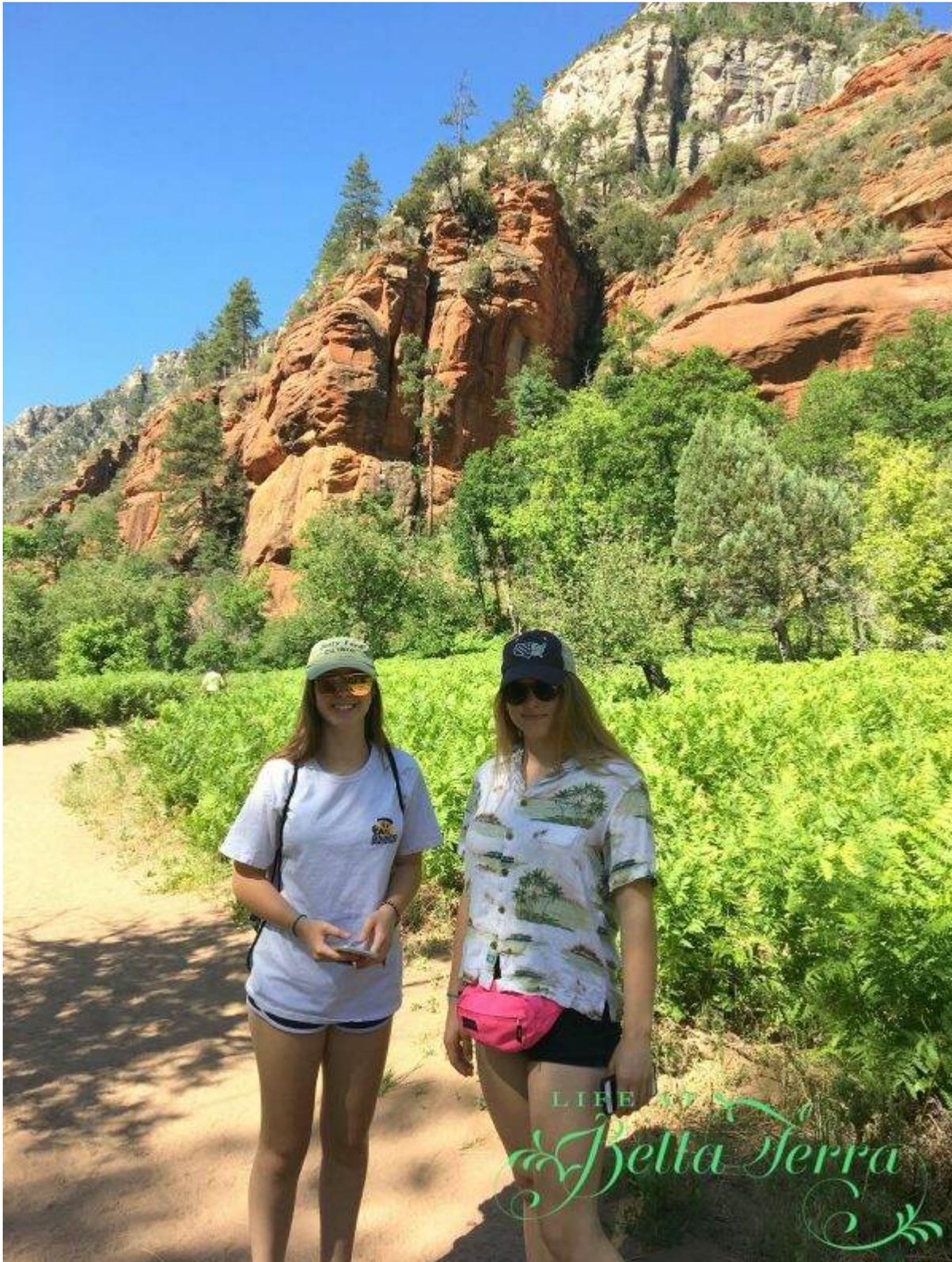


Hiking in Sedona, Arizona

On late Saturday afternoon, my daughter, Elisabeth, suggested we go hiking the next day.....in [Sedona, Arizona](#) (a mere 2.5 hour drive). Of course, I jumped at the chance to spend time with her and her best friend, Ella.

We left the house at 6:00 a.m. with an anticipated arrival time of 8:30 a.m.~ 30 minutes before the limited parking area opened. Well, after stopping for gas and snacks, we arrived at the lot at 9:06 a.m. to find it completely FULL. The attendant said that parking opened at 8:00 a.m. and the website was incorrect. Sigh. The closest parking was 1/2 mile away.

West Fork Trail is touted to be one of the best trails in Arizona and one of the top 10 trails in the United States. The trail is approximately 6.5 miles round trip and is rated easy. Although, there are a few areas where short uphill stepping stones are used.



It was a little disconcerting to see the sign about the possible rabid fox.

WEST FORK ↑

ATTENTION ANGLERS

You Are Entering A
Special Regulation Area

- All Fish **MUST BE RELEASED** Immediately
- Artificial Flies And Lures **ONLY**
- Single Barbless Hooks **ONLY**



Rabies Alert

A fox located in this area recently exhibited erratic behavior.

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach wildlife.
- Keep dogs on a leash.
- Report unusual animal activity.

928-679-8756

PUBLIC HEALTH
SERVICES DISTRICT
COCONINO COUNTY

Even though it was rather early in the morning, the sun was up and shining!



If you aren't familiar with Sedona, it is a beautiful destination filled with red-rock buttes, steep canyon walls and pine forests. The town of Sedona is a popular tourist

destination with several art galleries, shops, restaurants and hotels.

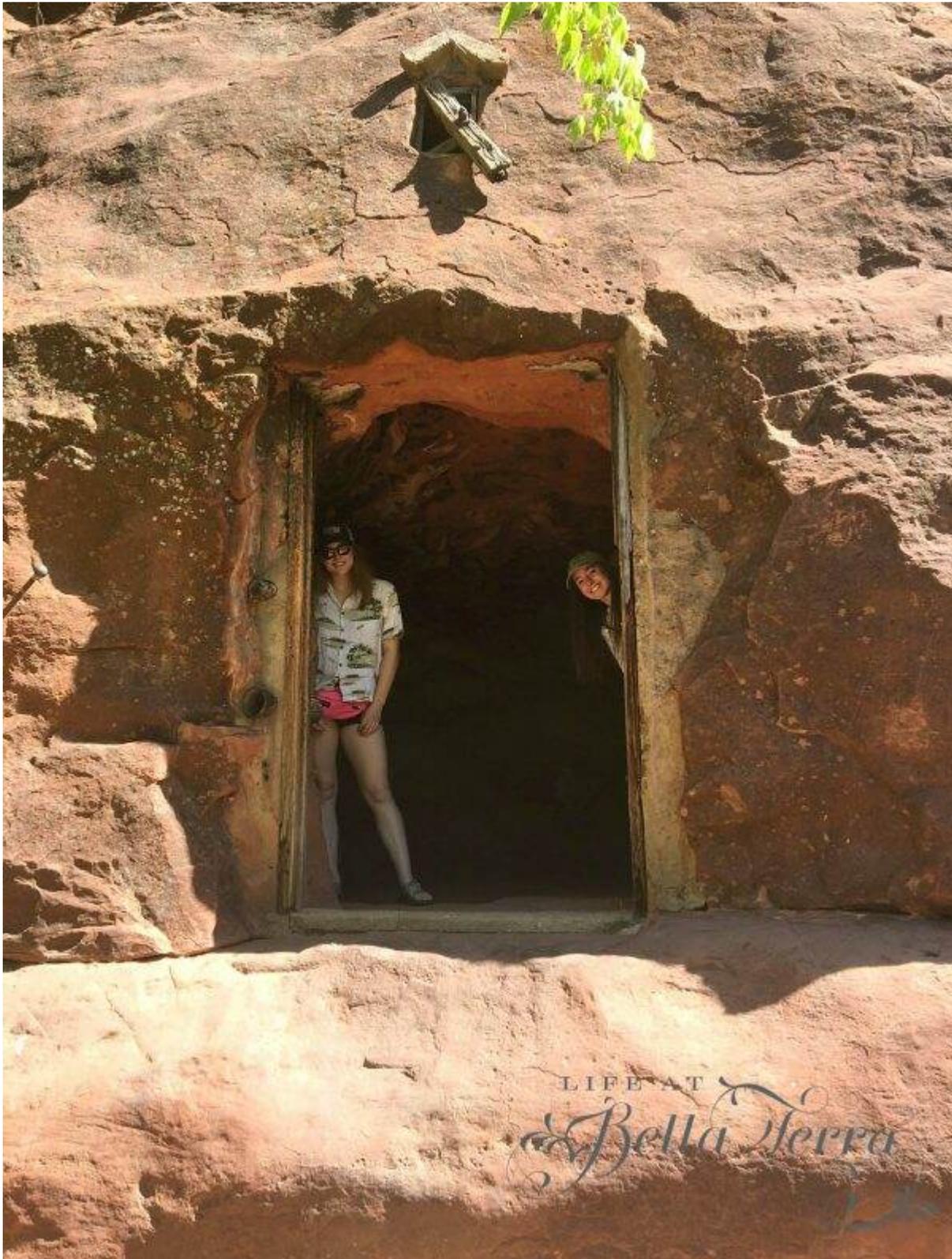




At the beginning of the trail, you pass through the ruins of the original [Mayhew Lodge](#), which was operational from 1925 to 1968. Some of its famous guests include President Herbert Hoover, Clarke Gable, Jimmy Stewart, and Walt Disney. The family who owned it sold it to The Forest Service in 1968. Unfortunately, it burned down in 1980 and the Forest Service

was unable to rehabilitate it for \$200,000. You can explore some of the remains...seems a bit sad since this is such an incredible location.





The trail wasn't challenging from an elevation perspective, but the path was soft and sand-like. There are also numerous stream crossings (at least 13) which are done with stepping stones and logs.

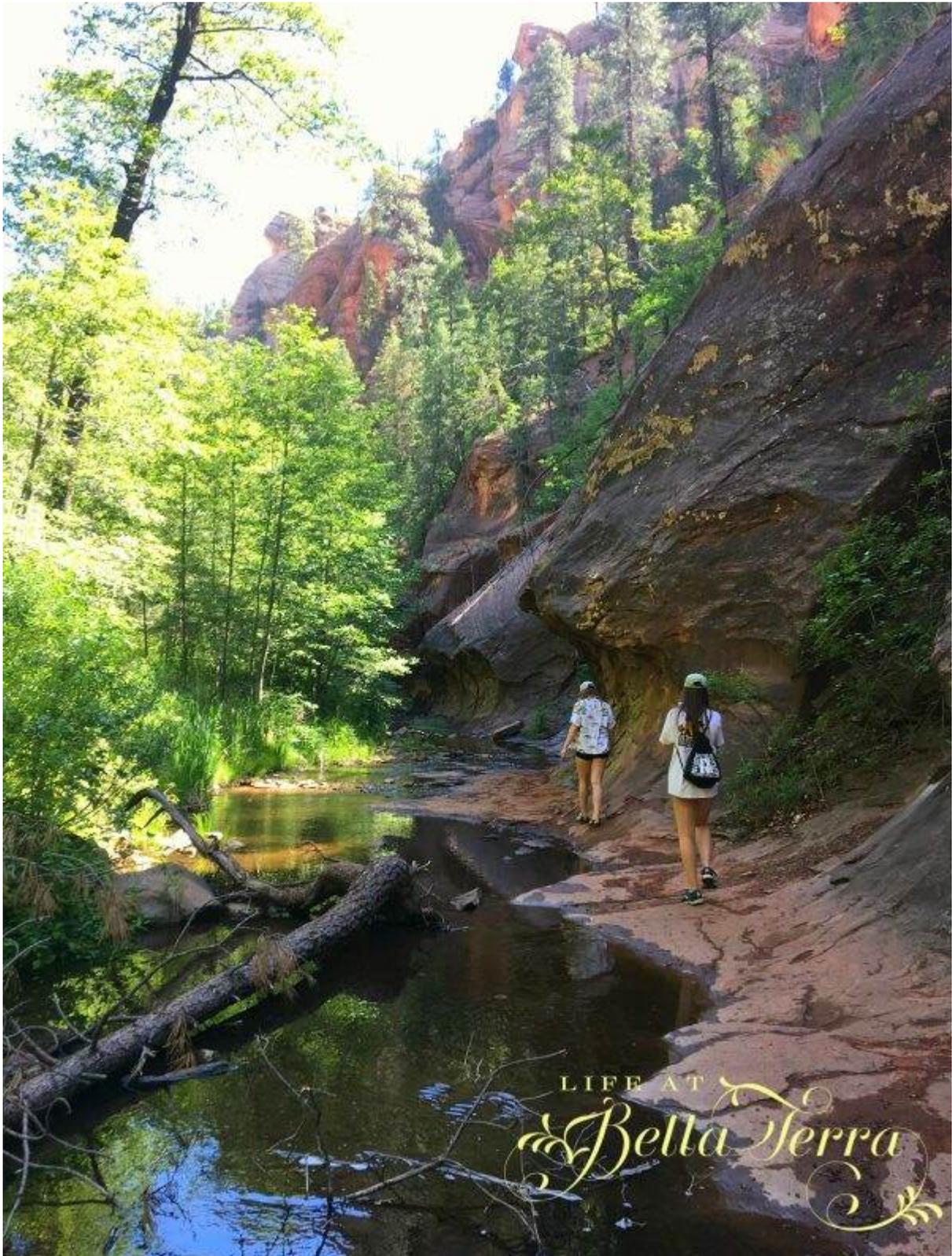


EUREKA
Bella Terra





The nice part of having two teenage girls on this hike is that they LOVED posing for pictures! Both wore bathing suits and were able to cool off in the chilly waters of Oak Creek. The stream flows gently, and the hike is very pleasant and relaxing – only occasional sunlight reaches the canyon floor so the trip is ideal for the hot summer months.





There were abundant gifts from nature along the way.



The West Fork trail is 3.3 miles one way. However, it is possible to continue through to the upper end of the creek, and meet with dirt roads in the Coconino National Forest. This is a 14 mile trip, and may involve some swimming of deep pools. We got turned around a bit because we weren't paying attention to the trail markers, which are about every 1/2

mile. My guess is that our 6.6 mile trip turned into 9 miles as we may have gone beyond the end of the trail. Fortunately, we weren't the only ones hiking and got directions from a couple who obviously knew where they were going.



By the time we hiked back to the car, we had completed a good

4 hours of hiking (including stops for swimming and picture-taking). With hot feet and hungry stomachs, we stopped at [The Indian Gardens Market and Cafe](#) in Oak Creek. The sandwiches were delicious and sitting for the 2.5 hour drive home was welcomed. I LOVED spending the day with my daughter and her friend, who feels like a daughter. I am a lucky person.



Key Points:

1. Arrive as early as possible. Even though the park's parking lot states online they open at 9:00 a.m., they really open at 8:00 a.m. Finding any parking in the area is challenging.
2. Bring lots of water. In spite of the plentiful shade, stay hydrated.
3. Prepare to cross water, so wear water shoes, or ones you don't mind getting wet.
4. Sunscreen always
5. Fire Danger is high~Stage 3 when we were there. Surprisingly we saw someone smoking on the trail (really?). Please be aware of fire restrictions.
6. The trail is squishy and sandy and my hip felt it the next day.
7. Wearing a bathing suit was a plus for the girls-they loved cooling off in the creek
8. Pay attention to the trail markers, especially if you continue beyond the marked trail.
9. We didn't have any issues with insects
10. It's \$10.00 to park at the trailhead. If you walk in, it's \$2.00 per person.

For more information on the West Fork Trail, click [here](#).

Happy Hiking!

Mary