

Ducks On A Pond

We spend the night in Cortez CO and then push on to Durango where we stop at a small park by the Animas River to have some lunch. The park is in a part of town that used to be "the wrong side of the tracks" when the town was full of miners and brothels and the railroad was young. The city has noted this history, placing memorials around the park. Now the river runs with kayakers. Young men try to impress each other by practicing their tight-rope walking skills on lines they've stretched between the large trees. These are the same young men that in those earlier years would be working the mines and laying the tracks. Do they have any idea?



We reach Pagosa Springs, along the San Juan River, in the early afternoon. Pagosa means stinking waters. At the heart of the town are the sulfurous hot springs for which it is named. Susan has history here. I have heard many fond stories from Susan about a group of pals that she hung out with in Pagosa about 30 years ago. These stories involve horses, skis, bathing and various other high-flying and daring adventures. She has told these stories many times.



Little Bear leads us to the "old funky" bathhouse. We find it closed for "cleaning" and it is even funkier than Susan remembered. The new spa across the street is obnoxiously pretentious and over-priced. Hmmm. We don't have a plan on where to stay tonight. We go sit by the river to consider. We have noticed a woman walking a very old boxer. (We stop for boxers.) As we walk out on the river foot bridge we pass the boxer walker again crossing from the other side. Susan suddenly turns and says "Addie? Is that you?" And, quite surprisingly, it is! She is the first person we meet in town and she is one of Susan's old pals. Suddenly it is old

home week. Much amazement is expressed and lots of catch-up is accomplished in a brief amount of time standing in the drizzling cold afternoon. Addie has stayed in Pagosa over the decades. She and her husband own the local ski shop.

Our visit is short because Addie is on her way out of town but she offers us a place to park for the night behind the ski shop.

Behind the ski shop is a lovely little park next to a pond built by some local beavers on a side channel of the river. There are a resident goose and merganser couple.

We settle in under a budding cottonwood tree and cook a simple dinner. Susan keeps mentioning "You know it could snow". "Tsk" I say, "How bad could it be?"





In the morning the weather has lifted. There is a small flock of Western Bluebirds and a number of Yellow-rumped Warblers cavorting in the trees as we take a pleasant walk around the pond.

We want to check-out a couple of campgrounds up the pass so we go for a little drive fully intending to spend one more night in Pagosa and take the waters in the non-grotty locals baths we have learned about from Addie. As we move up and north along the road it starts to drizzle. We start to notice that the cars coming west are a bit "frosted". Hmm. The light rain on Zillie's windshield is turning to light sleet. It seems to be getting colder as the clouds are thickening. Hmm. OK. Change of plans. We decide not to be snowed in in Pagosa and start a run south toward Santa Fe and lower altitude. The weather is moving from bad to worse.



We do not have chains or snow tires. We have to stop and de-ice the windshield wipers. "Little Bear, should we start to worry?"



From the road,
Jane and Susan.