

CYOA Reflection

Walking is a very beneficial and leisurely activity. Hiking, on the other hand, is quite a bit more strenuous as this class has come to realize over the past week. Even though for the first several days there was a great race to the finish line on time there was still chance to experience the environment so important to San Diego and the biomes we have been studying all semester. Unfortunately, due to the weather, the trail would not be done in the literal sense as it's name declares. It was more "What trail Was Best For That Day" versus "Crest to Coast". In a way this turned out well since the first day became a much easier venture.

Monday, while slightly cloudy during parts, was quite warm indeed and I returned home with a line on my calf. There were about four or five of us who spent the entire time ahead of others. For the rest of the hike we were notorious for causing a teacher to call out to slow down. It was lovely and full of wildlife we had memorized. Including the lemonade berry plant that grows around my community which, unfortunately, is only just starting to bloom so it is not ready to be consumed. Tuesday, on the other hand, was not as laid back. This is one of the days that extended a greater distance than the expected ten miles per day. Tuesday's hike may not have been much up and down, but it seemed to go on forever (came to a total of around fifteen miles). Forging streams is what we were told to expect. The first one actually had convenient stepping stone around the edge. The second one was thin, but knee deep. It was incredibly surprising to find myself blister-less after walking more than a mile with wet shoes. Thursday was a little similar in that it was quite long. Somewhere between twelve and fifteen miles; there were several recordings and they were all different. The most exciting experience (besides the appearance of poison oak) would be waiting for the cars. We were quite far out and for most, in the middle of nowhere. To the point that if there were to be an emergency, a helicopter would have to come in. I find that if one is 'in the middle of nowhere' it creates an environment that is so calming and breathtaking that really allows proper time to think and explore. As of the cars, it took about two hours for those shuttling to cars to go back and forth. Those driving had to go all the way around the mountains and hills versus through. It was a beautiful resting spot after the long, hot hike. Even the cows did not give off much odor. However, when the sun finally past the top of the hill in the distance, it dropped about ten degrees and got windy. In order to keep warm races were held and boredom was released by what we talked about in english class as Natural Play.

At the end of the week now, friday was a memorable day. This was the long looked forward to Bushwhacking Day. I honestly had no idea what to expect and was surprised. The day started off like any other on a trail (though hitting some construction), but then we had to enter the canyon since the trail met up with the road. That was where the fun began since we did not really know where we were going. There was also more physical contact with the nature we had been learning about. We were not quite to the chaparral environment which meant lots of trees and rocks where we were. Which then meant getting down on your hands and knees at some points. There were piles of leaves gathered at the bottom of the rocks at points nearly a foot deep.

The next two days of the following week were not as successful for me. Mostly just the one

where we hiked up Volcan Mountain. The beginning was hard and steep. Difficult since it was high elevation which meant thinner air. This turned to slower going. After getting to the bottom, though, it felt like hardly any time had passed. Although it was nearly one thirty in the afternoon and we had walked five miles total. The very last day I found to be quite disappointing in a way. Since we had nearly been at the coast on day two, the euphoric moment of reaching it was nonexistent. The beach was very relaxing and cooling none the less and a wonderful spot to begin this reflection.

A little something extra that really grabbed me over this past week is how many large, black beetles that were spotted and how they could all look nearly the exact same but have strong enough features different as to be different species. There were so many that would be crawling across the path almost through the entire hike. Even one that nearly everyone stepped on which I found so surprising since how could they not see a giant black dot moving past their vision.