

Our Bark Beetle, a Tiny Bug with a Tree-killing Instinct

arizonahighways.com OCTOBER 2004

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

4 GREAT HIKES

**Arizona Trail
Snake Gulch
Garden Canyon
PLUS Hike of the Month**

SPECIAL FALL HIKING FEATURES

Into the Woods and Canyons

When somebody in Arizona tells you to “go take a hike,” say “Amen, let’s go!” In this issue, we feature a rugged trail north of the Grand Canyon, a lush path through the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista and the soon-to-be-completed mother of all our wild footpaths—the Arizona Trail, from the Utah to Mexico borders. Also see our regular department, “Hike of the Month,” which takes you to the Thompson Trail in eastern Arizona.

14 North to South—the Arizona Trail

When a writer and some friends tackle parts of the meandering route bisecting the state, they find it full of lessons—including why we should preserve our scenic lands.

6 A Paradise for Hikers in Garden Canyon

Indians and U.S. soldiers have long occupied this area in the Huachuca Mountains, where a luxuriant environment still makes a prized habitat for wildlife.

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The long, dry, hot trek through remote Snake Gulch in the Kanab Creek Wilderness puts hiking comfort to the test—but offers rewards along the way.

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FOCUS ON NATURE

Dealing With Those Pesky Bark Beetles

The tiny insects take over drought-stressed and weakened trees, but some foresters say there’s hope for a positive outcome in the distant future.

[THIS PAGE] Autumn colors paint the canyon walls and reflect in the still waters of the West Fork of Oak Creek in the Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness near Sedona. STEVE BRUNO

[FRONT COVER] Framed by the brilliant orange leaves of a bigtooth maple tree, the mottled trunk of a mature Arizona sycamore adds its sturdy presence to this fall tableau along the Miller Canyon Trail, near the route of the Arizona Trail. See story, page 14. RANDY PRENTICE

[BACK COVER] Crimson monkeyflowers and yellow columbines grace a streamside scene in Garden Canyon of the Huachuca Mountains. See story, page 6. PETER NOEBELS

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Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park
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GENE PERRET’S WIT STOP

The lucky desert tortoise gets to age gracefully, unlike some humans who don’t.

ONLINE EXTRA

Harvey Boys Had Fun, Too

Being a Harvey Boy at the Grand Canyon had its benefits—even if achieving the equal fame of a Harvey Girl wasn’t one of them.

WEEKEND GETAWAY

Fort Huachuca and Coronado National Memorial

Visitors to southeastern Arizona can see where U.S. soldiers staged to fight the Apache Wars, and also trace the steps of the Spanish explorer Coronado.

EXPERIENCE ARIZONA

A listing of major events in the state is available online.

{arizona highways on television}

Watch for this independently produced television show inspired by *Arizona Highways* magazine. The weekly half-hour show airs in Phoenix, Tucson and Flagstaff in both English and Spanish.

Robin Sewell, a veteran television news anchor and reporter, hosts the show.

English show times: 6:30 P.M. Saturdays on Channel 12 in Phoenix and on Channel 2 in Flagstaff, and at 4:30 P.M. Sundays on Channel 9 in Tucson.

The show airs in Spanish on Channel 33 in Phoenix, Channel 52 in Tucson and Channel 13 in Flagstaff. Check the stations’ listings for times.

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PRODUCED IN THE USA

Raptor Aerobics

I enjoyed your column ("Those Sneaky, Clever, Fibbing Ravens Can Fly Upside Down, Too," "Along the Way," May '04) about ravens and their ability to fly upside down.

On May 5, I was up on Campbell Mesa, checking the layout of prospective trails with an archaeologist and a trails specialist from the Forest Service when I spotted a large bird being harassed by two smaller birds.

I saw that the large bird was an adult bald eagle and the smaller birds were red-tailed hawks. I suspect that the red-tails have a nest on the mesa and were attempting to keep the eagle far from it.

The hawks swirled over the eagle and then swooped down. As a red-tail descended in another swoop, the eagle deftly rolled over onto its back. In my imagination, I could see the eagle flex its talons and could hear it cry, "Wanna be lunch?" The hawk aborted the swoop. Then the eagle calmly rolled another 180 degrees and went back to flying with its belly toward the earth.

Ralph Baierlein, Flagstaff

In 1972, while hiking on the West Rim of the Grand Canyon, I spotted a pair of ravens flying over the Canyon at about my elevation. I thought I saw the first raven do a slow roll while flying from one side of the Canyon to the other. I wasn't sure of what I'd seen until I saw the second raven do the same. When I caught up with the rest of my hiking party, I decided not to mention what I thought I had seen because it was so hard to believe. That incident has been in my mind all these years, but now I'm relieved. I no longer have any doubts.

Joe Szep, Morgan Hill, CA

Vocabulary Lapses

I do hope your good copy editor had not imbibed one too many when he or she let pass ("Dining With Tucson Fliers," "Taking the Off-ramp," May '04) the phrase "deli favorites with a Southwestern flare" instead of flair.

Jeff Karpinski, King of Prussia, PA

I was reading ("A Canyon for All Seasons," May '04) about the cyclists who said "we peddled our bikes" between the ruts in the road, and I had to stop to

think: Why would they be selling their bicycles? Then it dawned on me that they were "pedaling" their bicycles, not "peddling" them.

I guess all of us have a mental glitch every once in a while. I thoroughly enjoy reading *Arizona Highways* and look forward to receiving it every month.

Dennis Alcock, Birmingham, AL

Two wording mistakes, for the poor old editor, is like getting two root canals at the same time. Maybe he's eating too many doughnuts. Thanks to all who found the errors.

Our Five C's

Being born and raised in Tucson, I was taught the "C's" of Arizona. But there are five. You mentioned cattle, copper and cotton ("Countin' Cows," "Taking the Off-ramp," May '04). The other two are citrus and climate. Climate alone is probably the biggest thing during the last 50 years that has brought many people to live and visit from out of state.

Andy Luketich, Albany, OR

From Down Under

I'm a 15-year-old Australian girl. When my grandma subscribed to *Arizona Highways* for my dad, I had no idea how much I would enjoy it. As a result of the most stunning photography in the world, my room is covered with cutouts from the magazine. Through all the wonderful stories, you have assured that Arizona is my number one must-get-to-at-all-costs places. Thank you for sharing Arizona with me.

Ruby Murray, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Magazine Size

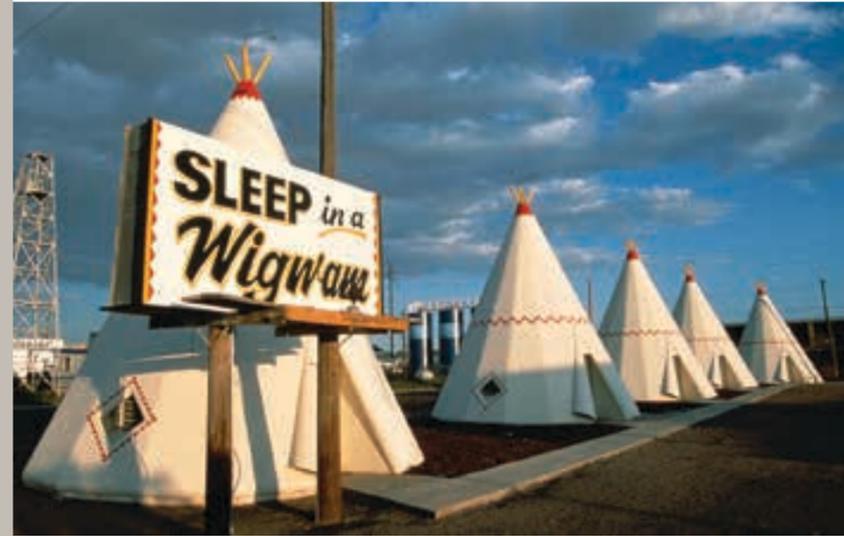
I have been a reader of your magazine for quite some time now, and I am shocked to see how it has shrunk so much over the years. There is so much to write about the West, and your magazine keeps shrinking in size. I have some old issues and I cannot believe the size difference.

Bharathi Kamineni, Manhasset, NY

Last January we reduced the page count in the magazine by 8 pages, but the magazine has remained the same size (9 by 12 inches) since its inception in 1925. Page counts change from time to time, depending on economic factors. In 1992 the magazine grew by 8 pages to 56 pages, and two special issues actually reached 64 pages. One thing that might make the issues seem smaller is the weight of the paper, which is much less, but the coated stock used today provides much better display of photographs and illustrations.

However, even though we've had a reduction in pages, the number of stories and photos we use remains higher than many other magazines, which are bigger because they contain ads.

Sorry to be so windy about this, but it's an important point that needed clarification.



Have You Slept in a Wigwam Lately?

Fitting in perfectly among the concrete dinosaurs, neon lights, Indian chief statues and other kitsch and clang of Old Route 66, Holbrook's Wigwam Motel captures the quirky nostalgia of America's mother road.

Standing 32 feet tall and constructed of stucco on wood

frames, the 15 wigwams cluster around a main office-souvenir shop-museum. Fake plaster "tent flaps" fold back around the doors, welcoming guests to the retro pink air-conditioned interior of their "home on the plains."

Opened in 1950, the Wigwam Motel appealed to a new generation



Plants Have Slow Days, Too

Have you ever suspected your yucca of idling? Your bromeliad of slacking off? Or, gasp, has your xeriscape been exhibiting symptoms of torpor? If so, don't rush to the closest xeri-psychologist. It's

probably just a routine case of CAM, an acronym for Crassulacean Acid Metabolism.

CAM—one of many secret weapons available to arid-zone flora warriors—is a variant of photosynthesis. Many succulents and semisucculents employ the process, which allows desert plants to use less water in photosynthesis than plants using the standard growth and energy process. When water gets especially scarce, CAM allows for plant metabolism to idle to save energy and withstand the drought condition. Sometimes CAM is so effective the plant may appear to be in state of dormancy.

Plants that dwell in arid climates have an arsenal of such adaptive behaviors that allow them to thrive. So, the next time your cactus garden gets a case of the doldrums, give it a little applause—and maybe a small sprinkling of water.



April's Angels

They fly, sleep, recline, hold flowers or baskets, or simply raise their arms in joy. April Romo de Vivar makes her terracotta angels happy. Nationally known for her nativity scenes, this Tucson artist has been making angels for 15 years. She molds and paints each copper-winged angel herself, no two alike.

"Life is chaotic, so I reach for peace and serenity in the middle of it all," she says of her angels. Starting at \$12, they fly off the walls of Tucson gift shops including, appropriately, that of Mission San Xavier del Bac.

Information: (520) 325-7302; www.exlibrus.com/aprilromo.

THIS MONTH IN ARIZONA

1888 Cattle from Sonora, Mexico, are declared diseased, and the federal government quarantines the border. Citizens believe it is a scheme to raise the price of Arizona beef.

1889 Casa Grande is visited by a swarm of so many crickets they can be grabbed by handfuls from the streets.

A Tempe hail-storm knocks out window lights, drives holes through roofs and kills chickens in its fury.

1893 The fledgling University of Arizona places ads in papers offering "tuition free for both sexes."

1897 Five miles south of Bonelli Landing on Lake Mead, workmen digging a gravel claim discover a huge bone buried at a depth of 35 feet. The bone is 43 inches long and 8 inches in diameter and thought to be part of an ancient mammoth.

1908 A raging fire destroys Bisbee business and residential sections. Losses are estimated at \$500,000.



A Look of Its Own

"Out here in the great spaces obvious symmetry would claim too much, I find, the too obvious wearies the eye too soon, stultifies imagination... [The] Arizona character seems to cry out for a space-loving architecture of its own. The straight line and flat plane, sun-lit, must come here — of all places — but they should become the dotted lines, the broad, low, extended plane textured because in all this astounding desert there is not one hard undotted line to be seen."
— Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, 1932



Things That Go Bump in the Night in Globe

Perched on a hillside overlooking Globe, the Noftsker Hill Inn served as the town's school from 1907 to 1981. Today guests stay in the former classrooms, which offer spacious quarters with sitting areas and fireplaces. Former cloakrooms serve as private baths. The classrooms' original chalkboards still decorate the walls.

Rosalie Ayala, who has owned the inn with her husband, Dom, since early 2001, says

neighborhood kids warn her of teachers buried in the basement. Come Halloween, kids avoid her doorstep for fear of ghosts. A local "ghost-catching" service even paid a visit to the inn to look for paranormal activity. Although the ghost-busters haven't pursued their findings, photographers reportedly have caught ghostlike orbs from the inn on film.

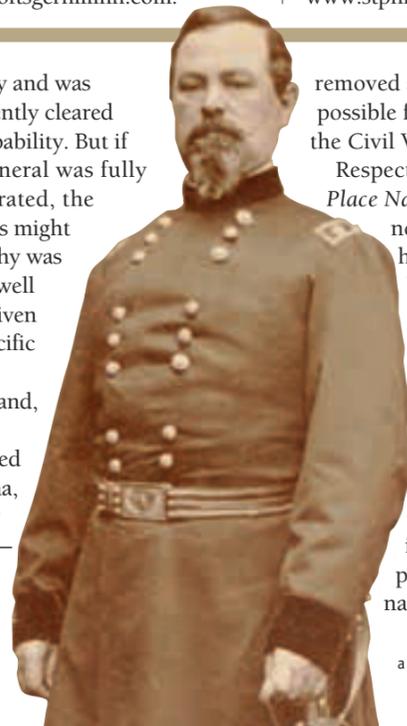
Information: (928) 425-2260; toll-free (877) 780-2479; www.noftskerhillinn.com.

General Admiration

Inquiring minds might ask why Arizona has so many map points named for a man who was never president, never governor and reportedly never even lived in the state. McDowell Road in Phoenix, Mount McDowell, McDowell Peak, McDowell Mountains and Fort McDowell are all said to be named after Civil War Gen. Irvin McDowell (1818-1885), whose military career almost foundered twice at Bull Run.

After being blamed in part for the second disaster at Bull Run, McDowell requested a court of

inquiry and was apparently cleared of culpability. But if the general was fully exonerated, the curious might ask, why was McDowell then given the Pacific Coast command, which included Arizona, in July 1864 — a post as far



All Creatures Welcome

On October 17, a special congregation makes its way to St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church in Tucson. The four-legged, no-legged, whisker-bearing, tail-wagging nontaxpaying citizens of the city have come for their rightful blessing.

For more than a quarter-century, St. Philip's has hosted the Blessing of the Animals, welcoming all pets and their owners to the service under the mesquites in the church garden.

Snakes, spiders and turtles join



the more predictable dogs, cats and hamsters. Even a bowl of water has been presented at a blessing. The small boy who carried the bowl told the priest, "If you bless it, I promise I will put my fish in it."

Information: (520) 299-6421; www.stphilipstucson.org.

removed as geographically possible from the major action of the Civil War?

Respected author of *Arizona Place Names*, Will C. Barnes, notes the number of sites honoring the seemingly banished, if not disgraced, general — but not the questions surrounding why someone in the state held him in such high esteem.

The mystery remains, but maybe it is just on "general principles" that his name lingers.



A Mineral-rich Museum

Tucked away on the lower level of the Flandrau Science Center on the University of Arizona campus in Tucson is the fascinating Mineral Museum. From brilliant-yellow sulfur to blue azurite (shown above), more than 2,000 different mineral specimens are on display.

Feel the difference between aa lava and pahoehoe lava, rub a meteorite from Canyon Diablo, see a glittering display of pyrite, known as fool's gold, or marvel at minerals from around the world. Part of the mineral collection dates to 1892 when it was part of the Territorial Museum. The Mineral Museum itself dates from 1919. Spend some time wandering and wondering in this special museum.

Information: (520) 621-4227; www.geo.arizona.edu/minmus.



Stop, Rest and Measure

A spirited debate surrounds the question of just which town and state can claim America's smallest church. Communities from Maine to

Washington and from Texas to Georgia may claim to have the smallest church in the country. Somehow, though, it seems, well, unseemly, to argue the issue.

Suffice it to say that Arizona's smallest church sits at the edge of a farm field at the end of a dirt road about 10 miles north of Yuma off U.S. Route 95. A farm owner built the little white structure in honor of his wife.

"Stop, rest and worship," a modest sign says to visitors.

No one would say the little church is Arizona's grandest attraction. The depth of devotion displayed in such a simple monument, though, reminds travelers who venture off the interstates — good things still come in very small packages.

Information: www.roadsideamerica.com/set/church.html.

Question of the Month

Does the jumping cholla cactus really jump?

No, it doesn't actually jump, although it can seem that way when someone unwittingly brushes against the jointed chain-fruit cholla, breaking off a piece. By the time the victim feels the points of the sharp



spines, the rest of the plant can be a short distance away, prompting the assumption that the cactus jumped.

The barbed spines help the cholla reproduce by allowing the joints or segments to catch rides to new places where they can sprout.

LIFE IN ARIZONA 1890s

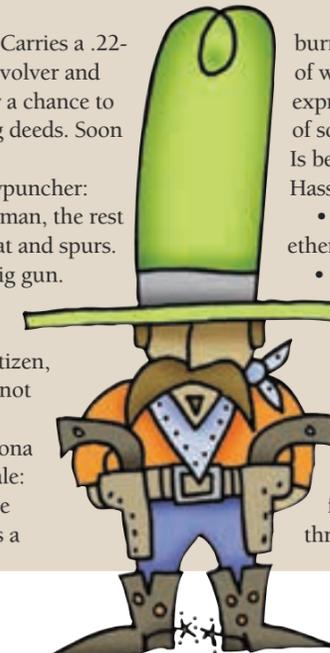
TALK OF THE TERRITORY

On August 2, 1890, Flagstaff's *Arizona Champion* newspaper published a list of Territorial colloquialisms. Some samples:

- Hassayamper: A man who came to Arizona when the hills were holes in the ground. Lived on brown beans and placer mined on Hassayampa Creek. Is very numerous, even when alone. Has an abiding affection for plug tobacco and a contemptuous hatred for "tenderfeet."
- Tenderfoot: A new arrival from the East. Comes to Arizona to surpass the deeds of Hurricane Bill, the Apaches'

nemesis. Carries a .22-caliber revolver and hopes for a chance to do daring deeds. Soon recovers.

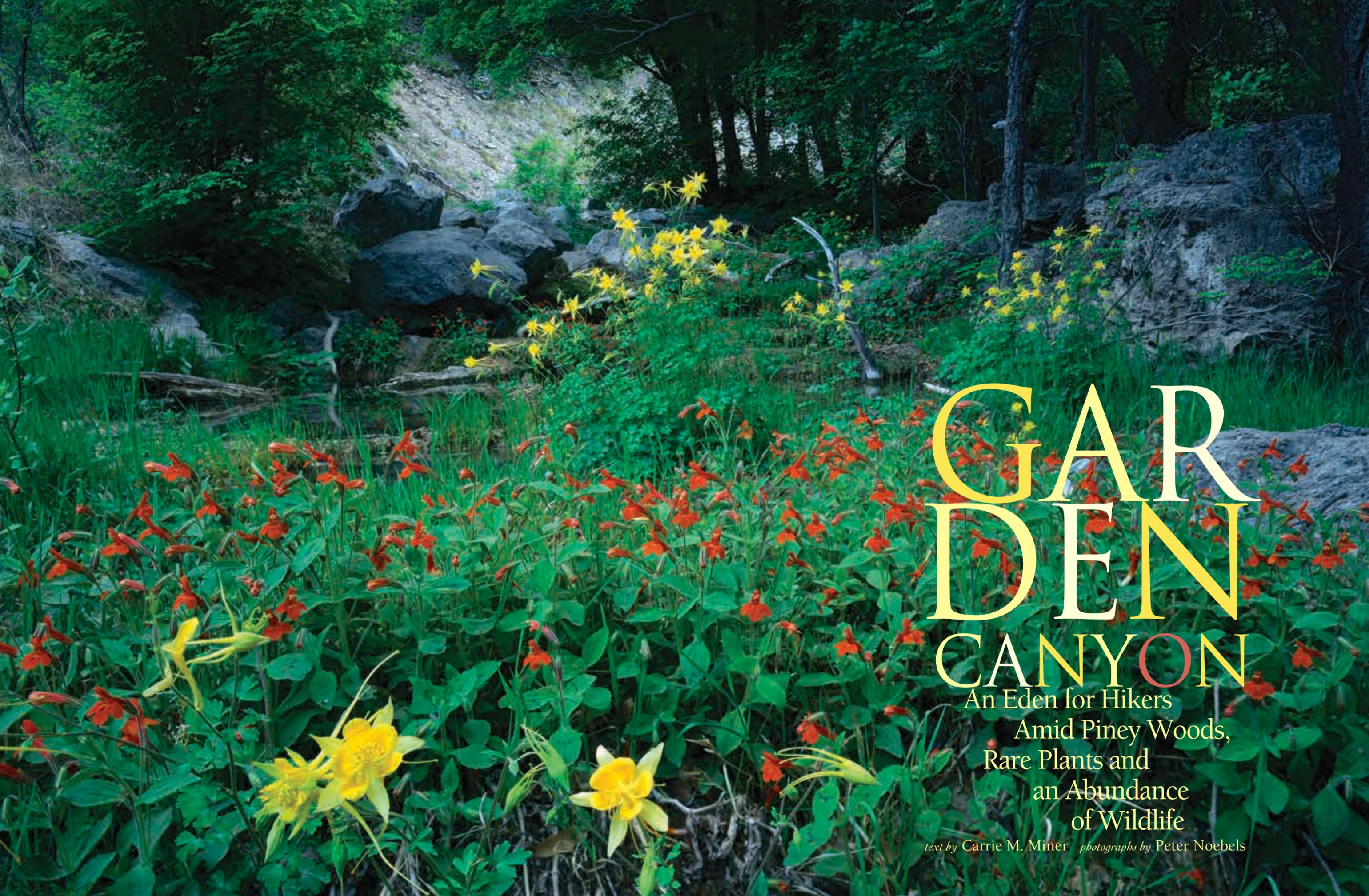
- Cowpuncher: Partly human, the rest mostly hat and spurs. Carries big gun. Never uses it. Is a good citizen, but does not mean it.
- Arizona nightingale: Otherwise known as a



burro. Has a countenance of wisdom, ears of expression and a voice of sonorous melody. Is beloved by the Hassayamper.

- Tucson blanket: The blue, ethereal vault of Heaven.
- Dead soldier: An empty whiskey bottle.
- A bath: More than four fingers of whiskey.
- Arizona strawberries: Beans. Brown in color, they form the staple food throughout the Southwest.

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GARDEN DEN CANYON

An Eden for Hikers

Amid Piney Woods,
Rare Plants and
an Abundance
of Wildlife

text by Carrie M. Miner *photographs by* Peter Noebels

Looming on the Arizona-Mexico border, the Huachuca Mountains grab with their jagged jaws at clouds floating through cerulean skies. The granite domes make a formidable barrier, guarding some of the richest treasures to be found in southern Arizona.

Since the range formed 80 million years ago, wildlife and humans have traversed it through Garden Canyon. Its pine forests, grasslands and riparian areas provide a rich habitat for many plant and animal species. I decided to hike this canyon paradise hoping to find a hint of heaven.

The U.S. Army's Fort Huachuca encompasses Garden Canyon, and public access to it is through the post's main entrance. Past the guarded gates, the paved road leads toward the buildings of the Old Post, which was established in 1877 during the Apache Wars. The U.S. Cavalry chose the foothills at the base of the Huachuca Mountains near Garden Canyon as a strategic rallying point. The outpost relied on the natural resources provided by Garden Canyon, which earned its name from the Chinese truck gardens planted in the canyon's meadows.

After the Apache Wars, Camp Huachuca stayed open even when other military camps in Arizona Territory were being abandoned. The Huachuca Mountains provided an idyllic setting for the military to keep watch on rebellious Indian tribes, Mexican bandits and American outlaws.

Today, the 73,272-acre Army post is the oldest continuously operating military installation in the Southwest. However, the Old Post wasn't the first human settlement in the San Pedro River valley. Paleo-Indians from the Clovis period hunted bison, tapirs and peccaries there up to 12,000 years ago.

As I began my journey up the corridor, I stopped at the edge of Garden Canyon Road in the knee-high grass of the meadow at the mountains' base. The grass rippled amber in the morning sun. A small herd of pronghorn antelope delicately stepped out into the open. Tan and white, they blended into the tall grass, and watched the road with large black eyes, their obsidian-colored horns curling skyward.

The herd soon moved out of sight, and Dr. Charles Slaymaker, an archaeologist at Fort Huachuca Military Reservation, walked with me to the shallow banks of Garden Creek. He leaned forward, pointing out ancient mortars ground deeply

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 6 AND 7] Yellow columbines and crimson monkeyflowers herald the presence of Garden Creek in Garden Canyon within Fort Huachuca in southeastern Arizona.

[RIGHT] Crossing Garden Creek by footbridge leads visitors to the Garden Canyon pictograph site with red and black paintings dating to A.D. 1300 and Apache paintings from the 1700s.





and smoothly into the bedrock on the creek bank.

“Ancient Indians would grind acorns here by the stream and then leach out the tannic acid,” Slaymaker explained.

A nearby village site was excavated in 1964, revealing that an agricultural community blossomed there from A.D. 300 to 1540. The fertile basin provided an ideal setting for a permanent community, and the water from Garden Creek allowed these first residents to cultivate crops of maize, beans, squash, gourds and cotton. Evidence of influence from several of Garden Canyon’s different early cultures — Hohokam, Mogollon, Tricheras and Casa Grandes — leads archaeologists to believe that the settlement may have housed several groups during the 1,200 years it was occupied. After these people moved on, the region was taken over by Apache nomads, who then became the sole occupants of the San Pedro Valley until the 1700s.

I searched the grasslands for some sign of the people who once ran through the fields laughing and loving, but not even a hint of their long habitation could be seen. I climbed back into the car and headed up to the Garden Canyon Pictograph Site where the ancient people had left their marks — slashing lines of red ochre painted on limestone walls. The site, located just off the road, is harbored by an arch eroded into the limestone walls of the canyon.

Fifty-three ancient figures adorn the walls, which are protected by a chain-link fence. Even through the metal mesh, the elements beckon. The renderings in red — snakes, comblike images and a series of squiggly lines and bold dots — were created by Hohokam artists some 700 years ago. Much later, ancient Apache hands painted the black-and-white images of eagles, spirals and sacred Crown dancers.

A short way up the road from the Garden Canyon Site lies the Rappel Cliffs Rockshelter Pictograph Site. Soldiers stationed at the post use the cliffs near the site to practice rappelling.

These soldiers aren’t the first warriors to utilize the spot. Indians using the pass often took shelter in the alcove, leaving behind

Nearly a thousand species of plants, **365** types of birds, 200 kinds of butterflies, 80 species of mammals and 70 different reptiles coexist in the unique melange of habitats. . .

memories in geometric and anthropomorphic shapes scrawled on the limestone rock. Ancient traders moving back and forth across the range also used the pass.

“They were the equivalent of a modern-day traveling salesman,” said Slaymaker. “They brought things like peyote and macaws and took back things like turquoise.”

Today, several Indian tribes have informal collecting rights on the military reservation, including the San Carlos, White Mountain, Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache tribes, as well as the Ak-Chin, Gila, Tohono O’odham, Pascua Yaqui, Zuni and Hopi.

The rugged range has not only protected and provided for humans, but also has been a sanctuary to native plant and animal populations.

The canyon encompasses semidesert grasslands at the base, sycamore and willow riparian forests along Garden Creek, juniper



and oak savannas on the uplands, and finally, the conifer forests at the higher elevation ridges.

The range that cradles these environs stretches 22 miles in length and 8 miles wide. Garden Canyon, created by a watershed following a fault line on the mountains’ east face, affords a natural corridor through the mountains. Nearly a thousand species of plants, 365 types

of birds, 200 kinds of butterflies, 80 species of mammals and 70 different reptiles coexist in the unique melange of habitats harbored in Garden Canyon. Several of these species have been listed as endangered or threatened — the Mexican spotted owl, peregrine falcon, lesser long-nosed bat, Sonora tiger salamander, Arizona agave (which is a food source for the lesser long-nosed bat) and the Huachuca water umbel, a semiaquatic plant that grows in the canyon’s wetlands.

“All of Garden Canyon is critical habitat,” said Fort Huachuca ecologist Robert Bridges. The post’s attempts at wildlife management have resulted in a butterfly list for lepidopterists, who often can be seen scouring the canyon for prime species after the July rainy season. Birders also trek to the wild reaches hoping to catch sight of one of the flashy tropical birds that migrate to the rich forests each spring.

As we traveled from the grasslands up through a forest of oak and juniper, I hoped for a glimpse of painted redstarts, elegant trogons, violet-crowned hummingbirds, northern goshawks and sulphur-bellied flycatchers. With more than a quarter of the birds found in North America nesting within its rich habitat, there is no disputing that Garden Canyon is a birders’ paradise.

Occasionally I would turn just a second too late to catch the whisper of a bird’s flight, only to see leaves rippling in the breeze. So I turned my attention to the bouquet of flowers cropping up between lacy willows, towering cottonwoods and gnarled oaks. Bridges pointed out lemon lily, wild grape, morning glory, catclaw mimosa and white honeysuckle plants. Butterflies danced among them, a colorful shower of petals caught in flight.

Bridges took me to the marshy cienega at Picnic Springs, where

[OPPOSITE PAGE] Crimson monkeyflowers — host plants for variable checkerspot, common buckeye and tropical buckeye butterflies — provide food during the insects’ larval stage.

[ABOVE] Ecologist Robert Bridges crouches amid Huachuca water umbel, a grass species endangered as a result of past cattle overgrazing.



pipes and spring boxes attest to the Army's original attempts to harness the free-flowing water for the post. He gently parted waving horsetails and pointed to the delicate green blades of a plant growing in the water.

"We call it the humble umbel," said Bridges of one of the threatened species in the canyon.

I looked closer at the modest greenery.

"It's not a very dramatic plant," he apologized. "But we have a responsibility to sustain what we defend."

A Boy Scout cabin marks the end of Garden Canyon Road, and several short trails lead off into the woods. I headed out on a path labeled as Vanished Trail. I knew that I wouldn't see any of the jaguars that once lived there, but I did hope to catch a glimpse of any one of the region's inhabitants.

Seeing the pronghorn had whetted my desire to experience more of the canyon's secrets. I knew that mule deer, javelinas, coatimundis, mountain lions and black bears have been seen here, so I added them to my list.

Soon, however, I found myself lost in the woods as the trail I was on seemed to vanish, as its name foretold. Despite the veiled warning, I was unprepared for hiking without a trail, so I abandoned my hopes of spotting any wildlife and concentrated on finding my way out of the woods.

[LEFT] With nectar hidden deep within their 2- to 3-inch-long spurs, yellow columbine flowers can be pollinated only by hummingbirds and hawkmoths.

I stumbled back on Garden Canyon Road a short time later and began the return walk to my car. My eyes were on the road, so when I rounded a bend, I was startled to find myself faced with a flock of wild Goulds turkeys trekking across the road.

These birds roam in small numbers along the state's southern border from the center of their range in Mexico's Sierra Madre Occidental.

Before this chance encounter, the only turkeys I'd ever seen were dressed in stuffing and giblet gravy, so I was shocked to see them walking about with their bristly feathers and skinny necks. I was even more surprised when I realized that they were actually gobbling. I think I'd hoped they would sound a little more dignified. The flock bobbed and gobbled and waddled into the forest, and I choked back a laugh at their crazy antics.

It wasn't exactly the wildlife sighting I had in mind. After all, the turkeys' red wattles and fanned rumps of black and white can't quite compare to the vivid coppery crown and violet tail feathers of the fabled elegant trogon, but I was in heaven all the same. **AW**

Carrie M. Miner of Glendale enjoyed exploring this paradise in the Huachuca Mountains and plans to return in the near future. She also wrote the bark beetle story in this issue.

Peter Noebels of Tucson said he was impressed with the amount of wildlife he saw in Garden Canyon, where the transition from grasslands to lush mountain canyon is one of the most dramatic in southern Arizona.



LOCATION: Approximately 80 miles southeast of Tucson near Sierra Vista.

GETTING THERE: From Tucson, follow Interstate 10 east to Exit 302 and turn south on State Route 90. Remain on SR 90 and watch for signs directing drivers to Fort Huachuca's main gate as you approach Sierra Vista. On the post, follow the main road for 2 miles and turn left onto Garden Canyon Road.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: There is no fee to enter Fort Huachuca or to travel up Garden Canyon Road. However, because Garden Canyon is located on an active military post, you should check ahead on the status of public access. Be sure to have picture identification, vehicle registration and proof of insurance to enter the post. Federal and tribal laws protect all natural, historic and ancient features.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Sierra Vista Visitors Bureau, (520) 417-6960 or toll-free (800) 288-3861. The bureau knows the status of public access to Fort Huachuca and Garden Canyon.

Walking the Arizona Trail



From Utah to
Mexico, the rugged
trek will someday
total about
800 wild miles

Text by LAWRENCE W. CHEEK
Photographs by RANDY PRENTICE
Maps by MIKE REAGAN

Normally I love staring into Arizona from an airline seat, savoring the mosaic of improbable colors, the spiderleg tracks of canyons, the mountain ridgelines that slice the sky like the serrations of an ancient stone knife. I see the fierce angularity of the land as a challenge to humanity's relentless press to tame and settle and pave it, which in an increasingly crowded world

seems immeasurably precious. We need places that resist us.

But this time, 35,000 feet over the Kaibab Plateau, I'm looking out the window with a knot of fear tightening in my throat. I have concocted a scheme to hike some 260 miles of the Arizona Trail, a not-quite-completed footpath from Utah to Mexico that comprises serious wilderness and an overabundance of that angularity. I'm spectacularly unqualified for this, aside from knowing Arizona fairly well and carrying not too much middle-age flab. I bought a backpack two weeks ago, pecked my first tentative waypoints into a global positioning system (GPS) gadget just five days past. I hate sleeping in a tent because everything that crunches a twig out there startles me awake. I've never done anything nearly as challenging as this.

So why try it? I moved away from Arizona eight years ago, with regrets, and this promised a powerful way to resume a relationship with a landscape I still love. I wanted to get out of my office. I needed to confront an army of my fears and tell them what they could do with themselves, rather than the other way around.

For reading matter, I've brought—what else?—Edward Abbey's classic *Desert Solitaire*, which helps explain my own mission to me. Landscapes like

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 14 AND 15] In the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument at the northern start of the Arizona Trail, Coyote Wash winds below a weathered shoulder of Kaibab limestone as sunset lights the rocky palisades above. [BELOW] Author Lawrence Cheek and his friend Howard Greene navigate through a stand of young aspen trees on the Arizona Trail near Tater Ridge in the Kaibab National Forest.



[ABOVE] One man with a big idea, Dale Shewalter developed the inspiration for the Arizona Trail while hiking through the state in 1985, from Nogales north to the Utah border. [OPPOSITE PAGE] Marble Canyon winds through the landscape beyond the sloping ridgeline of the Saddle Mountain Wilderness in this view from the trail near the East Rim.



these, Abbey wrote, have the power “to startle the senses and surprise the mind out of their ruts of habit, to compel us into a reawakened awareness of the wonderful.”

If we live to enjoy reawakening.

Dale Shewalter, a Flagstaff 6th-grade teacher, hatched the idea of the Arizona Trail in 1985. Pondering an Arizona map, he discerned a patchy north-south green corridor, signifying mostly mountainous national forests, so he decided to try hiking south to north, Nogales to Fredonia, using available trails and two-lane roads. “Unfortunately, it

was July and pretty steamy,” he told me. “It became more of an endurance test than a wilderness walk. I did 540 miles, living on peanuts and raisins.”

Shewalter is an old-fashioned, no-nonsense outdoors guy; he hikes in jeans and cowboy shirts and has not been known to backpack with prissy titanium cookware. But he has a degree in physical geography and talks about the critical need to grow a community of people who understand, cherish and care for the land. That in mind, he took a year's leave from teaching in 1988 and traveled the state, talking to hiking clubs and Forest Service officials. Six years later the nonprofit Arizona Trail Association incorporated and began carving new trails to link up with existing ones.

“We're down to the last 100 miles,” Larry Snead, the ATA's executive director, told me over a breakfast of Mexican food. He's reluctant to guess when the 800-plus miles will be linked—“not many years” is all he'll offer—but a few ambitious hikers already have made the border-to-border trek, bushwhacking where necessary.

Only a few. Snead said he knows of maybe 10 who have through-hiked it in one continuous push; about 25 have gone the distance in segments of a few days at a time. The trail is tough, frequently a vertical zigzag, plunging into canyons and lurching over mountains.

Even more daunting is its aridity. There are segments 10, 20, even 30 miles long where water is a fat chance. Weather is a caprice. Terry Gay, an experienced Tucson backpacker, started a through-hike in the spring of 2003. She lost the trail in snow in the Huachuca Mountains just north of the Mexican border, then fell sick from heat in the desert north of Tucson.

“I overestimated my ability,” she told me. “The trail is a good teacher.” She's now hiking it in segments, and not unhappily.

Shewalter confirmed that the Arizona Trail is plenty challenging, even for veterans. “But you make your challenges into opportunities,” he said. “It'll make or break your character.”

My character

breaks on the first day. The second week of October normally delivers ideal hiking weather in Arizona's midlevel elevations. But 2003 is no normal year. Phoenix will equal or break 57 daily heat records by year's end, and today will be one of those record-breakers. We're





a long way from Phoenix, starting our hike in high desert at 5,000 feet on the Utah border, but even here today's forecast high is 90.

I have a couple of companions for this leg: photographer Randy Prentice, who appears much more rugged than I but is just as leery of major backpacking, and Howard Greene, a friend from Taos, who looks more delicate than either of us but who has mountain-goat abilities and can read topo maps.

While planning this adventure, I read *A Walk in the Woods*, Bill Bryson's wonderfully entertaining and useful book about his fumbling efforts to hike the Appalachian Trail. Bryson selected a hiking buddy who knew absolutely nothing about the outdoors and resembled Orson Welles "after a very bad night." He provided a fine comic foil for the narrative but hardly enhanced Bryson's chances of survival. Of the friends I drafted for assorted segments of the Arizona Trail, three were veteran backpackers and the fourth was an engineer who could, in a pinch, build a satellite phone out of twigs and pebbles.

So my anxieties begin to dissipate, at least regarding the hazards I've projected. Navigation proves easy — Arizona Trail

[RIGHT] Autumn comes to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon where bigtooth maples in fall color frame a view of the Walhalla Plateau in this trailside scene along the Coconino cliffs.





Association volunteers have pounded stakes bearing “Arizona Trail” logos at every point where a doofus might wander off. The Yellow Brick Road couldn’t be easier to follow. Still, it’s a tough day’s stroll, even for Howard: 11 miles and a 1,500-foot climb with 35-pound packs onto the Kaibab Plateau, where we’re meeting Randy for first night’s camp. Groaning with camera gear, he’s driven his camper truck to a Forest Road rendezvous with the trail.

After a camp dinner of chile-laced noodles and landjager sausage (my one contribution to this party may be that I can cook), Howard offers a radical idea: “You know, using the camper as a base, we could do most of this as day hikes. . . .” I consider this suggestion eminently sensible, and not one at odds with the Arizona Trail’s spirit. This trail is intended for a galaxy of users—trail runners, mountain bikers, snowshoers, equestrians, casual day-hikers and fanatic through-hikers.

“Revised itinerary coming tomorrow,” I say.

The point of hiking, I think, is *not* to push to the edge of exhaustion and injury, but to remain sufficiently alive to be open to whatever beauty or instruction the land has to offer. I’m out here to have my senses engaged and sharpened, not degraded and dulled by fatigue, and to leave behind the pressures of my everyday work and home life.

Terry Gay was right; the Arizona Trail teaches—and its first-day lesson was that I hadn’t designed an expedition to elude those pressures, just one that imposed different ones—a forced march, 12 to 15 miles daily with full packs. Fun for fitness fanatics, maybe, but not the reason I’ve come here.

In the morning I scribble out a kinder, gentler itinerary, and Howard and I plod off across the Kaibab Plateau with 10-pound daypacks.

It’s impossible to top John Wesley Powell’s thoughts about traversing the Grand Canyon. Years after his 1869 expedition through the “Grand Cañon of the Colorado,” he wrote:

“The traveler on the brink looks from afar and is overwhelmed with the sublimity of massive forms; the traveler among the gorges stands in the presence of awful mysteries, profound, solemn, and gloomy.”

But also this:

“It is a region more difficult to traverse than the Alps or the Himalayas, but if strength and courage are sufficient for the task, by a year’s toil a concept of sublimity can be obtained never again to be equaled on the hither side of Paradise.”

I’ve day-hiked into the Grand Canyon—dipping in a toe, so to speak—several times, but this will be my first Rim-to-Rim. It’s the grandest obstacle on the Arizona Trail, in more ways than one.

Arizona Trail trekkers can’t simply saunter up to the lip of the Canyon and continue through—not unless they’re prepared to commit the entire 25-mile hike in one day. To control congestion and prevent overuse of the Canyon’s main corridor, the Park Service has a permit system for camping, and

[OPPOSITE PAGE] Ribbon Falls dwarfs author Cheek during a short side trip near Cottonwood Campground where the Arizona Trail follows the path of the Grand Canyon’s North Kaibab Trail. **[RIGHT]** A narrow Grand Canyon pathway provides a great view and a vertigo-inducing trek for Cheek and Greene.

confounding as it may be, they’re getting 30,000 applications a year. They issue 13,000 permits, which annually allows about 40,000 overnight campers.

Our application, faxed in weeks ago, didn’t make the cut, so we shift to Plan B. We arrive at the North Rim’s backcountry office, a trailer nested beneath a towering skyline of ponderosas and golden aspens, at 8 A.M. on a chilly Sunday to apply for slots opened by cancellations. A cheerful ranger boots his computer, checks some bewildering schedules, and tells us to return tomorrow when, he assures us, we can pick up a permit.

We pass Sunday night in relative luxury at the North Rim’s Grand Canyon Lodge, where I converse with a couple from St. Louis who tell me I’d not make a cheerful, helpful ranger.

“We’re here just for tonight at the Grand Canyon, and we’re hitting Zion National Park tomorrow,” the woman says. “Can we see Zion in two hours?”

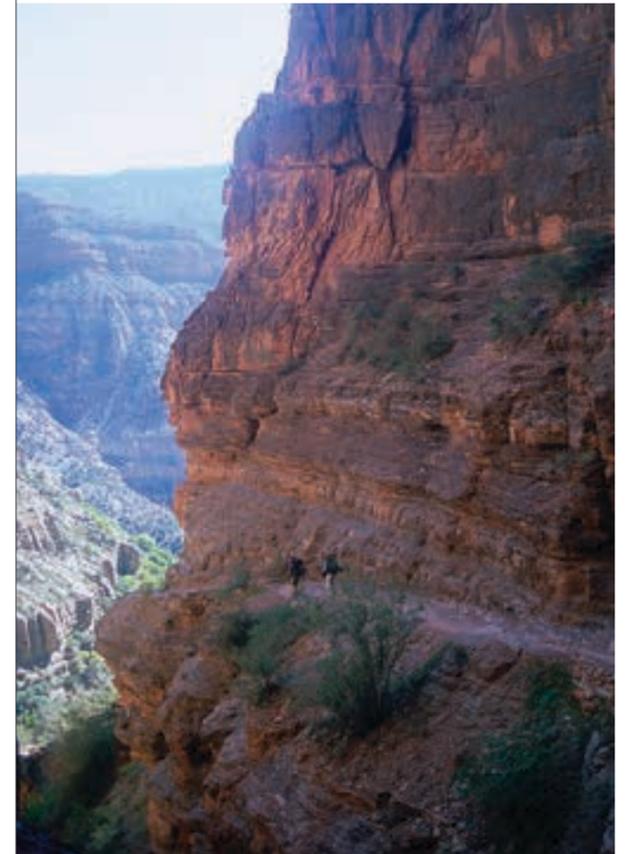
“You’re kidding. Stay two days, at least.”

“We can’t. We have reservations in Vegas tomorrow night.”

“Forget ’em. Life’s short. Spend your time here and at Zion.”

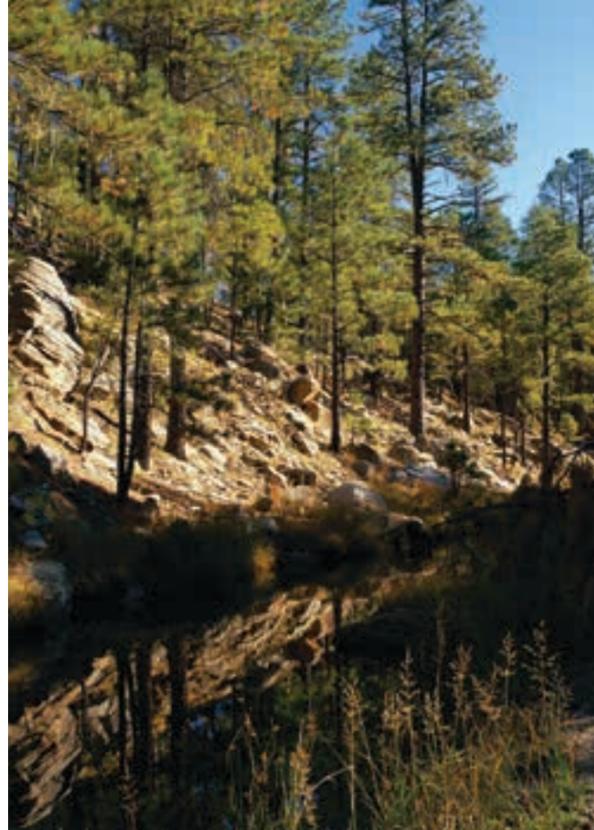
“Oh, no—we’d lose our deposit!”

Morning dawns with perfect hiking weather, at least at the



North Rim’s 8,000 feet. As we start down the North Kaibab Trail, my jacket is stashed and my pack is slimmed to a minimalist 25 pounds. We’re not schlepping tents since there’s no rain forecast. A helpful ranger suggested this and guaranteed we’ll thank him for the absent weight during our 4,300-foot grind up the Bright Angel Trail to the South Rim. (Memo to ranger: *Thank you!*)

Before North Kaibab, we’d encountered exactly one other



hiker in four days on the Arizona Trail. Now we're three molecules in a river of humanity—the Park Service estimates 50,000 people walk or run Rim-to-Rim annually. Despite signs warning how tough it is, many try it without camping overnight. I ask one of the speedsters why. “Why climb Mount Everest?” he replies, his expression adding, *What a lame question.*

I know there's more to the answer. Natural spectacles such as the Grand Canyon or Everest trigger a powerful lust within the human heart to cut them down to size and negotiate them on *our* terms. Young bodies, crazed with hormones and blessed with muscle tone, race across the Canyon. When we grow older, we design dams to plug the Colorado and make lakes in the desert. Either way, we learn much about our own abilities but little about the land.

We slither into our sleeping bags at Cottonwood Camp after 10 miles and one of those dismal pour-boiling-water-in-the-pouch “lasagna” dinners. It's only 8 P.M., so I just lie awake and stare at the sky. A gibbous moon rises, bright and brittle as a light in a cell that the guard won't turn off. The Canyon's serrated walls, faintly lit against the sky, are propped around us like sepia photographs of ruined battlements. The serenity is complete and perfect; I feel more secure than I would in my bed back in quake-happy Seattle.

At 10 P.M. a terrific wind blows out of nowhere, threatening to crack cottonwood branches 75 feet directly over my head. It's the Canyon “breathing,” exchanging warm air on its floor with cold on the Kaibab. It howls till midnight, then quits as abruptly as it started. That security was an illusion, an interlude. The Canyon is a living entity, always changing, sometimes cataclysmically—floods, rockfalls, storms. Naturalist

[OPPOSITE PAGE] The steep footpath through Walnut Canyon National Monument tests the legs and lungs of hikers negotiating this section of the Arizona Trail. Just south of Flagstaff, the canyon once sheltered the ancient Sinagua Indians, who lived here about 900 years ago.
[ABOVE] Ponderosa pine trees reflect in a placid pool at General Springs near the Mogollon Rim section of the trail.

Craig Childs, a frequent contributor to *Arizona Highways*, wrote perfectly: “The word ‘canyon’ is as close to a verb as any landform can be.”

Our ascent up Bright Angel Trail is as tough as advertised, but the physical effort teaches me more about the Canyon. Standing on the Rim and staring into and across it, a “concept of sublimity” doesn't fully jell because its scale and architecture lie outside human experience. Hiking the Canyon gives it an opportunity to rough you up, so you begin to know it—personally and respectfully.

I call home from the South Rim to report our accomplishment. Patty, my wife, says she has just talked to a friend who thought I was hiking the *Appalachian* Trail. When she corrected him, he sounded disappointed.

“Arizona,” he said. “That's mostly flat, isn't it?”

The Arizona Trail traverses just one urban area, the piney metropolis of Flagstaff, which provides us with a nutritious refueling bazaar encompassing all four basic food groups: hamburgers, hot dogs, tacos and pizza. A few miles south of the city, the trail resumes its teaching of lessons.

I've planned a two-day, 21-mile hike from Walnut Canyon National Monument to the north end of dry Mormon Lake. Joining me is a long-time friend from Tucson, Ed Stiles. Ed lives and breathes hiking; he fabricates his own ultralight tents and backpacks, and he's legendary in Tucson for snipping the paper flags off tea bags to save weight.

We shuttle one car to Mormon Lake, then drive back via Lake Mary Road, stopping to hide 2 gallons *(Text continued on page 26)*







(Continued from page 23) of water under a juniper. When we reach the trailhead at Walnut Canyon, a sign blandly informs us that we'll have 15 miles to hike to our cache.

"Fifteen miles is beyond my range," Ed declares.

"I eyeballed it on the map," I say. "It looks like only 9 or 10." "You eyeballed it?"

We spread the map on the ground and scale the route with a string: 15 miles.

So we wheel back to Mormon Lake to retrieve Ed's car, repark it where our water cache had been, then get lost in a labyrinth of back roads trying to cache water at an 8-mile stop. We burst out, inadvertently, back at the Walnut Canyon trailhead. It's noon, a bit past our intended 8 A.M. departure.

Lacking words fully appropriate to the occasion, I tell Ed, "I'm sorry."

He's beyond gracious. "This is how my backpacking trips usually begin—half a day after they're supposed to. There's always something. The basic fact about backpacking is that you can't control a lot—the weather, the environment, forest regulations, what the trails may throw at you." He doesn't underscore the obvious: that I could have averted this ridiculous morning by measuring the trail.

We end up carrying 2 gallons of water apiece. The trek finally turns into fun near the end of the first day, after we've cycled 5 or 6 pounds of the water through our systems. On the second day, emerging from the mouth of Walnut Canyon, we discover a lovely pink and black escarpment of Coconino sandstone, furrowed and wind-sculpted in rhythmic waves. It's not quite a spectacle to rival the Grand Canyon, but discovering it is like knowing a secret place.

We're collecting a horde of them.

Not every mile of the Arizona Trail bristles with secret wonders. Some miles just bristle.

Snead, ATA's executive director, meets me in Superior and

we rumble into the Pinal County outback for an introduction to some little-known segments.

Whitford Canyon, a few miles north of Superior, deserves to be better known. Without fanfare, the trail descends into a broad but shallow Sonoran Desert canyon that encloses a different, self-contained biological world at every turn. We walk through a saguaro forest, a cholla forest, a mesquite forest, a cottonwood forest, and finally a forest of sunflowers. Entirely absent is the puckered, parsimonious landscape sometimes associated with the word *desert*.

Snead examines a ruined cairn. "We used to think cows brushed against them and knocked them over. Now we know it's bears. Ants and other insects will get under the rocks, and the bears will tear up the cairns to get them." A *desert* that supports bears!

The next morning, Snead deposits Randy and me at Tiger Mine Road near Oracle with a promise to pick us up 6 miles north where the trail crosses Tucson Wash. I wonder why

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 24 AND 25] Blue Ridge Reservoir, which spills into East Clear Creek Canyon, offers trout fishing and a tranquil escape from the urban hubbub. [ABOVE] As the trail winds down the Mogollon Rim and into Arizona's Central Highlands, the changing scenery features plants like saguaro cacti and a water-loving cottonwood tree, here seen along Cottonwood Creek south of Theodore Roosevelt Lake.



he's not hiking with us. It's soon obvious. The trail undulates, rolling pointlessly into arroyos and over hills, offering few scenic dividends for the effort. It's a segment only a desert rat could love.

Take that literally. Under a sprawling mesquite, Randy and I notice a scattering of spiky cholla stems surrounding a hole. We're mystified: It's impossible that they scooted there on their own. Later, a wildlife biologist explains it to me: a pack-rat arranged them to protect its den from marauding coyotes and bobcats. A barbed-wire fence, engineered by a rodent.

This is the argument for shunning a wheeled cage and instead plodding across the world at 2 miles per hour, remaining receptive to nature's small miracles even—no, especially—where you least expect them.

Three weeks into the expedition, one of the surprises has been how few humans we've seen. Except for the Grand Canyon, and our occasional forays into civilization for showers and fine food, we've encountered maybe two dozen people on foot or bicycle. Most of those were in the Superstitions, a convenient weekend escape for urban refugees from Phoenix. We've seen almost no trailside litter and have sometimes plodded for miles at a time without any

sign of human impact on the land—except for those welcome markers assuring us we're still on the Arizona Trail.

Lonesome miles like those tend to reinforce, erroneously, the overriding myth of the American West that continues to endure even today: that this undeveloped land is so vast and its resources so prodigious that neither can ever be exhausted.

In a lovely, seemingly pristine valley on the Kaibab Plateau, Howard and I were enjoying lunch when a hunter put-tered by on an all-terrain vehicle, a rifle slung over his arm. He circled an ever-

green copse at a lawn-mowing pace for 10 minutes, counting on the machine's rasp to flush a deer or elk. None appeared, but his motorized hunting, the ability to pursue prey through their own habitat at high speeds, struck me as a metaphor for how technology has overtaken the West's capacity to resist us.

Human effort, multiplied many times by machines, is gobbling available land at a voracious pace. In 1995 *The Arizona Republic* calculated that metro Phoenix was expanding into the desert at the rate of an acre an hour, a pace that has not since slackened. I calculate that at this rate it will take Phoenix 8,328 years to engulf the state, but the big number is small

comfort. We persist in believing that there's enough land for everybody and every kind of use. We blindly follow our biological disposition, multiplying our numbers and claiming more and more of the planet's habitat, while denying our most amazing and precious gift: We are the one animal on the planet with the capacity to reason, to predict its own future and alter it if we choose.

The Arizona Trail boldly attacks the north flank of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Tucson's signature range, arcing up Oracle Ridge and over the summit of 9,157-foot Mount Lemmon. We'd hoped to hike this entire segment — it's Randy's and my hometown hill, and a sentimental favorite — but the disastrous 2003 Aspen Fire has closed chunks of it. Still, we can hike several miles through a burn zone on Oracle Ridge, which proves to be disturbingly enchanting.

The coal-black skeletons of white oak and emory oak trees jut into the sky like upturned spider legs, eerily sinister but also lovely in stark contrast to a sapphire sky and the colorful new growth sprouting around them. Larry Snead tells me he likewise found it strangely beautiful the first time he hiked through here after the fire. "Here was all this devastation, and I thought it was pretty. I felt guilty," he confesses.

Dean Prichard, a retired journalist, has lived here in the historic Buffalo Bill Cody ranch house for 30 years beside what is now the Arizona Trail. I ask him about his feelings when he rides his horse through the burn. "It's not my land, but I've always felt like I was a part of it," he says. "I feel a bit lost, a bit betrayed."

Betrayed by whom? Fire is a natural and essential part of

nature's forestry, but our urban encroachment and forest management has multiplied its ravages. The Aspen Fire torched 84,000 acres, a number that means something only after I convert it to square miles: 131, an area four-fifths the size of incorporated Tucson. Most of the devastation near Prichard's place was caused by backfires set to protect human habitat on the mountain.

[OPPOSITE PAGE] A clear blue sky reflects in the shimmering waters of Gardner Canyon Creek below the east face of the Santa Rita Mountains near the trail south of Tucson.

Oracle Ridge is the most instructive place on the Arizona Trail to see how substantially our species has transformed the landscape. Looking down from the rocky aerie, we see an open-pit mine, a smelter, dirt roads (and this hiking trail) scraped into the foothills, a red tide of suburban tile roofs, the diamondlike dome of Biosphere II and everywhere around us the blackened forest.

How do we preserve authentic wilderness at the back door of a city of nearly a million people? How do we convince a furiously growing population that it's worth doing, that it must be done if civilization is to have any collective memory of the Earth's natural beauty and nature's endangered balance?

How do we preserve authentic wilderness at the back door of a city of nearly a million people? How do we convince a furiously growing population that it's worth doing, that it must be done if civilization is to have any collective memory of the Earth's natural beauty and nature's endangered balance?

We had planned to backpack 21 miles across the Huachuca Mountains to trail's end at the Mexican border, but Steve Saway, the Arizona Trail Association's volunteer steward for the southernmost segment, advises against it. "There's a lot of illegal (alien) traffic up there," *(Text continued on page 33)*

PLANNING AN ARIZONA TRAIL HIKE

An Arizona Trail adventure demands planning and deserves precautions. If you're a beginning backpacker, there are plenty of books stuffed with critical and useful information (for example, if you change nothing else daily, change your socks — prevents blisters). Most comprehensive: *The Complete Walker IV* by Colin Fletcher and Chip Rawlins (Knopf 2003, \$22.95).

You can explore much of the trail on day hikes, although many of the forest roads that access the trail demand high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles. Check conditions with the Forest Service.

Other advice:

>> Learn everything you can about each trail segment before venturing out, particularly its elevation profile, trail condition, signage and current water availability. The Arizona Trail Association's website is the starting place (www.aztrail.org). The ATA's

volunteer trail stewards all know their designated segments and will happily provide information by phone or e-mail. For segments in National Forests, the nearest Forest Service ranger district office also will be helpful. Finally, check out ATA member Dave Hicks' comprehensive online "book" on the Arizona Trail (www.geocities.com/davehicks01/).

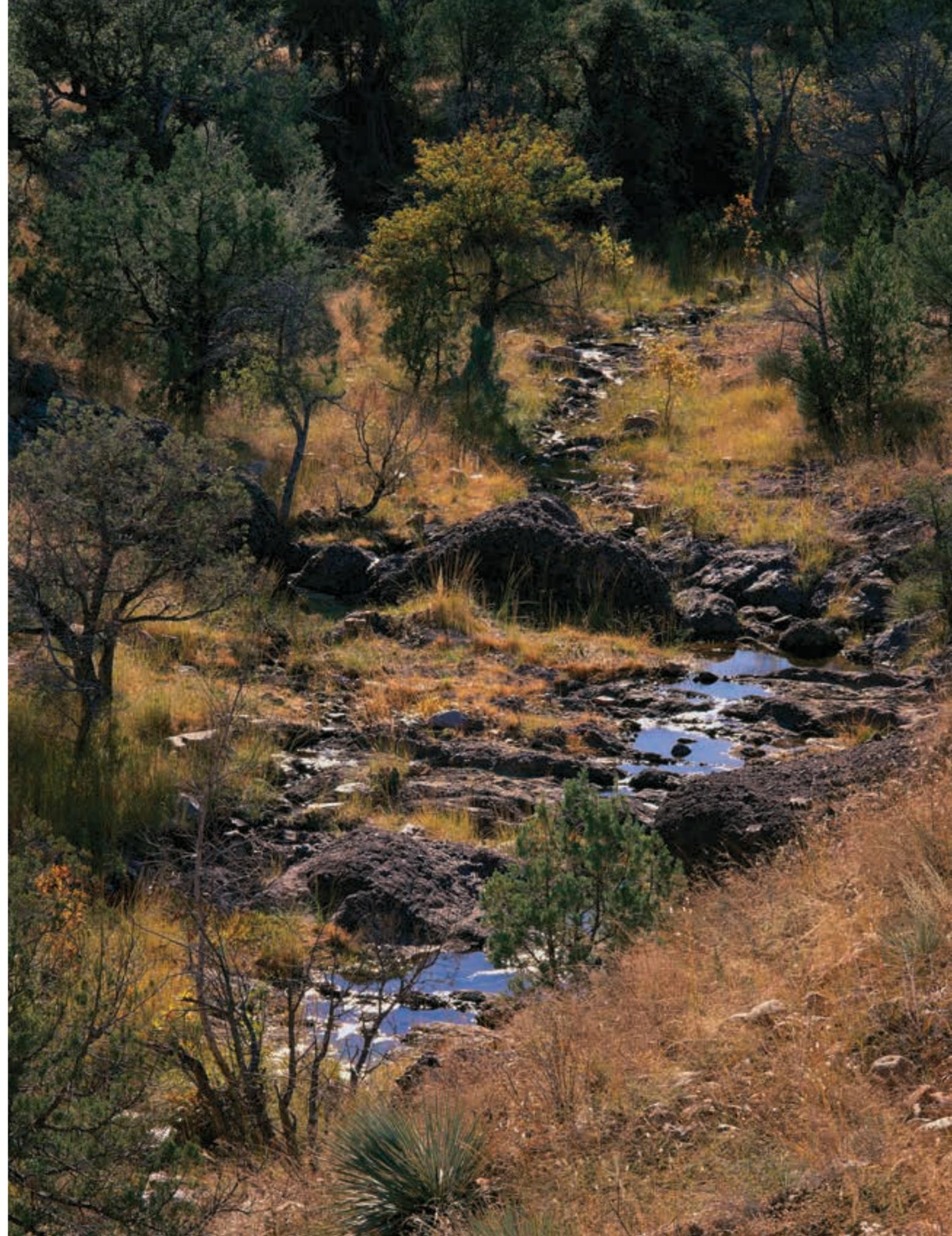
>> Maps have been a problem for trail hikers since many existing hiking maps don't show new segments of the trail or designate it as the Arizona Trail. But volunteers have now surveyed more than 550 miles of the trail with GPS receivers, and precise maps are available from the Arizona Public Land Information Center in Phoenix, (602) 417-9300 or www.publiclands.org.
>> Water is the most critical issue on most segments. The essential amount of water a hiker needs will vary with the seasons. Alternatives to carrying all the

water weight, 8.2 pounds per gallon, include caching it in advance where Forest Service roads cross the trail or having a reliable friend meet you.

>> The trek across the Grand Canyon is the most heavily trod piece of the Arizona Trail and ironically the most difficult to plan for. You'll need either to make reservations years in advance at Phantom Ranch, (888) 297-2757, or get an overnight backcountry permit for a National Park campground in the Canyon — both are challenging to arrange. Apply for the backcountry permit on the first day of the month four months ahead of the date you want. The National Park Web site, www.nps.gov/grca/backcountry/, has complete information on the permit system and answers to most questions about camping safely in the Canyon. The Backcountry Information Center, (928) 638-7875, answers phone

inquiries on weekdays between 1 P.M. and 5 P.M., or you can hear recorded information at (928) 638-7888. If your permit is denied, go to the backcountry office at 8 A.M. on the day you hope to hike and apply in person. A ranger said he's never seen anyone have to wait more than "one or two days."

>> The Arizona Trail generally shuns civilization, but why should you? A hot shower in a motel and a real meal in a restaurant every two or three days makes backpacking more enjoyable for the majority of us. Most convenient overnight stops on or near the trail include Jacob Lake, Grand Canyon North and South rims, Flagstaff, Pine, Superior, Oracle and Patagonia.
>> A GPS receiver is a useful navigational device on an Arizona Trail hike. A cell phone might be useful for throwing at a pesky raccoon. — LWC







(Continued from page 28) he tells me on the phone. “And bears are being attracted by the smugglers’ trash. They’re losing their fear of humans.”

After nearly a month on the trail, I’m losing my fear of bears—mainly because I haven’t encountered one. I don’t want to test my luck, so we change plans again and day-hike into the Huachucas. To prove our manhood, we decide to tack on the half-mile spur to 9,466-foot Miller Peak, highest point in the Huachucas and the apogee of our expedition.

We climb—Randy, my brother-in-law Chris Ball and me—and my thoughts become a tangle of contradictions. I’m buoyed and even cocky over my by-now exhilarating physical condition; I easily outpace Chris, who’s 12 years younger and endowed with more natural muscle than I. But when we round a bend and actually see Miller Peak, a craggy, defiant fist slugging into the sky, my confidence drains. It triggers my latent acrophobia, and I mentally review a parade of excuses I could use to back out of an assault on the peak. I recall a satisfying conclusion I reached weeks ago: When hiking isn’t fun, why continue?

I feel other contradictions. The landscape is ineffably beautiful and impossibly dramatic, maybe the best of the trek. The trail is a catwalk with the mountain falling away beneath it in a colossal swoop down to the San Pedro Valley. At one point granite stacks surround us like giant abstract chessmen; then we pass through a forest of pygmy aspen barely 10 feet high. At the same time, there’s dismaying trailside trash: cans, bottles, wrappers, tattered curtains and blankets apparently used for bedding, even castoff sweatshirts and jackets.

I can read the story in the litter. They’ve slipped across the border on a warm day. It’s a relentless 3,000-foot climb into the Huachucas. They chug most of their water, discard the heavy clothes—and suddenly it’s night at 9,000 feet. This story is no less important than the natural history along the Arizona Trail. Human culture, including our politics and economics, is a part of the global biosphere—arguably the most profound part, because how we proceed with civilization may determine the fate of every other living species on the planet.

My personal fears dissolve in these larger concerns, and we

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 30 AND 31] Sweeping vistas extend south toward the San Pedro River and Mexico in a view from Coronado Peak in the Huachuca Mountains, an area that provides access to the Arizona Trail.



stumble onto the summit. We indulge in a round of loud and rowdy self-congratulations, devils dancing on a pinhead. We try to call our wives to brag, but the cell phones won’t work at this elevation. The mountain resists at least this one glimmer of technology. If I could reach Patty, and find a place away from the other guys, I would tell her this:

[OPPOSITE PAGE] A rugged granite outcropping challenges the horizon below Miller Peak in the Huachuca Mountains. [ABOVE] Near the border with Mexico at one end of the Arizona Trail, Cheek and hiking companion Chris Ball take a last GPS reading on a Huachuca Mountain ridgeline.

I’ve done the Arizona Trail. Not even half of it by actual mileage, but enough to know that I could go the distance, if I were inclined to. I still have fears—I nearly chickened out this morning—but they don’t command quite the authority they used to. I called their bluff, and they backed away, a little afraid now of me.

I thought at this expedition’s outset that the most profound quality of this land we call Arizona is its power to resist us—our big plans, our development schemes, our environmental depredations. After a month of plodding over the landscape, I realize it hardly has any physical capacity to resist at all. The extremes of climate, the fierce angularity, the aridity, hardly matter anymore. We could bridge the Grand Canyon and build a subdivision in the Superstitions if we chose to; we are that powerful.

But maybe the most powerful thing we’ve built here in the last century is one of the least intrusive—this rambling, 30-inch-wide dirt path called the Arizona Trail—because it can teach us what else *not* to build. When we expose ourselves to raw wilderness, let it speak, allow it to reawaken an awareness of the wonderful within our spirits, we come to respect its true value. It doesn’t resist us, it changes us. ■■■



Lawrence W. Cheek, who lives near Seattle, resided in Arizona for 23 years and returns frequently for article research and hiking, which more and more frequently look like the same thing. His latest book for Arizona Highways, *Nature’s Extremes*, lyrically depicts the alternately savage and tender forces that have shaped the Southwestern landscape he loves.

Tucsonan Randy Prentice, who especially liked the Miller Peak segment of the hike, says that no matter how much money he spends on hiking boots, it’s not enough after 10 miles on a rocky trail.

Mike Reagan of Apex, North Carolina, has loved old maps and atlases since childhood.

An essential part of the complex ecosystem of Southwestern forests, bark beetles are so tiny you almost would not know they are there—that is unless you look for traces of them. Yet this unassuming tree dweller has wielded considerable clout over the last couple of years, worrying foresters, inspiring statewide experts to team up on an investigative task force and changing the state's landscape one tree at a time.

The diminutive creatures occur naturally in Arizona's pine, juniper and cypress habitats. Measuring only 3 to 6 millimeters in length, bark beetles play an important role in forest ecosystems—infesting and killing stressed or weakened trees and effectively providing an abundance of homes for animals and birds that inhabit snags. But the beetles also can create havoc, adding to the forest fire risk and displacing other wildlife dependent on verdant woodlands.

Through a combination of extended drought conditions and overcrowded forests, the state now faces what's considered the worst epidemic of bark-beetle infestation documented in Arizona.

Tom DeGomez, a forest health specialist with the University of Arizona and the Arizona Bark Beetle Task Force,

beetles are naturally attracted to stressed or weakened pine trees, which emit terpenes—oils that are easily detected by the insects. When a beetle locates a suitable host for colonization, it emits a pheromone to attract other beetles to the tree. The adult beetles bore through the tough outer bark, tunnel into the soft inner bark and then lay eggs. After a week, the eggs hatch and the larvae feed on the inner bark, girdling the tree with a crazy maze of tunnels and cutting off the tree's flow of nutrients.

The beetles also contribute to the demise of the tree by introducing a blue stain fungus that prevents the flow of water from the roots up to the top of the tree. Six to eight weeks after hatching, the larvae pupate and then emerge, boring out of the tree and flying up to 2 miles in a quest to find a new host for the next cycle.

With three to four generations in one year, the bark beetle population can quickly become unmanageable. "It's an exponential type of growth," said DeGomez.

In a balanced forest ecosystem, healthy pine trees repel bark beetle attacks by pushing out the invasive insects with sap. The overcrowding of the pines, all competing for water that isn't available due to the extended drought, contribute to conditions that create a prime habitat for the bark beetles.

According to the *Journal of Forestry*, the forest that existed prior to European settlement looked much different than it does today. Cycles of drought and natural fires kept them open. Logging, fire



bark beetles

friend or foe?

They destroy weakened, water-stressed trees, but there may be positive benefits by Carrie M. Miner

says the current problem first manifested in 2001. However, it wasn't until 2002 that the infestations drew serious concern—especially in the hardest hit areas below the Mogollon Rim on Apache tribal lands and around the cities of Pine, Strawberry, Prescott and Crown King.

Aerial surveys revealed a disturbing view. The bark beetles' 2002 season left behind more than 2 million dead trees on 617,000 acres. Seemingly content with their havoc and destruction, the season's last adult generation of bark beetles settled down to hibernate until April, when they started their destruction all over again. Forest Service officials are waging a war with the beetles in the state's scenic recreational areas so they don't mar the view.

There are 17 species of native bark beetles at work in Arizona's forests. The principal players in the outbreak are two types of *Dendroctonus*, which primarily attack the lower bole or trunk of large trees, and three types of *Ips*, which generally attack small trees or the crowns of large trees. These pine bark beetles don't discriminate and are happy to attack ponderosa pines, Chihuahuas pines, Apache pines, piñon pines, limber pines, bristlecone pines or single-leaf pines. However, there have also been serious bark beetle outbreaks in stands of native cypress and juniper trees. Pine bark

suppression and livestock grazing are just a few of the factors that changed the fundamental nature of Arizona's ponderosa pine forest. At the turn of the 20th century, there were only 20 pines per acre, compared to the hundreds per acre found in the ponderosa pine forest a century later.

In 2003, the impact of the bark beetle infestation hit with even greater force than the previous year—a tenfold increase in tree mortality from 2 million to 20 million trees on more than 875,000 acres. Even though many of those trees counted in the 2003 survey may be casualties that hadn't shown visual evidence of infestation during the survey

in July, August and September 2002, the numbers are staggering.

Despite the dramatic surge of bark beetles and tree mortality, foresters are optimistic about the long-term effects of the outbreak on future forest growth.

"This could be a very healthy event," said DeGomez, pointing out a possible bright side of the bark beetle battle.

These insects accomplish the impossible in the forests: They thin the woods. With more open forests, experts say the ponderosa pine density will be more like what existed prior to settlement, and although the forests will no longer look as they did during the 20th century, in the future they will be more fire- and drought-resistant. ■

Carrie M. Miner also wrote the Garden Canyon feature in this issue.



Slithering down Snake Gulch

The wilderness trail challenges hikers, but rewards with renowned Indian pictographs

text by CHRISTINE MAXA
photographs by STEVE BRUNO



The sweet perfume of sage clings to the October air like a sticky resin as my hiking boots brush against the bushes, crackling over limestone shards on the way to the trailhead for Snake Gulch Trail 59. A gentle breeze sways the golden rabbit brush blossoms like the hand of a nanny at a cradle, the effect as peaceful as a lullaby.

“On the other side of this line is reality,” John Neeling says at the Kanab Creek Wilderness boundary, marking a groove in the dirt with his hiking staff. “We are leaving unreality at this moment.”

Neeling, then wilderness manager for the Kaibab National Forest in northern Arizona, shares my sentiments about this trip into the remote Kanab wilderness. Its bristly terrain remains embellished with brightly colored rock-art messages left by residents who made this area home long before European explorers arrived.

As we leave the trailhead at Snake Gulch, the most northeastern point of the wilderness, Neeling assures me that our first day will be as easy as it gets on the 39-mile trek skirting the peninsula above Jumpup Canyon to our destination at Jumpup Spring, where we had parked a car to shuttle back to the our starting point.

Crossing the flat canyon floor of Snake Gulch, we detour off the trail to alcoves and rock faces emblazoned with pictographs up to 2,000 years old. To the untrained eye, the images appear to be ogres, demons, spacemen and monsters. The red, yellow and white pictographs painted by ancient Indian cultures hold meanings we can only imagine.

“People come from all over the world to view this art,” Neeling says, setting down his heavy backpack.

Some of the art panels are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, he explains. One of them, called *The Wise Men*, shows anthropomorphic figures on a 15-foot wall. Classic Snake Gulch figures, they have round heads and gold faces, geometric bodies, wide necklaces and large ear bobs.

“These guys are more than 1,000 years old and almost got wiped out in an earthquake a couple of years ago,” Neeling says as he points out seven of the figures painted on the wall. “Archaeologists and some Indians say they are Katsinam (Hopi gods)



dancing. Look at those wavy lines connecting the figures’ heads, like lightning bolts of energy.” Neeling’s voice trails as we turn to press on to Table Rock.

Table Rock is the culmination of the major rock art in Snake Gulch, both in numbers as well as dramatic impact. The closer we get, the more drawings we see: Katsinam, shamans, dragonflies and the classic Snake Gulch twins — anthropomorphic doubles, which Neeling says probably denote power.

Table Rock spans the canyon like a low-lying stage, perfect for ceremonies. Neeling tells me an alcove across from the mesa also was used for ceremonies, adding that old-timers working or traveling in the canyon



[LEFT] This shady setting in northern Arizona’s Jumpup Canyon above Lower Jumpup Spring overlooks the canyon’s limestone and sandstone cliffs sculpted by millions of years of wind and water.

[ABOVE] Archaeologists believe ancient Indians painted these pictographs by crushing hematite to create red pigment, limonite for yellow and using white clay for white.

generally stay away from the area because of too much “magic.” On the advice of a Hopi friend, Neeling carries cornmeal to protect himself. I rely on prayer. We make it past Table Rock unscathed, even after

6 This red rock walkway is half Grand Canyon and half Colorado Plateau.

taking a long lunch break on the mesa.

The character of the canyon changes dramatically beyond Table Rock. First, the pictographs virtually disappear. Then the canyon walls narrow, and the sinuous bends multiply. Neeling says the serpentine flow of Snake Gulch could be the reason for its name. Another reason, he says, could be that hikers often report seeing snakes here, adding that he has never seen any. I hope his record isn't broken because tonight I plan to sleep without a tent.

In the cool of the morning on day two, sunlight turns the pink canyon walls golden. Not far from our camp, I get a feel for Neeling's zeal for caretaking the wilderness when we spend nearly an hour cleaning up an old campsite.

“Leave no trace,” Neeling repeats as we pick up potato peels, onionskins, empty beer cans and cigarette butts. For someone

carrying an already heavy pack, it seems unfair to have to carry out someone else's garbage, but Neeling does it.

“The second day is always the hardest,” Neeling says when the day is still cool, the colors warm and subdued, and the instant espresso is energizing me for the journey. He's reminding me that backpackers tend to ignore how their muscles and feet will feel following an unaccustomed day of toting a 45-pound pack and trodding rough country.

Neeling's feet, covered with several blisters from bad-fitting boots, start paining him early in the second day. By midafternoon, unusually hot temperatures, sore feet and the promise of water have us resting at the mouth of Slide Canyon.

Sources have told Neeling that piped-in water from a spring 3 miles up the canyon flows right across the trail at the canyon's mouth. We find nothing. With only a half-gallon of water apiece, and no water sources for another 18 miles, we hope we don't have to hike up the canyon.

Neeling scans the area and spots an anomalous green patch 300 yards into the canyon. Instead of piped water, however, we find a rusty stock tank full of old rainwater and cattails.

Neeling calls it “bilge water, the kind hikers

are glad to drink when there's nothing else around.”

We use up an hour and a half filtering about 2 gallons of water apiece, spending almost as much time cleaning the filter as pumping with it. That doesn't leave much time to make our planned camp spot at Eddie's Place, an old home owned by World War I veteran Edward Hatch. Hatch, who suffered from mustard-gas poisoning, homesteaded the space with a cabin and corrals just after the war. Now the Forest Service owns it.

Within a half-mile, we spot a white pipe pouring out pure water like a garden hose. Peeved and frustrated, we stand quietly for a moment. Neeling breaks the silence with a remark about the bad information on water availability he got earlier. He refuses any part of the crystal flow. Not willing to pass up good water, I top off my water bottles, and we head to Eddie's Place.

“Kanab means ‘willow’ in the Paiute language,” Neeling says on the third day as we fight a labyrinthine overgrowth of willows and tamarisks in the Kanab Creek drainage. The Paiutes were the last native people to enter the Kaibab Plateau before the Europeans. We give up eventually, and heave ourselves up on a creek bank where we find a footpath that we hope will take us to our next connection, Trail 41, located on an extended stretch of red rock called the Esplanade. This ruddy sandstone layer

bends around the Jumpup Peninsula to about Lower Jumpup Spring. Though we're not sure where the hookup to 41 comes in, we obediently follow the sometimes-faint path along a drainage.

The day turns hot again as it nears lunchtime, and we've seen no sign of the trail. A combination of heat and pain, plus concern that we have passed the trail junction, provokes Neeling to stop suddenly, throw down his backpack and plop down in a shady spot. He adds more layers of moleskin and duct tape to his blisters. The “Leave No Trace Master” fantasizes for a moment about leaving the boots behind as he puts on his camp shoes.

The fantasy turns to serendipity when Neeling glances upward during his boot-ditching dream and spots Trail 41 climbing a slope up the Esplanade.

If Table Rock is the soul of the Kanab Creek Wilderness, its heart is the Esplanade. From a distance, it looks like a mild-mannered red rock sea with swells braced by rock walls reminiscent of the Grand Canyon. Once inside, however, the Esplanade is a swirling world of slickrock where terra-cotta boulders teeter atop one another and multilevel mesas invite exploration. As we pass a mesa, Neeling says, “This red rock walkway is half Grand Canyon and half Colorado Plateau. The stratified walls could match any Grand Canyon vista, but the red rock topography can't escape being branded as a Colorado Plateau natural.”

The red rock rhythm beats its steady pace as we connect cairns stacked strategically along the walkway. Colors change, pulsing with the whim of the sun: sometimes pink, sometimes deep red, other times the hue of glowing embers. We're spellbound, enraptured observers of our peaceful and enchanting surroundings.

Yet thirst tugs at our sleeves, demanding attention. We need to find a water pocket—a depression in the slickrock full of rainwater—to rehydrate ourselves. Neeling notices a dragonfly and correctly reasons that water is nearby. We find a pool just below



[ABOVE] An esplanade provides views of wind-carved sandstone boulders and the striking Kanab Plateau.

the trail as it descends into a small drainage.

On day four, after a tiring segment of dropping into and out of several side canyons, we enter a chasm coined “the Amphitheatre.” Here we find water, more rock art and evidence of bighorn sheep. This is our last water source for the next several miles. The hike around Jumpup Point will be like a death march, Neeling warns—hot, dry and long.

Just under the tip of the Jumpup Plateau, we duck under an overhang for lunch. Rock art on the ceiling indicates that Indians probably did the same centuries ago.

We spend our last night in the Kanab Creek Wilderness on a red rock overhang peering into Jumpup Canyon near Lower Jumpup Spring. As we drift off to sleep and the wind breathes heavily through the narrows of the side canyon, a huge owl swoops a few feet above our heads. In the

sky, falling stars travel as fast as the twinkling of an eye. Coyotes howl in the morning's wee hours, their cries echoing off canyon walls.

I think about how intense the hike has been. Though this terrain has not made unusually hard demands on us, the elements have: scarce water, glaring heat and the remoteness have toyed with our comfort.

I start to feel a twinge of wilderness withdrawal upon our return to civilization—Neeling's land of “unreality.” But that's a reality after a long trip into the secluded backcountry. ■

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Artifacts can provide archaeologists with valuable information and must be left undisturbed where they are found. Even touching rock art may alter its integrity. Memorializing names on the rockfall is considered vandalism and carries a hefty fine (up to \$250,000, with a prison term of up to two years). Also, vandals can have their vehicles confiscated and be held responsible for repair costs to the site. The art in the Kanab Creek Wilderness is protected by monitoring.

Christine Maxa of Phoenix likes to dip in and out of reality on trails similar to the ones in the Kanab Creek Wilderness.

Steve Bruno, also of Phoenix, who has hiked extensively in the western Grand Canyon region, rates this trail as one of the easiest, and a personal favorite.

[BELOW] A recent rain in the Kanab Creek Wilderness leaves pools on a large rock terrace above the creek.



LOCATION: Approximately 165 miles north of Flagstaff.

GETTING THERE: From Phoenix, take Interstate 17 north to U.S. Route 89A and continue west to Jacob Lake. Turn south onto State Route 67 for about a quarter mile, then turn west onto Forest Road 461, which is unmarked. After 461 intersects FR 462, follow 462 west for approximately 9 miles. At FR 422/FR22, turn south and continue about 2 miles to FR 423. Drive about 1.3 miles to FR 642, and then drive north for 2 miles to the Snake Gulch Trailhead.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: Maps are necessary for this hike and may be obtained at the Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center at Jacob Lake. The best times to hike are spring and fall. Always carry plenty of water when hiking or traveling in Arizona backcountry, and let someone know where you are going and when to expect your return.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, St. George, Utah, (435) 688-3200, azwww.blm.gov/rec/kanabcrk.htm; Kaibab National Forest, Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center, (928) 643-7298, www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai/visit/visit.html.

TOURIST HUMOR

Recently we asked our readers to send us tourist jokes. Here's a sample of what we got:

I volunteer as a docent, greeting visitors at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson. We are

{early day arizona}

Nellie: "Is that fellow of yours ever going to get up the courage to propose?"

Belle: "I guess not. He's like an hourglass."

Nellie: "An hourglass?"

Belle: "Yes, the more time he gets, the less sand he has."

The Weekly Tribune (Tucson), APRIL 24, 1909

constantly working to improve our collection and the appearance of the grounds. One day one of our groundskeepers was spreading decorative landscaping rocks near the museum entrance as a tour group from Minnesota was leaving. I overheard one lady exclaim to her husband as they passed by, "Will you look at that. Back home we rake leaves. Out here it is so dry, they rake rocks!"

LYLE INSCHO, Tucson

When we pulled into the parking lot of a restaurant in Winslow, there was a young fellow telling the drivers things like: "Nice

parking. . . . You got between the lines very nicely. . . . You backed into that space really well. . . ."

I walked up to him and said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "The lady from the tourist council told us 'complimentary parking' was the latest trend to attract big-city tourists."

HENRY CHARLES, Sun City

A seasonal visitor, who said he had been

coming to Yuma every winter for 20 years, was asked why he always made the long trip from his northern home state. He replied, "When I got old enough to have a big problem with shoveling snow and slipping on the ice, I looked on the map for a warm place. I found Arizona and decided to heed the call of the mild."

RUTH BURKE, San Simon

Arizona . . . where else can tourists experience a wilder West? Dag nab it, even the tallest cacti have their arms in the air!

GUY BELLERANTI, Oro Valley

UNUSUAL PERSPECTIVE

Arizona's spadefoot toads bury themselves in the soil and stay in a dormant state for up to two years. I had an uncle who could do the same thing. —Linda Perret

Did you know that the American Indians were the first American tourists? They had reservations.

Jamie say, "Well, once my mom was so brave that she stopped to heal a monster on the road."

FRAN STEVENS, Tucson

One thing about tourists is that every time you turn around, someone's taking your picture, and I take terrible pictures. I mentioned this to my therapist and he said, "Don't focus on the negative."

BOTH BY JOHN KRIWIEL, Oak Lawn, IL

A father traveling around California with his small daughter decided to visit a zoo before stopping for the night.

Standing in front of the tiger's cage, the dad was explaining how ferocious and strong tigers are, and the little girl was listening to him with a very serious expression.

"Daddy," she said finally, "if the tiger got out of this cage and ate you up . . ."

"Yes, dear?" asked her father.

"Which bus would I take home?"

YVONNE IACONO AND BRETT ZANZUCCHI, Delray Beach, FL

HORSE TRADER

My little sister and I each had a horse, but hers was a typical Shetland pony — hard to catch, and always biting, kicking and brushing her off on fences and tree branches every chance he got.

In October 1949, on my 16th birthday, my dad asked me to haul "Pet" out north of Douglas to McNeal to sell to Charlie McBride, a well-known Sulphur Springs Valley horse trader.

"How much should I ask for him?" I asked, feeling very grown-up and responsible with my brand-new driver's license in hand.

"Either \$50 or \$75," Dad replied.

"What do you have to have for him?" asked McBride when I unloaded the ornery little red and white pinto gelding from the trailer.

"Either \$50 or \$75," I said confidently.

Without the slightest flicker of an eye, McBride opened his worn, tooled-leather wallet, counted out five \$10 bills, and smiled, "It's been a pleasure doing business with you, young lady."

CONNIE PAUL KAZAL, Tucson

GOOD INTENTIONS

In the sack of goodies our daughter brought home on Halloween night was a box of Jello. Taped to the box was a desperately written note. It read, "I have run out of everything."

M.W. COHN, Phoenix

MONSTER TALES

One evening I told my husband and then 6-year-old daughter Jamie about how I had stopped traffic that day on a busy road in Tucson to let a Gila monster cross safely.

That Halloween, my daughter and her friends were sharing spooky stories when I overheard

{reader's corner}

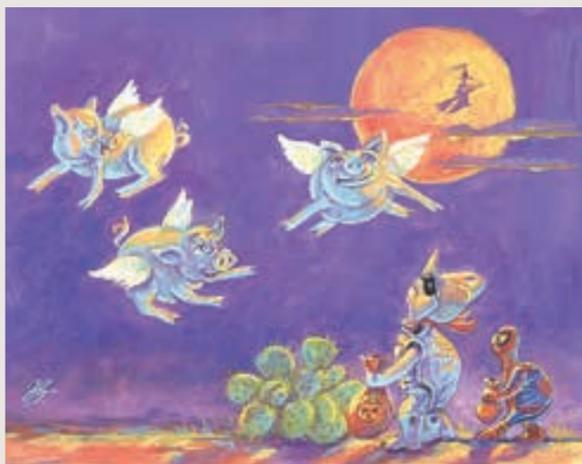
Javelinas have a strong family scent that helps keep the herd together. It's like that old saying, "The family that stinks together is forever linked together."

Send us your **animal jokes**, and we'll pay \$50 for each one we use.

TO SUBMIT HUMOR: Send your jokes and humorous Arizona anecdotes to Humor, *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009 or e-mail us at editor@arizonahighways.com. Please include your name, address and telephone number with each submission.

heat strokes

BY GARY BENNETT



"Oh boy! Now he'll have to eat his words and share his candy with his little brother."



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Mount Ord Once Concealed Outlaws and Hosted Indian Battles

ROWS OF MOUNTAIN ranges ripple into the distance until the far ridge is just a dark blue haze on a dim horizon.

Mount Ord rises in the center of the state and, from its top, I can look northeast to the Mogollon Rim or turn around and gaze toward the Phoenix valley. Nearby lie the Tonto Basin, Theodore Roosevelt Lake and Four Peaks Wilderness.

With sun shining and wind blowing gently



[ABOVE] Listing agave stalks frame the winding course of the Beeline Highway (State Route 87) through central Arizona's Mazatzal Mountains.

[OPPOSITE PAGE] Late-afternoon sunlight glances off daggerlike agaves in the foothills of Mount Ord, with the southern Mazatzals in the distance.

through the ponderosa pine trees, Mount Ord stands as a majestic example of Mother Nature's handiwork in progress. While wind and rain are smoothing this peak, it remains rugged, slashed and raw looking.

Mount Ord, 7,128 feet high, is a part of the Mazatzal Mountains that extend nearly 50 miles along the Verde River, running north to south right up the middle of the state. With steep hillsides and deep ravines, the Mazatzals are wild and remote.

During the late 1800s, the canyon-sliced mountains provided convenient hideouts for outlaws and battleground sites for Apache

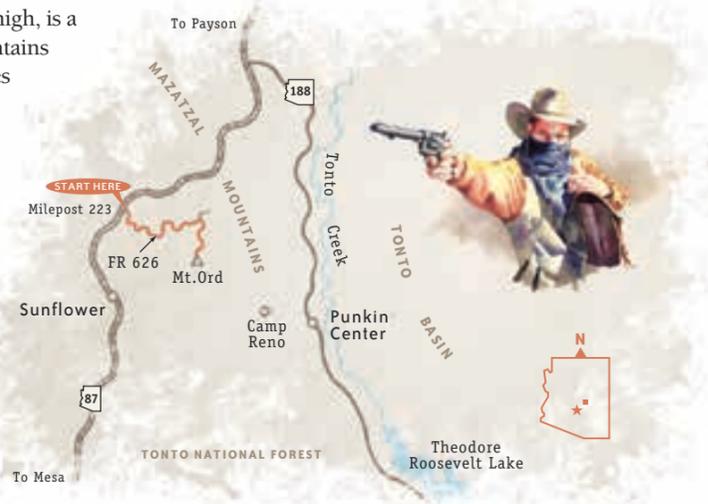
and Yavapai Indians against the U.S. Army.

The Army operated a heliograph station on top of Mount Ord in 1890. The mirrored device sent messages in Morse code by flashing reflected sunrays. Today, travelers on State Route 87 between Mesa and Payson can identify Mount Ord by the modern communication towers on its summit.

To reach Mount Ord from the Phoenix area, drive northeast on SR 87 (Beeline Highway), and turn east near Milepost 223, where a small green sign announces Mount Ord. The route is paved for a short distance before turning to dirt. The approximately 10-mile road is used by the Forest Service, cattlemen and outdoor hikers, and for access to the communication towers. It's a steep single lane that can be impassable in wet weather. A high-clearance vehicle is recommended.

The road starts climbing immediately, and cacti soon intermingle with scrub oak, manzanita and cedar trees along the road. Dead stalks of agave, also known as century plants or mesquite, reach more than 6 feet high. In earlier times, Apache Indians used agaves as a food source. The agave flowers were boiled, then eaten or dried. Seeds were ground into flour, while leaves and stalks were roasted several days in large pits. The resulting sweet pulp tasted something like molasses and was either used immediately or dried. Agave fibers furnished material for baskets, snares, sandals and other necessities.

I pass a Forest Service green metal corral with a water trough and loading chute. Mount Ord is popular with horseback riders who enjoy riding all day without meeting other people. Looking



KEVIN RIBSEY



[BELOW] A close-up of alligator juniper bark reveals the textured pattern that gives the tree its name. [BOTTOM] The blossoms of pointleaf manzanita bushes develop into reddish brown fruit resembling miniature apples sometimes used to make jelly. [RIGHT] Seen 15 miles to the southeast from atop Mount Ord, Theodore Roosevelt Lake shimmers in early morning light.



another vehicle on this one-lane road. As the elevation increases, so does the size of the trees. Piñons, alligator junipers and much larger manzanitas cling to the hillside. I peer down a deep, narrow canyon on my right and see tall, lanky ponderosa pine trees stretching for



back, I have a spectacular view of the Mazatzals, the highest range in Arizona's Central Highlands. The Apache word *mazatzal* roughly translates to "bleak-barren," and I can see some of the mountainsides are rock walls, devoid of plant life, but trees flourish in other spots. These ancient mountains, a conglomeration of granite, volcanic rocks and schist, all formed under tremendous heat and pressure, contained mercury mines.

About 2.5 miles from SR 87 stands a wire corral near a road off to the right, but I drive straight ahead, the road climbing steeply now with many switchbacks. Slowing, I creep around blind curves, not wanting to meet



sunlight. The agaves are gone—they only grow below 5,000 feet.

I must drive just 10 to 15 mph and keep my eyes on the curvy road, so I don't see any wildlife, but I know it's out there. Deer, coyotes, lions and bears all inhabit these mountains. I stop at pullouts to look at the scenery and admire the unusual rock formations. Layered, then turned on end, the rocks resemble the jagged teeth of some monstrous beast lurking deep in the chasm. The road loops around so much my truck compass fluctuates between north, south and east. I may not know which direction I'm headed, but I'm definitely going up.

This beautiful mountain was named for Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord, a West Point graduate who served prominently in the Civil

War, then was sent west to command the Department of California in 1868, which included Arizona. Fort McDowell stood where Sycamore Creek joins the Verde River southwest of Mount Ord, and Camp Reno, a smaller outpost and fort, was located near Punkin Center to the northeast. The old "Reno Road," skirting the southern edge of Mount Ord, served as a supply line linking the two forts. The road was so steep in places it took two teams of mules to pull the wagons.

General Ord seems to have served admirably back East, but his reputation in Arizona is one of harshness to the Indians. One story tells that he ordered water and food be withheld from Indian prisoners. However unpopular the general, there are two mountains named Mount Ord in Arizona. The other one rises in the White

Mountains in eastern Arizona. Also, present-day Fort Ord in California bears his name.

After 10 miles of slow travel, I reach a metal gate blocking the road. For security at the communication towers, vehicles are not allowed past the gate, but hikers may continue up the half mile to the top. The climb is steep but follows the roadway. The trail is closed between 9 P.M. and 6 A.M. At the top, the wind blows harder, but the view offers a sense of infinite distance.

Going back down Mount Ord is as slow as the trip up because of the incline and the curves, but I don't mind. The view of the Mazatzals makes me glad that Mother Nature practiced her handiwork here, and I hope she doesn't get these magnificent peaks smoothed out too soon. **AH**



WARNING: Back road travel can be hazardous if you are not prepared for the unexpected. Whether traveling in the desert or in the high country, be aware of weather and road conditions, and make sure you and your vehicle are in top shape. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone at home know where you're going and when you plan to return. Odometer readings in the story may vary by vehicle.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Tonto National Forest, Mesa Ranger District, (480) 610-3300.

Pueblo Grande Museum Demonstrates Hohokam Ingenuity With Water

[BELOW] The large, porous olla on display might have held grain or water.

[BELOW, RIGHT] This replica of a Hohokam dwelling was constructed with saguaro cactus ribs.

[BOTTOM] Ancient and modern buildings juxtapose in this view northward through a shade structure at Pueblo Grande.

AT FIRST GLANCE, the mound of earth — 30 feet high and as large as a football field — looks inscrutable. When we walk around it, our perspective shifts hundreds of years. Thick adobe and rock walls that once enclosed ceremonial rooms reveal themselves. My husband chases our 2-year-old son to the mound's top, where the two pause to view the Salt River Valley. Some 700 years ago, you could stand here and monitor the headgates of 10 different canals.

At the Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park in Phoenix, the traces of an ancient civilization persist in an area hemmed by railroad tracks, roads and the

airport. These remnants include the channels of a canal system considered one of the greatest technological feats of the ancient world. The museum celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, remarkable considering an entrepreneur once wanted to build a sanatorium here. Only a few of the approximately 50 platform mounds that once graced the Valley have survived.

Some archaeologists theorize that the Hohokam people farmed in the Salt River Valley for about 1,500 years until extreme cycles of flooding and drought destroyed their culture. In the museum, I examine a model of the Hohokam canals, which coursed like veins through the valley. The longest canal ran 20 miles, all the way out to present-day Glendale.

“Most scholars agree that the Hohokam canals were the most sophisticated built in the prehistoric world, due to their size and the complexity of the network,” notes Roger Lidman, museum director.

The village at Pueblo Grande controlled the headgates of canals that watered approximately 10,000 acres of farmland on the north side of the

river. A modern-day demonstration garden showcases ancient crops such as cotton, corn, beans, squash and amaranth, which jostle together behind an ocotillo fence.

The mound itself was built during the heyday of Hohokam canal digging. The maze of rooms, with few doors, wasn't designed for a crowd. Archaeologists believe the mound was used by leaders to oversee work on the canals and perform ceremonies.

Besides canal building, the Hohokam made pottery, etched petroglyphs and played a sport whose rules we can only guess. We walk past one of the excavated ball courts, similar to ones in Mexico. We peer inside at its angled walls, once covered with a hard layer of soil called caliche, now reinforced with concrete. Two goals bookend the court.

Farther down the Ruin Trail, we see how the



Hohokam people might have lived. The new exhibit re-creates an adobe compound and a pithouse cluster. We step down the height of a curb into the one-room dwelling, with slats of saguaro cacti, ocotillo and other desert plants paneling the wall.

Indians guide the museum in re-creating ancient traditions, including roasting agave at the annual Ancient Technologies Day in March. The museum's biggest event is the Indian Market. Held off-site in December, more than 500 Indian artisans exhibit crafts from pottery to jewelry. The museum also sponsors petroglyph hikes, lectures and archaeology sessions for both kids and adults. In its educational play area, our son enjoyed building a Hohokam village from blocks and making pottery rubbings.

The grounds, once threatened by development, now encompass more than 100 acres protected by the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department. Visitors can arrange a special tour to see some of its treasures, including the Park of Four Waters. We walk to the site with Chris Johnson, a museum aide, past modern canals that follow Hohokam

waterways, through locked gates and over railroad tracks until we reach the spot. An airplane seems to barrel right at us.

“This is the exciting part,” says Johnson. “We're right in line with the Sky Harbor International Airport runway.”

There are more than 20 canals in this area. Two of the ditches run parallel to each other, one gently rounded and the other cut in a V shape. Hohokam canals measured as much as 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The shape of the canal beds controlled the speed of water: If it flowed too fast, the canal banks eroded; too slowly, and sediment clogged them.

Despite their canal mastery, the Hohokam's population outstripped their ability to live off the desert during floods and droughts. They scattered a few decades before Columbus arrived in the New World, and today's Akimel O'odham Indians and the Tohono O'odham regard them as their ancestors.

Something on the ground catches my eye. I pick up a triangle-shaped piece of pottery, as thick as two stacked quarters. The red design flows fresh and fluid across its surface. I gently replace it for those who come after us. **AH**

[ABOVE] Stabilized for preservation, remnants of 800-year-old adobe walls from about a dozen rooms stand on the museum's 3.5-acre platform mound.



LOCATION: 4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix.

GETTING THERE: From downtown Phoenix, drive east on Interstate 10 and merge onto State

Route 202. Take Exit 3 to State Route 143 (Washington Street). Take the Washington Street exit and keep left at the fork for a short distance, then proceed west less than .1 of a mile to the museum, which is on the south side of the street.

HOURS: Monday through Saturday, 9 A.M.-4:45 P.M.; Sunday, 1-4:45 P.M.

FEES: \$2, 18 and older; \$1, children 6-18; children under 6 are free. There is no admission charge on Sundays.

EVENTS: Indian market in December, plus a number of ongoing programs for kids and adults.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (602) 495-0901; www.pueblogrande.com.

Hikers on Thompson Trail Share the Area Bounty With Fly Fishermen

PICTURE A LONG alpine valley at nearly 9,000 feet of elevation with a blue-ribbon trout stream running its entire length and forested slopes of spruce, fir and yellow-leafed aspen trees ascending to surrounding peaks. Imagine a level trail that meanders with the stream, mostly in sun, sometimes in shadow, never more than a few yards from the stream bank. Add a sunny Arizona fall morning with frost underfoot and a fine mist exhaled from the shallow, fast-moving waters.

That's a description of Forest Service Trail 629 (Thompson Trail) in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, one fine mid-October day when some friends and I hiked it. The trail traces a portion of the

West Fork of the Black River near Big Lake in Arizona's White Mountains and was created with the assistance of many volunteers under the guidance of the Forest Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The round-trip length of the hike is either 4.8 or 6.5 miles, depending on whether you hike Trail 628A, the shorter loop that begins where the Thompson Trail meets the West Fork Trail, 628 in the trail system. Because it traverses sensitive riparian habitat, the Thompson Trail 629 is for hikers only. Trail 628, a section of which travels along an old railroad grade above and parallel to the Thompson Trail, is open to both hikers and mountain bikers.

On this day there are no other hikers, only a fly fisherman working a deep pool behind one of many rock dams erected for stream improvement. We keep our distance, not wanting to spook his prey or break his concentration, but pause long enough to watch him fluidly wield rod and fly line. It's catch-and-release only on this portion of the river, and no live bait

is allowed. Posted signs along the stream warn anglers to release caught trout immediately.

Save for the fly fisherman, our only company is wildlife. Numerous game trails approach the river from heavily forested uplands, and animal droppings and tracks are everywhere in the soft earth. At one point a cow elk appears, spots us and disappears. A quartet of Clark's nutcrackers follows our progress downstream. These crow-sized pale gray birds, sometimes called "camp robbers" for their habit of raiding campsites for food scraps, approach boldly, and we wonder if other hikers have hand-fed them.

Watercress flourishes in lush beds beneath the stream bank and, although tempted, we don't harvest it—too great a risk of giardiasis, a waterborne intestinal disease that can make you wish you were dead. On a rock near the watercress, an American dipper does a series of pushups before diving beneath the surface for some underwater tidbit.

As we near the intersection of the Thompson Trail and Trail 628, the sun has warmed the river trailside, and butterflies flit among the few remaining fall flowers. A couple in our party decides to hike 628 back to the trailhead. We'll return the same way we came, along the stream.

Take your time, we tell them. None of us is in any hurry to leave this patch of Eden. **AH**

[RIGHT] Blue and Engelmann spruce trees foresting the West Fork of the Black River in the White Mountains of eastern Arizona provide habitat for Clark's nutcrackers (left, above), which feed mainly on seeds from pinecones and on insects.

Before you go on this hike, visit our Web site at arizonahighways.com for other things to do and places to see in the area.



LOCATION: About 25 miles south of Springerville.

GETTING THERE: From Springerville drive south on U.S. Route 180/191 to State Route 260 and turn west. After 3 miles, turn south on State Route 261, which joins Forest Service Road 113 as it loops around Big Lake and becomes Forest Service Road 249E. To reach the trailhead from Big Lake, drive northwest on FR 249E until it merges with FR 116, then it's approximately 1.5 miles west to the trailhead at the confluence of Thompson Creek and the West Fork of the Black River at Thompson Ranch. A cleared parking area and information kiosk indicate the trailhead.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: This hike is best done in late spring, summer and autumn. Be prepared for any type of weather in Arizona's high country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Springerville Ranger District, (928) 333-4372.

