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Sent: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 8:28 PM
To: vaca.dieck.2000@swbell.net
Subject: Postcard

It was a totally mucked up hike.

Last night's light rain in the badlands had penetrated maybe a quarter inch into the dusty top layer of clay, creating a slippery, slimy, adhesive that clung to our shoes like weaponized oobleck, until we tottered and slid on 2 inch platforms of the stuff.



The hike up to Saddle Pass, though short, was steep and we staggered from rock to rock, scraping our feet on their corners and edges.

And we left an interesting trail.



When we gained the top we were relieved to see that there was a lot less muck and the scenery was as good as the rangers had promised.





Our plan was to hike Castle Trail in a loop with Medicine Root Trail. About a half mile in we discovered, and were discovered by, four bighorn sheep, immediately adjacent to the trail.



This guy seemed to be the boss. As we approached he stood up and gave us the evil eye. We stopped.



He gave us an eviler eye. We backed up.

Unfortunately there was no easy way around. So we watched them for a while and they watched us.

Another hiker arrived. She went a little closer but backed off as well. I told her I was hoping she would try to go by. Our plan was to follow if she was successful and call 911 if wasn't. For some reason she didn't laugh. She just said "Have a good hike" and went back the other way.

A mule deer bounded up, literally leaping along, oblivious to us as well as the sheep.



Suddenly she was in their midst and seemed startled to be there. Stock still she looked all around.



You could almost hear her say “Uh Oh” before she sped away.

The sheep finally began to mosey on. We followed as closely as we felt comfortable.



Man, can bighorn sheep mosey. And of course they never left our trail.

After an hour of this we surrendered and headed back.

But we finally got some sun.





Slid back down Saddle Pass Trail, although it was admittedly drier, and we only muddied our butts once.

We stopped at a convenience store in Rapid City. I bought an old-style beer can opener and used it to clean our shoes.

Yes it was a totally mucked up hike, but we were well compensated.

D&S