

There's a dirt road on top of a plateau-like summit of White Mountain in southern Wyoming. The road is called the wild horse scenic tour, and we were just hoping our two-camper system could climb to the 7,000 ft. elevation on an unpaved road. The 50-mile loop through the Red Desert encircles the Great Divide Basin. It's home to herds of wild horses, pronghorn antelope, coyotes and rabbits. Before the trek, we checked with a local ranger to see if the road was manageable by RV. He gave us good directions and said we'd make it. He also assured us we'd see wildlife. Perfect, another adventure.

The first thing I learned about the landscape was the difference between a mesa, a butte and a hoodoo, all of which were visible throughout the tour. Basically, mesas are longer than they are tall, buttes are taller than they are wide and hoodoos are both on a smaller scale. All are eroded by the constant force of wind in Wyoming.

From our lookout atop the mesa, we didn't get to see much of the promised wildlife. It was more like a wild goose chase. Maybe it was too early in the season. Maybe it was the wrong time of day. But we did make it up the hill and from there we could see for miles. I started to understand apeirophobia, or fear of infinity or nothingness. Dan had described this disorder when we entered Wyoming, quoting from a brochure about the pioneers who passed this wide open state.

My eyes searched the horizon. I couldn't tell where it ended. I told Dan that I don't think I'd want to live here because of the emptiness. I used the binoculars to see if I could spot a coffee shop or a library in the tiny dot of a town in the distance. Dan disagreed though. "You can see so much from here."

I guess I couldn't see what was right in front of me. I realized he must have been talking about the panoramic view of the surrounding mountain ranges, hundreds of miles away. To our left was the Wyoming Range. In front of us we could see the Wind River Range and behind us, there was a great view of the Uinta Mountains, all part of the Rocky Mountain Range. A sign read that we could see an area the size of Massachusetts from where we stood. That's not nothing.

A similar thing happened to me a few days earlier in Utah at the Great Salt Lake. We camped on a island in the lake, Antelope Island State Park. We did see wildlife just roaming around there. We also waded in the warm but uninhabited waters. I was sort of surprised to learn that the wildlife in this lake, covering 1,700 square miles, is next to nothing. There are no outlets except evaporation, which leaves behind a high concentration of salt and minerals. Each year it gets saltier and saltier, a never-ending process. The lake comes in second in salinity next to the Dead Sea. Just think, a lake in the middle of the desert that no one can use for drinking or fishing. The whole idea of "dead waters," bothered me, while Dan was taking pictures of the kids and the sunset.

I guess people can either fear or embrace infinity, like Dan and I did. We've all worried some things would go on forever and wished other things could. Change is scary but it can be a good thing too.

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