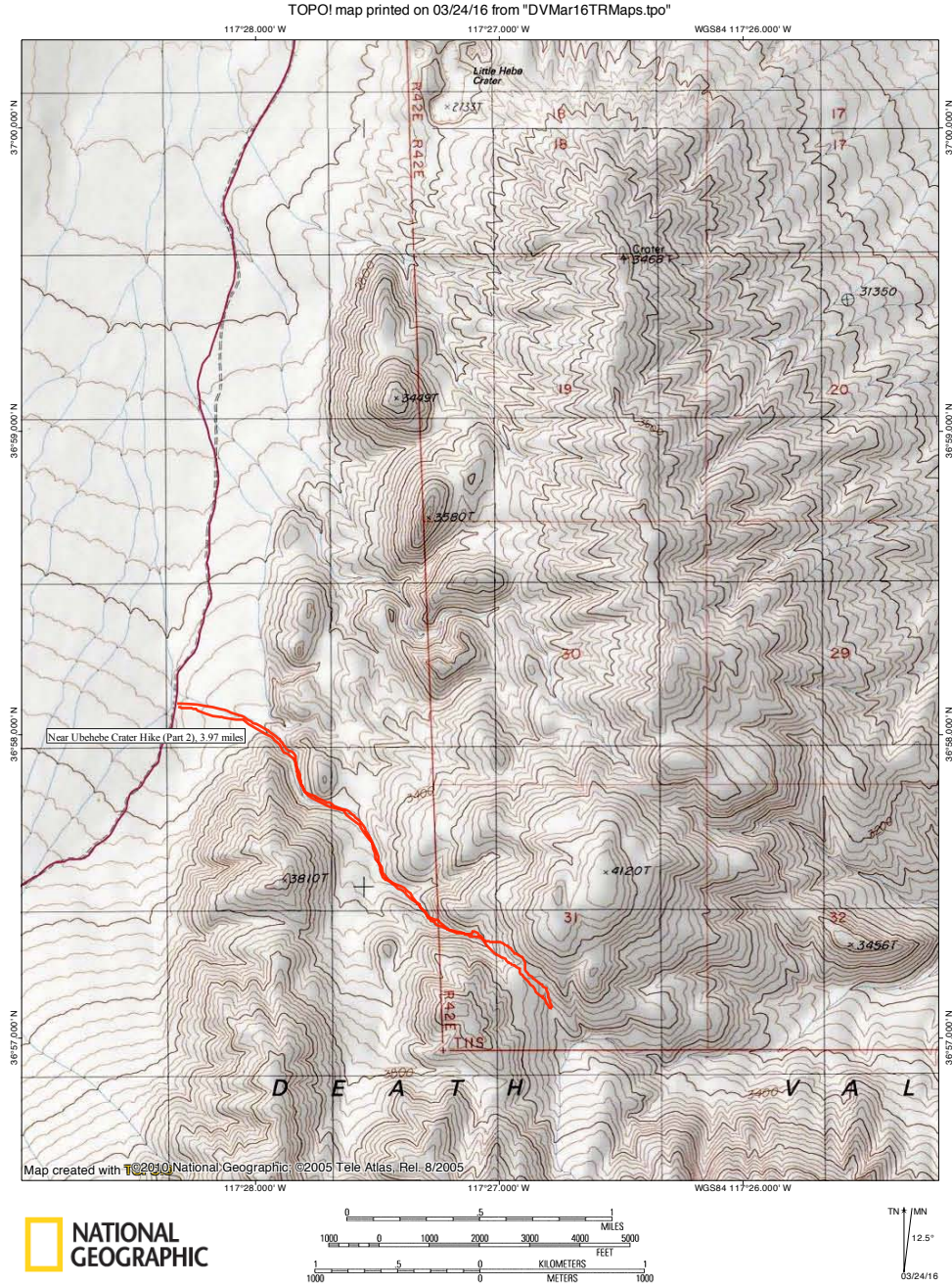


COLORFUL AREA SOUTH OF UBEHEBE CRATER

In January of 2016 we had hiked a canyon just north of this area, and then we had ascended the "peak 4120" seen on the TOPO map below. The hike below is the rest of the route which had been planned for that day, which we'd been unable to complete because hiking in this area seems to take much longer than one would expect from mapping out routes. Thanks to Steve Hall who shared with me some information from an anonymous hiker who explored this area last year.

TOPO map of the route:



I was surprised at how many Brown-Eyed Evening Primroses were blooming just past Ubehebe Crater on the Racetrack Road:



In general, the flowers blooming in this area were much, much larger than those elsewhere. Normally I would consider this to be a large Notch-Leaf Phacelia; however, it actually was smaller than average for the Notch-Leaf Phacelia which we saw on this hike:



Looking up towards the mouth of the canyon which we would be following to get to the colorful area which was our destination for this hike:



This rabbit was as still as a statue, seeming to hope we wouldn't spot him, but he startled at the sound of us taking cameras out (this photo was taken with an iPhone):



Looking back at the Racetrack Road winding its way along, with Dry Mountain in the background:



The most prevalent flowers in the wash through here were the Golden Evening Primrose (seen below) and the Notch-Leaf Phacelia:



Looking up at the canyon mouth through lots of Notch-Leaf Phacelia flowers:



I was very surprised at how many flowers we encountered on our hike up towards the canyon, even recalling that most of the rain from last year's storm occurred over the Scotty's Castle/Ubehebe Crater area:



Here is a Golden Evening Primrose (lower left), a Broad-Flowered Gilia (center), and a Notch-Leaf Phacelia (right):



I think this one is called a Humble Gilia:



This is probably the biggest Notch-Leaf Phacelia plant that I have ever seen:



There were noticeably less flowers once we entered the canyon:



Looking back out towards the Last Chance Range:



The canyon walls were surprisingly tall, and were very similar to those in the canyon just north of here which we had previously hiked in January of 2016:



Up ahead we see the beginnings of a colorful mud-mound area, though nowhere nearly as colorful or as interesting as the area we would be exploring later in the day:



View back into a narrower section of the canyon we have been following:



Panorama of where the canyon opens up; the small colorful area is to the right of center, and the main canyon (which we will be following) continues to the right. To the left is another interesting area to explore; with good maps, one might be able to cut cross-country to the canyon we had hiked back in January of 2016:



Another panorama from further up the canyon, looking north towards this interesting area which I hope to explore further someday:



Up ahead, the canyon opens up, before turning to the left and narrowing once again:



There were increasing numbers of flowers through the washes here, mostly Golden Evening Primrose and Notch-Leaf Phacelia, but also some Desert Pincushion and Gravel Ghost:



Looking up at the colorful cliffs we had seen from further back in the canyon; these are reminiscent of the white cliffs we'd seen in the canyon just to the north that we'd hiked in January 2016:



A small Notch-Leaf Phacelia which was growing on the gravel walls of the canyon:



This huge rock slab appears to be held up just by the mud columns:



Looking up the valley, towards Crankshaft Crossing:



Here the canyon splits; we took the more major fork to the right (south):



There were lots of Golden Evening Primrose through here:



There were quite a few tall Notch-Leaf Phacelia in the canyon here:



We turned a corner and saw a field of Golden Evening Primrose covering the canyon wall:



We are now at high enough elevation to be finding Desert Paintbrush:



The canyon becomes narrower and the walls become taller; it's not the most interesting canyon, but it is relatively easy hiking and this route leads to an incredible colorful area:



We were gaining elevation quickly enough that we generally could see back out towards the Racetrack Road:



This is the first (easy) impasse which must be climbed:



Just beyond is a straightforward workaround (to the left) of this crumbly dryfall:



This appears to be called Indigo Bush:



The flower clusters on this bush are very pretty and photograph well:



The canyon continues, with a few more boulders now in the wash:



This dryfall is much easier to climb than it appears, although the obstacles do begin to get more difficult past this point:



Notice how colorful the rocks are here; it was interesting to observe how, in general, the formations in this area south of Ubehebe Crater are much more colorful than are similar formations elsewhere in the park:



To the left we can see the western part of the high point which we had turned around at on our trip to this area in January 2016:



Looking back down-canyon from the top of this minor impasse:



Up ahead we can see that the terrain is starting to look very interesting:



More vivid red Desert Paintbrush was blooming through here:



The canyon walls became more of a reddish conglomerate, though not quite firm enough of a formation to create a slot canyon. In the center of this photo is the high point on the ridge at the head of the canyon; on the other side of that point is the colorful formation that was our goal for the day:



As there began to be some crumbly and relatively tall impasses in this canyon, we ascended the ridge to the left, and looked across towards the ridge to the right where this interesting rock formation caught our attention. While we were hiking along this ridge, a hawk flew out of a hole in this formation and began flying above our heads and making noises at us:



Panorama view looking down the canyon and out towards the Racetrack Valley Road from further up the ridge:



There were numerous large boulders through here along the ridge, and as it was a hot day we were mindful that there might be snakes in this area:

