

**Sent:**

Monday, June 6, 2011 9:53 PM

**Subject:**

Postcard

This year has been a special year for snow. The park got 200% of its normal snowfall, the heaviest in 40 years. As a result we were advised that most of the hiking trails are "white". And "wet". We are into dry earth tones, thank you. Here at the lower elevations all looks well, but as soon as you start to go up, everything changes. As one hiker put it: "When we saw the rangers in snowshoes we knew we were in trouble".

But our plan was to drive through the park today, take the little side jaunts at the overlooks, and hike tomorrow. So we started to follow our plan. We are nothing if not inflexible.

Into the park. Hmmm, bighorn sheep. OK. Good start.



"Many Parks Curve". Stopped here. Found a big climbing rock and a blue grouse.



Then we couldn't find the side jaunts.



Then we couldn't use the road.



We hung out at the closed gate in hopes that some ranger would soon be unlocking it. We took some pictures.



Picture of a ground squirrel. Cute.



Picture of Clark's Nutcracker. Sweet.

Getting discouraged, we turned back, visited Hidden Valley (looked in vain for the ranch dressing) and stopped at a boardwalk through a marsh that had no moose. (Moose is apparently the plural of moose the singular, like deer and deer and elk and elk. What's that about?)

Then we found a dry trail!



We started to have fun.



My oh my what a beautiful day.



Then we spotted a few elk to the right of the trail. That's fun too! Then a whole lot more. And they didn't move. A few to the left of the trail. Then a whole lot more. And *they* didn't move. It was an elk ambush! Who'd a thought it! Hightail it for Murray!



Our plan in shambles, ourselves in full retreat, we can only return tomorrow to try again.

D&S