

RETREAT to an Idyllic Mountain Frontier

# ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

JUNE 2005

get  
wet!

top  
swimming  
holes

**'Creviceing'  
for Critters**

**Saddle Up,  
City Slickers**

**Ball Courts Pose  
Ancient Mystery**



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BY CARRIE M. MINER

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WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY KIM WISMANN

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Down in southern Arizona's Patagonia Mountains, city dwellers get a feel of the Old West on an overnight horseback escapade.

BY SAM NEGRI PHOTOGRAPHS BY KERRICK JAMES

[THIS PAGE] A rising moon peeks over the rock-strewn hillside crowned by the ancient Sinaguan pueblo Tuzigoot north of Cottonwood. LARRY LINDAHL  
[FRONT COVER] Safely sealed in an Ewa-marine plastic PVC housing and held just at the stream's surface, photographer Nick Berezenko's 35 mm Olympus captures Phoenix resident Bök Lundgren and some companion fish gliding through Fossil Creek. See portfolio, page 20. NICK BEREZENKO  
[BACK COVER] Navajo Falls provides a backdrop for adolescent exuberance in Havasu Canyon on the Havasupai Indian Reservation. See portfolio, page 20. KERRICK JAMES

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## EXPERIENCE ARIZONA

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

## {highways on television}

*Arizona Highways* magazine has inspired an independently produced weekly television series, hosted by Phoenix TV news anchor Robin Sewell. The half-hour program can be seen in several cities in English and Spanish. For channels and show times, log on to arizonahighways.com; click on DISCOVER ARIZONA; then click on the 'Arizona Highways goes to television!' link on the right-hand side.

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Each month, prints of some photographs from *Arizona Highways* will be offered for sale. The selected photos will be designated in the picture captions and will be available in two formats. To order prints by phone, call toll-free (866) 962-1191 or visit [www.magazineprints.com](http://www.magazineprints.com). (For other magazine-related business: In Phoenix or outside the U.S., call (602) 712-2000, or call toll-free (800) 543-5432.)



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PRODUCED IN THE USA

## Wisdom of the Mule Whisperer: Spare the Spurs, Smell the Cholla

SANDY SETS HER EARS and plants her mule shoes. Mountain on my right, cliff on my left—nowhere to go but forward.

"Hehhah," I yell, a cowboy in command. Nothing.

"Forward, you mangy, mule-headed can of dog chow," I holler, slapping Sandy across the haunches with the reins, the low point in a long day at Sandy's mercy as I chased wacko cattle up and down some hellacious hillsides.

This I do not need.

Life harbors enough frustrations. My kids are moving away, getting odd jobs and just generally growing beyond my reach. I have a new job I can barely manage and a desk so piled with papers I can't find a level surface.

I don't need this lunkhead mule giving me trouble.

I jerk the reins and thump her with my heels.

Abruptly, she half turns and backs rapidly down-slope toward disaster.

My mind grows wondrously clear—several overlooked details come forcefully to mind. For instance, Sandy outweighs me nearly 10 to one—and could out-muscle a platoon of Marines. Moreover, if ejected from this altitude the only thing that will stop me from rolling off the cliff is a thick clump of cholla.

At just this moment, I recall a story imparted to me by photographer Gary Johnson—a man with an uncommon understanding of mules, cattle and other forces of nature.

Once upon a time, Gary undertook a 100-mile ride atop Dixie, a mule of wonderful endurance and awful disposition. Built of brick and barbed wire, she was half wild ass and half Spawn of the Devil. She

could bite like thunder and kick quicker than rattlesnake spit. Captain of her own doomed soul, she did pretty much as she pleased. In short, she was as unpredictable as a teenager in the grip of hormones.

Gary struggled for mastery as they journeyed across a landscape spewed out of the inside of a volcano. He cajoled, spurred, bribed—and failed.

At the end of one day-long humiliation, Dixie bit him with great conviction on the forearm.

Gary responded with a stream of obscenities sufficient to wilt a mesquite down to the tap root. And then he did a very foolish thing: He wrapped the reins around his forearm, reared back and kicked Dixie in the chest.

Dixie's Satan side kicked in. She jerked back, lifted Gary entirely free of the ground and bolted straight through the center of a large paloverde tree, trailing Gary

like a semi dragging a crumpled Volkswagen. Gary and Dixie left a perfect mule-man hole through that tree, decorated with bits of Gary. Dixie dragged him along for another 10 feet before she stopped and stared down at her prostrate foe.

Dazed, Gary unwrapped the reins, staggered to his feet, stumbled toward his gear, and pulled out his .45-caliber semiautomatic.

Up strolled Jed, the head wrangler.

"Whatcha doing?" asked Jed casually.

"I'm gonna shoot that mule," said Gary, wiping a trickle of blood from his cheek.

Jed nodded sagely.

"I'm gonna shoot that mule right between the eyes," said Gary.

"Simple justice," Jed observed.

"You're not going to try to stop me?" asked Gary, eyes narrowed.

"Nope," Jed said, staring speculatively at Dixie, who in turn watched Gary with self-satisfied contempt. "Of course, you'll have to pay for her."

"That's all right," Gary said.

"Eight hundred dollars."

Gary paused. "It's worth it."

"Of course, there's one other thing."

"What's that?"

"It's another 120 miles to Phoenix. You'll have to walk it." Gary's shoulders slumped. He walked back to his pack, put away his gun and pulled out a granola bar.

"Friends, Dixie?" he said, offering her the granola bar.

She gathered it in with her dexterous lips and savored it a moment. Then in a powerful motion too quick to follow, she flicked out her right front hoof and kicked Gary in the knee.

He howled, hopped twice and crumpled.

Dixie chewed her granola bar in perfect satisfaction.

Reviewing this story carefully in my mind, I sit motionless atop Sandy. Then I loosen the reins, pat her on the neck and click my tongue experimentally.

She glances back at me to make sure I have been well-broken, then ambles down the hillside. I concentrate on enjoying the view.

On the way down, I resolve to let my kids live where they will and pick the career path they prefer—even if it leads straight through the cholla patch. And maybe on Monday, I'll randomly toss half the papers on my desk.

Oh, yeah, and one other thing, after reading this month's issue: Next time someone suggests I'd enjoy herding cattle up and down hillsides on a mule that ain't neck-reined, I'm gonna suggest they get a running start and take a deep dive into the swimming hole on Wet Beaver Creek.



GARY JOHNSON

### Ostriches in Arizona

This afternoon, I read "No Dummies, These Big Ostriches" (January '05). My first encounter with ostriches in Arizona was in the late 1960s when I was 9 years old. My family owned Coyote Springs Ranch located at the base of Mingus Mountain outside of Prescott. Disney filmed *The Feather Farm*, a "Wonderful World of Disney" Sunday night movie, on our ranch. The stars of the movie were ostriches that Disney brought to the ranch.

One of the ostriches laid an egg, and it was given to my oldest sister who took it to Prescott High School where it was put in an incubator (it never hatched). There was a big snowstorm during the filming, and the ostriches were snowed in, so the film crew burned a wood fence for warmth and a helicopter dropped food to them.

*The Feather Farm* aired on October 26, 1969. Though my six siblings and I now live all across the country, we all have memories of that special time. We even have ostrich ornaments to hang on our Christmas trees.

Susan B. Hofstra, Gaithersburg, MD

### Inspiration in Stones

I enjoyed reading your article "The Peralta Stones: Maps to the Lost Dutchman Gold Mine or Hoax?" in the January 2005 issue. It's always thrilling to think that it would be that easy to find gold buried in "them thar hills."

With a background in fine arts, I have a keen sense for archaeological artifacts. The incised images seem new, as there is little sign of wear. Just think how you would look if you were about 140 years old and dug out of the ground. What I particularly enjoyed was the uniqueness of these stones and their historical content. I'm planning on using this story as a lesson for my art class with focus on the Peralta Stone artifacts. Thanks for this inspiration.

Steve Layman, Beach Lake, PA

### Embracing the Fear

In your first "All Who Wander" column in the April 2005 issue, you touched upon the emotion of fear. There should be a sense of fear in all of us, and we should feel its existence every day of our lives. Fear serves as a reminder that we are alive and willing to stretch the limits of our known horizons.

With your eyes wide open, you are knowingly pushing a distinguished writing career into the uncharted and possibly raging waters that will greet a new magazine editor. I sense you embrace the fear. Therefore, I suspect you will enjoy your tenure as the ninth editor of this very special magazine.

William Ramsay III, Carlsbad, CA

### Missing the Humor

I was terribly disappointed when Gene Perret's writings were removed from your magazine. In the April 2005 issue, I was doubly disappointed to discover the "Highway to Humor" page was missing.

I have been a subscriber for many years. I do not plan to renew.

Humor, to me, is just as important as food and drink. Any publication without a humor section is of no value to me. *Arizona Highways* seems to fit that category. Adios.

John Roark, Stanford, MT

*Alas, I, too, mourn the dearly departed humor page. We wrestled with the alligator of our limited space a long, hard while, trying to get more articles, photos and travel tips into the magazine. We invite Gene's faithful readers to follow him on our Web site (arizonahighways.com—where they can enjoy two of his columns per month). And I agree that humor's important. But I'm hoping we can let humor loose to romp through magazine articles, instead of keeping it locked up on one page. Still, now we've lost John, which redoubles our sorrow. Drat—so much good stuff, so few pages. Then I showed up, which raises the question: Do we need the humor page as badly if we have a funny-looking editor?*

### Woman Suffrage

In the January 2005 issue ("Taking the Off-ramp," "Question of the Month"), you erred in listing the order of states that granted woman suffrage.

You stated that Colorado "led the pack in 1893." Perhaps that is technically true, in that it was the first state that at first did not have woman suffrage but then granted it later.

In fact, Wyoming was the first territory to grant women the right to vote. In 1869, the Wyoming Territorial Legislature granted all women over 21 the right to vote. In 1890, Wyoming was admitted to the Union as a state with its woman suffrage provision intact. Therefore, the state of Wyoming had granted woman suffrage three years earlier than did Colorado.

Terrell Blanchard, Silver Spring, MD

**80th Anniversary**

## Trivia Contest

**Answers**

Here are the answers to the 80th Anniversary Trivia Quiz Contest published in the April *Arizona Highways*. Contest winners will be announced in the September issue.

1 – D	6 – C	11 – C	16 – C
2 – C	7 – A	12 – A	17 – A
3 – A	8 – B	13 – B	18 – B
4 – A	9 – A	14 – A	19 – C
5 – B	10 – C	15 – D	20 – C

**THIS MONTH IN ARIZONA**

**1883**  
The city of Prescott requires gamblers to purchase a \$15-per-month license.

**1893**  
The Oasis newspaper reports water is lower in the Salt River than it has been at any previous time in 20 years.

**1896**  
Maricopa beekeepers ship the first two of an intended 15 carloads of honey to the East.



**1898**  
The Secretary of the Interior considers protecting the Petrified Forest from becoming a private stone quarry.

A Phoenix resident reports that his insurance policy with the U.S. Casualty Co. of New York was canceled, reportedly because living in Arizona is too great a risk to be covered.

**1890**  
Yuma miners stop working when the thermometer tops 110 degrees.

**Look Out, You Missed a Masterpiece**

While Phoenix-area museums bring some of the world's great art to the state through traveling exhibitions, many masterpieces are already there, right under your nose. Don't overlook these gems, always on display in permanent collections, while visiting museums for special shows.

**Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art**

*Knight Rise Skyspace*, a room-sized viewing chamber to observe the changing sky by resident international art star James Turrell.

*Glass Scrim Wall* by James Carpenter Design Associates.

**Arizona State University Art Museum in Tempe**

*Horse's Skull on Blue* by one of the most famous female artists of all time, Georgia O'Keeffe.

*Osprey and the Otter and the Salmon*, attributed to John James Audubon.

*Nuclear Stockpile*, a modern masterpiece by Robert Arneson.

**Phoenix Art Museum**

*Flowering Arches, Giverny* by impressionist Claude Monet.

*Zoroaster Temple at Sunset* by a



Artist James Turrell's *Knight Rise Skyspace* in Scottsdale frames the sky as pure color and offers a unique view of sunrises and sunsets.

master of the Western landscape, Thomas Moran.

*Home of the Desert Rat* by one of the best of the West, Maynard Dixon.

**Heard Museum in Phoenix**

*Red Tail Hawk* by renowned contemporary Indian painter Dan Namingha.

*Katsina Doll Gallery* from the collections of the late U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater and the Fred Harvey Co.

*Fear of a Red Planet: Relocation and Removal*, a monumental three-wall mural by Navajo artist Steven Yazzie.

**LIFE IN ARIZONA 1921**

**THE VILLAIN WAS A STUDEBAKER**

A gripping courtroom drama unfolded in Prescott in 1921. The case so grabbed public attention it made page one of the *Journal-Miner* newspaper. But get this: The "desperado" was a car, a Studebaker to be precise.

Bootlegger "Curley" Morrison had used it to smuggle hooch, but poor Curley had been in the pen for four months when his car stood before the bar of justice for violating Prohibition laws.

At issue was a confiscation attempt by the state. The Studebaker's lawyer, J.A. West, argued that Curley had

already paid his dues and shouldn't lose his car. He howled that the court was "biased and prejudiced against automobiles caught hauling whiskey."

Judge John J. Sweeney wouldn't budge, saying, "I'm going to sell it unless stopped by the Supreme Court."

Sweeney's verdict? Guilty! He ordered the Studebaker sold to the highest bidder.



**Adopt a 100-year-old Grandchild**

Retirees Marion and Gene Simons have adopted a 100-year-old grandchild named Nonie. Nonie Harter was born in 1892 and interred at age 2.

A cross section of pioneers rests in Prescott's gated but unlocked Citizens Cemetery. Archives reveal a disproportionate number of children. Infant mortality ran high.

Yavapai Cemetery Association sponsors the Adopt a Pioneer Gravesite Project. It also issues quarterly *Gravemaker* newsletters and offers programs on pioneer history.

The Simonses visit, tend and beautify Nonie's grave. After



choosing this child, the couple received a short biography with her family history, along with a certificate of adoption.

When founded in 1864, Citizens Cemetery occupied a remote spot. Prescott has since grown around the location at 815 E. Sheldon St.

Historians and genealogists peruse tombstones and faded markers. If your family is "old Arizona," you might find a few ancestors there. Information: (928) 778-5988.



**Arizona Talussnail Loves Rainy Season**

One of the rarest animals in the world lives in southern Arizona. The San Xavier talussnail makes its home in a 5,000-square-foot tumble of limestone outside Tucson and nowhere else on Earth.

Smaller than a quarter, this unique invertebrate sports a whitish-pink, whorled shell with a chestnut-brown band. Since it is very sensitive to drying, the species protects itself from the Arizona

sunshine by crawling deep into cool, moist rock fissures, where it may stay inactive for as long as three years, waiting for conditions wet enough to venture out into the open.

After a rain, the snails emerge to feed, mate and lay eggs, before returning to the shelter of the rocks to hide out until the next rainy season.

Even though the talussnail is extremely rare and sensitive to human intrusion, the federal government has not awarded it protection under the Endangered Species Act.

**Powered Paragliders Take to the Sky**

If you're hankering to navigate a personal aircraft, there's an alternative to time-consuming, costly lessons, or even obtaining an airplane pilot's license. Instead, you can immediately fulfill your flying fantasies by becoming a powered paraglider pilot in just days at Airparamo in Phoenix.

Also called paramotoring, flying these aircraft is relatively safe, affordable, easy to learn and doesn't require a license or registration. Unlike hang gliding, paragliding doesn't require a lot of strength. It does, however, require maximum concentration as you learn critical techniques. Airparamo programs are divided into three consecutive courses: discovery flights, solo flight training and daily flight training.

Besides flight instruction and instructor certification and training, Airparamo sells paramotoring



equipment and accessories, and provides repair services.

Year-round flight training is available in metro Phoenix, Casa Grande and near Lake Pleasant, although Airparamo will provide lessons at a location near you.

Information: (602) 692-7995; www.airparamo.com.



**Territorial Taxes**

Territorial Flagstaff brought taxation to a new level when it levied the following unusual licensing fees:

- Saloonkeepers and prostitutes—\$5 per month.
- Gambling establishments—\$10 monthly.
- Traveling salesmen—\$20 a month.
- Circuses—\$20 each performance.
- Visiting two-horse peddlers—a whopping \$50 per month.

At least the town gave local "business people" a break.



### Hydroponic Tomato Tours

**T**our Eurofresh Farms in Willcox for an amazing look at how tomatoes are grown year-round. Approximately 300,000 pounds per day of tomatoes are grown hydroponically in 212 acres of glass greenhouses, then shipped throughout the United States.

Inside, the temperature is a pleasant 70 to 80 degrees with 68 percent humidity. The 90-minute, wheelchair-accessible tour takes you through a "forest" of tomato vines that can reach more than 45 feet high. The vines grow up strings; bumblebees take care of pollination. You can taste different tomato varieties, take a few home and pick up tips like "never refrigerate tomatoes." Wednesday-only tours are free, and are limited in size. Information: (520) 384-4621.



### Taliesin Twilight Tours

**F**rank Lloyd Wright, one of America's most famous architects, wrote in a story for *Arizona Highways* in 1949: "Living in the desert is the spiritual cathartic a great many people need. I am one of them."

Wright fell in love with the Arizona landscape while collaborating on designs for the Arizona Biltmore in 1927. In 1937, Wright bought several hundred acres in the foothills of the McDowell Mountains and began building Taliesin West, his field school and home. Created from desert materials, using colorful boulders

and sand, Taliesin West ultimately has included three theaters, a drafting studio, living quarters, kitchens, an office, workshops, dining areas and sunken gardens.

Tours operate year-round to view many of these spaces, linked by walkways and splashing fountains; however, Night Lights on the Desert tours operate only March through October. These spectacular two-hour twilight tours are offered Friday evenings. Lighted from within at sundown, Taliesin West becomes a radiant jewel, capturing all the romance of the West.

Information: (480) 860-2700.

### A Wave of Relief

**S**ince December 26, the organizers of Tsunami on the Square in Prescott have had to work hard to make the best of an unfortunate irony. In doing so, they have created an unusual festival.

Operating this year with a "Wake of the Flood" theme, the performing and cultural arts festival has teamed up with world help organizations like UNICEF and Doctors Without Borders and will donate 10 percent of the event proceeds to Southeast Asia Tsunami relief efforts.

From the strange to the sublime, actors, dancers, musicians, comedians and performing artists are set to offer a global range of unique, live presentations

while the Children's Cove, Beachcomber's Bazaar and the signature Pyrotechnic Spectacle promise fun for the whole family. The two-day outdoor event takes place June 17-18 in Prescott's historic Courtyard Plaza.

Information: (928) 445-5540; www.tsunami-on-the-square.com.



Fam Chen with the Molehill Orchestra

### Controlling the Weather

**B**orn in Bisbee in 1894, Lewis W. Douglas was a successful businessman, Arizona congressman and ambassador to the Court of St. James. By the early 1950s, Douglas had become interested in irrigating the desert, and in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower appointed him to head a committee on weather control.

Douglas turned to an unusual man for help. Wilhelm Reich had worked under Sigmund Freud in the 1920s, eventually coming to believe in what he termed "orgone



Lewis W. Douglas

energy," the primordial life force that permeates the universe. Theorizing that nuclear emissions and smog were blocking this energy field, Reich developed a "cloudbuster," a series of metal tubes connected by cables to a water source with supposed rainmaking capability.

In October 1954, Douglas summoned Reich to Oracle, north of Tucson, to bring water to the arid soil. Oddly, Douglas and Reich never met in person, but according to Reich's adherents, by November he had turned the desert into a green pasture.



### Weaving Tales

**N**avajo artists put a little of themselves into every traditional rug they weave. So when buyers ask Bah Yazzie Ashley to put special designs into her rugs, she says, "It doesn't work; patterns must take shape in your heart." Similarly, Navajo weaver Roy Kady hopes that the people who buy his rugs "feel the essence of happiness" in them.

Considering the personal touches Navajo weavers leave in their work, it is surprising that few books highlight their lives and faces. However, Carter and Dodie Allen's *The Weavers Way: Navajo Profiles* dispels the mist obscuring many Navajo weavers.

*The Weavers Way* profiles 36 Navajo weavers. Their striking portraits and individual histories infuse into the ancient craft of Navajo weaving the warmth and personality that, due to the artists' past anonymity, had been sadly absent.



### Vintage Village From Territorial Days

**T**he architectural history of early Arizona settlers is preserved at the Pioneer Arizona Living History Village in Phoenix. Children look pitiful gripping the bars of jail cells in the sheriff's office. People "ooh" and "ahh" when red-hot metal hits water in the blacksmith's bucket. From a barbershop to a military flagpole top, a trip to the village is a day well-spent.

Each building at the village dates

from 1863 to 1912. An opera house came from Prescott, a miner's cabin from Clifton and a Victorian-style house from Phoenix. Other buildings are reconstructions based on old photographs. At 11:30 A.M. every day that it's open, you can witness a Hollywood-style gunfight and presentation by the gunfight coordinator on gun safety in the modern world.

Information: (623) 465-1052; www.pioneer-arizona.com.



Documenting the line's colorful history and trains, Al Richmond and Marc Pearsall's *The Grand Canyon Railway: Sixty Years in Color* brings together a fascinating mix of rare, color photographs from the

Grand Canyon Railway's past and vibrant snapshots of its present that prove the journey to the Grand Canyon can be almost as much of an adventure as the Canyon itself. Information: (800) 843-8724.



### Question of the Month

What is a strato-volcano?

**A** strato-volcano is a volcanic cone, generally of large size, built of alternating layers of lava and explosive ash.

The San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff exemplify a strato-volcano. While the San Francisco Peaks aren't classified as extinct, it's highly unlikely an eruption will occur again.

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# Greenlee County, High Frontier

It's peaceful, uncrowded and quiet—a place for retreat

Text by **DOUGLAS KREUTZ**  
Photographs by **JACK DYKINGA**



## Pull into idyllic Hannagan Meadow high in the mountains of Greenlee County

and you might feel as if you've slipped through some weird time warp and ended up back on the frontier.

Wolves—wild wolves—roam the nearby woods.

Ranchers still work the rugged range mostly on horseback.

The main highway is so sparsely traveled that a black bear is occasionally seen lying in the middle of the road. Locals have dubbed him “Rug” in recognition of his risky lifestyle.

The air is pure pine scent. Silence is the most common sound. Your cell phone refuses to communicate.

It really does feel almost like a frontier.

Well, here's the thing: Greenlee County not only feels like frontier. It is frontier. Literally. By definition of the federal government.

Greenlee, about 120 miles long and 20 miles wide in eastern Arizona, was officially designated a “frontier county” by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, based on its population density of a mere 4.6 people per square mile. The generally accepted standard for frontier status requires fewer than six people per square mile.

That means the county—stretching from the Peloncillo

Mountains and Duncan in the south to the 9,000-foot heights of the Blue Range Primitive Area in the north—is short on cities and long on high lonesome. It makes an excellent travel destination for anyone seeking a respite from the rat race and solace in the wild.

Kay Gale, Greenlee County administrator, reels off some indicators of Greenlee's frontier personality:

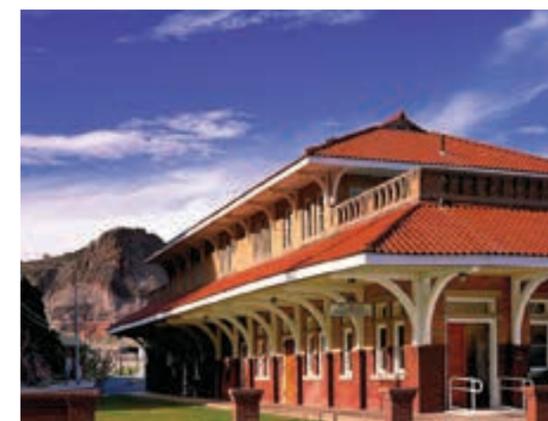
- The population of the entire county is 8,595—enough people to fill only about one-sixth of the seats in Phoenix's Bank One Ballpark.

- The county seat, Clifton, weighs in with some 3,000 residents, and nearby Morenci, site of a Phelps Dodge copper operation that accounts for about 85 percent of the county's tax base, has a population of about 2,000.

- There's not a single fast-food outlet in the county—unless you count the Dairy Queen in Morenci.

- The two elevators in the county building in Clifton are the only ones in all of Greenlee.

- The only supermarket is a Bashas' in Morenci, which also is home to the county's only movie theater. Clifton has



[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 8 AND 9] The panoramic view from Blue Vista Overlook in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests unveils an amber dawn over Pipestem Mountain and the lower reaches of the Blue River.

[CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] As day draws to a close, juniper bushes cast long shadows on the slopes of Four Bar Mesa about halfway between Clifton and Hannagan Meadow. Barbara Marks tends to her horses at the ranch homesteaded by husband Bill's family in 1891. Built in 1911, the Greenlee County Courthouse provides a historic backdrop for County Administrator Kay Gale. Constructed in 1913, Clifton's train depot today houses the Greenlee County Chamber of Commerce.

the sole Circle K store in Greenlee, which was named for early settler Mason Greenlee.

■ Of the county's five school districts, only those in Clifton, Morenci and Duncan have enough students to fill a classroom. The Blue District, in the remote northeastern corner of the county, had a whopping total of five students last year, and the Eagle Creek District, on the western side of the county, had an enrollment of one, a student schooled through a home computer. "The school is still there and is available if needed," Gale says. "The school board still is elected and has its meeting, although they have had no students for several years."

All of this blatant lack of urbanity makes Greenlee County a slice of paradise for many residents and visitors. While there are other counties across the nation, including La Paz County in far-western Arizona, that qualify as frontier based on sparse population, few offer the striking scenery and tonic atmosphere of Greenlee.

"It's peaceful. It's quiet. It's beautiful. It's the closest thing to heaven I can imagine," says Cyndie Edelblute, assistant manager of the Hannagan Meadow Lodge, as she watches morning mist waft across the tree-rimmed meadow in front of the lodge, at an elevation of 9,100 feet.

"We see deer everywhere, and elk, and even some of the wolves," Edelblute says. "We see wolves right over there in the meadow quite often."

The Mexican gray wolves, which have been reintroduced into the area by wildlife officials in recent years, are a source of pride for some area residents, but are viewed with a wary eye by many ranchers who see the predators as a threat to livestock. Other wildlife—including deer, elk, bears, wild turkeys, hummingbirds and other bird species—boost the local economy by attracting ecotourists, hikers, campers and hunters.

The high country of Hannagan, however exotic, is just one of the attractions of the Greenlee County frontier.

Travelers can spend a day or a week or much longer

**[BELOW]** John Decker takes a break from renovation work on a historic building along Clifton's Chase Creek Street.

**[RIGHT]** In the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests south of Hannagan Meadow, a pond at KP Cienega reflects the soft pastel colors of an early evening sky.





**That sense of paradise found,  
of a haven pretty close to heaven,  
seems to resonate from one end  
of the Greenlee frontier to the other.**

year-round. You can still not lock your doors. . . . It's not like living in the city."

Charles Spezia, whose grandfather built many of Clifton's historic buildings, and Jeff Gaskin, a U.S. Public Health Service dentist who is investing in Chase Creek renovation projects, are eager to show visitors landmarks such as the grand Palicio House, the ruins of the Lyric Theater vaudeville house and the Spezia House.

"I love the idea that this is still frontier," says Gaskin as he invites visitors into the antiques shop he operates in what was at one time a dry-goods store. "It's a rustic setting. I like a town like this, before people can see what it's going to be" following a tourist-friendly restoration.

Elsewhere along Chase Creek Street, you might happen across folks like Paul Whitted, a poet, musician and raconteur who speaks of one day opening a cafe in the historic district.

After this taste of life in Greenlee County's biggest burg, it takes just a few miles of travel to find yourself out in the big, open back-of-beyond along 191 on the serpentine drive north toward Hannagan Meadow. Be sure to have water, food, emergency supplies and a full gas tank for an excursion on 191, which is also known as the Coronado

exploring historic niches of Clifton, nearby mining country, remote stretches of U.S. Route 191, the pine, fir and spruce forests around Hannagan Meadow and the deep wilderness of the Blue River area.

Many visitors begin at the southern foot of the county with a stop in Duncan or in what passes for a metropolis in these parts: Clifton.

With deep roots in mining and other hands-on hard work, Clifton is not a croissants-and-latte-for-breakfast kind of place. Stop in at PJ's, a Mexican and American restaurant on the main drag through town, where you can chow down on frontiersque fare of eggs, meat, hash browns and hearty black coffee served in heavy porcelain mugs on Formica-topped tables.

After breakfast, save a few minutes for a stop at the old jail, a no-frills, no-longer-used lockup that was blasted from a cliff in Clifton. The first inmate reportedly was the miner who built the jail, which is on U.S. 191 on the west side of the San Francisco River.

Nearby, just off 191 in midtown Clifton, is the Chase Creek Main Street Historical District. This is a place to get a taste of late-frontier life and meet some colorful town folk and a few entrepreneurs who see possible profit in preserving the frontier atmosphere of the district.

"Clifton is a well-kept secret, but it's being let out," says John Decker, a craftsman who is doing extensive interior renovation work on some of the early 20th-century buildings in the historic district. "I'll tell you now, within three to five years, this old street is going to be active again with shops and places to stay.

"But you know, we're still the Wild West," Decker adds. "We've got a large herd of bighorn sheep right on the edge of town. We've got one of the few Arizona rivers that run

**[ABOVE, LEFT]** No longer used to incarcerate wrongdoers, the old Clifton jail welcomes visitors for slightly shorter stays than when it was originally blasted out of a rocky cliff in town in 1881.  
**[BELOW]** Desert paintbrushes poke scarlet blooms among the daggerlike leaves of banana yuccas in the Blue Range.  
**[RIGHT]** An arched exterior facade is all that remains of the Lyric Theater in Clifton's Chase Creek Main Street Historical District.





[ABOVE] A splash of edgy color from two blooming thistles and a white daisy contrasts with the striated emerald leaves of skunk cabbage.

[OPPOSITE PAGE] The vertical rhythm of white aspens provides a counterpoint to the spreading greens and golds of bracken ferns and Douglas firs near Hannagan Meadow.

Trail. Gas is available in Morenci about 4 miles up the road from Clifton.

The journey begins with the almost surreal experience of driving through a part of the Phelps Dodge open pit mine just northwest of Morenci. A mine overlook site proves well worth a brief stop.

After the highway leaves the mine area, traffic drops off, the scenery turns sylvan and you know you're not in Kansas, or even metropolitan Clifton, anymore.

Drivers pass a cluster of old stone and wooden buildings—frontier-style habitations except for an apparently kaput vehicle languishing in the yard. A mile farther up the road, small hoodoos (rock towers) offer a preview of rugged mountain terrain to come.

Those equipped for camping might spend a night at the Granville Campground a few miles beyond the hoodoos. The site, nestled in oak woodlands just below a zone of piñon pines and junipers, is a favorite of locals as well as travelers.

"Man, I love it—the fresh air, the breeze, the shade. It's beautiful," says Frank Morales, a Clifton native and Phelps Dodge employee, as he prepares to picnic with his family at the campground.

"Everybody knows everybody, just about, in Clifton," Morales says. "And we're right here in nature. You can pack up at any time and say: 'I'll go up the river. I'll go up the trail.' You can't do that in the city."

Beyond the campground and farther up the highway, summer wildflowers such as penstemons and paintbrushes add bright splashes of color to the deep-green forest.

At HL Saddle, between Mileposts 182 and 183, you get visual confirmation of just how steeply the highway has been climbing from Clifton, at 3,468 feet, on its way to the 9,075-foot heights of Hannagan Meadow. A table at the HL Saddle picnic site is perched at an overlook affording vast views over what looks a lot like, well, wide-open frontier.

Keep an eye out for wildlife all along the drive. I spot a dozen wild turkeys ambling along the roadside on the edge of an open, grassy plateau area between Mileposts 193 and 194. At the other end of the plateau, five deer, including a young buck, show themselves on this summer afternoon.

If you can pull your eyes away from fascinating wild critters on this stretch of highland, you'll take in magnificent views—with vibrant mountain grasses in the foreground, deep forests midfield and far blue mountains hugging the horizons. The Red Mountain Fire Interpretation Overlook, between Mileposts 200 and 201, features information panels describing the effects of past wildfires on the landscape spread out before you.

Well-marked trailheads along the highway invite a short, stretch-your-legs stroll or an extended pack trip for hikers or horseback riders.

On this winding ribbon of grand overlook points, one stands out as "must see." It's the Blue Vista Overlook at Milepost 225. There's a lot of talk in this world about views that take your breath away, but this is the real deal. Framed with tall firs, blue lupines and hot-pink penstemons, the big look from Blue Vista is a visual feast of green canyons and shapely mountains, seemingly without end.

By the time you pull into Hannagan Meadow—site of the Hannagan Meadow Lodge about 22 miles south of Alpine—you might be ready for a little taste of civilization.

"We've been coming here since 1950," says Lela Carpenter Abegg, a Mesa resident who often hosts family reunions at the lodge. "What we love is the seclusion."

That seclusion, that enduring sense of the frontier, is precisely what keeps rancher Barbara Marks and her family living on the remote ranch that was homesteaded by her husband's clan in 1891.

"His family has been ranching here for over 100 years," says Marks, who has lived on the ranch near the tiny outpost of Blue with her husband, Bill, for 27 years.

She says the family now has about 110 head of cattle and does most of the day-in, day-out ranch work on horseback because of the rugged and mostly roadless terrain.

"It's wonderful, just wonderful. It's the best office anybody could ever have," Marks says. "I'm riding up the trail, I stop and look out at the panorama, and it still fills me with awe."

She says the Mexican gray wolves, reintroduced into the area in 1998 and now numbering 44 or more in the wild, have had an impact on ranchers. The wolves are believed to kill some livestock, Marks says, and also apparently compete for natural prey with other predators such as mountain lions, which then might prey on calves.

"It's made life more difficult for us," she says.

But even wolves aren't likely to drive Marks from her piece of the frontier.

"We're rich beyond all our hopes and dreams out here,"



she says. "The clear air, the birds, the wildlife. We've never become jaded by it."

That sense of paradise found, of a haven pretty close to heaven, seems to resonate from one end of the Greenlee frontier to the other. Far down the Coronado Trail, in Clifton, County Administrator Gale shares Marks' heartfelt sentiments.

"Greenlee County is one of God's wonders," Gale says, "and we are fortunate enough to live here." ■■■

*Douglas Kreutz of Tucson plans to win the lottery and retire with his wife in a secluded cabin high in the mountains of Greenlee County. If the lottery pipe dream doesn't pan out, he intends to continue visiting the backcountry as often as possible.*

*Jack Dykinga of Tucson says the coniferous forest near Hannagan Meadow, heavily draped with moss, is reminiscent of coastal rain forests and comes as a welcome diversion to desert dwellers like him.*



**LOCATION:** Clifton is approximately 200 miles east of Phoenix and 170 miles northeast of Tucson.

**GETTING THERE:** From Phoenix, drive southeast on Interstate 10 and merge onto U.S. Route 60. Travel east on U.S. 60 about 76 miles, where it merges with U.S. Route 70. Continue traveling southeast about 79 miles on U.S. 70, then turn left (north) on U.S. Route 191. Travel northeast 24 miles and an additional 10 miles northwest to Clifton. From Tucson, drive east 90 miles on Interstate 10 past Willcox to the exit for U.S. 191. Turn left (north) and follow 191 to Safford; continue east and northeast on 191 to Clifton.

**LODGING:** Hannagan Meadow Lodge, (928) 339-4370; [www.hannaganmeadow.com](http://www.hannaganmeadow.com).

**TRAVEL ADVISORY:** U.S. 191, the Coronado Trail, is paved and well-maintained, but it's a steep, winding mountain road demanding special driving caution. From Blue Vista south to Clifton, the road descends steeply with hairpin turns and no guardrails, requiring a speed of 20 to 30 mph. Make sure your vehicle is in good condition and that you have plenty of gas and emergency supplies. Travelers also should be aware that parts of Greenlee County, especially the higher elevations, receive snowfall in the winter months and sometimes in late fall and early spring.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Alpine Ranger District, (928) 339-4384; and Clifton Ranger District, (928) 687-1301.

# BALL COURT MYSTERIES LINGER

## Did Celebrants at Arizona's 200 Sites Use Severed Heads as Balls?

by Anne Montgomery

Everything rested on the outcome of the game.

The players eyed one another anxiously as they checked their equipment. A man stood at the center of a small clamoring crowd taking bets, while fans milled about waiting for the action to begin. Concessionaires ringed the court, providing food and drinks for the spectators. Everyone knew that before the day was over, heads would roll. Literally.

While there is no direct evidence that severed heads were actually kicked around by game victors at any of Arizona's roughly 200 ancient ball courts, it is true that such gruesome events occurred in some of the Mesoamerican versions of the contest: the ball game of the Mayas and Aztecs called *ulama*.

Although Southwestern archaeologists disagree on exactly how the elliptical open-air courts in Arizona were used by the Hohokam and Sinagua, they agree the ball games were influenced by those south of Arizona's border.

The games and the ideology behind them might have been lost forever had Europeans not directly observed different versions being played during the 16th century in Mexico. In fact, when Hernando Cortez and his conquistadores returned to Spain from a voyage in 1528, they brought with them an entire team of ballplayers from Tlaxcala to perform for Emperor Charles V and his court. Numerous

Catholic missionaries also observed and recorded the playing of the ball games in Mesoamerica, the region from Mexico south to Guatemala and Honduras. However, when it became obvious there were religious rituals tied to the games, they began a campaign to destroy the courts.

Some courts remain today, most of them difficult to see with the untrained eye even when standing in the middle of one. There is also what scholars refer to as "ball-game art"—decorated pottery, stone sculptures and wall paintings depicting the players and the games.

Cold raindrops begin to fall as David Wilcox, the senior curator of anthropology at the Museum of Northern Arizona, gazes out over a ball court site 15 miles east of Flagstaff. A small village once occupied the ridge overlooking the court. The ground, a rocky mixture of small chunks of red basalt and black cinder, is littered with potsherds, some with beautiful black-and-white patterns. Junipers dot the landscape, lending their piney scent to the rain-dampened earth while long-dormant volcanoes rest silently on the horizon. When asked to visualize what might have been happening at this ball court back when the game was still being played, somewhere between A.D. 750 and 1250, Wilcox smiles.

"Well, the short answer is we don't know," he says.

Wilcox is considered Arizona's resident ball court guru. He co-edited and contributed to the 400-page tome *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, and has published numerous papers on the subject. Even more telling, when his colleagues in the Arizona archaeological establishment are asked about the ball courts, they invariably recommend Wilcox.

The fact that there are ancient ball courts in the American Southwest seems to have come as a bit of a surprise to historians.

"Emil Haury, who excavated the site of Snaketown along the Gila River in the 1930s, was the first to argue in a modern sense that they're analogous to ball courts found in Mexico where the ritual ball game was played," Wilcox explains.

Today's sports fan might not make much connection between sports and religion, but in ancient times, the ball game is believed to have been steeped in ritual meaning.

There is some evidence that ball courts and the games played in them had some calendrical meaning as well, with events being held at specific times of the year as dictated by the positions of the sun, moon and stars.

The courts occur across a 400-by-400-mile area, radiating out from Phoenix, Wilcox says. The wide distribution "would have created exchange flows of goods . . . and so it may well have been a way of moving valuables across the landscape of southern Arizona."

Shells, pottery, salt and minerals like obsidian and turquoise traversed the area. Even copper bells and macaws from deep in Mexico, have been found at Hohokam and Sinagua sites. Just as fans attending professional sporting events today find themselves inundated by vendors hawking their wares, it's possible that budding entrepreneurs were often at work in the vicinity of ball court events.

Cars fly by quickly on a two-lane road outside of Florence. It is doubtful that any passersby know they are just a few hundred feet from an ancient ball court. Bright-green irrigated fields nip at the edges of the state land on which the almost invisible structure lies. The tang of creosote fills the air. Mesquite bushes and broken caliche litter the interior of the depression. Henry Wallace, a senior research archaeologist with Desert Archaeology Inc. of Tucson, stands atop a small hill, once the side wall of the ball court.

"They're a tool for societies to use to get people together. That had to have been very important," Wallace explains. "If you want to meet potential spouses, expand your economy, maybe trade your pots . . . you need to get people together to make that happen. Ball games are great ways to do that."

The small court, which is 90 feet long by 60 feet wide, is well known to archaeologists. Still, it has never been fully excavated.

"I'd be quite happy to see this one left alone," Wallace says. "Because there are not enough of them. And there are enough of them that get hit by development. Excavation should focus on those."

While the vast majority of ball courts appear as little more than minor depressions in the ground, several have been restored, most notably one at Pueblo Grande in the heart of Phoenix, and the reconstructed site in northern Arizona at Wupatki, the only masonry court known to exist in the Southwest.

At Wupatki, heat rises from the 6-foot-high walls, which are composed of red and brown sandstone, rocks that are intermixed with black basalt boulders, some smooth, some pitted with small holes. The court, which was excavated and stabilized in 1965, is open-ended and situated down below the multilevel high-rise known as the Wupatki Pueblo. Discoveries at the soaring, red sandstone village have shown it to be a melting pot of the Cohonina, Sinagua and Kayenta Anasazi cultures, and it is easy to imagine



[ABOVE] Excavated and stabilized by archaeologists in 1965, the masonry ball court at Wupatki raises more questions than it answers. [LEFT] On private protected ranchland in southern Arizona, this well-preserved, unexcavated ball court features small enclosures at either end, which might have been staging areas for players or ceremonial participants. BOTH BY ADRIEL HEISEY



LEFT: ARTIST MICHAEL HAMPSHIRE, COURTESY PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK, CITY OF PHOENIX

the groups intermingling, excitedly trading their wares, bartering and socializing as their favorite ballplayers battle on the court's smooth, dirt floor.

There appear to have been numerous versions of the ball game. Both rubber and stone balls have been found ranging in size from a softball to as big as a basketball. The game might have been played with sticks, and stone paddles have been found. There is ample evidence that a ball game was also played in which participants were allowed to strike the ball using only their hips.

Many courts had ringlike goals, so it's possible players had to pass the ball through them to score. The comparison to basketball is striking, though the ancient game appears to have been much more dangerous. Players wore protective equipment, not unlike modern-day hockey players, with headgear that was both utilitarian and highly decorative. Stone sculptures from Mesoamerica show that women also played the game, though it is not known if females participated in the sport in the American Southwest.

While it's true some archaeologists don't agree that ball games were played in these courts—some contend the structures were used for dances or other ritual celebrations—the discovery in Mesoamerican burial sites of miniature ball courts, complete with tiny spectators and athletes frozen in midplay, goes a long way toward proving the ball game did exist. Surely the game was vital—some fans wished to take it with them into the afterlife. **AH**

Anne Montgomery of Phoenix spent nine years as a television sportscaster, including two years anchoring "SportsCenter" for ESPN. She has officiated amateur football, baseball, ice hockey, soccer and basketball games.

A man is swimming in a shallow pool of water at the base of a waterfall. The water is clear and blue, and the surrounding area is lush with green trees and foliage. The man is in the foreground, swimming towards the viewer. The waterfall is in the background, with water cascading down. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

# Let's Go Swimming!

Arizona's Backcountry  
Water Holes  
are World-class Spots  
for a Dip

by  
Carrie M.  
Miner



**B**oasting three of the four deserts in North America, Arizona gets pegged as severe and searing—a land of wailing dust devils, windblown tumbleweeds and bleached white skies. But look again. Arizona also has six life zones—from desert scrub to high tundra. And here’s one refreshing secret: The state harbors some of the world’s best swimming holes—from cool, shadowed glades to lush, near-tropical retreats.

The dog days of summer bring on visions of relaxing blue waters, most in spots easily accessible if you know where to look. From the blue-green waters in the depths of Havasu Canyon to pools in dark volcanic rock at Salome Creek, you can splash about in the state’s favorite places to take a dip. After all, nothing beats a nice swim on a sweltering day. Summer never felt so good.

Following are some of Arizona’s best locations to wade in and enjoy the water:

## Aravaipa CREEK

**THE 19,410-ACRE** Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness located about 68 miles northeast of Tucson preserves a unique riparian corridor consisting of a sycamore-cottonwood-willow habitat surrounded by the Sonoran Desert. Nestled within the boundaries of the rugged backwoods area, avid hikers will discover the pleasures of the 11-mile-long wilderness and the perennial waters of the creek that created the canyon environment.

Not for the faint of heart or those who dislike getting their feet wet, the route through Aravaipa Creek has an elevation gain of 430 feet



[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 20 AND 21] Headwater chubs dart away from Bök Lundgren as he slices through the refreshing water of Fossil Creek.

[ABOVE] In Havasu Canyon, Navajo Falls skims 75 feet down mossy rocks into a blue-green pool before tumbling over Havasu and Mooney falls en route to the Colorado River.

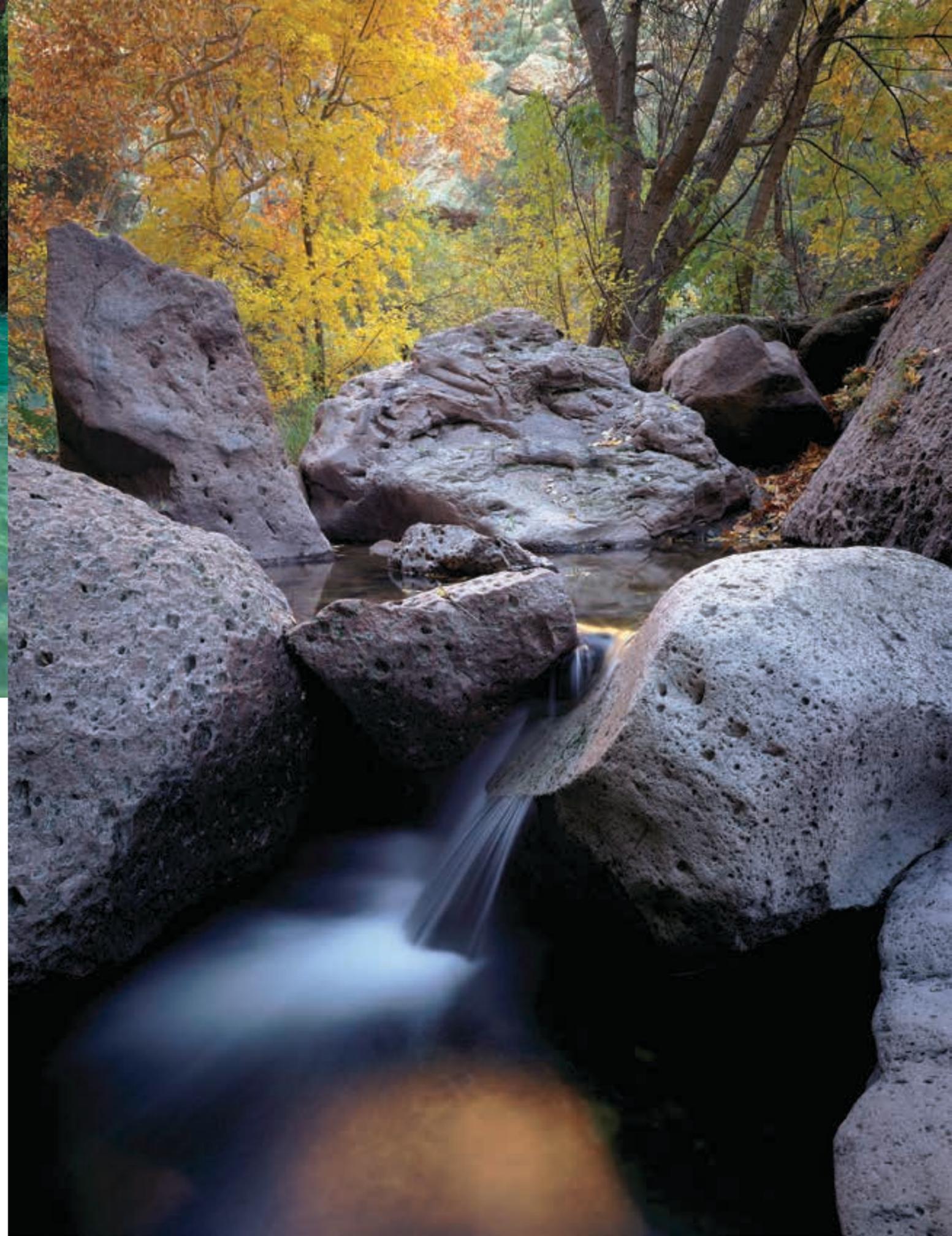
from the west trailhead to the east trailhead.

More often than not, the trail wanders through the refreshing ankle-deep water, which occasionally forms pools in the canyon’s curves. Cottonwood, ash and sycamore trees provide dappled shade in some places, which reinforces the relief offered by the pools from the sultry summer heat. An ambitious half-mile uphill scramble over boulders and crumbly volcanic rock in Virgus Canyon (opposite page) brings determined dippers to this pool in the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness northeast of Tucson.

\* To order a print of the photograph at right, see page 1.

### HOW TO GET THERE

To reach the west trailhead from Tucson, take State Route 77 about 32 miles past Oracle Junction to Aravaipa Road (at Central Arizona College). Turn right (east) onto the partially paved and graded dirt road and drive 12 miles to the west trailhead. From the trailhead, it is a 1.5-mile hike through Nature Conservancy land to the west wilderness boundary and access to the creek’s pools. A permit is required to enter the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness; entrance is limited to 50 people per day. Preregistration is required. Information: Bureau of Land Management, (928) 348-4400.



PRECEDING PANEL: NICK BEREZNEVO; TOP, LEFT: KERRICK JAMES; RIGHT: JACK DYKINGA



## Sycamore CREEK

**THE HARSH BEAUTY** of Sycamore Creek (left and opposite page) in the 55,937-acre Sycamore Canyon Wilderness about 60 miles southwest of Flagstaff summons those who seek the wet and wild. Easily reached by an ancient Indian trail, now dubbed Parson's Spring Trail, the scenic Sycamore Creek creates another watery habitat.

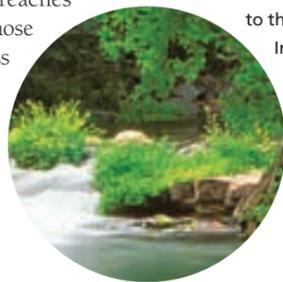
Just 2 miles into the journey, you'll discover the creek's most popular beach and swimming hole. Red rocks, spires and buttes complement the verdant vegetation and clear waters.

The canyon takes on an even rougher and more rugged appearance the farther you travel, but the upper reaches are well worth the work. Those willing to enter the wilderness will discover a profusion of unfrequented pools surrounded by tall forests and colorful cliffs.

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Flagstaff, drive south on Interstate 17 to the Verde Valley Exit 287 and turn right (west) onto State Route 260 toward Clarkdale. Follow the signs and turn right into Tuzigoot National Monument. After crossing the Verde River bridge, take the first left onto unpaved Forest Service Road 131, marked Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area. Continue about 9 miles to the parking area and trailhead, and access to the creek's pools.

Information: Peaks  
Ranger District,  
(928) 526-0866.



LEFT AND RIGHT: NICK BERZENSKI; BELOW: JEFF SNYDER



## Haigler CREEK

**NAMED AFTER JOSEPH HAIGLER**, one of the Territory's pioneering cattlemen, Haigler Creek (right) remains a little-known summer hideaway about 120 miles northeast of Phoenix.

Surrounded by the evergreens of the Mogollon Rim and tucked away in the imposing Hellsgate Wilderness, the creek is easily accessed by Tonto National Forest dirt roads. In fact, you can drive right up to a perfect wading area at the crossing of Forest Service Road 200 and Haigler Creek.

Impressive rock formations beckon swimmers to bushwhack upstream or downstream, along rocky ridges and steep slopes leading from the crossing. Although you can expect the going to be rough, you'll discover the creek's seductive treasures—slick stone tubs cradling cold, crystalline water.

There are primitive rest room facilities but no trash services.

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Payson, drive northeast on State Route 260 about 24 miles to Forest Service Road 291. Turn right onto the unpaved road and drive 3 miles to FR 200. Turn right and drive about 5 miles to the creek. Information: Pleasant Valley Ranger District, (928) 462-4300.



An aerial photograph of a waterfall cascading down a red rock cliff into a large, turquoise-colored pool. The surrounding area is lush with green vegetation and scattered trees. The water in the pool is a vibrant blue-green color, contrasting with the reddish-brown rocks.

## Havasu CANYON

**NOT ALL SWIMMING HOLES** are created equal. The Havasupai Indians in Havasu Canyon know this first-hand as the protectors of the most sacred and the most sought-after waterfalls and pools in the state.

The “People of the Blue-green Waters” live in this isolated side canyon, which is part of the extensive Grand Canyon system in northern Arizona. Havasu Canyon lures visitors seeking the beauty of the three main waterfalls and travertine pools brimming with turquoise water. Torrents rush from the 75-foot Navajo Falls and the nearby 120-foot Havasu Falls to drop playfully down into invigorating natural swimming pools.

However, it takes more work to get to the stunning sacred Mooney Falls, where the stream plummets 190 feet to fill a picturesque plunge pool.

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Historic Route 66 just east of Peach Springs, drive north 64 miles on Indian Route 18 to Hualapai Hilltop. You can either make the 8-mile moderately difficult hike into the canyon or opt for a helicopter or mule ride. A limited number of visitors are allowed into Havasu Canyon, and reservations are required. Information: Havasupai Tribe, (928) 448-2121 or (928) 448-2141.

After rushing past the village of Supai and dropping over Navajo Falls, Havasu Creek plunges 100 feet over Havasu Falls and splashes into a travertine-rimmed pool. RANDY PRENTICE  
\* To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



\* To order a print of the photograph above, see page 1.

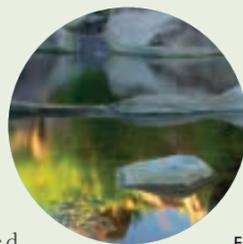
## Salome CREEK

**JUG TRAIL FOLLOWS A FORMER** jeep road as it descends into the 18,531-acre Salome Wilderness Area through a jumble of granite outcroppings to the course of Salome Creek (above) at the box canyon known as “The Jug,” located about 123 miles northeast of Phoenix.

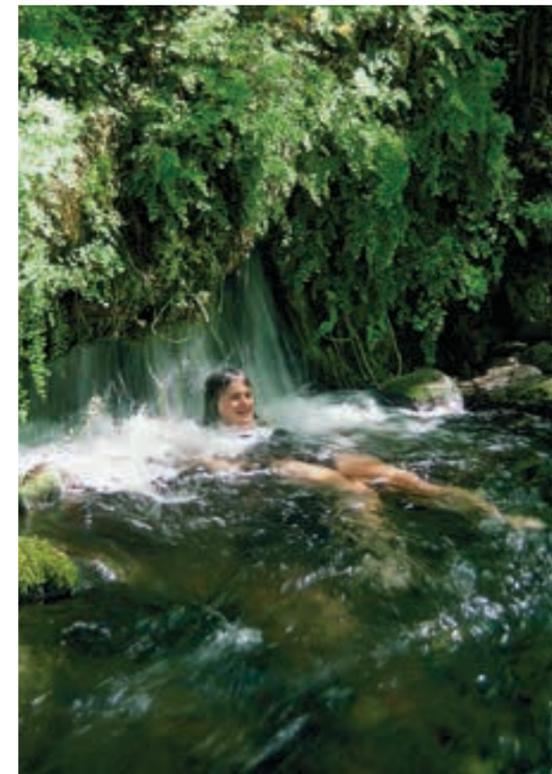
The clear waters wind through a smooth, narrow, cathedral-like chasm, where at places only a sliver of sky can be seen. The deep pools stay chilly year-round, but there are plenty of polished granite boulders to

scramble up, providing you a smooth place to warm up before taking the plunge once again into the water.

Those equipped for serious canyoneering can explore the more remote splashing waterfalls and wandering pools shut away from the rest of the world in the natural



**approximately 100 miles** in the upper part of the Phoenix, drive 85 miles east on U.S. Route 60. Turn left onto State Route 60. Turn left onto State Route 188 and continue 15 miles north to State Route 288. Drive 11 miles north on 288 to Forest Service Road 60 and turn left (west). Follow it northwest for 12 miles to the parking area and trailhead. The Jug is reached by a moderately strenuous 2-mile hike down Jug Trail. Flash floods can occur here during severe thunderstorms in July and August. Information: Tonto Basin Ranger District, (928) 467-3200.



## Fossil CREEK

**THE MORE THAN** 7,000-foot-high Mogollon Rim contains branching canyons, one of which conceals the wondrous Fossil Creek (left) near Payson in central Arizona.

At its head, the spring waters appear in a rush, gushing out of the earth at more than 17,000 gallons per minute. The Childs-Irving Power Plant harnessed the water for electricity for nearly a century and is now in the early stages of being decommissioned, allowing Fossil Creek to return to its natural flow. The 14-mile-long creek travels over travertine basins, one after the other, with turquoise waters rushing downstream.

Deep swimming pools, lush greenery, cascading waterfalls, roaring cataracts and unrivaled beauty led to the protection of the luxuriant oasis, which was designated a 22,149-acre wilderness area in 1984.

So whether swinging on a rope over the deep blue waters or capturing some sun on a smooth boulder, waders enjoy the diversity of this unique site, also home to 100 species of birds, more than 30 species of trees and abundant wildlife including javelinas, ringtails and foxes.



### HOW TO GET THERE

From Camp Verde, take State Route 260 southeast 7 miles to Forest Road 708 (Fossil Creek Road); turn right and drive 17 miles to the Irving trailhead. It is a 4-mile hike up the canyon to the springs. Information: Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 282-4119.

## Grasshopper POINT



### OAK CREEK CANYON

caters to crowds of outdoors lovers—especially at Slide Rock State Park and Red Rock Crossing. But the lesser-known blue-green waters at Grasshopper Point (right) offer a more tranquil respite.

Easily accessible, this cliffside swimming spot north of Sedona cuts deep into the sandstone floor with depths up to 15 feet. Sycamore and cottonwood trees keep the canyon floor and clear creek comfortable even on the hottest days.

Rangers discourage cliff-jumping, but there are always a few who clamber up the towering red rocks for a better view and a defiant plunge into the pool.

The location is also a perfect place for a leisurely picnic lunch, bird-watching and stunning views of Sedona’s red rocks. The area has picnic tables, cooking grills and primitive rest room facilities.

### HOW TO GET THERE

At 2 miles north of Sedona on State Route 89A, take the well-marked exit on the east side of the highway and follow the paved road down to the creek. Information: Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 282-4119.



LEFT: JEFF SNYDER; TOP: RIGHT: NICK BEREZANSKI; RIGHT: RANDY PRENTICE



## West Clear CREEK

**TUCKED AWAY IN** a secluded corner of the Coconino National Forest, West Clear Creek tumbles through more than 20 miles of canyon country in the isolated 15,238-acre West Clear Creek Wilderness area.

There are four footpaths leading into the clear-cut canyon with the most accessible being the 7.5-mile West Clear Creek Trail, located about 57 miles southeast of Flagstaff. Along the way, adventurers seeking cool getaways can pick sites from

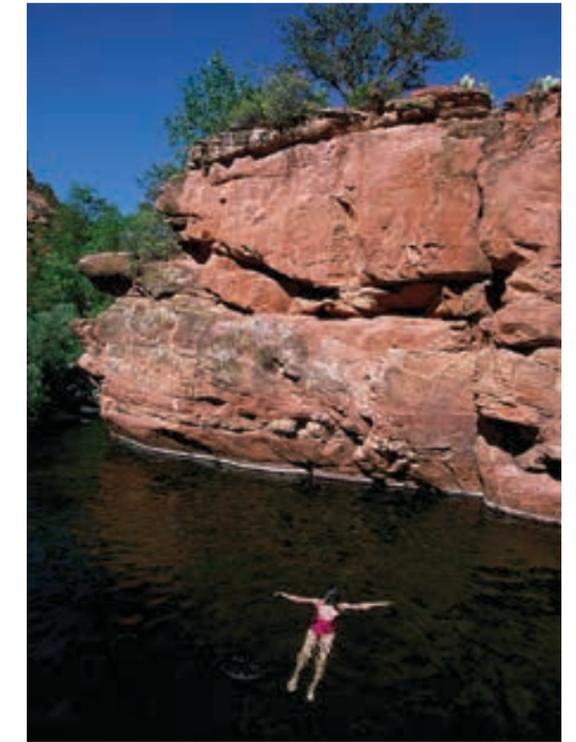
the water-carved passageway winding through the canyon.

Some of the incentives for traversing this waterway that sculpted the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau include hidden swimming holes, cascading waterfalls and rocky riffles. The largest of about 20 pools stretches a quarter-mile, hemmed in by steep canyon walls, but it takes extra effort to reach these pools near the canyon's middle.

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Flagstaff, drive south on Interstate 17 to Exit 298. Turn left (southeast) onto Forest Service Road 618. Drive 7 miles south on FR 618 to Forest Road 215 and turn left (east). Drive 3 miles to the Bullpen Ranch trailhead. Watch for flash floods during July and August. Information: Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 282-4119.

\* To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



## Wet Beaver CREEK



**SURROUNDED BY HIGH DESERT,** Wet Beaver Creek (above) near Sedona slips through a secluded red sandstone canyon, offering a cool reprieve from the summer sun.

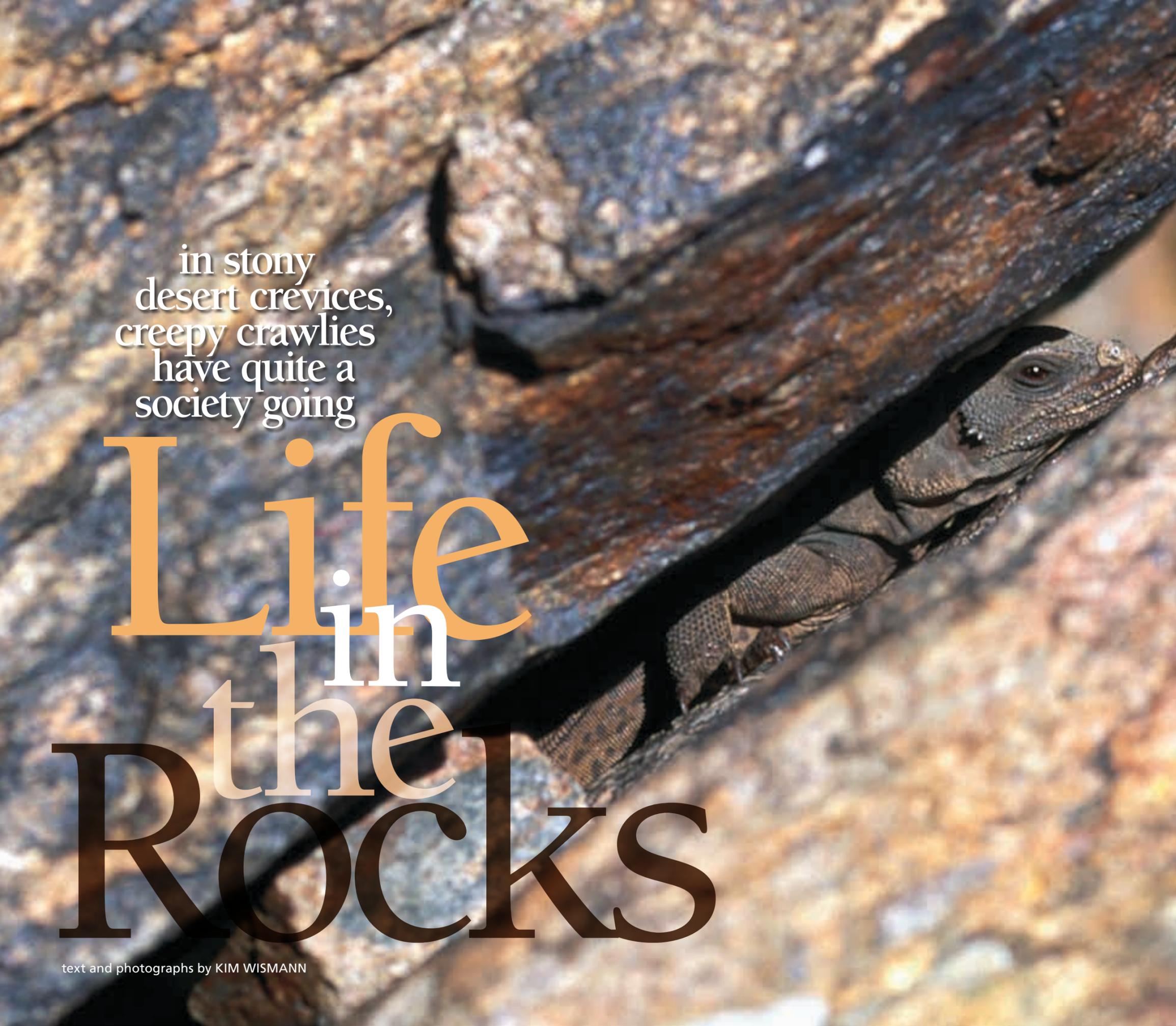
Shaded by sycamore, cottonwood and ash trees in a moist, narrow corridor, this clear creek attracts water enthusiasts seeking deep pools contained by rocky cliffs. The pleasantries of this popular destination require a minimum of a 4-mile hike to Bell Crossing, where you will most likely encounter competition in finding the perfect sunning spot.

Those intrepid explorers continuing upstream will enjoy increasingly larger water pockets, many of which plunge deeply between the sheer sandstone slots. Once you work your way far enough into the wilderness, the only company you'll likely encounter is songbirds playing in the brush and wellsprings trickling in the distance. **AH**

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Flagstaff, drive south on Interstate 17 to Exit 298. Turn left (southeast) on Forest Service Road 618. Drive 2 miles to the Bell Trailhead. The first couple of miles pass through high desert terrain. The first and most popular swimming hole is located at Bell Crossing, about 4 miles from the trailhead. Information: Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 282-4119.

LEFT, LEFT SWIDER; TOP, RIGHT, TOM BEAN

A close-up photograph of a banded gecko clinging to a dark, textured rock crevice. The gecko's body is dark with lighter bands, and its head is visible as it looks towards the camera. The background is a blurred, rocky surface with warm, golden-brown tones.

in stony  
desert crevices,  
creepy crawlies  
have quite a  
society going

# Life in the ROCKS

text and photographs by KIM WISMANN

The beam of sunlight reflecting off my mirror penetrated the rock crevice like a laser, slicing along the stony gap until it found a tiny, vaguely annoyed face blinking at the light—a banded gecko, one of the Southwest's most common lizards, safe in its cozy fissure.

The gecko and I shared a moment in the vast, tumbled boulder fields along the road to Four Peaks, relics of Arizona's volcanic past. These peaks in the Mazatzal Mountains are quintessential Sonoran Desert. High enough to receive extra rain and even snow, the stony slopes harbor saguaros, desert plants and animal life. On that day, the mountain's frosted flanks attested to a wet winter. Like an echo of Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro, those distant white summits provided a backdrop for the sculpted vistas of the boulder fields. Their bounty of snow would be released slowly as meltwater, charging normally dry washes and springs for months to come.

My wife and I had come for a hike and a leisurely search for some of the lesser-known creatures of the rocky slopes. In particular, I hoped to see a night lizard, one of Arizona's neatest little reptiles.

The open stretches of ground between outcrops were carpeted with wildflowers, for the season to search for night lizards is early spring—March and April. This was a good year, balmy days following a wet winter, and the flowers were thick. It was difficult to gain the next rock pile without crushing any blooms. Once there, my wife, a veteran in the outdoors and an occasional rock climber, had no difficulty navigating the sloping granite faces. I was less graceful, but mercifully, there were no other witnesses.

Scrambling over the boulders, we inspected likely looking crevices by reflecting sunlight off a small mechanic's mirror, angling the beam along the gaps in the stone until we

**[LEFT]** Capable of bloating itself with air to wedge within a rocky crevice, a camouflaged chuckwalla, nearly unnoticeable to the unobservant eye, hides in plain sight.

located something—a technique known as “crevicing” among its practitioners.

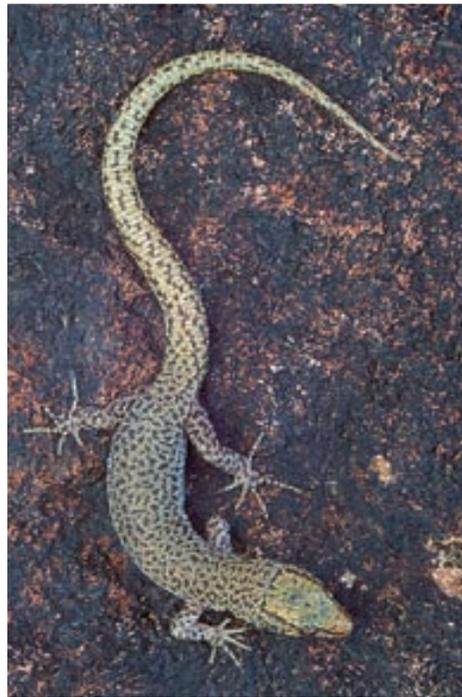
As an outdoor pastime, crevicing is one of the most benign and user-friendly activities. There is a slight challenge in learning to control the reflected beam of light—a technique quickly mastered that can bring a sense of achievement, especially for children. The creatures encountered by inspecting the boulder crevices are always fascinating and well out of reach—safe from being molested by observers. If a crevice-dweller decides it doesn't like the light, it can vanish into the depths and no harm is done.

There's an almost obsessive fascination with searching crevices during favorable seasons. It's something like gambling—one is sure that the next crevice will pay off. In one crevice, a chuckwalla lizard stared back at me with an expression that suggested ancient wisdom.

The boulder surfaces are as sterile a habitat as can be found. Splashed with solar radiation, devoid of any cover, open to the drying winds, the bare rock faces are visited by day only by the most durable wildlife, including lizards and a few tough bugs.

The environment in the crevices is much more attractive. Windblown soil and dead vegetation collect in the depths, holding moisture, giving cover and rooting plants. Older outcrops can be so fractured that the habitable volume exceeds the uninhabitable area of the surface. The crevices are thousands of years old, and some of the deeper

**[CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT]** A bark scorpion's painful sting may cause convulsions and frothing at the mouth, but rarely results in death for humans. With its flat body and protective coloration, a selenopid crab spider blends into its rocky surroundings. The secretive night lizard, difficult to find except perhaps under a downed cactus, a log or a boulder, is one of the few reptiles that bear live young. **[OPPOSITE PAGE]** Despite markings on its body similar to a rattlesnake's, the lyre snake's mild venom is not dangerous to humans, and it bears a distinctive V-shaped pattern (resembling a lyre) on its head.



It's something like **gambling**—one is sure that the next crevice will pay off.

ones have spring water flowing at their bottoms. Many interconnect—a freeway system leading everywhere in the outcrops, safe from the inhospitable surface, and full of life.

Strange, flat selenopid crab spiders hug the boulder faces, their color and texture perfectly matching their surroundings. Their relatives, the giant crab spiders, are not so bold. Round and furry, they stretch silk chambers between the sides of the cracks. Bizarre tailless whipscorpions, deliberate and graceful, creep silently through the shadowy world at the heart of the ancient stones. Bark scorpions pack themselves into narrow gaps, waiting for night to forage on the surface. Giant centipedes press their 8-inch bodies through tight spaces, eating anything smaller than themselves.

Relics of quieter dramas can be found among the boulders. On another trip one

cold spring day, I moved a loose capstone and found some hibernating lizards. All the way at the back of the stone pocket lay the remains of a mummified lizard that had gone to sleep for the winter and never woke up. In the dry desert climate, decay is slow, and the tiny skeleton might have dated back several years.

Snakes nosing through the cracks would welcome a meal of a sleeping lizard. In the world of the crevice-dwellers, danger comes from below, and for an unwary lizard, that slithering might be the last sound it hears. There are ways to evade enemies, though, and somewhere between the serpent's mouth and the killing sun, there's a life to be had, and not a bad one at that if you're a night lizard.

Adapted to life among the boulders, night lizards live primarily in rock fissures. They measure only about 3 inches long, but they

have it made. At midday, when shafts of light penetrate deep into the fissures, they can bask in full sun while remaining secure in a vertical crevice. They feed on small insects that inhabit the crevices and don't even have to leave home to get groceries. They do have to watch out for snakes and other enemies in the crevices but, unlike prey animals in other habitats whose cover can be moved by a strong attacker, the stony retreats of night lizards are impervious to bears, birds and people.

Those snakes are a problem, though. One in particular is a slender, graceful serpent modestly dressed in shades of gray, and dedicated to eating lizards—the Sonoran lyre snake.

Lyre snakes are rear-fanged and mildly venomous. They feed almost exclusively on lizards. If they secure a hold anywhere on a lizard, they work their mouths onto

the victim until they make contact with their enlarged rear teeth. The deep punctures those teeth make are the pathway for a paralyzing venom, and soon the lizard's body goes limp. Lyre snakes almost never fail after they've made a bite. Hatchling lyre snakes are so small they almost have to feed on tiny lizards like night lizards, and the ancient drama of quest and evasion proceeds below our feet, silent and unseen.

We found our night lizards and more that day and made it back to the car as the sunset gilded the boulders, highlighting the saguaros against the lengthening shadows. I took a last look back at the slopes, feeling that I had been granted a

rare gift—a glimpse of the secret lives of fellow travelers on our little green planet.

Populated with myriad creatures wondrous and terrible, pulsing with rhythms of survival and passage, the world of the crevice-dwellers is so near—inches from our noses as we peer in—and yet beyond our reach. The fortress of stone keeps us out and may shelter some of its secrets forever, but we can still take a peek at the worlds within worlds. All it takes is curiosity—and a beam of light. ■■

*Kim Wismann of Apache Junction has been following his curiosity about nature into rocky crevices and along back roads for more than 30 years.*





**S**ylvester Mowry has been absent from the Patagonia Mountains for at least 100 years, so it's hard to guess what he might make of our little procession. *Clip-clop, clip-clop.* Our horses saunter the narrow trail through rocky defiles and small meadows bursting with wildflowers. Certainly the year could have been 1860, considering our mode of travel, except we are not soldiers or miners or politicians. In the 19th century, Mowry had been all three in the country through which we are riding.

A small group of city dwellers in search of the quintessential Western experience, we are headed back in time to savor the joys of going slower, but we're not going to cut ourselves off from the 21st century completely. The wranglers and guides may be wearing spurs and bat-wing chaps, but

**[LEFT]** On a trail ride through the San Rafael Valley, part-time cowboy cook Mark Jensen (right) chats with Cynthia Carlisi beneath a vast, cloud-speckled sky.

**[BELOW]** A watering stop at Kennedy Spring affords horses and riders a half-hour respite in a day of riding.

they're also carrying cell phones, and one of them, we discover, knows how to cook like Julia Child.

As we set out from Rio Rico, a resort on the Arizona side of the U.S.-Mexico border, I am painfully conscious that it is April Fool's Day. Not that this has any particular significance. I can only speak for the others, and they do not appear to be fools. Like the characters in the movie *City Slickers*, they just want to do something a little different on their vacation.

Suzi Offenberger, for example, normally spends time selling cashmere clothing to millionaires in Boston and Nantucket when what she really wants is to experience the joy of basics—getting rain-soaked in the mountains, leading your horse through slick mud, trying to get your feet back into those sopping boots. Ah, yes, this is the life.

"My friends back East think I'm crazy," Offenberger says. Her husband, a psychologist with a National Hockey League team, does not share her love of the Wild West. From her description, I can almost see his bemused smile when his wife gets off the plane in her cowboy dress and pointy boots.

Offenberger and the others on this trip have taken previous excursions with Dan and Melody Skiver, the wranglers and owners of Ride the West, and by now they feel like part of an extended family.

Dan and Melody met us at Rio Rico, where they manage the stables, and told us that the next morning—the

first full day of our riding and camping excursion—we'll take a short day trip to see if we're compatible with our horses and saddles. Everybody seems so enthused about the trip that it becomes clear to me several of these guests would ride a horse with nothing more comfortable to sit on than a coating of Elmer's glue.

Most of the guests have brought their own cowboy hats, spurs, chaps, buckskin jackets, leather gloves and high-fashion Western shirts. If you're going to play like Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill, you might as well look the part. Certainly they do not look like they make a living selling furniture in California and Wisconsin. But that's our group, a handful of furniture dealers, a woman who owns an art gallery in El Cajon and an executive in the federal government whose title is longer than a sleepless night (and who happens to be an experienced rider). They all look like they've just come in from a day of branding calves in Alberta, and after 24 hours they're starting to sound like it, too. Pretty soon they're gonna start writin' cowboy po'try.

After meeting our horses, we start on a storybook journey through meadows blanketed with swirls of yellow, white and red wildflowers. We poke along Sonoita Creek in the foothills of the San Cayetano Mountains and see a rarity: not just the flowers, but running water. I am reminded that it was this water and the presence of gold and silver that once made this area so attractive to Spanish explorers who arrived in the 16th century and also, in more recent years, to American miners like Sylvester Mowry.

In keeping with our hands-on cowpoke



# Patagonia Mountains horseback riders get a taste of the Old West

## City Folks Hit the Trail

Text by Sam Negri

Photographs by Kerrick James



[ABOVE] Backlit by the late-afternoon sun, horses, riders and a wrangler's dog named Honey cast long shadows across a grassy ridge in the San Rafael Valley.

program, the following morning we brush down our horses and learn to saddle them. Then the horses are loaded into a trailer and we leave Rio Rico for the 30-minute drive to Patagonia. At a dirt pullout in the hills a few miles southeast of Patagonia, we mount the horses and begin a narrow, steep ascent on the Arizona Trail, a route that will one day traverse the entire state.

Within a few hours, we have our first adventure.

It starts with a hat. Rita Gundlach has accidentally pulled the stampede string (the string that ties under the chin) out of her hat while riding along. Knowing she can't fix it while we are moving, she has waited until we are all standing still. Her horse, Gretchen, is not very sociable and doesn't much care for company.

The wrangler leading us, a lanky fellow named Zay Hartigan, offers to fix the hat and swings his horse alongside. Gundlach's horse does not like this at all. Gundlach reaches backward to hand her hat to Hartigan and the mare spooks. Her front legs momentarily go rigid and she jerks backward, nearly slamming Gundlach against the hard trunk of an oak tree.

Fortunately, the horse spins away from the tree and lurches to a clearer spot. The

rest of us watch, dumbfounded, as Gundlach is tossed into the air. She lands on her back in a clump of weeds and quickly recovers her composure. She's a little rattled and her neck and leg are sore but, luckily, there are no serious injuries.

An hour later we stop in Red Rock Canyon, tie the horses to some bare mesquites and have lunch in a field facing a red cliff that looks like it could be 200 feet high and about as wide. After lunch the trail gets narrower and steeper. Around 4 P.M., we come over a hill and find ourselves facing a long sweep of the yellow grasslands in the San Rafael Valley, one of the most unspoiled portions of Arizona.

I ride along with Mike Hart, who owns a Scandinavian furniture store in San Diego. Hart tells me he made his first trail ride with Skiver in 1999. He liked it so much, he decided to buy a saddle; then he realized if he was going to do this sort of Western thing, he needed to buy a truck to haul his gear. Finally, it occurred to him that what he really needed was a ranch, so he bought a spread in New Mexico, and if only he could get away from his furniture business more often. . . . He smiles, imagining his future on the range.

By the time we have ridden nearly eight

hours, we're ready for a break. It comes at the beautiful Poco Toro Ranch, which is owned by Melody Skiver's mother, Margie Buyer. The place is a picture-postcard and reminds me why some scenes for the old movie *Oklahoma!* were shot in the San Rafael Valley.

About a quarter-mile from Mrs. Buyer's ranch house, the Skivers have erected a handful of large canvas tents, complete with cots and wood-burning stoves, in a grove of pine trees. As we settle in, the cook, Mark Jensen, begins grilling steaks and stirring a pot of beans. This is child's play to Jensen, who normally works as a flight attendant for U.S. Airways. Wrangling and gourmet cooking are his hobbies, and in the next few days we will be the beneficiaries of his culinary skill.

Bright and early the next morning, Dan Skiver suggests we take a day ride over to the ghost town of Mowry. This is going to be an easy ride, he says, not like the epic of the day before. About midmorning, we're riding in a ragged column through

an oak forest. Blue Duck, my horse, is acting like he'd rather be sipping a margarita on a beach in Mexico. *Clip-clop, cliiiiip . . . cloooooop.* Are we there yet? Hart is riding behind me and everybody else is somewhere in the distance in front of us.

Suddenly, a low branch knocks my hat off my head. Uh-oh.

"I'll get it," Hart says. He swings from his saddle and retrieves the hat, but as he remounts, the motion of his arm with the hat in his hand makes his horse nervous. Does this sound familiar? Two minutes later, Hart is lying in a dry creek bed. His horse panicked, and that spooked my horse. Guess where I am? Down here on the ground, of course, momentarily stunned when my head hits a small rock. Three people have now been thrown from their horses. Can we have a little less adventure, please?

An hour later, we find ourselves at the remains of Mowry. The place was known as the Corral Viejo or Patagonia Mine until Mowry purchased it for \$25,000 in 1859. During a period of four years, the mine reportedly produced over \$1 million in silver. Mowry once served some time in prison and later some time in the U.S. Congress.

Very little remains of Mowry's namesake town today—a crumbling adobe, remnants of a schoolhouse's walls and a stone building where explosives were stored. The granite building is roofless, but the walls look like they'll be there for eternity.

We, on the other hand, will only be here briefly because we have a long ride back to camp so as not to offend Jensen, who is getting ready to bake some salmon steaks over an open fire. Jensen has marinated the salmon steaks in balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, lemon and olive oil. He adds a tad more brown sugar before lowering the baking pan to the hot coals. Within an hour, we are consuming ambrosia under a star-studded sky.

Thus far, we've had delightful weather but, on the following morning as we begin the long ride across the southern end of the Patagonias, the sky is an ominous gray. We're on a narrow, precipitous trail through Soldier Basin when the rain starts. By the time we reach camp, we're in a deluge. Nevertheless, Jensen and Skiver get a fire going and bake a bunch of chicken and a pot of mashed potatoes.

The rain is unrelenting, but we've had a long day on horseback and we're starving. Skiver is serving the potatoes from a huge pot. He leans over my plate with a big iron spoon and says, "I'll try not to get my hat drippings in your potatoes."



[ABOVE] Jensen's special Mexican scramble with tortillas and cowboy coffee sustains riders through a morning ride on the trail.

The next morning, after I roll away from the puddle that had collected next to my sleeping bag, I notice a hole in the canvas tent a few inches from my head.

"Yeah," Skiver says, "dang mouse chewed right through that thing."

I look at my fellow horsemen. Several smile and paw the ground as if to say, "Isn't this great? We're getting back to basics!"

A couple of weeks later, Suzi Offenberger sends me a postcard from Boston. "Was just talking to friends about that rainy, cold, miserable morning when you asked if I was still having fun. Thought I'd let you

know that after you left, some of us went back to camp, saddled up and herded the rest of the horses back. . . . It was the best riding day ever!"

Darn, and I missed it! Sometimes, you just can't win. ■■■

*The adventurous Sam Negri of Tucson was last seen on a broken coin-operated horse in front of Kmart. For Kerrick James of Mesa, a long ride in the saddle of a huge horse that liked to run only downhill gave him a new appreciation for the toughness of cowboys and cowgirls.*

**LOCATION:** Rio Rico is located 53 miles south of Tucson.  
**GETTING THERE:** From Tucson, drive approximately 53 miles south on Interstate 19 to Rio Rico.  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Ride the West, toll-free (866) 454-7433; www.ridethewest.com.

## Man, with the Help of Rain, Forestalls the Natural Order of Fire

THE GIANT PONDEROSA pine reached highest among its forest companions. That was its undoing. As the boiling gray thunderheads rolled low over the woods, it took the first bolt of searing lightning.

With a splitting CRACK, the bolt snaked its way around the trunk, exploding limbs and branches into fiery sparks across the clearing. Clumps of grass and piles of needles sizzled with smoke and flames. Two-thirds of the fire-weakened upper trunk split apart, crashing to the ground. Flames spread quickly over the grass, searching for stronger fuel.

Simultaneously, the first drops of rain sputtered through the needles, steaming up from the superheated coals of the burning trunk. The battle had begun. The drops came harder and faster, splattering the ground with cool, protective moisture.

In the distance, claps of thunder rolled out. Another tree in a faraway part of the great Kaibab National Forest had been struck. But here, where the giant was smashed, torrents of rain soaked into the ground, extinguishing the once-leaping flames. Rivulets of water hurried down the gentle slope, joining their cousins in the rush of stormy runoff to become a flash flood miles below the forest.

The clouds rolled past. As quickly as it started, the rain stopped. The jagged trunk stood mute and black, steam still rising from its chimney. The shattered remains lay dark and quiet. Only an acrid odor remained,

settling amid the stillness of the scarred clearing. The danger was over.

Or so it seemed.

Five days passed. Buried under the broken trunk came a glow. Dim at first, it crept along the inside cavity, searching for dark cracks and crevices. Magically, it hopped from one splinter to another, seeking the hidden treasure of unburned spots.

A wisp of smoke appeared. A flicker of red lit the inside of the log. Suddenly it burst into flame. The smoke drifted lazily, straight up into the cloudless sky.

Twenty miles to the northeast, the ranger atop Grandview Lookout Tower at the Grand Canyon's South Rim sighted the smoke in the early morning sunlight. Within minutes, contacts

from the Hopi Fire Lookout Tower and Red Butte gave a triangulation on the forest map. The ranger radioed the dispatch office in Williams.

There was a sense of urgency in the flame. The log glowed red with coals. Some of the outer wall of the trunk began to flame. Chunks of fiery coals broke away, dropping on the now-dry clumps of pine needles and grass. With a sizzle, the needles melted and curled from the heat. Tongues of flame tasted each morsel of grass, sucked it into an increasing circle of smoldering ash. All the fire needed to leap into life was a little breeze, heading in any direction toward not-too-distant trees.

A few miles away, a green pickup truck with the official Forest Service emblem on the door turned off State Route 64 and headed east on the Ten-X Ranch turnoff. It was traveling north of 7,326-foot Red Butte, which rises like a beacon to travelers between Williams and Grand Canyon. The truck traveled fast, churning clouds of dust.

Just as the flame was about to gather itself for a lunge, the dust cloud boiled over the scene, catching up with the braking truck. Two men jumped out and grabbed fire rakes and their trusty Pulaskis—the firefighters' indispensable cutting and digging tools. Splitting up and working feverishly, they began scraping a circle around the fire. They chopped out grass and twigs, building an ever-widening fire line around the burning trunk.

As if sensing the threat, the trunk flared in heated anger, forcing the men to move away from the circle. But the fire was in a race it was about to lose. An hour passed, and the two men met on the other side of the circle. Without stopping, they crossed and shoveled the dirt back onto the glowing grass clumps, expanding the fire line once more.

The fire died, choking on itself. The broken trunk lost its flame and crumbled into a pile of coals. By the time the sweating figures met again near the truck, the battle had been won. All that remained were the smoldering embers, burning back upon themselves.

Drinking from his canteen, the Forest Service firefighter spoke into his radio.

"We got to this one in time," he said. "Another 30 minutes and it would have been too late."

They sat in the truck cab drinking from their canteens, watching the embers die. Then, the firefighter started the engine, shifted gears and turned the truck back to the road. He looked up at the sky.

"The clouds are building again," he said.

"Looks like it might rain this evening." ■■



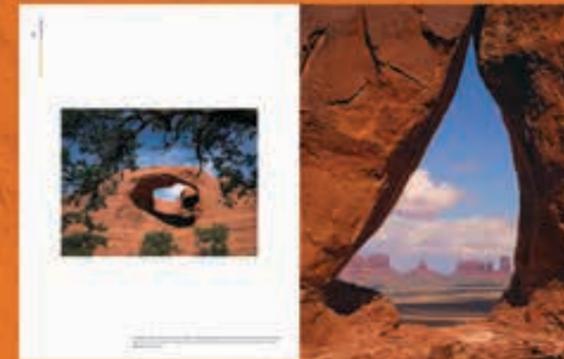
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text and photographs by LEROY DEJOLIE  
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## Ironwood Monument Loop Drive Has Expansive Desert Views

IF YOU SEEK A LONESOME DAY that likely will pass without human interaction, we have the trip for you. But a warning: This Sonoran Desert tour, including the Ironwood Forest National Monument, is a getaway without services, interpretive signs or pampering of any kind.

This landscape doesn't open its arms and invite you in. This is nature at its crankiest,



[ABOVE] According to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, about 75 to 100 bighorn sheep inhabit the Silver Bell Complex, the low desert mountain ranges in south-central Arizona west of Marana. PAUL AND JOYCE BERQUIST [OPPOSITE PAGE] The setting sun dramatically silhouettes saguaro cacti beneath a cloudy sky in the Ironwood Forest National Monument northwest of Tucson. RANDY PRENTICE

purest or most beautiful, depending on your point of view.

But the drive offers one undeniable benefit—some of the grandest views of the Sonoran Desert anywhere, including better views even than both Saguaro national parks.

It also presents great opportunities for photography and sunset-watching, a few makeshift roads doubling as hiking trails and a bit of Old West history.

Beginning in Tucson, my son Patrick and I drive 16 miles northwest on Interstate 10 to Exit 242, then turn left onto Avra Valley Road. We drive over the Santa Cruz River, past cotton fields, open range and the Marana Regional Airport—a full 22.2 miles.

With the Silver Bell Mine just ahead, we turn left onto Silverbell Road, which essentially loops around the mine. From our elevated vantage point in the Silver Bell Mountains, we look down on a vast expanse of land south and west of Tucson, including the Altar and Aguirre

valleys and a slice of the reservation owned by the Tohono O'odham Nation.

As the road curls northwest, the view expands to include the desert leading up to Ajo and Gila Bend. The land appears to the eye as a cobalt ocean below a mantle of mist, broken in the middle distance by smaller mountains and buttes, their caps thrusting out above the foglike shroud. So many giant saguaros rule the foreground that finding a spot to enjoy the full panorama might be harder than you think.

But Patrick's mind settles on less ethereal matters. He wants to hear about the gunfights that took place long ago in the mining town of Silver Bell.

The first miners came to this country in the 1860s, and their pocketbooks filled and emptied over the decades, according to copper prices and the availability of water.

In 1903, the Imperial Copper Co. began large-scale operations in the Silver Bell District, including starting a new town with shacks, tents and lean-tos, according to a brochure published by Asarco Inc., present owners of Silver Bell Mining.

In the boom years immediately following, the town of Silver Bell—most of which is now on mine company land—grew to more than 1,000 people, including Dr. Mead Clyne, who supervised the town doctors.

He kept a glass jar half-filled with bullets that had been pulled from unlucky victims, according to the brochure.

In January 1908, the *Tucson Citizen* noted that the prosperous mining town, "where hell breaks forth every payday," had grown to become the toughest in Pima County. This particular boom ended in 1911, and later bouts of copper fever came and went like the desert wind.

As we hike up a randomly selected roadside hill, these stories fill Patrick's mind, convincing him we'll find remnants of these wild times. We come upon a campsite littered with spent cartridge casings, and try as I might, I can't convince him that they were left by 21st-century hunters, rather than early 20th-century bad guys.

With his imagination in full holler, he starts in on rattlesnakes, a more likely threat. After all, rattlers come out in late summer to gorge themselves in preparation for winter hibernation.

"I know what I should've brought," he says as we hike. "My book, *Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook*."

"Like what?" I ask.

"Well, if you have to wrestle an alligator, it tells





won't be for years, but the public seems to want it tied to a town, like Marana, rather than in the monument itself."

After 13.5 miles on Silverbell, the road turns right toward Marana. The 3,907-foot mountain aptly named Ragged Top, a favorite hangout of desert bighorns, appears almost immediately.

It looks like an island jutting up from the desert floor, the light playing beautifully upon it. The curious can walk to the base on the east side, and a hiking trail goes over the peak. But Buck says only the stoutest hikers should attempt it.

Making the loop back to Avra Valley Road on Silverbell can be tricky. At the first stop sign after leaving the monument, turn right onto Trico Road and continue for a few hundred feet, then turn left onto Silverbell again. Five miles later, turn right at another stop sign and proceed 0.6 miles to Avra Valley Road. Then turn left and take Avra Valley Road approximately 22 miles back to I-10.

The mileage from the starting point at Avra Valley Road and I-10, all the way around the mine, through the monument and back to Avra Valley Road, totals 55.8 miles. But the astonishing desert views on this backcountry drive make it well worth the time. **AH**



**VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS:** Silverbell Road's dry wash crossings can be difficult, requiring a high-clearance vehicle. **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:** Bureau of Land Management, Tucson office, (520) 258-7200.



[ABOVE] True to its name, Ragged Top scrapes the sky with uneven, rhyolitic projections, while the volcanic soil at its base harbors saguaro cacti and a wide variety of trees, shrubs and desert plants. [OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE] Viewed from Silverbell Road, a windmill and a "mountain" of mine tailings serve as reminders of civilization's impact on Arizona's landscape. BOTH BY RANDY PRENTICE

you how to do it. It also tells you how to knock out a shark, too, by punching it in the nose."

Patrick went on in this vein, saying nothing more about rattlesnakes. The attention span of a 9-year-old can leave you breathless.

We have a good hike on a hot day. We expected to see bighorn sheep roaming the hills and brought binoculars to better our chances. But no luck.

With Patrick navigating and not a shark in sight, we're back in the car, and we do see lizards by the bundle, skittering through brush, and a family of cattle gathered around a stock pond.

As we ease into ever-deepening wash crossings,

the saguaros to our left stand almost as thick as pine trees around Flagstaff. To me, a forest of these beauties always looks so emphatic, never unsure. They're the desert's grand masters, the unforgettable ones.

After 5 miles on Silverbell Road, the view to our left really opens, and we can look south all the way to Kitt Peak. Through binoculars, peering farther southeast to the Santa Rita Mountains, beyond the hawks riding thermals, Mount Hopkins looks like a thumb jutting up from 6,880 feet.

A sign 9.5 miles from the start of Silverbell Road announces entrance onto Ironwood Forest

National Monument land. Created by President Bill Clinton in 2000, the monument puts 129,000 acres of choice Sonoran Desert under federal management, and beyond the reach of development.

We notice that the desert inside the monument looks no different than what came before, except for a somewhat higher concentration of ironwood trees. As for future improvements to the land, the Bureau of Land Management leans toward leaving it alone.

"It's a thoroughly rustic place, and the public likes it that way," says Lorraine Buck at BLM's Tucson office. "If we do build a visitors center, it

## Yuma's Sanguinetti House Museum Displays the Area's Rich Past

**O**N YUMA'S HISTORIC Madison Avenue, brilliant sunshine glints off the windows of 19th-century adobe homes, once owned by famous riverboat captains and the audacious entrepreneur, Eugene Francis Sanguinetti.

[BELOW] Eugene Francis Sanguinetti's travels in Italy inspired him to cultivate and pipe water to Yuma's first flower garden, which remains open to the public as part of the Sanguinetti House Museum.

Perched above the Colorado River floodplain, these homes survived the ravages of the tempestuous river that ripped through this bustling riverfront burg in the late 1800s and early 1900s, uprooting trees and melting adobe buildings like sugar. Today the river placidly snakes past Yuma, where winter residents double

the population every year and tales of the town's epic history await visitors at the Sanguinetti House Museum, formerly known as the Century House Museum.

On a recent afternoon, balmy 80-degree weather beckoned me outdoors, but my inquisitive nature nudged me inside the museum. Inside the old adobe structure built with stripped willow branches and river tules, all sense of time vanished as I became lost in an epic historical saga rivaling a James A. Michener novel.

The entrance's wall-sized three-dimensional map provided a quick introduction to this remarkable spot at the confluence of the Colorado and Gila rivers, once known as Yuma Crossing, where Arizona, California and Mexico meet. Dramatic tales of the area's past involve ancient Quechan Indians; famed Spanish conquistadores and missionaries, including Father Eusebio Francisco Kino; daring trappers like Kit Carson; and forty-niners en route to the California Gold Rush. The museum's approximately 5,000 artifacts—some in glass display cases, others in storage—tell their stories.

An exhibit called "River Yumans" details the lives of the area's first inhabitants, the Quechan Indians, before Yuma's recorded history began in 1540 with the arrival of Spanish explorer Hernando de Alarcon on a quest for Coronado's Seven Cities of Gold. Later, famous Spanish missionaries including Kino, Francisco Garces and Father Barreneche arrived on the scene, converting tribal members to Catholicism. The museum's "Tierra Incognita" display details this era with a wafer press used by itinerant priests to make communion hosts before Mass, and a ceremonial cross dangling a rosary, used by padres during religious ceremonies.

As the exhibit "Revolution 1781" reveals, Spanish and Indian cultures faced a deadly clash called the Yuma Massacre. Armed with primitive war clubs called *kelyhaxwai*, the Quechans rose up against Spanish soldiers brandishing pistols, swords and carbines. The Quechans miraculously won. In the museum, the names of Spanish soldiers, priests and settlers at the Yuma missions in 1781 appeared on a wall with a somber red cross next to the names of those killed in the revolt.

An adjoining room flashes forward to the 1849-1852 timeframe, when a few brave souls dared step foot here again. I became engrossed in the lives of the mountain men, the first Anglo-Americans to travel here, and the U.S. Army soldiers who established Fort Yuma. A glass-enclosed timeline spanning 1852-1916 housed



photos and artifacts of the years Yuma was founded and developed. Artifacts included camel bones from the "Camel Experiment" of 1855-1861, when the Army tried to introduce dromedaries to the Southwest, a ball and chain from the famed Yuma Territorial Prison and part of the "old plank road" that linked Yuma and San Diego in 1915.

Next I ventured into the original portion of the house built in 1871. Two small furnished rooms with thick adobe walls and high ceilings (for natural cooling) exemplify a "Sonoran row house" popular during its day. I discovered clues about Sanguinetti's life in the north room, which contained a gold-framed portrait of Lilah Balsz Sanguinetti, wife of the pioneer merchant whose life story reads like a Horatio Alger rags-to-riches tale. At age 15, Sanguinetti ran away from his San Diego home to seek his fortune—and found it in the most unlikely of places: in Yuma, described by his California neighbors as "just a portion of hell."

It wasn't an extreme exaggeration. When Sanguinetti arrived in Yuma in 1883, there was no air conditioning, electricity or ice. Peddlers drew Colorado River water, placed it in barrels, left it to settle a day or two and then sold it to residents by the bucketful. With more than 20 saloons and one church, the raucous river town held few amusements befitting 15-year-old Sanguinetti.

But it didn't seem to matter. He doggedly worked to build an empire that one day would include a department store, ice-making, farming, banking and mining ventures, to name a few. In fact, he rose to such prominence that one New Yorker simply addressed a letter to "E.F.



[ABOVE, LEFT] Rebuilt in their original locations, Sanguinetti's aviaries hold a variety of birds, including a large, colorful peacock (left). [ABOVE] Thirteen desert palm trees shade the museum grounds, creating a lush oasis.

Sanguinetti, Sanguinetti, Arizona," and it arrived without delay.

Today his passion for Yuma lives on in the Sanguinetti House Museum and its backyard gardens harboring brilliant red and fuchsia bougainvilleas, towering bottlebrush trees, fragrant lemon trees and aviaries everywhere. In one aviary, an African gray parrot named Rebel wolf-whistled, barked and greeted "good morning." Another towering cage housed a flamboyant peacock with brilliant blue and green feathers.

In the gift shop nearby, Sanguinetti's daughter, Rosemarie Gwynn, lovingly recalled childhood afternoons spent in this garden with her father. "Even before Yuma had air conditioning, he just loved this place," she said fondly. **AH**



**LOCATION:** 185 miles southwest of Phoenix.  
**GETTING THERE:** From Phoenix, drive 31 miles west on Interstate 10 to Exit 112. Turn left onto State Route 85 and travel south for 37 miles. Merge onto Interstate 8 and travel west 114 miles before taking the Giss Parkway exit. Turn left on Giss Parkway; drive about a half-mile, and turn right on Madison Avenue. Go one block to the museum, on the left.  
**HOURS:** Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.; closed on New Year's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.  
**FEES:** \$2, seniors; \$3, adults; \$2, children 12 to 18; free, children 11 and under and for Arizona Historical Society members.  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** (928) 782-1841.

## Buck Mountain Trekkers Can Visit Historic Fire Lookout Tower

**L**ADYBUGS ARE EVERYWHERE—tiny jeweled beetles clinging thick as plaster to trees, with more arriving. They number in the thousands at the end of the trail up 7,571-foot Buck Mountain in the Coconino National Forest, 37 miles southeast of Flagstaff.

In late August, when mountain nights become cooler, ladybugs congregate before hibernating throughout the ponderosa forest. Time your day hike just right and you may witness a gathering of these “good bugs” that eat plant-killing aphids and other insect pests.

Cheryl Rexford, a Phoenix journalist, might have overlooked them were it not for Forest Service engineer Douglas Denk of Flagstaff. Denk was surveying the restoration work on a historic fire lookout tower and pointed out the orange and black-dotted beetles to her.

“What an incredible sight!” she reported. “The ground seemed to be moving in places, there were so many.”

The ladybugs were still massed by the tens of thousands when we climbed to the lookout tower a few weeks later. We were careful

where we walked to spare the helpful little bugs.

We hiked up the Buck Mountain Trail, actually a two-track service road with a locked gate that has an opening large enough for hikers to pass through. The easy-rated hike involves a 300-foot elevation gain over three-quarters of a mile up the road to the lookout.

Forest Service entomologist Bobbe Fitzgibbon of Flagstaff said the ladybugs awakened from hibernation in spring, apparently timed to mate with the hatching of prey insects and with the hatching of aphids. “I’m not sure whether it is day-length, colder temperatures or lack of prey that triggers the late summer gatherings,” she said.

The lookout atop Buck Mountain is only one of two towers in Arizona made completely of wood. The other is East Pocket Lookout in Oak Creek Canyon north of Sedona.

Built in 1939, Buck Mountain Lookout was placed on the National Register of

Historic Places in 1988, then “mothballed” when the Forest Service ran short of maintenance money and allowed it to deteriorate.

“It was kind of embarrassing to have a historical structure that we weren’t taking very good care of,” Denk said. “So we decided—because it’s a little more visible and visited by the public more often, and because we wanted to use it—to use our funds for reconstruction.”

Completed in September 2003 at a cost of \$52,960, Buck Mountain’s restored 30-foot-high tower is an example of towers commonly built in the 1930s, Denk said. “Because it was a historical structure, we had to reconstruct every detail according to the original design,” he said.

If you’re lucky, you’ll get the chance to walk on history. The lookout cabin and catwalk are open to the public only when a spotter is on duty.

The nearby national forest offers many primitive campsites, and other area attractions include the easy drive to another fire lookout atop Indian Maiden Mountain. But be sure to include the hike up Buck Mountain as part of a summertime outing in Arizona’s high country. The incredible views from the summit reveal the craggy San Francisco Peaks to the north.

Maybe the ladybugs like the views, too. **AH**



**LOCATION:** 37 miles southeast of Flagstaff.  
**GETTING THERE:** From Flagstaff, drive south on State Route 89A, which becomes Interstate 17, to Exit 339 (Forest Service Road 3). Travel southeast on FR 3 to Forest Service Road 229, about 5 miles south of Happy Jack. Turn right (west) on Forest Service Road 229; drive about 2 miles and turn left on 229B. Travel about .75 of a mile and turn left on the service road. Drive to the service road gate.  
**TRAVEL ADVISORY:** The best time to visit is May through October. This trail is not suited to mountain bikes and horses.  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Coconino National Forest, Mogollon Rim Ranger District, (928) 477-2255.



[ABOVE] From a vantage point 30 feet aboveground atop Buck Mountain in the Coconino National Forest, lookouts not only spot fires but also relay radio messages among patrolling rangers and their headquarters. LES MANEVITZ [OPPOSITE PAGE] Gardeners’ allies because of their insatiable appetite for aphids and other pests, cold-blooded ladybugs cluster for warmth as they hibernate. RICHARD MAACK

Before you go on this hike, visit our Web site at [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) for other things to do and places to see in the area.



KEVIN KIBBEY

