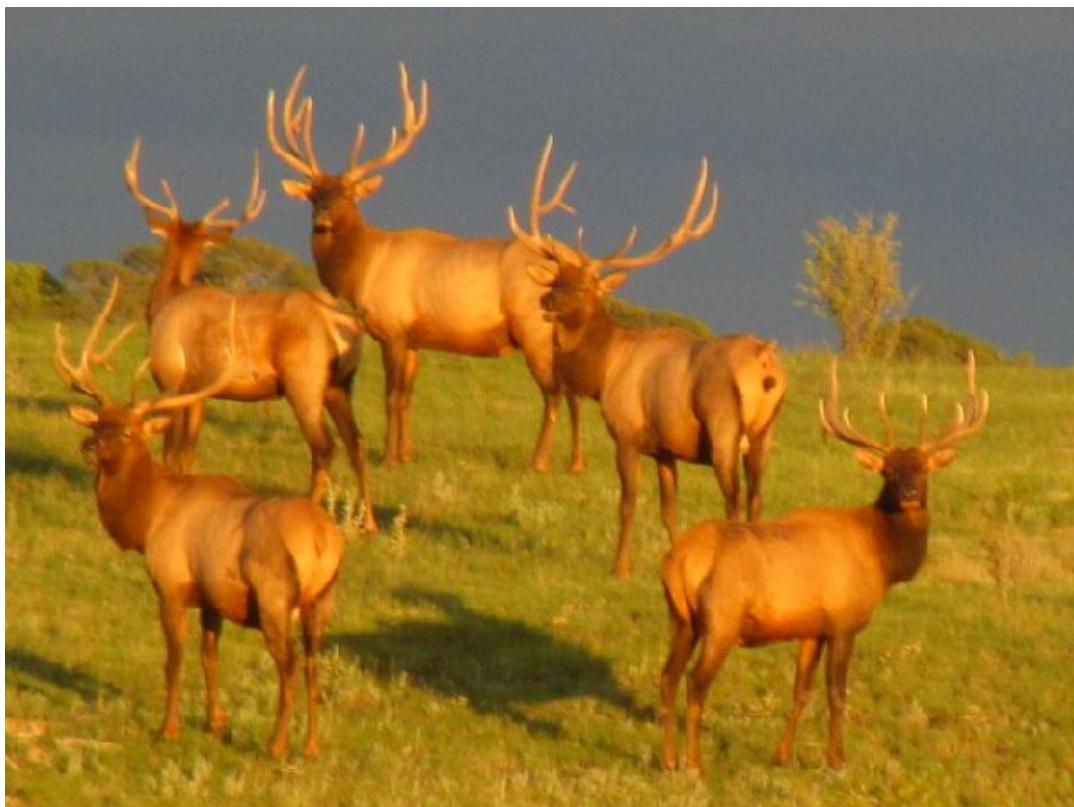
What a privilege to share this place with them. It's their world, too.

MM

## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 1 of 14

Wow.



*Okay, let's start at the beginning . . . it was a busy day . . . went to the feed store, came home and unloaded all the feed; mowed pastures; repaired the mower (again); mowed some more; etc. It was getting late, and although it was a beautiful evening, I had decided we would skip riding today, . . . but the horses' reproachful looks (and Lulu's, too) made me reconsider. "Alright, but it will have to be a fast ride somewhere close." Within a few minutes we were on a green meadow - with a rainbow. Not bad!*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 2 of 14

*"Hey, Thunder, head toward the rainbow", I suggested . . . and he did.*



*As promised, it was a fast ride. Everyone seemed to be in the mood to run on this perfect evening.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 3 of 14

*Lulu, too.*



*Rain was coming down to the north of us, spurring us on.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 4 of 14

. . . then Belle spotted something ahead.



Spanky saw it too. "Wazzat?"



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 5 of 14

*Elk in the distance.*



*Heading that way, we began to weave through the pinyons - quietly angling toward the elusive animals. Suddenly there was a roar of exerted breathing and a thundering of hooves. A group of big bull elk came crashing through the trees only a few yards in front of us! Belle was startled, and I kicked into her sides, hoping to catch up with them - at the same time struggling to get the camera up and into position. The simple camera wasn't able to focus that fast. "Damn, damn, damn", everything was a dismal blur. By the time the lens had a bead on the elk, they were well away from us.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 6 of 14

*Oh, well. It was an exciting encounter anyway. The horses looked at each other as if to say, "Did you see THAT?" We continued on our ride in the direction the elk went. I remembered that they often gain a safe distance and then slow to see what we are doing . . . so maybe . . . We quickened our pace.*



*All at once, there they were again! Right in front of us, a magnificent bull had stopped to bugle - his otherworldly call echoing off the hills.*



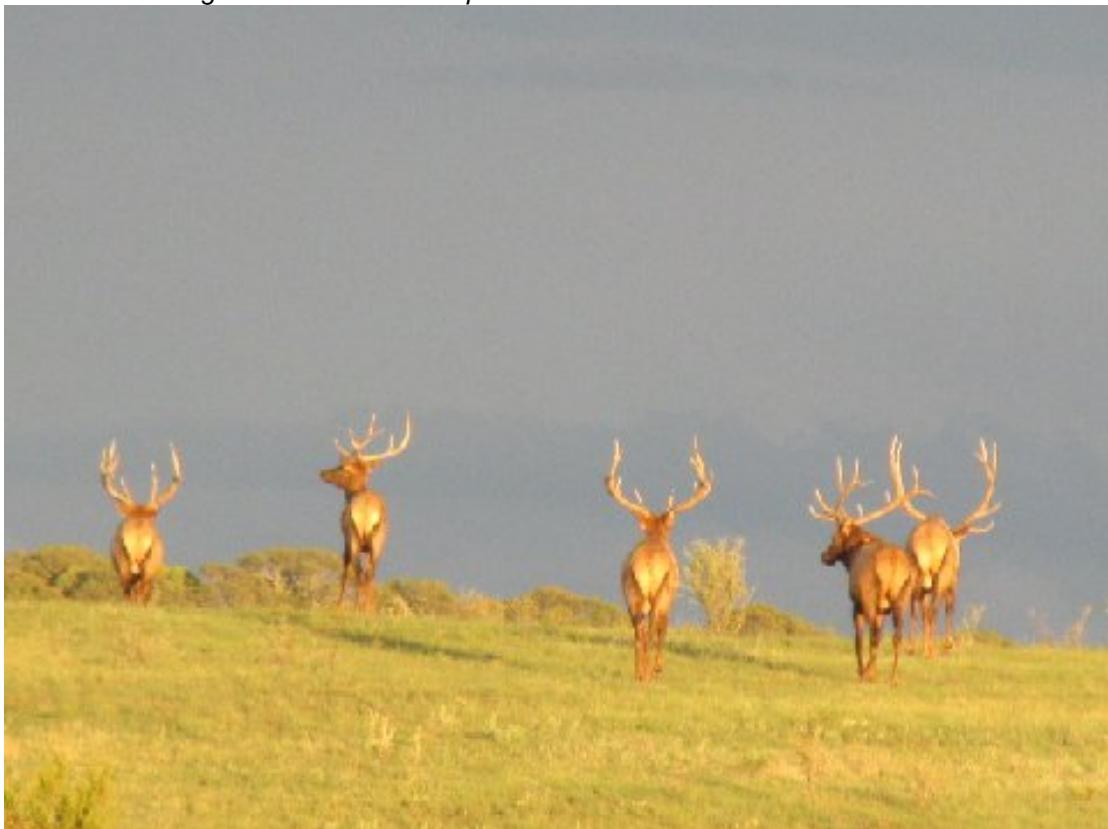
## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 7 of 14

*This time, they didn't seem so concerned about our presence on their turf (although this one seems to be giving us the "stink eye").*



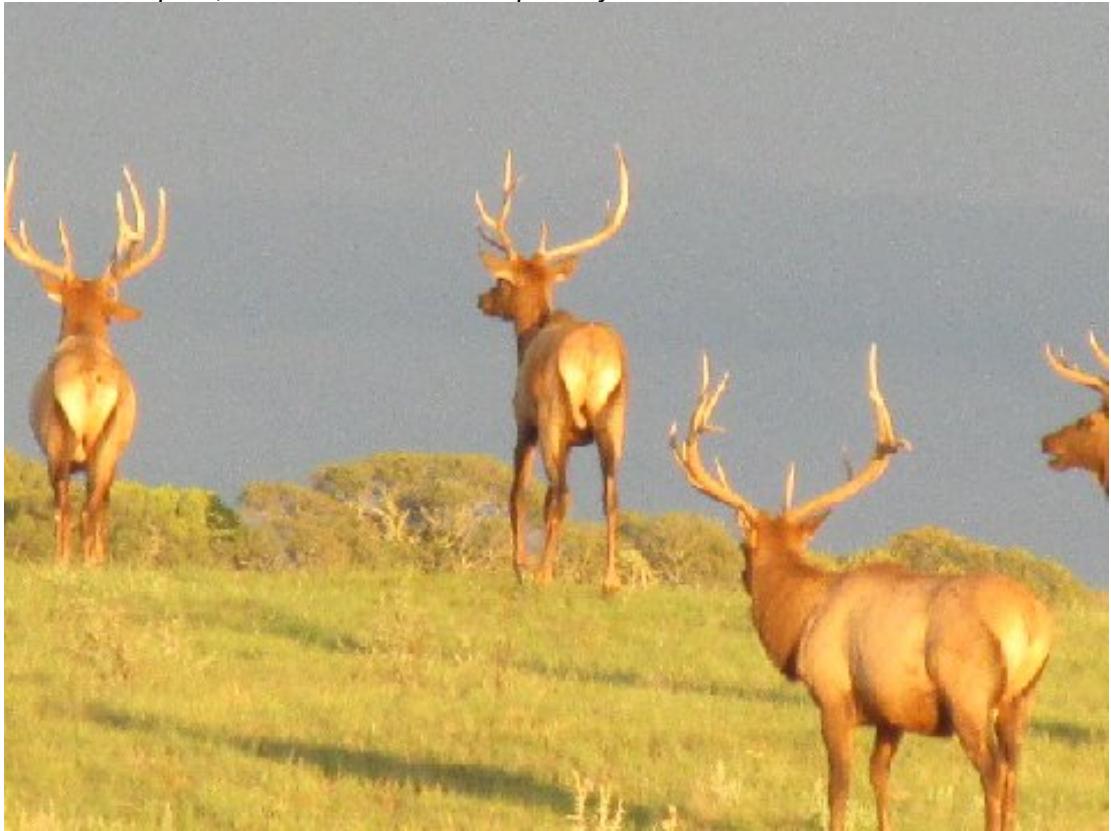
*We sort of trailed along behind them at a respectful distance.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 8 of 14

*They slowed their pace, as if to establish their superiority.*



*A very rare sight. If you look closely, you will see two bulls playfully sparring - getting ready for the upcoming mating season rituals. We could hear the dry, clattering sound.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 9 of 14

*They paused near the top of the ridge. The sun was deeply setting; dark storm clouds silhouetted their magnificent antlers. They seemed to intentionally pose for a portrait of champions. Wow.*

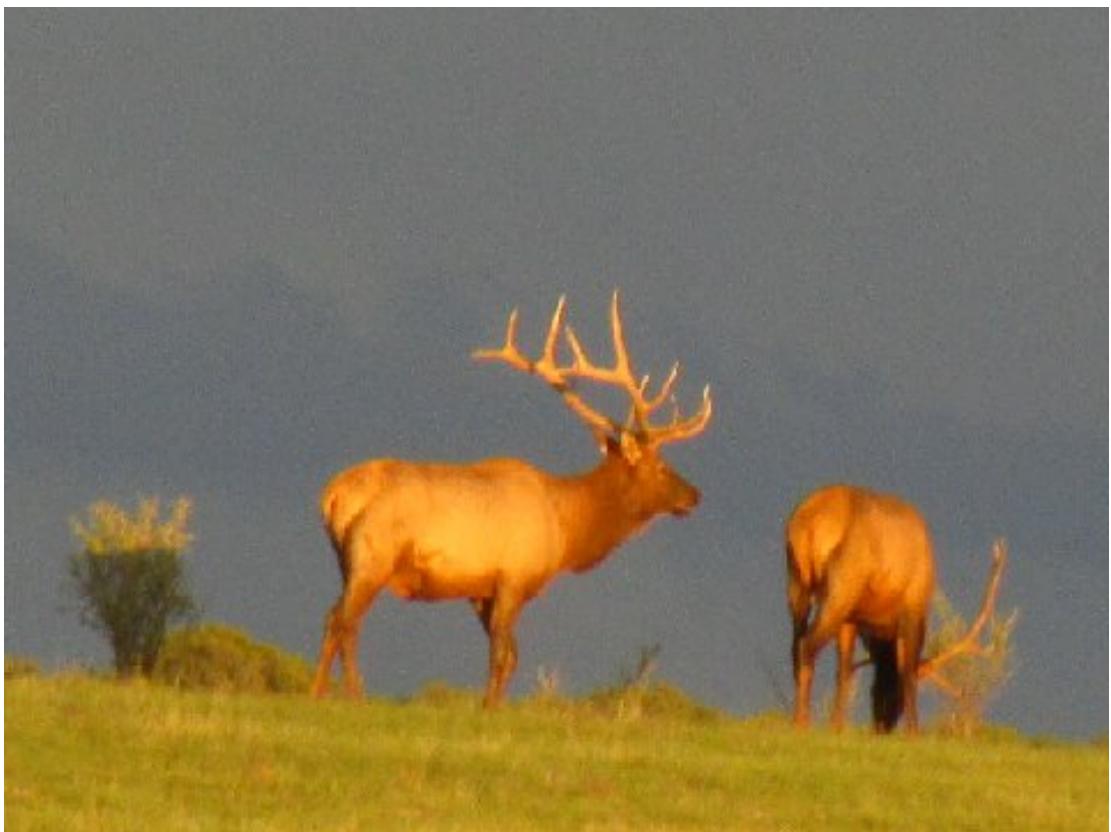


*Not many opportunities like this in life (oh, what hunters wouldn't give . . .)*



## 2016-08-23 – *Rainbow Ride*

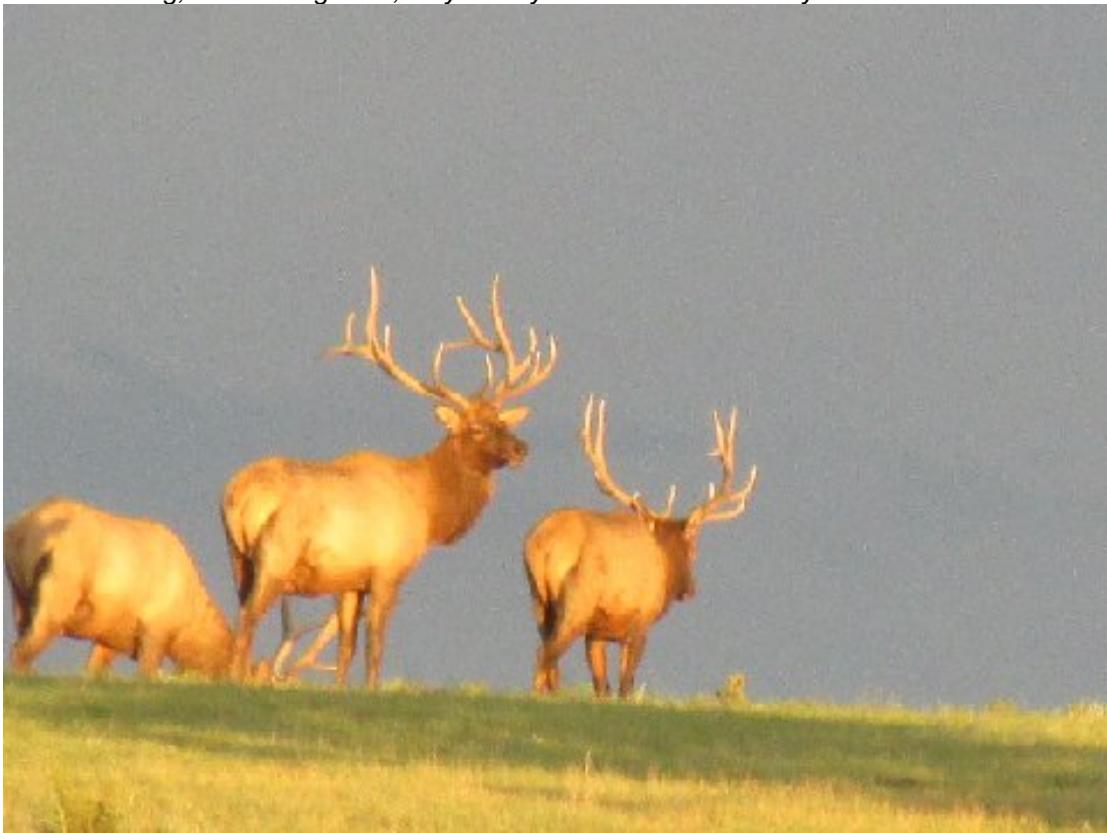
Page 10 of 14



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 11 of 14

*With a final knowing, backward glance, they moseyed over the hill. "See 'ya".*



*Thunder reminded us that it was getting dark, and we were now a long way from the trailer. Off we sped.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 12 of 14

"Come'on! This way!"



*Cresting a hill, Thunder and Lulu create a magic scene of their own.*



## 2016-08-23 – Rainbow Ride

Page 13 of 14

*Back at the trailer, it was time to reflect.*



## 2016-08-23 – *Rainbow Ride*

Page 14 of 14

*What a remarkable, memorable experience . . .*



Thank you for allowing us to share it with you.

MM

## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 1 of 11

With the least chance of monsoon rain this week, it looked like this would be a great day to visit the mountain.

*The lake is full.*



*. . . and every little brook is gurgling with fresh rain water.*



## 2016-08-24 – *Back On Top*

Page 2 of 11



*Sunflowers bid us a cheery welcome.*



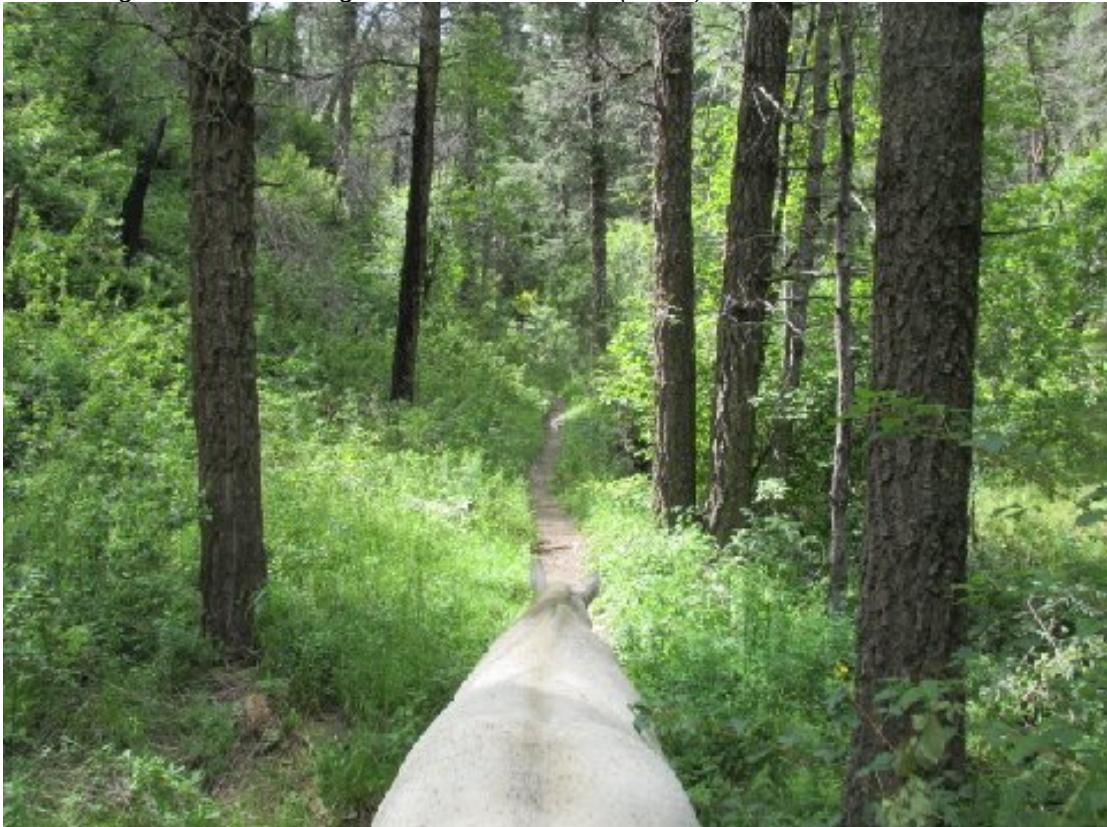
## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 3 of 11

*Everyone was happy to back on the mountain. "Come on, follow me!"*



*The trails through the forest were green and without mud (whew).*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 4 of 11



*Lots of ferns giving their thanks to the sun.*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 5 of 11

*Always happy Lulu.*



## 2016-08-24 – *Back On Top*

Page 6 of 11



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 7 of 11

*A race to the top.*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 8 of 11

*The last climb takes some effort.*



*. . . but oh, so worth it!*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 9 of 11



*Although we are in the wilderness, the forest service maintains this fence around Argentina Spring.*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 10 of 11

*A peaceful family outing.*



## 2016-08-24 – Back On Top

Page 11 of 11

*As we returned to the trail head, we passed numerous horses at the campground. I was very pleased that Thunder, Spanky and Belle minded their own business - just quietly walked back to our trailer. One camper commented that he had never seen such well-behaved horses. Nice compliment to them (it's always a relief when your kids behave themselves in public).*



MM

End Journal Volume 11 - Part 1 of 3

Please Follow Us Some More...

See All the Journals.

JUST CLICK HERE!

