

Accumulating Spot Reports

Before I tell you about this father-son trip to Idaho, you need to know about “spot reports.” According to Google AI, “In Ranger School, a spot report is a formal, concise evaluation of a student's performance, conduct, or an observed significant event during training. In Ranger School, it's used to document student actions and behaviors. Ranger School spot reports are written by instructors and can be positive or negative, with a limited number allowed before a student might fail, serving as a significant component of a student's final grade.”

Here’s a bit more background info. From a young age, my son was inclined to test the integrity of his skull. Cuts and bruises were common to his noggin’ (a Southern term that means “head.”) His nickname became Nog. That shall be the name used henceforth in this account.

Nog’s route to adulthood was circuitous and protracted. Nevertheless, he eventually arrived. There were many years when his obligations as a young soldier prevented us from taking a long vacation together, but finally the circumstances were such that in the summer of 2022, Nog had 10 days leave from the Army that he was willing to squander on/with me. I planned a trip Idaho for the two of us. I had been on multiple wilderness backpacking trips and photographic expeditions to Idaho with my best traveling buddy Peter. I envisioned a trip where I’d take Nog to some places that held special meaning for me.

Here are GR’s notes from that trip.

Monday 8 August 2022 Flights into Boise

For GR: GSP-ATL-Boise Pick up Chrysler Pacifica 15,606 miles. Lunch as Sushi Place. Excellent! Pet Resale Shoppe, Drive to Capital and up into residential district, Dick Street. REI for Mountain House and Alpine Fare camping food. Greek Dinner at Romio’s. Check in Airport Inn. Return to REI to get Nemo pad for Nog. GR at hotel sleeping 9:30 pm until 11 pm. Nog arrives 12:15 pm. Pick up at airport. Back to Airport Inn.

Tuesday 9 August Boise to Grandjean Road

Breakfast of major omelets at Denny's. Shop at Albertsons. Nog spent \$297. Drove to Capital Building. Drove Hwy 21 to Idaho City. Strolled in Pioneer Cemetery where Chinese were "removed." There is a "Catholic Section." A man wearing a pistol arrived on a Polaris. Treacherous drive up to Pilot Peak. Probably shouldn't have done that in a rental minivan, but once we started, there was no turning back. PBJs for lunch at Pilot Peak. Drove back down to Lowman for water and sunblock. Soaked in Sacagawea Hot Springs. "Toured" Grandjean (consisting of one store, and it wasn't open.) Camped near Sacagawea at a river bend where a huge tree trunk was sawed to make two "chairs". Dinty Moore for dinner!

Wednesday 10 August Grandjean Road - Stanley - Alpine Lake, 2.8 miles hiking

Cross Banner Pass. Drizzling rain at Stanley Lake parking lot. Stanley Mercantile. Refilled water bottles. Drive to Iron Creek Trail Head (6710 ft.) Hike 2.8 miles to Alpine Lake (7823 ft.) Set camp on the same boulder where GR had camped with Dusty Dave. Noisy family across the lake. Someone voiced their disapproval, yelling, "This is supposed to be wilderness!" First Mountain House meal. GR had lethargic afternoon in afib at Alpine Lake. First night on Nemo air mattress was great except for high altitude dreams.

Thursday 11 August Alpine Lake – Sawtooth Lake – Stanley – Fourth of July Lake Trailhead, 5.8 miles hiking

Nemo air pad failed overnight. Hike 1.5 miles to Sawtooth Lake (8430 ft.) Summitted unnamed peak (9085 ft) above Sawtooth Lake. GR received his first spot report. 1.5 miles back to Alpine Lake (7823 ft). Hike 2.8 miles back to Iron Creek Trailhead. Drive to Stanley. Get water. Bought blue foam pad. Met female Sheriff from Gaud County, UT in the Cove Hot Spring along the Salmon River. Husband was kayaking. Thunder scared off the Sheriff. Drive to Redfish Lake. Cheeseburgers and massive fries and drinks at the outdoor grill. Drive to Fourth of July Creek Road. Finally found a nice campsite near the trailhead that was passed up by another guy. Nog made a huge fire. Good soft ground here.

Doused with water before we retired to our tents. It rained. Even so, embers reblazed during the night.

Friday 12 August Fourth of July Trailhead – Blackmon Peak -Washington Lake, 5.5 miles hiking.

Fourth of July Trailhead (9365 ft). Left packs at col over Antz Basin, bagged Blackmon Peak (10,307 ft) (3.0 miles so far.) Ethereal Views from Blackmon Peak. Lunch at the col above Antz Basin. Hike 2.4 miles to Washington Lake (9362 ft). Set camp. Motocross cyclist nearby. Sunset light not impressive at Washington Lake. Poor night of sleep on tilted tent area.

Saturday 13 August Washington Lake – Stanley -Flatrock Junction, 5.5 miles hiking

Washington Lake to Fourth of July Lake Trailhead 2.0 miles all downhill except the saddle above Washington Lake. Felt like a very long hike by the end. Selfies at Trailhead. Drive to Cove Hot Springs for a second soak, this time with two women from Coeur d'Alene. Lunch at Mountainview Resort. Huge cheeseburgers and massive fries. Filled van with gas. Dumpster diving for out-of-date croissants while testing Nemo pad for leak. Drove through all campgrounds sites on the south side of Redfish Lake. Finally found a spot to park a long walk from the Lodge. 3 pm boat shuttle to head of Redfish Lake (6547 ft.) Hike 3.5 miles to Flatrock Junction at 7400 ft. Nog saw a deer. Nog enlarged the fire ring with rocks/boulders from the creek. Huge campfire to burn GR's Depends. Embers from the sparks burned hole in Nog's shorts at his penis region.

Sunday 14 August Flatrock Junction – Cramer Divide – Cramer Lake, 8.3 miles hiking

Hike 3.7 miles from Flatrock Junction (7400 ft) to Upper Cramer Lake (8381 ft). Set up a temporary camp while waiting for people to leave a really good campsite which we claimed as soon as they departed. Late morning hike to Cramer Divide (9480 ft) where we had lunch. Nog sought a better view of the Cramer Lakes from North Ridge. Descent to Cramer Lakes 2.3 miles. Looked at waterfall below the Cramer Lakes. Nog improved the fire ring. Very early fire at Cramer Lake.

Sunday 15 August Upper Cramer Lake – Twin Falls, 7.0 miles hiking.

7.0 miles from Upper Cramer Lake (8381 ft) to Redfish Lake Inlet (6747 ft) arriving 11:15 after departing at 7:30 am. Boat Shuttle to Redfish Lodge with crazy woman who sat too close to GR. Her boyfriend(?) swam before we left the dock. Walked long ways to van in the parking lot. Hawaiian Pizza at Papa Bruneé's in Stanley. Basin Creek Hot Spring was Awesome! After some conversation, we displaced the pastor from Caldwell and his nice nurse wife. Two hours of perfect hot springs soaking, just the two of us. Drove south through Sawtooth Valley to Galena Pass. Stopped at Sun Valley Mall and Grocery Store and an outdoor store. Drove through Hailey to KOA Campground north of Twin Falls. Site # 17 for \$44. Ice cream at KOA. Showers! Nog did all the laundry. Discovered tiny holes in his clothes caused by embers from the campfires.

Monday August 16 Twin Falls -Bruneau Dunes -Twin Falls- Boise

GR up at 4:30 am for shower. Break KOA camp. Sunrise during our 1:15 drive to Bruneau Dunes. 8:00 am breakfast in parking lot of visitors' center at Bruneau Dunes. Worried about 80 degree cutoff for dune surfing. Chatted with camp host in Tiffen Motorhome. GR challenged Nog to "Use your skills. Talk your way on to a sand board." Nog met Gus IV and Gus V. Borrowed a sand board for two runs. First not so good. Second was better. Satisfied with sandsurfing before 9 am. Drive Hwy 30 east toward Aquaduct. Rock from truck tire cracked rental van windshield. Stop at Thousand Springs Visitor Lookout at Fossil Beds. Stop at Hardy Box Canyon. Leaving the Goodwill Store in Buhl, GR got in the wrong van. Awesome lunch at The Twin Falls Sandwich Shop 128 Main Ave N, 83301. Cale salad and Thai salad. Called Chris Harakas; windshield is covered by GRs insurance. To Planetarium at College of Southern Idaho. Art and Anthropology Museum. Learned of Skyview app. Lost Nog at the CSI Museum. GR joked with the museum staff that he had lost his child (34 years old!) They checked video monitors but couldn't find him. GR finally found Nog, and on the way out, told the museum staff he was taking his child to the van for a spanking! At Perrine Bridge met Hungarian woman who took our picture. To Shoshone Falls. Drive 2 hours at 80 mph to Boise to REI. Secured reservation at Airport Inn. Nice dinner

at Romio' Greek Italian (8125 Fairview Ave, Boise, 83704). A major foodie feast: hummus platter, gyros, soup and salad, tiramisu. At Airport Inn, room changed to 207 because 203 was occupied. 1st night on CPAP in a week. World's sorriest pillows.

Wednesday 17 August Boise – fly home.

Up at 6 am at Airport Inn. Big breakfast in the hotel lobby. Brought stuff up from the van for repacking in the room. Checked two bags for \$70. Using backpack as carry on. Cleaned out the van. Drove around Boise to used sports gear shop (Outdoor Exchange, 1405 W. Grove St., Boise 83702). Easy return of the Pacifica to Enterprise. Cracked windshield was no big deal. While waiting in airport, took one hour to review the trip day-by-day. Itemized all spot reports (see Appendix.)

Appendix

Camp meals: Mountain House: Lasagna; Beef Stroganoff. Alpine Aire Meals: Wild mushroom fettucini; Pad thai; Chicken with Spinach; Spicy Beef Stew. 4 cans Dinty Moore Beef Stew.

Hiking:

Wednesday	10 Aug	2.8 miles	Aline Lake
Thursday	11 Aug	5.8 miles	Alpine Lake -Sawtooth Lake – Ironhead Trailhead
Friday	12 Aug	5.4 miles	4 th of July – Blackmon Peak – Washington Lake
Saturday	13 Aug	5.5 miles	Washington Lake – Flatrock Jct.
Sunday	14 Aug	8.3 miles	Flatrock Jct. – Cramer Divide – Cramer Lake
Monday	15 Aug	7.0 miles	Cramer Lake – Redfish Inlet

Total 34.8 miles backpacking over 6 days, 5.8 miles per day.

Restaurant Meals with Nog:

- 1 Denny's Breakfast in Boise
- 2 Mountain Resort in Stanley. Cheeseburgers and fries (twice?)
- 3 Papa Brunee's Pizza in Stanley

- 4 Redfish Lodge Grill hamburgers and fries
- 5 Romio's Greek/Italian in Boise for gyros and tiramisu
- 6 The Sandwich Place in Twin Falls for salads.

Gas for the Pacifica in Stanley, Bruneau Dunes area on Hwy 30, Boise.

Lessons learned:

Always carry a sleeping pad in case air mattress fails.

Typically use two Depends per day. Put on a fresh one after dinner before crawling into the tent for the night.

No matter how saturated a Depends might be, Nog can burn it!

Use backpack under sleeping pad as an incline for better rest.

Use big garbage bag inside backpack to keep everything dry.

Verbal Spot Reports issued by Nog to GR:

1. Lost Sawtooth topo map on the ascent to the 9000 ft unnamed peak above Sawtooth Lake.
2. Left Sawtooth map in the van for the Cramer Lakes hike. (Fortunately had M. Fuller Guidebook which is probably better!)
3. Broke plastic spoon at Flatrock Junction. Shared a long handled spoon for the rest of the trip.
4. Left Jetboil (almost) at Cramer Lake tentative campsite.
5. Tried to get in the wrong van at Buhl Goodwill Store.
6. Left ziplock with toilet tissue and lighter an emergency poop site in Garden of the Boulders.
7. Opened trunk a dozen times with key fob when intending to open the side door of the van.

Guilty as charged. GR is disqualified and dismissed!

This report generated by GR Davis Jr on 22 Sept 2025