

Robert Bogucki Help Sign (HELP Canyon)

Submitted: Saturday, Sep 10, 2011 at 20:40

equinox

Hi all,

I followed with interest the story on Robert **Bogucki**, the Alaskan who went for a long walk in 1999 across the north west section of the Great Sandy Desert. The story made international headlines as the search was on for him. The locals here gave up on him, perhaps rightly so. Not so his parents, who hired the 1st Special Response Group from the United States of America to go and bring him out....

He was eventually found by a media helicopter in the Edgar Range near Mowla Bluff.

Before the news of his rescue broke, only hours before in fact, members of the 1st Special Response Group found the word "HELP" above a cliff in the Edgar Range.

Here is a picture of it from the newspaper in Perth (The West Australian) from 1999.



I had often wondered where this was located, and thought I should seek it out. I asked here on Exploroz with no luck, no surprises there. So I asked the 1st Special Response Group about it and they put me in touch with David Kovar who was on the rescue mission. Mr. Kovar was extremely helpful, full of information though could not provide exact coordinates.

He says, referring to a road he calls Looma Access Road, ".....base camp was off the road just to the west of the point where Looma turns south. The tarp was found approximately half a mile from the base at a bearing of approximately 80 degrees. From there, you'd proceed north until you hit a dry (at our time of year) creekbed. Then follow that to the west. Eventually you'll hit a significant drop - approximately 100 feet down. At the base of the drop was Robert's last camp and the worlds "Help" written in rocks."

Believe it or not, that info was enough for me to determine the "HELP" sign location.

So land based navigators - Could you have worked it out?

Mr. Kovar provided a picture, here it is:



Later Mr. Kovar found some more of his notes and says, "We came to a location at which the creek aprons out upon a large flat rock (approximately 100 by 200 feet) and ends in a hundred foot drop waterfall. We observed a "H E L P " sign spelled out with small rocks on the rock apron with an arrow-pointing north. From the lip of the waterfall we could observe sign and ashes of a small campfire below."

He also supplied some coordinates reinforcing his previous description:

Help sign found half a mile west of this location:

18 degrees 55 minutes 123 seconds South

123 degrees 33 seconds 419 seconds East

These coordinates are impossible (eg 123 seconds?? Seconds have to be in between 0 and less than 60) so once again I had to try and work out what they meant and it led me to the same spot as I had worked out previously.

Anyway, on the 7 July this year I found the spot at 18 degrees 55 minutes 4.6272 seconds South, 123 degrees 33 minutes 3.7584 seconds East.

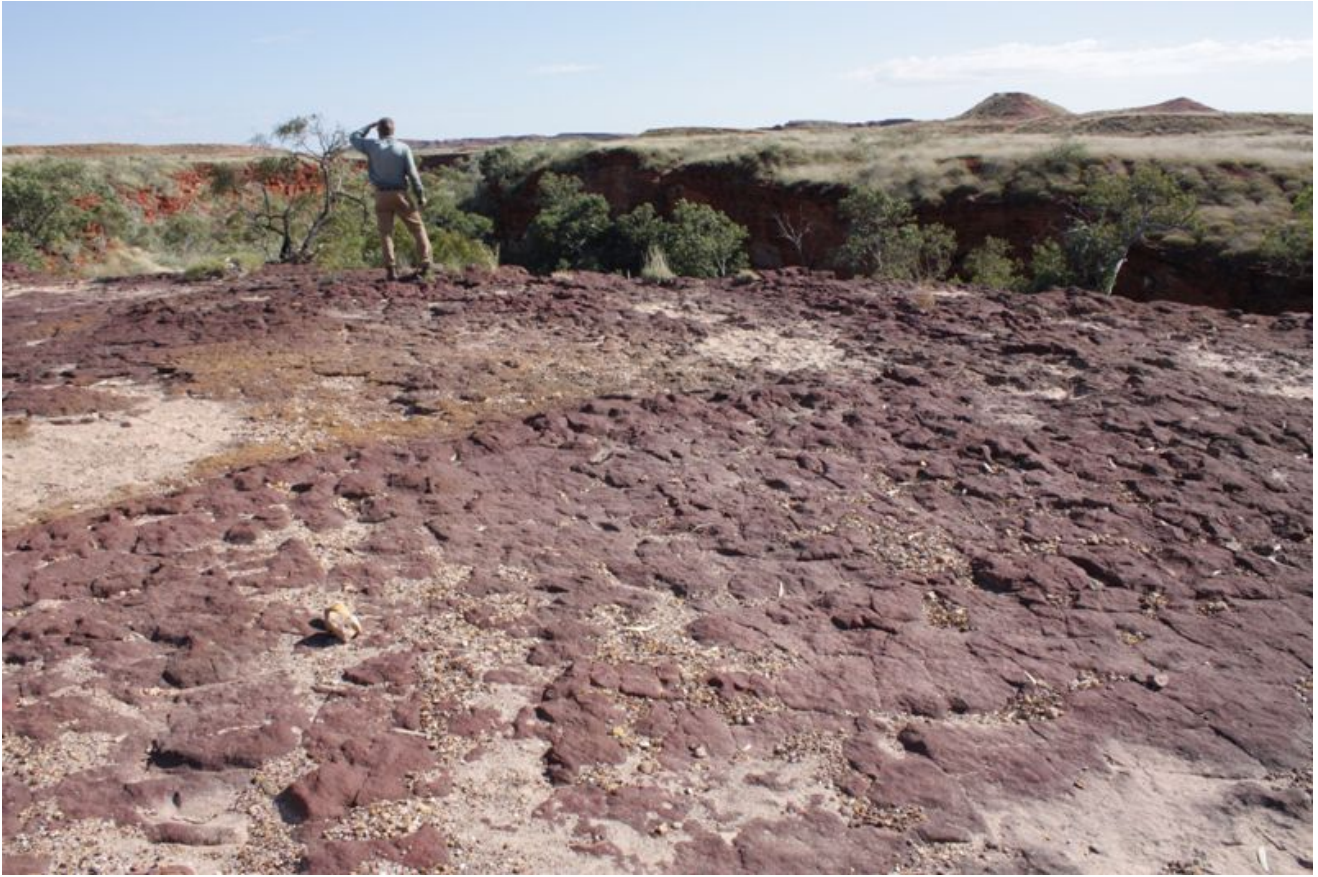
Here I am at the spot where the sign was, as it has washed away. Note the tree, the hill on right and the small ranges in background.



There was a huge drop and a beautiful canyon. A bit like Kings Canyon, only smaller.



Dave from our party went down to the bottom, there was water there and some fish. Here he is looking across the canyon from where the HELP sign was.



We couldn't drive all the way there as it was fairly hard to get down into the lower section where the canyon was. I went back to the vehicles and took these pictures of the crew coming back, and the canyon in the distance.



Another one ticked off the list. Thanks a million to David Kovar.

Cheers
Alan