

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume Ten

**BELLE, THUNDER, SPANKY, LULU
AND
MATTHEW MIDGETT**

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume X

Part 2 of 3

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FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

2016-04-17 – Mixed Bag

We've had a mixed bag the last couple of days.

Warm temps (70's) and blue skies energized Thunder.



Lots of grass coming up now.



Then, yesterday . . . Yup - that's snow coming down in the distance.



Getting closer - hurry up, Spanky!



Yikes, here it comes.



We boogie home.



We get there just as it hits - the horses head for the barn (fast!). Everything was too warm; the snow didn't stick.



Clear this morning. The horses wore their blankets overnight.



What's this? A quartet of young elk near the old water cistern.





2016-04-17 – Mixed Bag

They hung around all morning.



Mommie cat takes it ALL in stride.



"What, me worry?"



2016-04-21 – *Looking Up*

We've had some beautiful skies lately.





MM

2016-04-22 – *Ancient Shadows*

The presence of ancient peoples is keenly felt all over New Mexico. We often come across evidence of past habitation on our rides - a bit of old stone wall or pottery sherds. Our good friends Bill and Beverly are long-time residents, educators, and historians - and extremely knowledgeable about this area. Bill offered to show us some petroglyphs in the forest behind the ranch.

Since it was so close, we rode out our gate to meet Bill for the tour. Thunder races up the hill to join us.



He could tell this was something special.



2016-04-22 – Ancient Shadows

The horses and Lulu got into the spirit of our exploration - staying close and paying attention to Bill.



Spanky seemed to have a special interest in what Bill had to share . . .



2016-04-22 – Ancient Shadows

It was exciting to know that the ancient Mogollon people had lived in our "back yard" prior to 1,200 A.D. Bill explained that this nondescript meadow had once been covered with a large stone pueblo.



Some of the old stones remain around the base of this tree.



2016-04-22 – Ancient Shadows

Unfortunately, during less "enlightened" times early in the 20th century, work crews dismantled the old walls and used the rock to build dams across the arroyos - to slow flash floods.



These stones were once gathered and stacked into homes by the ancient Indians.



Other evidence of their time here includes lots of pottery sherds.



This fragment has an unusual and very finely-painted diamond design.



2016-04-22 – Ancient Shadows

Bill led us back into time . . . eloquently describing life here centuries ago. Finally, we came upon some faintly visible petroglyphs - scratched drawings on stone. If you look closely, you will detect the sketch of a face - a sun god wearing a headdress (shadows on the rock make it difficult to see) . . .



. . . and here is a "M"-shaped snake, crawling across a boulder.



2016-04-22 – *Ancient Shadows*

There is a large hand print on this one.



2016-04-22 – Ancient Shadows

Centuries of weather have faded the old images. What did the artists want us to know? The Mogollon people moved on, blending into other Puebloan cultures with the coming of the Apaches. Thanks to Bill, we were able to imagine life here in another time; walking in the footsteps of those who came so long before. Perhaps visitors will one day look at evidence of our efforts, and wonder - "What was it like then?"



MM

From the very first time they met, they didn't like each other. "Buddy" came with me from California. My cat Scooter found him as a kitten, hiding under a car in the garage (who knows how long he had been there), and came to tell me we had a guest. He never left. Scooter adopted him and they became best friends (thus the name "Buddy"). "Smarty Pants" was one of the many feral cats I inherited with the ranch. I caught them all and had them spayed/neutered (nightmare!) and all but one eventually converted to domestic (the one hold out, "Elke", is the barn cat. She still wants nothing to do with me or the other cats).

Anyhow, by the time we moved in, Smarty Pants was about four months old. He had a nasty disposition (he once attached himself with his teeth to my friend Patrick's thumb - like a giant leech - and wouldn't let go). As I say, when they met, it was instant dislike. They hissed, struck out with claws (feebly), and stayed far away from one another. When Smarty Pants finally saw the wisdom of moving into the house (Buddy's domain), they stayed in separate rooms. They would try to keep within view of each other, though (afraid of being ambushed, I guess). Although across the house from each other, they would lock eyes and stare daggers back and forth.

Over time, they at least became civil to one another. No hissing - but you knew what they were thinking (like uncomfortable in-laws). This has gone on for years. Then, recently . . .

Smarty Pants (left) and Buddy.



So. You see - there is always hope!

MM



FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

2016-04-23 – *Taste of Summer*

Suddenly, it felt like a typical *summer* day - warm temps and a few sprinkles.

First, a repair to the trailer at a local welding shop. I swear, Spanky was taking notes. "I bet I could do that. I just need a BIG welding helmet . . ."



We were in the vicinity, so decided on a trek along the Bonito River. Sure looks like a summer sky. There was some rain in the distance, and we got a few sprinkles during our ride.



2016-04-23 – Taste of Summer

Spring is just coming to these cottonwoods along the stream.



We decided to bushwhack into areas we've never explored before. It was rough going at times (my face was bleeding from whipping branches) - but the horses thoroughly enjoyed the adventure, and we saw some beautiful new views.





Lulu has learned to enjoy wading in cool water on a warm day . . .



2016-04-23 – Taste of Summer

... and the horses found lots of fresh green grass.



Lulu's look'in for fish!



She sure loves her Thunder (and visa-versa).



"I wish I had longer leg . . . ", she sez.



2016-04-23 – *Taste of Summer*

Yup . . . *summer-like skies.*



It was a nice "summer" ride . . . in April. (And we got a proper monsoon rain overnight at home). Thanks for coming along!

MM

2016-04-24 – *What About Me?*

Late last evening, I looked out the kitchen window, and was startled. For a moment I thought Spanky had somehow gotten out of the pasture.

It was a young elk . . . wondering why the deer got corn and he didn't!



He looked up, and he looked down.



2016-04-24 – What About Me?

There is an open gate he could have gone through just a few yards to the right . . . and of course, elk can jump a fence like that with ease (maybe the deer didn't invite him).



He tried to stick his head through . . . but the corn was too far away. Finally, he rejoined the rest of his herd. The deer went on with their snacking.





I think this evening I will put some corn on the other side of the fence . . . just in case.
MM



FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

So far, this spring is greener than most.



Lots of water, as the snow continues to melt in the high country.





The sound is wonderful.



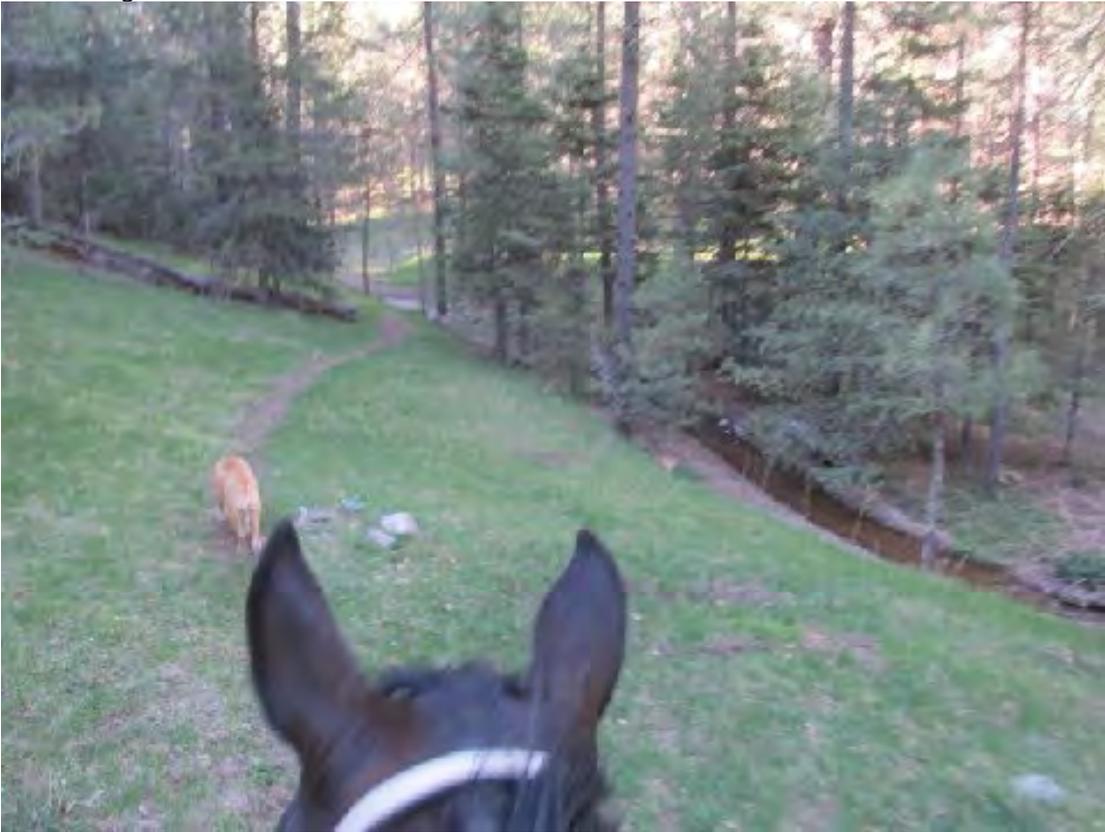
The kids eye some goodies.



Ready to hit the salad bar!



This is like riding across a mowed lawn.



... but it isn't all smooth going ...



Yum!



We come across an old gold mine. The Forest Service blocked most entrances years ago, but over time, some shafts have been exposed.



Solid rock. Boy, did this take some work to dig!



I wonder how this fruit tree got here . . . likely a miner threw a pit aside . . .





"Wait just a sec.



Headed back at a full gallop.



Whoa. Gotta stop for a snack.



Whoopie! . . . There's the trailer.



Sure is nice to have the green back!

MM

The sun was still out - the deer had come for their evening snacks.



"What the heck?"



"Huh?"



"What's that landing on my head?"



Look closely . . . tiny snowflakes!





It was much too warm for the snow to "stick" . . . but it was snow . . . in the sun.



Ah, New Mexico!
MM

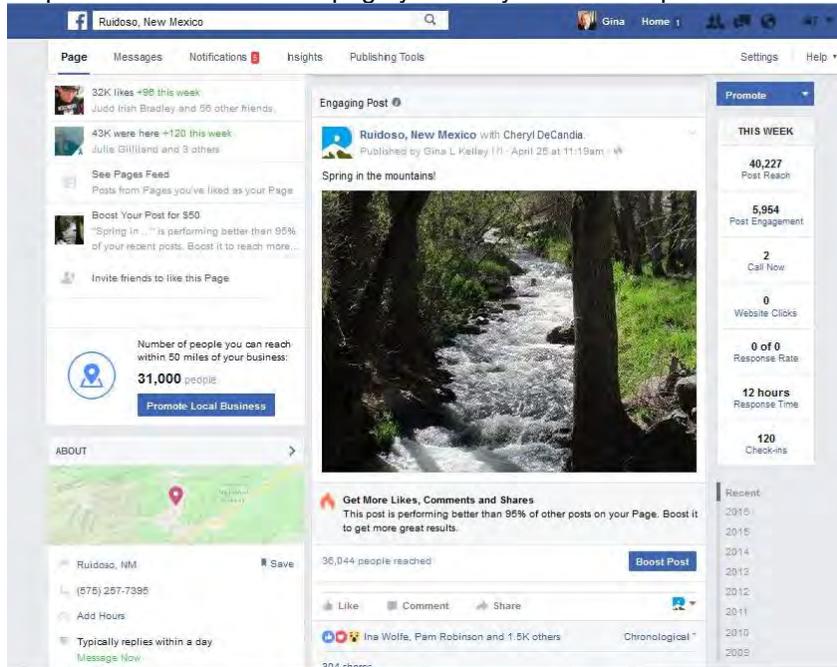
2016-04-27 – The Power of Photography (and the Internet)

We sometimes share photos with our friend Gina, who is the Director of Tourism for Ruidoso (she does a great job).

Golly!

MM

Posted one of your photos on our facebook page yesterday - what a response!



2,683 "likes"
193 "loves" (a new thing of facebook)
3,379 "reactions, comments & shares"
36,240 people reached
Keep 'em coming!

Gina L. Kelley
Ruidoso Tourism
www.DiscoverRuidoso.com



FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

2016-04-30 – Open Rides

Although some rides may look the same, each one is special to us. With about 100 miles of trails surrounding Fort Stanton, we still have "new" ones there to enjoy. So, after Spanky's monthly injection at the vet (to ease his ring bone), we went exploring.

This is one of our favorite places. Easy trails and wonderful, wide views.



2016-04-30 – Open Rides

Lulu happily bounces along behind Spanky. She has bonded with each of the horses.



Thunder drops back from his usual lead position (maybe he just wanted to sightsee - "You go ahead, Belle. I just want to relax back here.")



A bit of spring.



Spanky spots a burrow. Don't know what animal dug this impressive hole (Spanky seems to be wondering, too. "If anything pops up, I'm outta here!").



2016-04-30 – Open Rides

Soon, Thunder takes the lead again (and has a snack). He now routinely understands verbal commands from me. When I say "right" or "left", that's what he does. Makes it easy!



Spanky flies.



2016-04-30 – Open Rides

At the river, everyone takes a break. Leaves are just emerging on these cottonwoods.



Then, some friendly competition. In spite of her handicap (me), Belle gives Thunder a good run for his money.



2016-04-30 – Open Rides

This was interesting. The trail led into an old cattle pen area - a dead end. The horses figured it out, and found a way around on their own.



2016-04-30 – Open Rides

Racing back to the trailer, you can just barely make out Thunder and Spanky throwing up dust clouds in the distance (they stayed on the trail. Belle and I took a short cut!)



At home after the ride, the deer were waiting . . . the buck on the right has new bumps on his head . . .



. . . he already has begun developing this year's antler rack. See the odd growths coming out of his skull? (I wonder what that feels like). They can grow as much as one-half an inch per day!



A view of the top of his head, as he reaches up for some apple leaves. In a couple of months, these bumps will develop into a magnificent rack (and make him prey to trophy hunters . . .)



Spring seemed to come early this year, allowing us to ride the high country sooner than usual.

The snow melt is still feeding rivers and streams.





2016-05-01 – A Gift

We decided to do one of our favorite long loops up the mountain. It was a beautiful day for it.



Belle stops for a snack among some wildflowers.



All the little brooks along the trail are running now.



Thunder enjoys a drink, as we cross the top of a rocky waterfall.



When we finally reach the crest, Thunder flies along the top of the world, high above the Tularosa Basin.



While Spanky . . . well . . .



Moving on.



2016-05-01 – A Gift

These horses know such liberty; yet they choose to stay with their family. It doesn't get much freer than this, racing through the tufted grass in the White Mountain Wilderness of New Mexico.



Cowboy "selfie" at a gallop.



Another snack before we descend into Turkey Canyon.



This part of the trail is ROUGH. Very steep and rocky. It's faulty design funnels water straight downhill. The resulting erosion removes any soft topsoil from the trail. Lulu picks carefully among the rocks. If you look closely - you will spot Spanky up ahead, bushwhacking a more comfortable path under the trees. Smart horse.



2016-05-01 – A Gift

As we struggled along, I had a funny feeling we were being watched. Maybe we've spent too much time in the wilds, but there is a sort of second sense . . . sure enough . . .



. . . this elk had been pacing us for a while - probably just curious. The oaks haven't leafed out yet - robbing him of his camouflage.



Ah - a little break at the bottom of the slide.



Nature's beauty. A cactus display along the trail, complete with heart-shaped stone.



Thunder pauses for a cool drink. This has been a long ride.



Nearly back, as the sun sinks low.



At dusk, Belle has one more snack while the stream gurgles contentedly by.



Speaking of contentment . . .



None of us wanted to see this day end. We never take such gifts for granted . . . and as always, thanks for sharing this special time. MM

2016-05-01 – Spring?

Did I say spring came early this year? That was yesterday. This morning . . .

I knew something was up - it was just too quiet outside.



Yesterday was springtime. Today was more "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas".



2016-05-01 – Spring?

More snow coming down. We finally ended up with about 1 1/2".



Although it snowed off and on all day, by this afternoon most of the fallen snow had melted. The horses came out of the barn for a snack.



2016-05-01 – Spring?

The elk didn't seem to mind. They grazed all day behind the barn (falling snow blurs this photo).





Later in the day it was nap time.



Good idea on a day like this (no, I didn't).



Snow falling on the mountains.



The weather service predicts it will be 73 degrees here on Wednesday.

New Mexico!

MM

2016-05-03 – Paved Roads

Most people these days take paved roads for granted. Not around here! Because of our mild, dry climate, unpaved roads are common. We use a gravel road to take us into Capitan for groceries and horse feed. It's a picturesque ride through cattle ranches - even though the bumps and ruts are hard on the old (1948) Chevy feed truck (it has just leaf springs and no shock absorbers, so you really feel the road!) . . . and during summer monsoon rains, it can be quite a muddy challenge. But there is good news for the truck and anyone who uses the old byway named for Cora Dutton, a local pioneer. (The road passes through her former ranch - right in front of her old house. Cora was famous for sitting on her porch with a loaded shotgun, to "warn" speeding motorists to slow down). Crews have begun work on paving the historic route between Nogal Mesa and Capitan.

On our way back from town, we follow a water truck spraying the road, as crews add gravel and grade it in preparation for paving next week.



Unusual activity for this old road.



2016-05-03 – *Paved Roads*

We give this guy lots of room. It'll be smooth sailing soon.



At home, Lulu helps me unload some hay.



. . . and that's the latest "news" from rural New Mexico!

MM

2016-05-04 – Sleepy Kids

Do horses sleep lying down? Mine sure do.

At dawn this morning. It's unusual to see all three lying down at the same time.



However, if you notice - one of the boys is always keeping an eye out, just in case.



Thunder's turn (although he looks a bit drowsy).



... then Spanky's.



That was likely the last night they will wear their blankets for a while. It's heating up.
MM

2016-05-06 – Bath Time

Belle has been invited to once again carry the flag in the Smokey Bear Days parade at nearby Capitan, tomorrow morning. She wants to look her best, so we took advantage of a beautiful, warm afternoon to give everyone a bath.

Belle dries in the sun, while Spanky waits his turn. They all are very cooperative.



Thunder is next. Wilcox seemed amused, because he gives himself a bath.



2016-05-06 – Bath Time

It was such a nice afternoon, an "après bath" ride seemed in order. We decided on Cedar Creek. Lulu has a quick drink before we start out.



Nice day for it.







Sure feels like spring now!

MM

2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

Once again Belle was invited to carry the flag and open the annual Smokey Bear Days parade in little Capitan, N.M.

She had her bath yesterday, so today she was already . . . except for some shiny black "toenails" to complete her look. She waits patiently as I paint them.



All ready to go.



2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

For a small rural town, it was a good turnout of participants and spectators again this year.



There were some interesting entries, including this rather serious looking longhorn. Belle took it all in stride.



2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

... and several miniature ponies. For some reason, the little guys unnerve some regular-size horses.



This looked like a beer wagon from Munchkin land!



2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

Some of the folks got quite creative.



Ready to go!



2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

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Naturally, just as the parade began, the wind came up. Big hard gusts . . . from our back. The heavy flag caught the wind and flew directly over Belle's head for much of the route - occasionally snapping her forehead. She just moved on.



. . . and then we had all this commotion behind us - lights flashing and sirens blaring.



2016-05-07 – Smokey Bear Days Parade

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I was very proud of Belle - she moved with a friendly sort of dignity. She truly enjoyed her job. By now, many people know her name, and I think she recognized when they called it out. However, after all the hoopla, she was glad to get home and be greeted by her guys - running alongside us up the driveway.



It was a wonderful day, and a true honor to carry our nation's flag.

(Thank you, Caroline, for the photos of Belle and me).

MM

[The horses, Lulu and I will be taking a little trip out of town this week. Although someone will be keeping an eye on the ranch, we will not be able to send or read emails until we return].



FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

2016-05-08 – *Happy Mother's Day*

Having a wonderful mom is the gift of a lifetime.

December 2010



January 2011



MM



FOLLOWED
DREAM
RANCH

2016-05-16 – Remembering Maverick

Our late, beloved Maverick may have enjoyed living in Sedona the most - he liked all the attention from tourists.

He has a drink of (bottled!) water at Bell Rock.



Bell Rock seemed to be his favorite spot, so it was our first destination. We brought along some of Maverick's mane to place in his memory. Just as before, when we arrived at the parking area, tourists gathered for photos. Belle was so excited; "My public! My public!", she exclaimed.



2016-05-16 – Remembering Maverick

On the trail.



2016-05-16 – Remembering Maverick



Iconic Bell Rock is magnificent.



Because of slick-rock shoulders, few horses (if any) venture up here, but these horses remembered the route, and soon were taking in a favorite view.



2016-05-16 – Remembering Maverick

Sometimes I have to remind myself that these horses are free, and yet stay close.



Bell Rock is thought to be one of the strongest vortex energy sites in Sedona; the horses seem to sense something there.





Thoughts of our friend.



Coming up: Zoning Out.
MM

2016-05-16 – Sedona Sojourn

Living in Sedona, Arizona, was truly a special experience. We met wonderful people, and made lifetime memories. After five years away, when we received an invitation to the high school graduation of Kendall (who with her sister Kelsey helped take care of the horses when we were there), it seemed like a perfect time for a visit.

It's about 450 miles from home to Sedona, a long trip for the horses in a trailer. So we made several stops along the way for them to stretch their legs. It sure is helpful that they can exercise (and graze) without wandering away. We found a neat old abandoned barn off the highway.



Over the Arizona border we explored an old cattle operation.



2016-05-16 – Sedona Sojourn

Although long, it is a beautiful route, passing through desert, rolling plains, and at least four National Forests.



We arrived at Horse Mesa Ranch in Sedona after dark, but the horses knew exactly where they were. They remembered. Lulu and I stayed with them at the ranch, and this was our view of the horses in their stalls the next morning.



2016-05-16 – Sedona Sojourn

The horses greeted Bee, the owner, as old friends (Bee's dog, "Cali", seated next to her in the golf cart, looks a lot like Lulu, and the two became good buddies. Cali was a rescue dog, too - off the Navajo Reservation).



After the long (11 hour) journey, they really enjoyed a romp in the ranch's arena before taking off for our first ride.



2016-05-16 – Sedona Sojourn

Even Spanky opened up into a full gallop . . . (as did Lulu).



Here he kicks up his heels next to Belle.



Thunder races along in the soft red soil . . .



2016-05-16 – Sedona Sojourn

... and Belle lounges in the sun. Ahhhh ...



Next: Return to Bell Rock, and memories of Maverick.
MM

2016-05-17 – *Special Spot and Historic Town*

It was apparent that the horses remembered everything about Sedona - they knew which trails to take, and recalled where their special places were.



2016-05-17 – *Special Spot and Historic Town*

One spot they particularly enjoyed was along the Munds Wagon Trail (which follows an historic route between Sedona and Flagstaff). There always seems to be running water and fresh grass in this little arroyo.



We took a long cool break on a warm Arizona day.





2016-05-17 – *Special Spot and Historic Town*

Climbing along the trail presents some wonderful views.



Once again the horses - though loose - stay with me, just grazing along.





Thunder gives an affectionate kiss to Belle. Jealous Spanky looks discreetly away.



2016-05-17 – Special Spot and Historic Town

After our ride, Lulu and I took a drive up to the historic (1890's) mining town of Jerome. Considered one of America's most "vertical" communities, the former ghost town turned art colony/tourist destination clings precariously to a steep mountainside. It provides a dramatic view toward Sedona in the distance.



The former hospital has been turned into a European-style boutique hotel.



Thanks for joining us on our sentimental journey!

More to come: Splish Splash

MM

2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

Living in Sedona allowed us to explore countless trails - some became real favorites, and those are the ones we revisited on this trip. "Chicken Point" is a giant slab of red rock high above Sedona. The only way to access it is by a long, rocky trail; or by jeep - the commercial Pink Jeep Tours arrive on their regular route about every 20 minutes. The tourists generally look around briefly before re-boarding the jeep and heading to the next spot. That is, unless there are some unusual horses at the rock . . .

On the trail to Chicken Point. That's Courthouse, and Bell Rocks behind us.



Water is scarce in this area, but some small springs pop up now and then along the trail. Lulu cools off - she is not used to the warm temps of Arizona.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

Thunder spots the famous Chapel of the Holy Cross in the distance . . .



Built on a dramatic ledge in 1956, it was designed by a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright.



On to Chicken Point.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

The horses seem to enjoy the view from up here, as well as the regular arrival of tourists on jeep tours.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

They took up the same positions as they had in the past, and didn't move for hours. This was their idea. They remembered, from years ago . . .



It's Lulu's first visit, but she caught on right away.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

Everyone just zones out up here. Interesting note: the horses would normally face out, toward the view, but instead they keep a lookout for the tourist jeeps . . .



. . . and the occasional biker! No one moves.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

I just let them be, as they greet their guests . . .



. . . then zone out again (see Lulu in the shade?) . . .



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out

. . . before the next group arrives. The tour drivers love our presence - their tips go way up! (But they do have trouble keeping everyone on schedule).



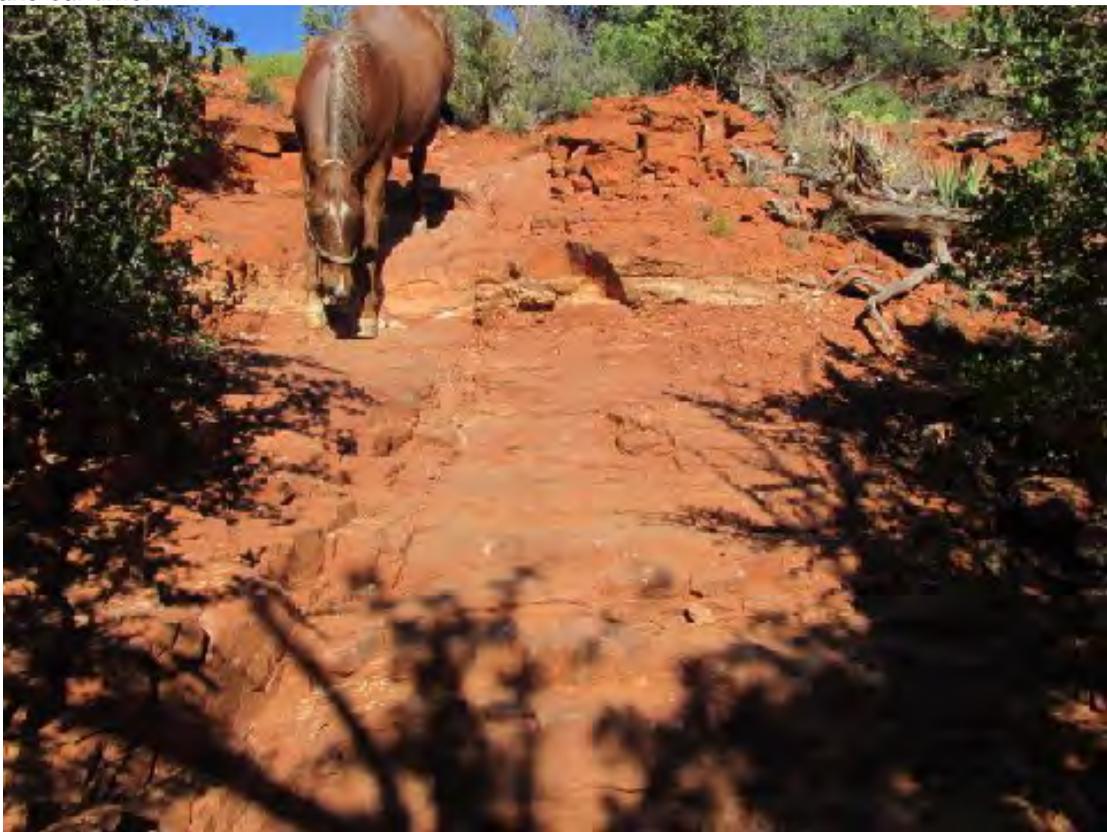
They wait in anticipation of the next arrival. This is not typical horse behavior.



2016-05-17 – Zoning Out



After about four hours of being points of interest, it was time to go. Climbing down is a challenge, but we just take our time.





Chicken Point was a highlight, and the horses certainly remembered it well from before.

Coming up next: A special spot, and an historic town.

MM

2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

The horses seemed to know that we were on vacation and they remembered all their favorite places . . . and how to get there.

As usual, Lulu fit right in.



Red Rock Crossing is one of Sedona's "secret" places - and among its most beautiful.





Cooperative horses line up on their own for a photo . . .



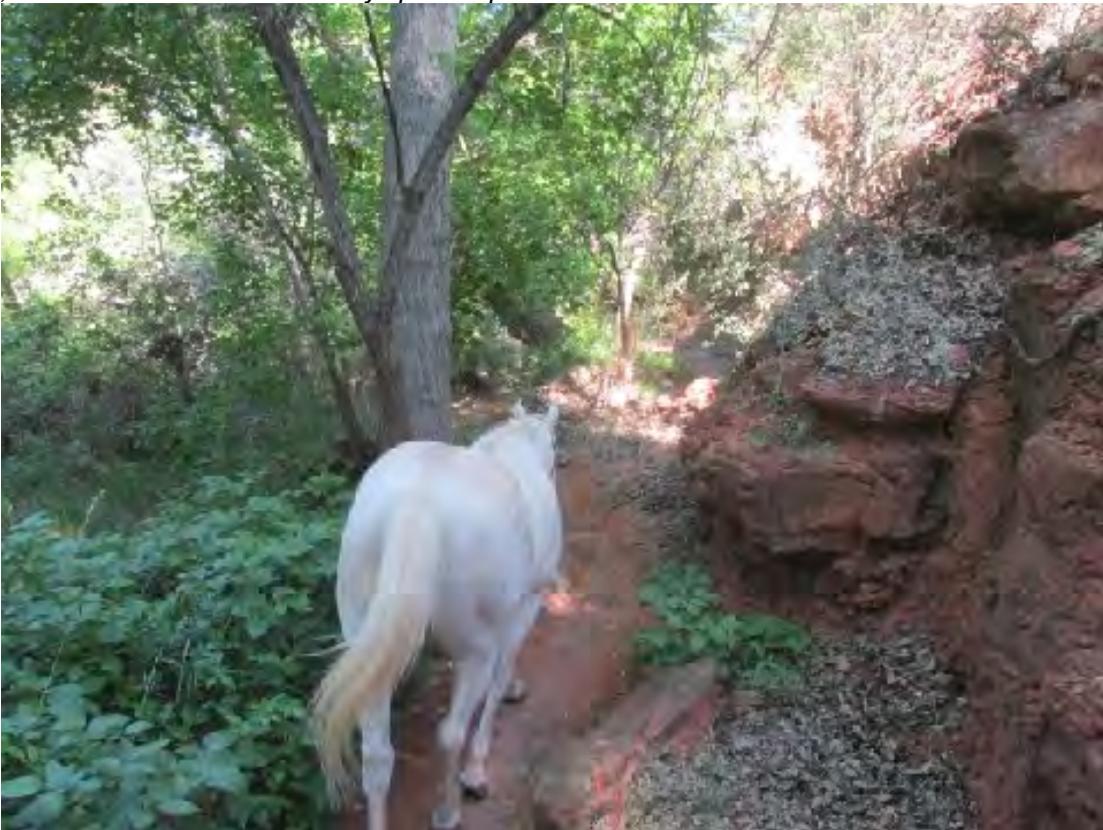


Lots of good snacking here (Belle nearly disappears in the tall grass)!





Then, Thunder reminded us of a very special spot . . . and led us to it.

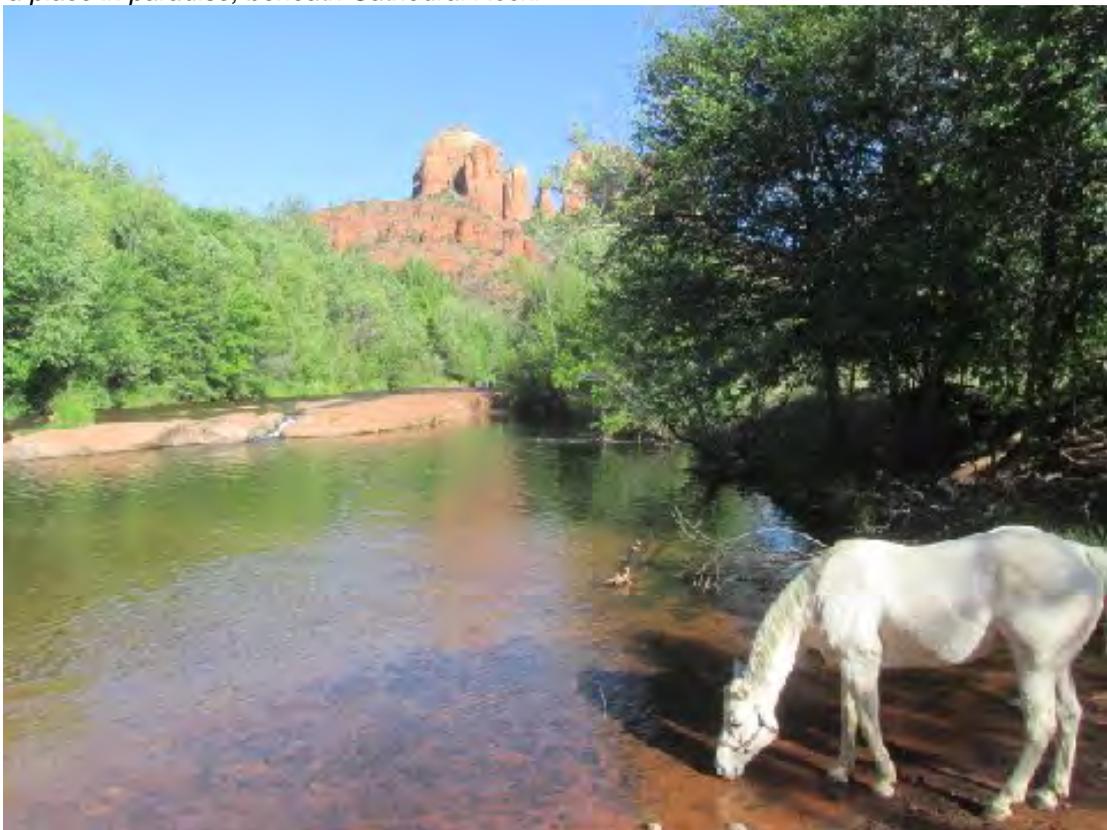


2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

"Oh boy! I know where we're going!"



Truly a place in paradise, beneath Cathedral Rock.



2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

This was our "beach" during the warm summer months. Thunder couldn't wait to take a swim.



Me, too!



Just floating along.



Nice to be back.



2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

Then a roll on a red beach.



"Oh, no - I'm PINK!"



"Hmmm . . ."



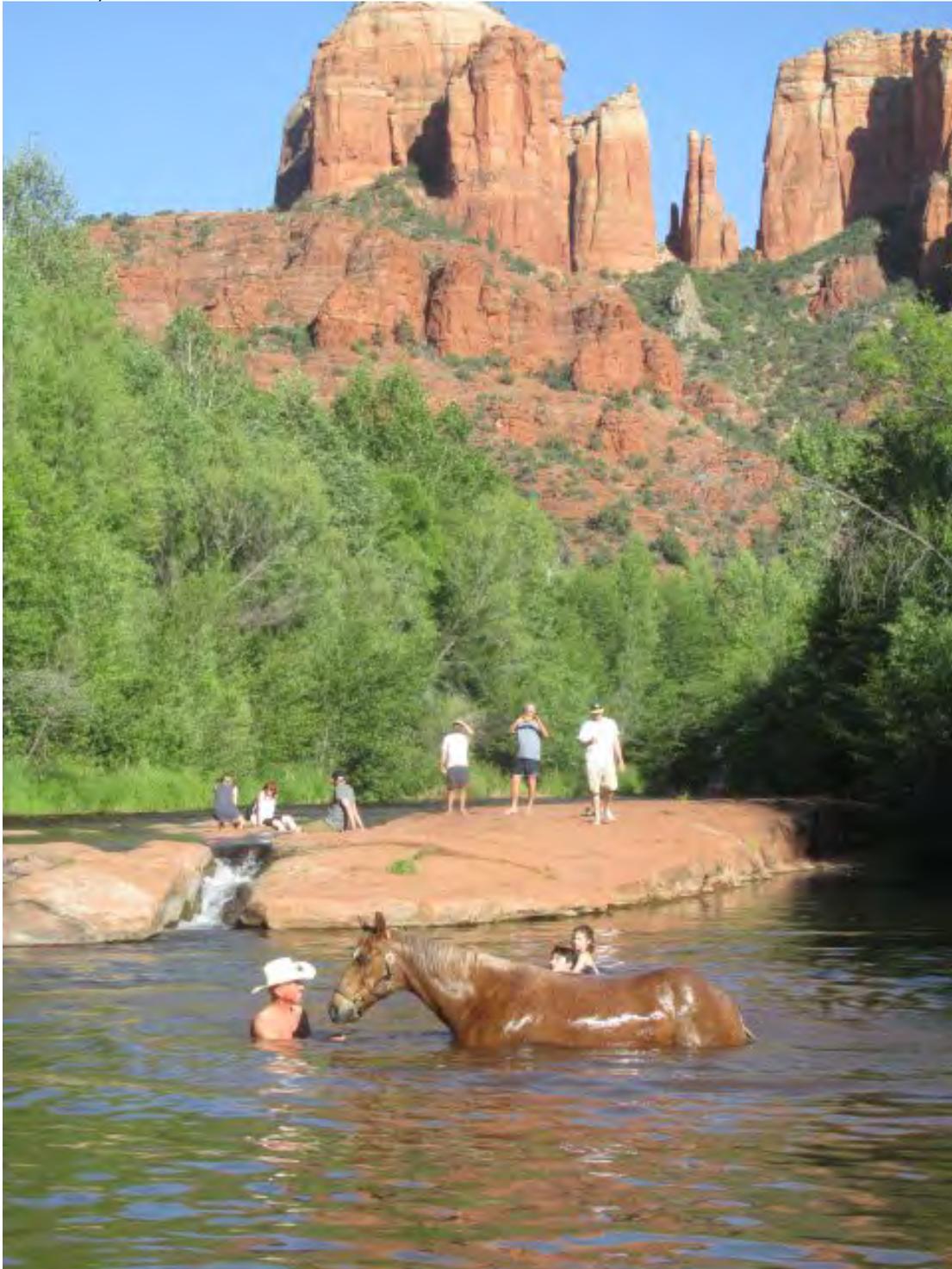
2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

Spanky takes the plunge. Splish splash!



2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

(Belle went for a swim, too, but she was sensitive about not having her "bathing suit body" yet, so no wet photos . . .)



2016-05-18 – *Splish Splash*

"This is so cool!"



"Indeed!"



A bit more to come . . .

MM

2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

Each day we explored different trails - and usually included a ride at one of the horses' favorite spots, as well.

Along the way, the horses made new friends, like these tourists from Japan - one of whom got a kiss from Belle.



Often, we stopped by Bell Rock.



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

"Vortex" or not, the horses obviously found it to be very special.



Hey, Spanky - howya doi'n? "I like this place!"



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

This is how they are.



It is remarkable to see them standing like this . . .



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

... on their own ...



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

... and posing with excited tourists.



We enjoyed our "beach" one more time.



2016-05-19 – *Farewell to A Very Special Place*

... and grazed on the sweet grass along the shore of Oak Creek,



... but, inevitably, it was time to head home. One more turn around the arena, early in the morning ...



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

. . . and then a fond farewell to special friends, and the magic red rocks.



To break up the long trek back home, we made short stops several times along the way. This was in the forest near Payson, Arizona . . .



2016-05-19 – Farewell to A Very Special Place

... and at the lake in Springerville (Belle was curious about the kayaks).



It's about an 11-hour drive. Over the border into New Mexico, we stopped one last time for a little supper. I just put some alfalfa out (and a bucket of water, too) and they enjoyed their snack en route - no wandering off. Then quietly back into the trailer for the last stretch. They knew they were getting close to home.



2016-05-19 – *Farewell to A Very Special Place*

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Some places are so special; they stay in your heart even when you have to leave. Sedona is one of them . . .



2016-05-19 – *Farewell to A Very Special Place*

Page 10 of 10

. . . we live in another. Back in their familiar pasture, I know the horses remember the magic of red rock country . . .



Thank you for joining us on this special, sentimental journey.

MM

2016-05-21 – *From Red to Green*

We all miss the beautiful red rocks of Sedona, but in compensation, we came home to a very green spring in the mountains.



2016-05-21 – *From Red to Green*

After being away, the horses were excited to revisit some favorite trails in their own backyard.







Lots of snacking along the way.





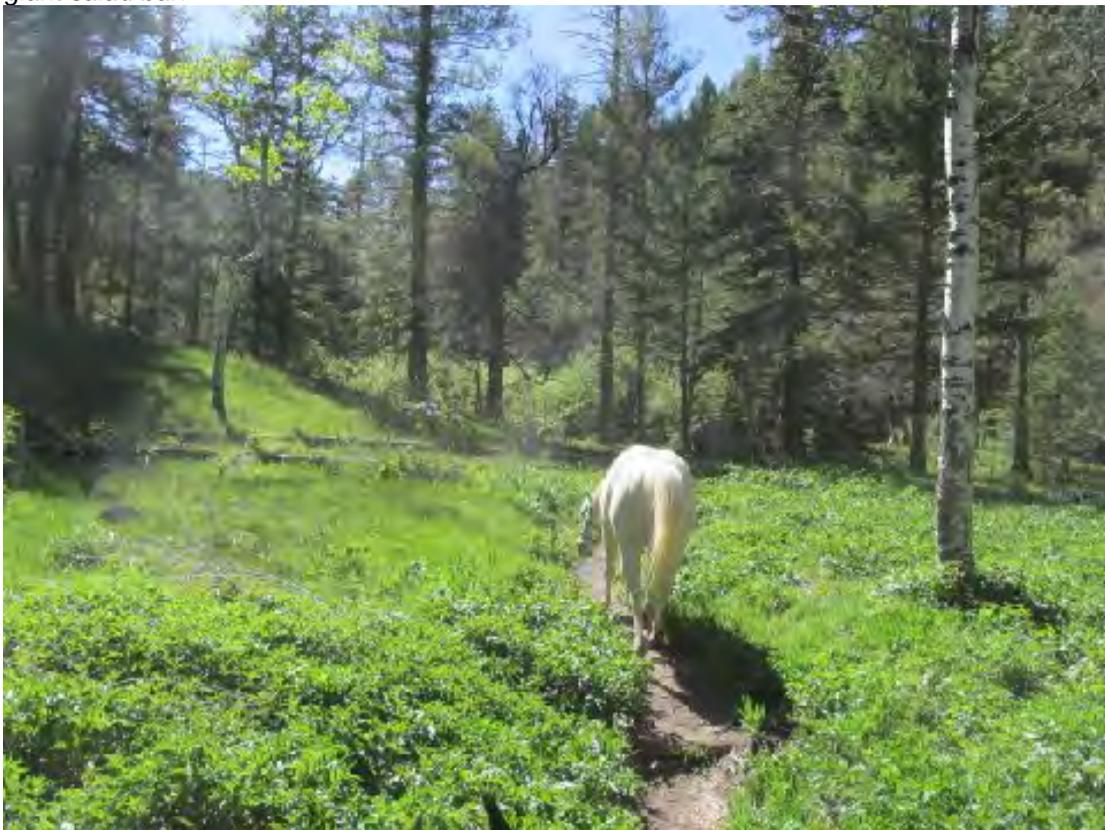
This is interesting - Lulu sometimes eats a little grass, too - just to be one of the gang!



The sound of water gurgling along the trail.

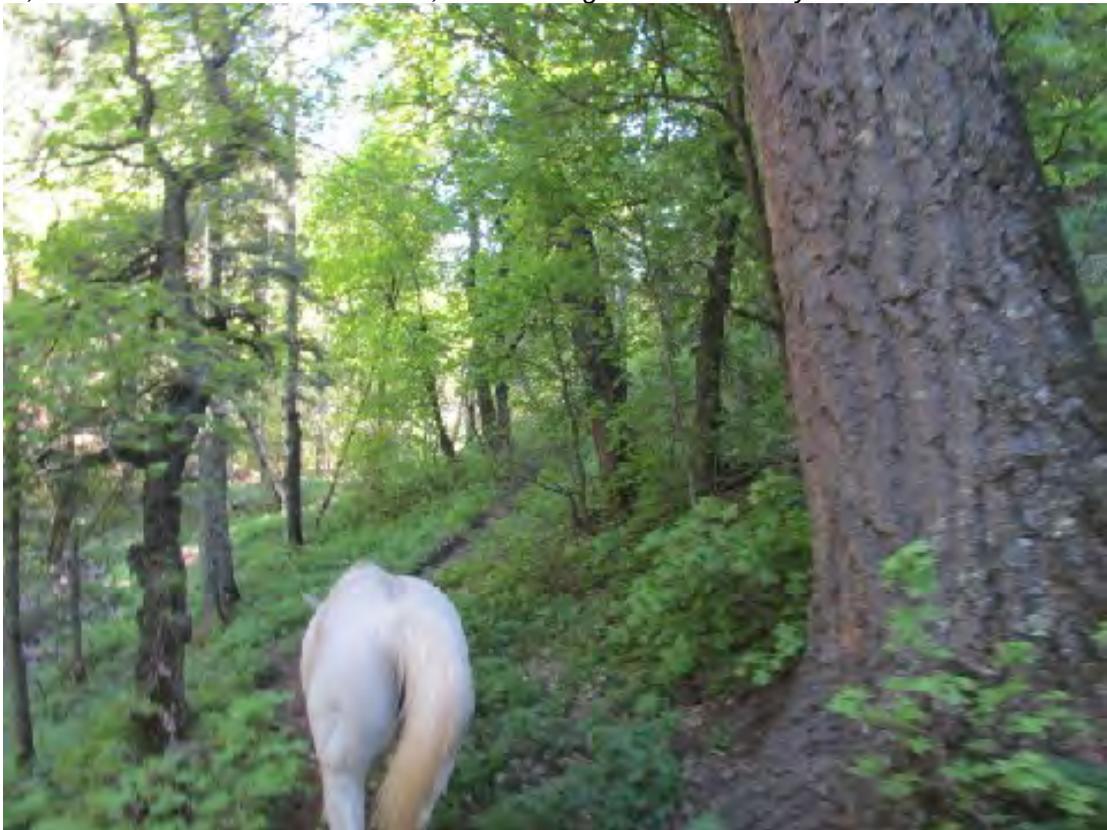


It's a giant salad bar!





Maples, which are a riot of color in the fall, wear clean green this time of year.



Suddenly, under the forest's heavy canopy, ferns are everywhere.



... and the wild iris are early this year, too.



2016-05-21 – *From Red to Green*

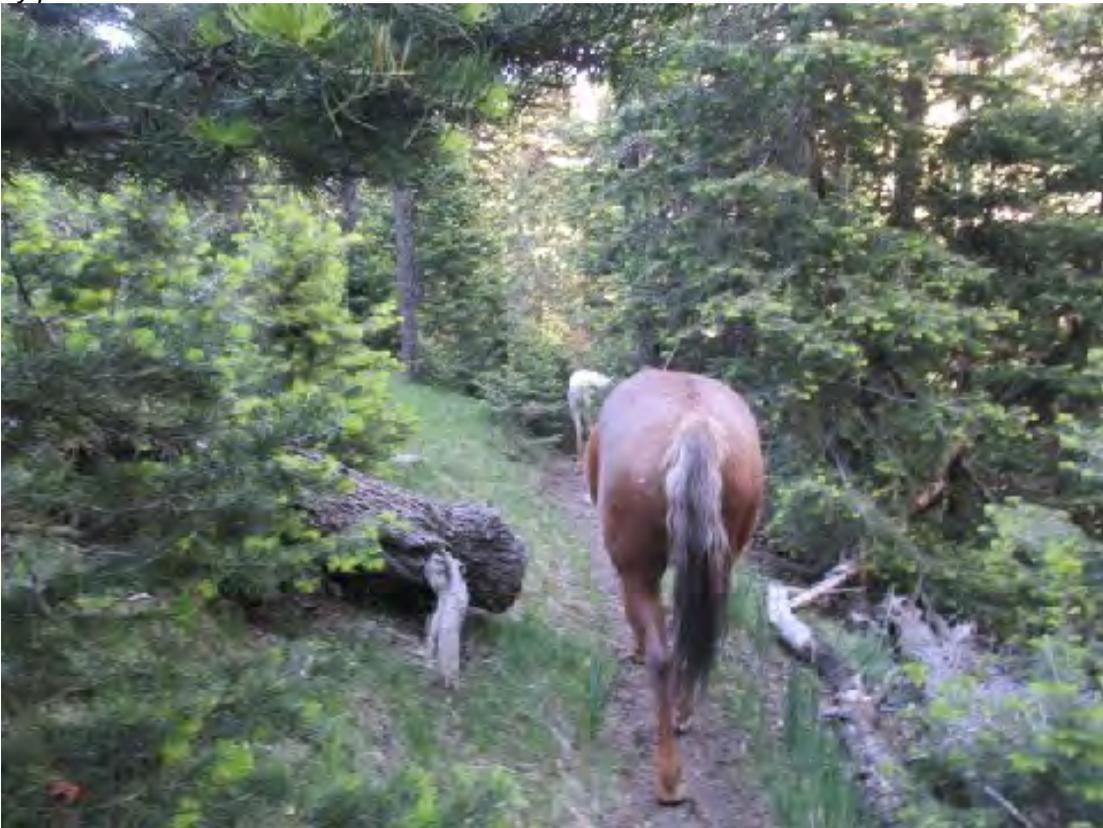
As we near the top of the mountain, aspens are just beginning to leaf out.



Even the old fir trees are sporting lots of new growth.



It's very peaceful here.





Lulu couldn't be happier!



Yes, it's nice to be home.

MM

Spring arrived suddenly.



We took a ride to Blue Pond, which really does have an azure cast to it.





The horses enjoyed grazing along the shore.



Often, we encounter spots in New Mexico which remind us of other places.



Today, Blue Pond felt like a southern bayou; all we needed was the sound of a banjo strumming in the distance . . .



... *"but without the mosquitos!"*



"Way down upon the Swanee River . . ."



2016-05-22 – Green and Blue

After a while, we headed toward the old apple orchard at a gallop (I think all four of Thunder's feet are off the ground).

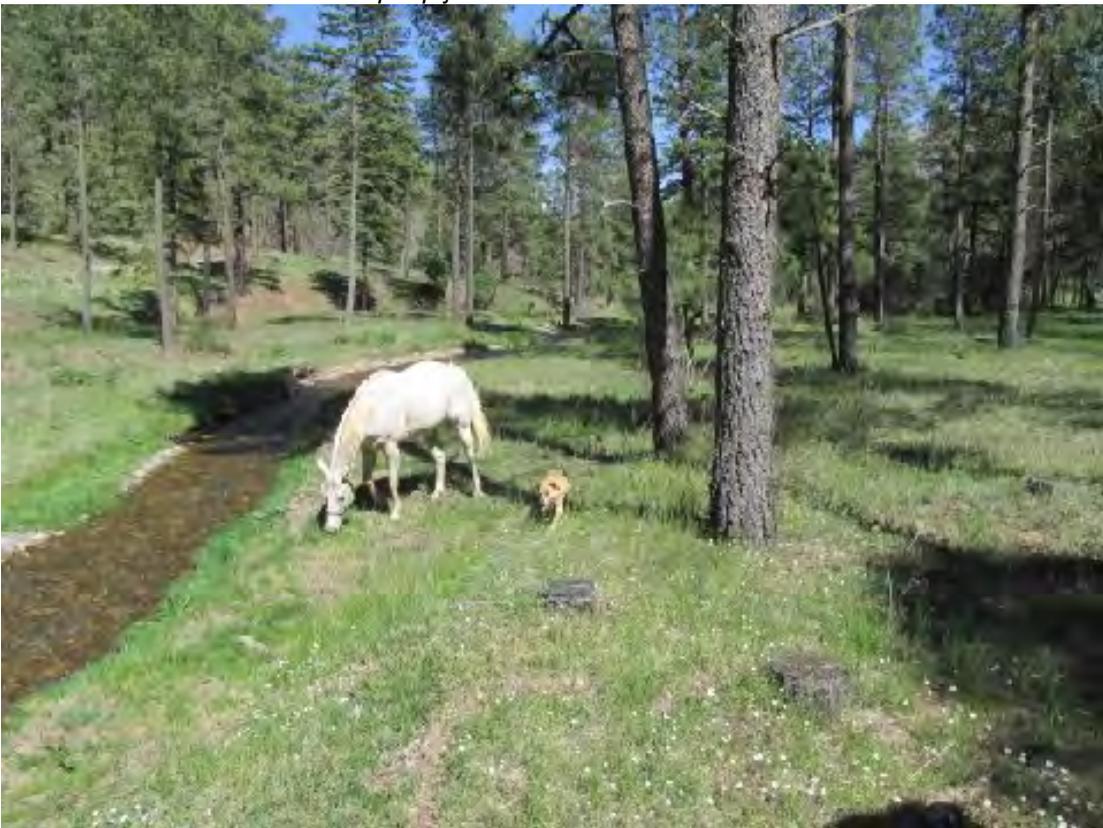


2016-05-22 – *Green and Blue*

... and speeding on through green meadows (it's kinda remarkable that the horses are willing to pass up all that grass).



This was a fast ride - but little Lulu kept up just fine.



A peaceful time of day.



Then more running.



"Hmmm . . . that grass looks nice and soft . . ."



(You knew this was coming . . .)



One leap . . .



. . . and with a cloud of dust, we are off again!





Everyone got exercise on this one!





"Ahhh" - Lulu soaks her feet in the cool, cool water.



Thanks for coming along!

MM

End of Volume 10 - Part 2 of 3

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