



Sequoia and Kings Canyon Hike Trip Notes **August 25-September 1, 2018**

A better and more complete trip report can be found from my 2015 similar hike. See at www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com under 2015 tab.

The Looming Health Crisis in the Aftermath of the California Wildfires – Sad - It may be the reason for my sinus congestion. I heard from many workers and hikers that they had cold symptoms of scratchy throat and runny noses.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-looming-health-crisis-in-the-aftermath-of-the-california-wildfires>

Trip Notes

Can you believe? I have another trip! Sequoia and Kings Canyon national Parks here I come.

We were in Santiago Chile through early August and then mid-August I went to St. Louis area for nephew's wedding and then I felt a little rushed to get out on this hike but it was one I felt I wanted and needed to do. I was here about three years ago when they Tom came along but there had been fires in Kings Canyon and I missed some of the hikes. In addition, and this is very important, I needed some good exercise and a test to see if I could still do it.

I usually come a couple days early both to see the city where we start, be a tourist, and ensure that I really get to the starting point on time. In this case there just wasn't sufficient time and I nervously came in on Saturday for a Sunday hiking start. That meant getting up at 3 AM for a flight that wasn't the last flight of the day. Ugh.

Besides. I have never found or heard of any redeeming qualities for Fresno. It is like the end of the world even if it weren't often well over 100°.

From www.ParksPlusHiking.com: Sequoia/Kings Canyon: More Than Just Trees – Sequoia is undoubtedly the best place in the world to hike amongst astounding "Sequoiadendron Giganteum" (i.e., giant sequoias). Beyond just trees though, the park offers a wealth of other features that make for a fantastic hiking experience. From spectacular alpine scenery to abundant wildlife to the comfort and convenience of Wuksachi Lodge, we think our six-day Sequoia/Kings Canyon hike should be on every hiker's "to do" list. Throw in the challenge of Alta Peak and you've got a classic. Don't take our word for it, come see for yourself! (And by the way, yes it does pain us to call a sequoia "just a tree." But we are trying to making a point here.)

Sunday: Tokopah Falls - Distance: 4 mi - Difficulty: 3

Departing Fresno, we make our way to the Lodgepole area of Sequoia for our first hike, Tokopah Falls. While the falls are relatively tame this time of year, the moderate 2-mile ascent along the



Tokopah trail offers great views of the massive "Watchtower" looming above and the forested valley below. After the hike, we'll make the short commute to Wuksachi Lodge--our modern, comfortable, centrally located home for all five nights of the tour.

Hotel Wuksachi Lodge – <http://www.visitsequoia.com/lodging.aspx>

From website: Every national park has its top lodge, the one place to stay that reflects all the park stands for. The Wuksachi Lodge® is Sequoia's signature motel, a striking stone-and-cedar mountain lodge situated in the heart of the park and surrounded by a mighty sequoia forest and soaring Sierra peaks. Open year-round and located with the best access to Sequoia's awesome attractions, the Wuksachi Lodge was built in 1999 in a spectacular alpine setting at 7,200-foot elevation. This alluring mountain lodge features 102 spacious guest rooms, a full-service restaurant with massive picture windows, cocktail lounge, retail and ski shop, and dedicated special event facilities. Wireless Internet is available in all common areas of the lodge. All guest rooms at this distinctive Sequoia lodge are located 100-200 yards from the main lodge building, and feature upscale, natural décor highlighting native granite rock, oak, cedar and hickory woods, private baths, flat panel televisions, telephones with computer data ports, hair dryers, coffee makers, iron/boards, mini refrigerators, ski racks, central heat, and daily maid service. You'll enjoy our Sequoia lodging's remote location, yet all the modern amenities and guest services of a AAA rated three-diamond hotel. It's the perfect base camp for exploring the wonders of Sequoia by day, and as evening falls, spinning Sequoia stories next to a roaring, rock-rimmed fireplace. End.

Note: very limited Wi-Fi. No air conditioning. And it is hot and there is an air alert due to all the smoke in the air. I say this for truth-in-packaging because I hate when people tell me how wonderfully perfect everything is. Yet here I am again so that tells you that there are plenty of reasons to come here just that not everything is perfect.

It has another downfall and yet that's part of the reason we come here: it's elevation is near 8000 feet. Just walking in the parking lot those of us from sea level can lose our breath. Despite that I did get 6 miles in today. 4 miles for the first part of the hike, then I copped out for the second hike, but somehow I still managed to get 6 miles. It must've been the back-and-forth to the lodge.

I found a cell phone in my bed. Remembering that Tom has lost his and how wonderful angels have gotten it back to us, I felt obliged to take the phone to the front desk. But the line was ridiculously long like it was when we checked in so I went to the gift shop and asked for paper and pen to write a note. I had barely gotten the words "housekeeping maybe the owner" onto the paper until the cute little Asian girl grabbed the phone and said "she's here-I know who it is-it is the housekeeping manager."

I realize that Sequoia and Kings Canyon are not big headlines like going to the Grand Canyon. So that less people come here. Their loss and to our advantage.

We will be at this lodge for five nights and that is a real treat not to have to move. Despite all my travel, it is rare to sleep well the first night in a new bed. And I still wake up in the morning wondering where I am.

Dinner is interesting in that you don't have to decide what you are going to eat because you're here enough nights you can sample pretty much everything on the menu. I chose a couple of appetizers and nothing worth writing home about. The wine was the best. The Brandy to put me to sleep will be pretty nice too.



I wasn't going to have dinner at the Fresno hotel until I heard they had fish tacos. Some of you know that I can eat a tremendous number of them. Ask Dana in Colorado Springs about our day sampling all the food trucks and their tacos. Where they are a dozen?



We will be up there on the top this week.
 I saw a couple little babies in the water and hopefully they are on their way to becoming water babies.
 An ahi appetizer on its way to a clean plate.

Good night.

Me again. Part 2 with hopefully more to go

Mon Aug 27 - Day 2

Heather/Emerald/Pear Lakes - Distance: 12 mi - Difficulty: 5

From website: Today's theme is alpine lakes so bring your swimsuits (brrr!). Our hike begins with a steady climb through the forest to "The Hump," a 9,400' granite outcropping and a great spot for a break. From The Hump, we continue on a wide trail carved into a rock ledge high above the Tokopah Valley to our next destination, Heather Lake. Past this point, the trail climbs gradually to Emerald then Pear Lake, either of which makes a great lunch/turnaround point. Whichever lake we achieve, 11,200' Alta Peak will loom well above to the south reminding us what awaits for day 5.

Note: I managed about 10 miles with a lot of elevations start and a lot of elevation gain. I enjoyed part of it very much. It was a little bit hot and Rocky and I did a pretty big fall. My fall resulted in a few bruises and swelling and skin scrapes but apparently nothing that will keep me from finishing the week. It was really steep and slippery with small rocks and unfortunately Nola also fell. We joked that she did it to give sympathy to me. Just like in Florence Italy.

Tue Aug 28 - Day 3

Mist Falls - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

It was ParksPlusHiking owner Steve's 60th birthday so we managed a little bit of a party with a couple of gifts, a couple bottles of Champagne and a big banner that said happy 60th. He took it very well. From website: Time for a day trip to Kings Canyon National Park. Much of our outing will be spent on the extraordinary Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, which begins at the terminus of the Generals Highway and descends nearly a mile vertically into Kings Canyon itself. At "Roads End" we'll hit the trail along

the south fork of the Kings River past Bubbs Creek to our destination, Mist Falls. The river above Bubbs Creek is actually a long series of falls, cascades, and rapids so to ensure their proper identification the Park Service has posted a sign designating one particularly scenic drop as Mist Falls. That is our destination, lunch spot, and turnaround point. End.

Note: Kings Canyon is absolutely stunning and I had no idea. In 2015 the fires kept us from seeing it. It is not easy to get to. The drive is wonderful, magnificent, and quite the pleasant surprise. Half of the hike is very nice and within the forest and the other half is next to nasty. The Knats surrounded us and no one enjoyed that part of it. Nola gifted me with a mosquito net which helped a lot but was somewhat hot and claustrophobic. It was still worth it and I'm going to acquire a mosquito net of my own. I did complete near 10 miles with maybe 1200 feet of total elevation ups and downs.

Weather. The temperatures in the morning have been quite pleasant in the low 40s. The temperatures in the middle of the afternoon have been oppressive and well in the 80s and when you add the smoke from the fires it certainly was not ideal.

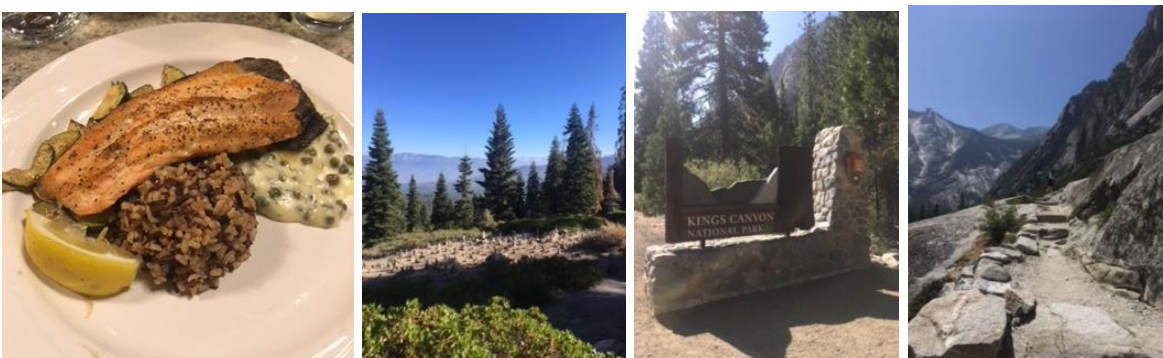
Lodge. National park lodges are typically just OK but when you think about location location location then they are wonderful. This one needs some management and some of our people have suffered much frustration with getting repairs. I was fortunate with a good room.

Legs, feet, health. So far I am holding up really well. And despite the fall and a rather large ankle swelling that required ice packs through the night and looked terrible the next day, I was able to hike on it without discomfort. I expect some big bruise marks. The smoke from the fires is another subject. A scratchy throat and allergies symptoms have been felt by many of us.

Off to the big sequoias tomorrow.



At watchtower look out. Yesterday we looked across and could see this high peak. Who would've thought that our feet could get us there. Nola our super guide. Below: Trout. Two nights in a row. The next day on the way to Kings Canyon.





That's my mosquito net thanks to Nola. Those without them had bugs up there nose, they ate bugs and we all thought that part of the trail was nasty. The rest was wonderful. As was the falls at the end. Hikers have a need to wear T-shirts that brag about what they did. We all do it. This is a T-shirt showing he hiked from rim to rim. I don't think I have that T-shirt but earned it. I have been down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon three times and no, I didn't take the mules.

Steve turned 60 on our tour. We all wanted to honor his birthday and to remind him that some people start life anew at age 60 and the toast said that we hoped we would all be a part of his new life.

Tom had hunted down and had this T-shirt created. I



You might want to look on Google images for Kings Canyon. This is one of those pictures but I don't think any can do it justice. It is dramatically gorgeous. Different than anything I can remember seeing it.

Part 3 from sequoia national Park

Thank you Jeff for pushing me during our training sessions. Despite doing no hiking since my Northern Ireland July trip, the legs and feet are holding up.

Thank you mother-nature for giving us so much artwork. As much as I enjoy museums I sometimes wonder if mother-nature's natural sculpture isn't better.

Thank you Tom for encouraging me to do these trips on my own and your taking care of the house and livestock. We will next go to France together starting September 6.

Thank you to the wild bears for staying at a distance but giving us a good sighting. And to the rattlesnakes we were told to watch out for but we never saw. For no poison ivy but plenty of little squirrels, chipmunks to include a sweet little squirrel that was hauling a green pinecone bigger than he was. Even a marmot or two.

From www.ParksPlusHiking.com - Wed Aug 29 - Day 4 - Giant Forest, Moro Rock - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 4 - There are few hikes I (Steve) look forward to more than the Giant Forest. Starting in quiet Crescent Meadow, we climb steadily past scattered sequoias, eventually joining the Congress Trail. There we'll see the Senate and House Group and many other named trees before "General Sherman," the largest known tree on earth. From the Sherman tree we make our way back toward Crescent Meadow, pausing for lunch on the Trail of the Sequoias.

Departing the Giant Forest, our day is far from over. Our next stop is a short but exciting hike to Moro Rock, a park landmark and fabulous view point. After Moro Rock, we then make a stop at the Giant Forest Museum where we'll find answers to many of the questions we've come up with during our hike among the trees. What a day! End.

I skipped Moro rock remembering it was a lot of stairs steps and in the open sun and I was frankly pooped. Then I missed the entire next day simply being cautious about my health. I've got a bit of a cold, it dropped into my chest quickly and considering a September 6 European trip coming up.

I've gotten in reasonable mileage and lots of elevation anyway with 6 miles on day 1, then 10 1/2 miles, then 10 1/2 miles, and 10 on Wednesday.

Wow. The trees are momentous. From https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequoia_National_Park Where you could learn more.

The park is famous for its giant sequoia trees, including the General Sherman tree, the largest tree on Earth. The General Sherman tree grows in the Giant Forest, which contains five out of the ten largest trees in the world. The Giant Forest is connected by the Generals Highway to Kings Canyon National Park's General Grant Grove, home to the General Grant tree among other giant sequoias. The park's giant sequoia forests are part of 202,430 acres of old-growth forests shared by Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Indeed, the parks preserve a landscape that still resembles the southern Sierra Nevada before Euro-American settlement.



A sweet little tree lit like it's for Christmas among the Giants. We learned that young sequoias look a bit like Christmas trees.



Monkey flower. There is a marmot in there somewhere. I never could find my picture of the black bear he was so small in the picture. An old cabin made out of a log. Guide Nola creates these lovely maps for us. Frankly, I just follow figuring I have a guide for that purpose but I appreciate her artwork and it could be a savior if I got lost.

 NEWS 11m ago

The Wall Street Journal
"It's like suddenly becoming a smoker." Smog from wildfires has made the air in some Pacific Northwest cities dirtier than in Beij...



This may be the source of my allergy or cold. The chunk of halibut was enough for a family. Stacked eggplant parm on a bed of linguini was enough for two people.

On that - Good night!

Last – and not sent

Home Again!

Last of my Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park's adventure

I decided to skip the Thursday hike. It was one I did before and my cold was in my chest and I have an upcoming September 6 trip with Tom and it seemed prudent to rest.

Rest? I had breakfast and then went back and crawled into my bed. Rather quickly our entire building got evacuated (as a safety measure) since they were cutting down trees. I argued. I pleaded. I offered to sign a waiver. I groused. I considered refusing to leave. They eventually offered me a room in another building so I got dressed again, moved myself, undressed and crawled into the new bed. I heard two crashes and felt what was like an earthquake. But just like we don't worry about lightning striking, I wasn't worried about the tree falling on the building and of course it didn't. I got dressed again, moved myself back, got undressed and crawled in bed again. So much for a rest.

Later I gave up dinner and had a bowl of soup at the bar. It was there I met the men who were down in the trees. Their occupation is one of the most dangerous known as much because you can't know how dead a tree is. The 67-year-old looked about 80 and it was his birthday which called for a drink - or two.

From ParksPlusHiking.com - Fri Aug 31 - Day 6

Little Baldy, General Grant Grove - Distance: 4 mi - Difficulty: 3

We close out our visit to Sequoia/Kings Canyon with two short hikes. First, we make the moderate climb to yet another granite promontory, in this case 8,044' Little Baldy. After admiring the view and shooting some group photos, we return to the trailhead and make the short drive to Grant Grove Village. There we'll hike the grove loop past the General Grant Tree, the second largest sequoia tree on earth, then head back to the village for lunch prior to our return to Fresno. 4:00pm Anticipated end and drop off at Fresno hotel. End

4:30am Anticipated departure from hotel to the airport!

At lunch I hunted for chicken soup because all my Jewish friends reminded me of its magical properties. All I could find was vegetable soup and a chicken sandwich. Tom to the rescue. I'll have chicken soup soon as I get home.

Saturday morning was up at 3:15 AM and the shuttle didn't come for about 20 minutes which really increased my blood pressure. As usual, most things we worry about never come to pass and I made my flight.

Some trip report comments:

From Marv - Trout sure looked good. Much better way to get protein than the mosquito deal. (-:

From Richelle - Gorgeous there!

Getting to be gray here [in Paris].... so good to see your blue sky. Have fun and pace yourself !

From Maryanne - Hope your cold goes away quickly. Lots of chicken noodle soup if you can find it!
Jewish Penicillin!

From Judy - Funny, true! Also true is the fact that chicken soup works! I'll never forget, and I'll always appreciate the time Diana brought chicken soup to me and left it at my hotel room door, so I wouldn't have to open the door and "pretend" to be sweet and nice. It really did the trick. I was so sick that I slept in my clothes, and the next day it was like I had experienced a miracle, which maybe I had. Hope Diana can find someone to bring her some miracle soup.

Going home. OMG but it was really early despite the shuttle trouble it all worked. United had a new and nice service: the attendant offered help on our connections, timing and gates. He also offered me another bottle of scotch to help my coughing.



Up on top of Mt Baldy, with Steve and Nola, hiking guides. Then all the Christmas type trees on the trail, followed by Grant's Grove and a tree that had fallen and large enough to hold a small town inside.



In Grant's Grove. My effort to get chicken soup which was fortunately waiting for me at home. See all those Sequoia's that are INSIDE the Fresno Airport.

Itinerary

Sat Aug 25

7:00am Depart Newark EWR via UA#1848 – wait list with one regional certificate
10:20am Arrive San Francisco SFO for plane change

4 hour connect time

2:20pm Depart San Francisco SFO via UA#5452
3:27pm Arrive Fresno

Hotel Piccadilly Inn – 1 night by PPH but in Diana's name
2305 W Shaw Ave, Fresno, CA 93711 Tele: (559) 226-3850 or 559 375 7760
www.piccadillyinn.com – 3 blocks but shuttle suggested
Confirm #159-061 and includes breakfast – ask for chit

Sun Aug 26 – Day 1 of hike

8:00am Start of hike

From www.ParksPlusHiking.com: Sequoia/Kings Canyon: More Than Just Trees – same as in 2015? Sequoia is undoubtedly the best place in the world to hike amongst astounding "Sequoiadendron Giganteum" (i.e., giant sequoias). Beyond just trees though, the park offers a wealth of other features that make for a fantastic hiking experience. From spectacular alpine scenery to abundant wildlife to the comfort and convenience of Wuksachi Lodge, we think our six-day Sequoia/Kings Canyon hike should be on every hiker's "to do" list. Throw in the challenge of Alta Peak and you've got a classic. Don't take our word for it, come see for yourself! (And by the way, yes it does pain us to call a sequoia "just a tree." But we are trying to making a point here.)

Tokopah Falls - Distance: 4 mi - Difficulty: 3

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Hotel Wuksachi Lodge – 1st of 5 nights
Wuksachi Way Wuksachi Village, Sequoia National Park, CA 93262
Tele: 559 565 4070 and (866) 807-3598 <http://www.visitsequoia.com/lodging.aspx>

Yes coffee maker and mini refrig; limited WiFi

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Hotel Waksachi Lodge – 2nd of 5 nights

Tue Aug 28 - Day 3

Mist Falls - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Steve's birthday

Time for a day trip to Kings Canyon National Park. Much of our outing will be spent on the extraordinary Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, which begins at the terminus of the Generals Highway and descends nearly a mile vertically into Kings Canyon itself. At "Roads End" we'll hit the trail along the south fork of the Kings River past Bubbs Creek to our destination, Mist Falls. The river above Bubbs Creek is actually a long series of falls, cascades, and rapids so to ensure their proper identification the Park Service has posted a sign designating one particularly scenic drop as Mist Falls. That is our destination, lunch spot, and turnaround point.

Hotel Waksachi Lodge – 3rd of 5 nights

Wed Aug 29 - Day 4

Giant Forest, Moro Rock - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 4

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Departing the Giant Forest, our day is far from over. Our next stop is a short but exciting hike to Moro Rock, a park landmark and fabulous view point. After Moro Rock, we then make a stop at the Giant Forest Museum where we'll find answers to many of the questions we've come up with during our hike among the trees. What a day!

Hotel Waksachi Lodge – 4th of 5 nights

Thu Aug 30 - Day 5

Alta Peak - Distance: 16 mi - Difficulty: 5

Behind Half Dome, Alta Peak is the 2nd hardest hike that Parks Plus offers on any tour. It is also one of the most scenic, rewarding, and fun! What makes this hike so challenging is its 13-mile (round trip) length; 4,000' of vertical rise; the steep, rocky two mile climb below the summit; and the 11,200' elevation of the peak itself. What makes it rewarding are the fantastic views of the Sierra Crest to the east you'll enjoy for over half the climb to the peak and knowing that comfort and great food await you when you return to Wuksachi Lodge. We suspect you already understand, but the "fun" part is hard to define.

Hotel Waksachi Lodge – 5th of 5 nights

Fri Aug 31 - Day 6

Little Baldy, General Grant Grove - Distance: 4 mi - Difficulty: 3

We close out our visit to Sequoia/Kings Canyon with two short hikes. First, we make the moderate climb to yet another granite promontory, in this case 8,044' Little Baldy. After admiring the view and shooting some group photos, we return to the trailhead and make the short drive to Grant Grove Village. There we'll hike the grove loop past the General Grant Tree, the second largest sequoia tree on earth, then head back to the village for lunch prior to our return to Fresno.

4:00pm Anticipated end and drop off at Fresno hotel

Hotel Piccadilly Inn Fresno Airport – 1 night by PPH
Address and phone above

Sat Sep 1

4:30am Walk or shuttle to airport?

5:55am Depart Fresno FAT via UA#2052

6:5am 3Arrive San Francisco SFO for plane change – 1:07 connect time

8:00am Depart San Francisco via UA#233 – wait list with one regional certificate

4:27pm Arrive Newark EWR

Participants

Bill and Karen?

Bernie and Betsy

Neil Chapin

Steve Krakauer

Anne Fox

Bill Meredith

David Stein

Diana

Steve cell 303 057 6900

Nola cell 303 249 8432

From PPH newsletter: **Sequoia--Out of the Shadows**

Sequoia National Park is a bit of an enigma. The park contains the largest living organisms on earth (The General Sherman tree) and the highest peak in the lower 48 states (Mt. Whitney). What's more, Sequoia is our nation's second oldest National Park, designated for such protection before the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, etc. So why so little attention?

The one-word answer, of course, is "Yosemite." Sequoia's northern neighbor is obviously (and deservedly) world-renowned for its spectacular beauty and we look forward to our visit there in July on our [Yosemite hike](#). But that isn't what I want to talk about now. Rather, let's take a quick look at Sequoia; take it out of the shadow of Yosemite, so to speak.



Challenging Hikes . . . Comfortable Nights

We're all about the hiking so that's the place to start in shining the light on Sequoia. If you look at the roster of hikes for our [Sequoia/Kings Canyon tour](#), you'll see healthy mileage and a mix of moderate to strenuous trails. What is hard to convey is the splendor and the variety of the terrain you'll see: massive granite spires, domes, and other formations; turquoise alpine lakes, shimmering waterfalls, and the greatest concentration of giant sequoias in the world. Add to this the exceptional quality of the trails themselves, the absence of crowds, and an abundance of wildlife, including black bears. Lest we forget, there's also Alta Peak, an 11,200' mountain that is tough to summit but worth every challenging step.

All five nights of our Sequoia/Kings Canyon tour are spent at spectacular Wuksachi Lodge. Few people have ever heard of this lodge; few who have stayed there will ever forget it. Wuksachi Lodge was built in 1999 and boasts spacious, fully appointed accommodations, a cosy central lobby, and an excellent dining room. The lodge is nestled in a mature evergreen forest, yet set in close proximity to most of the park's trailheads (i.e., less than 20 minutes drive). The star-filled night sky at Wuksachi is a sight to behold!

Here are more photos of Sequoia to perhaps whet your interest.



