

Date: 7/28/2017 8:54:56 PM

Subject: Postcard

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A ranger we talked to (His name was Joe. Or he was wearing Joe's nametag.) told us the most lovely views in Rocky Mountain National Park are at Mills Lake. He further said that that, two years ago, if you wanted a parking spot at the trailhead, he would recommend getting there before 9:00. But last year he changed that to 8:00. And this year he changed it again to 7:00. Fine. At 6:45 we rolled into the trailhead parking lot. Not a space left.

So we drove to nearby Bear Lake, not our preferred destination but hey, we did find a parking slot among the many dozens of other Ranger Joe disciples. We soon discovered there was a connector trail from Bear Lake to the Mills Lake Trail. A Bear Lake Station ranger – we didn't see a nametag so let's call her Teen Ranger – was folding brochures (she probably lacks seniority) but stopped long enough to help us find the trail. Off we went, in a sort of hiking peloton, to the most beautiful views in the park.

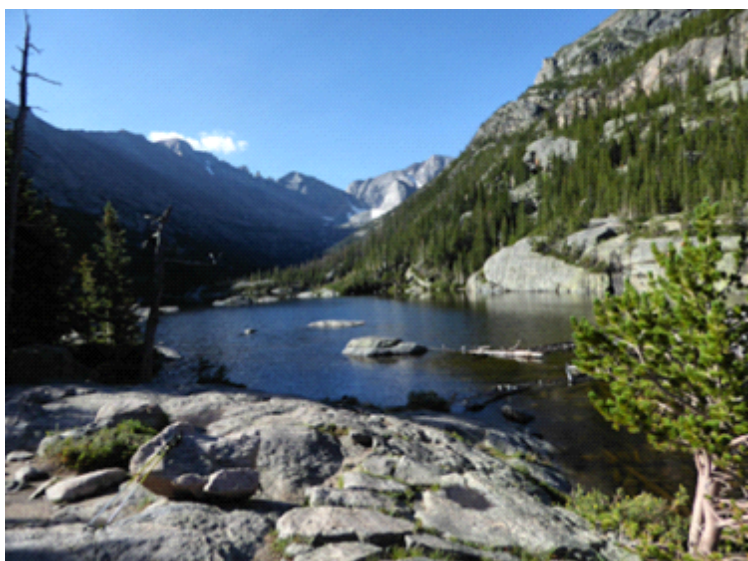


We ultimately skimmed off some folks onto other trails. The rest of the throng strung out in front of us and behind us in a broken line. We were alone sometimes for minutes.

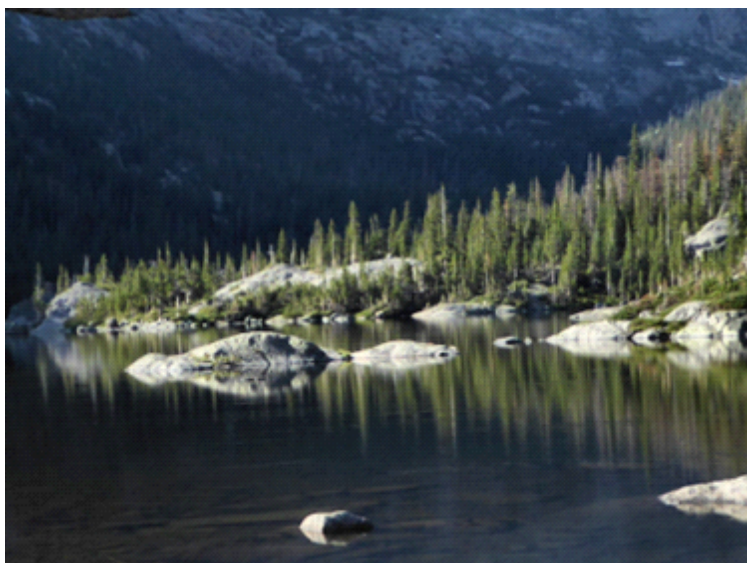


We took lots of pictures of dark evergreens in shadows (not shown).





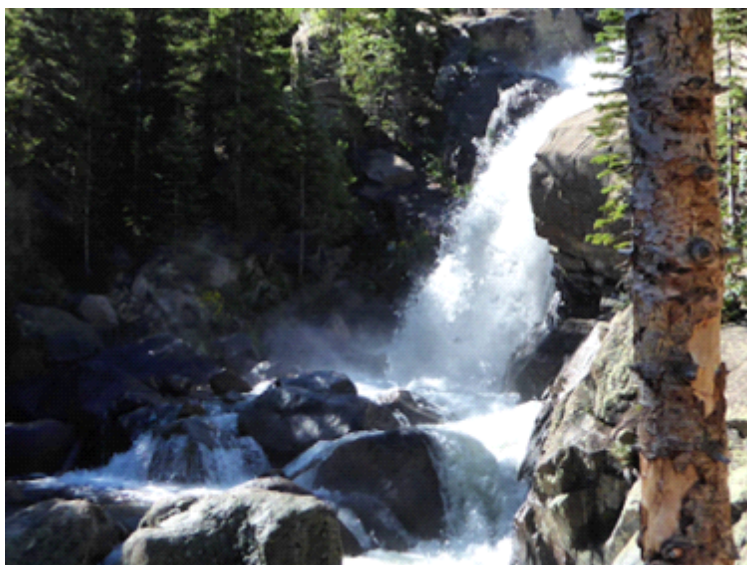
Ah, at last, Mills Lake. The most beautiful views in Rocky Mountain National Park...



...according to Ranger Joe.

Yes, splendid indeed. But clearly unfair to fifty other candidates.

On the way back we encountered a couple of hundred other hikers. Some had squeezed their cars into the Bear Lake parking lot and the rest had been brought in by shuttle bus to ensure the trails remained full.



About a mile from the trailhead is Alberta Falls. A short distance below it, one of multitude asked us the usual question: "How much farther to the falls?" It was a young guy and his wife (I'm making an assumption, OK?) and a middle-aged woman sitting on a rock. We answered him "Just around the bend, maybe a quarter mile". He turned to the ladies and said "OK mom, it's just ahead". Mom said "I can't go any farther. You go on without me. I'll wait here." The guy turned to us and said "She's from Florida".

We're still working on that one.

D&S

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