

outdoor&travel
SPECIAL ISSUE

High Country News

For people who care about the West

May 13, 2019 | \$5 | Vol. 51 No. 8 | www.hcn.org

ATOMIC TOURISTS

LOST SANCTUARIES

WALKING IT OFF

High Country News

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PUBLISHER
Paul Larmer
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Brian Calvert
ART DIRECTOR
Cindy Wehling
DIGITAL EDITOR
Gretchen King
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Tristan Ahtone
Emily Benson
Maya L. Kapoor
ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR
Luna Anna Archey
ASSISTANT EDITORS
Paige Blankenbuehler
Carl Segerstrom
Anna V. Smith
EDITOR AT LARGE
Betsy Marston
COPY EDITOR Diane Sylvain
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Graham Brewer
Ruxandra Guidi
Michelle Nijhuis
Jodi Peterson
Jonathan Thompson
CORRESPONDENTS
Krista Langlois,
Sarah Tory, Tay Wiles,
Joshua Zaffos
EDITORIAL FELLOWS
Elena Saavedra Buckley
Jessica Kutz
EDITORIAL INTERN
Nick Bowlin
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Laurie Milford
MAJOR GIFT ADVISER
Alyssa Pinkerton
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
Hannah Stevens
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT
Christine Maila Mein
DIGITAL MARKETER
Chris King
EVENTS & BUSINESS PARTNER
COORDINATOR Laura Dixon
WEB APPLICATION DEVELOPER
Eric Strebel
IT MANAGER Alan Wells
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
Erica Howard
ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Mary Zachman
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER
Kathy Martinez
CUSTOMER SERVICE
Christie Cantrell (office
manager), Karen Howe,
Josh McIntire (IT
support), Pam Peters,
Doris Teel, Rebecca
Tiedeman, Tammy York
GRANTWRITER Janet Reasoner
editor@hcn.org
circulation@hcn.org
development@hcn.org
advertising@hcn.org
syndication@hcn.org
FOUNDER Tom Bell
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Brian Beitner, Colo.
John Belkin, Colo.
Seth Cothrun, Calif.
Jay Dean, Calif.
Bob Fulkerson, Nev.
Anastasia Greene, Wash.
Wayne Hare, Colo.
Laura Helmuth, Md.
John Heyneman, Wyo.
Samaria Jaffe, Calif.
Nicole Lampe, Ore.
Marla Painter, N.M.
Bryan Pollard, Ark.
Raynelle Rino, Calif.
Estee Rivera Murdock, Colo.
Rick Tallman, Colo.
Andy Wiessner, Colo.
Florence Williams, D.C.
Luis Torres, N.M.,
Director Emeritus

CONTENTS

Editor's note

Road trip detours and epiphanies

Last year, I found myself driving from Colorado's Western Slope to my home in North Idaho, my car loaded down with books, camping gear and my bike. As road trips go, it was short but illuminating: I saw, firsthand, a fundamental truth of that place, its desert heat and fire-scarred hillsides. The first evening, as dusk settled over the landscape, a sign announced that the narrow highway I'd meant to take through Utah was closed. As I detoured up the next road, I watched the glow of a wildfire — the cause of the closure — blossom on the ridge to the east like a brilliant, dreadful flower, the scent of smoke filling my car. Things out here can happen fast, and change even faster.

Few things are more quintessentially American than a road trip, especially across the sprawling West, with its ample opportunities for detours, reflection and epiphany. This issue examines all this and more, through outdoor recreation and travel. In our cover story, writers LuLing Osofsky and Key MacFarlane pilot a rented Kia Soul through New Mexico, navigating the violent history of the atomic bomb. On their journey, they discover the absurdities of nuclear tourism, including the image of a warhead on pins, hats and even, perhaps, on the stained glass windows of a church. In the process, they explore how centuries of brutality continue to reverberate across the landscape.

Elsewhere in this issue, writer Gustavo Arellano details in a bittersweet essay the changes he's seen at a beloved 200-year-old chapel in New Mexico, El Santuario de Chimayó. Created as a spiritual refuge, the shrine has become a locus of a common struggle in the modern West, over how to conserve the character of places threatened by their own popularity.

Some changes, however, are welcome. Antonia Malchik describes the thoughtful design of outdoor spaces with disabilities in mind, where careful attention to gate widths and switchback angles can open up access to more people, while forcing land managers and people without disabilities to rethink assumptions about who belongs outside.

Challenging assumptions about who belongs in recreational spaces is something professional rock climber Emily Taylor knows well. To fill a void left by climbing companies unwilling to help diversify the profession, Taylor, a black woman, has created multiple initiatives for black climbers. A photo essay by Michael A. Estrada shows her at work.

From the Grand Tetons to Yosemite, past wildfires, churches and atomic test sites, many of us first experienced the vistas of the West through the bug-splattered windshield of a vehicle zooming down the highway. Some would contend this is not exactly the ideal way to get to know the place, and I wouldn't argue. But I do enjoy the spectacle of the West at speed — if for no other reason than because it matches the region's rapid rate of change.

—Emily Benson, associate editor



FEATURES

12 The Atomic Road Trip

In the Land of Enchantment, histories of violence are packaged, sold and consumed

By LuLing Osofsky and
Key MacFarlane

32 Whose Santuario?

Finding and losing
a centuries-old refuge

By Gustavo Arellano

INSIDE

- 4 **By the numbers** How recreation boosts the economy
- 5 **Bears Ears' guerrilla visitor center** A local nonprofit educates the masses
- 6 **Designing for access** We all want to be able to pursue the things that are part of our identity
- 7 **Last descents** Mountaineers confront disappearing glaciers
- 8 **A crusade for quiet** The growing opposition to the noise of military aircrafts
- 31 **Running in place** Reimagining the city street by street
Essay by Kate Schimel
- 38 **Freedom of movement**
Photo essay by
Michael A. Estrada
- 40 **Currents of consent and control**
Essay by Page Buono
- 42 **To walk is human; to reflect, divine**
Essay by Antonia Malchik

Emily Taylor is on a mission
to teach, through Brown Girls
Climbing. MICHAEL A. ESTRADA



On the cover

Photo montage:
White Sands National Park
hiker overlaid by the Trinity
nuclear bomb test, July 16,
1945, New Mexico.

LUNA ANNA ARCHY/HIGH COUNTRY
NEWS AND U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENTS

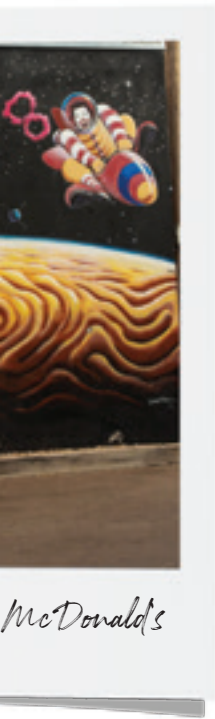
- 3 FROM OUR WEBSITE: HCN.ORG
- 10 THE HCN COMMUNITY
Research Fund, On the Road to 50
- 16 OUTDOORS & TRAVEL MARKETPLACE
- 36 MARKETPLACE
- 44 HEARD AROUND THE WEST By Betsy Marston



High Country News is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) independent media organization that covers the issues that define the American West. Its mission is to inform and inspire people to act on behalf of the region's diverse natural and human communities. (ISSN/0191/5657) is published bi-weekly, 22 times a year, by High Country News, 119 Grand

Ave., Paonia, CO 81428. Periodicals, postage paid at Paonia, CO, and other post offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to High Country News, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428. All rights to publication of articles in this issue are reserved. See hcn.org for submission guidelines. Subscriptions to HCN are \$37 a year, \$47 for institutions: 800-905-1155 | hcn.org

Printed on
recycled paper.



outdoor&travel

SPECIAL ISSUE



PHOTOS: LUNA ANNA ARCHIE/HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

Contributors



Gustavo Arellano is a features writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and the author of *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America*.



Heather Hansman lives in Seattle, where she writes about water and the West. Her first book, *Downriver*, came out in 2019.



Chris Berdik is a freelance journalist in Milton, Massachusetts. He covers science and education, and he's the author of *Mind Over Mind*, a book about placebos in medicine and beyond.



Antonia Malchik is a freelance writer. She is the author of *A Walking Life*, a nonfiction book about walking, and lives in Whitefish, Montana.



Page Buono is a freelance writer based in Durango, Colorado. She received her MFA in nonfiction from the University of Arizona.



LuLing Osofsky is a writer, educator and Ph.D. student in visual studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



Nick Davidson is a Santa Fe, New Mexico-based writer who covers the outdoors, adventure and the environment.



Key MacFarlane is a geographer and a Ph.D. candidate in the history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



Michael A. Estrada is a Salvadoran-American photojournalist and artist. His work falls at the intersection of media, environmental justice, art, and folks of color in nature.



Kate Schimel, topics editor for Colorado Public Radio, is a former associate editor for *High Country News*, where she worked for four years. She writes about culture, politics and climate change, among other topics.

FROM OUR WEBSITE: HCN.ORG



Ed DesRosier wants a Blackfoot National Park east of Glacier National Park. COURTESY OF ED DESROSIER

Tribe seeks own national park

The Blackfoot Nation once owned the eastern half of Glacier National Park, until a still-contested sale in 1895 transferred the mountainous region to the U.S. government. Now, the tribe is seeking to open its own national park just outside the current park. Advocates say the move would protect natural resources and direct tourism dollars to the tribe. Perhaps most importantly, the park would acknowledge the tribal people who lived in the area for centuries before it became a tourist hotspot. **SAMANTHA WEBER**

Read more online: hcne.ws/blackfeet-park

“I stand with governors across the land in asserting our states’ rights to access markets foreign and domestic.”

—Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, R., who was among the governors of energy-rich states who came out in support of President Donald Trump’s recent executive order that loosened restrictions of the Clean Water Act. The order eases permitting for energy export infrastructure along the Pacific Coast, where projects like Washington’s Millennium coal terminal have been blocked for years.

CARL SEGERSTROM Read more online: hcne.ws/trump-energy

Court rejects Trump rollback

In 2016, an Obama-era rule closed a loophole that allowed energy companies to avoid paying royalties on resources extracted on public lands. A year later, the Trump administration repealed this measure, known as the “valuation rule.” A federal judge found the repeal illegal last month, reinstating the rule. Takeaways:

When energy industries profit from public lands, the public should benefit, too. Closing the loophole would bring in at least \$71.9 million each year for public funding, largely in Western states.

When it comes to deregulation, the Trump administration does not do its homework. This administration’s regulation rollbacks have struggled in the courts. As in many other cases, the judge found a lack of legal justification for the repeal.

Fixing this loophole has been a bipartisan concern. Western politicians like Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, led the initial bipartisan push to close the loophole back in 2013.

There could be trouble for Trump energy policies. Several ongoing lawsuits are using similar legal arguments to challenge other regulation cuts, including the Interior Department’s hydraulic fracturing and methane rules. **NICK BOWLIN** Read more online: hcne.ws/loophole-closed



Complete access to subscriber-only content

HCN’s website hcn.org

Digital edition hcne.ws/digi-5108



@highcountrynews

By the numbers: How recreation boosts the economy

INFOGRAPHIC BY LUNA ANNA ARCHEY

Nationwide benefits

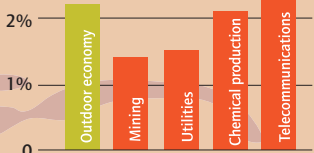
Across the country, the outdoor recreation industry puts millions of people to work and boosts the economy by hundreds of billions of dollars. To cash in on some of that spending, many communities trumpet the recreation opportunities available to visitors, in the hopes that travelers will stay in local hotels, book local tours and dine at local restaurants.

But do recreation amenities lure new residents — who might bring even more economic benefits — as well as tourists? To find out, Headwaters Economics, a nonprofit research group, looked at where populations have grown or dwindled since 2010. They compared counties where the economy is closely tied to entertainment and seasonal visitors' spending, or "recreation counties," to counties with economies driven by other factors.

The number of people who moved to each type of county, and how much money they brought with them, was different at distinct levels of urbanization. Here are some of Headwaters' results:

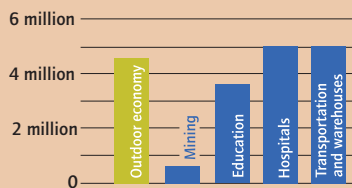
The U.S. outdoor recreation economy generated

\$412 billion in 2016



Or **2.2%** of the U.S. GDP

Providing **4.5 million** jobs nationwide

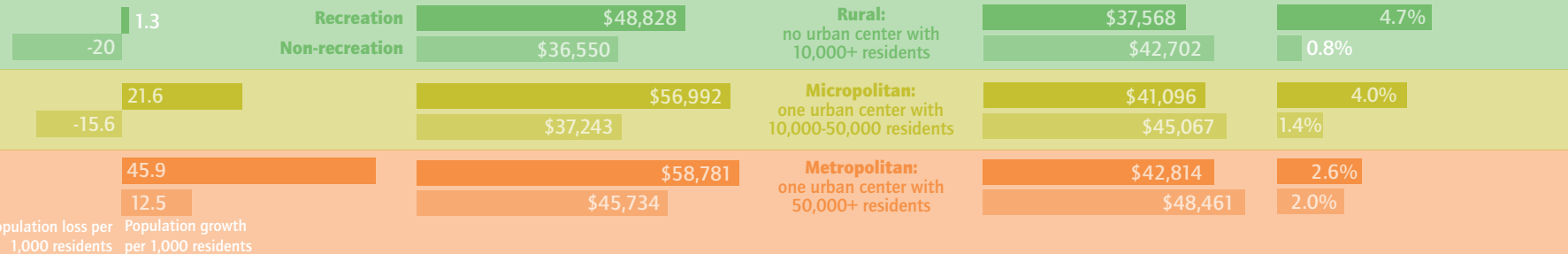


Since 2010, more people nationwide have moved to recreation counties than other places.

Those newcomers have higher average incomes.

However, average earnings are lower in recreation counties.

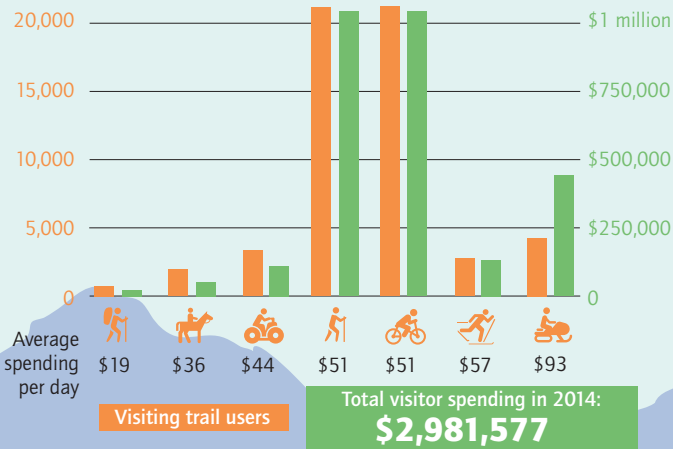
But that may be changing. Wage growth is higher in recreation counties.



Local benefits in North Idaho

Rural Bonner County, in North Idaho, hosts about 660 miles of trails for biking, hiking, riding ATVs and other activities. The area has a robust recreation culture, which in turn supports gear shops, lodging, restaurants and guide services.

Spending by visitors to national forest trails in Bonner County in 2014:



Statewide benefits in Montana

The vast majority of Montana's 1 million residents — 87% — label themselves outdoor enthusiasts. They're responsible for more than half of the \$7.1 billion spent on outdoor activities in the state every year, including rafting or fishing the state's nearly 170,000 miles of river. Residents and visitors alike are drawn by the natural assets of Big Sky Country: Montana's booming recreation economy is built around the cornerstone of the 33.8 million acres of public land within its borders.

Even seemingly small recreation areas can have a big impact. The 42-mile Whitefish Trail, sections of which snake around ponds and lakes near the town of Whitefish, contributes \$6.4 million to the economy every year. The trail system supports more than one job for every mile of its length, putting residents to work at local businesses like the Whitefish Bike Retreat, where visitors can rent bicycles, spend the night or arrange for a trail shuttle.

10% of jobs in Montana are in outdoor recreation.

That's **71,000 total jobs** paying workers **\$2.2 billion.**

Land agency	Number of visitors	Jobs created
NATIONAL SYSTEM LANDS	5.9 million	8,762
U.S. FOREST SERVICE	7.5 million	3,000
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT	4.6 million	3,186
MONTANA STATE PARKS	2.5 million	1,600
20.6 million visitors to Montana's public lands directly support		16,548 jobs

Alpine skiers spent **\$83 million** in the winter of 2010.

In 2017, hunters spent **\$389.2 million**

Each year, ORV users spend **\$208 million**

In 3.3 million fishing days in 2017, anglers spent **\$919.3 million**

SOURCE: HEADWATERS ECONOMICS; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bears Ears' guerrilla visitor center

A local nonprofit educates the masses

BY NICK DAVIDSON

The terracotta mesas and umber buttes reveal that this is an exceptional place. Yet not one sign from the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service, the two federal agencies that jointly manage Bears Ears National Monument, indicates where it's actually located. There are no federal facilities dedicated to the rising tide of visitors.

"It's managed by Google," says Josh Ewing, executive director of the land-conservation nonprofit Friends of Cedar Mesa, based in nearby Bluff, Utah. "Because that's the only place people are getting their information." Ewing, a Nebraskan with a stubbly beard and a quick smile, is a climber whose 20-year love affair with the landscape turned him into an activist for southeastern Utah's public lands.

In the absence of federal resources, Ewing and Friends of Cedar Mesa raised \$700,000 from the crowdfunding site Kickstarter and built the Bears Ears Education Center last year. The local climbers, guides, conservationists and educators saw the growing hordes descending on the fragile, embattled monument and feared they could permanently damage the landscape.

Last September, locals, donors and supporters from nearby pueblos gathered to inaugurate the nation's first-ever privately run national monument visitors center. Board President Vaughn Hadenfeldt, a sandy-gray-haired guide and owner of Far Out Expeditions, cut a handmade yucca rope with a stone knife, saying, "Let's make Bears Ears National Monument great again!"

The visitors center's refurbished wood-slat façade evokes the Old West. The building once held a saloon that served uranium miners in the 1950s. Now it greets travelers headed to a culturally bountiful landscape, where Indigenous communities have lived for thousands of years.

The grassroots visitors center exists owing to the lack of infrastructure, a problem that persists largely because Bears Ears National Monument is in legal limbo with still-uncertain boundaries. After President Donald Trump's executive order eliminated 85 percent of the monument's original acreage in 2017, tribal nations — the Hopi, Navajo, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Zuni tribes — along with numerous environmental groups, including Friends of Cedar Mesa, filed lawsuits that will likely take years to unfold.

But the political controversy has only increased the monument's visibility, and since 2017, visitation has overwhelmed resources on the ground.

Federal agencies estimate that more

than 130,000 visitors came to the newly shrunken monument in 2017, a 72% surge from the year before. BLM estimates put the monument-wide number in 2018 as high as 750,000. But even greater numbers are expected: Fodor's, the popular travel guide publisher, ranked Bears Ears at the top of its list of recommended places to visit in 2019.

"That's the sort of challenge we're trying to meet," Ewing says. "There's all this publicity happening, and yet there's no official visitor center."

Ewing's staff will interact with at least a portion of that influx; he hopes that 10,000 people will pass through the doors this year. Inside the center, exhibits illustrate the region's history and cultural significance and describe the continuing efforts to protect it. A virtual reality exhibit, expected to open this summer, will immerse travelers in sites too sensitive for large-scale visitation.

Already, many sensitive sites in the monument are getting hammered — resulting in unauthorized new trails, vandalized rock art, pottery shards picked up by looters. Lyle Balenquah, a Hopi citizen, river guide and former National Park Service archaeologist, assists Friends of Cedar Mesa with archaeological recording and restoration projects for the center. As a freelance contractor, he surveys monument sites and collects data for the BLM, Forest Service and tribes to use to monitor impacts. He's seen firsthand the damage uninformed visitors can do.

"That's where this need for places like the education center comes in," Balenquah

says, "to try and help fill that void of what it means to visit with respect."

To truly educate the masses about how best to interact with a complicated landscape like Bears Ears, the new Bears Ears Education Center wants tribal citizens guiding its vision.

The Inter-Tribal Coalition, an alliance between the Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni and Ute tribes, wants a presence on the landscape, possibly a center of its own that might operate as some combination of a Indigenous knowledge institute, visitors center and official coalition headquarters. The coalition is also collaborating on a key exhibit for the Bears Ears Education Center. But right now, it's focusing on the monument lawsuit and a land-management plan it is drafting alongside the BLM and Forest Service, so progress is slow. For now, the Bears Ears Education Center has to stand in for its needs.

Ewing will embrace that hand-off when it comes. He hopes the U.S. government will partner with tribal nations to build a more official center for the monument. "We hope (this center) is an interim measure," he says, "and we'll be happy to put it out of business." □

Below, Vaughn Hadenfeldt addresses people at the center's opening.

COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF CEDAR MESA

Bottom, a visitor reads by campfire at Bears Ears National Monument.

STEPHEN ALVAREZ/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Designing for access

*We all want to be able to pursue the things
that are part of our identity*

BY ANTONIA MALCHIK

"Hunters with disabilities, just like their non-disabled counterparts, have the same expectation — and desire — of strenuous preparation and planning, uncertain success, discomfort, and unfruitful time expended as any other hunter in the most remote backcountry."

—Chris Clasby, lifelong Montana resident and outdoorsman

Chris Clasby is a lifelong Montana resident, former team roper and steer wrestler, and an avid angler and hunter. He also has quadriplegia, but that doesn't mean he wants to be limited to paved pathways when he heads out into the woods. People without disabilities, he told me, tend to assume that he "wants to hunt from a warm vehicle, shoot at a perfect animal out the window, and be served a warm meal while watching TV as someone else field-dresses the animal."

But Clasby isn't just along for the ride. The experience of the hunt, which in his case includes taking along a companion who can field-dress Clasby's quarry, is of paramount importance. "Hunters with disabilities, just like their non-disabled counterparts, have the same expectation — and desire — of strenuous preparation and planning, uncertain success, discomfort, and unfruitful time expended as any other hunter in the most remote backcountry," Clasby said.

Like Clasby, many Westerners form their sense of self around a relationship with the outdoors, whether it's a week-long hunting trek into the backcountry or regular walks on a trail winding through urban green spaces. And, of course, having a disability doesn't prevent a person from seeking the solace or thrill of spending time in nature. That's why small, everyday design choices in infrastructure and trails that open up the outdoors to a wider variety of users are more important than their apparent simplicity might suggest. Rethinking outdoor access through the lens of disability forces a reckoning with assumptions about who the outdoors is for, while at the same time widening the inclusiveness of Western communities.

One of the biggest difficulties Clasby has encountered while advocating for outdoor access is that some people tend to evaluate a project's success based on how many people have used it rather than the quality of the experience it creates. For example, some proponents were disappointed in the small number of people who took advantage of a private ranch near Lolo, Montana, after the owner opened it to hunters with disabilities. That's missing the point, Clasby told me: "It's not the number of hunters, but the *value* of the experience to each hunter" that matters. The ranch is within driving distance of Missoula, with good access and plenty of wildlife, factors that make it a good place for a hunting trip that doesn't require hiking miles into a wilderness area. "We all

want to be able to pursue the things that are part of our identity," Clasby said.

And design features that take into account access for people with disabilities can be surprisingly simple. Julie Tickle, who works with DREAM Adaptive, a non-profit that makes skiing and paddleboarding more accessible for people with disabilities, currently advises on a mountain biking trail network outside Columbia Falls, Montana, called Cedar Flats. Collaborators' initial response was that making it accessible would be too costly and "special." But the changes required for a three-wheeled mountain bike are small and mostly inexpensive: minor shifts in choke points on the trail, for example, or easing the tightness of switchbacks. Such projects can increase access in many areas throughout the West.

When you visit Rock Creek Confluence, a park just east of Missoula, Montana, it's hard to believe that busy I-90 is right over your shoulder. Rock Creek, a blue-ribbon fishing stream, gurgles down to meet the Clark Fork River, and trails wind through 300 acres of forest. It's an exceptionally scenic recreational spot, and one that's intentionally being redesigned

for disability access.

Now, thanks to that redesign, which he helped lead, Brenden Dalin can traverse a greater proportion of the property. Dalin is a quintessential Western recreationist: He's an avid fisherman, hunter and skier who recently graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in recreation management. He has paraplegia, and during an internship last year with Five Valleys Land Trust, which owns Rock Creek, he directed crews extending its wheelchair-accessible gravel trail. He also points to the importance of a redesigned entrance gate: It's now large enough to allow wheelchairs in, but small enough to keep ATVs out.

The land trust describes Rock Creek as a "living laboratory" — a crucial perspective, Dalin said. Managers there can build and test trails, signs, gates and other features that make it easier for people with disabilities to navigate. Because it's privately owned, the trust can try out innovative and sometimes experimental designs without going through a lengthy bureaucratic process. Successful changes at Rock Creek can serve as a model, Dalin told me, giving other developers, and perhaps public-land managers, a sense of what's possible.

I asked Dalin if designing for disability, as he and others at Rock Creek are doing, might represent an emerging trend in outdoor recreation, a growing awareness that something as simple as thoughtful gate and trail design is just as important as, for example, the development of advanced prosthetics. "If it is a trend," he said, "it's about time." □



Chris Clasby poses outside a trail access point 10 minutes from his home. He had used the trail frequently, until rock and a small erosion ditch blocked the already narrow gate; now, he hikes and hunts elsewhere. MATTHEW ROBERTS FOR HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

Last descents

Mountaineers confront disappearing glaciers

BY HEATHER HANSMAN

The most common route up Gannett Peak, the highest mountain in Wyoming, follows a gooseneck couloir up a skinny snowfield to a gaping crevasse. Darran Wells, a professor of Outdoor Education and Leadership at Central Wyoming College who studies glaciers in the Wind River Range, says that historically, it's been fairly straightforward to cross, a scramble across a snow bridge. Over the past few years, however, temperatures have been so warm that the crevasse — technically a bergschrund, where the glacier separates from the mountain — opens up, making it nearly impassible. People who have traversed it before without ropes and found the route fairly easy now find it completely different.

"One of the things I couldn't have imagined, as I started going in to the Winds as a NOLS instructor in the late '90s, was how the routes would have changed," Wells told me recently. "And the emotional impact of seeing the glaciers move and melt."

Wells has seen the toe of the Sourdough Glacier retreat 45 feet in 15 years, making it inaccessible. "There used to be ice and snow that bound up the talus, and that's all gone now," he said, making it harder to climb. It also impacts the time of day and year climbers can attempt the peak. "The window throughout the year is getting narrower, and then through the 24-hour cycle, you have to worry about rockfall during the day. You're getting up at 1 or 2, climbing in the dark, getting down before a rockfall. There's a lot more rockfall; it's just a bowling alley."

Safe mountain travel requires stable conditions and fair weather, but as the globe warms, that's becoming harder to find. Glaciers are breaking up, permafrost melting and mush season is creeping into winter, rendering old approaches inaccessible and new places harder to explore.

As a culture, we've glorified first ascents — and the climbers who attempt them — in the Western U.S. since 1820, when geologist Edwin James first climbed Pikes Peak. The 2018 documentary *Free Solo*'s Oscar is the most recent sign of



Central Wyoming College students traverse the treacherous Sourdough Glacier in 2016, where rocky rubble had fallen onto a sheet of ice and a misstep could send you sliding into the frigid meltwater below. COURTESY OF DARRAN WELLS, CENTRAL WYOMING COLLEGE

our obsession with untouched summits, even as we approach the downslope of accessibility.

A 2017 study from Portland State University found that Western glaciers and snowfields — perhaps "the clearest expression of climate change" — may have decreased by as much as 39% since the mid-20th century. This forces a question: As high mountains melt and change, do we need to stop thinking of first ascents, and start thinking about final ones instead? When do we need to give up on these places?

Glaciologist and climber Alison Criscitiello is now prioritizing what she calls "ice memories," recording ice cores from mountains that might soon become inaccessible. She cites endless examples, like Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak, where the climbing season is shortening and icefall conditions are changing. This is an urgent issue for both the climbing and glaciology worlds. "Many of these places that hold soon-to-be-lost climate archives are the same places that have drawn climbers for centuries and may too become unclimbable, or at least unrecognizable, in our lifetime or within a few generations," she said.

"All the glaciers basically are receding," Andrew Fountain, the PSU study's lead author, told me recently. His group is mapping glacier change in the Rockies, Sierra Nevada and Cascades to try to quantify just how much climate change is impacting glaciers and where they're most sensitive.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture flies over the whole nation every five years, taking aerial photos. Digitized mountain photographs can then be used to compare the outlines of glaciers to historical records. The agency has photo records from some glaciers, including Washington's Sahalie, going back to 1900, after the end of the Little Ice Age. Fountain and his researchers looked at the records and learned that almost every glacier is receding, except for a few that are topographically protected. "The question isn't whether or not they're changing, it's where they're changing less," Fountain said.

For mountaineers, that means they're losing access to climbs like the visually stunning Black Ice Couloir on the Grand Teton, dealing with dangerous rockfall as permafrost melts, and trying to push summit attempts in narrow weather windows. Even the more accessible, frequently climbed routes are changing quickly.

By last August, Disappointment Cleaver on Mount Rainier, the most popular route up to the top of the volcano, was a tricky cheese grater of bridged crevasses and loose rock. Lowell Skoog, who pioneered skiing and climbing routes in the North Cascades, told me the period the mountains are climbable is shrinking, the swing between seasons has become more dramatic, and thinning glaciers now reduce access to many popular routes. Skoog doesn't think we'll lose our drive to explore, he said, but at some point the access gap will be so narrow that we won't be able to slide through. □

"I couldn't have imagined, as I started going into the Winds as a NOLS instructor in the late '90s, how the routes would have changed. And the emotional impact of seeing the glaciers move and melt."

—Darran Wells, glacier researcher



A crusade for quiet

The growing opposition to the noise of military aircrafts

BY CHRIS BERDIK

On a chilly March morning, acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton and his assistant, Laura Giannone, hiked into a glade of moss-draped maples in the Hoh Rainforest of northwest Washington's Olympic National Park. They set up a tripod topped with ultra-sensitive recording equipment to listen to the murmurings of a landscape just then awakening from winter dormancy.

Above the low rush of the nearby Hoh River, the melodic trills of songbirds rippled through a still-leafless canopy. Then, suddenly, the low thrum of a jet aircraft built in waves until it eclipsed every other sound. Within half an hour, three more jets roared overhead.

Hempton has spent more than a decade fighting for quiet in this forest — the traditional homeland of the Hoh Indian Tribe, who lived here before it was a national park and now have a reservation at the mouth of the Hoh River. In 2005, Hempton dubbed a spot deep in the Hoh "One Square Inch of Silence," and created an eponymous foundation to raise awareness about noise pollution. But he couldn't stop the sonic intrusions from ramped up commercial air traffic and the Navy's growing fleet of "Growler" jets training over the Olympic Peninsula. "In just a few years, this has gone from one of the quietest places on Earth to an airshow," he told me.

As the Hoh got noisier, rather than concede defeat, Hempton broadened his effort into a global crusade. In 2018, he launched Quiet Parks International (QPI), to certify places that are relatively noise-free, in a bid to lure quiet-seeking tourists and thereby add economic leverage to preservation efforts. For Hempton, the sounds of nature are as critical to a national park as its wildlife or scenic vistas, and as the world gets louder, the importance of protecting quiet refuges as places of rejuvenation grows. "Our culture has been so impacted by noise pollution," he said, "that we have almost lost our ability to really listen."

Everywhere, people are becoming more aware of the noise in their lives. Food critics routinely carry noise meters to restaurants, towns are banning gas-powered leaf blowers, and noise-metering apps are providing crowdsourced guides to refuges of quiet in cities worldwide. As evidence mounts that the stress of noise raises the risk of heart disease and stroke, so does

interest in escaping the clamor.

Hempton visited the Hoh in March with Giannone, an Evergreen State College senior majoring in audio engineering and acoustic ecology, to train her in data collection for the Quiet Parks International certification. After recording, they went over her notes. The ambient sound averaged 25 decibels (whisper-quiet) and the peak noise, from a jet, hit nearly 70 decibels (vacuum-cleaner loud). Mix in the distant hum of vehicles and a chainsaw's whine, and the longest period of unadulterated nature was just three minutes. By contrast, a cornerstone of the Quiet Park certification will be a noise-free interval of at least 15 minutes. The Hoh met that requirement easily — until recently.

"This is really incredible," Hempton said, after Giannone tallied the noise intrusions. "This is a national park, and natural quiet is on the list of protected natural resources," along with native plants, historic sites and dark night skies, among other assets.

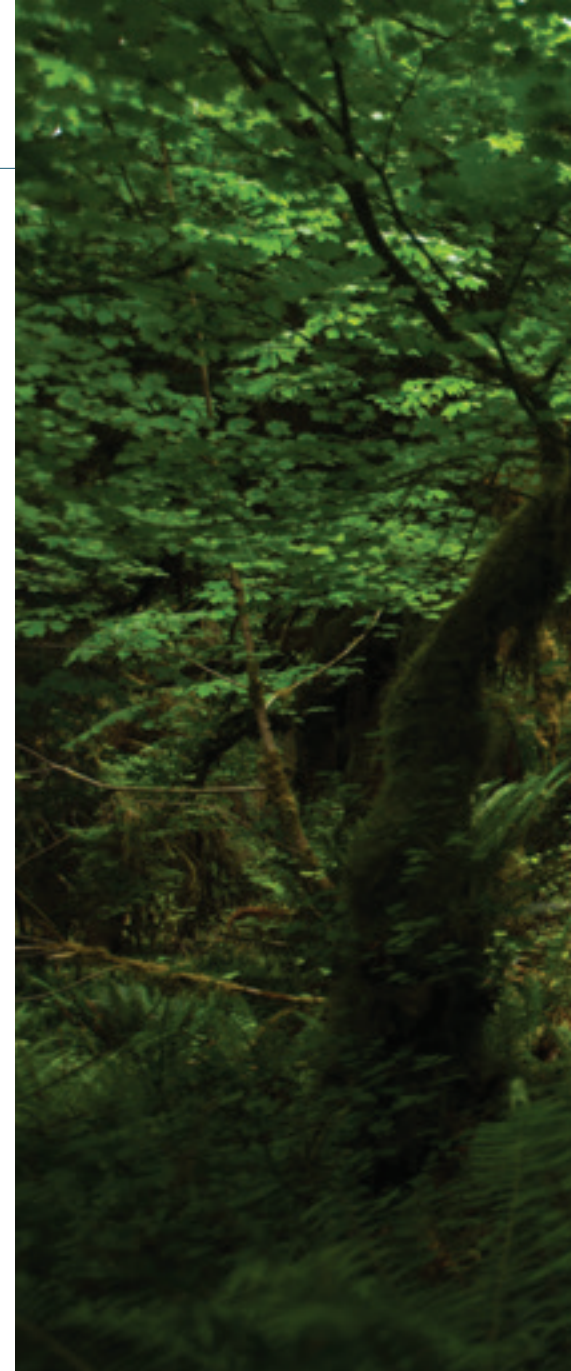
Noise pollution in wilderness is not about loudness per se, according to Frank Turina, a program manager with the National Park Service's Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division. Rather, it's about how unnatural sounds can shatter "the sense of naturalness" essential to a wilderness experience, he said. "One of the biggest ways that civilization creeps into wilderness is through noise."

Noise has particularly severe effects on wildlife. Research shows that the din of humanity remains pervasive in protected areas. Intrusive sound disrupts animals' ability to navigate, avoid predators, locate food and find mates — beaching marine life, altering birdsong and causing stress that's linked to shorter lifespans. "Obviously, we aren't the only ones listening," Hempton told me. "But we are the only ones who can choose to listen; wildlife listen to survive."

Hempton hopes that the "quiet park" standards, which are still being finalized, help. Similar certifications, or "ecolabels," have helped boost other environmental causes, including the Blue Flag beaches, created to protect fragile coastal environments, and the Dark Sky Places of the International Dark-Sky Association, which battles light pollution. Much of the work of QPI will involve cultivating an appreciation of quiet through educational programs and partnerships. For example, QPI partnered with a virtual-reality

"In just a few years, this has gone from one of the quietest places on Earth to an airshow."

— Gordon Hempton



education nonprofit to create a VR tour of the Hoh to teach kids about noise pollution and ecology. Furthermore, the label will give tourists information they currently lack. Hempton suspects many will favor noise-free options. "We know from history that underlying every social movement is a widespread need for something that's valued, but not being provided," he said. "I feel all the ingredients for a social movement for quiet."

Certifications highlight what people value, according to Rob Smith, northwest regional director of the National Parks Conservation Association, and "a quiet park label says that the sounds of nature matter." If local communities and the managers of Olympic National Park bid for a quiet-park certification, he said, "it would give us something to point to with the Navy to say, 'This needs protection, too.'"

A few weeks after Hempton and Giannone visited the Hoh, the Navy released a final environmental assessment for its plan to add even more



Facing page: The U.S. Navy's Growler, an aircraft designed for electronic warfare.

U.S. NAVY

Gordon Hempton searches for silence in the Hoh Rainforest of Olympia National Park.

SHAWN PARKIN



Growler jet training over the Olympic Peninsula — from the current 82 jets to 118 by 2022. The Growlers, which specialize in jamming enemy radar and communications, are named for their very loud, low-frequency roar.

Residents across the Olympic Peninsula have forged the Sound Defense Alliance to fight the expansion, lobbying to spread the jets around the country rather than have them all at Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. Sherry Schaaf, a retired schoolteacher who lives in Forks, about 20 miles northwest of the Hoh Rainforest, and her boyfriend, David Youngberg, are two of the anti-noise locals. Schaaf sometimes rents her house to people visiting Olympic National Park, and she and Youngberg often chat up out-of-towners. “Many of them talk about the quiet and how beautiful it is,” Schaaf said. “But they also say, ‘We heard the planes, and it was so loud and rumbling that we couldn’t even hear ourselves talk.’”

Since 2000, the National Park Service’s Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division has helped park managers across the

country minimize noise by, for instance, restricting snowmobiles. But overflights are the biggest noise threat in back-country areas, and the Federal Aviation Administration, not the Park Service, controls airspace. While the Park Service can request flight-pattern changes, as it successfully did for Rocky Mountain National Park, it can’t force the issue.

For their part, Navy officials said they work to minimize the Growlers’ disturbance by, for example, using flight simulators and other virtual training tools. But spreading out the Growler squadrons would involve costly inefficiencies and logistical complications that “would degrade the Growler community’s overall effectiveness,” according to a 2018 environmental impact statement. And Michael Welding, the Navy’s public affairs officer on Whidbey Island, pointed out that the vast majority of noise complaints are from people living near the Growler airfields, where pilots do low-altitude training, rather than from visitors to Olympic National Park.

Still, the roar of the jets is clearly audible in the park. Whether visitor numbers

will fall significantly if overflights intensify is an open question: Research on whether eco-certifications influence tourists’ destination decisions is mixed. But profits aside, Vinod Sasidharan, a professor at San Diego State University who specializes in sustainable tourism, said certifications are often more about “raising awareness and setting transparent standards” within the tourism industry.

And tourism is vital for the Olympic Peninsula, said Youngberg, who spent more than two decades in the Navy, including deployment on an aircraft carrier during the Gulf War. Every year, about 3 million people visit Olympic National Park, pumping \$385 million into the local economy in 2017, according to the Park Service. The park also supports more than 3,500 jobs in a region where unemployment is about double the national rate. Youngberg pointed out the decline of the region’s timber and fishing industries. “We’re a pretty poor county,” he said, “and it’s going to crush us if we lose tourism and our reputation for beauty, and peace and quiet.” □

This story was supported by a grant from the Solutions Journalism Network.

Thank you, Research Fund donors, for supporting coverage that sweeps across the West

Since 1971, reader contributions have made it possible for *HCN* to report on the American West. Your tax-deductible gift directly funds nonprofit, independent journalism.

Thank you for supporting our hardworking journalists.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA GUARDIAN

Mike & Karen Fried, Community Education Fund, Montana Community Foundation | Broomfield, CO

PUBLISHER'S CIRCLE

In memory of Nancy Fouquet, George W. Davis Fund | Novato, CA
Campizondo Foundation, U.S. Charitable Gift Trust | Indianapolis, IN

PHILANTHROPIST

Sarah Grace Jones | Riderwood, MD

STEWARD

A HAH! Productions | Nashville, IN
B Bar Ranch | Emigrant, MT
Owen Olpin | Teasdale, UT
Jim & Carol Patton | Kensington, CA
George Sells | Aspen, CO

GUARANTOR

Anonymous
John Buckley & Anna Bennett | Washington, DC
Cowboy Moving Foundation | Englewood, CO
Shields Goodman | El Prado, NM
Jim Lyons | Edgewater, MD
Walter & Sally Miller, Miller Forests | Salem, OR

BENEFACTOR

In honor of our friends, Kimberly & Hank | Boulder, CO
In memory of John R. Bailey | Dillon, CO
In memory of Nadine Strom, M&C Strom Charitable Fund | Fort Collins, CO
In memory of Randy Udall | Carbondale, CO
William Bloomquist | Conifer, CO
Mary Brisson | Mancos, CO

Marilyn Brown | Morrison, CO
Lloyd & Arden Davidson | Evanston, IL
Don Hagedorn | Columbia, SC
Chip Miller | Missoula, MT
Erik & Estee Murdock | Estes Park, CO
Peter & Linda Rhines | Port Townsend, WA
Randy Slaughter | Cambridge, MA
John Thorup | Tucson, AZ

SPONSOR

Anonymous (2)
In honor of Jake the wonder dog | Flowood, MS
In memory of Max & Janet Fowler | Los Alamos, NM
In memory of Barry Kelly | Pittsburg, CA
Bo Baggs | Port Arthur, TX
Diane Brookshire | Denver, CO
Mari N. Jensen | Tucson, AZ
Kassen-Goelz Charitable Fund | Boulder, CO
Barney & Dot Mulligan | Glenwood Springs, CO
Charles W. Murray | Denver, CO
Raule Nemer | Evergreen, CO
Kathleen Streid Noe | Durango, CO
Chuck Otto | Anaconda, MT
Bettina Proctor | Denver, CO
Robert Shellenberger | Golden, CO
Betsy & Eric Smidinger | Evergreen, CO
Nanette Spence & Jeffrey Geiger | Evergreen, CO
Gayle & Richard Wells | Carbondale, CO
Phil Wondra | Lakewood, CO

PATRON

Anonymous (8)
In memory of Don Ewy | Gould, CO
In memory of Brian Gannon | The Dalles, OR
Daniel Ault | Longmont, CO
Vaughn Baker | Estes Park, CO
Joyce Beckes | Los Ranchos, NM
Naomi & John Bishop | Portland, OR
Virginia H. Black | Longmont, CO
Elaine Brett | Paonia, CO
William Brinton | Alamosa, CO
Thomas Butts | Thornton, CO
Charles & Shelley Calisher | Fort Collins, CO
Randy Campbell | Paonia, CO

Janet Carter | Ketchum, ID
Craig Carver | Denver, CO
Anne Castle | Golden, CO
Nona Jane & Stephen Wiltzen | Bozeman, MT
Bonnie Cohn | Hermosa Beach, CA
Carol Delker | Erie, CO
Benjamin Everitt | Ivins, UT
Phillip & Joni Friedman | Fort Collins, CO
Dennis Fritzinger | Berkeley, CA
Howard & Patty Garber | Salt Lake City, UT
Eric Hansen | Milwaukee, WI
Ruth Hellman | Centennial, CO
Steven W. Howes | Pasco, WA
Bill Hubber | Townsend, MT
Katherine K. Hudson | Carbondale, CO
Gene Hunner | Portola Valley, CA
Bo Jackson | Lakeland, FL
Craig & Lois Kocian | Arvada, CO
Laurie & Cam Kuethau | Steamboat Springs, CO
Arthur Kull | Idaho Falls, ID
Charlene Larsen | Astoria, OR
Judy Long | Las Cruces, NM
Bruce A. Luer | Evergreen, CO
Britton & Megan Mace | Washington, UT
Lorrie & John McAllister | Evergreen, CO
Sherri Helms & Stan McNeese | Grand Junction, CO
John Middleton & Susan McRory | Boulder, CO
Pat Meyers | Boulder, CO
Kris Newgard & Eric Dickinson | Troy, MT
Cletus E. Nolde | Lakewood, CO
Thomas & Corinne Nyquist | New Paltz, NY
Rita O'Connell | Duluth, MN
Liz O'Rourke | Arvada, CO
Scott Parkinson | Ogden, UT
Jim & Gloria Purcell | Belmont, CA
Ken Ransford | Basalt, CO
James Sadler | Santa Barbara, CA
James Sample | Denver, CO
Gordon & Tina Sanders | Coeur d'Alene, ID
Catherine Schmidt | Littleton, CO
Carol M. Schoonhoven | Paonia, CO
Sue S. Schultz | Littleton, CO
Cynthia & Peter Scott | Boulder, CO
Richard Sherman | Salem, OR
Linda J. Shoemaker | Boulder, CO
Jordan & David Smith | Santa Fe, NM
Robert & Anne Sneed | Denver, CO
Paul & Arianthe Stettner | Steamboat Springs, CO
Mark Stevens | Denver, CO
Janet Stonington | Louisville, CO
Pat Tucker | Hamilton, MT
Martin Urquhart | Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Sue VanHoose | Clarkdale, AZ
Hannah Van Wetter | Bozeman, MT
Charles White | Denver, CO
Peter White | Santa Fe, NM
Randy & Kathy Williams | Loveland, CO
Bill & Holly Wilson | Ely, NV
David Wilson | Irvine, CA
Stan & Elder Witt Wellborn | Washington, DC
George Wright & Jodie Kavanaugh | Grand Junction, CO
Douglas Young | Boulder, CO

FRIEND

Anonymous (6)
In honor of Nancy H. & Susan I. Anderson | Salt Lake City, UT
In memory of Carolyn Barker | Burbank, CA
In memory of Martha E. Gentry | Gunnison, CO
In memory of Logan Ghormley | Del Norte, CO

In memory of Tanya & Bill Mandel | Kensington CA
In memory of Robert E. Redmon | Yosemite National Park
In memory of Gladys Richter | Bozeman, MT
William & Holly Anderson | Tres Piedras, NM
Genevieve Bachman | Crested Butte, CO
Alan Batten | Fairbanks, AK
Jon Bonkoski | Portland, OR
Johnathan L. & Dawn Suzanne Buffalo | Tama, IA
Molly Carmody & Daniel Crowe | Yelm, WA
Gil & Barbie Cerise | Renton, WA
Jason Corzine | Denver, CO
Norma Costain & Geoffrey Kontje | Edgartown, MA
Deirdre Daly | Longmont, CO
Mary Ellen Davis | Colorado Springs, CO
Poppy Davis | Berkeley, CA
Gary G. Draper | Midvale, UT
Gunnar & Cindy Ellsmore | Sierra City, CA
Keith E. Evans | South Ogden, UT
Dana M. Field | Salem, OR
Dylan Flather | Hamilton, MT
Rolfe A. Forland | Scarborough, ME
Robert Garcia | Santa Fe, NM
Harold & Jacque Hall | Claremont, NH
Susan Horn | Monticello, IN
Walter Hunner | Electric City, WA
Harold Hushbeck | Eugene, OR
Jerry & Donna Jacobi | Santa Fe, NM
Brian Joedicker | Mesa, AZ
Jeff & Marie Callaway Kellner | Boise, ID
Elizabeth Kelsey | Garden City, ID
Curtis Kruer | Sheridan, MT
Cindy Lantry | Seattle, WA
Richard Linnett | Pacific Palisades, CA
Dyan Loya | Meridian, ID
Madonna Luers | Mead, WA
Christine Erica Marbet | Shelton, WA
Russell & Janice Martenson | Ranchos de Taos, NM
John Mason | Crested Butte, CO
Louisa K. Matthias | Boulder, CO
Amiee Maxwell | Salt Lake City, UT
Marian May | Montrose, CO
Dan McCormack | Magnolia, TX
Don McGowan & Bonnie Cooper | Asheville, NC
John McKean | Corrales, NM
Don & Joan McMillen | Portland, OR
Tom & Jane Meacham | Anchorage, AK
John Mijer | Ogden, UT
Roger Miller | Nathrop, CO
William A. Molini | Reno, NV
Ann Moore | Albuquerque, NM
Larry & Daria Moskowitz | Dillon, CO
Thomas Mourar | Colorado Springs, CO
Roger I. Moyer | Aspen, CO
Carolyn Nelson | Laramie, WY
Thomas Paragi | Fairbanks, AK
Scott Paschal | Lakewood, CO
Sue Patella | Boulder, CO
James Petri | Longmont, CO
Martin & Lisa Pool | Durango, CO
Margaret Porter & James Knifong | Boulder, CO
Geoffrey Rauch & Lyn Howe | Paonia, CO
William B. Riker | Cochiti Lake, NM
David Roberts | Montrose, CO
Andy Robinson | Plainfield, VT
William E. & Beverly A. Sawrey | Long Beach, CA
Terri & Keith Schulz | Fort Collins, CO
John & Betty Sigler | Pocatello, ID
Solar Professional Services, LLC | Fort Collins, CO

YES! I care about the West!

☐ \$35 Friend

☐ \$75 Patron

☐ \$150 Sponsor

☐ \$250 Benefactor

☐ \$500 Guarantor

☐ \$1,000 Steward

☐ \$2,500 Philanthropist

☐ \$5,000 Publisher's Circle

☐ \$10,000 & up Independent Media Guardian

Amount of gift \$ _____

☐ Here's my check (or voided check/1st month's gift for recurring gifts)

☐ Charge my credit card

Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Name on card _____

Billing Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

☐ Make this amount recurring

\$15/month minimum

High Country News | P.O. Box 1090 | Paonia, CO 81428 | 800-905-1155 | hcn.org D016A010

A grand beginning



The West stands at a pivotal crossroads, at a time both dangerous and promising. Many of the dangers were visible when HCN first appeared on black-and-white newsprint back in 1970.

One of the great blessings of working for *High Country News*, as I have for the past three decades, is that I constantly get to learn new things about the West. As I tell our new interns and editors: Consider this your extended graduate school on the region, with field trips to the most glorious, mind-expanding and oft-abused places on the planet.

HCN will turn 50 in 2020, and we are working hard to ensure we thrive for another 50 years, and beyond. Over the next many months, I will be on the road a lot, visiting readers and donors and talking to people who are shaping the West of today and tomorrow. Periodically, I'd like to share what I learn with you here.

One thing I already know: The West stands at a pivotal crossroads, at a time both dangerous and promising. Many of the dangers were visible when HCN first appeared on black-and-white newsprint in 1970: a surging human population, imperiled wildlife, polluted waterways, the extractive industries dominating public and Native lands. Others have gained visibility more recently: climate change, the growing divide between rich and poor, an unresolved history of violence and intolerance, and a hypnotic digital media environment that does as much to separate people as it does to bring us together.

The promise lies in the resilience of the land and its people. Last month, I joined a river trip down the Grand Canyon organized by Jim Enote, a member of the Zuni Tribe, who runs the Colorado Plateau Foundation out of Flagstaff, Arizona. As we drifted down the Colorado River, Jim described the work he and others have been doing on the Zuni Pueblo and Hopi Reservation to help young people retain their Native languages and cultures, including their connection to the Grand Canyon. "I tell the kids that if they follow our Zuni River downstream, they'll get to the Little Colorado River, which eventually meets the Colorado River here in the Grand Canyon, where we came into the world," Jim told us at our launch spot at Lees Ferry.

Three days later, at that confluence, we watched the Little Colorado's warm, chocolaty brown waters merge with the cold green flows of the Colorado. The only reason the river was so clear is the upstream presence of Glen Canyon Dam, which, since 1963, has trapped most of the river's silt in its reservoir, Lake Powell. It is, in other words, artificially clear.

Recreation here is artificial as well. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's measured releases from Lake Powell provide electricity and water to Phoenix and Las Vegas. But they also ensure about seven months of relatively safe rafting for tour groups like ours.

Without the dam, the Colorado would, in a wet year like this one, roar at dangerously high levels in the spring, only to shrink to flows too low for safe passage by midsummer.

"We might only be able to take boats down here a couple of months a year," said Robby Pitagora, our trip leader, who has spent the past 40 years running and studying the canyon. That would mean fewer jobs in recreation, so important to cities like Flagstaff, and fewer people experiencing the canyon's harsh beauty. But all of this impacts the river's natural ecology. Today, exotic trout compete with humpback chub and the other endangered native fish that evolved in the once-silty waters, and the canyon's shrinking beaches have become choked with vegetation despite an extra-large "restoration" release from the dam every November.

And yet, massive as it is, the dam is not permanent. Silt is already reducing the reservoir's capacity, flowing in liquid clouds toward the dam's hydro-turbines. Drought is speeding up the process, even as climate change could magnify gigantic floods in the future. (In 1983, *High Country News* ran its first bona fide scoop on how a huge runoff that year almost destroyed the dam.) We floated past the site in Marble Canyon where the federal government originally planned to build a dam in the park, trying to imagine what the canyon would look from a boat floating hundreds of feet above us. The Sierra Club, led by David Brower and others, successfully fought that proposal, but acceded to the building of Glen Canyon Dam upstream, a trade-off Brower regretted to his dying day.

On the sixth day, we reached Phantom Ranch, an oasis on the relatively flat delta of Phantom Creek. We rose early the next morning to begin the 8-mile, 4,500-foot climb to the South Rim, joining a steady stream of human traffic as we approached the top. Near the rim, we ran into parents and grandparents and children skipping down the trail — a few of the more than 6 million people who visit Grand Canyon National Park each year. We heard snippets of conversation in many languages.

So what is the meaning of the Grand Canyon? A great place to eat ice cream and take a selfie? An ancestral homeland? A mind-boggling landscape where natural and human forces collide to create beauty and contradiction? It all depends on your point of view. I came away from my first Grand Canyon experience with a sharper sense of the issues facing our beloved West and a deeper respect for the people who care about it. That's what we hope to accomplish at *High Country News* for the next 50 years. Happy trails.

—Paul Larmer, executive director/publisher



Jim Enote on his 13th trip down the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, with Paul Larmer. COURTESY OF RIVERS & OCEANS



"On the Road to 50" is a series of community gatherings in cities across the region, collecting feedback about HCN's future direction as we approach our 50th anniversary in 2020. See more: hcn.org/otr-50



White Sands National Monument



Trinity Site Ground Zero



"Worth stopping"



The American pastime of pocketing land

THE ATOMIC ROAD TRIP

In the Land of Enchantment, histories of violence are packaged, sold and consumed

FEATURE BY LULING OSOFSKY AND KEY MACFARLANE | PHOTOS BY LUNA ANNA ARCHY



for since 1934"



The core becomes known as the "demon core"



Fat Man killed 40,000 people in an instant

CLINES CORNERS

Refueling sixteen-wheelers, a cloudless blue sky and an asphalt parking lot that blurs into the brown scrub beyond the intersection of two highways: If you're headed north from White Sands National Monument up to Santa Fe, as we were, you'll hit the Clines Corners rest stop. For a hundred miles, billboards prime you: "Souvenirs," "Indian Pottery," "Fireworks," "99-cent Coffee." At the junction of Interstate 40 and U.S. Route 285, the iconic gas-station-diner-gift shop is an oasis of respite and kitsch. "Worth stopping for since 1934," the signs say. We needed gas, coffee, restrooms, a chance to stretch our legs. It was Black Friday.

The gift shop is the size of a warehouse. Its walls and aisles are bursting: hundreds of hot pink and neon-green dreamcatchers, Minnetonka moccasins, "I Want to Believe" posters from the *X-files*, "Zuni jewelry," Mexican blankets woven in every imaginable color, T-shirts, bumper stickers declaring: "Police Lives Matter," "Heritage not Hate," "One Nation under God." For \$1, you can have a fortune generated by a stern-faced Medicine Man in a glass case. Even if you don't buy anything, the fever dream stays with you, living out a half-life under your skin.

We settled on a chocolate bar and two massive cups of coffee and were back on the road. We were on an "atomic tourism" road trip. Our rented Kia Soul was strewn with camping gear, groceries and lots of sand. We'd wanted to get out of the Bay Area for a little while, away from its tech fantasies and housing crunches. Leaving the birthplace of the microchip and Google, we came to see where the atomic bomb was born. Both of us were intrigued by New Mexico's nuclear past and with how that legacy has been branded, packaged and sold. That history seemed a dark undercurrent to the "Land of Enchantment" celebrated on the license plates in front of us. As we accelerated back onto the highway, a trio of military jets flew overhead, out over the desert.

Tourism and destruction aren't easily separated here, especially after the invention of the atom bomb. From the road signs marking pueblos and Indian reservations, to patches of radioactive rabbitbrush in Bajo Canyon, New Mexico's cracked and cratered landscapes are riddled with violent histories, nuclear secrets, veins of turquoise and silver.

The farther you drive, the more it fuses together in the Sangre de Cristo mountain light, a place where alien conspiracy theories on the radio are as eagerly received as the sacrament.

Where thickly forested landscapes are punctuated with dusty arroyos, and linear particle accelerators are built on plateaus above centuries-old Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings. It was this enchanting mess that pulled us to the place where the atom was split, to create the world's first nuclear weapon. As we squinted down the highway, we saw a chain reaction of violence, ricocheting across the desert of history.

June 1598. Juan de Oñate leads a group of Spanish conquistadors north along the Camino Real, across an unforgiving stretch of the Jornada del Muerto desert. When they reach the desert's northern edge, they receive food and water from the Piro Indians of the Teypana Pueblo. They rename the pueblo Socorro, meaning "help" or "aid."

January 1599. Oñate and his conquistadors kill 800 men, women and children at Acoma Pueblo, 60 miles west of what is now Albuquerque. Those who survive are sold into slavery. On Oñate's orders, the right foot of 24 male prisoners is amputated.

SAND FOR SALE

We had just come from White Sands National Monument, an unending, undulating terrain of blindingly white sand dunes. To the west, just over the San Andres Mountains, lies the Jornada del Muerto, or "Journey of the Dead." It was in that desert, just 60 miles from where we camped at White Sands, that the U.S. Army conducted the world's first detonation of a nuclear device on July 16, 1945. The test was code-named "Trinity" by physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," director of the government's Los Alamos Laboratory and Manhattan Project.

It happened at 5:29:45 a.m. Mountain War Time, just before sunrise. From our tent, the fireball would have been blinding, and we would have felt the shock of the blast, coming some seconds later. Witnesses described the explosion in terms of both beauty and terror, as brilliant, thunderous and menacing. Many saw the light turn from yellow to green to red to purple. Some experienced flash blindness. Oppenheimer recalled a verse from the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*: "If the radiance of a

Facing page: the Trinity nuclear bomb test, July 16, 1945, in the New Mexico desert.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one.”

Within milliseconds, the bomb liquified the sand into little chunks of greenish glass; in a flash of divine violence, trinitite — the first human-made mineral — was born. A reporter for *Time* magazine described the bomb’s crater as a lake of green jade, shaped like a splashy star. First reporters, and then the general public, flocked to the site (now only open two days a year) to collect these irradiated keepsakes. Today, it’s illegal to take pieces home, though you can find a small chunk online for \$35.

There’s no trinitite in the White Sands National Monument gift shop, but you can buy vials of white sand. You are encouraged, as a visitor, to participate in the American pastime of pocketing land. And the land, as the National Park Service never tires of pointing out, is vast. White Sands National Monument sits on “the largest gypsum dunefield in the world,” spanning 275 square miles of “dazzling white sand dunes.” It is, according to the park’s website, “the perfect setting for commercial filming, photography, and various other art forms.” It’s disturbing to think that what happened in the New Mexico desert was somehow sanctioned by the desolation and awe of the landscape itself — a limitless canvas of swirling sand and searing light.

August 1680. Inflamed by decades of colonial treachery and abuse, Pueblo Indians from across Nuevo México rise up against the Spanish conquistadors. One of the main organizers is Popé, religious leader from the Tewa Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh. Popé’s Rebellion succeeds in driving out the Spaniards, who do not regain control of the province until 1692. That year, Diego de Vargas promises protection to the Pueblo Indians if they swear allegiance to the king of Spain and the Christian God.

NEW MEXICO TRUE

Leaving White Sands, we passed through the Mescalero Reservation en route to Roswell. On the drive, we listened to a podcast that featured a “UFOlogist” who claimed that the famous 1947 Roswell UFO incident was not about extraterrestrial aliens at all. The aliens, he argued, were actually disabled Japanese patients who were used as test subjects. They’d been interned at Fort Stanton, a little over an hour outside Roswell, during World War II.

With so much of New Mexico’s military history classified, it’s hard to know what is true and what is not. But the state’s tourism department builds its own version of truth, under its own official brand, “New Mexico True.” The state’s website calls it an “authentic” experience, one that “isn’t about plastic replicas, papier-mâché attractions, or contrived adventures.”

But much of what we found was indeed contrived, papier-mâché’d replicas. Roswell — consistently voted one of the worst tourist traps in the U.S. — epitomizes this. One of the state’s poorest cities, it relies on its world-famous UFO industry. Driving up Main Street, you pass the International UFO Museum and Research Center, and a string of storefronts with vaguely extraterrestrial-sounding names: “Stellar Coffee,” “Cosmic Salad,” “Alien Invasion Tee Shirts.” The streetlights have slanted eyes and glow green at night. At the Roswell Walmart, cartoonish aliens painted on the windows beckon you in with long spindly fingers.

July 1942. Two Japanese Americans, Toshio Kobata and Hirota Isomura, are killed en route to the Lordsburg Internment Camp in New Mexico, where some 1,500 Japanese and Japanese Americans will be held by the end of WWII, shot in the back at close range by a sentry who sees them wandering off the road. It is possible that the two 58-year-old men were going to relieve themselves, since they had been denied the use of a restroom. The sentry is later acquitted of murder charges.

CITY ON A PLATEAU

We felt the change from Roswell to Los Alamos as we drove the 230 miles between them, finding up the mountains, ears popping with the elevation, temperatures dropping fast. We cranked up the heat and reached into the backseat for our jackets.

Perched over 7,300 feet above sea level, on four mesas on the Pajarito Plateau in northern New Mexico, Los Alamos is quiet, remote and beautiful — almost transcendental. It was the sublimity of Los Alamos that drew Robert Oppenheimer back to the area. He’d spent time here as a teenager — hiking, camping, riding horses, breathing in the clean mountain particles — to convalesce from a long illness. Years later, when the Manhattan Project needed a secluded location to create the first nuclear weapon, Oppenheimer returned.

Today, its fame as the birthplace of the atomic bomb makes Los Alamos seem like a likely hub of nuclear tourism. But since the Los Alamos National Laboratory is still fully operational, a rarefied air of secrecy and reserved professionalism persists. There are still gates, checkpoints and badges. As our tour guide, Georgia, would later explain to us, there is a deep ambivalence about tourism in the so-called “Secret City.” It hasn’t fully commercialized its past. It doesn’t need the money: The city is one of the wealthiest in the U.S., with the highest concentration of millionaires. Nested high up in the mountains, Los Alamos feels like it belongs to the sky.

We entered town on the main drag, Trinity Drive. It was around 8 p.m., and we were starving. But the streets were deserted and every restaurant closed. Even the local wine bar, UnQuarked, was ... well, quarked. A quick search on Yelp revealed that the “Atomic Bar & Grill” was our best bet. We found the bar in the middle of a Smith’s grocery store, brightly lit, wedged between the deli and the produce. Three men were there drinking beers, watching Monday Night Football. We read down a list of sandwich names that included the “Manhattan Project” and “America the Flavorful,” but the place was no longer serving food. Instead, the bartender nodded toward the prepared foods — we could grab sushi and eat it at the bar.

In the morning, we visited the Los Alamos History Museum. Its first room tells the city’s history through a timeline, starting with the Ancestral Puebloans and ending with contemporary Los Alamos. There are two dates attached to the Puebloans: the 1150s, when they arrived on the plateau, and the 1550s, when, due to a drought, they left.

There was no other mention of the Ancestral Puebloans in the museum, let alone any reference to Indigenous people, aside from the expensive Native jewelry and pottery in the gift shop. Yet Los Alamos occupies land that was loaned to the U.S. government during World War II by the San Ildefonso Pueblo, with the agreement that it would be returned once the war ended. Obviously, it was not. This has been a source of distress and anger among neighboring pueblos, not only San Ildefonso, because the land is widely recognized as sacred. It is now toxic from decades of the lab dumping untreated radioactive waste and other materials into the Los Alamos canyons that flow into the Rio Grande. The timeline conceals other acts of violence, too: There is no mention of bombs actually being dropped; no Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Only 1943 — the start of the Manhattan Project — and 1945 — the end of World War II — are noted. The timeline segues right into the Cold War, when Los Alamos became “a thriving, internationally known town.”

May to July 1956. As part of Operation Redwing, the U.S. military conducts 17 nuclear test detonations in the Pacific Ocean, on the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls. The tests are named Cherokee, Zuni, Yuma, Seminole, Blackfoot, Flathead, Osage, Inca, Dakota, Mohawk, Apache, Navajo, Huron. At 5 megatons, the most powerful detonation is Tewa, named for the Tewa people of northern New Mexico.

OMEGA POINT

We were the only two people in Georgia's yellow touring van that day, and though the tour was advertised as one and a half hours, it ended up being closer to four. Early on, she showed us her church, the United Church of Los Alamos, the town's first, chartered in 1947. It featured some shockingly beautiful stained-glass work — exploding galaxies, supernovas, planets and black holes swirled in cobalt. The panes were made by Robert Brownlee, an astrophysicist who worked at the lab in Los Alamos for 37 years, executing and analyzing nuclear tests at Bikini and Eniwetok and at the Nevada Test Site.

As we stood before a window called “The Second Coming,” our stomachs dropped. In the center of five panels, amid a swirling convergence of blue ribbons of light, pointing upwards toward a white cross at the arched apex of the pane, was the yellow silhouette of what appeared to be the nuclear warhead Fat Man the plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki. Fat Man killed 40,000 people in an instant, a number that doubled in the days, weeks and months that followed. The bomb was code-named Fat Man because of its round, wide shape, exactly the same as the silhouette in the stained glass. The small white circles surrounding it look like ball bearings shooting out.

In describing the window, Brownlee writes about the Omega Point. In the Book of Revelation, Christ says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Brownlee sees the Omega Point as the final destination, where history and humanity are fated to spiral towards a point of divine unity, making “light from light.” Jesus becomes an “accelerator,” speeding up the complexity of atoms and consciousness, producing enough energy to escape the “heat death” of the universe.

The likeness between the Omega and Fat Man is unnerving. Whether Brownlee, the Christian nuclear scientist, meant to conjure Fat Man, seems impossible to know. We'd seen Fat Man on earrings and pins and hats, but not yet gracing the walls of a church.

August 1945. After attending an evening lecture, 24-year-old Los Alamos physicist Harry Daghlion returns to the remote Omega Site, where he's been running experiments on a plutonium core. He has an idea that involves stacking tungsten carbide bricks around the silvery plutonium sphere.

Against official procedure, he works alone into the night, placing brick on brick, until one accidentally slips from his hand.

It falls down into the core.

A flash of blue light fills the room. Daghlion feels a tingling. He will die 25 days later from acute radiation poisoning. After this and another accident in 1946, the core becomes known as the “demon core.”

THROUGH THE GATES

After the tour, we headed down the mountain to Santa Fe. We were, in a way, retracing the same path that many Los Alamos scientists took back in 1945, after finding out that the Trinity test had been a “success.” Like us, they piled into cars and sped down to the famous La Fonda hotel on the Plaza. There, they drank and celebrated in the afterglow of the bomb. There was no feeling of guilt about Nagasaki or Hiroshima, at least not yet; that would happen later. This is something the museums never mentioned: Einstein's regret, Oppenheimer's despair, Otto Frisch's feeling of “nausea” when he watched his friends in Los Alamos once again rush down to La Fonda, this time with news from Japan.

La Fonda continues to celebrate its role in this history. In conjunction with Santa Fe's 2018 “Atomic Summer” programming, the hotel offered a one-night package: luxury accommodations, breakfast for two, admission to the nearby “Atomic Histories” exhibition, and a complimentary copy of Oppenheimer's biography. We missed the special, but managed to book a discounted room with the slightest view of the



Los Alamos lab sits on land that was supposed to be returned to the San Ildefonso



The bomb was code-named Fat Man because of its round, wide shape



Roswell is consistently voted one of the worst tourist traps in the U.S.

mountains. As the night wound down and the lingerers at the bar tipped back the last of their martinis, we eyed the bartenders suspiciously. We'd heard that during the Manhattan Project, FBI agents infiltrated La Fonda's staff. We kept up a spirit of secrecy, peering into empty ballrooms, tiptoeing across the lobby, with its hodgepodge of Mission-era altarpieces and Zuni animal fetishes, half looking for ghosts.

Before leaving town, we visited 109 East Palace, the Manhattan Project's secret office, where new scientists would check in before making the journey to Los Alamos. The original gate is no longer there — we had seen its ominous, prison-style iron bars displayed in the Los Alamos History Museum. Instead, the new door was wide open. It's now home to Chocolate and Cashmere, a boutique billing itself as a “celebration of the senses ... a room painted like the inside of a chocolate wrapper; color and more color; everything is soft and oh so yummy.”

Outside, there's a large mural of Oppenheimer. He's silhouetted with pipe in hand, standing in the desert, a rainbow scarf billowing in the wind. He's blowing smoke rings. They spell out “Chocolate + Cashmere.” Like everyone else, we took pictures. □



ORGANIC
ANCIENT
GRAINS

Bluebird
Grain Farms

FROM OUR PLOW TO YOUR PLATE

WHOLE GRAINS, FRESH MILLED FLOURS & DRY PRODUCT BLENDS

LOCATED IN THE METHOW VALLEY, WASHINGTON | 509.996.3526

BLUEBIRDBGRAINFARMS.COM



PATAGONIA PUMAS

PUMAS, CONDORS AND WHALES
OF SOUTHERN CHILE WITH PUMA
EXPERT DR. MARK ELBROCH
OF PANTHERA.







"ONE OF THE
TOP 10 GREAT
WILDLIFE TOURS
OF THE WORLD"

RESERVE YOUR SPACE
TODAY FOR THIS ONE
OF A KIND PROGRAM

MARCH 13-23, 2020

JHEcoTourAdventures.com | 307-690-9533



CONSERVE
SCHOOL

Inspiring Environmental Stewardship

www.conserveschool.org



Yellowstone Wolf Tracker

The Wildlife Watching Experts



Single or multi-day tours in
Yellowstone National Park
led by local naturalists

Trip Advisor
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

WolfTracker.com • (406) 223-6634

26th International Climbers' Festival



JULY 10-14, 2019 | LANDER, WY
WWW.CLIMBERSFESTIVAL.ORG

ADULTS: \$50 BEFORE JUNE 1 (\$70 AFTER)

YOUTH: \$40 BEFORE JUNE 1 (\$50 AFTER)

FULL REGISTRATION BAG NOT GUARANTEED AFTER JUNE 1

Kitty Calhoun | Craig DeMartino | James Edward Mills | Volker Scheffl

ELAINA ARENZ, MAUREEN BECK, TOMMY CALDWELL, MARTA FERNANDA RODRIGUEZ GALVAN, MARCUS GARCIA, JESSA GOEREL, BRETTANY GRIFFITH, KRIS HAMPTON, HÖRST FAMILY, KAI LIGHTNER, DRU MACK, COLETTE MCINERNEY, MOLLY MITCHELL, SHINGO OHKAWA, CHELSEA RUDE, BEN RUECK, KATE RUTHERFORD, MATT SEGAL, JONATHAN STEGRIST, BECKY SWITZER



OR

WYOCIMBERS



explore with 50th ACES

Aspen Center for Environmental Studies



free daily guided hikes

private custom tours

kids camps

adult hikes & field classes

weekly birding outings

community events

Hallam Lake &
Rock Bottom Ranch
visitor centers



aspennature.org | 970.925.5756

PHOTO © CINDY GOEDEL

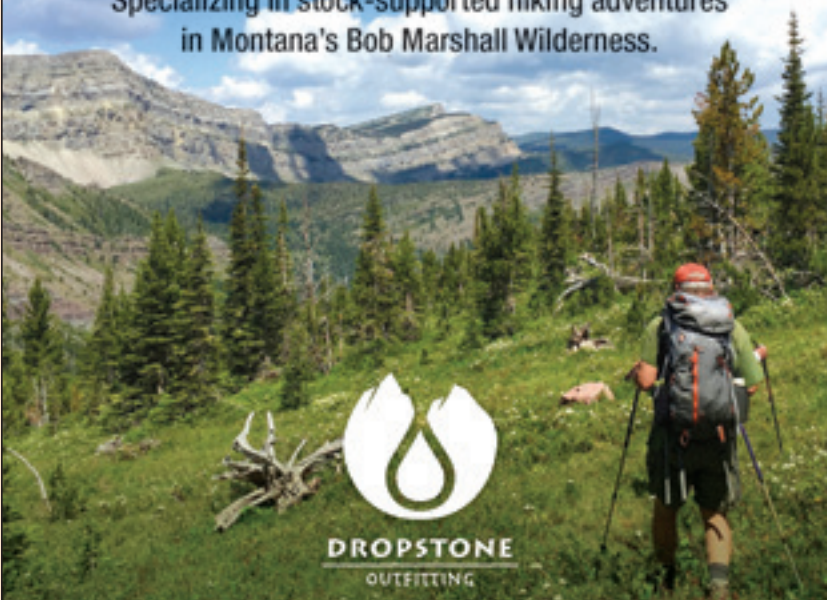


PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE. JOIN US TODAY.
GREATERYELLOWSTONE.ORG

DISCOVER WESTERN TREKKING

You Enjoy the Hike, We Pack Your Gear!

Specializing in stock-supported hiking adventures in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness.



DROPSTONE
OUTFITTING

406.289.0863 • www.dropstoneoutfitting.com

Rebuild Trails, Rewild Your Soul!

Join a community of outdoor lovers for day, weekend, or full week-long projects clearing trails in Idaho's beautiful backcountry. Join Today to Explore and Restore with the Idaho Trails Association.



www.idahotrailassociation.org



**HOLIDAY
RIVER
EXPEDITIONS**

FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOHN WESLEY POWELL

Join River Historians and the staff of Holiday River Expeditions for this 18-day Journey through four River Canyons. July 5-22, 2019.

BikeRaft.com • 800-624-6323
email Info.HolidayRiver@gmail.com
Per canyon options also available.



discover the power of PLACE

Our 90+ year-old biological field lab is pioneering a new approach to science that is changing how we understand the world. We are accelerating scientific discoveries that affect our food, water, air, and health. What happens at RMBL is Earth changing. Join us to discover the power of place.

For information on, tours, programming and visitor center visit rmbll.org

EXPERIENCE WONDER

DAYTIME TOURS
TELESCOPE VIEWING

LOWELL
OBSERVATORY
125 YEARS | 1894 - 2019



Psst! What are you waiting for?

Asa Wright Nature Centre
Trinidad & Tobago

Inspiration and adventure waits for you! As the North American booking agent for the Centre's famed Eco-lodge for over 35 years, **Caligo Ventures** offers Guided Group Tours, Independent Birding Ventures, and Relaxing Lodge Stays. Visit this bucket-list birding destination for your next tropical getaway and discover great discount rates October to December.

Contact us at 800-426-7781
or at info@caligo.com.



Photo: Green Honeycreeper Sandy Sorkin

NATURALIST JOURNEYS

Our educational, wildlife & birding tours feature expert guides, local foods & boutique lodgings. Immerse yourself in learning and nature with like-minded travelers! 866.900.1146 / www.naturalistjourneys.com

Texas' Big Bend: Monsoon Madness, July 20 - 27, 2019

Arizona Monsoon Madness, August 3 - 9, 2019

Kansas Tallgrass Prairies, September 14 - 22, 2019

Veracruz: Mexico River of Raptors, September 25-October 5, 2019

Peru: Cusco to Manú National Park, October 12 - 26, 2019

South Carolina: Southern Charm, October 17 - 24, 2019

Southeast Arizona: Sky Island Fall Sampler, November 4 - 10, 2019



Roseate Spoonbill, Bob Hill



So. Carolina Fody Beach, Carlos Sanchez



American Avocet, Carol Eischen

NATURALIST
JOURNEYS



www.naturalistjourneys.com

Sorensen's
AN ALL-SEASON RESORT IN THE HIGH SIERRA
Hope Valley, CA

Call to Reserve
800.423.9949

Near South Lake Tahoe



Your resort for all seasons in the Sierra Nevada

Tucked away on the eastern edge of spectacular Hope Valley, near Lake Tahoe, Sorensen's Resort is ideal for recreation and relaxation all year long. This historic settlement offers cozy housekeeping cottages, log cabins, and mountain home vacation rentals providing a range of charming accommodations.



Enjoy fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, bicycling, rafting, history treks or just unwind.




Sample the amenities of a small resort that include a full-service restaurant, a wood-fired sauna and 165 wooded acres to play on.



Sorensen's Resort is also a perfect spot for small weddings and conferences.

14255 Hwy. 88 • Hope Valley, California
800-423-9949 • www.sorensensresort.com

**Have We Met?
See Me In:**

**Joe Scheuerle
and His
Remarkable
Indian Gallery**



September 6 through December 2019

Become a member and see this
and
other exhibits free!

**Montana's Museum
and Museum Store**

Open Monday-Saturday, 9-5
Closed Sundays and State Holidays
225 North Roberts • Helena



Big Sky, Big Land, Big History.
**Montana
Historical Society**
montanahistorysociety.org



LAST CHANCE!

ON THE WILD ROAD
TRAVEL. OBSERVE. ENGAGE.

HCN's Expedition through Utah & Southwest Colorado
Explore Bears Ears, Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef, & Grand Staircase-Escalante with us!

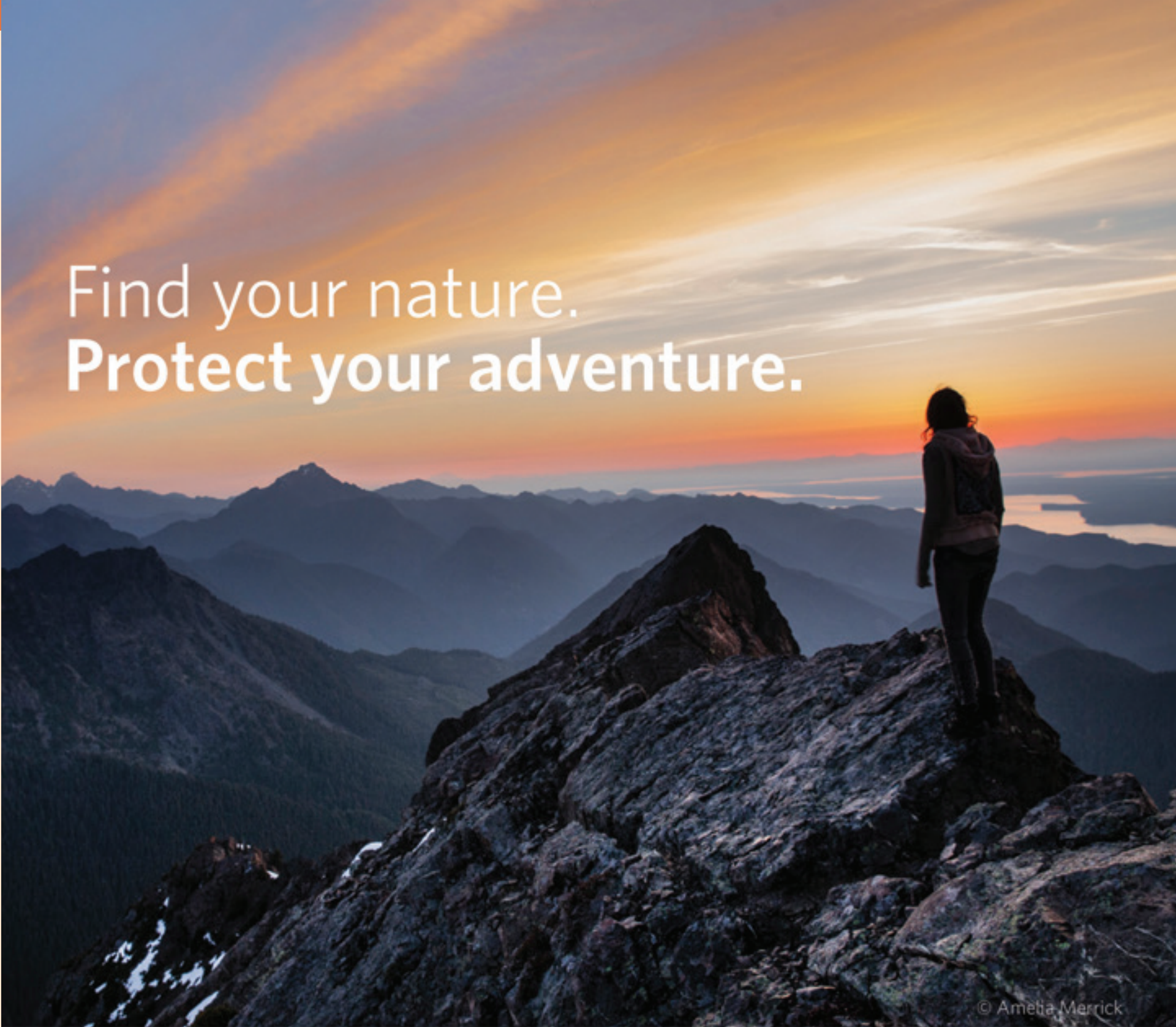
September 7 - 15, 2019

For more info visit: hcn.org/wildroad
Call toll-free: 866-OH-SHEEP




BLACK SHEEP ADVENTURES

High Country News
travel



Find your nature.
Protect your adventure.

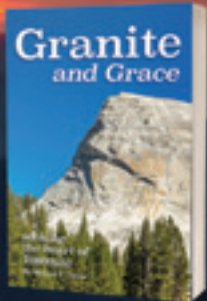
© Amelia Merrick

The Nature Conservancy works across the West to protect the places you love. From towering snow-capped mountains to prairie grasslands, from arid desert landscapes to our mighty winding rivers, the nature we depend on, depends on us.

**Learn how you can make a difference
at [nature.org/lovethewest](https://www.nature.org/lovethewest)**



Travel the West through these pages



Granite and Grace
Seeking the Heart of Yosemite
Michael P. Cohen
"A perfect book for mountain people who distrust easy answers to existential questions."
—Jared Farmer, author of *Trees in Paradise*



GRAND CANYON
A History of a Natural Wonder and National Park
Don Logo
"Logo mixes various contexts and insights—along with some humor—to probe the canyon's history."
—Arizona Daily Sun



Where the Sky Touched the Earth
The Cosmological Landscapes of the Southwest
Don Logo
"The writing is personal, thoughtful, and emotional, but it is also clear that Logo conducted extensive research on the topics..."
—The Journal of Arizona History

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA PRESS unpress.nevada.edu



EVER WILD

A Lifetime on Mount Adams

AN OVERLOOKED MOUNTAIN. AT LAST, A MOUNT ADAMS BOOK!



Text and Photography by **DARRYL LLOYD**

Lloyd has long been striding that "high ridge" where, Vladimir Nabokov said, "the mountainside of 'scientific' knowledge joins the opposite slope of 'artistic' imagination"—and in this *Book of Wonders*, he takes us there.

Robert Michael Pyle, Author of *Wintergreen*, *The Butterflies of Cascadia*, *Where Bigfoot Walks*, and twenty other books

Available at your favorite gift and book stores, and online at:
www.mtadamsbook.com

GRAND CANYON ZION & BRYCE



May 29-June 6, 2020

We invite you to join us to explore the spectacular National Parks in the Canyonlands! With superb leadership by national park expert and naturalist, Ellis Richard, we will explore the dramatic wonderlands of **Zion National Park**, **Bryce Canyon National Park**, and the **Grand Canyon**, including a half-day float trip on the Colorado River. \$3,495 (from Las Vegas).

For a detailed brochure, call (800) 252-4910
All prices are per person twin share + air



BETCHART EXPEDITIONS Inc.
17050 Montebello Rd, Cupertino, CA 95014
Email: Info@betchartexpeditions.com
www.betchartexpeditions.com

Arizona Skies & New Discoveries



April 19-26, 2020

We invite you to join us to explore natural and astronomical wonders of the desert paradise of Arizona! From Tucson to Sedona to Flagstaff see the spectacular landscapes and wildlife that Arizona is so famous for. Visit **Caris Telescope Mirror Lab**, **Biosphere 2**, **Kitt Peak**, **Meteor Crater**, **Lowell Observatory** and more! \$3,295 per person twin share + air.

For a detailed brochure, call (800) 252-4910
All prices are per person twin share + air



BETCHART EXPEDITIONS Inc.
17050 Montebello Rd, Cupertino, CA 95014
Email: Info@betchartexpeditions.com
www.betchartexpeditions.com

THE WILD ANIMAL *Refuge*



*The Largest Carnivore
Sanctuary In The World,
Designed And Built Like
No Other In Existence*

A 10,473 Acre Refuge
for more than 500 Lions, Tigers, Bears,
Wolves and other RESCUED animals

WildAnimalRefuge.org



**Salida
ART WALK**
JUNE 28-30, 2019

*An Immersive
Art Experience*

www.salidaartwalk.org

PRESENTED BY High Country BANK

Discover...
Wilderness Adventure
Arts and Culture
Science and Nature
You!






Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions
for
Ages 10-18 ~ 1 to 6 weeks
Enrolling for Summer 2019
www.CottonwoodGulch.org ~ 505.248.0563



EXPLORE YELLOWSTONE THIS SUMMER
MASTERS SERIES

PHOTO NPS/NEAL HERBERT

Yellowstone.org/masters
406.848.2400 |   

 **YELLOWSTONE
FOREVER**
OFFICIAL NONPROFIT PARTNER OF
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Experience the park alongside the people whose work has changed
our way of seeing and understanding the world.

JUNE 12-15 | CORVIDS AND CANINES with John and Colleen Marzluff
JULY 22-26 | BEYOND YELLOWSTONE with Chris Johns
AUGUST 6-9 | STORYTELLING GOES WILD! with Asher Jay

All programs include fully catered meals and private cabins at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch.

Custom Painted Fish Replicas

of the trophy caught and released
or of the one from long ago.

visit www.ricksportraits.net



GROW MORELS
MOREL HABITAT KIT*
CREATE A PERENNIAL
MOREL GARDEN IN YOUR
OWN BACK YARD
\$32.95 + \$8.65 S/H

**ORGANIC INDOOR
MUSHROOM KITS**
AS EASY AS GROWING A
POTTED PLANT
Shiitake, Oyster & Pom Pom

ORGANIC MUSHROOM PLUGS
LOG & STUMP INOCULATION
Shiitake, Maitake, Lion's Mane, Ganoderma & Oyster

(707) 829-7388

www.gmushrooms.org
GOURMET MUSHROOM PRODUCTS

P. O. BOX 515 HCN19 - GRATON, CA 95444

Visa - Discover - Master Card - American Express

Wyoming Public Media is a statewide service of the UNIVERSITY of WYOMING

Western Podcasts
Download our Award-Winning Podcasts
HumaNature • The Modern West • Open Spaces

WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA

Photo by: Lane Tomlin

• Backpacking Treks • Day Hikes •
• Photography Workshops • Birding Tours •

**Discover Yosemite's Hidden Gems
with Expert Naturalist Guides**

Outdoor Adventures
Campsites and park entry included

Custom Adventures
Tailored to your interest and schedule

Sign up before space runs out!

yosemiteconservancy.org/outdoor-adventures
adventures@yosemiteconservancy.org
209-379-2317 x10

Yosemite Conservancy has been the park's non-profit partner since 1923. All of the proceeds from your adventure goes back to the park, ensuring its protection for future generations.


**YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY**
Providing For Yosemite's Future

COOLWORKS.com
JOBS IN GREAT PLACES®



© ROBERT B. CIACCIO

Who lived here *before?*

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND GO BENEATH THE SURFACE WITH OUR SPECIAL UNDERGROUND SERIES

HCN READERS *special offer*

\$35

Yearlong subscription to
Archaeology Southwest Magazine

Bonus

The complete "Underground" series
FREE when you subscribe through this
special offer

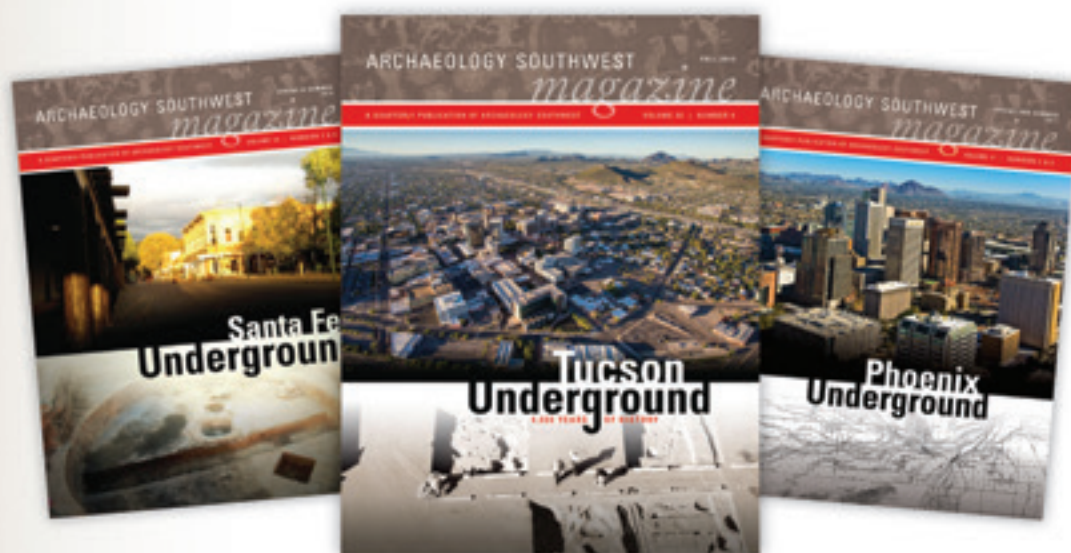
Get all three issues in the *Archaeology Southwest Magazine* "Underground" series for **FREE** when you join as a subscriber today (an additional \$20 value).

How? Join before **June 30, 2019:**

Online: www.archaeologysouthwest.org/hcn-special
Use this exclusive link to enjoy this special offer

By mail: Archaeology Southwest, HCN Special,
300 N. Ash Alley, Tucson AZ, 85701

By phone: (520) 882-6946 x26



Beneath the major cities of the Southwest lie historical remnants and ancient settlements. From the preserved footprints of a family and its dog walking across their farm fields thousands of years ago to liquor and medicine bottles tossed down a latrine a century ago, our cities have tales to tell—and archaeologists are unearthing those stories. In *Archaeology Southwest Magazine's* "Underground" series, we share what archaeology is revealing about the deep past of today's urban centers. Discover how places such as Santa Fe, Phoenix, and Tucson came to be from a whole new perspective!



Archaeology Southwest

(520) 882-6946 | www.archaeologysouthwest.org

Subscribe today at

www.archaeologysouthwest.org/hcn-special

EXPLORE *before*
our time

GO *beneath*
our city streets

LEARN *about*
those who came before

GAIN *from*
new perspectives

ADVOCATE *for*
preservation

Broad (*noun*): a passionate force for nature



Protecting wilderness and wild public lands and waters since 1989.



Be Bold • Be Brave • Be a Broad • www.greatoldbroads.org

SEEDS TRUST



A local seed company dedicated to teaching customers to save seed and combat disappearing biodiversity

High Altitude, Open-Pollinated, Heirloom Seed

WWW.SEEDSTRUST.COM



2019 Summer Camps Get Your Kids Outside This Summer!

Explorer Base Camp

An eco-adventure in the La Sal Mountains
Session I July 8 - 12; Session II July 15 - 19
5th-8th graders

Youth River Skills

An introduction to the art of running rivers
July 29 - 31
7th - 9th graders

Whitewater Academy

Learn advanced whitewater rafting skills
August 5 - 8
10th - 12th graders

Learn More

cfmoab.fun/summercamp
Scholarships Available



RIVER OUTFITTING SERVICES
FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Outfitting private river trips in the Southwest is our specialty.



ceibaadventures.com
928.527.0171

TRAIL GUIDE BOOKS

GUIDEBOOKS TO IDAHO TRAILS

by

Margaret Fuller and Jerry Painter

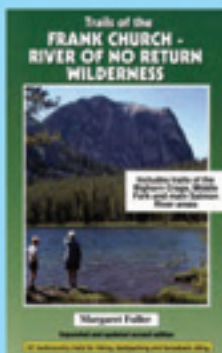
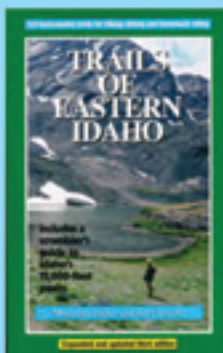
trailguidebooks.com

208.549.1820

2017



2016



Also

Available:

- *Trails of Western Idaho*
- *Ski The Great Potato: Idaho Ski Areas, Past & Present*



ZION
NATL PARK
FOREVER
PROJECT

Connect On a Deeper Level

Our guides are experts.
Our classroom is
Zion National Park.

Deepen your Zion experience with one-to-three day courses in geology, archaeology, photography and more, or call to customize your own learning adventure.

Start exploring now at
ZIONPARK.ORG.



Visit online or call today!
435-772-3264

The Forever Project
is the official
nonprofit partner of
Zion National Park



Lake Powell Vacations

Kayak Rentals • Paddle Board Rentals • Boat Rentals
UTV Rentals & more!

Clothing and Merchandise including: Roxy • PrAna • Rusty • Lucky & more!



Shuttle Services! - Call 928-614-8573

\$10/person round trip! To/from Horseshoe Bend, Antelope Canyon & more!

We can also pick you up straight from your location if planned in advance.



Lake Powell Vacations is your one-stop shop for adventure & fun!
We have all your needs to create unforgettable memories year-round.



www.lakepowellvacations.com • 928-614-8573

WEATHERWOOD HOMESTEAD

Vacation Rentals • Historical Accommodations
Retreats • Farm to Table Events • Celebrations

Less than 30 minutes from Glacier National Park, Whitefish, Bigfork & Flathead Lake



LET US WELCOME YOU HOME.

weatherwoodhomestead.com • homestead@weatherwoodllc.com

GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO PUBLIC LANDS.



JOIN AN
ADVENTURE
SERVICE PROJECT WITH
WILDERNESS VOLUNTEERS

VISIT WILDERNESSVOLUNTEERS.ORG

PROTECT YOUR BACKCOUNTRY




WILD SPOTTER

Mapping Invasives in America's Wild Places™

Citizen Science Volunteers Needed

Help map invasive species threatening
Wilderness Areas and Wild & Scenic Rivers.

Like us on Facebook and learn how to protect America's Wild Places at WildSpotter.org



The most comfortable wallet you'll ever own.



*Rogue Front Pocket Wallet
in American Bison Leather. \$55*

Back pocket wallets are poorly designed - they're bulky, uncomfortable and easy to have stolen. So at our little leather shop in Maine, we reimagined the wallet and what it could be.

We started with a new design that was slim, secure, and shaped for your front pocket. We put the finest American leathers in the hands of our craftsmen and women. And we ended up with a wallet you'll want to carry for a lifetime. Not everyone cares about well-made leather goods. But if you're the type of person who does, we're glad you found us.

Rogue Industries

rogue-industries.com | 800-786-1768

Explore Our National Parks

Alaska • Yosemite • Glacier • Yellowstone • Utah
Death Valley • Big Bend • Colorado • New Mexico

HIKE. BIKE. RAIL.
TRAVEL EUPHORIA.



**BLACK
SHEEP**
ADVENTURES

Call 866-OH-SHEEP

BlackSheepAdventures.com

Citizens of Bozeman: We'd like to hear from you!



Join *High Country News* editors for an evening of food, drink, and intriguing conversation as we dive deep into the essential issues of your region, and of the contemporary West.

Free & open to the public, bring a friend.

Visit hcn.org/otr-50 for more info.



The Baxter Hotel
Main Ballroom

Friday, June 7, 2019
5:30 - 7:30 pm

105 West Main Street
Bozeman, MT

Contact
laurad@hcn.org

Amazing Bed & Breakfast for Sale in Moab, Utah

Red Moon Lodge

A retreat-style, organic Bed & Breakfast



- Artesian spring
- Spring-fed pond
- 21+ acre feet of water rights available from well

- Pasture for livestock
- Greenhouses & gardens
- Solar powered
- Ancient cottonwood trees

- Bordered by park property on 3 sides
- Situated on 1 acre
- Additional 5.34 acres with remodeled home available



\$1.1 million for B&B on 1 acre or \$1.8 million for B&B with additional acreage and remodeled home.

Red Moon Lodge strives to foster awareness and reverence of Nature as well as grow and serve delicious and healthy food, all in a lovely sanctuary setting.



For more information contact Lenore Beeson · 435-260-2135 · Lenore@MoabByrdCo.com · www.MoabByrdCo.com

www.redmoonlodge.com

Running in place

Reimagining the city street by street



Rickey Gates.
ESTHER KENDALL

On a clear day last November, Rickey Gates set out running. He ran across the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco, down along chilly Ocean Beach and around Lake Merced. He traced his progress carefully, making note of which streets he travelled. The next day, he awoke and did the same, this time on the east side of the city. For 46 days, he repeated this, recreating, run by run, a map of the city's boulevards and dead ends, in a project he called Every Single Street.

Over the past few years, Gates has taken the Sisyphean sport of ultrarunning and found ways to make it stranger. Rather than run a race course, with the spur of competition and the support of volunteers, Gates has increasingly turned to odd, relentless pursuits, such as running every single street in San Francisco, looking for a different way to get to know a place.

Most human relationships are about repetition, the day-to-day rituals of cohabitation or coworking, the revisiting of old conversations, the years of watching another person change and grow. The same is true of our relationship to a place. You see the hills behind your home burn and then recover to become something new and different, you watch high-rises go up and displace the people who once lived in the shabbier low-slung buildings, you find yourself slipping to the margins of a city you once knew. And yet, for many urban residents, modern ways of life, from mapping apps and digitized social bonds to wealthier transplants' tendency to city-hop, allow us to hold our physical communities at a certain distance.

As we loosen our ties to this place or that in favor of more sprawling connections, Gates' undertaking became the

opposite: a detail-oriented inscription of a particular place, its streets and the people who live there, for no real purpose other than to know it well and, perhaps, to find a sense of belonging there.

In the months before Gates began Every Single Street, he ran 3,600 miles across America along a route designed according to a set of rules: Follow a river for a while, spend as much time as possible in the South, end in San Francisco. The run took him five months, most of which was spent in the long stretches of rural America between major cities. "When you're doing a run like that, you're giving the same amount of time and energy to a city as a 30-mile stretch of highway in Kansas," he told me. The day after he finished, he wandered around San Francisco with his friends and began to dream about the Every Single Street project. "I wondered if you lined up all the streets, how many miles of streets would there be," he told me. In a piece on his personal website announcing the project, he wrote, "I now felt the desire to experience the immensity of a single pixel on the global map."

Gates did not come up with the idea of Every Single Street. Runners and walkers have been tracing the roads of their hometowns for years, and this kind of comprehensiveness extends beyond running: In recent years, people have mapped every building in the U.S., documented every pedestrian plaza in New York City and every planted tree in Portland, Oregon, and visited every park in Seattle. Taken together, these catalogers have created an incredible inventory of the built environments most Westerners now inhabit.

Gates, a lapsed Catholic, makes a

ritual of his comprehensiveness, using repetition to relate to the places he's called home. "I have a lot of little collections," he told me, including tiny heaps of dirt from everywhere he has ever lived. "There's all these things I do over and over again." As he ran around San Francisco, he obsessively photographed an array of random landmarks: topiaries, lost pet posters, open garages, portapotties, trash bins on pickup day, women pushing strollers, grates and manhole covers, graffitied invocations of Jesus (*Thanks, Jesus; Jesus Saves; Jesus is Lord*), stairs and colorful Karmann Ghias, the quirky sloping Volkswagen sportscars. He began to notice patterns that slowly made the city become the irreplicable place that is San Francisco: In one part of town, all the pet posters were for runaway pitbulls; in another, it was parrots who'd gone astray.

Gates also documented the people who filled the streets he ran. About halfway through, he met a man repairing a Datsun in his driveway in the Richmond district. "It's a labor of love," the guy told him. Tell me about it, Gates responded. Those connections may have been, in the end, the whole point — the rehabilitation of the city as a human wild, the reimagining of it as an ecosystem like any other, full of delicate ties between organisms living in a fluctuating balance.

Cities are like the towering mounds termites build for themselves, elaborate habitations constructed by animals, human and nonhuman alike, Gates said: "We're creating a structure that suits us." Projects like his push for a love of the warrens we've built, an understanding and appreciation that erases the bounds between people and the environment they inhabit. □

WHOSE SA



Finding and losing a centuries- old refuge

It's a one-and-a-half hour drive from Albuquerque to El Santuario de Chimayó, a 200-year-old folk-Catholic compound in northern New Mexico. The trek to the town of about 2,100 curves and dips with the land as it swings from freeway to highway to two-lane street, suburbs to sparse foothills, Hispano communities to Native American pueblos. Keep an eye out for the roadside signs plugging the Santuario, because cellphone coverage out here gets spotty fast.

Neophytes can be excused if, at any point, they feel lost. But the faithful know to push on. Because they've seen the grand finale: a verdant valley that hosts old homes, pepper fields, cottonwood trees and the Santa Cruz River, with a 202-year-old adobe chapel at the

center of everyone's lives.

This shrine is devoted to Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas, a Guatemalan depiction of the crucified Christ that ended up in northern New Mexico, no one knows quite how. The Interior Department described the Santuario as a "very well-preserved and unrestored example of a small adobe pueblo church" in a 1969 survey, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It still has that old-fashioned charm. Twin bell towers flank the front door, and an adobe wall encloses the churchyard, which holds burial plots for the family that built it.

There's Mass in English every morning at 11 a.m., but most visitors skip it in favor of a visit to an ancillary room not much bigger than a middle manager's office. Here, they line up to scoop up dirt from the *pocito*, a hole refilled

every morning with soil drawn from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and blessed by a priest. Believers swear by its alleged curative powers; just outside the Pocito Room there is a Milagros ("miracles") Room, filled with visible declarations of faith: crutches and shoes, statues of the saints, photographs of the sick and saved.

The Santuario estimates that it receives about 300,000 visitors every year; more than 30,000 pilgrims walk from Santa Fe during Holy Week — the week before Easter — alone. But behind the Santuario's saintly façade lies a more earthly story, one with competing visions for the site's past, present and future, torn between clerics who want to make the shrine a worldwide attraction, and locals whose roots here go back generations, and who fear they are losing their Santuario for good.

SANTUARIO?

FEATURE BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO
PHOTOS BY LUNA ANNA ARCHEY



I FIRST VISITED CHIMAYÓ in 2010. A massive snowstorm had blanketed northern New Mexico the day before my visit, transforming the town into a Christmas-card village. I had the Santuario largely to myself for an hour, and the self-guided tour wasn't long. I got dirt from the *pocito*, bought rosaries for my siblings from a home-turned-gift shop, and peeked inside the nearby Santo Niño Chapel, built by Severiano Medina in 1857 to venerate an image of the Christ Child — a beloved Catholic icon of Zacatecas, the Mexican state where my parents were born.

I ended my visit with a green chile burrito and *biscochitos* (anise-scented cookies) at Leona's, a small restaurant a short walk away from the *pocito*. The hype was real: I've returned to the Santuario every summer since.

But what I didn't know that first time was that I had accidentally walked into the beginning of a dramatic transformation.

I noticed the small changes every year, but didn't think much about it at first. The Bernardo Abeyta Welcome Center opened in 2011, a huge gift shop and art gallery named after the farmer who originally built the Santuario, where legend says he found the Señor de Esquipulas crucifix buried in the ground. Soon came more places to pray: a former barn turned into a room dedicated to the Holy Family (not to be confused with a separate monument honoring the Nativity). A third gift shop sprang up. Behind the Santuario, next to the Santa Cruz River, the Madonna Gardens now featured statues of Mary appearing in multiple ethnicities, made of different

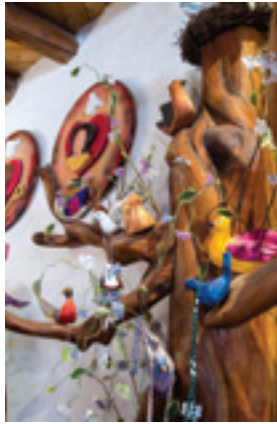
building materials — a Vietnamese Our Lady of La Vang in glimmering marble, a Mexican Guadalupe in wood, the New Mexican La Conquistadora in what looks like sandstone.

Those were the tasteful tweaks, but others verged on Disneyfication, and they were inescapable.

Cartoonish guide maps placed around the growing campus (and on sale at the official gift shop for a quarter) turned the sacred grounds into an amusement park. Rock arches next to the Santa Cruz, erected to commemorate the Seven Days of Creation, are now graffitied with *in memoriams* or dates of visits by people from across the globe. A nearby "Three Cultures" statue depicts a kneeling settler, a Bible-wielding Hispano farmer, and — bizarrely — a Plains Indian.

A remodeled Santo Niño chapel

Inside the original chapel at El Santuario de Chimayó, above left, in its original state, and the Santo Niño Chapel, recently renovated as part of a redevelopment plan supported by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.



Gil Martinez, above right, with the first piece that Father Julio Gonzalez saw in his art studio — a carving of Saint Francis of Assisi — which Martinez later donated to the Santuario. Above, artwork commissioned by Gil Martinez and Nidia Corral Gomez, including a statue called “Three Cultures,” depicting an Anglo-American settler, a Hispano farmer and a Plains Indian.

resembles Catholicism as imagined by Precious Moments, with big-eyed child angels and gaily painted wooden birds everywhere. The new look was the antithesis of the stark, mournful New Mexican-style *bultos* (wooden statues of the saints) and *reredos* (altar screens painted in muted colors) inside the Santuario.

This last August saw the most disturbing developments yet. A seashell embedded with sandals — a stylized reference to the Santo Niño, who wears *huaraches*, and the Shell of St. James, which signifies completion of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain — now marked everything from statues to buildings. Leona’s was gone; a new, church-run restaurant will replace it. Santuario workers now wore clothes that identified them as staff, with a sartorial division of labor: Groundskeepers and shop workers wore cheap red T-shirts, while managers walked around in white polo shirts.

Down in the so-called prayer portals — makeshift shrines devoted to various saints — a scale model labeled the “Santuario Vision Plan” announced more changes to come. A picnic area. More prayer sites. And right in front of the Santuario, a retreat center complete with its own church.

I left saddened, disturbed at the idea of losing *my* Santuario. Other tourists didn’t seem to mind.

“The dirt is nice, but I’d want to stay a day here instead of just a couple of hours,” a white woman from Maryland

told me. She wasn’t Catholic, but had read about the shrine online. “The more holy things here, the better.”

THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF THE SANTUARIO

arguably began in 1916. That’s when *El Palacio*, the official publication of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and the oldest museum magazine in the United States, ran a 24-page spread, complete with photos and maps, on what it declared a “New Mexico Lourdes.” It was, the author wrote, “probably the most charming bit of primitive Santa Fe architecture in existence.” The article urged people to “preserve the innate beauty, the natural grandeur, the romantic glamour, the precious heritage of (such) monuments hoary with age.”

Abeyta’s descendants, the Chaves family, still owned the chapel. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, then under the control of French-born clergy, had long neglected it; leaders forbade Mass to be held there in an attempt to reel in New Mexico’s influential lay Catholic movements. Instead, the Archdiocese encouraged pilgrims to visit a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, 25 miles away in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo.

But Santa Fe’s elite fell in love with the Santuario. Many felt the Chaves clan couldn’t be trusted with maintaining the chapel, so they launched a public and private campaign to gain control.

In 1919, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported “with regret” that a newly installed red tin roof “detract(ed)

tremendously from its picturesque beauty.” Soon, a group calling itself the Society for the Preservation and Restoration of New Mexico Mission Churches discussed how to take over the Santuario.

“Of course it is unsafe as long as it is in Native hands,” one member wrote to another, in a letter excerpted in Brett Hendrickson’s 2017 book, *The Healing Power of the Santuario de Chimayó: America’s Miraculous Church*. “They are likely at any time to go on a restoring (project) and ruin it.”

The “Natives” in question weren’t Pueblo Indians but rather Hispanos, the descendants of Spaniards who had settled in New Mexico as far back as 1598. The Anglo intellectuals who flocked to Santa Fe in the early 1900s romanticized their architecture, art and customs even as they stereotyped Hispanos as superstitious, fatalistic underachievers. Those caricatures made their way into American culture, from Willa Cather’s 1927 novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (based mostly on the life of Jean-Baptiste Lamy, the founder of the Santa Fe Archdiocese) and even the cult television show *Breaking Bad*.

The preservation society purchased the Santuario in 1929 from the Chaves family and transferred ownership to the Archdiocese, which renewed religious services once a month but otherwise neglected it. By the time Father Casimiro Roca arrived in 1954, the Santuario’s foundation had cracks and cavities.

Roca served the Chimayó community on and off for 61 years, until his death in 2015. The padre not only rehabilitated the chapel but oversaw the introduction of new grottoes and an outdoor worship area behind the Santuario, down next to the Santa Cruz River. He helped to negotiate the purchase of the Santo Niño chapel from Severiano Medina’s descendants in 1992. Last year, the Santuario dedicated a bronze statue of Roca outside the Abeyta Welcome Center, which also sells wood figurines of him for \$100.

But even Roca worried that he had irrevocably changed the Santuario. “The crowds are out of proportion,” he told United Press International. “The facility sometimes becomes a mess.”

This was back in 1987.

GIL MARTINEZ, WHOSE ANCESTORS settled in the state over 400 years ago, had visited Chimayó almost every month throughout his adulthood when Father Julio Gonzales walked into his arts and craft store sometime in 2007.

“Santuario for northern New Mexico is an icon,” says the 62-year-old graphic designer for the city of Santa Fe.

“Everyone goes. If someone is sick, or you have a hard time, that’s it. You go there.”

Gonzales was slowly assuming Roca’s duties at the Santuario, so Martinez offered the priest a 9-foot-tall wooden statue of St. Francis of Assisi for free.

“We deliver it weeks later, and he tells me, ‘My dream is to redo this whole (Santo Niño) chapel,’ ” Martinez

remembers. “I want to do a children’s chapel.’ That was the best day of my life.”

Gonzales hired Martinez to completely renovate the chapel. He removed the ceiling to expose the original *vigas* (load-carrying wooden beams) and installed modern artwork, pews and an altar. Gonzales was so impressed that he encouraged Martinez to do more. He donated a statue of a pilgrim, which now stands near the Santuario’s restrooms, and designed most of the area around the Santa Cruz River, including the “Three Cultures” statue, gazebo and prayer portals.

“Once we met the priest and we started, he had so many dreams to get things done, we just made it happen,” Martinez said. “It was a match that was meant to be.”

But soon, some began complaining that Gonzales and Martinez were cheapening Chimayó.

Villagers have a history of resenting ambitious newcomers who want to remake their home. In 1837, Native Americans and Hispanos in northern New Mexico rebelled against the Mexican governor in what became known as the Chimayó Revolt. Nearly 150 years later, merchants chased out Robert Redford, who wanted to film *The Milagro Beanfield War* (which dramatized northern New Mexico’s struggle between modernity and development), over fears that he would alter the town square. And in 2008, locals forced the Federal Communications Commission to paint a T-Mobile cellphone tower brown to better blend in with the landscape.

In 2011, the Santa Fe Archdiocese announced plans for a multimillion-dollar spiritual retreat. It had bought about 45 acres of land in Chimayó over the years, and the shrine’s booming popularity, advocates argued, meant the Santuario needed to expand.

The proposed project would restore the former homes of Bernardo Abeyta and Severiano Medina, which stood across the street from the Santuario, and repurpose them as part of a complex that included conference rooms, a restaurant, another chapel, and rooms for overnight stays. Martinez would head a foundation to raise funds, while his brother, Louis, drew up designs.

“We’re bringing the spirituality back into Chimayó,” Martinez told the *New Mexican* at the time.

Other residents resisted. They formed Chimayó Citizens for Community Planning to fight the Archdiocese. Its president was Raymond Bal, an Abeyta descendant who, with his sister, runs El Potrero Trading Post, which stands between the Santuario and the Santo Niño Chapel. His grandparents opened it as a general store in the 1920s, but over the years it evolved into a gift shop for tourists.

The Santuario “was a place that belonged to us,” says the 61-year-old, who remembers when the daily 7 a.m. Mass was in Spanish because that was the primary language of the elders.

“We had a tangible connection to the

past,” he said. “It was like time stopped, and maybe we were time itself because we were the link between the past and the future. This imbued me and the people of the area with that feeling of, ‘This really matters to me.’”

Bal also worried that the Archdiocese was starting to limit access, creating new rules and blocking easements around the property of his grandmother and others.

“The only person you could talk to is from the church, and they’d have a lawyer,” he said. “And you would need



a lawyer. Like any older person would, they’d throw up their hands and say, ‘I can’t fight this.’ So they have to sell. And the only buyer is the church.”

At crowded town hall meetings organized by the Chimayó citizens’ group, Martinez and the Archdiocese tried to present their case. Most of those in attendance were skeptical.

“We see the change is slow,” Bal now says. “We see the change tries to be organic. It’s organic to a certain degree until you realize that it’s not from the residents. And now, the future is somebody else’s yet-to-be-seen plan.”

The Archdiocese put the retreat plans on hold. (Neither Gonzales nor the Archdiocese responded to requests for comment.) Martinez still feels “horrible” about the death of what he calls a “beautiful project.”

“In my mind, I thought we were doing a wonderful thing for the community,” he said. “It was going to help them with (the economy) in the area, because nobody has work there.”

He puts the blame squarely on Bal.

“He was the biggest complainer of them all,” Martinez said. “As long as he’s around, he’s got enough power around the community that it’ll (never) happen.”

Built as a refuge from the troubles of mankind, the Santuario was now drowning in them.

WHEN I SPOKE TO BRETT HENDRICKSON, describing the recent changes, I could

hear him wince. “Oh, no,” he’d say. Or just a subdued, “Wow.”

Hendrickson is a professor of religious studies at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania who specializes in Mexican-American popular religious devotions. He last saw the Santuario in 2015, as he finished research for a book about its history.

As a scholar of shrines, Hendrickson is sympathetic to the Bals and Martinezes of Chimayó. “A place has to stay dynamic to keep relevant,” he said. “You need the money and attention to keep it from



decaying, but once you open the door, it’s like Pandora’s box. You can see how both sides have need for the place. They all want it to thrive, just in different ways.”

And the Santuario is clearly thriving. An article in the Santa Fe *New Mexican* about Conrado Vigil, a World War II veteran whose 1946 walk from his New Mexico hometown of Belen to the Santuario (a trip of about 120 miles) has inspired other pilgrims ever since, brought renewed media attention. This past summer, *Forbes* recommended a day trip; in October, *Architectural Digest* named Chimayó one of its “50 Most Beautiful Small Towns in America,” specifically citing the Santuario.

Meanwhile, Louis Martinez says he last worked with the Archdiocese on its expansion plans about three years ago. But his design firm still prominently displays a “Chimayó Retreat” page among the featured projects on its website.

You don’t abandon beloved spots just because they’re changing, so I’ll continue to make my annual pilgrimage as long as I can. Entering the Santuario, praying at the Santo Niño chapel, still soothes, still serves as a respite from the clamor of day-to-day life.

But the changes hurt. The world is seeping into the Santuario, whether I like it or not. So now when I step into the Pocito Room, the one place that has remained relatively untouched for two centuries, I kneel down to scoop up my dirt — and to remember the past. □

A couple in the Pocito Room, above left, where sand is replenished and blessed daily. Raymond Bal, above, a descendant of the farmer who originally built the Santuario, heads Chimayó Citizens for Community Planning, formed to fight the Archdiocese’s expansion plans.

Notice to our advertisers: You can place classified ads with our online classified system. Visit hcn.org/classifieds. May 10 is the deadline to place your print ad in the May 27 issue. Call 800-311-5852, or email laurad@hcn.org for help or information.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Conservationist? Irrigable land? Stellar seed-saving NGO is available to serious partner. Package must include financial support. Details: <http://seeds.ojaidigital.net>.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

On the Wild Road with High Country News — Join HCN and Black Sheep Adventures on an expedition through the national parks and monuments of Utah and southwest Colorado, Sept. 7-15, 2019. Author and journalist Jonathan Thompson will be the tour leader as we explore Bears Ears, Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef and Grand Staircase-Escalante. For more information, visit <https://www.hcn.org/advertising/wildroad-sept2019>.

3rd Annual Taos Writers Conference July 12-14, 2019, in Taos, N.M. With over 21 workshops and keynote speaker, poet Arthur Sze. taoswritersconference.org.

Voices of Wisdom 2019 Southwest 970-268-5214. Djbutterfly5@gmail.com Palisade, Colo. May 25 and 26; <https://www.sacredfire.foundation/event/voices-of-wisdom-southwest/>.

EMPLOYMENT

Chief Executive Officer at RCAC. See the full description at <https://bit.ly/2WJ3HvY>. Apply at RCAC@marcumllp.com.

Staff Attorney, Alaska — Earthjustice is hiring for a Staff Attorney. <https://app.jobvite.com/j?cj=oL7H9fws&s=HighCountryNews>.

Experiential Education Intern/Assistant — Actively introduce students to experiential education, outdoor recreation and sustainability while engaging and challenging them to learn and participate in these diverse opportunities. Room, board, salary; starts August 2019. Contact: joel.barnes@wasatchacademy.org.

Philanthropy Coordinator — Wyoming Wildlife Federation. Collaborates with the Executive Director and staff to ensure the effective implementation of all philanthropic activities. <https://wyomingwildlife.org/hiring-philanthropy-coordinator/>.

Community Engagement Assistant — The Idaho Conservation League (ICL) is seeking a dynamic community engagement assistant. The individual will work to identify and empower members, supporters, volunteers, and others to become involved in conservation issues, and to bring about positive local and statewide conservation awareness and policy change. For full job description, please visit: <https://www.idahoconservation.org/about/job-openings/>.

Executive Director — Badlands Conservation Alliance is seeking an Executive Director. For job description visit <https://www.badlandsconservationalliance.org/hiring>.



Trout Unlimited, North Idaho Field Coordinator — The field coordinator will work with TU members, other fishing organizations, community leaders, businesses and elected officials to build support for actions necessary to recover abundant, fishable populations of wild salmon and steelhead. The position location is in North Idaho with a preference for the Lewiston area. For complete job description, see website, www.tu.org. Send application materials to katie.becker@tu.org.

Northern Rockies Regional Director Visit our website for full description and to apply. No phone calls, please. NPCA is an EOE. <https://www.npca.org/about/careers>.

Executive Director — The Flathead Lakers are seeking a dynamic, self-motivated and proven leader to be our next Executive Director (ED). 406-887-2166. tomcoxmt@gmail.com <https://flatheadlakers.org/>.

HOME AND GARDEN

Western Native Seed — Specializing in native seeds and seed mixes for Western states. 719-942-3935.

John Deere snow blower, 24" — Newly refurbished and tuned. Older model, great condition. Gasoline engine. Chains on tires. Heavy duty for mountain snow. Call cellphone and leave message or email. 303-594-7909. mpietras09@aol.com.

MERCHANDISE

Lunatic Hydration Spray Bottle — Clean off, cool off and drink. Multiple spray patterns. Better than you imagine. Try it. www.lunaticgear.com.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Expert land steward — Available now for site conservator, property manager. View résumé at: <http://skills.ojaidigital.net>.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKS

The Book of Barley — Collector's item! The story of barley, the field crop; 50 years of nonfiction research. www.barleybook.com.

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

Coming to Tucson? Popular vacation house, furnished, two bed, one bath, yard, dog-friendly. Contact Lee at cloler@cox.net or 520-791-9246.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

Everland Mountain Retreat — 300 acres with mountaintop lodge. Nonprofit relocating. www.everlandmountainretreat.com.

#AmericanWestFuture

Your support fuels the engagement of young – and not-so-young – Westerners through in-depth and fact-based journalism.

Donate online at hcn.org/1904ad, call our office toll free at 1-800-905-1155

Or mail a check to
P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

High Country News
For people who care about the West.

SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE

#FridaysforFuture

Photo by Paul Becker

Qualify for California industrial hemp license? Former Northern Sierra winery, with 2,208-square-foot commercial building, big lot, room to expand. ron.lunder@gmail.com or call 530-256-3233.

Country Estate near Kings Canyon/Sequoia Parks – Spectacular views of snowcapped Sierras, 15 miles from Kings Canyon/Sequoia Parks. 47 acres with two homes, 75-foot pool, gym, patios, gardens. 1,670 square-foot main home has three bedrooms, one bath, built 2008. 1,163 square-foot guest house two bedrooms, one bath. 559-917-3040 nmcmanus@c21mm.com <http://EscapeToTheCountry.c21.com>

40-acre Lamborn Mountain Retreat, Paonia, Colo. – One-of-a-kind gem borders public lands/West Elk Wilderness. Privacy, creek, spring, irrigation, access. \$265,000. Info at <https://hcne.ws/LambornMT> or call 970-683-0588.

Energy-efficient – Unique custom home in Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Colorado near La Veta Pass. Three-bed, two-and-one-half bath, private gated park, two hours from Taos, N.M. Contact: karin81089@gojade.org or 719-379-3442.

Two earth-berm passive solar houses Walk through century-old mesquite Mexican doors into the huge adobe walled courtyard connecting the two homes. Incredible property in an astoundingly beautiful area in the Mimbres Valley. 575-519-8259.

Gila National Forest, N.M. – Beautiful off-the-grid passive solar near the CDT. 9.4 acres, north of Silver City. Sam, 575-388-1921.

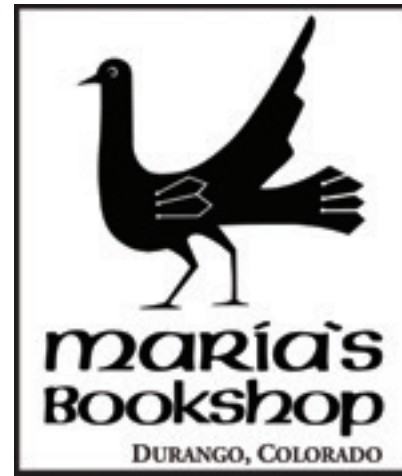
TOURS AND TRAVEL

Copper Canyon, Mexico – Camping, hiking, backpacking, R2R2R, Tarahumara Easter, Mushroom Festival, www.coppercanyontrails.org.

UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS

Instructors: Get High Country News for FREE in your classroom! Help your students unravel the complex issues of the American West with this tremendous resource, which includes:

- A copy of the magazine for each student in the class as well as for the instructor.
- An email to the instructor the week of publication, including a link to the PDF copy of the magazine for planning purposes.
- Access to our librarian for curated HCN stories on specific fields of study and topics.
- Full access to our website, including our rich archive of 45-plus years of *High Country News*. Sign up at hcnu.org/edu.





Back of Beyond Books

Specializing in Books of the Colorado Plateau

Maps and Guidebooks, Southwest Literature, Western Americana, Native Americana, and Edward Abbey and friends. Plus, Rare and Collectible books. We buy book collections.

83 North Main Street • Moab, UT 84302
www.backofbeyondbooks.com
 (800) 700-2859



Get High Country News in your classroom

Help your students unravel the complex issues facing the American West with this tremendous, free resource.

Sign up now at www.hcnu.org/edu



High Country News

BIG IDEAS

& EDUCATION GUIDE

ISSUE



Promote your degree or program in the Education Guide.

To place an ad, visit: hcn.org/big-ideas



Publication Date: August 19, 2019
 For more information call 1-800-311-5852 or email laurad@hcn.org

Freedom of movement

Emily Taylor remembers the first time she met another black climber outside of work. It was three years ago — after she'd been climbing for more than two decades. For years, Taylor, who lives in Oakland, California, has been advocating for better representation in the outdoor community, but the response from industry leaders has been vague and negligent. "They have been so careless and haphazard and not understanding of their own cultural bias," she said. Some companies have taken shallow measures to appear more diverse, but meaningful efforts, such as seriously looking into why there are so few black climbers, have not followed. Before it can move forward, the industry must grapple with the harrowing violence black people have endured in the United States, Taylor explained: "We have generational and ancestral trauma about having rope around our bodies."

So Taylor, a professional climber and climbing coach, created her own initiatives to diversify the sport, including a group called Brown Girls Climbing. Having a black coach can help young climbers, including non-binary kids, navigate the predominantly white spaces of climbing gyms, and feel safe there. One way Taylor does this is by incorporating stories of black heroes into skill-building exercises. For example, during a lesson on "quiet feet" — carefully avoiding shoe squeaks while climbing, to ensure efficiency and proper technique — she described how Harriet Tubman helped slaves escape to freedom without "making a sound." All of them know that story, she said. Creating an intentional space for fledgling climbers has been personally liberating for Taylor: "These girls can walk in (the climbing gym) and can see somebody that looks like them." JESSICA KUTZ



Left, Emily Taylor and her 9-year-old daughter, Milo. “I’m giving her an understanding member of Brown Girls Climbing, about the sport.



Kaily Heitz, left, and Emily Taylor scope out a route. Taylor started the Black Climbers Collective to create a safe space for climbers separate from the POC climbing community. “When we group (POC) all together, there is still a lack of healing space for me,” Taylor said. Middle, Taylor brings down Heitz after she topped out on a route. Across, Taylor holds the hand of one of her pupils, explaining why her hands hurt and what she can do to prevent it.



and a freedom of her own movement,” Taylor said, by teaching Milo, a



Top, Taylor assists 5-year-old Aki Williams-Rawlings. “Brown Girls Climbing was basically an answer to creating a safe space for girls and their emotions and their movement,” Taylor said. “But also celebrating ourselves as brown and black women.” Above, Taylor speaks to the girls.





Currents of consent and control

M has decided to tell him that she cheated on him, that the form for the disclosure will be a letter, that the conversation will happen tonight. She's also going to file a report about the time she can't remember. That time she was blacked out when friends saw her coworker carrying her up the stairs, and how in the morning, when she found herself in his bed and remembered nothing, she asked, "Was I good?" because she didn't know what else to do. In the crowded coffee shop she sits across from me, her shaking hands holding the small red cup of frothed milk. She ushers the mug halfway to her mouth and her mouth halfway to the mug, but she doesn't take a sip.

I'm sitting across from her because I've also grappled — am always grappling — with the questions she asks.

I can't figure out what's what, she says.

Where was I wrong and I need to take responsibility, and where do I get to say, "But listen, I don't know when sex is something I own, and when it's something I owe?" When are my infidelities separate and when are they inextricable from the other stuff — by which she means a litany of rape and assault and harassment and coercion and subtle and overt messaging about what it means to be a woman in a culture built on misogyny and patriarchy. *Where do I hold up the mirror to my actions and where do I say: Wait — how exactly was I supposed to know there was any other way?*

I'm conflating her words with mine, her story with mine, because they overlap in ways that render them indistinguishable at times. Perhaps your story lives here, too.

And because neither of us can untether the guilt and shame from stories of worth built around the way a body looks and who it is for, we've collided in this small coffee shop to do the work of unraveling, of trying to dislodge an instance or a word from an action downstream.

If what we fear about ocean currents is their power to push us into vast and unimaginable spaces, fear of rivers comes from the power of currents to push us into small, tight ones. The Animas River in southwest Colorado isn't the only river to build strainers, but it is the river I know best.

During spring runoff or following heavy rains when water sweeps the landscape and hauls debris into the main channel, downed logs or fences or vehicles snatch small bits from the current and incorporate them into a growing mass — a strainer — that alters a river's movement. From above the surface, a strainer may appear to be nothing more than a single log or a bouncing twig, but below it, those fragmented bits of detritus weave together a web of snapped stems. Strainers grow and change this way, gathering and releasing, trapping and storing. Over time, they reshape the course of the river from within.

I can't help but think of strainers as resembling a collection of memories. And if strainers are where memories are stored, then the river is the body and the life shaped by them. Like memories, strainers force a life to slow down and avoid certain

corners. Sometimes memories are dislodged and carried to another part of the body, but once there, they are always there.

M isn't sure what the letter should include. A litany of sins that began well before her infidelity — a word we're struggling with even now? Or just a few instances that exemplify trends? How can she even begin to explain a complicated relationship with sex and desire and power, without making excuses? When are they not excuses but subconscious responses that come from the layering of stories and meaning we collect over years, that build and solidify in such a way so as to inspire the response, "Was I good"?

"Be good" lodged itself into our story the same way "make him want you" was pervasive in every message in every magazine and rom-com and advertisement and conversation about being wanted; "be good" is about pleasing men. To not "be good" was, at best, a surefire way to live a lonely and celibate life and, at worst, a reason for men to inflict violence. To not be what men wanted us to be, in any given moment, was to risk something — a job or promotion, a perceived friendship, a lover, a life.

I tuned in recently to a podcast called *In the No*. Over the course of the three-part series, the host, Kaitlin Prest, does a resounding job of trying to parse dynamics of power to define and understand her role in a complicated relationship with sex. To differentiate the things she does from those done to her; to define consent. At one point, she records herself in a chilling interaction that by some accounts might imply consent, but the hesitation in her voice is all too familiar. Someone pressures and she says no, but it's a whisper and then a question.

Why do we say "Yes" when we mean "No"? Or when we mean "No!" why do we say, "No?" Is consent even possible when many of us have never understood that it's OK to want sex or that sex can be for us and not for someone else? These two messages — "make him want you" and "tell him no" — don't work in concert with each other; trying to find solid footing between them can make you lose your balance.

Once I stopped to wander on top of a large and exposed strainer in the Animas River, which is a good way to break an ankle. I tested every step, pressing my weight in measured increments into the spongy surface, finding balance on larger bridges of logs that built the framework for the twigs and mud and smaller things wedged between. On a quick count, the human objects folded into the tapestry of timber and soil included: six paddles, five bottles, one flip-flop, multiple but unmatched tennis shoes, two left-footed Chacos, cameras, a bowling pin, a whiskey bottle, a film canister full of marijuana, pill bottles and multiple unopened cans of PBR. Perhaps most fascinating about this collection was the way the items had become indistinguishable from one another. So woven into the fabric of the strainer were the artifacts that if you began trying to separate anything

ESSAY BY
PAGE BUONO

ILLUSTRATION
BY EMILY
POOLE

out, it seemed the entire structure might unravel.

I didn't learn that strainers were called strainers when I was young and living near the Animas. Only after I was introduced to boating in my mid-20s did I learn that strainers are the single greatest threat to swimmers in a river, particularly when the water is high and the current swift. Friends who raft and kayak have stories about avoiding them, or getting caught in them, and an unlucky few have stories about people who weren't able to move through those layered chambers.

But to paint strainers as purely dangerous is inaccurate and dangerous in and of itself, and disregards the other 99.9% of species reliant on the river. It disregards the role strainers play in making the river what it is.

Strainers trap sediment that otherwise washes downstream. They provide food for aquatic insects by ensnaring leaves and fish carcasses. The overhead cover creates a critical escape for fish eager to dodge a bald eagle's sharp eyes and talons. And strainers do their own work to temper the energy of floods, helping to mellow a downstream current by pushing water out and away, by holding it back. Strainers are warning signs and death traps, safe houses and full pantries, the collectors of stories. M draws the red mug to her lips again, but the frothy milk doesn't appear to be diminishing. She just holds it there.

M says, *Here's the thing: I want to use these experiences for good. To be good. And not "good" in some puritanical sense of the word or for anyone else. I want to feel like I'm in control of the decisions that I make, that I understand the reasons, and then I ensure they align with my own moral values. I want to put this cluster of memories and lessons, subconscious and not, to work for me — to reclaim the narrative — not just act because this lesson of being wanted and needed was lodged so deep in my brain that I can't flow apart from it.*

Together we attempt to step outside the current, to understand the forces at work and try to find words that might help unravel the story. To redirect "make him want you" to "you are safe to say what you want. You are safe to want. You will be heard."

Strainers define a river by altering its course and pace. By collecting and storing remnants — from flood events and droughts, passersby and long-term acquaintances — strainers act as the record, reminding the river of things come and gone.

Our own memories come together in much the same way, simultaneously present and ephemeral, defining and evading us. Like memories, strainers can exert a dam-like dominance, rendering us immobile at times. But like dams and like memories, those lived and those passed down through story, strainers are not permanent.

In drought, strainers are robbed of their fodder. In flood, their core shaken and reshaped. And when a strainer backs up too much energy behind it, the river swallows it whole, dispersing and reshaping the pieces, rewriting the story, reclaiming its course. □

To walk is human;

to reflect, divine

In the middle of our walk home from school, my daughter paused to pick up a handful of snow and shape it into a ball. “This is a unicorn egg,” she told me, planting it in the thigh-high snowbank next to the sidewalk. This was the fourth unicorn egg we’d planted that day, along with a dog egg and an allicorn egg (an allicorn, for those not in the know, is a unicorn pegasus) and one particularly large egg that would eventually, in whatever mythology we were creating, birth an entire menagerie. While she made up stories, rambling on about a unicorn and a rock and a frog in a river, I breathed deep, lingering over the smell of wet snow that hovered between a chinook-like dampness and the bite of our recent sub-zero temperatures.

Ever since my family made the move from an exurban house where we were completely dependent on our two cars into a walkable town, the effects of walking have crept into all corners of our life, from my own health to our two kids’ sense of independence. We’ve been walking or biking to school most days for nearly three years now, ever since my daughter started kindergarten. At first, she preferred biking to the half-hour walk, but the benefits of wandering — and the imaginings it can inspire — gradually took over the desire for speed.

I’ve also spent the last two years writing and researching a book about walking. In the process, I clocked upward

of 2,000 miles on foot, in Denver and New York City, in Montana’s Great Bear Wilderness and along England’s Norfolk coast, and in my hometown in northwest Montana. What walking has given me can never be distilled onto a Fitbit or calorie counting app. Rather, I am far more aware now of how my senses help my brain filter and interpret the vast sea of information constantly shifting around me, allowing me to not just move through the world, but to understand my own place within it. I’ve seen the same transformation in my son: At 10, he started walking to and from school by himself, and realized that he could also walk to after-school karate or wander to the library or a friend’s house and then home again without his parents. Many of his friends who were driven everywhere didn’t know how to get from one side of town to the other, a 15- to 20-minute walk. In walking, my son discovered a sense of ownership over his own life, a kind of self-determination that’s rare for a young child.

Walking a thousand miles a year hasn’t given me a tidy list for how to live a good and effective life that I could stick up on the refrigerator. But it’s kept the promise contained in the Latin phrase *solvitur ambulando*,

or “it is solved by walking.” Originally used to describe a premise that is explored through practical experiment, the phrase has been used by thinkers, writers and travelers throughout millennia of written history, people who believed — because they walked and found it to be true — that walking was an answer to the stuck thought, the sorrowing heart, the moral dilemma. It is the realization that freedom of the mind is intertwined with freedom of movement.

Homo sapiens evolved from various hominin species that spent something like 6 million years learning to walk upright on two feet and developing habits of motion, work and social relationships alongside that evolution. So it’s no surprise that walking helps us build and maintain community, in large part by developing relationships with people of varying backgrounds through seemingly inconsequential daily interactions. It is through walking — and by making walkable, mobile lives possible for all of us, not just a privileged few — that we can begin to restore the communities fractured by car-centric design, lives spent online and a polarized social-political sphere. Walking, alone or with others, allows us to question the rigidity of our own beliefs, whether it’s a political ideology or the potential of snowballs to turn into unicorns.

I’ve walked off sadness, anxiety, anger and fear, wandering until whatever dark emotion gripped me receded enough that I could place it in perspective. Depression in particular

has lost its power. When that familiar numbness creeps through my fingers and heart, I force myself to step outside no matter the weather, to walk a little, even just to the mailbox. Not once has it failed to remind me that life is a beautiful, complex thing worth living.

That is what I thought of as I watched my daughter play in the snowbanks, drinking in the cold air: That there is power in this act of walking together, that we’re building something curiously resilient. Even if the eggs my daughter plants never hatch into baby unicorns, I know that there is magic in our walking. □



ILLUSTRATION BY RAN ZHENG FOR HIGH COUNTRY NEWS



WHY BUILD WHAT WON'T LAST?

To make the most durable work denim possible, we turned to the strongest lightweight fiber in the world.

The newest addition to the Patagonia Workwear line, our Steel Forge Denim blends 92% organic cotton with 8% Dyneema®, a fiber that's light enough to float on water but 15 times stronger than steel. It's used in crane slings, tow ropes and anchor cables, and now it's helping us fuse a traditional fabric with advanced technology to build a more durable material that will withstand years of demanding work.

Timber framer Bodie Johansson chisels out floor joist housings in the Handcrafted Log & Timber yard in Ridgway, Colorado. **BLAKE GORDON** © 2018 Patagonia, Inc.

patagonia®



Dyneema content more than doubles the fabric's tear strength, and the organic cotton is Texas-grown

Hammer loop and large drop-in utility pockets hold small tools and larger phones

Double-fabric knees accommodate knee pads, with bottom openings that allow easy cleanout

Dyed with natural indigo grown in Tennessee, replacing petroleum-derived synthetic dyes

Men's
Steel Forge
Denim Pants

WYOMING

The headline in *The New York Times* didn't pull any punches: "Sorry, Instagrammers, you are ruining Wyoming." Tourists who post "geotagging photographs" on social media are drawing crowds of people to beautiful places that used to be remote, said Brian Modena, a member of the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board. "We want people to have a real connection to nature," he said, "not just a page with a pin on it." The board suggests that visitors cease their bragging and use a generic location tag: "Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild."

CALIFORNIA

The relationship between Southern California's humans and their coyote neighbors has been "more than a little strained" over the past few years, reports *Atlas Obscura*, largely owing to the coyotes' diet. Sometimes the menu consists of food from garbage cans, but now and then somebody's pet goes missing. To pin down exactly what coyotes eat, National Park Service ecologist Justin Brown trained volunteers to act as "poop scouts." Searchers were taught to look at the ground for "links about the size of their thumbs, with tapered ends." Back in the lab, researchers put the coyote scat into panty hose, washed it, and then baked it to kill parasites before analyzing what was left behind. *Atlas Obscura* says more than 3,200 samples have now been studied, revealing that LA's coyotes definitely enjoy feasting on domestic cats, as well as fruit from ornamental trees like figs, rabbits, gophers and insects and human food leftovers. Coyotes are not dainty eaters; they gulp their food whole, Brown said, and unlikely aperitifs like work gloves, a condom, shoelaces and "plenty of packaging" turned up in some scat. Residents are naturally unhappy when coyotes bite them or devour their pets, but as the researchers noted, "Coyotes are living pretty much everywhere, and a lot of them aren't causing conflicts." Where they do get into trouble, say researchers, it's important to "control their food sources."

COLORADO

If you're ever in Grand Junction, Colorado — at some 60,000 people, the biggest city on the



COLORADO There's a community for everyone. MICHAEL JOHN JURYNEC

Western Slope — check out its garbage trucks, street sweepers, dump trucks and buses, because every vehicle is run on human poop. Anaerobic digestion starts breaking down the organic matter at the Persigo Wastewater Plant. Then the raw biogas the plant produces is collected and turned into renewable natural gas, or biomethane, which can then be used for electricity, heat or fuel for vehicles. The result, as the *Guardian* reported back in 2016, is "like finding a diamond in the sludge," especially compared to the old method of "simply flaring off the raw gas into the atmosphere" or burning diesel or gasoline. Don Tonello, who recently retired as wastewater services manager for the city, said the Persigo plant may be the only one in the nation that powers its vehicles with biomethane. The biomethane is produced during the night, and vehicles fill up their tanks for the next morning. In less than a decade, the project, worth \$2.8 million, is expected to pay for itself.

It's a different story in Weld County, in the northeastern part of Colorado. Though its Heartland Biogas plant, a \$115 million anaerobic digester, does an efficient job of turning cattle manure and food waste into renewable biogas, some rural residents say the operation stinks — literally. In fact, the county shut down the

plant, reports the *Coloradoan*, after some 600 complaints about dizziness, headaches and the nasty smell of "scorched manure." The company says it's working to solve the odor problem, but in its defense claims that "about 10 people made most of the (complaints)." Heartland Biogas has been in operation since 2015 and has contracts with Sacramento, California, as well as Weld County.

ALASKA

"They'll never be able to link it to us," crowed poacher Andrew Renner, 41, to his son Owen, 18, of Wasilla, Alaska. They'd gone out to Esther Island in Prince William Sound to kill a hibernating black bear, confidently assuming no one would ever discover their crime. Unfortunately for them, a government stop-motion camera caught their every move. The poachers shot a mother bear in her den and after her two panicked cubs began bawling, the men slaughtered them as well. The video shows the two men in front of the den, high-fiving their bloody hands, reports the *Washington Post*, while one can be heard boasting: "We go where we want to kill shit." *The Post* notes: "Had it not been for the camera, the duo's illegal hunting — and efforts to cover up what they had done — would not have led to criminal charges last year." Faced with the video evidence gathered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service, the men pleaded guilty to unlawful killing of the bears. Andrew Renner was sentenced to three months in jail, fined \$9,000, and his hunting license was revoked for 10 years. His son's license was suspended for two years, and he was required to do community service. An Alaskan assistant attorney general called the case "the most egregious bear cub poaching case his office has ever seen."

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.



High
Country
News

For people who care about the West.

High Country News covers the important issues and stories that are unique to the American West with a magazine and a website, hcn.org. For editorial comments or questions, write *High Country News*, P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428 or editor@hcn.org, or call 970-527-4898.

U.S. \$5 | Canada \$6

