

Sandthrax Canyon Descent

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By Matt Brejcha

My recollection may be somewhat hazy from cold medicine, but I do remember a super fun day with a great crew...and this entry from my journal:

Sandthrax seemed like a good canyon for FreezeFest with no driving, a late start, and an early finish. I wanted to go through the Thrax, but I wasn't sure my gimpy ankle was up to it or the crew was into it. Then, near the end of FF, the group started to form up and the canyon was going to go. I had a cold coming on and I was tired from the last 5 days of canyoneering (nearly the only canyon days I'd had all year), but I couldn't pass. So, the night before I drank a bottle of Nyquil and went to bed at 6pm. I woke up at 9 the next morning, feeling a little hazy. I drank a few cups of Kraken coffee and a Mountain Dew to straighten that out.

Game on. I felt like ass, but I started to pack up for the day. Feeling under the weather I figured extra food and drink would be needed. I packed the rest of the trip's beef jerky supply...I was down to 1lb of teriyaki and 1.5 lbs of regular... it would have to do. Luckily, I found a bag of cinnamon bears under the seat in my car, so I threw that in my bag happy I wouldn't starve now. I had family size bag of Doritos left as well, and thinking the boys might want some chips during the day, I packed those. I had run out of water a few days before. I was down to PBR, Kraken, Coors, Red Bull, Bushmill's, Bud Light, Bud, Rockstar, Capitan Nelson's, Smirnoff, Glenfiddich, Beck's, Sauza, and Mountain Dew. I decided to save the booze for afterwards and packed up the Dews. I could only fit (19) in my bag, but I figured I could ration them.

I ate some cinnamon bears and a Red Bull for breakfast then suited up. Jeans and a jean jacket are not only stylish, but also functional as the belt loops make great rappel points. Figuring I might need to save some weight because of the extra jerky, I cut the sleeves and legs off of my outfit. I was ready to roll.

I slammed a Dew and sprinted to the head of the canyon. By the time I got there, I was down to (11) Dews and 2 pounds of jerky. I still had the Doritos, but those were for later. I was nervous about my dwindling supplies; so I chugged a Dew and ate some Jerky to calm my unsteady nerves.

The boys were ready to roll, so we started in. We quickly reached the first rap. We pulled out my brand new harbor freight rope and dropped in. Mid-rap my POS flip-flop blew out and damn near made me spill my Dew. Guess I would have to do the rest of the canyon in my socks. I chugged a Dew and headed down canyon. After a few Dews and a bit of canyoneering, we reached a good spot for eating some Doritos. The nacho cheese tasted amazing, and the jerky/nacho combo was incredible. I chugged a dew and continued down canyon.

We reached a long, sweeping up climb. I gave the Doritoe bag to one of the boys and sent them up the climb first. I chugged a Dew and started up after. It was hard and tiring, but knowing there were Doritoes at the top got me up it.

We continued down canyon and I started to get nervous because I was out of cinnamon bears now. I didn't know if I could keep my energy up with only the (6) Dews and 3/4lb of jerky left, but goddamit I would try. We reached another good Dorito eating spot and dug in.

Super good.

We reached the canyon's crux and Mikey took the Doritoes to the top. I followed, dreaming of the Nacho cheese. Halfway up I had to wedge a Dew can in the crack to aid on. Once past the move, I chugged the Dew. At the top, we ate some Doritos and gave nachoey high fives. I finished off my jerky, chugged a dew and headed down canyon.

We came to another silo, but realized we could rap into it and reach the bottom of the canyon. There was no obvious anchor; so we wedged a dew can in a crack and rapped off that. I had (2) dews left at the bottom of the rap. I acted as cool as I could with my low supplies and headed down canyon, Dew in hand.

We reached a final silo. I shotgunned my last dew, threw my empty dew cans into the abyss and lunged across. I was going to make it. Shortly after we reached the end of the canyon, and none too soon. I desperately needed PBR and some gummy bears.

I staggered back to camp, and passed out. What a great canyon.

Love,

-Brejcha