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Subject: Postcard

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This morning we headed to Whitewater Canyon to hike to the end of The Catwalk and then on into Gila National Forest. The Catwalk was built around 1935 by the CCC, and follows a pipeline route that once served a local mine. The metal walkway clings to the canyon wall above the creek, occasionally dropping down to ground level when there is a walkable creek bank. And it passes over flowing water so loud you can barely hear the canyon wrens practicing their scales.





Our hike abruptly ended about a mile in. A seven foot wall, which we believe once attached to a metal stairway, blocked our path and ended our hike.

Oh! What's this? A SIGN!!!



Apparently the whole catwalk had washed away in a terrible flood and is in the process of being rebuilt. They have finished one mile.

What to do? Well, couldn't do much until we got some gas. We drove up and down US-180 until we found a ramshackle

market in Alma, NM, with gas pumps. They were not the kind you put your credit card into. You lift the nozzle, slide the lever up and squeeze the handle. We did that but hardly anything came out.

On the other side of our pump a 1970's pickup truck with a homemade wooden camper shell coasted in. The driver asked if our gas was slow. Yup. Well, he said, let go the handle for 15 seconds and then start again, that should work. And he pointed to...

...THE SIGN!!!



Of course. Yes, it worked.

Now we needed another hike. We had driven past a Ranger Station earlier and easily found our way back to it. Although if we needed to we could have followed...

THE SIGN!!!





INCREDIBLE! BEST SIGN EVER! WE LOVE IT HERE!!!

The person staffing the Ranger Station was dressed in ranger green but her clothes had no insignia and she had no nametag. A Ranger Wannabe. We'll call her Ranger Wannabe Stupid. She looked at maps (apparently for the first time), she aimlessly pawed through file cabinets, and she finally pulled a *Fodor's Guide to Gila National Forest* off the shelf in the sales area and found us the most boring hike in the state:

The San Francisco Hot Springs Trail.



Except for the really steep, rocky switchbacks that went down to the river (have yet to discover that river's name), this dirt path is it. When we got to the river it was flooded and we couldn't cross it (no sign, just water) so we returned.

There were some flowers to photograph.



We drove back to the casita and watched the hummingbirds.



End of day.

D&S