

outdoor&travel
SPECIAL ISSUE

High Country News

For people who care about the West



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Rethinking risk
Bikes in the wild?
Save your stoke

High Country News

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Editor's note

What is recreation worth?

Every month, every season, for the last three years, I have trudged up some snowy slope with skis on my back, then skied back down. I'm part of a small community of die-hards who have embarked on a project we call "turns all year": We never let a month pass without skiing. In winter, this pursuit is logical, even fun. But in summer, it gets ridiculous. One August, I walked up Peak Nine in Breckenridge, Colorado, as a few hundred Spartan racers passed me by, in order to ski 100 rough yards of dirt-coated snow. I've been laughed at by picnicking Mennonites, frolicking children and happy hikers with boomboxes. I've also gotten the most fun turns of my life on grubby patches of snow it took me two hours to walk to.

We who live in the West are defined and sustained by the landscapes we inhabit; we are part of a culture rooted in the outdoors. Outdoor recreation and travel through the American West are a big part of life for many out here, and the issue you hold in your hands takes a hard look at outdoor recreation's influence — and its costs.

The outdoor industry often aligns itself with environmentalists, flexing its economic muscle to defend Bears Ears National Monument and demand action on climate change. But closer examination complicates this alliance. There's mounting evidence that recreation, like all human activity, takes a toll on every ecosystem we travel through. Our writers explore how the push to allow mountain bikes in wilderness has aligned some recreationists with anti-public-land proponents, for example, and whether playing in the outdoors actually inclines people to defend the environment.

Meanwhile, the outdoor industry is still coming to terms with the changes social media has wrought, including the opening of a once-insular world. As Jane C. Hu writes, social media has encouraged those traditionally excluded from outdoor activities to carve out a space and to demand changes in the industry.

But as our cover story shows, the digital universe's abundance of tools and tips hasn't necessarily made us safer in the backcountry. Correspondent Sarah Tory describes how social media makes rad adventures seem easy, obscuring the potentially life-threatening dangers encountered along the way. A quick Google search gives potential peakbaggers detailed guides on 14ers.com, but it's harder to access the training needed to use that information safely.

My own "turns all year" project would not be possible without social media, at least not for me: I scope out routes using Instagram, looking for the telltale patch of snow in the background of someone's selfie. But come summer, I'll think twice about following the trail from app to adventure, and also consider the costs of my year-round fun.

—Kate Schimel, deputy editor, digital



On the cover

Justin Reiter, a former Olympic snowboarder, navigates piles of sharp rocks along the Capitol Peak ridgeline. NOAH WETZEL

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High
Country
News



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Reiter traverses the infamous Knife Edge on Capitol Peak in the Maroon Bells Wilderness, Colorado. NOAH WETZEL

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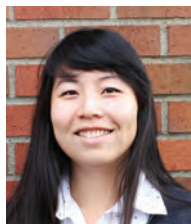
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FROM OUR WEBSITE: HCN.ORG



Bryan Rice, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, has stepped down from his position as the Bureau of Indian Affairs director. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Indian Affairs director resigns

After six months at the Interior Department, Bryan Rice has resigned as director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, according to an internal department email obtained by *High Country News*.

No reason for the resignation was given, and the agency has yet to comment on the personnel change. It comes during a troubled time for the BIA and Interior, where a high number of Native American employees have been reassigned, and a workplace survey recently revealed pervasive issues of harassment. The BIA, where the highest rates of harassment were reported, has yet to publicly release a formal action plan addressing the problem.

ANNA V. SMITH

Read more online: hcne.ws/bia-resignation

“We want our leaders to work together to protect salmon, not block actions necessary for salmon long-term survival.”

—Brett VandenHeuvel, the executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper, on why he opposes a bill that would override a federal district court decision mandating Columbia and Snake river dam operators spill more water to aid imperiled salmon.

Proponents of the bill assert that dam spills would not necessarily help salmon and would cost ratepayers \$40 million in lost hydroelectric revenue. The Republican-sponsored bill, passed largely on a party-line vote in April, still has to clear the Senate before it becomes law.

CARL SEGERSTROM Read more online: hcne.ws/dam-bill

\$6.1 billion

The budget of the Indian Health Service

13 percent

of that budget is provided by Medicaid

The Trump administration has asserted that tribal citizens should be required to have a job before receiving tribal health-care assistance, a move that could exacerbate the health-care challenges Native Americans face. Thirteen states have moved toward implementing work requirements for Medicaid, but the Trump administration has denied tribal nations' requests for exemptions from those rules. The administration's stance is based on a racial distinction rather than a political definition of tribal citizenship, which is “a remarkable departure from U.S. history, U.S. policy and U.S. law,” says Oklahoma College of Law professor Taiawagi Helton. GRAHAM LEE BREWER
Read more online: hcne.ws/tribes-medicaid



Outdoor retailers reconvene

The industry faces a future outside of Utah

BY SARAH TORY

“It’s not just a venue for outdoor recreation — it’s our home.”

—Aaron Mike, a member of the Navajo Nation and founder of Pangaea Mountain Guides, speaking about how Native Americans view places like Bears Ears National Monument, compared to how white outdoor enthusiasts do

One gray Saturday morning at the end of January, thousands of people filled three cavernous floors of the Colorado Convention Center in downtown Denver. The crowds had come for the Outdoor Retailer + Snow Show (dubbed the OR Show), a massive four-day gear and clothing expo for winter-related activities.

Though actual snow was in short supply, the excitement level was high. This year marked a turning point in the OR show’s history: For the first time in 20 years, the biannual event, which also takes place in the summer, was not held in Salt Lake City. In 2017, the show’s organizers announced they were leaving Utah to protest the efforts by the state’s politicians to reduce Bears Ears National Monument, which protected both popular recreation areas and land that was important to many Native American tribes.

A state where public lands enjoy broad political support, Colorado was happy to welcome the trade show instead — along with the roughly \$45 million it brings annually.

“I just think it’s thrilling not only that (the Outdoor Retailer show) is here, but that they did it as a statement,” Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet told a group of outdoor-focused small-business owners who’d come for the trade show.

For brands like Patagonia and The North Face, the move to Denver exemplified the industry’s growing advocacy movement, especially around public lands. Backed by their sizeable \$887 billion economic impact, gear-makers and

consumers alike are flexing their muscles on issues they care about, confident that getting more people outside — equipped with Gore-Tex jackets and carbon-fiber skis — can have a social benefit, too. But their message is missing some important voices: namely, the Native peoples who lived on, protected and depended on those same lands thousands of years before modern hikers discovered them.

A current of slightly self-congratulatory excitement buzzed through the convention center. Outdoor Research, a clothing maker, sold a series of hand-painted wooden boards by Colorado artist Sarah Virginia Uhl, with all proceeds benefitting public lands. Others, like Parajumpers, a luxury outdoor apparel brand based in Vail, seemed happy to be there for more mundane reasons.

“The move to Denver was great for us specifically,” Barry Levinson, the marketing head for Parajumpers’ North American distributor, told me, as I struggled to operate the booth’s free espresso machine. Compared to Salt Lake City, he said, Denver is a lot closer to Vail. Plus, the downtown “has a lot more going on.”

In the back corner of the convention center, nestled among the hundreds of vendor booths, an audience had assembled for a panel discussion titled “Indigenous Connections: Re-envisioning Recreation and Public Lands Preservation to Incorporate First Nation Values and Traditions,” beneath a giant sign from one of the venue’s sponsors, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.

The mood at the panel, however, felt somewhat less celebratory than its surroundings. Moderator Annette McGivney, the Southwest editor for *Backpacker Magazine*, asked what role Indigenous people should play in protecting public lands.

“I’m not promoting outdoor recreation,” said Jolie Varela, a citizen of the Paiute and Tule River Yokut Tribes and the founder of Indigenous Women Hike, a group of Native American women. This summer, they plan to walk 210 miles from Cottonwood Pass to Yosemite Valley, following their ancestral trade routes on what is now known as the John Muir Trail.

Before Yosemite Valley became a renowned rock-climbing destination, Varela recalled, her ancestors were forced out of the area — yet another episode in the violent history of displacement of Native people across the West, this time in the service of “wilderness preservation.”

John Muir himself wrote disparagingly of the Paiute people he encountered in his travels through the valley that eventually became Yosemite National Park. “Somehow they seemed to have no right place in the landscape,” he wrote, “and I was glad to see them fading out of sight down the pass.”

As she spoke, Varela pointed out that very few of the climbers she’d met in Yosemite seemed aware that their favorite playground used to have so-called “Native zoos,” in which Indigenous peoples were displayed as novelties to tourists. “Sometimes, I’m the only one who knows that history,” she said.

The mostly white audience stood and listened in awkward silence, while nearby vendors tried to lure people to their booths with free candy and other product samples.

In recent years, the outdoor industry has sought to fashion itself around a kind of benevolent consumerism, appealing to its



customers' progressive values as well as its own bottom line. On Black Friday, many brands encourage people to #OptOutside instead of shopping, while others donate a percentage of their profits to environmental causes, including the defense of public lands.

For many companies, California-based outdoor clothing giant Patagonia is the ultimate proof that this kind of advocacy also makes good business sense. Ever since Patagonia's co-founder, Yvon Chouinard, described himself as a "reluctant businessman," the company has made environmental and labor advocacy go hand-in-hand with profit-making.

"The way he justified being a businessman was to give back to the planet," Corley Kenna, Patagonia's director of global communications and PR, told me as we stood inside the company's booth, surrounded by racks of Patagonia's latest high-tech apparel and its new line of sustainably sourced food items, "Patagonia Provisions." Today, Patagonia's environmental grant program is bigger than ever, with the company giving away almost \$90 million to grassroots organizations — almost a tenth of its nearly \$1 billion in revenues. Meanwhile, Patagonia's profits have quadrupled since 2009, and its annual growth rate has jumped to 14 percent.

It was Patagonia, too, that led the charge in boycotting the Outdoor Retailer show last February after Utah Republican Gov. Gary Herbert signed a bill calling for Bears Ears National Monument to be rescinded. Other companies followed suit, including Canada-based Arc'teryx and Polartec, and when Herbert refused to abandon his fight against the monument, the show's organizers decided to part ways with Salt Lake City, too.

Since then, Patagonia has stepped up its game. (Full disclosure: *High Country News* receives advertising money from Patagonia as well as annual donations

from its founder, Yvon Chouinard.) For the first time in the company's 45-year history, it has felt compelled to take serious action: suing the administration over its rollback of national monuments and running television ads reminding people that public lands belong to everyone.

"We're lucky to be in an industry that's taking this on," Kenna told me.

Over at the booth for GU, an energy gel maker, a celebration was underway for the company's 25th anniversary. Brian Gillis, its marketing communications manager, handed out commemorative birthday cake-flavored energy gels.

Gillis, bearded and wearing a Patagonia jacket, told me about his company's charitable giving foundation, "GU Gives," which supports about 100 organizations through grants and product donations. After boycotting the last Outdoor Retailer show in Salt Lake City, GU donated the money instead to the Conservation Alliance.

"I was worried that it would just look like a marketing tactic," Gillis admitted, speaking of GU's public-lands initiatives. But after the company took a group of employees and GU-sponsored athletes to Bears Ears last year, he felt reassured. They visited the Canyon Discovery Center (formerly the Four Corners School) in Monticello, Utah, and biked around the monument for a few days. The experience, he said, helped the rest of the company understand "why we felt a need to take a stand on this issue."

And yet, despite all the outdoor industry's idealistic talk, something still seemed to be missing, as far as the Native American panelists were concerned.

"We all grew up in sheep camp — herding sheep — but rock climbing was such a foreign concept on Navajo Nation," said Aaron Mike, a member of the Navajo

Nation and founder of Pangaea Mountain Guides. Native people often view places like Bears Ears differently from non-Natives, he explained. "It's not just a venue for outdoor recreation — it's our home."

When I brought this up with Corley Kenna, she acknowledged that outdoor recreation "is a very white industry." But Patagonia is trying to reverse that trend, she said, by bringing Native voices to the forefront of its public-land activism. Willie Grayeyes — chair of the Utah Diné Bikéyah, an all-Native nonprofit focused on protecting Bears Ears — would be giving a presentation about the importance of Bears Ears in Patagonia's Salt Lake City store.

Regardless, Indigenous peoples often struggle to feel at home in the privileged world of \$190 lift tickets and \$500 ski jackets. "A lot of Native women feel self-conscious about not having all the right gear," said Varela.

Still, the main reason you won't find Varela wearing many of the brands on offer at the trade show is less a practical matter than a philosophical one — one that speaks volumes about today's outdoor recreation culture. At the end of the panel, someone in the audience raised his hand: Dustin Martin, member of the Navajo Nation and director of a group called Wings of America, which aims to empower Indigenous youth through running. He applauded the industry's efforts to get more Native people involved in outdoor recreation, but wondered how far those efforts will go if they can't afford a plane ticket to Aspen and a closetful of gear.

"The way that we Native people recreate is often not the way white people recreate," Martin explained to the mostly white crowd, who were clad in outdoor-chic flannel and expensive down coats. "We don't need a Klean Kanteen and a super-fancy sleeping bag." □

Scenes from the Outdoor Retailer + Snow Show, from its new site in Denver. From left, colorful apparel at the Outdoor Research booth; Saxx men's briefs come in designs featuring coral snakes and mountain sunsets; a woman tries a sample at the GU Energy Labs booth; skis at the Sego Ski Co. booth.

BROOKE WARREN/
HIGH COUNTRY NEWS



A mountain biker in the Boulder-White Clouds Mountains in Idaho, before the area was designated wilderness.

LESLIE KEHMEIER/IMBA

Bikes in the wild?

A new law could change the nature of wilderness travel

BY CARL SEGERSTROM

“The real fear isn’t that mountain biking will cause problems, but that it won’t cause problems.”

—Ted Stroll, spokesman for the Sustainable Trails Coalition, which is pushing the so-called *Wheels Over Wilderness* bill that would allow mountain bikes in wilderness areas.

Ted Stroll, a bespectacled, balding, retired attorney whose remaining hair is short and white, doesn’t fit the stereotype of an extremist mountain biker. But his group, the Sustainable Trails Coalition, is challenging the mainstream mountain biking establishment by fighting to permit bikes in America’s wilderness areas.

Stroll’s crusade has sparked strong resistance, particularly from wilderness advocates and environmentalists. His alliance with notoriously environmentally unfriendly Republican congressmen, whom he has enlisted to push a bikes-in-wilderness bill, is particularly controversial. Stroll’s group has alienated would-be allies in the mountain biking community, who are loath to ostracize the greater recreation and conservation communities, especially at a time when many feel public-lands protections are taking a back seat to extractive industries.

The original text of the 1964 Wilderness Act bans “mechanized transport” — and bicycles are clearly a form of mechanized transport. For the federal agencies tasked with enforcing the ban, however, the definition hasn’t always been clear-cut.

In 1966, in its first rule on the issue, the Forest Service banned only devices powered “by a nonliving power source.” That left the door open for bicycles. Mountain bikes did not yet exist, however, so neither the original framers of the law, nor the agencies interpreting it a couple of years later, even considered the possibility of bikes venturing into the mostly road-

less areas and extremely rugged trails.

In 1977, as the first mountain bikes were being manufactured — evolving beyond the earliest jerry-rigged cruisers — the Forest Service changed its rules to prohibit bikes in wilderness areas. After a couple of conflicting decisions in the early 1980s, the agency confirmed the prohibition in 1984. By that time, mountain bikes were being mass-produced and rapidly gaining in popularity. Still, the ban has stood ever since.

Now, however, that may be about to change. House Resolution 1349, introduced by Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Calif., would amend the mechanized transport section ban of the Wilderness Act to read: “Nothing in this section shall prohibit the use of motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized bicycles, strollers, wheelbarrows, survey wheels, measuring wheels, or game carts within any wilderness area.” Utah Republican Sens. Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee brought similar legislation to the Senate floor in 2016.

Many environmental groups are opposed to the idea of allowing bikes into wilderness, but even some of the more permissive ones were alarmed by the congressmen carrying Stroll’s water. All three made the Center for Biological Diversity’s “Top 15 ‘Public Lands Enemies’ in Congress” list in 2017. Hatch and Lee are both standard-bearers for the federal land-transfer movement and favor opening public lands to extractive industries. President Donald Trump dedicated his

controversial shrinking of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments to the Utah senators.

Stroll acknowledges the congressmen’s records, but says that they are taking a stand based on principle. The legislators “want this corrected because it’s a wrong,” he says. “We’ve had extensive talks, and I don’t perceive that they have ulterior motives.”

The mountain bike industry’s most prominent voice for expanded access, the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), opposes the legislation, arguing that it could undercut the important relationships already forged between the outdoors and public-lands communities. IMBA has long fought against the loss of mountain bike access to wilderness areas, but has largely focused its efforts on making sure new designations don’t include popular trails. In some cases, it has lobbied for modifying existing wilderness so that trails lie outside the boundaries. The organization has worked with wilderness advocates to come up with mountain-bike-friendly compromises.

In a letter stating its opposition to the House bill, IMBA writes that collaborative efforts with Congress and land managers on future land designations are a proven way for bikers to gain or maintain access to trails. IMBA also cautioned that the legislative push could alienate the conservation community. “Public lands are being threatened at an unprecedented level, and it’s imperative that public land users come together to protect these cherished places and offer our voices in this critical dialogue,” wrote Dave Weins, IMBA’s executive director, in a letter to members describing the organization’s stance on bikes in wilderness.

Conservation groups have formed a broad coalition against what they’ve dubbed the “Wheels Over Wilderness” bill. In an open letter to Congress, 133 groups asked legislators to oppose it. A separate joint letter from The Wilderness Society, Back Country Horsemen of America and the Pacific Crest Trail Association wrote that the bill “undermines one of our nation’s bedrock conservation laws, jeopardizes America’s wilderness and won’t advance mountain biking.”

Stroll, however, remains undaunted. “The real fear isn’t that mountain biking will cause problems, but that it won’t cause problems,” he says. Stroll predicts that if the Sustainable Trail Coalition’s quest succeeds, no harm will come from biking in wilderness. Instead, backcountry access will improve for everyone, and his detractors “will be left with egg on their face.” □

Unlikely hikers

The face of outdoor rec is changing

BY JANE C. HU

At a few minutes past 7 p.m., Jenny Bruso and Trevor McKee strode onto the stage. “Welcome to Queer Adventure Storytelling!” McKee told the packed one-room feminist bookstore-turned-community-center in Portland, Oregon. The space is home to a lending library; signs at the back read “Black Lives Matter”; “Stand with Standing Rock”; “Trans Rights Now.” Bruso explained the event’s new admission policy: Though no one will be turned away, donations of \$3 to \$5 are encouraged, while people of color pay nothing. “It might sound like kind of a strong statement,” she said, “but we know that spaces like this are often not inclusive.” She continued: “We’re looking at this event as an invitation for people of color — and all types of people — to participate in the version of what *we* see the outdoors as.”

Their vision appears online in the Instagram account Bruso created. Called “Unlikely Hikers,” it features photos and stories from underrepresented minorities in the outdoors. It’s part of a wave of social media accounts determined to broaden the notion of what outdoorspeople look like. In addition to reaching millions of Instagram users, the spotlight on diversity is galvanizing change in environmental policy as well as outdoor retail.

Bruso, a Portland resident who identifies as a fat, queer woman, was tired of seeing the same type of person in outdoorsy ads and social media. “The person is always white; if it’s a woman, her hair is cascading down her back, and they’re very young and thin,” Bruso said. “It’s always someone who looks like they’re effortlessly there, like they didn’t get their entire ass kicked by hiking.” Unlikely Hikers is an antidote to that: a climber perched on a rock gym, wearing a hijab and tape over her amputated right arm; a black Denali National Park ranger with his mom, who took her first plane ride to Alaska to go on her first hike; a selfie of Bruso in a rain jacket, drenched and unsmiling.

Though underrepresented minorities have always been active in the outdoors community, social media has amplified their voices and carried them into the mainstream. Two years after Bruso started it, Unlikely Hikers has over 35,000 followers, and nods from companies like REI and Columbia. Dozens of other new accounts have popped up, featuring queer and trans mountaineers, fat hikers, Indigenous boulderers and Latino/a ice climbers. Earlier this year, Unlikely Hikers and 23 other groups formed Diversify Out-

doors, a coalition of social media influencers promoting diversity in the outdoors.

Collectively, the accounts command hundreds of thousands of online followers, along with in-person meet-ups and festivals. “Little by little, we’re doing the ongoing work of reframing the way we’re thinking about the outdoors: who it affects, where funding should be going, how to work towards policy,” said Michael Estrada, founder of the Brown Environmental Media Collective, which is part of Diversify Outdoors.

That reframing involves more than just showing that underrepresented minorities enjoy the outdoors; it’s also about challenging the values of the dominant outdoors culture. For instance, it’s common for outdoorspeople to share stories of “conquering” a mountain or “crushing” a boulder problem — language that makes Bruso uncomfortable. “We’re talking about the land like it’s our playground, but people were displaced for it,” she said. Bruso prefers to identify areas by their current names and as territories of the Indigenous people who lived there before colonizers displaced them. Hundreds of users have adopted the practice in their own posts, using hashtags like #thisisnativeland, #whoslandareweexploringon, and #publiclandisnativeland.

That shift extends to policy, too, with Indigenous voices getting more weight

in the movement to restore the original boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument. “You see a lot of people asking the five Native American tribes who reside there for their perspective,” said Jaylyn Gough, founder of Native Women’s Wilderness, also part of Diversify Outdoors. “Patagonia waited until the tribes sued (President Donald) Trump, out of respect — like, ‘This is your land, and we understand that.’”

Online discussions have also spurred outdoors retailers to expand their offerings. Last year, REI committed to improving gear for women and people of all sizes; stores now offer plus-size options from companies like Columbia and KUHL and may soon do so for their in-house line. “That can only be because of the outcry of people on social media finally being able to air their grievances in public places about not being able to find clothes that fit them, or how they can’t find clothes that aren’t pink or purple,” said Bruso.

Now, leaders like Bruso are looking to bring other voices to the forefront. At Queer Adventure Storytelling, a portion of the door fees goes towards outdoors leadership training for Mercy Shammah, founder of the group Wild Diversity, which helps people of color and queer people get outdoors. The night’s success means more money for that work. “And we need leaders like Mercy so bad,” Bruso said. □

Clockwise from upper left: “Pinar aka Creature,” (@queerquechua and @queernature) in Yavapai, Hopi and Western Apache lands; Summer (@summerseeking) at Stinson Beach, California; Miguel (@mgutjr) at San Jacinto Peak, California; Lulu (@aviladanka) in Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah.

COURTESY UNLIKELY HIKERS (INSTAGRAM.COM/ UNLIKELYHIKERS)



“The person is always white; if it’s a woman, her hair is cascading down her back, and they’re very young and thin. It’s always someone who looks like ... they didn’t get their entire ass kicked by hiking.”

—Jenny Bruso, founder of Unlikely Hikers social media sites, talking about the kind of people who usually are shown when the media talks about outdoor recreation.

Get thee to a brewery

In a small town, hope, hops and co-ops

BY SUMMER GODDARD/VALLEY JOURNAL

On a Saturday night in December, 100 or so people filled the Ronan Valley Club in Ronan, Montana, to connect over a cold drink and an idea. They were the would-be owners of a proposed community-owned brewery — the Ronan Cooperative Brewery — and this gathering was the first public event of an ownership drive. “I was kind of wondering what would happen,” said Gail Nelson, a steering committee member, as he surveyed the room with a smile. “I’m excited by this.”

His wife, Barb Nelson, chairperson of the steering committee, agreed. “I think we can do it,” she said. “I really do.”

About 12 miles south of Flathead Lake, Ronan, population 1,871, has an economy based largely on agriculture. And while the town boasts a variety of businesses, including a telephone company, a movie theatre and a hospital, roughly a third of Main Street’s buildings are vacant or in need of repair. In 2016, locals began holding public listening sessions with economic developers to figure out how to bolster the town’s quiet economy. They identified the revitalization of Main Street and increased business development as top priorities and, early on, began to think about building a brewery.

Across the West, and the country, small towns are turning to brewing as a way to draw in travelers and replace some of the money that has disappeared with the decline of extractive industries. That trend is especially strong in Montana: The state has 68 craft breweries, according to 2016 data compiled by the Brewers Association, and it ranks second in the nation for breweries per capita. And Montana’s craft beer production has increased at a rate of roughly 13 percent per year since 2010, the association says.

That growth has already had an economic impact. Kyle Morrill, a senior economist at the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, says that brewing operations have created 1,044 additional permanent year-round jobs, more than \$33 million in additional income for Montana households, and \$103 million in additional sales from businesses and organizations, and increased the state’s population by 280. “Craft brewing represents a sizable, grassroots industry to the Montana economy,” he wrote. “Furthermore, brewpubs often appear in historically industrial neighborhoods, reinvigorating and reimagining properties left vacant by passing industry.”

In Ronan, the community decided to pursue a cooperative model for the new

brewery, meaning that it would be owned collectively by members, who would share in any profits or benefits. All members purchase one share, which gets them one vote; additional shares do not garner extra votes. Preferred stock, offered to common stock members, is sold at \$100 per share and yields a member a greater share in the return down the road, as the brewery becomes profitable.

While craft breweries aren’t a new phenomenon, cooperative ones are. There are only a handful in the United States, including Bathtub Row Brewing in Los Alamos, New Mexico. That 3-year-old brewery has found success, growing at a rate of 10 to 20 percent annually and making \$700,000 in sales in 2017. The brewery operates at almost full capacity and at times can’t make enough beer for its guests. “It’s a good problem to have,” general manager Douglas Osborn noted. “We’re far past the original projections.”

As a whole, cooperatives tend to return more money to the local economy and generally generate more jobs for the same amount of sales, said Brianna Ewert, the cooperative development program

manager for Lake County Community Development Corporation’s Cooperative Development Center, who provides the new brewery with technical assistance. According to research done in Canada, co-ops also have twice the survival rate of corporate businesses.

A cooperative’s end goal is to serve its members, as opposed to a corporation’s mandate to maximize profits. In Ronan’s case, it’s also about helping the town grow. Toby Hubbard, former owner of the University Motors Honda dealership in Missoula, attended the December event and bought shares in the brewery, saying he saw investing in Ronan’s Cooperative Brewery as a way to “help the community and make a little profit at the same time.”

As of April 25, 2018, the Ronan Cooperative Brewery, now officially incorporated, has raised \$118,500 in investment shares from some 280 owners. The brewery had also received \$75,000 in grant funds, including a \$50,000 award from the Montana Department of Agriculture’s Growth through Agriculture program.

As the December event wound down, Gail and Barb Nelson reflected on the Ronan of the 1970s, which boasted a thriving Main Street that was home to clothing, hardware, furniture and drug stores. They celebrated the community’s involvement as the first step toward reinvigorating the small town: “My vision for the role of the brewery is to be a destination point,” Barb said. □

This story is part of The Montana Gap project, produced in partnership with the Solutions Journalism Network.



Brianna Ewert, cooperative development program manager for Lake County Community Development Corporation, offers a high five to a newly signed co-owner of the Ronan Cooperative Brewery. NICOLE TAVENNER/VALLEY JOURNAL

Recreation is redefining the value of the West's public lands

BY KATE SCHIMEL AND BROOKE WARREN

Once, the West's public lands were valued primarily for the timber, minerals and fossil fuels they held, which were extracted and then sold around the world. In the 1970s, more than two dozen Western counties relied on timber for at least a fifth of their revenue, while energy companies expanded onto public lands for coal and natural gas. Small communities swelled with loggers and miners and the businesses that supported them, providing an economy that helped preserve the West's rural feel. Today, though, natural resource economies are waning, and many of those towns are struggling. Public lands are increasingly used for fun and leisure, and the West has joined the Northeast as the two most urbanized regions in the country, according to U.S. Census data analyzed by Headwaters Economics.

The West's vast public lands remain its defining factor, but these days, their economic value increasingly comes from the outdoor industry. Nationally, that industry is worth nearly \$900 billion annually, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. People made over 290 million visits to the West's public lands last year and spent a lot of time — and money — along the way. Those numbers are growing, while the jobs and revenue associated with hydrocarbons and timber have declined over the past several decades. The West's nearly 600 million acres of public lands have tremendous influence on what it means to be a Westerner, and that picture is changing. Here, a by-the-numbers look at the economic heft of recreation and public lands:

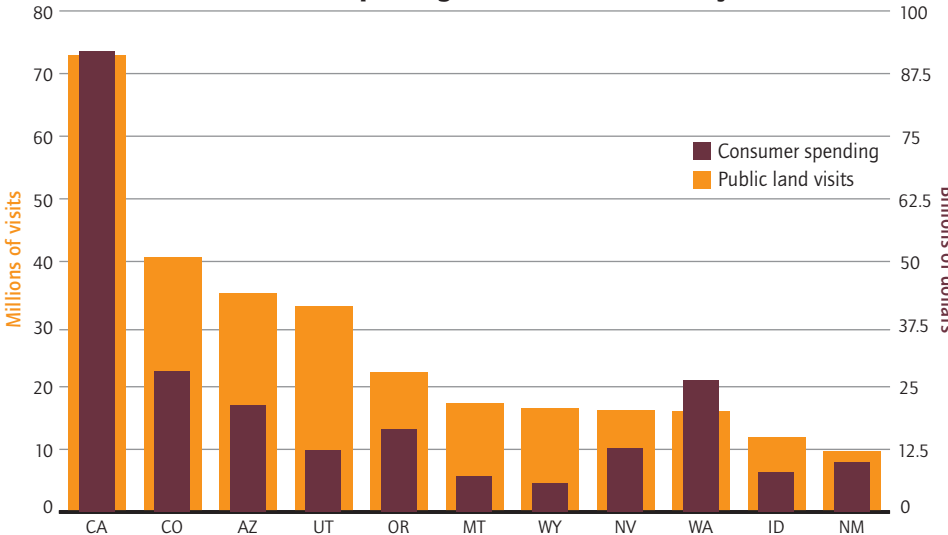
The national outdoor recreation economy generates **\$887 billion** in consumer spending annually.

Nationally, **483,000** people are employed by hunting and fishing, while **180,000** people work in oil and gas extraction.

Americans spend more on:	Trail sports gear (\$20 billion)	than	Home entertainment (\$18 billion)
	Water sports gear (\$14 billion)	than	Movie tickets (\$11 billion)
	Cycling and skateboarding (\$97 billion)	than	Video games (\$61 billion)

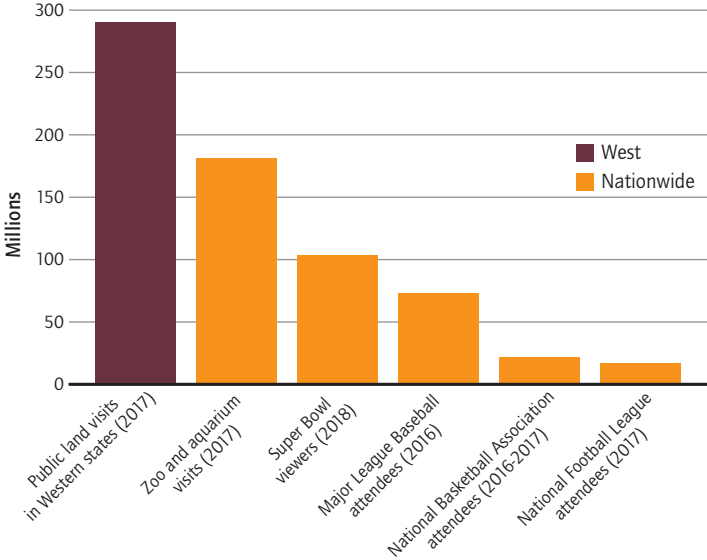
SOURCE: OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Visits to public lands and consumer spending in the outdoor economy



SOURCES: OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, CENTER FOR WESTERN PRIORITIES

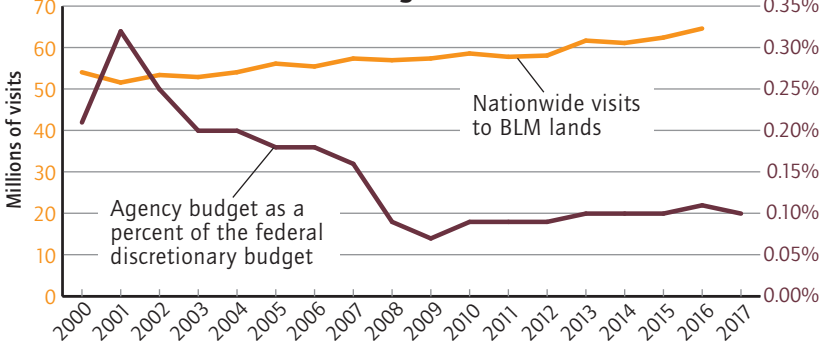
More people spend time visiting Western public lands than on other forms of entertainment



SOURCES: ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS, NBC, NATIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, PRO-FOOTBALL-REFERENCE.COM

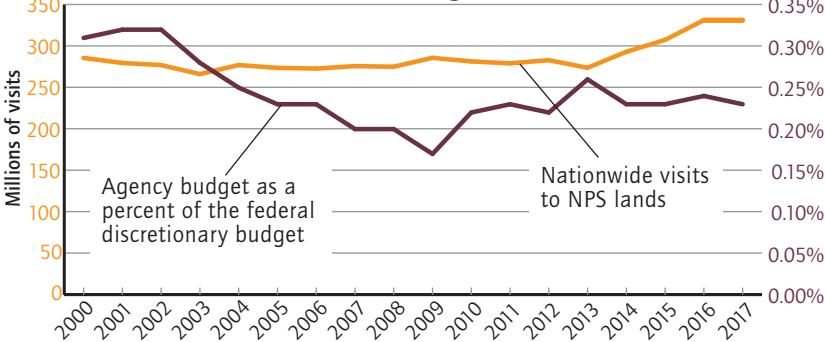
More than 290 million people visited Western public lands in 2017. Despite increasing visits to public lands and the billions of dollars in consumer spending on outdoor recreation that often takes place there, the percent of the federal budget allocated to manage these places has shrunk.

Visits to Bureau of Land Management lands vs. BLM budget allotment



SOURCES: CENTER FOR WESTERN PRIORITIES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Visits to National Park Service lands vs. Park Service budget allotment



Entrada complicada

Every year, culture and history collide in Santa Fe

BY JASON ASENAP

Evening, and a raucous crowd is milling beneath a giant marionette, waiting for the fire to begin. “Burn him!” they chant. “BURN HIM!” And, just like that, the lights of the old baseball park go out. A roar of approval from more than 60,000 people fills the air. In the darkness, faces are illuminated by cellphones; necks and wrists glimmer green, orange, and pink with the help of neon-glowing bracelets and necklaces.

Then there is fire.

Zozobra, or “Old Man Gloom,” symbolizes Santa Fe, New Mexico’s collective woes and grievances. He’s a 50-foot effigy resembling a nightmare puppet or whirling dervish. He burns lazily at first. Flames flicker at his feet, slowly run up his legs, jump to his torso, then his arms, until finally, his whole figure is engulfed. The intense heat radiates out into the crowd. People glow with happiness, their faces orange from the two-story bonfire.

For 93 years, every September, Santa Fe has publicly incinerated Zozobra. While 93 years might seem like an old tradition, that’s nothing compared to the Fiestas de Santa Fe, which begins one week later. Taken together, these two festivals have recently become an occasion for reflection, and in the case of the Fiestas, something more: a confrontation with history.

The Fiestas commemorates the reoccupation of Santa Fe by Spanish conquistadors after they were expelled from the region during the Pueblo Revolt. In 2017, eight people were arrested for protesting at the Fiestas, and Jennifer Marley, a citizen of San Ildefonso Pueblo, was charged with assaulting an officer. 2018 promises to be no different. In the wake of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, in an America where white nationalists regularly occupy public space and Confederate monuments are fought over and often removed, the city of Santa Fe faces its own dilemma. How do you honor New Mexico’s colorful past without celebrating violent colonialism in racially charged festivities?

The Fiestas de Santa Fe stems from a 1712 proclamation to celebrate the peaceful reoccupation of Santa Fe in 1692, after the Spanish were driven from what is currently New Mexico by the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. While the first part of the reoccupation 12 years later was largely bloodless, the second phase resulted in a two-day war. At least 70 Pueblo warriors were executed and hundreds of Indigenous men, women and children enslaved.

How are the burning of Zozobra and the Fiestas connected? They’re not, technically; the relationship is best described as a shotgun wedding. Created in the 1920s by artist Will Shuster, Zozobra began as a counter-Fiesta celebration: Shuster thought the Fiestas were too Hispanic and too Catholic. Over the years, however, the event has been absorbed by the larger celebration.

“(Shuster) felt that the Anglo community and Native community were not represented,” said Ray Sandoval, chairman of the Zozobra event. “He wanted to have an event that led into the Fiestas that everyone could participate in.”

Shuster, who moved to Santa Fe from Philadelphia in 1920, became part of the artist collective Los Cinco Pintores. Artists have been relocating to Santa Fe since the turn of the 20th century, and it’s certainly not difficult to imagine a group of inebriated artists sitting in a backyard, enjoying the smell of piñon on the breeze and creating schemes to challenge the establishment. Shuster based Zozobra on a Yaqui ceremony he witnessed in Mexico: an effigy of Judas, loaded with firecrackers and set ablaze. He created Zozobra in his backyard in 1924 — a culturally appropriated, “inclusive,” private fiesta.

“They decided they would hold a counter-fiesta the weekend before,” said Sandoval. “They would burn Zozobra on Friday, they would dress up all their pets, and parade them all around the plaza on Saturday, and then Sunday ended with the historical/hysterical parade, which was to make fun of all the historical reenactments by the fiesta council. It was a very in-your-face counter-fiesta.”

In the late 1500s, Spanish colonists began settling Pueblo lands, mostly through violent means. In 1598, Don Juan De Oñate led the Acoma massacre, in which hundreds of Acoma died. Afterward, Oñate ordered his men to sever the right foot of every Acoma man over the age of 25, then sentenced them to 20 years of servitude; about 24 men actually suffered amputation. Years later, in 1675, 47 Pueblo Indians were arrested by Spanish colonists and charged with “sorcery.” One of them was a religious leader named Popé, who, upon his release, began planning a rebellion — the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

“We’d been living with these guys (and) the Spanish did some awful, awful shit,” said Jonathan Sims, a filmmaker and for-

mer tribal secretary of Acoma Pueblo. “I don’t think we realized that they were going to stick around that long.”

Under Popé’s leadership, Pueblo freedom fighters expelled the Spanish from New Mexico, as far south as modern-day El Paso, Texas. It took 12 years for the Spanish to return to Santa Fe, led by Diego de Vargas. The event is re-enacted each year during the Fiestas and portrayed as a “peaceful” reoccupation. For obvious reasons, this doesn’t sit well with many Indigenous folks.

There was a time when Native people participated in the burning of Zozobra, but that ended in 1958. This hasn’t stopped Ray Sandoval from reaching out to Pueblo and Native communities, asking people to return to the celebration. But his overtures have been largely ignored.

“For many years, Pueblo dancers danced with fire in front of Zozobra and helped light Zozobra on fire,” Sandoval said. He spoke to me as if addressing the Native community directly: “We want you to come back home to Zozobra. You were there at the inception and you were there from the beginning and we miss you and we need you back.”

“In terms of Zozobra directly, there’s never been any real issue with any of the Pueblos,” said Sims. “Now the Entrada...” He paused. “We got much larger fish to fry than worry about these guys that like to play conquistador four days out of the year.”

Ever the optimist, Sandoval sees Zozobra as something bigger, separate from the Fiestas. “You don’t lose anything from the story of Zozobra or fiestas by telling the entire story. In fact, the ending is a much more beautiful ending, because you understand the reality and the hardships and the mistakes that were made.”

But how does the story truly get told without Indigenous input? How does one reconcile a word like “reconquest” with the idea of coming together? And how do you get the surrounding Pueblo communities to join in setting a giant papier-mâché marionette ablaze to mark the beginning of the Fiestas?

The politics of the Southwest are messy with competing narratives, intertwined Indigenous, Hispanic and Anglo contributions. Thanks to intermarriage, shared cultures and incredible cuisine, New Mexicans generally get along. However, sparring creation stories continue to complicate relations. Sandoval sees Zozobra as an opportunity to set those myths straight.

“The ending is we all learn how to live together, despite all of our troubles,” said Sandoval. “We’re all here, and we peacefully co-exist, and need to treat each other well, and we need to respect each other, and we need to respect each other’s cultures.” □

“Burn him!
BURN HIM!”

—The chant from the crowd before Zozobra, “Old Man Gloom,” is set aflame before the Fiestas de Santa Fe.

The burning of Zozobra before the Fiestas de Santa Fe. CHARLES MANN PHOTOGRAPHY



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This guidebook series is ideally suited for those section hikers. It's split into four separate volumes, each covering one of the trail's geographic regions, including elevation graphs, hiking distances, color maps and comprehensive trail descriptions. Each is written by a different, experienced section-hiker, who sprinkles in interesting tidbits of knowledge, ranging from tips on where to find water or harvest berries to how to spot wildlife. **JESSICA KUTZ**

Paradise Lake in Northern California is surrounded by pines, some clinging to life on tiny granite islands. PHILIP KRAMER, WITH PERMISSION OF MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS

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An award for 'Foodways'

Here in Paonia, Colorado, where *High Country News* is headquartered, the town is busily preparing for the upcoming summer season. Seasonal stores are reopening, including the local ice cream shop, much to the delight of staffers who can now walk less than half a block to satisfy their cravings. To burn off the double scoops, we have 70-degree temperatures — perfect for a bike ride to the (mostly) still-blooming orchards.

Our readers are out enjoying the warm weather, too, taking advantage of the spring season to hit the road. Subscribers **Dale** and **Peter Korba** visited the office on the back end of a six-week trip to the Southwest and Southern California from their home in Boulder, Colorado. One of their favorite places was Kartchner Caverns State Park in Arizona. Dale said she was happy to see that some of the national parks they visited have begun to place a greater emphasis on the history of the local Indigenous people. Longtime readers **Bob** and **Cathy Lefevre**, a retired librarian, visited from Sand Creek, Wisconsin, on their post-retirement tour through the Southwest, thereby knocking a few things off their bucket list. For Bob, that meant hiking up and down the Grand Canyon in a single day!

In other *HCN* news, one of our Alaska-based contributors, **Julia O'Malley**, won a prestigious James Beard Award in the "Foodways" category for her *HCN* story, "The Teenage Whaler's Tale." The story, which followed one boy's whale hunt, and the social media vitriol that followed it, helped readers understand the importance of

subsistence hunting for Native Alaskan villages.

In June, *HCN* will be participating in a joint presentation, Environmental Justice in the Great Basin, alongside the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada. The panel will address the key issues and battles over the last 40 years as they relate to military and nuclear development and the impacts to rural and native communities, among other topics. Executive Director **Paul Larmer** is moderating the panel. The talk takes place on June 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Crowley Student Union Theater (1664 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada) and is free and open to the public.

New reader **Kate Linehan**, from Paonia, says the whole family is enjoying her subscription, including daughter **Thryn** (pictured), who is absorbing the news in more than one way. Kate and her mother, **Mona**, recently opened Creature Collective on Grand Avenue, a store dedicated to ecologically sustainable products, from natural plant-dyed clothing to bedding plants for the garden.

Finally, we have some corrections to make. From our feature "Cashing in on Standing Rock" (*HCN*, 4/16/18), we incorrectly reported that Michael Wood came to Bismarck, North Dakota, from Baltimore, Maryland. He arrived from Los Angeles. In the story "What to do with an extra billion or two?" (*HCN*, 4/30/18) we incorrectly identified New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall as chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. He is the vice chair.

—Jessica Kutz, for the staff



An astute reader enjoys her mom's new subscription to *High Country News*.
KATE LINEHAN

DEATH IN THE ALPINE

Social media is changing our relationship to risk, with deadly consequences

FEATURE BY SARAH TORY

On July 14 of last year, Peter Doro and Jake Lord joined the Friday afternoon stream of people leaving the sprawling cities of Colorado's Front Range for the mountains. They planned to summit Capitol Peak, a soaring mass of granite 14,130 feet tall near Aspen on the state's Western Slope. They reached Capitol Peak's trailhead late in the day and set off on the 6.5-mile hike to the mountain's base. The sun sank low, filling the sky with streaks of red, purple and orange, and a few cows meandered across the trail, which followed a creek through a sliver of valley that widens abruptly into a vast alpine basin. Capitol Lake lay before them, ringed by the high peaks of the Elk Range, a view so stunning that Doro felt as if he had entered Middle Earth, the setting of J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasy, *Lord of the Rings*.

The Elks are among Colorado's highest and most challenging mountain ranges, with seven of the state's 54 peaks over 14,000 feet. And Capitol Peak is considered the hardest of them all — so difficult, in fact, that the Forest Service posted a sign near the trailhead, cautioning would-be climbers about “down-sloping, loose, rotten and unstable rock” that “kills without warning.”

For Doro, 25, and Lord, 24, both avid outdoorsmen, the sign was little more than a formality. As they hiked, their thoughts were not of death, but of the endless beauty and possibilities that the mountains seemed to hold.

In those mountains, Doro saw everything he missed about his native Colorado. He had recently moved to the Midwest for work, and though his job took him to Oregon frequently, the Cascades never inspired him the way the Rockies did. “There’s something that’s so striking about mountains that tall,” he told me. “Like there are just big adventures everywhere.”

Doro, who competed in triathlons, found the hike to Capitol Lake easy. “What’s the big deal?” he asked Lord jokingly as they neared the lake.

“No, trust me,” Lord replied, “the last two miles will be difficult.”

Neither Doro nor Lord anticipated how difficult their trek would be — or that the mountain they climbed the next day would be so different from what they imagined.

COLORADO'S FOURTEENERS OFFER AN ALLURING MIX of adventure and accessibility: close enough to Denver for a weekend trip, with relatively short hiking approaches, thanks to the abundance of mining roads carved out during the 1800s. Most of the climbs are relatively easy, too; trails are well-marked and routes rarely require ropes or technical mountaineering skills. Lloyd Athearn, the executive director of the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, a trail-building and education nonprofit, calls them “approachable Everests.”

Today, they’ve become a high-altitude fun zone for the growing numbers of people seeking adventure in Colorado’s high peaks, with 311,000 hikers estimated on the fourteeners

in 2016, according to a survey from the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative. The most popular summits are those closer to Denver, like Mount Bierstadt and Grays and Torreys’ twin summits. The Elk Mountain fourteeners see far fewer climbers, and their peaks are among the most dangerous.

Just a few decades ago, few but seasoned mountaineers attempted to climb Capitol Peak. Much of the route involves difficult rock scrambling with a lot of exposure — the kind of terrain where the simplest mistake can be deadly. But the internet has opened up a world of free online guidebooks filled with detailed route descriptions, like 14ers.com, while social media has helped fuel a new appetite for outdoor excitement, broadcast through electrifying GoPro videos and Instagram selfies.

And the consequences of this are becoming increasingly clear: Across the West, more people than ever before are tackling the highest peaks, from Colorado’s fourteeners to Washington’s Mount Rainier. As a result, search and rescue teams are responding to more calls. The mountains are more accessible than ever, and to our wired selves, they often appear less dangerous, too, their risks obscured by an expanding digital universe of information and its strange mix of security and adventure. A world where no edge is too thin and no hold too unstable — where nothing is impossible — and no mountain could ever kill you.

DORO AND LORD ARRIVED AT CAPITOL LAKE AROUND 9:30 P.M.

It was nearly dark. They set up camp on a grassy knoll below Capitol Peak’s massive north face and crawled into their tent to sleep without making dinner. But Lord slept poorly. At 3 a.m., he woke Doro, insisting there was a bear rummaging around outside the tent.

“I hear rustling,” he whispered. Unsettled, they stayed in the tent, debating what to do. Finally, Lord plucked up the courage to stick his head out the door of the tent, shining his headlamp around. There was nothing there — just the coyotes howling and the wind shaking the nearby bushes.

Still, Lord was not satisfied. He wanted to gather their food and hang it in a bear bag — something they should have done before they went to bed. Doro sighed. He was tired, and that was the last thing he felt like doing.

“All right, fine, Jake,” he said. They hauled themselves out of their sleeping bags, threw some energy bars and trail mix into a stuff sack and flung it over a tree 20 feet from the tent. Doro got a blister on his thumb from handling the rope, but at least Lord could get some sleep.

“It was not a good plan,” Doro later told me, referring to their belated bear bag efforts. In hindsight, though, he wondered if perhaps Lord’s anxiety over the nonexistent bear was the mountain sending them a warning that they weren’t quite ready for the climb.

Hikers scramble along the unstable ridge of Capitol Peak, one of the more dangerous mountains in Colorado. According to data collected by the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, fewer than 1,000 people climb the mountain each year. This group included the last people to speak to a couple who died on the peak in August 2017.

KATIE BOTWIN

THE TWO MEN GREW UP IN COLORADO. As a kid, Doro was in the Boy Scouts and later, on the Winter Park ski patrol. He met Lord at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, bonding in shared engineering classes and in the run-down fraternity house where they both lived. But it was in the mountains that they really became friends. Lord, with his wiry frame, preferred rock climbing, while the burlier, 6-foot-5 Doro was more of a hiker. Toward the end of college, Lord began climbing fourteeners, spurred by a mutual friend and classmate, Andy Terhune.

After college, Doro got a job as a project manager at a healthcare software company and moved to Madison, Wisconsin. He often felt homesick for Colorado. He missed its mountains and its culture of “getting after it,” and felt bored and shut in by the city and the gray Midwestern weather. Wisconsin was “a bit depressing,” he told me.

Lord’s life was at a turning point, too: He had recently proposed to his longtime girlfriend and was beginning to think about applying to graduate school. “Everything was looking good,” Doro told me. “He just had so many things going for him.”

So last summer, while traveling for work, Doro impulsively called Lord and proposed stopping off in Colorado. The two friends could spend a weekend in the mountains together, just like old times. Doro suggested hiking to Conundrum Hot Springs, a popular backcountry camping spot near Aspen, and enjoying some easy day hikes.

But Lord wanted to try something more ambitious. The summer before, he and Terhune had climbed North Maroon Peak, a 14,014-foot summit in the Elk Mountains. North Maroon is the deadliest of Colorado’s fourteeners, with 20 climber fatalities between 2000 and 2015. Despite its reputation, Lord had no difficulty reaching the summit. Near the final part of the climb, they reached the crux: a difficult vertical chimney where a fall meant





Peter Doro is shown taking a selfie with Jake Lord on their way up Capitol Peak on July 15, 2017. Photo illustration.

PHOTO: PETER DORO
ILLUSTRATION: BROOKE WARREN

serious injury or death. But Lord found a way around it, a lesser-known route that was much safer.

"It was a classic example of ever-cautious Jake,"

Terhune told me. Their success bolstered Lord's confidence, and by the time Doro called him last summer, a new mountain had entered Lord's imagination: Capitol Peak.

When Doro searched for Capitol Peak on the internet, he found YouTube videos of people making their way across the Knife Edge, a notorious section of the route along a ridge so sharp that most climbers shimmy along the top of it on hands and knees. Other climbers prefer to grab the top of the ridge and shuffle along, using their feet to smear the rock face, above a 1,500-foot drop.

Though Doro was afraid of heights, Lord reassured him and reminded him how triumphant they would feel after the climb. The YouTube videos thrilled Doro, too. "OK, man, I'm in," he told Lord over the phone. When they hung up, Doro sent the harrowing videos to his friends via a messaging app called Snapchat.

"This is what I'm about to do," he messaged them. "It's going to be sick."

ON THE MORNING OF THEIR SUMMIT ATTEMPT, Doro and Lord woke at 5 a.m., after a night of fitful, interrupted sleep, and began hiking quickly towards the base of Capitol Peak, their headlamp beams moving like two bubbles of light suspended in a vast darkness.

At dawn, they crested the saddle that leads to the long summit ridge, where the harder terrain begins, and came across two other climbers feeding a pair of foxes. Doro took a video with his phone to share on Snapchat later.

Social media had become an inseparable part of the two friends' outdoor experiences. Whether it was the YouTube videos of the Knife Edge that first tempted Doro, or the desire to record and share their adventures, the boundaries of their digital world and the "real" world felt increasingly blurred.

In *The Four-Dimensional Human: Ways of Being in the Digital World*, British writer Laurence Scott explains that social media often collapses those boundaries, redefining our own physical limits and the relationship between our bodies and the world around us. Our "everywhere-ness inevitably alters our relationship to those stalwart human aspects of self-containment, remoteness and isolation," he writes. Even in the wildest places, we are connected to a universe of people and information through Instagram and Facebook, while those same apps bring distant landscapes into the comfort of our living rooms.

That can affect people's assessments of how dangerous things are: What once seemed extreme becomes normal if you

look at enough Instagram photos showing other people doing it. Jerry Isaak, a professor at the State University of New York, Plattsburgh, first began studying how the prevalence of social media affects decision-making in remote, high-risk environments a few years ago. In one of his classes, he heard students describing a recent day of backcountry skiing, during which they built a large jump out on a slope. The students spent the day filming each other going off the jump and later posted a 15-second clip of it on YouTube.

What troubled Isaak was less the danger of skiing off jumps in the backcountry than how others might perceive the video. The clip itself represented just a tiny fraction of the day, and Isaak worried that viewers would get a false impression of backcountry skiing as merely a fast-moving series of thrills. The video leaves out the less entertaining parts: the hard falls, the risks and the potential avalanche danger.

Later, Doro realized that he had come to see fourteeners like Mount Bierstadt, a popular mountain on Colorado's Front Range, as too easy, the kind of "piddly hike you take your aunt on." Capitol Peak, in contrast, was a real climb — the kind of mountain where a summit selfie or video of the Knife Edge traverse would attract people's notice and elicit admiring and envious comments.

If mountain climbing has traditionally reflected the most heroic versions of ourselves — triumphant and invincible — social media has amplified that projection.

Lots of people had climbed Capitol. Doro told himself, "If some dude from Kansas can do it, then I can do it." His fear of the peak fell away, replaced by glowing images of success.

AFTER THE SADDLE, THE NORMAL ROUTE UP CAPITOL DIPS DOWN to the east and then crosses a steep rocky slope, before rejoining the main ridge near K2, a nearby thirteener. But just past the saddle, Lord decided to veer off the main trail, which was covered in old snow and hard to follow, and to stay on the ridge instead.

When it came to making decisions about the mountains, Doro had always deferred to his friend. Lord was more of a planner: Days before a big climb, he checked weather forecasts and spent hours reading over route descriptions on 14ers.com. He would look at the dozens of pictures, taken every 400 to 500 feet up the route, which you can print out and use as navigational cues. For first-time climbers, this information is especially useful, breaking down vast, complex landscapes into simple steps — like reading the directions about how to assemble a bookcase from IKEA.

Although Lord was no amateur, he consulted these route instructions and the accompanying pictures religiously at every intersection, cross-referencing them with a topographic map and the altimeter reading on his watch. On another climb, Terhune recalled, Lord walked almost a quarter of a mile back down a trail to make sure the bridge they had crossed looked like the one in the picture.

"He always wanted to know where he was going, without a doubt," Terhune told me.

So when Lord said they should take the ridgeline, Doro followed. Later, as they picked their way over large boulders, Lord told him that they were not on the standard route. But it was fine, he said; the ridge was still a route.

Doro found the terrain increasingly terrifying. The ridge was a massive pile of rocks stacked like Jenga pieces with hundreds of feet of air on either side. Lord, comfortable with the exposure and delicate climbing maneuvers, had no trouble. At one point, Doro pulled on a large rock that came loose and nearly hit him. “That freaked both of us out,” Doro recalls.

After the near-miss, Lord took the lead, while Doro followed, reminding himself to keep three points of contact on the rock at all times. They stuck to the eastern side of the ridge, which was less exposed and felt safer, traversing along the side of it. Lord moved deftly through the maze of rocks, often stopping to wait for his friend. Despite the stomach-turning drops on either side of them, Lord was calm and confident; he had done this kind of climbing before.

JUST AFTER 7:30 A.M., THEY WERE NOT EVEN HALFWAY to the summit. Ahead lay about a mile of ridgeline, with loose and stable rocks all jumbled together. It was nearly impossible to tell them apart, so Lord moved with extreme caution. He put his hand on a rock in front of him to steady himself while he moved carefully around it.

Doro was thinking about the weather. Summer in the Elks is mercurial: Within minutes, skies darken to the color of lead, bringing sheets of rain and flashes of lightning to the high peaks. But the morning of July 15 was windless and blue, without a cloud in sight. Doro marveled at their luck — they were both climbing in T-shirts. At that moment, he thought, they could not have picked a better day to climb Capitol Peak.

The next moment, the rock shifted, dislodging itself from the ridge and toppling onto Lord. Doro watched in shock as the rock sent his friend tumbling down the mountain like a rag doll. Without thinking, he rushed down the steep slope to the spot where Lord had come to halt — roughly 150 feet below

— scrambling faster than the treacherous terrain should have allowed. He knew that Lord had to be injured, but told himself that everything would be OK; people get hurt on fourteeners all the time.

But when Doro reached Lord, he was unresponsive. He tried to rouse his friend and then to figure out what his injuries were. Doro’s first aid training had taught him to stabilize the spine, which he did, working swiftly, but as he did so, he realized that Lord’s skull was severely injured. His friend’s right arm was out of its socket, his shinbone poking through his skin.

Not knowing what else to do, he pulled out his cellphone. At least he had a bit of reception, he thought. He dialed 911, describing his situation and requesting help. Then he started doing CPR on Lord. Soon, another climber appeared on the scene and began to help. But the breaths weren’t going in, and Doro grew more and more frantic.

“With my first aid training, I had an inkling about things,” he told me. “(Search and rescue) said they were coming, but with brain damage, the window obviously is a few minutes — half an hour tops.”

The climber came over and gently tried to tell Doro that CPR was useless. But Doro refused to listen. If search and rescue could just arrive soon, he thought, maybe there was a chance that Lord could survive.

The wait was agonizing. “Time was passing in a weird way,” Doro told me. After 30 minutes, he stopped performing CPR and let the other climber lead him away from the scene.

The rescue helicopter landed on the ridge above the fallen climber at 9:37 a.m., two hours after Doro’s call. Doro watched as the rescuers began down-climbing from the helicopter to where Lord lay. At 9:46, one of the paramedic-trained rescuers noted that Lord’s condition was “inconsistent with life.” Doro saw them pull out an oblong red bag, wrapping it around Lord’s body, and he went over to them to be near his friend. When it was time to load Lord’s body into the helicopter sling, the volunteers and the other climber had to pull Doro away from Lord.

Above him, people continued along the ridge towards Capitol’s summit, as Doro watched his friend spin upwards into the sky.

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The Mountain Rescue Aspen team prepares to haul the body of Jeremy Shull off Capitol Peak via a federal fire helicopter in August 2017. The rescuers chose this form of extraction because the body was in a precarious place that was not safely accessible. Shull was the second person to die on Capitol Peak in 2017.

COURTESY OF MOUNTAIN
RESCUE ASPEN

A map shows the approximate locations where five bodies were recovered on Capitol Peak in 2017, based on incident reports from Mountain Rescue Aspen and Pitkin County Sheriff.

GOOGLE EARTH
HEADSHOTS: PONDEROSA VALLEY
FUNERALS, INSTAGRAM AND
GOFUNDME

A LITTLE OVER THREE WEEKS AFTER LORD DIED on Capitol Peak, Jeremy Shull, a 35-year-old from Parker, Colorado, died after falling 200 feet off the east side of the Knife Edge while ascending the same peak. He was an experienced climber, an addiction counselor, married with a 2-month-old son.

Two weeks later, Ryan Marcil, 26, and Carlin Brightwell, 27, a young couple who lived in Aspen, died after falling from somewhere above Capitol's north face. According to witness reports, the pair reached the summit around 11:30 a.m. and stayed there for about an hour, chatting with another couple they met during the climb. Hoping to descend as quickly as possible, they discussed taking "the other route down," though a member of the other party told them they would need a rope and climbing equipment. Brightwell, who had hiked around 20 fourteeners, snapped a photo of Marcil on the summit. Two days later, they had still not returned, and Brightwell's sister reported them missing. They were found at the base of Capitol's north face. The Pitkin County Sheriff's Office concluded that the couple had attempted to descend by an apparent shortcut that ends in a cliffband.

On Aug. 27, two days after the memorial service for Marcil and Brightwell, Zackariah White, a 21-year-old from Pine, Colorado, was descending Capitol with his partner late in the afternoon when the two of them got into a disagreement over a potential shortcut back to Capitol Lake. According to police reports, White looked down the north face, claiming that he thought he saw people hiking down that way. His partner pleaded with him to stay on the main route, but White took off down a steep rocky chute. He never made it back to camp. Search and rescue volunteers discovered his body the next day in a snowfield below Capitol's north face. Responders from Mountain Rescue Aspen said he fell between 600 and 700 feet. Following the accident, The Pitkin County Sheriff's Office released a statement clarifying that there is no alternate hiking route down the north face of Capitol Peak. "If there was a safe shortcut, it would be the standard route," it said.

Altogether, Capitol Peak claimed the lives of five people in six weeks — an unprecedented number in the mountain's history. The string of tragedies so close



Jeremy Shull, 35

Fell 200 feet from the Knife Edge Aug. 6. Rescue teams waited out weather before recovering him via helicopter on Aug. 9.



Jake Lord, 25

Fell about 150 feet while hiking up a ridge off the "standard route" on July 16.



Ryan Marcil, 26

Fell while trying to descend the north face after summiting Aug. 20 with Carlin Brightwell. Witnesses reported hearing rockfall.



Carlin Brightwell, 27

Fell while trying to descend the north face after summiting on Aug. 20 with Ryan Marcil. Witnesses reported hearing rockfall.



Zackariah White, 21

Fell on Capitol Peak after separating from his partner and choosing to descend the north face on Aug. 26.

Location based on rescuers' description in the incident report.

together left many people reeling.

"It felt like we were losing someone weekly," Karen Schroyer, the Forest Service District Ranger for the Aspen-Sopris District, told me.

Jeff Edelson, the former president of Mountain Rescue Aspen and one of the organization's current rescue leaders, told me they typically see between one and three fatalities in the Pitkin County backcountry over the course of the summer. Never had they seen so many deaths in a single season on the same peak. "We never anticipated having to respond to something like this," he said.

The sheriff's office, Mountain Rescue Aspen and the Forest Service began discussing how to prevent another summer like 2017. Many of their conversations centered on the irony that even though people have access to an almost infinite amount of information about Colorado's high peaks online, that material does not always make them safer.

"In some respects, there's too much info out there," Schroyer told me. "Someone climbs Capitol and they post it and 200 of their friends see it." But she wonders how many of the people who are then drawn to those mountains have the information, skills and awareness necessary to climb safely.

"You read about people who just didn't seem to have any comprehension of what they were biting off, and that's who we need to focus on," said Athearn. Although both Lord and Doro had experience on fourteeners, neither believed that climbing one could be so dangerous or that people could die on Capitol Peak. "That's a statistic I wouldn't want to know going up," Doro told me. "But it's a stat that probably should have played into my decision-making about which mountain I chose."

To help reverse that trend, the Colorado Fourteener Initiative is putting together an educational video series about the more challenging fourteeners, which will run on YouTube. Mountain Rescue Aspen will host a series of workshops on the Front Range this year about how to climb fourteeners more safely as well as field sessions for people who want to learn the basics of climbing through steeper, exposed mountain terrain.

But for today's social media-connected outdoor enthusiasts, the most effective education tool might be the same one that

pushes so many to take risks. A growing number of sponsored and recreational athletes are using Instagram to share their stories about accidents in the backcountry in the hopes that others may learn from their mistakes. Take Colter Hinchliffe, a professional skier from Aspen, who was backcountry skiing with some friends in January 2017 when an avalanche released, dragging a member of his group through some trees and breaking his leg. After the accident, Hinchliffe posted a picture of it on his Instagram feed, with a long caption outlining what happened and how difficult it was to carry out the rescue. "I only share this in hopes that you can get a taste of our experience of how quickly things go from good to bad to terrifying, and learn from it," he wrote.

Internet guidebooks like 14ers.com could play an important role, too. The site now has an open forum called "Climbing accidents: info and analysis," where people can post information related to fourteener accidents. In early September, someone began a thread titled, "Capitol's Death Route," with a picture of a pseudo trail leading down from the standard route into the so-called "death gully" where mountain rescue volunteers believe one of the tragedies on Capitol occurred last summer.

"Gives me chills looking at that," one person commented. "It looks so inviting. ..."

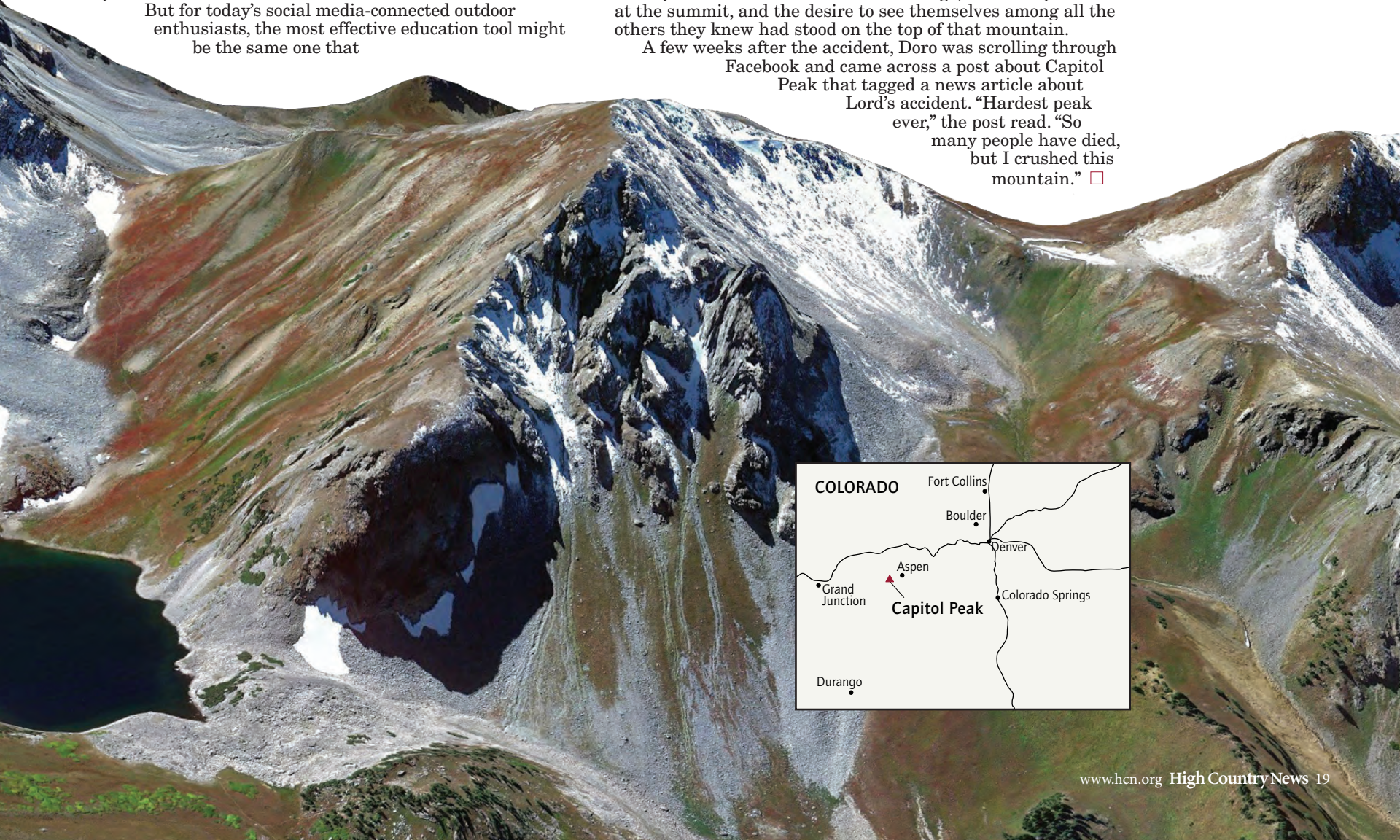
AFTER THE ACCIDENT, Doro went to his parents' home in Littleton, Colorado. He spent a week there before returning to work, unable to think about much at all. But later, he would replay the accident in his mind and wonder how things might have gone differently. Maybe if they had been roped together, or had taken a different route, or were wearing helmets. ... But they still would have encountered loose rock and the same exposure. Sometimes, the margins for error are so small.

"To a certain degree, it's nothing that you can control," Doro told me. "You don't expect a giant rock to be loose. You expect that if you grab something as big as your body, it's going to stay put."

And he thought about why they had chosen Capitol Peak, about the hype surrounding it. They were so focused on the descriptions — the thrill of the Knife Edge, the endorphin rush at the summit, and the desire to see themselves among all the others they knew had stood on the top of that mountain.

A few weeks after the accident, Doro was scrolling through Facebook and came across a post about Capitol Peak that tagged a news article about Lord's accident. "Hardest peak ever," the post read. "So many people have died, but I crushed this mountain." □

But for today's social-media connected outdoor enthusiasts, the most effective education tool might be the same one pushing people to take risks.





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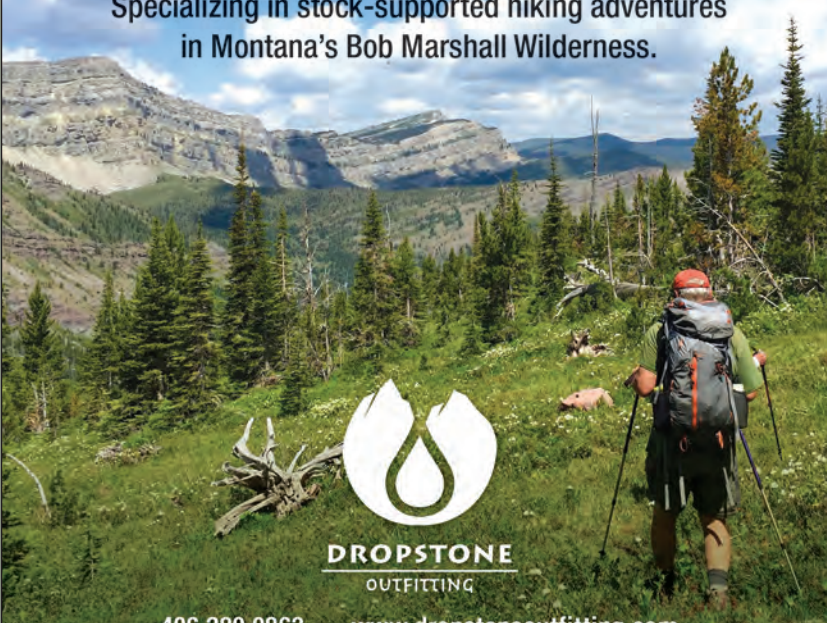


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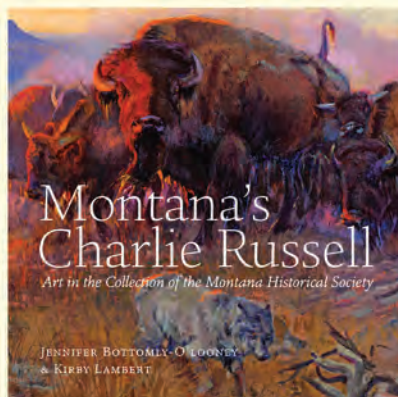
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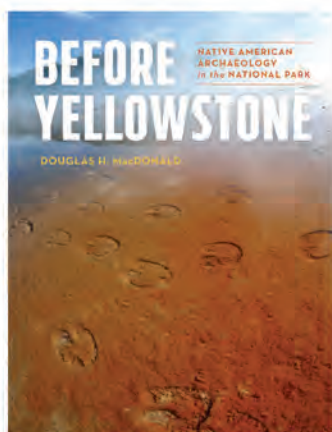
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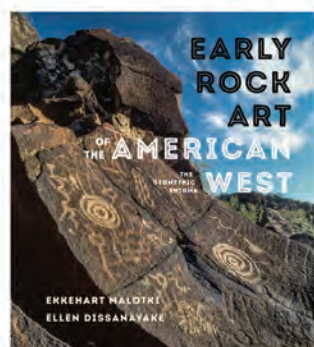
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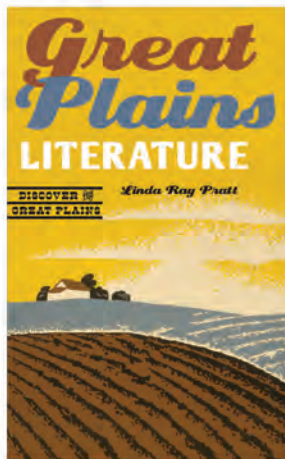
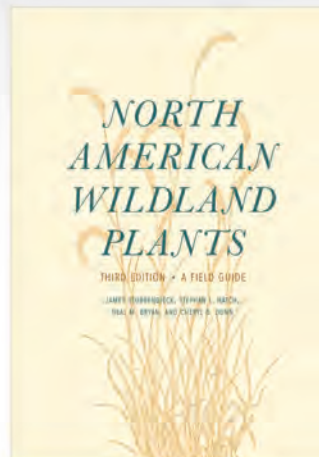
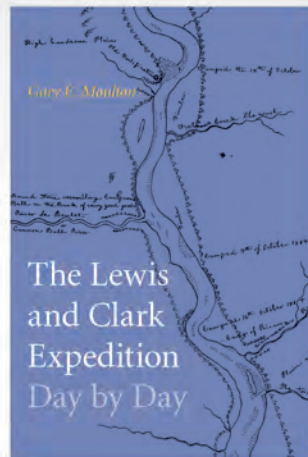


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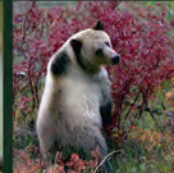
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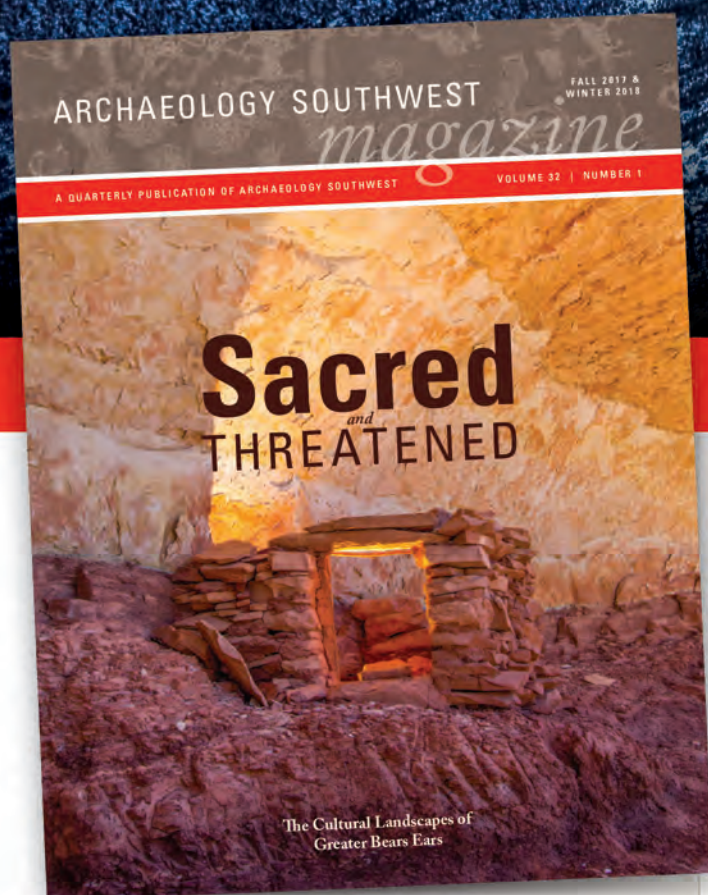










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**Sacred and Threatened:
The Cultural Landscapes of Greater Bears Ears**

Archaeology Southwest Magazine
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Issue editors:
R. E. Burrillo and Benjamin A. Bellorado

64 pages, full color

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March, 2018

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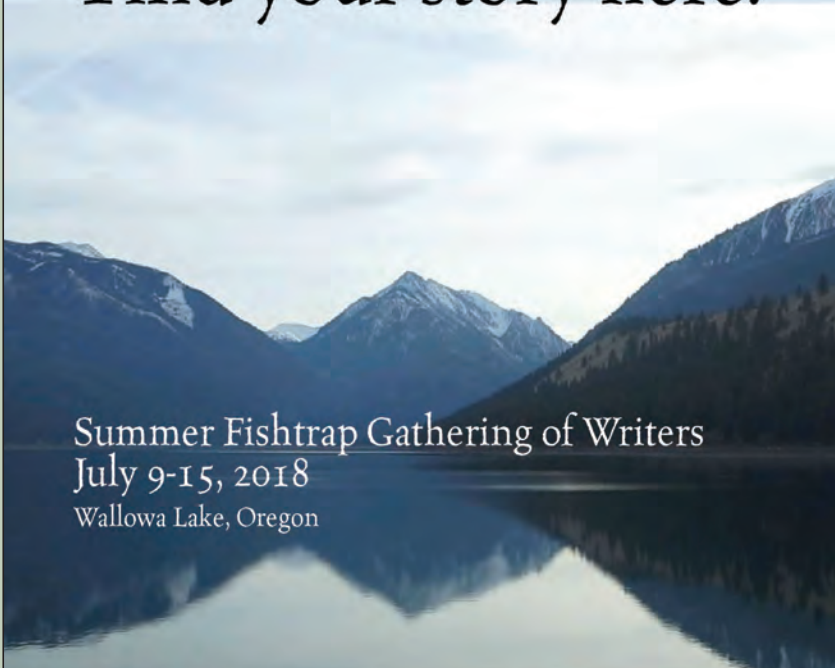
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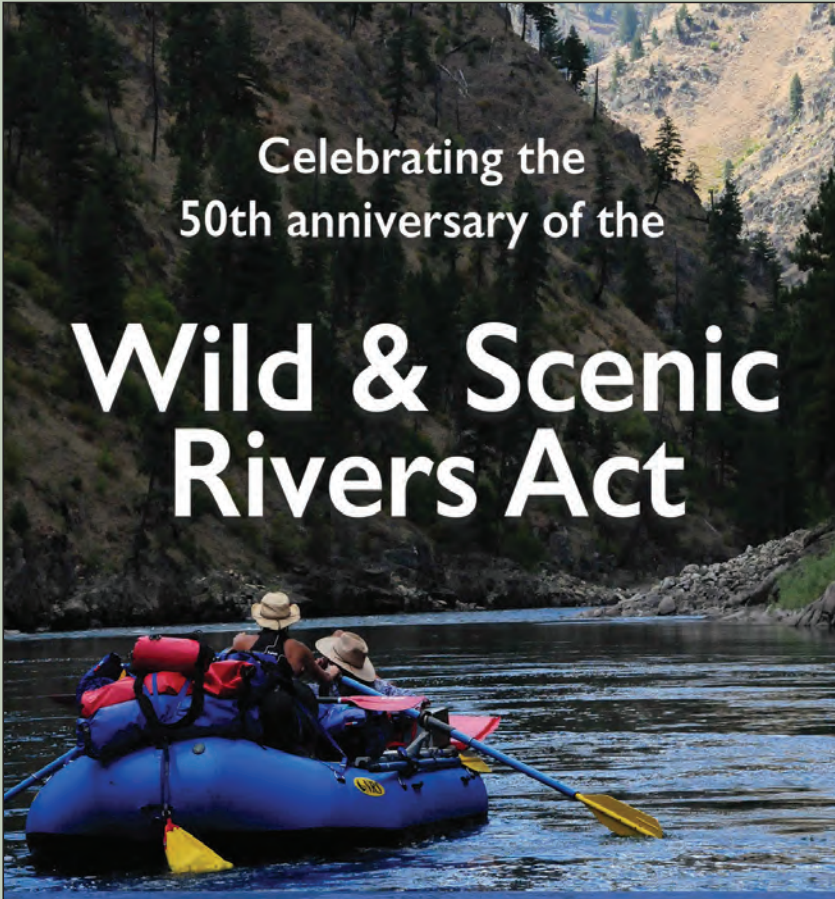
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The idea that outdoor recreation leads to meaningful conservation rests on a very big 'if'

ESSAY BY ETHAN LINCK

THE TWIN SUMMITS of the mountain that U.S. Geological Survey Capt. George Davidson called “The Brothers” are 60 miles from Seattle on the far side of Puget Sound. From my office in the biology department at the University of Washington, I can just see their upper reaches, a sliver of alpine splendor beyond the snarl of traffic and slow waltz of the city’s construction cranes. For years, the view was a constant temptation, and on a clear autumn afternoon not long ago, I gave in to it, resolving to skip work the next day and go for a run.

I texted my friend Richard, and by 8 a.m. the following morning, we were jogging up switchbacks through Douglas fir dotted with darkly gleaming rhododendrons. Carrying carbon-fiber running vests, energy gel packets and 10-ounce windbreakers, we climbed quickly and had soon left the woods behind to enter a high domain of rock and dew and lichen. This late in a dry year there was no snow in the gully leading to the summit, so we found ourselves negotiating fluid scree, leaping between larger islands of rotten volcanic rock. We moved fast in heavy fog, alone among wheeling ravens and silent stone buttresses. High on the pleasure of movement, the thrill of exposure, and the vastness of the mountain, we were *stoked*.

Stoke: North American slang, with origins in surfing. These days, we’re stoked on gear, stoked on activities, and stoked on content. More than mere jargon, stoke has become an ethos, claiming the best life is one lived with unbridled enthusiasm and the uncomplicated pursuit of experience. For those of us who identify with modern outdoor recreation culture, stoke has increasingly begun to mediate our relationship with the natural world.

I’ve spent a lot of my adult life in search of stoke, and like a lot of recreationists, I have implicitly linked my passion for skiing, climbing and running with a passion for conservation and environmental stewardship. But after accepting this premise for most of a decade, I am no longer so sure. Can outdoor recreation really support conservation for the long-term health of the land, not



just human access? In the face of the daunting planetary environmental challenges ahead, can stoke really save us? I suspect the answer is a hollow *no*.

THERE IS A QUOTE by Edward Abbey that I am convinced will outlast all his others. Long after the stoic beauty of *Desert Solitaire* fades into oblivion, after the ribaldry of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is discarded, a knotty paragraph from a pair of speeches in the late 1970s (first put to print in this magazine) will persist against the odds. It will appear on aluminum mugs with built-in carabiners and in ornate text on Sierra Club calendars, and ever adorn the Instagram captions that have become the *raison d'être* for people who drive \$65,000 vans and covet long-exposure shots of illuminated tents beneath the Milky Way:

“Do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am — a reluctant enthusiast ... a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it. While you can. While it's still here.”

It is very much Abbey in tone and in its focus on paradoxes, and is as good a monument to the man as any. But I think its continuing popularity will have less to do with that and more to do with how well it articulates the modern idea that recreation can itself be something of a conservation act.

I first encountered the idea as a college student, and it felt like a revelation. It was as if my own skiing, running and climbing were suddenly infused with righteous purpose. I wasn't alone: From the social media posts of brand ambassadors to the mission statements of conservation NGOs to outdoor industry fact sheets, the link between outdoor recreation and land conservation was widely reinforced. Ultimately, however, this same relentless positivity began to arouse my suspicions. Wasn't it just a bit convenient that the goals of an \$887 billion industry so perfectly aligned with a major goal of environmentalism —

that what was good for business was good for the Earth? At some point along the way, the scientist in me got the better of the recreationist, and I began to wonder whether any evidence existed to support Abbey's premise. Was it really more important to enjoy the land than to fight for it? And if so, important to whom?

I was not the first to ponder this. In the early 1970s, Riley Dunlap and Robert Heffernan, two sociologists from Washington State University, became interested in a closely related question. They wanted to know how an emphasis on outdoor recreation in society might relate to the emergence of the burgeoning environmental movement and “the corollary rise of public concern with environmental quality.” Using data from a large survey of Washington residents about their priorities for public funding, Dunlap and Heffernan tested three questions: whether outdoor recreation was correlated with “environmental concern,” or how important respondents thought it was to address contemporary environmental problems; whether the difference between “appreciative” sports like cross-country skiing and “consumptive” sports like hunting made a difference; and whether recreation was correlated with greater concern for local environmental issues affecting recreation access, versus distant, more abstract concerns (like tropical deforestation).

The pair's findings, published in 1975 in the journal *Rural Sociology*, were mixed. On the whole, outdoor recreation was only weakly correlated with environmental concern, and even this depended on the type of recreation and the particular environmental problem. People who hiked or hunted, for example, showed some concern for protecting endangered wildlife, but people who visited national parks did not. Campers were concerned with agricultural pollution, but no group was particularly concerned with industrial pollution. (This was the 1970s, after all.)

Dunlap and Heffernan's second and third hypotheses, meanwhile, were strongly supported. Other than the issue of wildlife protection, participants in appreciative activities always showed higher levels of concern for environmental issues

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There's a certain irony in complaining about tax burden when your business model depends on resources under public ownership.

than participants in consumptive activities. And in all cases, survey respondents cared more about environmental issues that affected their choice of recreation than issues that did not.

Forty years out, this paper has proven highly influential, producing a cascade of follow-up case studies that continues to this day. If anything can be generalized about all this research, it is that the conclusions vary, but that recreation does less than you might expect for environmental concerns. Recreation *was not* a good predictor of environmental attitudes in northern Wisconsin, or in Louisiana, two studies from the late 1970s found. It either was, or only maybe was, in Pennsylvania, according to independent 1998 studies, but it definitely (albeit weakly) was in the nearby Shawangunk Mountains of New York, a 2013 study concluded. On balance, a 2009 review in the *Journal of Experiential Education* decided that the jury was still out: “Whether a person recreates in the outdoors does not alone predict his or her environmental attitudes.”

What does? Discouragingly, the answer appears to be our identities, politics and circumstances. In many studies testing Dunlap and Heffernan’s hypotheses, socioeconomic variables such as gender, income, education and size of home municipality often had more to do with a person’s attitude toward the environment than his or her outdoor recreational activities. This helps explain why so many beautiful trails are strewn with hiker trash, or why, in the middle of a forest glade, you’ll find a faded can of Coors. It is why for every pretty place you visit, you’ll find an enraged leave-no-trace extremist, and why few people show much compunction about idling their cars at the entrance of Arches National Park, pumping 20 pounds of carbon dioxide per gallon into the desert air.

FOR INDIVIDUALS, THEN, STOKE SEEMS like a shaky bet for effecting the dramatic change necessary to halt accelerating ecological collapse. But maybe I’m being unfair. After all, systemic change requires organized effort, and the outdoor recreation industry — with its focus groups and lobbyists and economic heft — might channel stoke into positive environmental action. I once believed this, but I’m no longer convinced.

This is partly because outdoor recreation is far from unified in its goals and values. When Dunlap and Heffernan conducted their study, a clearer distinction existed in the kinds of activities people undertook. Appreciative activities included hiking, backpacking and photography. Consumptive activities included hunting and fishing. But that picture has become a lot more complicated. Not only has typically appreciative activity become a consumptive burden on the natural world, but consumptive activities have become more appreciative. Is tenkara flyfishing — a variant of the sport originally developed in Japan — consumptive? Are full-suspension mountain biking and steep powder skiing really appreciative in the same way as birdwatching?

Despite these ambiguities, the political divide related to them remains distinct. In the fight over Bears Ears and other national monument reductions, the appreciative sector of the outdoor industry has firmly aligned itself against President Donald Trump’s “energy first” (clearly consumptive) agenda. After the president issued an executive order reducing the size of Bears Ears by 85 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante by half, the outdoor retailer Patagonia took the unprecedented (and widely covered) step of replacing its homepage with a stark message: “The President Stole Your Land.” Patagonia (currently an advertiser in *High Country News* whose founder, Yvon Chouinard, is an annual donor) called the reduction “the largest elimination of protected land in American history.”

At my desk with its view of The Brothers, I cheered them on. And yet, because Patagonia’s cultural reach exceeds its market share, I’ve begun to think that such bold politics do a lot of indirect PR work for less altruistic players. How much are most of the other brands that cater to appreciative recreationists actually contributing to conservation? (*See related story, page 4.*)

There are few appropriate data available to directly address this question. But there’s suggestive evidence that while the outdoor recreation industry is willing to take a public stand for wild places — to pledge its commitment to conservation as a political badge — it remains unwilling to pay for that commitment on any terms but its own. Take, for instance, the Outdoor Industry Association’s staunch opposition to an excise tax to directly fund conservation. (Though OIA’s members include businesses catering to hunters and anglers who are affected by traditional excise taxes on ammunition and tackle, the list is dominated by “appreciative” gear brands.) In a dedicated page on its website, the group claims that “exceptionally high and disproportionate import tariffs ... on everything from apparel and equipment to footwear and backpacks” make up the difference, and that these tariffs end up in the reserves of the U.S. Treasury, where they may eventually support “the Department of the Interior (DOI), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and other federal land and water management agencies.”

There’s a certain irony in complaining about tax burden when your business model depends on resources under public ownership, and the full statement’s elusive language doesn’t incline me to take its words at face value. At best, the OIA’s approach seems to be a wildly inefficient, insufficient way to channel funding into conservation.

BY CITING ITS INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS to federal agencies with widely varied missions and management agendas, the Outdoor Industry Association inadvertently raises a thorny question. That is: What are we conserving in the first place? Should we fight for public lands because they provide us with recreation opportunities, or because they support biodiversity? Should we only protect those plants and animals that directly benefit us or that we find beautiful — or should we fight for the entire community of life? The field of conservation biology tells us that long-term ecological stability requires the latter. But stoke fundamentally centers on the self and the quality of human experience, and thus has no intrinsic stake in biodiversity or ecosystem stability. More than anything else about recreation culture and its relationship to conservation, this troubles me.

For even if outdoor industry groups manage to engage in some political battles, or kick some money toward environmental protection, recreationist-driven conservation has historically failed to align with the principles of conservation biology. That’s largely because of the emphasis on awe-inspiring scenery at the expense of biodiversity-rich lowlands, and wildlife management that favors prey species at the expense of ecosystems. This is especially true in the mountainous West.

The Brothers are an apt example. Mount Edward and Mount Arthur are located on the eastern edge of Olympic National Forest, which, combined with the adjacent Olympic National Park, comprises nearly 1.5 million acres of federal land in the Lower 48’s northwest corner. Together, they represent an important landscape in the history of U.S. conservation. As Richard and I ran up the massif’s southern summit, we passed through an ecosystem profoundly shaped by the interests of industry — outdoor recreation and others. We began our climb in depleted, second-growth forest far below the wilderness boundary. This was not by chance: Nearly all the commercially valuable trees on the Peninsula were excluded from the boundaries of the Olympic Forest Reserve, the predecessor to today’s protected areas. This commercially valuable lowland acreage was in part given to Northern Pacific Railroad in exchange for economically useless but scenic, high-elevation holdings on nearby Mount Rainier in the Cascades. Such trades demonstrate a bias towards rock and ice in national parks and wilderness areas, what the Park Service itself admits is an overrepresentation of “scenic alpine vistas ... compared with low-elevation areas with higher primary production, species diversity and richness, and complex ecosystem structure.”

Less visible to us but no less profound were the management decisions made on behalf of the area’s first European



TIM MATSUI

recreationists: elk hunters. When the rugged core of the region was set aside for preservation by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, it was largely intended as a reserve for the breeding grounds of the Olympic elk. For Roosevelt, preservation of this game species was incompatible with the presence of wolves, and by 1920, the western gray wolf had been extirpated. What happened next is a familiar story in the West: Rebounding elk populations put a heavy burden on black cottonwood and bigleaf maple, and their decline in turn led to increased erosion and widening riverbanks. The Olympics today are undeniably a less complex, less stable ecosystem than they were prior to European colonization.

It is tempting to think of these anecdotes as belonging to a less enlightened era. Today, of course, the Park Service and its counterparts are staffed by ecologists and conservation biologists, who, though constrained by our small and bitter politics, largely work with honor and diligence to manage lands for their long-term benefit. Yet there are clear modern analogues. Non-native mountain goats now roam the La Sals, bolstering Utah's coffers with funds from expensive hunting permit lotteries, despite evidence the species harm native alpine vegetation. And the Idaho Fish and Game commissioner recently said he believes wolves "hurt" elk numbers, despite an obvious ecological relationship millions of years old.

There's also little to suggest that appreciative recreation will expand beyond its fixation on rock and ice. The highly biodiverse but somewhat uncharismatic Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, facing similar threats of reduction from the Trump administration, has received a fraction of the attention from industry groups that the iconic, climbable, bikeable sandstone of Bears Ears has.

WHAT, THEN, ARE WE TO DO? Lock ourselves indoors and despair? I don't think so. For while recreation alone may be a poor way to instill environmental ethics, it's a good place to start —

emphasis here on "place." By developing what sociologists call *place attachment* — a sense of identity and dependence on local landscapes and the ways they enrich our lives — we can move beyond the myopic view of the natural world as a playground, and towards something more sustainable and morally defensible.

In fact, there's evidence from a diversity of studies (in the U.S., Japan, Europe and elsewhere) that place attachment may be the only thing that cuts across socioeconomic divides to predict environmentally friendly behavior. At least some of this research has also found that dedicated, regular participation in outdoor recreation can help us develop this connection. This gives me hope that a different outdoor recreation culture, one that emphasized the pleasure of knowing the wild nearby, could be a powerful force in building these links. For as much as we need arguments for self-willed nature that invoke Wallace Stegner's "geography of hope" and the spiritual reserves of wilderness beyond the horizon, we also need daily practices that form bonds with places that are the backdrops to our lives.

Three hours after leaving the car, Richard and I broke out above the inversion onto the top of Mount Edward. Basking in sunlight as the Olympics put on a vertiginous tease through tatters of cloud, I felt there as if there was nothing better to be doing in the entire world. There is a poetry to the movement of human bodies through landscapes, a joy and beauty that are their own worthwhile ends. As Abbey would have put it: We were enjoying ourselves, with our brains in our heads and our heads firmly attached to our bodies, active and alive.

On the eastern horizon, Seattle was shedding its own layer of morning fog, its familiar landmarks glittering above the waters of Puget Sound. We turned and began to careen downhill, our elation at learning to know a new corner of home as powerful as the brisk westerly cracking open the great gray bowl of the Northwestern sky. It was a feeling related to, but distinct from, stoke. □

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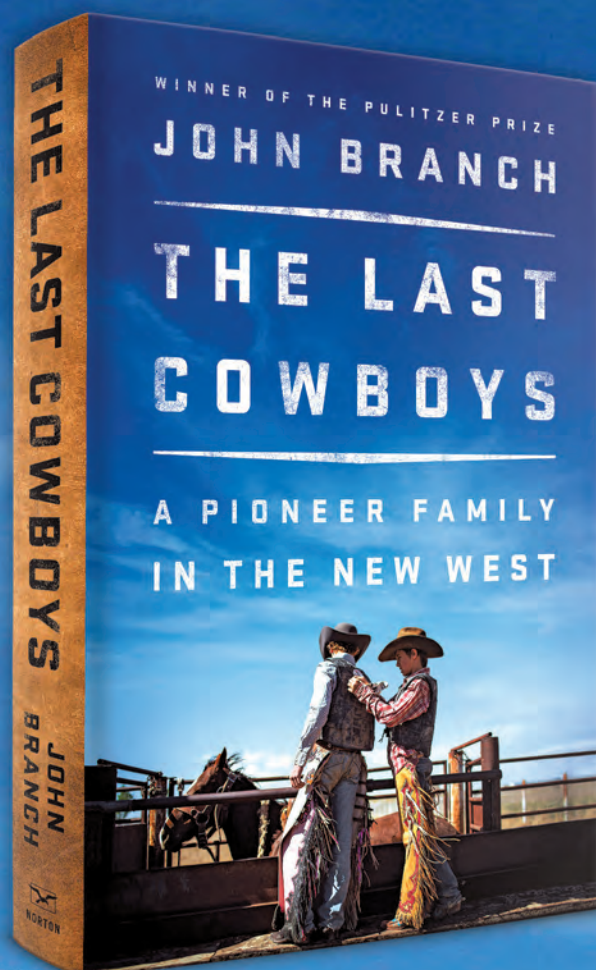
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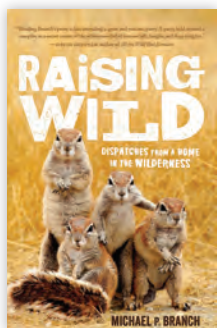
Wildness for the next generation

Two new books explain what we're passing on to our children



Wildness: Relations of People and Place

Gavin Van Horn (editor), John Hausdoerffer (editor)
272 pages, softcover: \$30.
University of Chicago Press, 2017.



Raising Wild: Dispatches from a Home in the Wilderness

Michael Branch
320 pages, softcover: \$16.95.
Roost, 2017.

Wilderness and the American Mind: Fifth Edition

Roderick Frazier Nash and Char Miller
440 pages, softcover: \$25.
Yale University Press, 2014.

Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature

William Cronon
560 pages, softcover: \$21.95.
W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Last year, I entered the wilderness of fatherhood. When my daughter was 6 months old, my wife, Sarah, and I brought her to a small cabin I built in Colorado's Rocky Mountains when I was younger. Here on a battered old mining claim, as I built my cabin out of repurposed lumber and sheet metal, I began to question the traditional view of wilderness as something removed from humanity. At a time when so little remains untouched by humans, but when I also hope to raise my daughter among wild things, becoming a father has complicated those ideas.

Like a lot of people, I began as a wilderness purist. In the early 1990s, exploring the nearby Fossil Ridge Wilderness, I first read Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind*, and I advocated, like Nash, for America to continue setting aside designated wilderness. Later, as a trail builder in Washington's Glacier Peaks Wilderness, I recoiled at William Cronon's *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, which asks readers to decide "Nature or people?" and argues that "legislating humans out of the wilderness is no solution to our environmental problems." But over that summer, amid jagged snowcapped peaks, I began to think humans have a place in wilderness. After all, my Pulaski dug trails, my boots were trampling, and my tent was staked for weeks in places where I was asked to remain a visitor.

Years later, holding my 6-month-old daughter on our cabin porch, pointing out gray jays in pines beside old silvermine tailings, I realized I had never fully reconciled my competing views on wilderness. What, I wondered, will I teach Winter Eve about how humans and wilderness might co-exist? I found help in two recent books: *Wildness: Relations of People & Place*, edited by Gavin Van Horn and John Hausdoerffer, and *Raising Wild: Dispatches from a Home in the Wilderness*, by Michael Branch. Both explore and complicate the idea of wilderness.

In *Wildness*, a collection of 25 essays and one poem, the reader is asked to consider wildness in four distinct ways: first, "wisdom of the wild," including wild species, wild processes and wilderness in its general sense; second, the "working wild," how humans work the land; third, the "urban wild," how cities and suburbs might become "full of wild creatures, habitats, and possibilities"; finally, the "planetary wild," to imagine "wild futures in the making." *Wildness* argues Americans should continue "wilderness zoning on public lands, especially to curb mass extinctions and to limit our fever for turning life into commodity," but, in his epilogue, Hausdoerffer tells his



A mother with two young children on the shores of Long Lake in the John Muir Wilderness in California.

RUSS BISHOP

daughter that wilderness is more than a designation to keep humans out. Rather, he suggests, she should understand that these areas "come from our hope to share the land with all the other species with which we evolved." Our job, he says, is to become "wild partners" with the land, and so enhance our "shared self-will."

Raising Wild begins where *Wildness* ends, exploring the intersection between wildness, home and fatherhood. This book is for those who long to "raise their children out in this open wilderness," which is what Sarah and I are trying to do. Whereas *Wildness* looks for ways to expand how humans envision wilderness, *Raising Wild* expands on who might enter it. Wilderness, Branch writes, too often "features men, often operating in solitude, removing themselves from the sphere of home and children." Branch's wilderness, on the other hand, includes his wife and two daughters. After summing Moonrise Mountain, Nevada, with one of his daughters, Branch writes, "I looked down at our little home, a small island in a vast sage-brush ocean. ...

In that moment it occurred to me that maybe Moonrise actually was my home mountain. Our home." Wilderness teaches his daughters things that he cannot, Branch says. If we "assume that the wild does not exist within the family — or that the family cannot exist within the wild — we radically limit our conception of what wildness means and so also limit what it can teach us."

It has been 25 years since I read *Wilderness and the American Mind*. I have gone from trail-builder to solitary cabin-dweller to husband and father. Now, as I carry Winter Eve across our spring hillside, I want my daughter to know the wilderness outside our cabin, and the wildness within each of us. And that is why on my cabin's rough-hewn shelves, *Wildness* and *Raising Wild* have found a home beside my *Colorado Trail Guidebook*, there to teach me to live beside wild lands, to turn toward wildness, in partnership with my wife and our daughter, so that we may learn from her (and our) native self-will.

BY SEAN PRENTISS

Jet lag

Air travel is a void of nothingness

I was sitting in a hard, spine-crumpling seat in an airport somewhere, one of the seven I'd pass through during a four-day journey from my current residence in Bulgaria to the East Coast of the U.S., and eventually on to my hometown in southwestern Colorado, thinking about the insipid quote I'd seen on a poster in a dentist's office: "It's the journey, not the destination, that counts."

I think it was the Charlotte airport, but I don't really know. It just as easily could have been Hartford, or Newark, or Dallas-Fort Worth. They all are populated by the same categories of humans: Dudes in suits striding purposefully along gleaming floors, coffee in one hand, roller bag in the other; families in flip-flops staring at the flight monitor, trying to

decrepit car or another, perhaps most memorably an old International Harvester pickup. My brother and I rode in the back, rain or shine, wind whipping through our long, bowl-cut hair as we inhaled the scent of piñon, the electric-blood whiff of first rain on hot pavement or sandstone and, of course, burnt oil.

After we pulled over and set up camp, maybe in Utah's Canyon Country, I'd stop and look up whenever I heard the dull roar of the jets flying overhead, glimmering like little diamonds in the deepening blue as they caught the day's last light. And I'd imagine what it must be like up there, to fly so fast and so high and to land in some exotic place like Los Angeles or Phoenix. I felt a sense of envy, a longing for that vast unknown.

I finally experienced the inside of a commercial airplane when I was 17, flying from southwestern Colorado to Tucson, Arizona. As we lifted off, the landscape — so familiar to me from my relatively slow, earthbound travels — opened up below me, the San Juan River cutting an emerald incision through a gently undulating khaki-colored carpet. I felt like a god, able to take in so much country at once and yet oddly detached from the two-dimensional scene below. Where was the warm wind, the sense of coming up over a hill and seeing the ominous shape of Shiprock jutting into the blue, the wind in my hair, the competition with my brother to spot the first saguaro?

A few decades later, I moved with my wife to Bulgaria, a lush and fecund land that is worlds — and several airports — away from my arid home. Now I endure the security line ritual several times a year, the jostling of the boarding lines, the herding into the plastic seats, followed by the blast of life and smells and humanity, the chatter of other languages and the shock of another land when I finally exit the airport shuttle on the other side, in Rome, Budapest, Athens.

Most airports have huge windows, but they might as well be video monitors looping the same images. Waiting for flights, I spend hours staring at the baffling flatness of the runways and taxiways, the metal and plastic tubes stuffed with humanity, falling from the sky or launching into it, set on repeat. I no longer wonder at the lack of topography, of vegetation, or even of birds. Airports are placeless; there is no there here. And the airplanes that ferry us from one to the other defy place and time, striking us with the malady known as jet lag, which we treat as a minor discombobulation, but which is in fact a symptom of the violation of our animal understanding of the world.

And yet, salvation awaits at the end of the journey. On the last leg of my latest Bulgaria-to-Connecticut-to-Durango odyssey, the plane finally dropped below the cloud cover, giving me a view of my homeland. We flew over its tree-studded mesas and snow-covered mountains, past curtains of precipitation falling from dusk-lit clouds. I looked below and anticipated the moment I'd finally step off the plane, into a place where you can feel the sun on your brow, the earth under your feet and catch the aroma of sage on the pushy spring breeze. □



The Durango, Colorado, airport.

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remember whether they're going to Cozumel or Cancun. Bleary-eyed trans-Atlantic travelers wearing neck pillows, disheveled hair and drool on their cheeks, stumbling into steely faced folks at the bar who throw back vodkas regardless of the time of day.

"Hey!" I wanted to yell. "It doesn't matter where you're going. All that matters is this — The Journey." But I kept my mouth shut, because terrifying people in an airport is a federal offense. I, of course, was one of these people, a melding of the neck-pillows and vodka-guzzlers, caught in a stagnant eddy in a sea of constant movement, drifting through the liminal space between the Starbucks across the hall and the first McDonalds I will see upon disembarking from my next flight, a few hours and a thousand miles away.

It wasn't always like this. I grew up in the rural West, where air travel was severely limited, if you could afford it. Our journeys occurred on different scales of time and space. I rode my bike around my hometown and the nearby hills, hiked into mountains and along canyon bottoms. My family spent weekends chugging around the Four Corners in one



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HEARD AROUND THE WEST | BY BETSY MARSTON

OREGON

For 92 years, a 31-acre stand of towering trees — mainly Douglas firs — graced Washburne Wayside, a state-owned rest stop on Highway 99 near Eugene. But about a decade ago, the rest stop closed all services there, and in 2012, the Oregon State Parks Department decided to sell the land. What happened next is a cautionary tale about what can happen when public land falls into private hands, reports the *Eugene Register-Guard*. Shiloh Forestry, which offered the winning bid of \$250,000, recently clear-cut all the trees, leaving behind a gigantic “mud pit,” says Doug Heiken. He is the restoration coordinator for Oregon Wild, and by chance was on his way to Corvallis to give a talk about the harmful effects of clear-cutting. His trip took him right past the former rest stop, where he saw the devastation caused by clear-cutting. “Public lands are valuable for so much more than the trees,” he said. “We get clean water. We get habitat. We get quality of life. ... We just can’t afford to sacrifice those things for a quick buck.” That “quick buck” wasn’t even as impressive as it might have been: Last year, an appraisal of the land came in at a considerably higher \$356,000.

THE WEST

Social media has once again outed a vandal who couldn’t resist bragging about his allegedly “romantic” act. To immortalize his love for his wife, Jennifer, while visiting Corona Arch, which is about five miles away from Utah’s Arches National Park, Ryan Andersen of Idaho Falls used a sandstone shard to carve into the buttress of the arch, drawing a big heart with his and his wife’s initials and the date carefully etched above. Then the couple and their three young children posed and posted the photo online, showing everyone smiling proudly. Outrage ensued, the Bureau of Land Management was notified, and Andersen posted what sounded like a heartfelt apology: “At that moment, I foolishly thought I was conveying my love for my wife, when, in fact, I was tarnishing the experience of others. ... My actions were wrong. I am extremely sorry for my conduct.” Andersen offered to pay the BLM for repairing the damage his valentine



COLORADO The call of the wild. GRETCHEN KING

caused; he also said that from now on, he would “help to protect our public lands.”

UTAH

Hats off to the Utah Legislature and Gov. Gary Herbert for passing a “free-range parenting” bill, the first of its kind in the nation — and no, we’re not talking about cows and calves and that kind of free-range activity. “That we need legislation for what was once considered common-sense parenting a generation ago — and is considered normal in every other country in the world — is what surprises me,” said Danielle Metiv of Silver Springs, Maryland, who was charged with child neglect for letting her two children, 6 and 10, walk home from a park alone. Another mother, Lenore Skenazy — lambasted on social media as “America’s worst mom” — began calling for a new law redefining child abuse four years ago. She was vilified after she revealed in

a *New York Daily News* column that she allowed her 9-year-old son to ride the New York City subway all by himself. Many readers denounced her permissiveness as unthinkable and possibly dangerous. Skenazy would have none of it, saying, “No one should have to second-guess their decision if they feel their kids are safe.”

COLORADO

When John Mattingly, one of our favorite columnists in the monthly *Colorado Central* magazine, becomes enthralled by a farm animal, he falls hard. First it was goats, he says, “starting with the odd goat and ending one morning looking out the window at nearly 500 goats.” These days it’s ducks, beginning with a modest six males and four females, though judging by the birds’ amazing reproductive facility, he is sure that “by 2020 there will be well over a thousand.” Mattingly waxes rhapsodic about living with ducks for both practical — “with ducks around there are very few mosquitos” — and fun reasons, as he finds the birds’ behavior entertaining. He likes to watch them preening and oiling their feathers, and observes that even though duck bills are not especially dangerous, “a duck attack is so startling as to be disarming; they hiss like a snake and fly right at you.” He also enjoys spending the occasional afternoon watching “as they interrogate the bottom of the pond for grubs and bugs, ducking down with feet and tail wagging furiously above the surface.” But though he has tried to make a pet out of a duck, he could never make the bonding work, he admits, “mostly because a duck out of water is really a duck out of water.” He also notes, “If you don’t see a duck in the room, you are probably the duck.”

WEB EXTRA For more from Heard around the West, see hcn.org.

Tips and photos of Western oddities are appreciated and often shared in this column. Write betsym@hcn.org or tag photos #heardaroundthewest on Instagram.



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“If you must nick geology specimens from the public lands and adorn them with animal faces or poetry or whatever, keep them on your shelf. **Post them on Facebook. Eat them, or bury them with your poop. Just do not leave them on the trail.**”

Marjorie “Slim” Woodruff, in her essay, “Don’t even think of leaving a trace,” from *Writers on the Range*, hcn.org/wotr