

It is a good day to go railfanning at Rocky Point!

Rocky Point 2007

We turn off Highway 11 and begin the twisty-turny descent through a cool, narrow canyon of green toward the James River. After yet one more curve, the river and (don't you just know!) a railroad track spread before us. The scanner promises an eastbound soon and is backed up by a green signal light. There is a handy parking spot at the base of this mountain and we start our "train vigil."

We are only forty miles by rail from Lynchburg's lower basin rail but this is a totally different world. The sun is still behind the trees so we are cool and comfortable in the early morning light. The gentle rush of The James and the chirping of the bird community add a peaceful hush to the scene. Bright orange trumpet vine blossoms (exactly the same color as the pumpkins of today's plastic canvas project) reach for the sign post but the blue chicory already has squatters' rights. A waterfall to our left adds beauty as birds and butterflies keep busy at whatever it is that birds and butterflies do best. Queen Ann's Lace catches Jim's eye and is the subject of another photo opportunity. Something sparkles in the ballast beside me; I find chunks of pink and white quartz.

Soon the promised eastbound train rumbles past us. I wonder what the ninety-nine carloads of coal will eventually power. A big red cardinal checks out the rail for hoped-for grain but flies away, searching for a more accessible bug for his breakfast. Wouldn't he appreciate Amelia's cicadas? Jet contrails create a perfect "X" in the crystal blue sky above us. Just a fragment of brick foundation hints at a long-ago house. My mind "free-wheels" into the past and I imagine just how beautiful this spot must have been when that foundation actually supported a home. A convoy of nine vehicles, each with canoes strapped to their roof, passes by our parking spot. The James will be a busy place today. A chocolate lab in a red Chevy barks his greetings as his master drives by. Gentle poofs of wind rustle through the car. This seems like a good time for a nap (or, as friend Pat calls it, a nappy-pooh).

The Chevy returns, the lab waking me with his superior vocal abilities. Then Jim brings me a Hardee's bagful of coal nuggets to add to my collection in the flower bed in front of our house. The sun is high in the sky and it is time to move on, so, for now, "Good Bye, Rocky Point."

