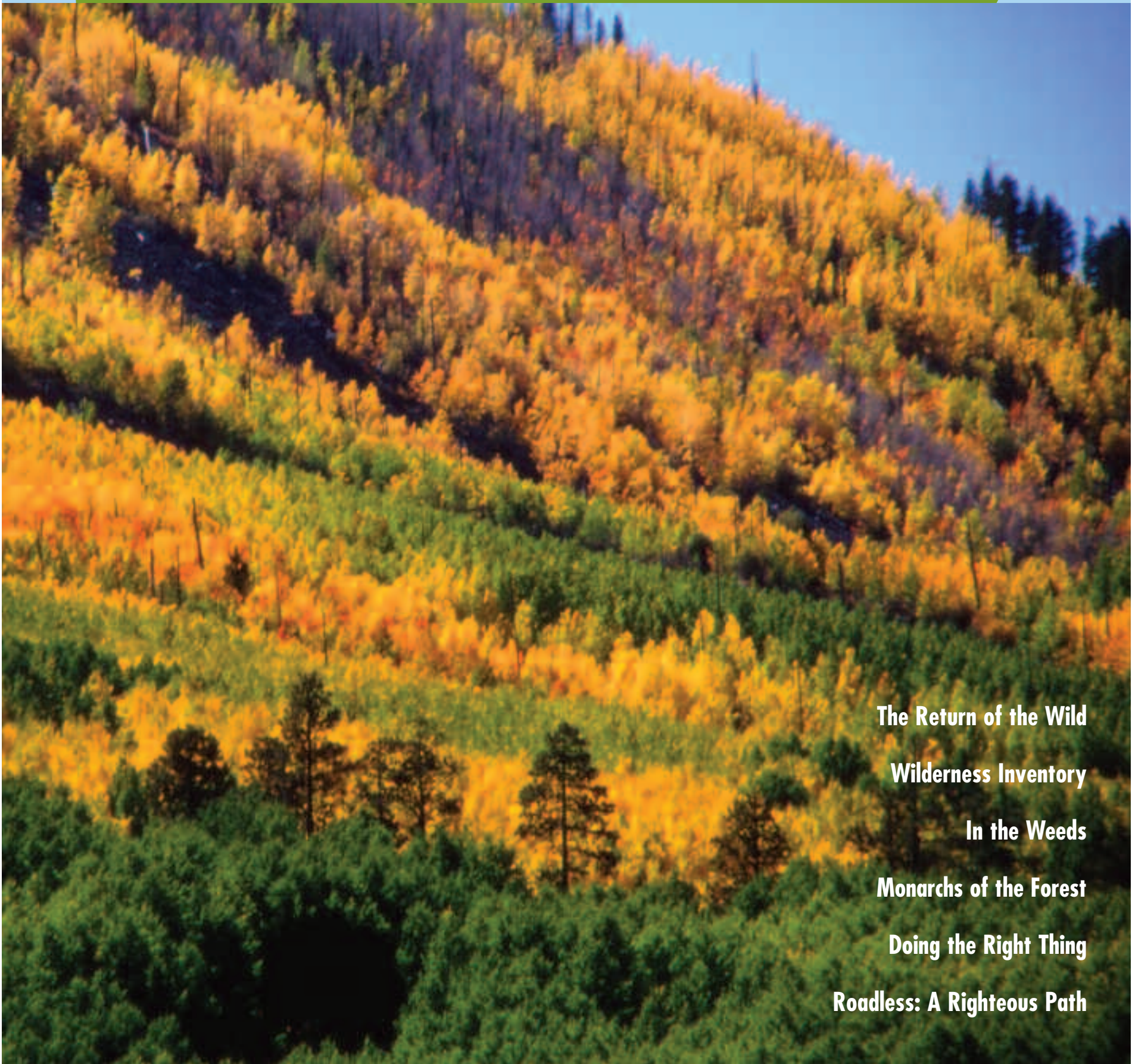


NEWSLETTER OF THE ARIZONA WILDERNESS COALITION

ARIZONA
WILD



The Return of the Wild

Wilderness Inventory

In the Weeds

Monarchs of the Forest

Doing the Right Thing

Roadless: A Righteous Path

FALL/WINTER 2005-06

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Mission Statement

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition's mission is to permanently protect and restore Wilderness and other wild lands and waters in Arizona for the enjoyment of all citizens and to ensure that Arizona's native plants and animals have a lasting home in wild nature. We do this by coordinating and conducting inventories, educating citizens about these lands, enlisting community support, and advocating for their lasting protection.

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OUT OF THE BLUE

A Wild Child

Somehow I grew up wild in a Connecticut mill town. I lived in an older neighborhood on a city block with an eclectic grouping of two-storied and multi-family houses. By blind luck, within a two block area lived 11 other boys within two years of the same age. Much to my sister's chagrin, there wasn't another girl in the entire neighborhood. We naturally became an unruly gang – we didn't wear our colors, flash a sign or defend a territory from neighboring juveniles. Instead, we had "the woods"— a single undeveloped lot bisected by Troy Brook, a tiny tributary of the Naugatuck River.

Our parents didn't want us to play there. We were out of sight and sound – they couldn't call us to dinner from the back porch. We were often grounded for our lack of responsiveness, yet we couldn't resist the woods. My mom sincerely believed that the brook was polluted. You see, before the Clean Water Act all streams in mill towns were logically assumed to be polluted.

But we knew the truth. My hometown was at the top of the watershed, with no less than 10 factories, mills and foundries lining the banks of the Naugatuck River, all once driven by elaborate systems of shafts, pulleys and belts connected to giant water wheels. For years their industrial by-products had been dumped conveniently into the river. My mom was right about it being polluted. We saw the orange slime oozing from the factories. There were no fish and it smelled bad.

Our woods were different. There were no upstream sources of pollution. It didn't smell bad and there were fish. We built dams to create pools where we swam with native brook trout. Within a quarter mile upstream there were no more homes along the brook's banks – only solid woods. We called them the "deep woods". It smelled even better. It plain felt better—lots of fish, snakes, bugs, and not just sparrows and starlings but colorful song birds, nuthatches, chickadees, and woodpeckers boring holes in rotting trees. There were vines big enough for Tarzan. We were much farther from our back porches where our mothers called us in vain. The punishments were severe, but we just couldn't resist the place. I also think that back then parents better understood a child's natural desire to be wild.

We permanently relocated our fathers' hatchets and hammers to the deep woods where our gang of 12 first built a lean-to and then a log cabin made of mostly rotting logs. We built and installed an excessive number of bird houses. This was a wild place all our own and it was better than little league baseball.

The deep woods went for miles. I know this because I can now measure the distance on a car's odometer. First they built a divided highway through the deep woods. We were angry, but we could cross through a large culvert and the diminished deep woods remained on the other side, our sanctuary intact. Then they cleared a huge area for the new regional high school. Our cabin barely survived at the edge of the clearing, but it no longer had any value. It was wild no more and we were really pissed!

It was 1960, I was eleven years old and it would be twenty more years before I met Dave Foreman or read Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. However, we knew

what we had to do. Weekend after weekend, we pulled up survey stakes. We apparently made a major impact because one weekend, a SWAT team of city police stormed out of the now very shallow woods. But we knew this place better than they, and we smugly found cover and escaped. Of course we weren't as smart as we thought. Police were waiting at our houses. Times being different, it was only kid trouble for us—the punishment in the hands of very angry and embarrassed parents.

I graduated from that new high school. I went on to get a degree in Business Administration, but was clearly unfit for the business world. Maybe it was because of what I learned at the Woodstock Arts Festival, but I really think it was what I learned in "the woods". I eventually came west where I've spent the rest of my life working for wilderness—as a Forest Service Wilderness Manager and now for the AWC.

Those woods taught me a lot. I learned that life was more diverse in wild places. I learned that backyard shade trees aren't enough for wildlife or for me. I learned that dead trees have tremendous value; that woodpeckers can't live without them and that mushrooms thrive within them. I learned that fish need clean water that flows from wild places. I learned that all life

is connected. I learned that when humans build big stuff, they can thoughtlessly destroy wild places and the creatures that live there. I learned how important wild places are to my spirit. I learned that while sabotage feels good, it isn't enough for saving wilderness. I felt the lure and heard the call of the wild, but obviously everyone does not. Those of us that hear it, feel it and "get it" are both blessed and cursed to forever serve as the voice for the wild. We need more voices.

Every day wilderness challenges me to understand ever more complex relationships, but one thing always rings true: science consistently confirms that wild places are essential to life. I was just a kid, but I knew this in my bones—wilderness is necessary for life to continue to evolve in response to natural processes.

In 2000, fifty activists met to revitalize the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Today we are 1,500 strong and growing. All of us have our own story regarding lessons learned and how we came to value wilderness. We need to share our stories and our knowledge about the benefits of wilderness. Our goal is to find and empower everyone that cares about our wild places. We need your help.

To all of our volunteers, members, and readers — please continue to support the AWC every way you can. Please share your story and your love for wild places with your friends. Share this newsletter with them and ask them to join with us to protect our wild heritage. Invite them to volunteer outings and public meetings. Encourage them to write letters and to take action when needed. Most important, teach them to cherish wilderness by getting out there.



Executive Director

Don dedicates this memoir to his mom, who passed away on September 26, 2005.



A lone pilgrim, Don Hoffman, AWC Executive Director, age 6.

The Return of the Wild

by Kim Crumbo

The return of wild wolves to Arizona is an immensely important and symbolic event. The wolf, as much as any creature in the Southwest, remains emblematic of the wilderness spirit. Today, a fortunate visitor to the Blue Range Primitive Area and adjacent lands may discover their tracks, hear a forlorn howl, or even catch a glimpse of these remarkable animals. Indeed, the simple knowledge that wolves again haunt our wildlands comforts our commodity-driven and conflict-weary souls.

Recent research has demonstrated the important role played by carnivores, especially wolves, in what is described as “top-down regulation” of ecosystems. The ruthless slaughter and elimination of these creatures by the early 20th century caused considerable harm to wilderness ecosystems that are only now, slowly, recovering with the return of top predators.

Wolves once flourished within the mountainous regions of eastern and central Arizona. They roamed west of New Mexico through the forested Blue Range and White Mountains, along the Mogollon Rim to the San Francisco Peaks, Kendrick Mountain, and Bill Williams Mountain. Small numbers of wolves reached northward to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and westward to the pinyon-juniper woodlands near Peach Springs.

Wolves also roamed Grand Canyon’s North Rim and the adjoining Grand Canyon National Game Preserve (North Kaibab Forest) before being slaughtered by government and other hunters in the early twentieth century. Around 1928, cowboys and government hunters chased Grand Canyon’s last wolf off the Kaibab Forest, across the Paria Plateau and into the Escalante area.

In 1870, approximately 5,000 domestic livestock grazed in the Arizona Territory. By 1891 that number increased to an estimated 1.5 million, turning the Southwest into what one prominent biologist-historian described as “one large livestock ranch” subject to ubiquitous, severe overgrazing.

Pronghorn, beaver, bighorn sheep, and deer were slaughtered for food, fur, so-called sport, or because of perceived competition with domestic livestock. In fact, Merriam’s elk, the only native elk of Arizona, was

hunted to extinction. With this dramatic decline in wildlife, carnivores for some reason resisted resorting to a purely vegetarian lifestyle and turned to the only abundant source of meat—domestic livestock. By 1914, the western states were paying out more than a million dollars a year in bounties. Soon—and at the behest of the livestock industry—Arizona’s wolves, jaguars, and grizzly bears were wiped out by government and other hunters.

The extirpation of the wolf and reduction of mountain lions have disrupted the ecological integrity of our wildlands. For example, overbrowsing by elk harms the regeneration of aspen. In Yellowstone National Park, reintroduced wolves are moving elk away from riparian areas and wetlands where elk have difficulty seeing stalking predators. Preliminary research indicates

that this changed elk behavior allows willow, cottonwood shoots and other vegetation to flourish where they previously struggled for decades. With the return of these plants have come beaver and their dams and ponds, excellent habitat for muskrat, amphibians, fish, waterfowl, and songbirds. Similar overgrazing by rapidly expanding elk populations is now a problem in central and northern Arizona—areas where wolves are absent.

Wolf predation can be very beneficial to prey populations like ungulates. Diseased and weak animals in a herd are apt to be killed first, making it unlikely they will infect others with sickness or pass on genetically inferior traits. Wolves can also be beneficial to other, non-prey species. Scavengers such as foxes, bobcats, hawks, and eagles all benefit from wolf kills.

By the late 1920’s, the wolf, as an effective population, was eliminated from the U.S., although a few wandered between New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico. By the 1980’s, the Mexican Wolf was considered extinct in the United States and the country of its namesake. After a century of persecution and complete eradication of Mexican wolves, the federal government acknowledged that the species was indeed “endangered.”

In 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed their Environmental Impact Statement for the reintroduction of the endangered Mexican Wolf into

the BRWRA [Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area], and on March 29, 1998, 11 Mexican gray wolves were released from three holding pens on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in eastern Arizona. The objective of the reintroduction was to re-establish a wild population of at least 100 Mexican wolves.

As of July 2001, approximately 35 wolves inhabited the recovery area, with a total of 69 wolves released since March of 1998. As of the end of February 2005, the collared population consisted of 22 wolves in 10 packs, one group and three lone wolves. Based on other field data, including sightings, tracks and howling, as many as 25-30 additional wolves were assumed to be distributed among the packs and groups. But by July, the number of packs was estimated at only seven. Continued illegal kills and agency removals continue to deplete the population of what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considered “one of the world’s rarest land mammals.”

In 2001, a group of independent scientists was convened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a formal review (the Three-Year Review) of the wolf program. These experts warned that the wild population was likely to decline unless several measures were undertaken:

- Continue releases of captive wolves to the wild
- Make livestock carcasses less available to wolves
- Allow wolves to live within suitable habitat outside of the recovery area boundaries, as long as they were not creating problems.

At the time of this writing, the Bush Administration continues to direct the responsible agencies from adopting any of these recommendations.



Photo: James Frank



Wolf pelts are testament to the U.S. government extermination program at the turn of the century.



This graphic shows the benefits of returning wolves to ecosystems.

Courtesy of the Oregonian

In the meantime, new and dubious and scientifically unsupported recommendations—all at the behest of the livestock industry—have been proposed. These new proposals—which include moratoriums on new releases, bans on relocations, and a policy to kill wolves who predate on cattle if they cannot be trapped within 10 days—and their likely effects, can be found at the Grand Canyon Wildlands Council’s website: <http://www.grandcanyonwildlands.org/>. These proposed policies continue to allow ranchers to avoid taking responsibility for removing or rendering unpalatable (as with lime) the carcasses of domestic animals dead from non-wolf causes before wolves feed on them and habituate to livestock. Instead of preventing conflicts, the Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to implement even more deadly wolf control when conflicts develop.

Wolves are popular in Arizona. A recent poll of 695 randomly-selected Arizonans found that four out

of five supported letting Mexican gray wolves naturally migrate from southeastern Arizona to suitable habitat in northern Arizona, echoing the recommendations of biologists. A remarkable 86 percent said wolves bring a natural balance to the Southwestern landscape.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition encourages the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to:

- Establish priority for wolf recovery as at least co-equal with livestock grazing on public lands. Allow wolf recovery in all areas with high potential suitability for wolves. While conflicts with livestock and humans must be addressed and resolved, they should not automatically preclude wolf recovery.
- Fulfill their duty to monitor Management Indicator Species and Sensitive Species, and to take necessary action so as to prevent wolf decline and restore wolves to as much of their natural distribution and abundance as practicable.
- Assist wolf recovery by making suitable land-

scapes safe for large herbivores and carnivores through reducing road densities, restoring natural fire, implementing critical migration linkages for wildlife, and reducing grazing impacts.

- Allow for initial releases of captive-born (and wild-born if appropriate) Mexican wolves into the Gila National Forest.

- Develop operating procedures for ranchers and the federal land management agencies to share responsibility for carcass management and disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock.

Kim Crumbo is AWC’s Grand Canyon Regional Director.

Inspiration Precipitation

by Arieh Scharnberg

I awoke to the faint light of a Thursday morning accompanied by the sound of Nicole crying. I held her and the tears that rolled down her cheek onto my nose reminded me of the Arizona rain that flooded the state and, more recently, drowned my friend Brian, who was trying to canoe one of Prescott's swollen streams.

I thought to myself, "Has God ever done this for anyone?" But I quickly reminded myself that God was not a necessity in this equation, that it was Nicole and I, and that was it. Our best friend had drowned in what normally would be a welcome excess of rain. We sat together, devastated by our aloneness until Nicole had to leave for work. I fell back into a fitful sleep, finally deciding to go next door to see if my roommate Tim wanted to go backpacking.

Tim had been asked to do an inventory for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition in a totally obscure range called the Little Horn Mountains near the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge in Southwest Arizona. To the unsuspecting passerby, rocketing at 70 mph down Interstate 10, it's a desolate, anonymous, and unappealing range; one of many bypassed by the multitudes of daily travelers without more than a glimpse or a thought.

We rattled down a dirt road, which was grated into the earth a good five feet, leaving pockets that caused Tim's Mercury Sable to fishtail a little as we tried to identify plants at little less than highway speed. Eventually, I took over the wheel, without a driver's license or considerable car experience in order to navigate tricky spots while Tim moved boulders (actually small rocks that were big enough to rip off parts of the under-carriage of what he called his "No Boundaries Family Sedan"). We finally arrived at about 1:30 in the afternoon at a pull off that seemed suitable to gain access to the ridge of Little Horn Peak.

The Little Horn area is not a designated anything. It is federal land, period. Our first "trail" was to follow the wash, and from this point on through the next 3 days, words fail me when trying to encapsulate what we experienced. For those of you who have seen the bloom that occurs in the desert after record amounts of rainfall, you can understand the utter inadequacy of words to describe the beauty of what unfolded before us. My first sensation was the floral aromas surrounding us, and I thought: "What are people doing using artificial perfumes and colognes?!"

The yellow blooming brittle bush, the fruiting teddy bear cholla, purple lupine, and many plants that I can't identify made me almost want to take off my pack and roll around like I've seen dogs and llamas do when they smell something they like. We noticed so many things: the serenade of bees, seeking out a pollen-laden anther out of the multitude that carpeted the desert floor, and black basalt interrupted by white fragments of jagged limestone pebbles and perhaps welded tuft, all beneath a spread of yellow mustard flower that almost seemed to be rivaling the sun in its intensity.

"Ouch!" An intense sting interrupted my awe. I looked at my calf, and in it, like an obsequious hedgehog, was a small arm of cholla that I had kicked up with one shoe and into the leg opposite it. I sat down, got two rocks, and watched my skin rise into mounds as the little barbs on the spines hooked in underneath my flesh. I yanked the cholla with my limestone pliers, and was left with small oozing red dots. After that, I became much more aware that I was in a veritable



Atop the Little Horn Mountains.

Photo: Arieh Schatnberg

mine field of little cholla pieces that had been cast off by the parent plant in order for its offspring to take root after the recent rain.

Another amazing plant is the ocotillo. If you are not familiar with this plant, it looks much like octopus or squid tentacles pointing into the sky, with enormous thorns instead of suction cups running its length. After a rain, these thorns bloom onto broad green leaves that eventually turn red, fall off, and decompose at the base, creating a fantastic photosynthetic/nutrient-rich cycle, perfect for handling the rigors of a desert environment. I walked past a particularly full blossoming plant and had an impulse to touch its waxy green bloom. Prescott had been experiencing an unprecedented streak of snowy precipitation, and so I was unaccustomed to the mid-70's temperature of the southern Sonoran desert. So as I touched my hand to the leaves of the ocotillo, gently rubbing them between my fingers, I was hyper-aware [insert photo of ocotillo here. Photo: Mark Miller] that there was a micro-environment at the surface of the foliage several degrees cooler than the air temperature. If it weren't for some remnant thorns, I would have put my face against the plant to cool it off, but I had to be content to briefly cool my hands.

Once we were gaining the slope, we were sweating. I took a different route than Tim, and snapped some shots of the brittlebush's yellow daisy like flowers contrasting brilliantly with the basalt rock slope. We had climbed rapidly to the top of the ledge and were now several hundred feet above the valley floor. I looked out and saw a range that looked exactly like a row of wolves' teeth in profile, with a perfect canine spire in the "front," and a broken, long, but equally jagged molar in the "back," with rows of small jagged teeth, connected in many places, in the "middle." It was then that I thought of the irony—or perhaps the beauty—of my friend having drowned in the same excess of rain that had caused the very beauty I was explicitly enjoying.

We continued, every once in a while stopping to look at a new plant, such as a beaver tail prickly pear, or as we neared the summit, an agave. Some of these agaves, also known as century plants, had reached their personal century and shot up massive stocks into the sky out of their radiating green leaves. With each step I took in this apparently desolate and anonymous ridge, I became more humbled. We made camp that night on a notch overlooking an immediate valley to

our north and a distant plain to our south. In the northern distance, I-10 was Kerouac's "microscopic no-bug" crawl, semi trucks that appeared as inch worms among aphids and fleas. Our camp was intentional—an attempt to place ourselves near a water source designated on the map. I hiked over the notch for a bit, during which I caught a view of the water tank we wanted to camp near. I got an intense feeling that something lived on these dry cliff sides, but I couldn't figure out what. I hiked back up to the summit near our notch camp and told Tim that waterholes in this neck of the woods are apparently much more extensive operations than the disgusting cow ponds we were acquainted with in central Arizona. He was confused, and I began to describe that I had seen a tin roof over one pond, with propane type back up storage tanks below it. Our thoughts faded as we turned to the west to see the sun's last rays.

On our second day, after consulting a map, we began our hike down to the water facility nestled in a nook of red sandstone about 800 feet below where we spent the night. It is very hard to try and describe the awkward looking apparatus that had been constructed to collect this water, but it was quite an elaborate system of pipes, dams, pools, and tanks—elaborate to the point that Tim and I were baffled as to the function of several of its aspects. While I was sitting, reflecting next to a lower pool looking at a thick growth of aquatic plants and contemplating at least five different kinds of squirming specimens, Tim found an ammo box. From the inscription we read that the purpose of the tank was a collaborative effort of BLM, USFWS, and a few local protection agencies to promote the existence of a historic herd of desert bighorn sheep. I was right! Something did live there! We both swiftly swiveled our heads upwards, but saw nothing. We had probably been too noisy.

The hike to the top of Little Horn Peak was filled with all sorts of new species of flowers and other plants popping up as we gained elevation. I was particularly struck by the now frequent agaves, particularly the dead ones, whose century stocks had fallen long ago, leaving only the withered, radiating leaves spread out in a pattern like a blazing star on the sun scorched ground. We also flushed out a lone big horn, which clambered away from us rapidly, soon to be only a tan speck on the horizon. Once we were on the

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Wilderness Inventory: Not Just for Experts Anymore

by Jason Williams

Bouncing down a dry and lonesome dirt road, you and your inventory partner had your eyes peeled for the next vehicle intrusion into the potential wilderness area you are inventorying, but you forgot to look ahead and didn't see the wash crossing that you just drove into like you were racing in the Baja 1000. You lurch forward and knock your head on the rearview mirror, Willie Nelson's *Redheaded Stranger* hums over the truck speakers, and you can barely see through the windshield because it's covered with dust and your dash is covered with maps.

In reality, driving every last road in the backcountry is only a part of the wilderness inventory process, but an absolutely essential one. The presence or



Wilderness inventory trips give volunteers plenty of time to enjoy wide open space and solitude. Photo: Scott Koch

absence of roads is normally where debate occurs between the various interested publics and elected and non-elected officials, so having a complete and thorough inventory of the roads in an area help all of us defend those special places—hopefully, with better information than anyone else.

In addition to finding an absence of roads, wilderness inventory also aims to document the primitive and natural character that abounds in all roadless areas. One can reach these wild gems by leaving the paved or rough 4x4 road behind and relying on two things: feet. Inventory is about taking people for hikes, watching birds early in the morning, finding a 1,000-year-old Native American site, or simply enjoying a quiet place to sit and write. You don't have to know a GPS unit like the back of your hand. Inventories can be completed by anyone who knows how or wants to learn to read a topographic map and experience the beauty and tranquility of Arizona's backcountry.

Documenting these wilderness characteristics is done using topographic maps, a camera, some paper and pencil, and if you have one, a GPS unit. The information gets collected on simple forms that volunteers fill out as they go. We normally start by making sure the area is five thousand acres in size and roadless. This means the bouncing in the truck part, but you don't have to listen to Willie Nelson. I normally recommend combining the road inventory with wilderness character inventory. This means you drive a segment of the boundary and then use the other half or more of your day to go on a hike into the area and document the solitude, naturalness, or the outstanding primitive recreation opportunities found there.

Wilderness inventories are the starting point for advocating for the protection of special wild places left in Arizona. Inventories include listing wild and primitive attributes of a tract of land, mapping any trails or dirt tracks, marking the location of archaeological sites, and noting the abundance of certain plant and animal life in the area. If the area and its characteristics warrant special protection, the field information is then compiled into a formal wilderness proposal for that area. The proposals are submitted to the relevant land management agency for consideration and interim protection so that these places stay wild until Congress can act to designate them as federal wilderness. The agencies don't always agree with wilderness recommendations, so it is often left to volunteer activists, like yourselves, working with the Arizona Wilderness Coalition and its partners to make sure nothing happens to degrade the wilderness character of these lands. Hopefully, in time, with lots of persistence we will have support from a local Congressional representative to sponsor a wilderness bill to permanently protect the lands we have inventoried. In the meantime, we build local support by meeting with local officials, leading hikes, and giving presentations.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is the document that guides our inventory efforts, as it clearly outlines three types of mandatory characteristics and one set of sup-

plemental characteristics that we look for in a potential wilderness area. The mandatory characteristics are naturalness, opportunities for outstanding solitude or primitive recreation, roadlessness, and a size of at least five thousand acres of roadless land. The Wilderness Act defines supplemental characteristics for an area as: may also contain ecological, geological, or other fea-



Volunteers help AWC on a service project trip to Pine Mountain earlier this summer. Photo: Jason Williams

tures of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Often times these supplemental features are what make an area special but they are often overlooked by the agencies.

If you are new to exploring Arizona's wild lands or are an old hand at tromping around on our public lands, you should consider coming out to one of our many wilderness inventory trips. Every outing is a training run where people of all abilities are welcome; normally we will group people that have experience with those who need some training.

Our wilderness inventory outings can consist of day trips, overnight car camping trips, or backpacking into some more remote areas. Many of our dedicated staff and volunteers that organize these events have years of experience camping and hiking and are very willing to help those with less experience. I, for one, am always very excited to show someone how to read a map, set up a tent, or even decide what kind of hiking shoes to buy. I have been known to make better meals in the backcountry than at home, and if that isn't true, at least I am willing to do the dishes!

Check out our list of events or give me a call to ask about our wilderness adopter program. Fall and winter is a great time to be out in the wilds of Arizona.

Jason Williams
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Jason Williams is the AWC Central Mountains-Sonoran Regional Director, based at Prescott College.



Is this a road? Inventory in the Coyote Peak area, east of the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo: Chris Kopeck

Saving the Best of the Rest

by Tyler Kokjohn

“There is no way this qualifies as wilderness. To meet wilderness designation criteria, tracts must be remote and gigantic.” Those were my first thoughts as Jason Williams described a portion of the Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) that the Arizona Wilderness Coalition needed someone to assess for its wilderness character. Although the parcel Jason identified—roughly bounded by Silver Creek, Indian Creek and the Tonto National Forest—appeared roadless and looked like it would meet the 5,000-acre requirement, my enthusiasm was limited knowing that Interstate 17, electric power transmission lines, and the town of Cordes Junction were all plainly visible from many sections of the Monument. When I adopted this parcel for the Coalition, it was with the certainty that the sole benefit was to provide me with a convenient excuse to explore a new corner of the Monument.



Petroglyphs remind us of the ancient people who lived around Agua Fria. Photo: Dr. Tyler Kokjohn

Viewing the mesa with the eyes of a wilderness advocate, only minutes were needed for me to realize that the parcel possessed the key features of primitiveness, sense of solitude, and untrammelled nature needed to secure a Congressional wilderness designation. Although the grass-covered mesa offers wide-open spaces and long vistas, the varied elevations and scattered juniper growth can easily conceal persons in close proximity. In some reaches any evidence of roads, power lines or other alterations are all but invisible. Some potent topography is packed into this small corner of the Monument. Descending the gulches and deep canyons leaves a visitor in total solitude and fully engulfed by wild land.

Untrammelled lands are a rare and vanishing resource in this country and they intrinsically deserve protection, but the Indian Creek parcel offers us still more. Like Perry Mesa to the south, relics and ruins of a vanished prehistoric civilization are abundant in the Indian Creek area. Although my colleagues and I have assessed only about 15-20% of the parcel to date, this small section harbors significant archaeological resources.

With Agua Fria National Monument's land and cultural resources already afforded substantial federal protection, is wilderness protection for the Indian Creek area—roughly 7% of the Monument holdings—worth



Ruins like this one abound in Agua Fria National Monument.

Photo: Dr. Tyler Kokjohn

the effort? The AFNM will soon be surrounded by a burgeoning population growing north from Phoenix, with perhaps less connection to the natural world, traditional uses of the land, and Arizona prehistory than ever before. These impending regional changes will inevitably spawn new management challenges and increased demands to exploit Monument resources. Designating the Indian Creek parcel as wilderness would ensure future citizens have the opportunity to experience an active encounter with their cultural history in its full, natural context. Granting our increasingly urbanized and digitized future descendants a chance to experience a bit of the real past may be the most far-sighted action we will undertake today.



A shell pendant found on Perry Mesa indicates a complex system of trade these ancient residents had with inhabitants of coastal regions to the west and south.

Photo: Dr. Tyler Kokjohn

Although the Indian Creek parcel is deceptively small and in close proximity to a major urban area, it offers outstanding wilderness qualities, encompasses significant natural and cultural resources, and by virtue of location, has an enormous future potential to captivate visitors. As Arizona Wilderness Coalition members participate in land use planning efforts and develop wilderness designation proposals, perhaps the Indian Creek experience will remind us to stay flexible and alert when new opportunities emerge to save the best of the rest.

Tyler Kokjohn is Professor of Microbiology at Midwestern University. He is also an AWC wilderness adopter and Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument member.

The Patient Path to Wilderness Success

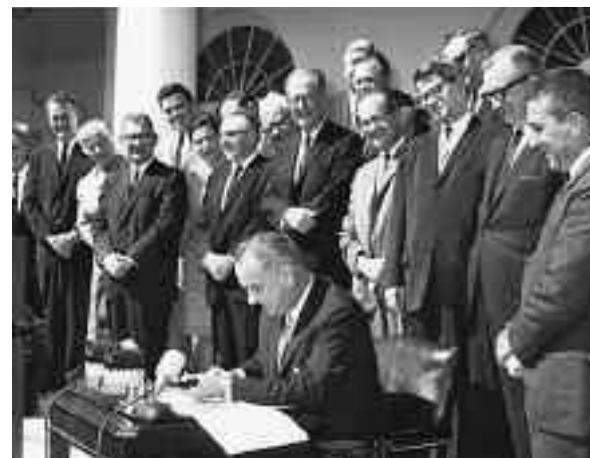
by Doug Scott

Securing lasting preservation of a wilderness area—statutory protection under the Wilderness Act—requires congressional approval. This can take a matter of a few years if the proposal is not locally controversial, has the support of the administering agency and local elected officials, and will be championed by your members of Congress. But getting all of those conditions in place can take years (and sometimes even decades) when the issues are complex, there is significant opposition, and local elected officials and your congressional delegation are not yet ready to express support.

The authors of the Wilderness Act, who were leaders of our movement, understood that requiring congressional approval for each new wilderness area would involve sometimes difficult political circumstances. Yet they felt statutory protection for wilderness, with all of its demonstrated strength, would be worth the effort you and I must put into it. They knew from hard experience that “protection” of wilderness areas that relies only on agency decisions or plans can be all too easily changed (and often are). Once a wilderness area has been designated by Congress, those who might want to cut back the boundary or weaken protective provisions will face the burden of passing legislation. The power of the Wilderness Act is that it uses the build-in inertia of Congress to protect against unjustified changes.

Congress is enacting new wilderness designations these days; in July the U.S. Senate unanimously approved four bills totaling nearly half a million acres in New Mexico, California, Washington, and Puerto Rico. All had Bush administration support. All “take delivery” on years of patient, strategic work by grassroots wilderness groups. And that has been the story of every Arizona wilderness success, too. The constituency and partnership building work the Arizona Wilderness Coalition and local groups are pursuing in the campaign for the Tumacacori Highlands wilderness proposal—and all across your state—continues this proven pattern.

Doug Scott is policy director for Campaign for America's Wilderness. For more on the history and politics of wilderness protection, check out Doug's book *The Enduring Wilderness: Protecting Our Natural Heritage through the Wilderness Act* (Fulcrum Publishing, 2004).



President Johnson signs the Wilderness Act into law in the Rose Garden.

Photo: National Park Service Archives

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

In the Weeds

by Don Hoffman

This summer the AWC teamed up with the Tucson-based Sky Island Alliance to survey the Blue River for the presence of tamarisk (also known as salt cedar), an exotic species that can be devastating to our native river habitats. We selected this project so we could help the U.S. Forest Service understand the current level of infestation and to help develop a control strategy for this overwhelming species. We also appreciated this rare opportunity to work with a rural community where we share a common goal of healing an ecological wound.

The Blue River runs through the heart of the Blue Range Primitive Area – one of our most cherished wild places nestled along Arizona's eastern border with New Mexico. It is where I had the privilege of spending an entire Forest Service career as a wilderness manager. It's also a place where large predators including mountain lions, bears, and wolves still play a natural role in



Grove of saltcedar/tamarisk along Colorado River near Fruta.

Photo: William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International

ecosystem functions. In this relatively unspoiled condition, the Blue Range deserves to remain wild.

Part of keeping wild places wild is to control exotic species from displacing native species. Tamarisk was imported from the Middle East in the 1800's to be used throughout the West as an ornamental shrub and for erosion control. It has the capability of bringing salts up from the water table and depositing them on the soil – often making soils so saline that only tamarisk can grow there. Where willows, walnuts, cottonwoods, and sycamores once shaded our streams, tamarisk can completely take over. In addition to reducing the diversity of vegetation, studies show that overall biological species diversity is diminished when tamarisk displaces native vegetation: fewer species of insects, fewer birds, and fewer mammals including deer and elk.

Over Memorial Day weekend, more than 40 volunteers came to the Blue River to survey the upper portion of the riparian area – along the river road that serves a small rural community. Armed with GPS units and clipboards, we divided into teams and systematically inspected the entire riparian corridor on public land. With so many volunteers, the work went quickly and the good news is that only a 16 tamarisk plants were found along the upper 18 miles of the Blue River. We also enjoyed a fun weekend of camping, potlucks, campfires, and even an outdoor slideshow.

On another extended weekend in June, we divided

into two smaller teams to survey the unroaded portion of the Blue Range. I worked with volunteers Tim Flood, Karen Lowery, and Malcolm and Lori Ryder surveying downstream from the end of the road. Trevor Hare, George Carlisle, Jason Williams and Jen Dinaberg started at the lower end and surveyed upstream. The first day we surveyed 4-5 miles while backpacking which tested our stamina scrambling up and down the stream banks in the summer heat. On the second day, we left camp behind and surveyed an additional 4+ miles. With a heroic effort, the two crews completed their routes to the historic HU Bar homestead and then marched back to camp just before dark.

As expected the incidence of Tamarisk was much higher than what was found on the upper Blue River survey over Memorial Day weekend. For instance, on the 9-mile stretch that our team surveyed in June, we found 87 plant locations with 635 individual plants.

The other team found similar amounts. While this sounds like a lot of tamarisk, it was very apparent that native species are still dominating within the riparian zone. Also, the current level of infestation should allow the Forest Service to consider a feasible eradication strategy.

We still have about 9 miles left to survey to complete the entire main stem of the Blue River to the confluence with the San Francisco River. We will be scheduling an additional volunteer weekend this fall (after the temperatures start to cool down!).

I have truly enjoyed this project. It has been great traveling back through the wild core of the Blue Range– like visiting a dear old friend. I have also enjoyed getting to know and to work with so many new friends from the

AWC and SIA volunteer corps. I also feel very confident that we will be providing the Forest Service with solid information that will be useful in developing a tamarisk control strategy for the Blue River.

Don Hoffman is Executive Director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition and lives on the Blue River.



Mitchell White, plant ecologist with the US Forest Service, explains how to spot tamarisk to volunteers on a survey trip in the Blue Range Primitive Area.

Photo: Don Hoffman

Get Out There

AWC volunteers are needed to help staff our booth at many of these events.

Tamarisk Survey, Lower Blue River, Eastern Arizona's White Mountains, November 11-13

This will be a backpacking trip into the lower Blue River to finish surveys started this summer. It should be beautiful this time of year, no bugs, crisp evenings perfect for campfires, and warm days. This is on the holiday weekend for Veteran's Day so we will try to leave our meeting location around noon on Friday and return to the cars around 3pm on Sunday. For information and directions, contact Jason Williams at jwilliams@azwild.org - 928-717-6076

Roadless Inventory Weekend, December 3-4

Location to be determined. Please e-mail or call for more details tim_craig90@hotmail.com 928-717-6076

Restoration Project with the Bureau of Land Management, February 18-19, 2006

Location to be determined. Contact Jason Williams, 928-717-6076, jwilliams@azwild.org.

Tres Rios Nature Festival, March 11-12, 2006

Celebrating the natural history and heritage of the Southwest Valley. Visit <http://www.tresriosnaturefestival.com> for more information.

5th Annual Yuma Birding & Nature Festival, April 20-22, 2006

The 5th annual Yuma Birding & Nature Festival celebrates the diversity of the lower Colorado River with field trips and educational seminars throughout the days. The festival offers a trade show at the Shilo Inn to showcase services and products to over 1,000 consumers interested in wildlife watching and nature activities. Sponsorships and indoor vendor spaces are available. Visit www.yumabirding.org for more information about the festival.

Verde Valley Nature and Birding Festival, April 27-30, 2006

This rich birding corridor in the center of Arizona hosts its annual festival with guided walks, workshops, tours, trail rides, train rides, presentations, song and scenery. There will be educational opportunities for the whole family, the opportunity to see what's new in the birding world, and excursions of interest to experienced and novice birders and outdoor enthusiasts. Visit <http://www.birdyverde.org/> for more information.

Ongoing Field Work:

We also have students and staff in the field almost every week and weekend doing various projects and inventory. If you are interested in going out in this more informal setting please call or e-mail jwilliams@azwild.org – 928-717-6076. We will be scheduling various other outings during the next six months, so keep your eye on our website and sign up for action alerts by e-mail. Always feel free to call and find out what you can do to help protect Arizona's wilderness on your next outing.

Monarchs of the Forest

by Erica Ryberg

The Prescott National Forest (PNF) harbors a helter-skelter diversity of plants, from the saguaros of Black Canyon to dinosaur pockets of aspen adorning the Bradshaws. People in Prescott have an equally diverse array of perspectives regarding the surrounding forest and its value, be it fiscal or aesthetic.

Among the oldest and most beautiful plants in the PNF are mature alligator junipers (*Juniperus deppeana*), also known as monarch junipers—stumpy, gnarled creatures whose trunks are wider than a man and whose crowns are half silver and half deep green. The really big ones are ancient, the oldest in the PNF being 1,800 years old, according to Doug Hulmes, Professor of Environmental Studies at Prescott College.

“The alligator juniper is the sequoia of the Prescott National Forest,” Hulmes says.

Hulmes has been a passionate champion of monarch alligator junipers for years. He became concerned about their protection after management

mishaps and poaching destroyed several millennium-old trees.

He described the theft and “murder” of a colleague’s favorite tree by poachers who had to cut down several ponderosas in order to get a truck in to haul off the juniper’s fragrant wood.

“I’ve seen the stumps of cut-down trees that indicate they were more than a thousand years old,” he says. “Those trees were around since the Anasazi period, until they were cut down by people who don’t have a clue how old they are.”

According to PNF Forest Health Program Leader Gary Wittman, the juniper poaching problem has plagued the PNF for quite some time. “It seems like it’s just part of the game. We really don’t have that many law enforcement people and to really catch poachers in the act is difficult,” Wittman says.

Wittman relayed the story of a rare occasion when the Forest Service managed to catch juniper poachers red-handed. “A couple of years ago, some older kids

were out hiking when they noticed some people cutting juniper. They told their mother, who called us. The Forest Service people went out a couple mornings and they caught them.”

According to Wittman, the poachers chose hours when rangers weren’t likely to be working, cutting the wood in the morning, and coming back in the evenings to collect it.

“If we find [fresh] stumps and we can dedicate the time for stakeouts, then we do catch them,” Wittman says.

While poaching a monarch juniper is considered a major offense, the increased fines, usually less than \$500, have little sting, especially to commercial poachers. “If you’re selling a lot of fuel wood and you get caught, it’s not a deterrent,” Wittman says.

Frequently, poachers take only part of the tree. The sculptural growth habits of the junipers produce smooth, dead branches that mingle with those still covered by the tell-tale squares of living bark. They branch close to the ground, sending out mature ponderosa-sized limbs that make for easy cutting, leaving telltale scars as wide as three feet in diameter.

According to David Thornburg, who registers the trees he seeks with the National Register of Big Trees in Washington, this practice is far more widespread than cutting whole trees. “We find a lot of them that people have cut dead limbs off of, but that’s illegal too,” Thornburg says. “I think that for most wood cutters, if the tree is much larger than three feet in diameter, they don’t cut it. I think there are too many easier ones to take.”

The practice used to be legal. Up until about 20 years ago, the PNF authorized the harvesting of dead juniper branches as part of its dead-and-down program, but the practice was outlawed as its effect on the trees became apparent, both in decreasing important habitat and in the appearance of the tree itself. “Finally, we said, ‘ok, this isn’t working,’” Wittman says. “You’d have these trees with just a tuft of green up high.”

Despite being illegal, the practice has continued both on national forest and private land. Over the years, ranchers and residents around Williamson Valley and Chino Valley have watched their trees slowly deconstruct.

Judy Lewis, who lives near Table Mountain, watched the degradation of a monarch juniper on her land. A giant standing in the midst of well-drained savanna, the tree was home for years to a giant horned owl. According to Lewis, a man she describes as “a rogue cowboy” cut the tree a piece at a time until she put a stop to it. “I thought he had been the one who’d been chewing on it and then he came to me and said, ‘I’ll come and take that tree off your hands.’ I said, ‘Over my dead body.’”

Lewis says that the temptation to cut the tree, now reduced to a single limb soaring 35 feet above the ground at an odd angle, remains. “I still get people coming by all the time who offer to cut down our tree for us,” she says.

Despite suffering poaching, the trees have paradoxically enjoyed a peculiar sort of protection. Apart from fuel wood, they have no commercial use, being too diffuse to harvest easily and too short for building material.

“It’s not a good lumber species,” says Gary Wittman. “When the heavy logging occurred in the late 1800’s, juniper wasn’t what they were looking for.



Located up a closed road, this tree lost several limbs to a poacher. Not so long ago, according to Professor Doug Hulmes, “It was a beautiful rounded canopy tree.” Photo: Doug Hulmes

What they were looking for was timber to build their mining towns.”

David Thornburg says that while qualifying junipers as champions might be difficult (girth, an important factor, must be measured four feet off the ground, where many alligators have already begun to branch), there is no shortage of possible candidates.

“There are quite a few big junipers. If you live in Prescott, you can get up on these ridges and find a lot of them that are six feet in diameter. We have three co-champions, and we’re still trying to find larger ones,” he says.

In the world of big trees, alligator junipers truly are the reigning monarch species. Of the 88 champions that Arizona claims (a large number of champions—according to David Thornburg, only California and Florida have more), only two native trees, the Arizona cottonwood and sycamore, claim more points for size than the three *Juniperus deppeana* co-champions on the registry.

Hence, after years of logging and forestry on public lands, the alligator juniper, a tree ignored as an economically useless, watershed-draining plant, has indeed come out a survivor. Having escaped the fate visited upon their more economically viable relatives, celebrated juniper specimens grow up to 65 feet high, 76 feet around the crown, and trunks that are 27 feet around.

Regardless, much of the Forest Service’s management of alligator junipers centers on killing those that encroach on rangeland or impact groundwater supplies, in which case, eradication is the order of the day. The Forest Service even advocates creating new open grassland. This, despite a statement in the Forest Service’s own profile of the tree (available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/jundep/all.html>), which suggests that large junipers actually encourage an increase in grass growth and improve rangeland.

Yet the obsession with their removal continues. “Most of the literature surrounding junipers discusses what types of herbicides kill them,” Hulmes says.

Alligator junipers are officially neither endangered nor threatened. According to both Thornburg and Wittman, once a juniper gets too big to be easily cut, they acquire a default sort of protection.

“A lot of people’s chainsaws just don’t have a bar long enough to cut [monarch junipers]. I think once they get to that size, they’re fairly safe,” Wittman says. “They’re pretty much protected.”

Doug Hulmes disagrees. Though it is illegal to cut live alligator juniper trees in the national forest without specific approval and permits, the reality is that Forest Service lacks the law enforcement manpower to enforce the prohibition.

Another problem is the issue of accessibility. For the most part, poachers cut trees close to forest roads. According to Hulmes, the tree poachers on Mingus Mountain, who cut down a favorite ancient monarch, followed a closed road to where they carved their own truck path to cut the huge juniper. Designating more roadless areas might ostensibly help protect some trees, but then there’s that lack of manpower issue again: it’s futile for Forest Service to decree a road closed if they can’t enforce it.

“They drove around a road closure sign to cut down trees several hundred yards beyond it,” Hulmes says. “Obviously, signs and dirt berms aren’t deterring tree cutters.”

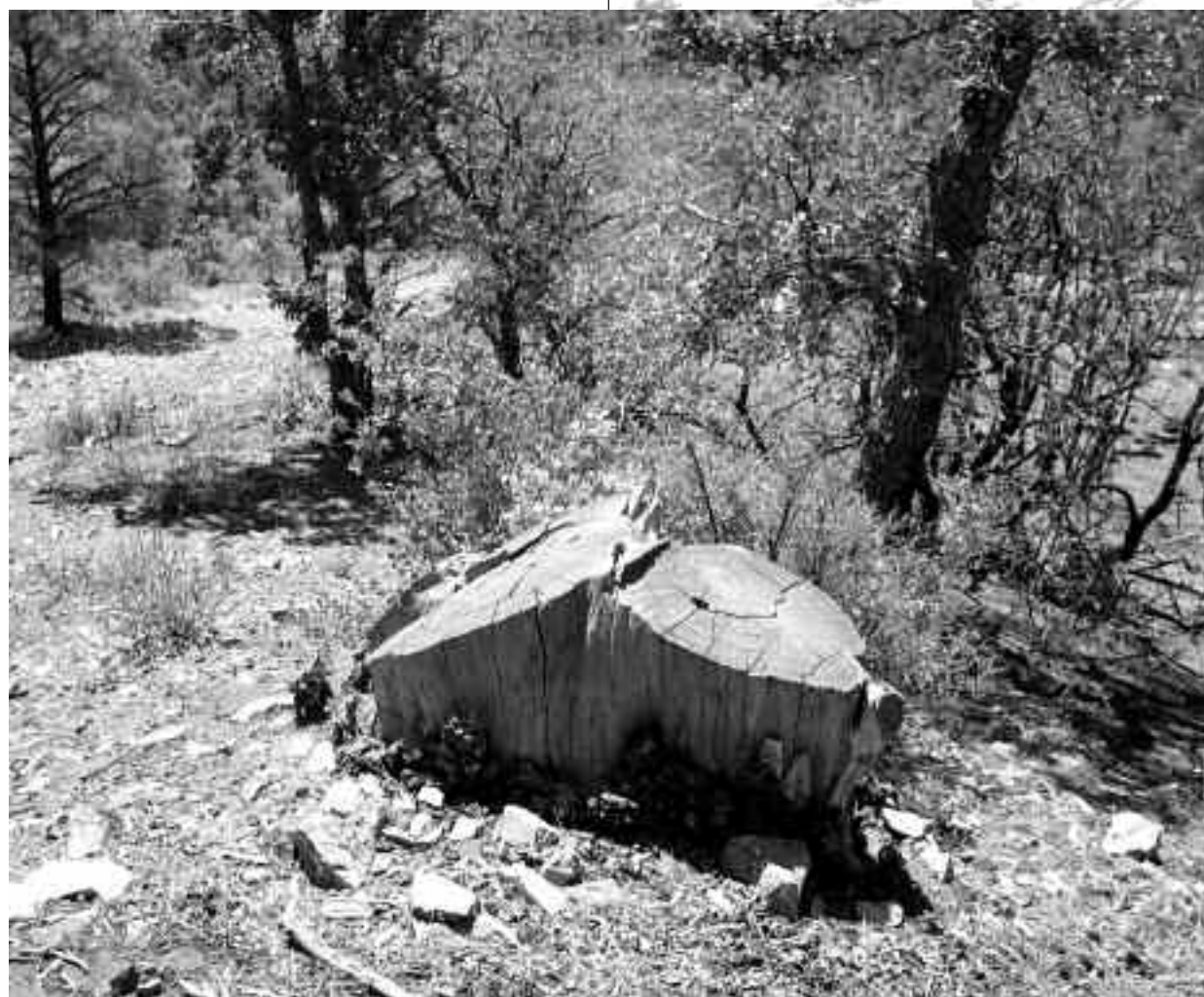
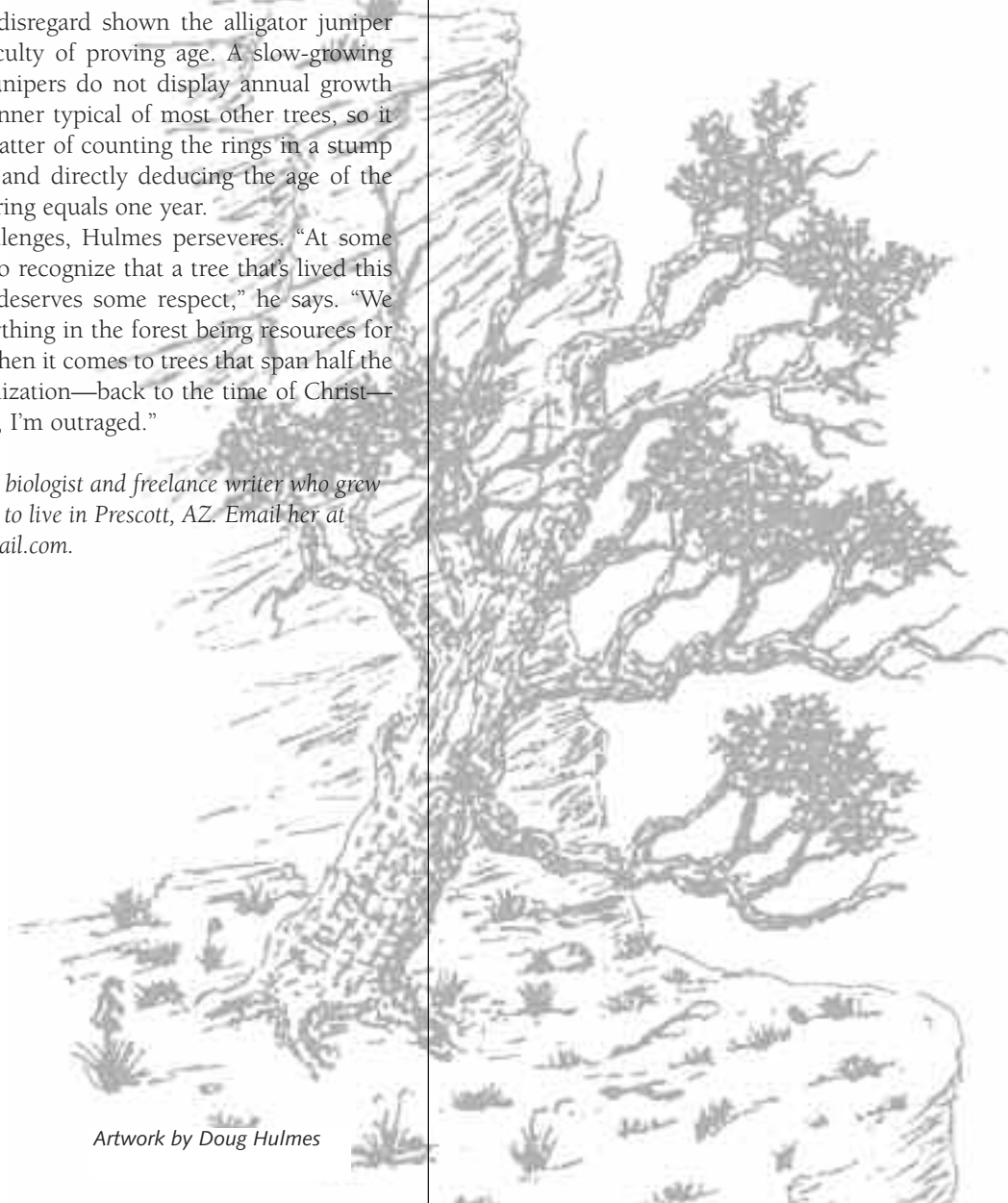
According to Hulmes, while trees in other parts of the country that are half as old as many monarch alligator junipers have been given protection, the monarchs on the PNF are still being cut and burned for firewood. Until the Forest Service has the will and human resources to enforce existing laws to protect these ancient beings, roadless areas and wilderness are

their best hope. “When 200 year old trees in Washington D.C. have plaques, it’s incredible that ancient alligator junipers aren’t even protected,” he says.

Part of the disregard shown the alligator juniper lies in the difficulty of proving age. A slow-growing tree, alligator junipers do not display annual growth rings in the manner typical of most other trees, so it isn’t a simple matter of counting the rings in a stump or core sample and directly deducing the age of the tree where one ring equals one year.

Despite challenges, Hulmes perseveres. “At some point we have to recognize that a tree that’s lived this length of time deserves some respect,” he says. “We talk about everything in the forest being resources for us to use. But when it comes to trees that span half the time of our civilization—back to the time of Christ—being cut down, I’m outraged.”

Erica Ryberg is a biologist and freelance writer who grew up and continues to live in Prescott, AZ. Email her at erica.ryberg@gmail.com.



Poachers cut this 300-year old tree, leaving a withering stump as evidence.

Photo: Doug Hulmes

Doing the Right Thing

Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing.

John D. Rockefeller

by Katurah Mackay

With newshounds sniffing around every new corporate scandal these days (think Enron, Tyco, Halliburton, Martha Stewart—the list goes on), it's refreshing to get a glimpse of a company trying to do something right. It's even more astounding when a business is trying to better the environment and the community it serves.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition understands that corporate interests benefit when ensuring that their operations, product lines, and resources look out for the environment. After all, employees and customers alike appreciate a clean, healthy community in which to live and work. More telling is a recent trend documented by the Sonoran Institute in Tucson that shows an increasing number of businesses are moving their operations and headquarters out of major cities to places where their employees want to live. Right Now Technologies in Bozeman, Montana; Print for Less Brokerage in Livingston, Montana; Snap Media Works in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; IBM Microelectronics, Burlington, Vermont—all located within a short drive to magnificent public lands and outdoor recreation. With the advent of telecommuting and powerful software, employees can live and work in more rural areas while receiving the same high paying salary they would glean in metropolitan areas.

Communities with lots of protected open space, clean water, access to the outdoors, and other environmental amenities are at the top of many employee lists. Protecting natural beauty and healthy ecosystems can then be viewed as a foresighted development strategy. So besides luring employees with beautiful natural surroundings, what else can businesses do to show their interest in healthy landscapes?

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition is jumpstarting a new program to encourage businesses to support wilderness conservation around the state. The reasons are many. Recent studies, polls, and outreach show a high percentage of Arizona residents support protection of wild lands in their state. Active promotion of businesses that support wilderness protection will help further AWC's mission to raise awareness and reach out to new members. In turn, it will help payoff the participating businesses with positive public relations and customer and employee loyalty.

The program would function as follows:

- For a set business membership fee, businesses small and large can join the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.
- Participating business members will be grouped together in a directory on AWC's website, with active links and descriptions of their enterprise, so that web visitors can research and patronize services, retailers, and food/lodging vendors who support conservation.
- Each month, the AWC newsletter will feature a story on a participating business that has supported wilderness efforts in some part of the state. The features will vary geographically and by service.
- Participating businesses and their employees will be invited to join or sponsor service projects, special events, and public outreach campaigns with the Coalition.

On the Ground Support

There are already many businesses in Arizona that are doing their part to support wilderness protection

efforts in their corner of the state. Roberta Stabel, a retired real estate executive from Tubac and an active member of the Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands (FOTH), has been working to help galvanize business support for the Tumacacori wilderness proposal in her community. She successfully met with more than 60 business owners in Tubac to explain the proposal to them, invite them to ask questions and come to meetings, and request their formal support of the proposal. Because of the tremendous value and customer appeal businesses saw in protecting such rich natural and cultural heritage right in their backyards, the Tubac Chamber of Commerce voted unanimously to support wilderness for the Tumacacoris—a spectacular roadless swath of madreaan-pine oak woodlands stretching for nearly 85,000 acres 40 miles south of Tucson. For other businesses and services supporting the Tumacacori wilderness proposal, go to www.tumacacoriwild.org.

Hunting for Wilderness

From his office in Queen Creek, where farmland disappears against a rising tide of new suburban townhomes outside Phoenix, Robert Frost owns and operates a hunting-guide service, taking city-jaded men and women for a breath of fresh air in Arizona's wild backcountry. Diablo Canyon Outfitters gives hunters a chance to get away from the rest of the public, says Frost, and experience a traditional hunting experience—a rarity in the West these days.

"I like hunting in the wilderness," Frost says. "It's a lot more challenging and a much quieter atmosphere out there without the rest of humanity around." Frost will take his clients on rigorous hikes to reach a particularly prime wilderness hunting ground, and his persistence pays off. His business is known for its elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and bear hunts around the state.

Frost says about 35-40% of his hunting trips take place in designated wilderness. "I explain the difference to my clients between regular forest land and wilderness, and they usually have a worthwhile time out there."

To pack out his loads, Frost uses an Alaskan pack frame, which attaches to his torso like a backpack with a convenient shelf for carrying more weight. He also relies on horses to help with the load when hunting in wilderness.

"I really wish more national forests would protect their acreage as wilderness," Frost says. "It's unbelievable how many forest units out there have roads just crisscrossing right through them. But just because they designate land as federal wilderness

doesn't mean you can't get in there to hike, hunt, or do whatever to enjoy it."

Frost says he's been hunting since 1977 and comes from a long line of backcountry expert hunters. His family moved to Arizona from Wisconsin when his dad retired from the restaurant business.

"This is something in life I really enjoy. It's all I do for 7 months of the year, and I wouldn't think of spending my time any other way," says Frost.

Katurah Mackay is the Communications Director for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

Become a Business for Wilderness

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition encourages its members and readers to seek out businesses that support conservation efforts and the goals of wilderness protection in Arizona and around the country. Watch for our statewide list of supportive businesses on our website (www.azwild.org) so you can patronize wilderness-friendly retailers, services, and accommodations at home and when on the road.

For more information on the Coalition's Business for Wilderness Program, or to nominate your business for inclusion in our next newsletter, contact Katurah Mackay, kmackay@azwild.org.



Clients of Diablo Canyon Outfitters finish a hunt in the Sierra Ancha Wilderness.

Photo: Diablo Canyon Outfitters



Roadless: A Righteous Path

Roadless areas (referred to by the conservation community as “IRAs” Inventoried Roadless Areas) comprise 58.5 million acres—about 30%—of National Forest lands throughout the United States. Scientists find that roadless areas belonging to the U.S. Forest Service are some of the most important natural areas in the nation, and that their status as roadless areas could have lasting and far-reaching effects for biodiversity conservation around the world.

According to the Forest Service, roadless areas function as biological strongholds and places of refuge for many animal species—from wide-ranging large mammals, such as grizzly bears, to narrowly distributed bird species, and other small animals such as

people in the United States.

Moreover, the quality of fishing and hunting is superior in roadless areas. When roads divide large landscapes into smaller patches, populations become isolated from each other, reducing genetic mixing necessary for species diversity and health. Negative effects of roads on wildlife habitat include loss of large trees and logs needed by cavity dependent birds and mammals, direct and indirect species mortality, and reductions in breeding productivity.

In Arizona, where hot forest fires have endangered many families and destroyed thousands of acres, roadless areas actually serve as forest fire deterrents. According to the Forest Service, approximately 12 million acres of National Forests are at risk of fire, while about 300,000 acres—less than three percent—of roadless forests are at risk.

Roadless areas, generally devoid of houses, buildings and other installations, also provide the best opportunities for allowing wildfire to play a more natural role within ecosystems. For instance, in eastern Arizona numerous fires have been allowed to burn in the Blue Range Primitive Area and surrounding roadless lands. Since 1979, some areas have burned as many as five separate times similar to what was once the frequency of natural fire. As a result, there is a diverse mosaic of vegetation associations through that area and it is one of the only places in the state where young stands of aspen are regenerating. Further, roaded and degraded forests often lack the natural resiliency to insect outbreaks, as logged areas tend to be deficient in the genetic stamina needed to fend off pestilence.

In January of 2001, Bill Clinton imposed a uniform ban on road development for 58.5 million acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) throughout the National Forest System in the United States. Dubbed the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, it was enacted following more than two decades of broad debate and three years of official review and public participation. More Americans took part in this rule-making process than in any other federal rule making in history. The U.S. Forest Service received a record-breaking 1.7 million official comments: five times more comments than in any other federal rulemaking

process in its history. More than 95% of these comments supported the strongest possible protection for all of our nation’s remaining roadless areas.

However, in May 2005, the Department of Agriculture under the Bush Administration announced a new rule creating a process that replaces Clinton’s administrative road development ban and instead requires the governors of each state to petition for protection of our IRAs in order to prevent road building and unwanted development. This new plan encourages public input, but once the petitions are submitted, governors’ proposals can be both modified and overridden by the U.S. Forest Service. Thus, while

appearing to give forest management an element of local control, Bush’s plan inherently undermines the states’ ability to protect their remaining roadless lands.

The 58.5 million acres in question cover just 2% of the total United States land base, and are some of the last remaining truly wild lands in this country. If the inventoried roadless areas documented under the Clinton Administration were combined with existing wilderness areas, the western forests would contain 34 of the 45 largest contiguous areas of strictly protected forests in the United States. As it stands, congressionally designated Wilderness currently protects only about one-third of the 35 ecoregions within the lower 48 states. Roadless areas further safeguard ecoregions not already represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

A prime example is the Tumacacori Highlands area located on the Coronado National Forest in southeast Arizona. The Highlands area is a vast tract of roadless land that contains an exceptional intermingling of subtropical and northern plant and animal species, many of which are found nowhere else in the United States. These mountains host to more than 50 sensitive species—one of the highest concentrations in the state—and abundant wildlife habitat, especially for white-tailed deer and javelinas, with mountain lions, black bears, bobcats, and the occasional jaguar. The area is also prized for bird-watching, attracting tourists from all over the world to gaze upon the yellow-billed cuckoos, elegant trogons, Mexican spotted owls, and gray hawks. A large threat to this landscape is overuse and fragmentation due to the rapid expansion of the Santa Cruz River Valley to make way for vacation homes, high-density housing, and industrial uses—all which require roads and ensuing infrastructure. Roadless area protection does not necessarily restrict development, but it does deflect ill-conceived proposals to more appropriate locations.

While the federal lands are the nation’s best hope for maintaining relatively intact ecosystems, the extensive roads network on public lands exceeds 400,000 miles—enough to circum-navigate the globe more than 16 times. Coupled with the value that roadless areas provide in ecological services, open spaces, and quality of life amenities, a strategy that truly protects roadless areas is an investment both in sound conservation and a sustainable economy. The best policy is to protect them from additional exploitation—a challenging, but righteous goal.

At the time of this writing, conservationists—including the Arizona Wilderness Coalition—are working with Arizona’s governor to protect the state’s remaining inventoried roadless areas. We are fortunate



Roadless wild lands help protect clean waterways and important riparian areas.

Photo: Kim Crumbo

snails. Nationwide, these roadless areas provide habitat for, or affect, more than 220 threatened, endangered, and proposed species, and 1,930 sensitive species.

Within Arizona alone, there are currently 71 species of plants and animals that are listed as threatened, endangered, or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. For some species with only a few remaining populations, the strict and permanent protection of National Forest roadless areas may represent their final, critical refuge. Roadless areas also protect more than 2,000 major watersheds, contributing to clean public water sources for more than 60 million



Roadless areas, like the Blue Range Primitive Area, are prime hunting grounds in Arizona.

Photo: Robert Frost



The Tumacacori Highlands in the Sky Islands region is the largest remaining roadless area left unprotected in Arizona.

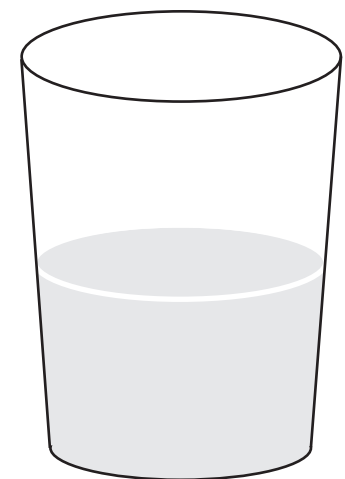
Photo: Matt Skroch

We Want to Hear from You!

Please send us your letters-to-the-editor about any of the issues you see covered in *Arizona Wild*. Your feedback is critical to how we address issues and accomplish our work for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Ranting and raving is acceptable. Please send your letters to azwild@azwild.org, or mail it to the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, 3305 N. 25th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85016. Thanks, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Did you Know?

Forests supply more than 50% of the fresh water sources in the lower 48 states, providing drinking water for some 180 million residents.



to have a Governor who listens and who recognizes the value of protecting our roadless areas. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, so AWC members please stay tuned to this issue and plan to attend public meetings this fall and winter to advocate for protecting our remaining roadless areas in Arizona.

Kim Crumbo, Sarah Swartzentruber, and Katurah Mackay contributed to this article. For a full research paper on the benefits of roadless areas to our forests, visit www.azwild.org.

Inspiration Precipitation

continued from page 5

peak, we were breathing hard, but immediately, even between heaves, we noticed the patterns of vegetation in the washes far below us and, in the distance, a truly fantastic carpet of yellow flowers in the far off bajada.

I closed my eyes, then opened them, closed them, then opened them, seeing this desert in front of me then as a beautiful brown skinned woman. I felt embraced by wholeness, completeness: her fragility has been exploited by too many, her distant and near sisters already ravaged, but I was thankful to her for allowing me pass within her, both of us in that moment moving in unison through time and space. I left thinking that perfection is only in the mind—our minds—and that a God who manifests itself in the dynamic nature that is all around us is not and cannot be a perfect God. Nature is not perfect. I began to see the idea of completeness, or wholeness, as something very far from this human idea of perfection.

We got an early start the next morning. I had been awake for quite some time because I magically awoke right before sunrise. Looking up at the ocotillo above me, an electric blue bordering its base with a faint yellow of the morning sky, it wasn't hard to imagine that I was on a totally different planet, and then I realized: a different planet from what? In the scope of the universe I am on an alien world, where strange life abounds, with a single moon cycling itself in its image. This new perspective increased my fascination as I

achieved the sensation of seeing everything as if it was new to me. But my thoughts were soon lost as I watched the silhouettes of the ocotillo change colors and the sun began part of its Arizona leg of its Groundhog Day.

As we neared the terminus of the ridge we had been inching along, we stood in silence above the broad wash below us and could hear at least 10 different bird calls. We aborted the final section of the ridge and went down to the alluvial plain below to sit and enjoy the almost urban sensation of noise and abundance that the dry river plain had in comparison to the exposed ridge we had been traveling on. We sat for a while, and then continued, scaring up a long eared jackrabbit, who easily evaded my digital camera's slow reaction shutter.

I was sad to be back at the car, and since this whole experience, have had a hard time being back in Prescott. I felt that my ability to access the magic of life vanished as soon as I began to associate with this fabricated world. In the Little Horns, however, I was able at moments to grasp sensations outside myself, whereas intuitions about my surroundings are typically stifled in towns. I have left part of myself in the Little Horns as a hopeful safeguard against damage to such precious uniqueness, home for an abundance of species, and as a travel corridor for animals and wandering humans alike.

I lament that my spirit alone cannot protect a place. Hopefully if more people can experience and feel the awe of our natural world as I did in the Little Horns, it will empower them to advocate for protection and preservation. In the darkness I felt after losing my friend, being amidst the beauty of nature rejuvenated my spirit. Without these special places, we lose the potential for our nature-severed society to reconnect with our highest selves.

If you want to know more about trying to protect areas like the Little Horns or elsewhere in Arizona, you can go to www.azwild.org. You don't have to live in Arizona to be a part of wilderness protection work.

Arieh Scharnberg is an anthropology student at Prescott College whose connection to the land was fostered by his father, a rabbi, who began taking him into the wilderness even before his son could walk.

Nature Outranks Motor

A report released by Northern Arizona University's Arizona Hospitality Research and Resource Center (AHRRC/NAU) shows that visitors to Grand Canyon National Park strongly support protection of the park's natural and cultural resources, including geology, wilderness, cultural history, plants and wildlife, and ecosystems, rather than developed and/or mechanized activities.

The report, Grand Canyon National Park & Northern Arizona Tourism Study: Final Report, includes a number of findings indicating that visitors



Crowds of motorized boats degrade the wilderness experience along the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park. Photo: Chris Brown

agree with the park's resource preservation mandate: Grand Canyon visitors strongly supported protecting the park's natural resources. Respondents identified the following five as the most important park resources (descending order by mean): Clean water (4.8), Clean air, Native plants, animals, and Endangered species (4.7 each), Natural quiet and the sounds of nature (4.6).

When asked to rank their interest in activities and themes available at Grand Canyon National Park, visitors responded most positively to those related to natural and cultural resources. Ranked in descending order by mean, the top five areas of interest were: Canyon origins, formations and geology (3.8 mean), Animals and plants (3.7), Wilderness preservation and solitude (3.7), Cultural history of native inhabitants (3.6), Park ecosystem and ecology (3.4). At the other end, at the bottom of the list of visitor interests, appeared all things mechanical or unnatural to the park, such as: ATVs (1.9), helicopter rides (2.1), and jeep tours (2.2).

The Highlands Need Your Support!

Southern Arizona's extraordinary Tumacacori Highlands are a national treasure. The large, remote, roadless lands south of Tucson offer visitors a unique opportunity to hike, hunt, birdwatch, and explore one of Arizona's last true wildlands. We know that the Highlands are deserving of wilderness protection; now it's time to ask Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl for their support.

The Tumacacori Highlands are home to more than 50 remarkable species including the jaguar, the elegant trogon, and the Mexican spotted owl—many of which are found nowhere else in the United States. Much of the rest of the Coronado National Forest is already criss-crossed by hundreds of miles of off-road vehicle trails. As the region continues to grow, development pressures will only increase. We must urge our elected leaders to take action to permanently protect the Highlands—before it's too late! Address your letters to:

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Kyl
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

It Ain't Easy Being Endangered

On September 29th Congress took the first step toward gutting the 30-year old Endangered Species Act, America's safety net for fish and wildlife at the edge of extinction, voting 229 to 193 for HR 3824. The Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act was crafted by House Resources Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA). The bill eliminates habitat protection measures

Maximize Your Support for Wilderness

by Kevin Gaither-Banchoff

Over the past eighteen months, almost 500 concerned Arizonans have generously supported the Arizona Wilderness Coalition with a financial gift. Another 700 people have signed up to receive our newsletter, email alerts and calls for action, attend meetings, volunteer and otherwise defend Arizona's wilderness and other wild places.

This summer, I was honored to become the Arizona Wilderness Coalition's very first monthly donor. What does this mean? This means that I believe so strongly in the Arizona Wilderness Coalition's ability to protect our state's snow-capped mountains, deep rugged canyons, blooming deserts, and lush conifer forests that I set up automatic monthly donations to the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. I know they can do the work – but they need money.

Setting up an automatic monthly donation to the Arizona Wilderness Coalition was easy and helps the Coalition in a number of important ways.

1. Making monthly donations enabled me to increase the total financial support I'm able to give over the course of the year.
2. Overhead is reduced because processing costs are lower. It may not be much per gift, but it adds up. These extra savings go towards supporting important program work to protect wilderness and wildlife.
3. A regular flow of funds is assured, unaffected by any interruptions, helping the Arizona Wilderness Coalition plan its work.

Since you are reading this, I know you are a passionate believer in the need to protect Arizona's remaining wilderness. Between now and the end of 2006, we have the opportunity to both improve interim wilderness protections and permanently protect almost 5 MILLION

acres more of wilderness across Arizona. We may not have an opportunity to protect some of this land for another 15 to 20 years.

That is why today I am inviting you to join me as a Monthly Friend of Arizona's Wilderness. Monthly Friends is a club created for those of us who chose to make gifts on a monthly basis. Today this is a club of only a few. I hope this will be a club of hundreds by



Photo: Mark Miller

years end. These combined monthly gifts can provide the Arizona Wilderness Coalition an extremely effective and reliable source of income – which will directly fund program work that protects Arizona's wild places against the growing threats of oil and gas drilling, logging, road building, and illegal ORV use. We can stem the loss of wild habitat for plants and animals, while also preventing the degradation of the places where we take our families fishing, hiking, backpacking, and camping.

Please join me by becoming a Monthly Friend of Arizona's Wilderness.

Yes! I want to become a Monthly Friend of Arizona Wilderness!

_____ \$10/month will allow AWC to present one slideshow to a community organization.

_____ \$15/month will allow AWC to inventory 20 acres of wilderness.

_____ \$25/month will print 2000 newsletters.

_____ \$50/month will help us mobilize our staff and volunteers to attend public hearings and meetings.

_____ I authorize the Arizona Wilderness Coalition to debit by credit card for the above amount each month. My Credit Card is listed below.

___ MC ___ Visa ___ American Express

Card # _____

Expiration Date: ___/___

Signature: _____

Cut out and return this slip to: Don Hoffman, Arizona Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920. And thank you for your generous monthly support for wilderness!

for fish and wildlife facing extinction, creates an exemption for the approval of potentially dangerous pesticides and establishes a new entitlement program for developers and polluters. According to the Congressional Budget Office, implementation of the Pombo legislation will cost the U.S. taxpayer \$2.7 billion over the next five years.

The legislation eliminates habitat conservation measures on tens of millions of acres of land around the country, the "critical habitat" of species facing extinction, and prevents such conservation activities in the future. Analysis of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data shows that species with critical habitat are more likely to be increasing in number and heading towards recovery than species without by a 2:1 margin.

The legislation also creates a new entitlement program by requiring the federal government to pay developers, the oil industry and polluters to avoid destroying the habitat of publicly owned fish and wildlife.

The Endangered Species Act enjoys a proven track record of success. Ninety-nine percent of all the fish, plants and wildlife ever conserved under the Endangered Species Act have been saved from becoming lost forever, including the bald eagle and the grizzly bear.

The next step for the Endangered Species Act is consideration by the Senate. Spearheading this effort is Senator Chafee, who has indicated he will not move a bill until 2006.

Paying It Forward

For the fourth consecutive year, Patagonia™—a leading retailer in the outdoor apparel industry—has funded a significant conservation program for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition through its Environmental Grants Program. A generous grant of \$10,000 from Patagonia will fund the Arizona Wilderness Coalition's forest protection programs from our Prescott office and allow staff to work productively toward ensuring that our last wild and roadless forest lands in Arizona remain for future generations.

Through the program, at least one percent of Patagonia's sales is donated at the grassroots level to innovative groups who take radical and strategic steps to protect habitat, wilderness, and biodiversity. Patagonia has given more than \$22 million to over 1,000 organizations since its grants program began in 1985.



Patagonia is a founding member of the Conservation Alliance, a non-profit organization of outdoor businesses whose collective annual membership dues support grassroots citizen-action groups and their efforts to protect wild and natural areas. The Alliance, consisting of 85 members, donates 100 percent of its membership dues twice a year to diverse, local community groups across the nation--like the Arizona Wilderness Coalition--who seek to protect the last great wild lands and waterways from resource extraction and commercial development.

Compiled by Katurah Mackay



Yes! I want to help the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Together, we can build a lasting legacy of Arizona wild lands for this and future generations. You may make tax-deductible donations payable to "The Arizona Wilderness Coalition." Enclose your check with this card to: The Arizona Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920. Questions? 928-339-4525

Tell us about yourself!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

____ I wish to receive your e-mail alerts and newsletter. Sign me up! (Your email is necessary for us to send you our electronic alerts and event notices, but we will not share your email address outside of AWC.)

____ Enclosed is my one-time donation of \$ _____.

____ I wish to make a monthly donation to the AWC, in the amount of \$ _____.

Card Type _____ Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

By sharing your interests and hobbies with us, we can be more accurate in sending you alerts, event notices in your region, and requests for volunteer help. Please take a few minutes to fill out the information below. Thank you!

Hobbies or Skills (please check all that apply):

- General Volunteer
- Public Speaking
- Special Events
- Wild Land Inventory
- Letter Writing
- Photography/Art/Design
- Writing/Publishing/Newsletter Help

Region of interest (please check all that apply):

- Central Mountains–Sonoran
- Grand Canyon
- Western Deserts Region
- Sky Islands–Southeastern

Mailing Preferences (please check all that apply):

- Newsletter Only
- Newsletter and Alerts
- All Mailings
- Action Alerts Only
- No Mailings: I prefer to visit your website for news.



On behalf of Arizona's Wilderness,
thank you.

What is Wilderness?

Wilderness is an area of undeveloped federal land that appears “to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of mans’ work substantially unnoticeable,” as written in the Wilderness Act of 1964. Unlike national parks, wildlife refuges, or monuments, wilderness designation from Congress provides the highest level of natural resource protection available in the world. The Wilderness Act created the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the last remaining wild lands in America. Currently, about 4.7 percent of all available land in the United States is protected as wilderness. In Arizona, wilderness designation protects approximately 6.2 percent of our land and wildlife habitat.

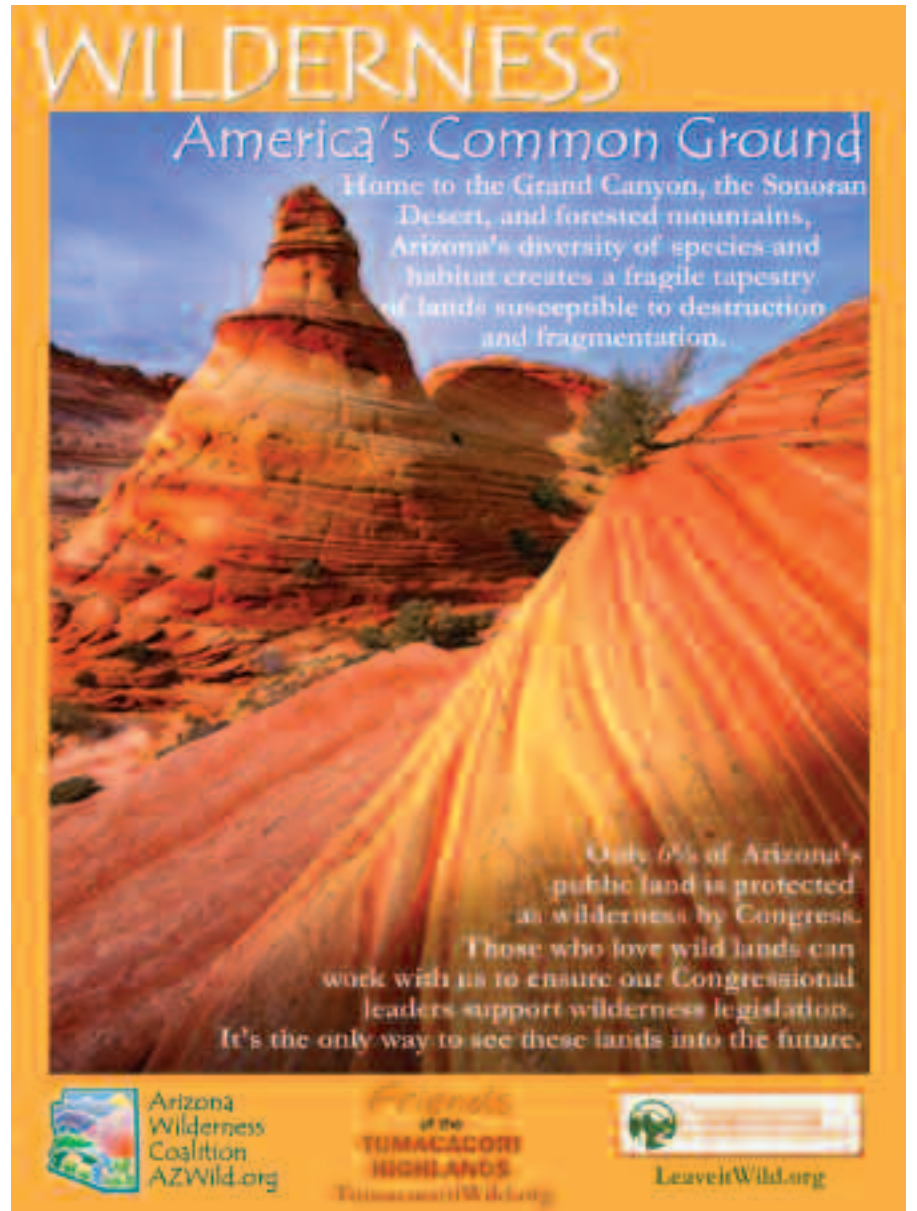
**A R I Z O N A
WILD**

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