

## Day Four - We Poison The Well



We have decided to stay a couple nights at Bodega Dunes. We'll wait out the weekend crush for state park campsites with a known entity, have a little day of rest and expand our mastery of Woodzilla's systems. I start looking at the systems gauges. For those of you who are uninitiated, these report the levels of the auxiliary batteries, the propane tank and the various onboard water tanks. Battery, propane and fresh water levels are all looking great. We are managing our resources prudently! Grey water is also looking reasonable. (Grey water is waste from the sink and shower and no, we have

not attempted to use the shower. That is an advanced class.) The one trouble in paradise is the dreaded black water gauge. (Black water is code name for slightly diluted "human waste". "Human waste" is a euphemism for pee and poo. These are the prime terms. If you have any doubt, just ask any four-year-old.) Black water has gone critical!

"Holy crap!" we each think. "How could this be true?" we each ask. No one answers. Could it be that it was not really empty when we picked it up? Could it be that the sensors are wrong? Could it be that our production really has exceeded our capacity? We again take turns breathing into that paper bag we found so useful in the earlier stages of our journey. We come to terms with the fact that this is the day that we will have our first experience with the "dump station". This is the one true RV rite of passage. It is what separates the car campers and the van campers from the RVers. I have done my homework. I have read the manual and the "how to" sheet. I have studied the diagrams. I paid attention during the orientation. I know the three rules of plumbing. (1. Effluent flows down hill. 2. Payday is on Friday. 3. Don't put your fingers in your mouth). How hard can it be? "I'm ready," I tell Susan.

We take the rig up a hill above the campground to the location indicated on the campground map and reaffirmed by the some vague signage. We find a stark and lonely small concrete pad and a couple of hose faucets. There are only two ways to approach so on our second try we are in the correct position. (Note the comment on vague signage.) The site is very zen. Very primal. There is a levered metal cap over a modest hole in the ground covered by the concrete pad. On the pad there has been placed a single rock. This is obviously a place of great spiritual significance to the RV people.

After we pay our respects to the four directions we get down to business. I pull out the funny-looking hose with the doughnut and valve on the end and stuff it down the hole in the ground, put the rock on the hose, open the black valve (as per instruction sequence)

and tell Susan to push the big red button. Woodzilla shudders, heaves and pours forth with all she's got, which curiously does not seem like much. Hmm. We try the grey water valve. Better, but not by much. We read the gauges. Grey water is now empty. Black has made little progress. Hmm. I kick into engineering diagnostic mode. In time I am convinced that the sensors have indeed LIED to me. A few harsh words are mumbled and I am ready to complete our mission.

I used a significant amount of our onboard water in the course of my diagnostics procedures so all we have left to do now is refill the fresh water tank. Relieved that the worst is over, we connect the hose to the water filter and hook the whole thing up to one of the faucets and start to run water into the tank. Since there is nothing else to do for a while, Susan starts reading the sign mounted on the other side of the post from the faucet. "NOT SAFE TO DRINK!" she shrieks. "Holy crap!" We both think. "How could this have happened?" We look at each other. "We've poisoned the well!"



None of my Woodzilla technical studies has prepared me for this event. "Where is that paper bag?" Susan goes off to find anyone vaguely looking like park staff to try to learn the reason for the non-potable designation and I start looking up numbers for poison control centers and the CDC. Park staff manage to make a call, after Susan releases them from the head lock, to someone who actually knows something. We have narrowed the issue down to pathogen contamination that might be transmitted by the faucet if one were to connect

one's fresh water hose to it. The exact thing we had just done. Oh, poo! (Is that a good or bad choice of expletive here?)

Now you might be wondering why one would be able to connect a hose to a faucet one should not connect a hose to, or why the warning sign is not visible to anyone who might be connecting a hose to the faucet one should not connect a hose to, but these are topics requiring an advanced degree in government studies. Susan and I, both being calm, considered and measured personalities, opted to implement full Ebola protocol and set off for town to fetch a couple gallons of bleach. In just a few hours it's all over.



We opt for a modest dinner tasting faintly of Clorox.

Tomorrow will be easier.

From the road ... Jane and Susan