

How Santa Fe Almost Became Our State Capital

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

FEBRUARY 2008

LAKE POWELL GUIDE

Great Ways to Explore Arizona's Great Lake

PLUS:

Touring Glen Canyon Dam

AND:

Williams' Best Restaurant

Vintage Airstreams in Bisbee

Tony Hillerman's Perfect Weekend

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With more than 1,900 miles of coastline and millions and millions of years of geologic priming, there's a lot to explore at Lake Powell, and all kinds of ways to do it. **BY KELLY KRAMER**

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In case you hadn't noticed, we have a lot of shots of Lake Powell in this issue. They're all spectacular, but for our portfolio, we wanted something different, so we sent our photographer up in a plane. **BY GARY LADD**

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Edward Abbey wasn't a fan. Few environmentalists were, including our writer, who boycotted Lake Powell for more than 25 years. He stayed away until a story assignment forced him to contemplate his opposition. We won't give away the ending, but chills are running up the collective spine of the Monkey Wrench Gang. **BY LAWRENCE W. CHEEK**

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"Rob and Kathi" have no respect for Mother Nature. Neither do the thousands of other vandals who carve their names in the red rocks surrounding Lake Powell. The task of removing the graffiti falls to volunteers, who are doing their best to make a difference. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it. **BY GARY LADD**

38 Dam Big

If one cubic yard of concrete landed on your head, you'd die. If 5 million cubic yards of concrete landed in Northern Arizona, you'd have something called Glen Canyon Dam. Love it or hate it, this thing is big — really big. **BY GARY LADD**

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online arizonahighways.com

Arizona lays claim to more than one great lake. While Lake Powell and Lake Mead inhabit the northern part of the state, many other lakes in Arizona offer water enthusiasts boatloads of fun. Hop on board at arizonahighways.com to discover those lakes and ways to enjoy them. Plus, view additional images of magnificent Lake Powell with our online slide show.

WEEKEND GETAWAY The living museum of Castle Dome in Western Arizona tells the tale of a mining town too proud to die.

EXPERIENCE ARIZONA Find out what's happening this month with our Calendar of Events.

Photographic Prints Available

■ Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase, as designated in captions. To order, call 866-962-1191 or visit arizonahighwaysprints.com.

LA VIEW EN ROSE Curtains of rain, Cathedral Butte and Lake Powell blush in sunset's glow, while Navajo Mountain — a site sacred to the Navajo Indians — looms in the distance. Photograph by Gary Ladd

■ To order a print of this photograph, see information on opposite page.

FRONT COVER A mushroom-shaped rock formation seems to sprout from a slope near Cookie Jar Butte, overlooking the reflective waters of Padre Bay on Lake Powell. Photograph by Gary Ladd

■ To order a print of this photograph, see information on opposite page.

BACK COVER Kayakers can venture into Lake Powell's myriad narrow gorges and hidden coves, like this enthusiast paddling into Anasazi Canyon. Photograph by Gary Ladd



JEFF KIDA

Water surges from enormous jet valves at the base of Glen Canyon Dam. On page 38, writer Gary Ladd offers an inside look at the colossal dam's construction.



GARY LADD

LAKE SUPERIOR IS THE BIG LAKE they call "Gitche Gumee." The name comes from *The Song of Hiawatha*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem about an Indian prophet who used his powers for the good of humanity. Great poem. Great Lake. Great place to get away from it all — if you live in Wisconsin, Minnesota or Michigan. If

you live in Arizona ... well, you need a lake a little closer to home.

That's where Lake Powell comes in. Like Superior, Arizona's great lake is big, and even though it's never been memorialized by anyone of Longfellow's stature, it's certainly worthy of its share of iambic pentameter. Not to mention the cover of *Arizona Highways*.

Of course, Lake Powell has been featured many times in this magazine, but it's been awhile since we've dedicated an entire issue to the second-largest man-made lake in the country. February 2008 seemed like a good time to do it again.

With 1,900 miles of coastline — more than the west coast of the United States, from San Diego to Seattle — it's hard to condense all of that water and natural beauty into a single issue. There's so much to see and do, and the options go beyond the legendary houseboats.

Among other things, the list includes diving excursions, guided fishing tours, a hike to the Hanging Gardens, scenic drives and the John Wesley Powell Memorial Museum. If you've never been, the museum is a great way to get your feet wet when it comes to the region. As Kelly Kramer writes in *Powell Expeditions*, "In addition to showcasing memorabilia from Powell's two expeditions down the Colorado River, the museum also features a substantial collection of Native American and pioneer artifacts." That's just the beginning.

In all, we spotlight 10 of the best things to do in and around the lake. They're all worth a look, but the best perspective might come from the aerial tours — the bird's-eye views of Powell are out of this world. To get there, though, you'll have to climb into a small plane, and that's not for everyone, so we sent photographer Gary Ladd up in the air to be a surrogate for those of you who don't respond to Dramamine.

As you'll see in *Out of the Clear Blue Sky* — this month's

portfolio — Lake Powell is a sight for sore eyes. From the towering red-rock sandstone cliffs and picturesque canyons to the brilliant blue-green water and beautiful sandy beaches, there's nothing like it anywhere, especially if you can look past the fact that Lake Powell consumed what many considered to be the most amazing canyon in the Southwest. For decades, Larry Cheek was among those who couldn't look the other way.

If you're a regular reader of *Arizona Highways*, you recognize Larry's name. He's a longtime contributor, and he's one of the best. Like Edward Abbey and a boatload of other writers, Larry had wrestled with the nature of the lake for years. "In a microboycott to honor my environmental ethic," he explains, "I never [went to Lake Powell] during the quarter-century that I lived in Arizona. I believed then, and now, that we humans hold a moral responsibility to tread as lightly as possible on the Earth. How can anyone reconcile that principle with the colossal footprint of this desert lake?"

In *Reflecting on the Water*, one of the best essays ever written about Lake Powell, you'll learn how a five-day kayak trip on the lake forced Larry to resolve what he calls the "rightness or wrongness of its existence." I won't give away the ending, but chills are running up the collective spine of the Monkey Wrench Gang.

Be that as it may, even Hayduke and his fictional band of havoc-wreaking pranksters would have to admit that Glen Canyon Dam — the enormous wall of concrete that created Lake Powell — is impressive. Love it or hate it, the dam is an engineering marvel. And it didn't happen overnight. As Gary Ladd writes in *Dam Big*, "More than seven years went into the construction of the dam, and it took another 24 months to finish the power plant." By the way, Gary also did the photography for that story.

In fact, as you read through this issue, you'll notice that Gary shot most of the photos, and wrote a couple of stories. The reason is simple: He's lived at Lake Powell for 30 years, and few people, if any, are more familiar with Arizona's great lake than our man on the scene. I don't know if he can recite *The Song of Hiawatha*, but when it comes to Lake Powell, Gary Ladd is the closest thing we've got to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

— Robert Stieve

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highways on tv

For more coverage of the Grand Canyon State, check out *Arizona Highways Television*, an Emmy award-winning show hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. For broadcast times and more, visit arizonahighways.com; click the *Arizona Highways Television* icon at the bottom of our home page.

CONTRIBUTORS



GARY LADD

In 1977, writer-photographer Gary Ladd had his first article published. That story, about paddling the length of Lake Powell, appeared in *Arizona*

Highways. He's been published numerous times since then, and this month, more than 30 years after that first article, he's at it again. Instead of one story, however, there are three (see *Out of the Clear Blue Sky*, page 20; *Cleanup Crew*, page 36; and *Dam Big*, page 38). Although there were some challenges in researching, writing and photographing the stories, Ladd, who's lived in Arizona for 36 years, was up to the task. In fact, he says, there are plenty of other adventures he'd like to take in the state as well. "There are many backpacking trips in the Grand Canyon," he says. "And I want to continue photographing the Grand Canyon and Lake Powell — especially as the lake continues to fluctuate in surface elevation." Ladd, who lives in Page, is currently working on a book about the major overlooks of the Grand Canyon. His work is also featured in our new book, *Arizona Highways Photography Guide: How & Where to Make Great Photographs*, which will be available next month.



ELIAS BUTLER

For photographer Elias Butler, his visit to the Vermilion Cliffs to shoot this month's *Hike of the Month* (page 48) turned into quite the adventure. "My

trek up the Vermilion Cliffs was unforgettable," he says. "Once on top of the Sand Hill Crack, I sat for lunch on the rim overlooking House Rock Valley. A small black dot appeared on the horizon, and flew closer. It was a condor. I began shooting as the bird circled lower, apparently to get a better look at me. Looking through the viewfinder as I was shooting, I was thinking that it was getting awfully close when it soon filled up the entire view and flapped its wings. I jumped back as it landed a few feet away." But the condor wasn't the only critter Elias encountered. "When I left the rim to return to my truck, I passed by Anasazi petroglyphs of bighorn sheep," he says. "Just below that spot, I heard a noise and looked down the trail to see a large bighorn sheep trotting away." In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Butler's work has appeared in *USA Today*, *Backpacker* and *National Geographic Adventure*.



MICHAEL ENGELHARD

As a part-time Moab, Utah, resident, writer Michael Engelhard considers Northern Arizona his backyard. With that in mind, it's no surprise

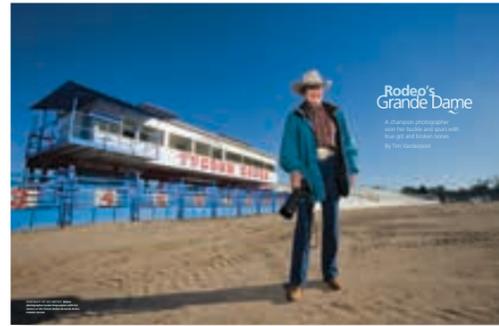
that he pitched us the idea of doing a hike in the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, one of the newest federal parks in the United States. "To me, the state line really is a meaningless abstraction," he says. "Whereas the geographical province — the monolithic Colorado Plateau, which runs east to west across Arizona — is a physical and experiential reality." Although Engelhard is no stranger to the Vermilion Cliffs, that's not to say he didn't experience a challenge or two when he journeyed there for this month's *Hike of the Month* (see *Sand Hill Crack*, page 48). "At one point, I got separated from my backpack on top of the cliffs and had to spend a rainy, cold and miserable night in shorts and a T-shirt, cowering in a shallow alcove," he says. Engelhard is a regular contributor to *Arizona Highways*. He currently lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, and works as a wilderness guide in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. His work has also appeared in *Outside*, *Utne Reader*, *Wild Earth* and *Terra*.



MIKE COFFEY

Mike Coffey moved to the Grand Canyon State as a child, and after developing his interest in photography at Paradise Valley High School, he

realized that making pictures would be his life's work. Since that realization, Coffey has been making photographs all around Arizona. There's one place, however, that he returns to year after year — the Paria Plateau in Northern Arizona (see *Back Road Adventure*, page 44). "We return every year to share with friends the stunning geology that is my photographic focus," Coffey says. And even though he and his wife, Twila, who wrote the story, go there often, he says no visit to the Paria Plateau is complete without its own adventure. "During this trip, we took aim at Powell Monument. Deep, powdery sand is the big challenge in traversing the 400 square miles atop the plateau. Almost to the Powell Monument, it was a wonderful surprise to round a tight bend and be at the very edge of a 3,000-foot view down into Marble Canyon." Keep in mind, this back road is not recommended for anyone with limited backcountry driving experience.



Hats Off to the Rodeo Queen

As an Arizona cowgirl, I want to let you know how very much I enjoyed the article on Louise Serpa [*Rodeo's Grande Dame*, November 2007]. I have attended the Tucson Rodeo every February for over 55 years, taking along my three sons, then my grandchildren and now my great-grandchildren. I missed seeing her there last year — it's nice to know she's well. Her daring ability to capture the excitement and dangers of rodeo is awesome.

Leeta Ellis, Green Valley

Taking Aim at Wolf Fables

I thoroughly enjoyed the article about the Arizona Game and Fish Department's recent research efforts to reduce elk-vehicle collisions [*Crossways With Elk*, July 2007]. Well done, with one very important exception. [The writer] stated that "hunters" wiped out Arizona's wolves. Before the current model of wildlife conservation was in place, there were no restrictions on killing many species, and early settlers worked very hard to make the forests and rangelands "safe" from predators. These actions are not related in the least to the highly regulated and scientifically based hunting that occurs today. No species has been hunted to extinction under modern management. It was, in fact, the hunters and their growing ecological awareness that restored elk to Arizona starting in 1913. Hunters today can be proud of being the cornerstone of the most successful system of wildlife conservation the world has ever witnessed. To blame them for the disappearance of Arizona's wolves does not accurately portray hunters or the vital role they play in conservation.

*Jim Heffelfinger,
Arizona Game and Fish Department, Tucson*

Heads-Up in Skull Valley

Two items caught my eye in the July 2007 back-road adventure [*Sierra Prieta Panorama*]. 1) The inclusion of the words on the tombstone saying, "A cowboy forever." This is the tomb of Bobby Curry, a former school teacher in

Phoenix — what a departure from daily life to what one dreams! Bobby lived in Skull Valley, Prescott and then Phoenix, I guess. 2) The photo of the Santa Fe Railroad Station, which was moved north to the old school yard. My dad, Addison N. Turner, was the station agent there. He made bills of lading for cattle from the Diamond and A Half, plus others driven in from Zane Grey territory. So, it is little wonder that, as Bobby lay dying, those scenes would be with him. As you can imagine, there are tears in my eyes as I type this. Thanks a lot.

George W. Turner, Oceanside, California

Home Away From Home

I regularly get your excellent magazine, thanks to my friends Loretta and John from Arizona City, who gave me a gift subscription. We already have been to Arizona four times, and enjoyed every day there. Whenever I read the various articles in your magazine, my memory comes back to the places we have already been. I am not exaggerating by calling Arizona our second home. Your magazine makes it easy for us to feel the spirit of all those beautiful and interesting places, despite the fact that we live in Germany, almost 6,000 miles away. Your magazine also helps us to understand the current situation and circumstances, and keeps us up-to-date. It also gives us an idea about the eventful history of Arizona and its cities, especially the first settlements and the battles against the natives. We already have a lot of ideas

from your magazine about where to go and what to see during our next vacation in Arizona. Thanks for the exciting evenings you gave me due to the exciting articles and breathtaking pictures.

Mario Rogus, Cottbus, Germany

Peddling an Idea

Your team should develop an Arizona cycle "touring" article — bicycling and motorcycling throughout Arizona. Or add a tour of the month to each of your magazines.

David Yoches, Mesa

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Thanks for the suggestion, David. Turns out, we're featuring some of the state's best cycling routes in next month's issue. Keep your eyes peeled.*

Snail Mail vs. the Pony Express

My husband and his family are from Arizona, but now that we live in Colorado, his parents give us a subscription to *Arizona Highways* for our anniversary every year. Our family looks forward to it coming by mail every month. In your August 2007 issue, I could completely relate to the story by Roger Naylor [*Why Are They Trying to Kill Me?*]. After having an incident on a horse with a tree a year ago, I understand Roger's fear of staying on his "mighty steed." I chuckled throughout his article. By the end of the story, I wondered if perhaps we should go back to the old ways of delivering the mail by Pony Express. Three weeks ago, a dear friend of mine from Cottonwood sent me a package by priority mail. Enclosed were pictures from our 30-year high school reunion. Unfortunately, it still hasn't arrived. I believe that if Roger had been delivering the mail on his trusty steed, I'd have my pictures by now. By the way, Roger, I'd have a cold brew ready for you at the end of your ride. Happy trails!

Erin Wright, Lone Tree, Colorado 🐾

contact us

If you have thoughts or comments about anything in *Arizona Highways*, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at editor@arizonahighways.com, or by mail at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85009. For more information, visit arizonahighways.com.



Whoosh!

Admittedly, snowfall in Arizona has been a little anemic in recent years. Still, it's a good idea to have your skis and snowboards ready — you never know.

■ For current snow conditions, visit arizonasnowbowl.com or sunriseskipark.com.

BILL HATCHER



PEOPLE

In Memoriam: Stan Jones

He's not a household name, but for the folks in Page, Stan Jones was to Lake Powell what John Muir was to the Sierra Nevada.

HE WAS KNOWN AS "Mister Lake Powell" and "The Sage of Page." Stan Jones devoted his life to Arizona's great lake, becoming its foremost cartographer and spokesman, and sharing his discoveries through photographs, articles and an iconic map. On September 3, 2007, after 40 years of exploring the lake, Stan Jones died of prostate cancer. He was 88. Raised in Winnetka, Illinois, on the shores of Lake Michigan, Jones spent an amphibious youth diving, lifeguarding and teaching aquatic survival in the Navy. His self-described "insatiable zest for adventure" drove him west, where he worked as a writer and an editor in Tucson and Salt Lake City. He also wrote for Walt Disney. In 1967, news of a new lake in Northern Arizona lured him away from his city job. That's how he ended up in Page with his wife, Alice, and their son, Steve.

It was there that he witnessed the birth of Lake Powell, watching it grow from a mud puddle to the nation's second-largest man-made reservoir. He once wrote: "For as long as three weeks at a time, I methodically probed the new lake's coves and canyons, squeezing through narrow clefts to explore the farthest

reaches of gorges known down through time only to a few birds."

By popular demand, the self-taught map-maker created *Stan Jones' Boating and Exploring Map of Lake Powell Country*, which he updated yearly. More than mere cartography, the map reads like a 20,000-word love letter to the lake. Hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold, and it's considered the bible for Lake Powell country.

In 1969, Jones co-founded and became the first director of the John Wesley Powell Memorial Museum, which showcases Powell's journeys down the Colorado River, the history of Page and the Indian cultures of the Colorado Plateau. In recognition of his contribution to preserving the state's natural heritage, he was inducted into the Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame in 2002.

Jones is described as a true gentleman with a down-to-earth sensibility. He wasn't a fan of the champagne-laden boats zooming across the lake, preferring the serenity of a slow cruise in his 14-foot skiff with a pen, camera and frothy beer at hand. Over the years, he boated in torrential rain and hiked in scorching heat, but, he wrote, "I relished every day and every night."

Jones' legacy will live on in the museum and through his map, which still guides thousands of fellow nature lovers to petroglyph-etched coves and hidden ruins. Although Jones turned over the map to his longtime friend Steve Ward, Ward says he'll always think of it as the Stan Jones map. "No one," Ward says, "will ever know Lake Powell as well as Stan did." — Keridwen Cornelius



FRANK TALBOTT

CELEBRITY Q & A

Tony Hillerman

by Dave Pratt



AH: If you were trying to convince an old friend that Arizona is one of the most beautiful places in America, where would you take him?

TH: I'd take him to Window Rock and Navajo National Monument, giving him a view of spots like Church Rock.

AH: If you were making a solo road trip to Sedona, which would you choose: Harley or Mustang convertible?

TH: I'd take the Mustang, because that was a wonderful vehicle, and leave the cycle for younger folks. I'm 82, and feel every year of it.

AH: Describe your ideal weekend getaway in Arizona.

TH: I'd head for the extreme southeast corner of Arizona, where that mountain chain sneaks in from Mexico, and join the swarm of birdwatchers who show up to watch the colorful parrots, and all sorts of other feathered species that come up from the south. Aside from being an internationally notable birdwatchers haven, the people who show up are interesting.

AH: When you go hiking, what's the one thing — other than water — that you carry in your backpack?

TH: A camera, with a couple of extra rolls of film.

AH: If you were taking a group of kids on an over-nighter in Arizona, where would you go?

TH: I think I'd take those youngsters to Flagstaff to visit the telescope used by the astronomer who discovered Pluto.

— Dave Pratt is the host of the "Dave Pratt in the Morning" show on KMLE 107.9 FM in Phoenix.

RESTAURANTS

Red Raven

Fine dining isn't running rampant in Williams, but a popular new place on Route 66 is a step in the right direction.

BROILED SALMON FILET BASTED WITH basil-butter and served with cranberry-pine-nut couscous ... that's the kind of thing you expect to find in Phoenix or Scottsdale, not in Williams, Arizona. Not only that, the unexpected entrée is served on a white tablecloth — or beige, as it were.

Chef and co-owner David Haines (below, left) chats with diners at the Red Raven Restaurant in Williams.

has been a meat-and-potatoes kind of town. Period. Places like Sue-B's



GEOFF GOURLEY

Steakhouse, Rod's Steak House and Wild West Junction are the norm. The Red Raven Restaurant, with its gourmet menu and notable wine list, is a considerable change of pace. In this case, change is good.

Co-owned by the husband-wife team of David and Rozan

Haines, the Red Raven has been impressing desperate locals and flavor-starved tourists since it opened in June 2006. There are three reasons for that: ambience, service and food.

In addition to the salmon filet, the alluring menu includes Tempura Style Shrimp and Red Raven Pasta (chicken breast, sweet red peppers and oven-roasted tomatoes tossed with penne pasta and topped with Parmesan cheese). And for traveling carnivores, there's a long list of steaks, including a rib-eye that was recently dubbed "one of the best" by a rib-eye aficionado.

"I have a passion for cooking and wanted to create a restaurant that I'd like to go to," says David Haines, the head chef. "Not just for food, but for the whole experience." Part of that experience is the place itself. Long and narrow — about 25 feet by 80 feet — the Red Raven is cozy and inviting.

When you pass through the front door (painted red), you'll see a brick wall at one end, a high ceiling (also painted red) and green wainscoting all around. There are 10 booths, eight tables, retro artwork on the walls and an abundance of charm, all of which is orchestrated by Rozan, who will take your order and make you feel at home. Like the food and the ambience, the service at Red Raven is spectacular, which isn't always the case in Phoenix and Scottsdale.

■ *The Red Raven is located at 135 W. Route 66 in Williams. For more information, visit redravenrestaurant.com or call 928-635-4980.* — Robert Stieve



GEOFF GOURLEY



TERRENCE MOORE

LODGING

Shady Dell

RV parks aren't for everyone, but this park is perfect for anybody wanting a trip back to the days of beatniks and blue highways.

JACK KEROUAC NEVER SLEPT HERE. Well, maybe he did, but there's no record of it. Still, it's the kind of place he would have been drawn to when he was out on the road. Nearby Bisbee and its mixed bag of colorful characters would have caught his eye as well.

Located along State Route 80 — at one time a main artery between Savannah, Georgia, and San Diego — the Shady Dell RV Park is about as far away from high-end luxury as you can get. It's low-key, as most things are in rural Arizona, and it's a step back in time, to the days of beatniks and blue highways.

Of course, there are a few modern-day amenities at the park. In particular, full hookups for RVs and campers. If you've blown the kids' inheritance on a fifth-wheeler, you might as well use it, but that's not the best way to spend a night at the Shady Dell. The better option is to shack up in one of the park's vintage aluminum travel trailers. There are several to choose from, including a 1949 Airstream, a 1950 Spartan Manor, a 1954 Crown and a 1951 Royal Mansion.

Take your pick. They're all cool. The Airstream is the most photographed, for whatever that's worth. The Manor, however, might be the closest you'll ever come to time travel. The polished blond wood on the walls and ceiling is original, as are the appliances and furniture. There's even a vintage television

— no remote, no TiVo, no nothing, which is how it should be when you're flashing back to the 1950s.

The best of the bunch, arguably, is the Royal Mansion. Built in 1951, this 33-footer has a full-sized bed and a small bathroom. In addition, there's a breakfast booth in the kitchen and leopard carpeting in the living room, which adds volumes to the exotic feel of this trailer. Imagine the Jungle Room at Graceland, but without Elvis. By the way, he never slept here either.

In all, there are nine trailers at the Shady Dell, eight of which are immaculately restored and used for sleeping. The ninth, a 1957 Valentine, houses Dot's Diner, a 10-stool eatery that's been featured in *Gourmet* magazine and *National Geographic Traveler*. CNN and *CBS This Morning* have dropped by as well.

When John Hart bought the Valentine in the mid-1950s, he parked it on the corner of Ventura and Topanga Canyon boulevards in L.A. — it was "Burger Bar No. 3" in his chain of Los Angeles hamburger joints. Development eventually forced Hart to move it to the middle of nowhere, and after decades of neglect, it was shipped to the Shady Dell on a flatbed truck. That was 1996. Six months later, it was opened as Dot's Diner, in honor of Dot Bozeman, the restaurant's first cook and bottle washer.

Dot retired a few years ago, but her namesake diner is still going strong. Check it out, and when you do, think about the '50s. You won't see Kerouac at the end of the counter, but if you squint your eyes a little, you might be able to picture him there, hip and cool in a tattered sweatshirt, milking a cup of coffee.

■ *The Shady Dell is located at 1 Old Douglas Road in Bisbee.*

For rates and reservations, call 520-432-3567 or visit

theshadydell.com.

— Robert Stieve

PHOTOGRAPHY

Style Points

Like writers and painters, photographers develop individual techniques. What follows are some tips on how to establish your own sense of style.



JEFF KIDA

This image was shot at 1 second at f-5.6. Using a lower ISO of 100 allows for less grain in the final image.

I WAS HIKING RECENTLY with a group of photographer friends on a little-known trail north of Phoenix. The group was made up of professionals and amateurs, and along the way, we shared canyons and conversation, tips and trade secrets, successes and failures. We also talked about artistic style, including individual technique and vision.

The great shooters, it was suggested, make everything look easy, no matter what equipment they use. Their images are always compelling. It's as if they're issued some sort of intergalactic press pass allowing unbridled access to the cosmos. Perpetually accompanied by perfect weather and lighting conditions, this sanctified group seemingly resides in a different universe — a "Neverland" for photographers. The obvious question: How to become a member?

Sadly, there are no magical secrets to making great images. For the most part, it gets down to knowledge and hard work. Photography has a language all its own, so when using your camera, you must learn to think like a photographic Rosetta Stone. Here's why:

First, film and digital sensors don't see the same way people do. We live in a three-dimensional world — latitude, longitude and altitude. The photographic world has only two dimensions — there's no altitude. Whenever we review processed prints or a computer monitor, we're looking at a two-dimensional surface. There's no depth. Creating the illusion of the missing dimension by use of light and shadow is a good first step toward photographic success.

Second, our eyes and brains are constantly interpreting visual data — instantly extracting details from the deepest

shadows to bright sunlight, adjusting colors from man-made light sources and the natural world. Our eyes zoom in to isolate a solitary object. Then, using our peripheral vision, we switch to a wide view, all within fractions of a second. The best cameras simply cannot compete with the human eye. The only real option is to learn the "language" of photography. Embrace its limitations, and then explore and create. You'll find there's beauty in photography's simplified palette.

Whatever equipment you carry, go out and test it. Find out what it can do successfully in as many situations as possible. Pick a subject you enjoy shooting and go for it. Walk around and explore how light interacts with your chosen topic from a variety of angles.

Study the work of established artists and photographers. In the beginning, give yourself permission to emulate the style of others. Think of your early work as learning a second language. You read, you repeat. You look at work that excites you and you imitate it. The more you practice and review, the quicker the translation process occurs. Soon, the vision becomes your own.

Work on uncomplicated projects, get some keepers, and then begin to experiment and push the envelope, which helps establish your personal vision. The more you work, the sooner your style will emerge.

Of course, following the trails established by others is only a starting point. Eventually, you'll want to strike out on your own. The excitement really begins when you discover your own style and process.

— Jeff Kida, Photo Editor

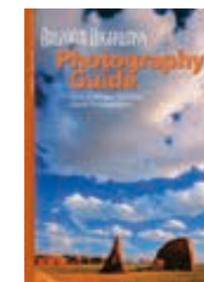


PHOTO TIP

In low-light situations, using an on-camera strobe (flash) along with a slow shutter speed can be both beneficial and, at times, necessary. Using this technique will allow you to create very interesting effects that are not always predictable. The flash both illuminates and freezes the foreground

while the background becomes more evenly lit due to the long exposure. If you are hand-holding the camera or there is motion, the resulting backgrounds can appear streaked or blurred. To try this, use the "night scene mode" built into the menu or

program of your camera. If you prefer to shoot in the manual mode, use a shutter speed of between 1/10 and a full second.

— Jeff Kida

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for *Arizona Highways Photography Guide* coming in March. For other books, visit arizonahighways.com.

online For more photography tips and information, visit arizonahighways.com and click on "Photography."

HISTORY

Santa Fe, Arizona?

It seems inconceivable today, but a century ago, Santa Fe was proposed as the capital of Arizona.

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE the U.S. government not clamoring to bring Arizona into the union, but in the early 20th century, it was the proverbial last kid picked for the team. In 1902, the territories of Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma introduced a bill that would promote them to statehood. However, President Theodore Roosevelt and Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana were wary of the rugged outposts.

To make his point, Beveridge launched a tour of the territories, determined to give them a bad report and stymie the bill. His frank assessment: "Arizona is a mining camp." Others agreed. Senator Thomas Bard of California predicted, "Arizona has reached its limit of development, its mines will play out, its population will decrease, and it can claim no more arable land." Turns out, the senator wasn't exactly Nostradamus.

The senate never voted on the bill, but politicians concluded that Arizona and New Mexico were too sparsely populated to be granted statehood independently. So, Beveridge came up with a solution: Make them a single state, and make Santa Fe the capital. Arizonans, of course, bristled at the idea, fearing their territory "might lose her name, identity and history." Arizona's congressional delegate, the extravagantly mustachioed Marcus Aurelius Smith, commented that Beveridge had rejected one rotten egg, and somehow thought two rotten eggs would make a good omelet.

Beveridge, nonetheless, persisted, delivering a congressional speech advocating the Arizona-New Mexico omelet. Arizonans, who for years had campaigned for statehood, suddenly lobbied against it. In 1905, 3,000 Phoenicians signed a peti-



In Douglas, a mock funeral celebrates the defeat of an Arizona-New Mexico joint statehood merger, circa 1906.

COCHISE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

tion stating: "We affirm that with almost no exceptions, our people are unilaterally opposed to this obnoxious union. . . ." In addition, the Phoenix City Council, prompted by President Roosevelt's passive support of jointure, even changed the name of Roosevelt Street to Cleveland Street.

In 1906, Arizonans officially voted against merging with New Mexico by a count of 16,265 to 3,141.

Three years later, President Taft said he'd grant statehood to Arizona as long as its constitution wasn't radical like Oklahoma's. Taft authorized Arizonans to elect 52 delegates to a constitutional convention, but instead of

choosing conservatives likely to create a Taft-friendly constitution, the frontiersmen voted radical.

The delegates' progressive constitution was roundly approved by the people in 1911. Taft, however, wasn't amused. He sent it back for revisions, and Arizonans, yearning more for statehood than for provisions such as judiciary recall, made the necessary changes. Meanwhile, New Mexico pulled ahead in the statehood race, becoming the 47th state. Then, on Valentine's Day in 1912, Arizona got what it wanted — admission to the Union as the 48th state.

— Keridwen Cornelius

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- In 1875, Phoenix had 16 saloons, four dance halls and one faro table.
- On February 14, 1862, Confederate President Jefferson Davis issued a proclamation creating the Confederate Territory of Arizona. The following month, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a bill dividing the New Mexico Territory into two territories, which President Abraham Lincoln signed into law in February 1863, overriding the Confederate proclamation and establishing the official U.S. Arizona Territory.
- In 1907, a Tucson judge ruled that miners and cattlemen could wear their guns in town for up to two hours.

NATURE

Let Us Prey

An innovative program near Tucson gives museum visitors a chance to see raptors in their natural environment.

A FAMILY OF HARRIS'S HAWKS SWOOPS in interweaving arcs, scoping out prey and chasing each other off saguaro tops. A prairie falcon tucks a wing and dives, corkscrewing to the ground at top speed. A barn owl, its face as pale and round as a sand dollar, coasts at eye level, then extends its talons and lands on a paloverde snag.

In the Raptor Free Flight demonstration at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, cages have been cast aside so visitors can see birds of prey glide, flap, pinwheel and dart in their natural habitat. The program began in 1996 with three Harris's hawks, and has since expanded to 17 birds, including five more species of raptors: the ferruginous hawk, grey hawk, prairie falcon, great horned owl and barn owl.

Raptors are birds with sharp vision, sharper



PAUL & JOYCE BERQUIST

talons and hooked beaks (all the better for eating live prey, my dear). Also popular with visitors are two nonraptors — greater roadrunners, which hunt rattlesnakes, and Chihuahuan ravens.

Twice a day, the birds are released into the desert sky to showcase their athletic ability and unique natural adaptations, with trainers using leather lures to simulate prey. Barn owls are known as silent predators, hovering buoyantly above visitors, and then making beelines for their targets. Prairie falcons whoosh with the speed and recklessness of a getaway car, overtaking their avian prey in midair. Harris's hawks — one of only two social raptor species in the world — hunt like a pack of wolves, cornering rabbits, reptiles or rodents. The family dynamics of these hawks change constantly, with the larger female establishing her authority by forcing the smaller males off their saguaro perches.

The birds at the museum are treated like top athletes — they're kept in shape with daily checkups and exercise, and their skills are continually honed in training sessions. During initial flights, the raptors are often reserved and slow. As they build strength and confidence, they accelerate and expand their repertoire of complex maneuvers. In the case of the Harris's hawks, more experienced birds will demonstrate complicated actions for the newbies. Although the birds are taught to return to their trainers, the Free Flight demonstration is not a show — the aerial feats are natural behaviors.

There's been growing concern in recent years over the loss of wild raptors due to habitat encroachment and pest-control chemicals. Therefore, the trainers at the museum inform visitors about steps they can take to prevent unnecessary deaths, such as avoiding rodenticides and contacting local utility companies about making utility poles raptor-safe.

The delicate balance of the desert ecosystem hangs upon its skyborne sentinels. Protecting these birds will help ensure that they continue to soar over their natural habitat, their shadows rippling across seas of cactuses as they watch, ready to strike.

■ Information: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, 520-883-2702 or desertmuseum.org

— Keridwen Cornelius & Sue Tygielski

nature factoid



PAUL & JOYCE BERQUIST

Gila Monsters

For nine months of the year, Arizona's most fearsome lizard is lazy. From July through March, Gila monsters don't eat. Instead, they live off the fat stored in their expandable tails. In April, May and June, they hunt for small rodents, bird and reptile eggs, young birds and frogs. Sometimes, they consume up to a third of their body weight — talk about fat and happy.

50 years ago in arizona highways

The focus of our February 1958 issue was Tucson. In his description of the city, longtime editor Raymond Carlson referred to the Old Pueblo as a place as "new as a bright, polished penny gleaming in the sun, building and growing in every direction." Fifty years later, things haven't changed a whole lot.



JEFF KIDA

9
FEB

THINGS TO DO

Hoopla at the Heard

ATHLETICISM, SPEED, grace, Native American tradition ... it all adds up to the Heard

Museum's World Championship Hoop Dance Contest. Top hoop dancers from

around the world compete every February in this colorful spectacle, which is held at the Heard Museum in Phoenix. Originally performed by medicine men and spiritual leaders to cure ailments and see into the future, today's dances weave stories that convey messages about the importance of harmony in nature and the never-ending circle of life. The hoops, which were traditionally made from willows, allow dancers to showcase intricate movements and footwork as they perform tribal dances while manipulating from four to 50 hoops at a time. Among other things, the dancers create shapes that symbolize animals, butterflies, snakes, deities and Mother Earth. The two-day event takes place February 9-10. The hoop dancing is the main attraction, but the event also features the Heard's world-class museum and gift shop, Indian fry bread and other Native American foods. ■ *Information: 602-252-8848 or heard.org.*

HAUTE & COLD

Food-loving skiers can combine two passions in one afternoon during Flagstaff Nordic Center's Eat, Ski and Be Merry on February 11. An afternoon of food and wine awaits at the center's groomed cross-country trails, where gliding gourmets can ski or snowshoe through a progressive buffet of haute cuisine. ■ *Information: 928-220-0550 or flagstaffnordiccenter.com.*

FEB
11

Taste of the NFL

THIS MONTH, GRIDIRON do-gooders host one of Super Bowl XLII's signature events. Taste of the NFL is a fundraiser that offers a night of food, football and excitement while raising money for hunger organizations throughout the country. St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, the nation's first food bank, and other organizations will benefit from the event, which includes a silent auction and entertainment, along with delectable dishes prepared by chefs and players from NFL cities. The festivities begin on Saturday, February 2, at the Phoenix Convention Center. ■ *Information: 952-835-7621 or tasteofthenfl.com.*

FEB
2

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

No one knows the striking landscapes of Page, Lake Powell and Glen Canyon better than Gary Ladd. This year, Friends of Arizona Highways offers two photography workshops taught by Ladd, whose background in both geology and photography offers students the chance to learn from a master. ■ *Information: 888-790-7042 or friendsofazhighways.com.* AH



DAVID H. SMITH

Giddyup Down in the Old Pueblo

SLIP ON YOUR SPURS AND A 10-gallon hat and saddle up for the country's largest outdoor midwinter rodeo — Tucson's 83rd annual La Fiesta de los Vaqueros. The celebration kicks off on February 16 with the Justin Junior Rodeo and Dodge Mutton-bustin' contest, as well as a Pro Rodeo competition. The nine-day fiesta includes an old-fashioned parade with more than 200 Western-themed floats, marching bands, folk dancers and Western riders. After that, professional cowboys and cowgirls hit the arena for bull-riding, barrel-racing, saddle-bronc riding, steer wrestling, roping and bareback riding competitions. ■ *Information: 800-964-5662, 520-741-2233 or tucsonrodeo.com.*

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FEB



RICHARD MAAK

FEB
8

GO FOR THE GOLD

In 1863, Henry Wickenburg discovered a gold mine, but not just any gold mine — Vulture Mine would become the most productive gold mine in Arizona history. The town celebrates its 145th anniversary with its annual Gold Rush Days, which takes place February 8-10. The popular event features gold-panning, music and dancing, a parade, a rodeo and an Old West shootout. ■ *Information: 800-942-5242 or wickenburgchamber.com.*



Rinus Baak, participant



Jim Ryder, participant



Tom Rust, participant



J. Peter Mortimer

Colleen Mimiuk-Sperry

2008 Photo Workshops

Learn From the Best

Professional instruction by Arizona Highways photographers will give both film and digital photographers the opportunity to improve their creative and technical skills.

Join a small group this year to:

- Photograph the distinctive artisans and landscapes of the Hopi Mesas, *April 17-20.*
- Develop and refine your photographic technique among the stunning backdrops of Monument Valley and Canyon de Chelly, *April 19-23; Oct. 28-Nov. 1.*
- Master digital workflow with the help of a professional Photoshop® instructor, *Grand Canyon, April 25-28; Sedona, Oct. 24-27.*
- Escape to a local dude ranch to photograph cowboys and cowgirls in action during horse drives, cattle penning, barrel racing and more, *Horses & Cowboys, Apr. 29-May 3.*
- Experience an exhilarating rafting adventure through the Grand Canyon, *April 30-May 11.*
- Sample a variety of Northern Arizona's premier landscapes, *Best of the West, May 7-12.*
- Discover the twisted interiors of some of Arizona's most amazing slot canyons, *May 11-15; Sept. 23-27.*
- Helicopter into Havasu Canyon to photograph its brilliant blue-green waterfalls, *May 15-19; Nov. 16-20.*
- Select from several exciting workshops led by Navajo photographer LeRoy DeJolie, *Hunt's Mesa & Monument Valley, May 16-20; Navajo Lands & People, June 4-8; Monument Valley for Large Format Photographers, Oct. 10-14.*
- Photograph the Grand Canyon's spectacular North Rim at the height of fall color, *Sept. 29-Oct. 3.*
- Join Gary Ladd as he guides participants to stunning photography locations near Lake Powell, Page and Glen Canyon, *Preposterous Landscapes, Oct. 18-23; Lake Powell by Houseboats, Nov. 11-15.*
- Journey to Southeastern Arizona for breathtaking scenery and magnificent displays of fall color, *Chiricahuas in Autumn, Nov. 4-8.*

These are just a few of the workshops we conduct throughout Arizona and the West.

For More Information

To obtain a free color brochure detailing all of our 2008 photography workshops and prices, call toll-free 888-790-7042, or visit us online at friendsofazhighways.com.





POWELL EXPEDITIONS

With more than 1,900 miles of coastline and millions and millions of years of geologic primping, there's a lot to explore at Lake Powell, and all kinds of ways to do it. BY KELLY KRAMER

MORNING STILLNESS On a late-October morning, nothing but a ripple stirs on Lake Powell at a houseboat camp in Face Canyon. Photograph by Gary Ladd

1

1. Take a dive

TWIN FINN DIVING, PAGE

Sure, Arizona's landlocked. But that's not to say great scuba-diving options don't exist — particularly at Lake Powell, where the fish are as common as the houseboats. Thanks to Twin Finn Diving, the only full-service dive shop in the Lake Powell/Page area, you can strap on a tank and head out to the cool, blue water, searching for creatures like bluegills, largemouth bass, walleyes, crappies, catfish and carp. Twin Finn rents out equipment at affordable rates (\$45 per day for a regulator, weights, a wetsuit, two tanks and a flag), arranges diving excursions and offers introductory courses. Twin Finn also rents kayaks and canoes for a little over-the-top lake exploration of your own.

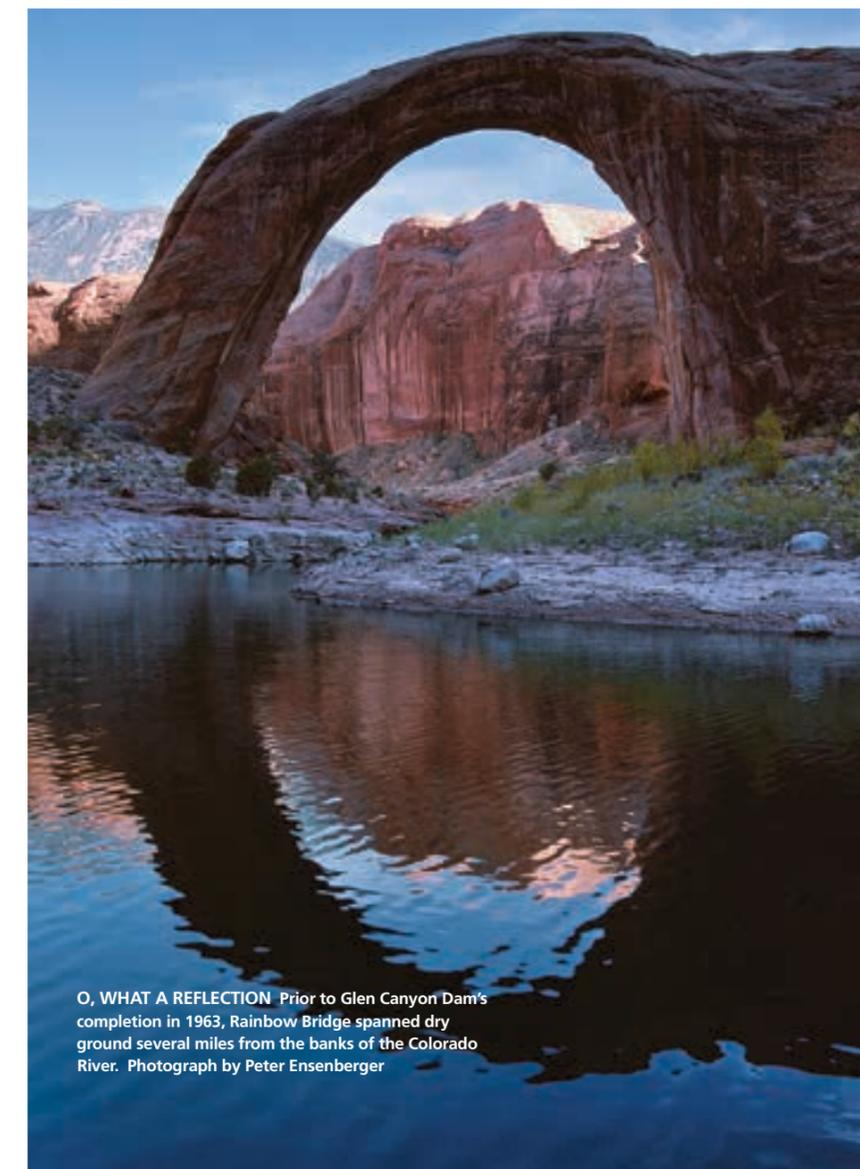
■ For more information: 928-645-3114 or twinfinn.com.

BUBBLE UP Captured in the lens of an underwater camera, a diver begins her descent into Lake Powell's submerged slot canyons. Photograph by Jeff Kida



IN PLANE VIEW Nestled among the trees (left), 251 tenting and full-hookup campsites provide temporary residents of Wahweap Campground & RV Park with a sunrise view of Castle Rock. Photograph by Peter Ensenberger

In August 2002, a tour plane flies over the long arm of Navajo Canyon (below). Photograph by Gary Ladd



O, WHAT A REFLECTION Prior to Glen Canyon Dam's completion in 1963, Rainbow Bridge spanned dry ground several miles from the banks of the Colorado River. Photograph by Peter Ensenberger

2. Rent a houseboat

LAKE POWELL RESORTS & MARINAS, PAGE

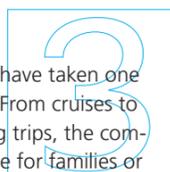


If man is the master of his domain, he can be the captain of his very own floating fortress on Lake Powell. With 10 houseboat options available, Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas offers much more than mediocre dinghies. Take your pick from the 44-foot Explorer, which sleeps 10, but lacks air conditioning, all the way up through the 75-foot Odyssey, which features six staterooms, a GPS system and a home-theater system, as well as a hot tub, water slide, refrigerator and freezer. The houseboats are water-ready, which means you won't have to worry about launching from a dry dock. Whether you're a water-ready partier or just looking to relax, a houseboat is the best way to chill out and enjoy the scenery.

■ For more information: 888-896-3829 or lakepowell.com.

3. Take a tour

LAKE POWELL TOURS, LAKE POWELL



Too bad Gilligan and the gang couldn't have taken one of Lake Powell Tours' three-hour tours. From cruises to Rainbow Bridge to breakfast sightseeing trips, the company offers a slew of adventures suitable for families or couples looking for a romantic excursion. Popular water expeditions are the Canyon Princess Dinner Cruise, the Navajo Tapestry Boat Cruise, the Sunset Cruise and kayak tours. Although the best way to see Lake Powell is from the water, it's not the only way. That's why Lake Powell Tours also offers a number of hiking expeditions.

■ For more information: 800-410-8302 or lakepowelltours.net.

4. Take flight

WESTWIND AIR SERVICE, PAGE



There's something special about Page. Not only is it a charming little town, but it's also smack-dab in the middle of Arizona's "scenic triangle," which encompasses the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley and Lake Powell/Rainbow Bridge. That's why Westwind Air Service launches several of its tours from the town, including its Grand Scenic Triangle Aerial Tour, which departs near the lake and flies over Navajo Mountain, Monument Valley and the Grand Canyon, before landing at Grand Canyon National Park Airport. Westwind also offers packages that feature air and ground tours of the area, including some that can accommodate entire tour buses full of travelers.

■ For more information: 800-245-8668 or westwindairservice.com.

5. Visit the other canyon

NAVAJO TOURS, NAVAJO NATION

Even if you don't believe in mythology, you'll have to believe that something magical happened as rain and wind-driven sediment carved the sandstone walls of Upper and Lower Antelope canyons over the millennia. Navajo guides have led countless adventurers through the canyons and into what they call "the crack," although Navajo Nation residents no longer herd sheep through Upper Antelope. Guided tours through the Southwest's most photographed slot canyon typically last an hour, and don't require a lot of exertion — the majority of travel occurs in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. For shutterbugs, photography tours last approximately two hours.

■ For more information: 928-698-3384 or navajotours.com.

ANTELOPE INTERLOPER A dried branch lies on a ledge in bristly counterpoint to the swirling sandstone patterns of Lower Antelope Canyon. Photograph by Ralph Lee Hopkins

6. Pitch a tent

WAHWEAP CAMPGROUND, WAHWEAP

If you're looking for a room with a view, this is it. Composed of 112 tentsites and 139 full hookups, Wahweap Campground & RV Park is the area's best place to pitch a tent, roll out the sleeping bags and roast a marshmallow or two. Wahweap campers are awarded full access to all of Lake Powell's amenities, as well as campsite grills and tables, utility hookups, laundry facilities, restrooms, showers and fire rings. And the campground is within close proximity to Wahweap Marina, where you'll find plenty of fishing equipment, bait and boat rentals. If you can't find all you're looking for at the campground, Page is only a few miles to the south.

■ For more information: 928-645-1004 or lakepowell.com.

7. Take a hike

HANGING GARDENS,
GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

It's not often that you stumble across a garden in the middle of the desert, let alone a hanging one. But thanks to winter precipitation, water collects in a Glen Canyon National Recreation Area aquifer, then drips downward through cracks and crevices in the porous rock of the Colorado Plateau. When the water reaches an impermeable layer — like the Kayenta Formation — it flows sideways and down the walls of canyons, where a variety of plants, including maidenhair ferns and helleborine orchids, cloak the Jurassic Navajo sandstone walls. Of the Colorado Plateau's hundreds of endemic plant species, 35 grow in the area's nearly 200 hanging gardens, supporting water-loving birds and wildlife. If you explore any of them, including Ribbon Canyon Garden, tread lightly, as the slopes are fragile and easily eroded.

■ For more information: 928-608-6200 or nps.gov/glca.

8. Drop a line

BUBBA'S LAKE POWELL FISHING GUIDE SERVICE, PAGE

The bass are big in Lake Powell, thanks in large part to nearly 2,000 miles of shoreline and plenty of smaller fish on which to dine. And thanks to the company that Jerry "Bubba" Puckett started 20 years ago — Bubba's Lake Powell Fishing Guide Service — novice and hardened anglers alike can find some of the best bass-fishing hotspots the lake has to offer. Although the company is now owned by Bubba's good buddy, Jim Cliburn, its guides can customize a fishing trip built to your own specifications, whether you're a solo adventurer or have a school of kids to take along. Best of all, you won't have to haul your own equipment. Cliburn and his crew have you covered.

■ For more information: 888-741-2822 or bubbasguide.com.



ROCKY ROAD Near Hole in the Rock, the water of Lake Powell reflects clouds and craggy cliffs on an early winter afternoon. This rough terrain didn't daunt Mormon pioneers who forged a wagon trail through the area in the winter of 1879-80. Photograph by Gary Ladd

9. Hit the road

HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK ROAD, ESCALANTE, UTAH, TO LAKE POWELL, ARIZONA

For 62 miles, from Escalante, Utah, to the western shore of Lake Powell, Hole-in-the-Rock Road runs a ragged, rocky route. In the summer, it's hot (temperatures often exceed the century mark), and in the winter, it's cold (temperatures below freezing are commonplace), but Hole-in-the-Rock is home to some of the most splendid scenery Lake Powell has to offer. Although much of the road runs through Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the last 5 miles or so are within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area — a four-wheel-drive vehicle is required. Consider the names of some of the points of interest along the way — Dance Hall Rock, Carcass Wash and Fifty Mile Spring, to name a few — and hit the road. But be prepared. Take plenty of water and a few snacks, and be aware of flash floods, particularly during the summer months.

■ For more information: 928-608-6200 or nps.gov/glca.

10. Pay your respects

JOHN WESLEY POWELL MEMORIAL MUSEUM, PAGE

A trip to Lake Powell wouldn't be complete without paying homage to the man for whom the lake was named, one-armed Civil War veteran Major John Wesley Powell. Back in 1869, 10 men in four boats set sail along the Green River in Wyoming, looking to find a bigger slice of the American pie and confirm Powell's theories about the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. Powell did it, and like all good explorers, he discovered amazing things along the way, such as the Virgin River (now under Lake Mead) and several native ruins along the Colorado. In addition to showcasing memorabilia from Powell's two expeditions down the river, the John Wesley Powell Memorial Museum also features a substantial collection of Native American and pioneer artifacts, as well as exhibits that focus on the history and development of Page and the geology of Colorado River-cut canyons.

■ For more information: 888-597-6873 or powellmuseum.org.

Kelly Kramer is a Phoenix-based writer and a regular contributor to Arizona Highways.



In case you hadn't noticed, we have a lot of shots of Lake Powell in this issue. They're all spectacular, but for our portfolio, we wanted something different, so we sent our photographer up in a plane.

Out of the Clear Blue Sky



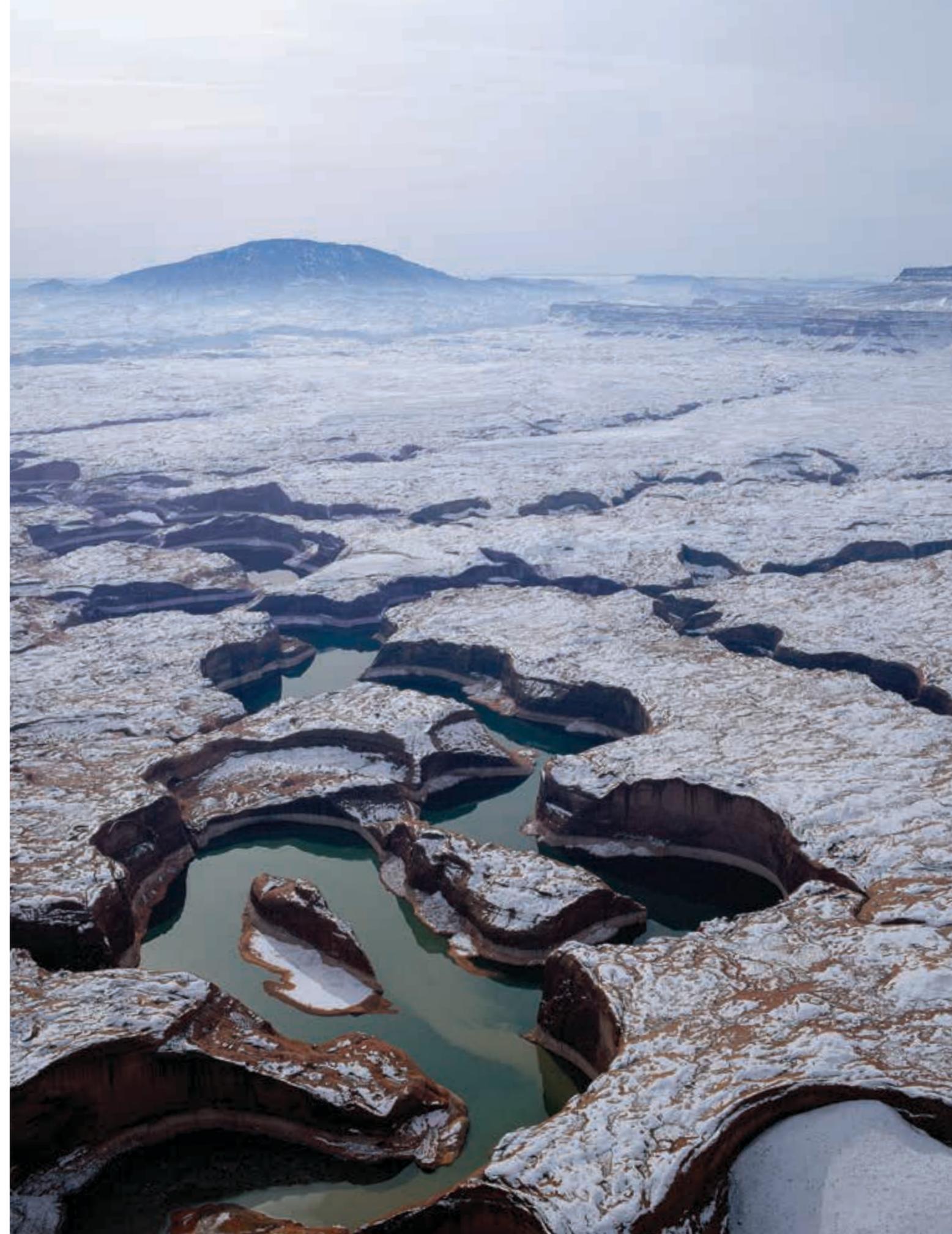
TO THE POINT Kane Point juts across Lake Powell, which combines the cinematic scenery of Glen Canyon with the reflective beauty and recreational possibilities of a reservoir.
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



STAINED STONE Houseboats camp in inlets (below) stained with a "bathwater ring" that marks the lake's level before severe drought caused it to drop rapidly a few years ago.

"DESSERTED CANYON" Resembling powdered sugar dusted over gingerbread (right), snow settles on Lake Powell's Escalante Arm, celebrated for its arches, narrow canyons and Indian ruins.

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





BAY WATCH The sun sets over Padre Bay (left), illuminating the stripes of sandstone that make up the lake's signature buttes and arches.

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



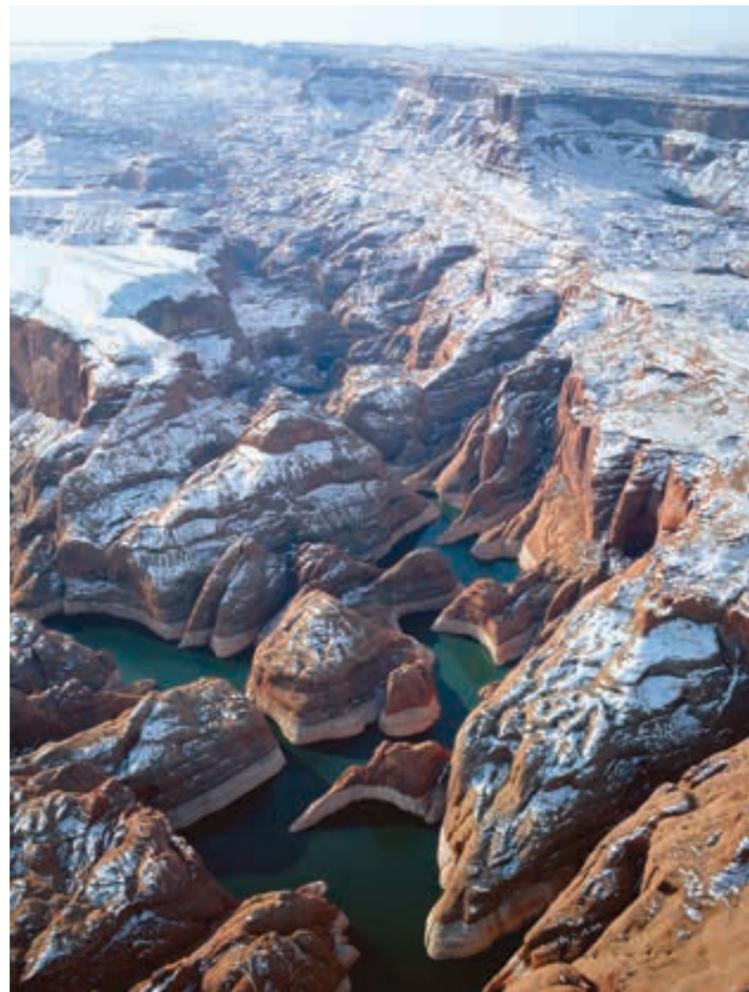
AROUND THE HORN A houseboat takes an early morning spin around Gregory Butte (left), a castle-shaped monolith near Last Chance Canyon.

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

REAL CANYONS HAVE CURVES With the lake down 140 feet from full, the serpentine loops of Reflection Canyon (above) emerge, enticing boaters with new scenes around every turn.

DISCOVERY CHANNEL Hundreds of squiggly channels like Anasazi Canyon (right) radiate off Lake Powell, inviting boaters to detour into the slickrock wilderness.





FATHER FIGURE It's easy to see figures in some of the lake's bizarre rock formations. Padres Butte (above, left) rises like a sandstone Loch Ness monster prowling Padre Bay.  To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

SNOWBALL EFFECT When snow sifts over the canyons, houseboats stay moored and silence reigns in the twisting course of Forbidding Canyon (left).

WHAT LIES BENEATH A speedboat narrowly misses rocks bulging up from the main channel near Antelope Point (above). 





Reflecting on the Water

Edward Abbey wasn't a fan. Few environmentalists were, including our writer, who boycotted Lake Powell for more than 25 years. He stayed away until a story assignment forced him to contemplate his opposition. We won't give away the ending, but chills are running up the collective spine of the Monkey Wrench Gang.

BY LAWRENCE W. CHEEK PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY LADD

MAGNIFICENT MORNING Sunrise illuminates the craggy face of Padres Butte on a placid Lake Powell. Named for John Wesley Powell, who first explored the Colorado River in 1869, the lake has more than 1,900 miles of shoreline. ■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



AS CRIME SCENES GO, LAKE POWELL IS SO STAGGERINGLY BEAUTIFUL THAT IT'S HARD TO HOLD IN THE LOCK OF YOUR MIND THAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE APPALLED BY IT. EVEN EDWARD ABBEY WAS GRUDGINGLY SEDUCED: "THOUGH NOT A LAKE, [IT] MAY WELL BE AS ITS DEFENDERS ASSERT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RESERVOIR IN THE WORLD." SIERRA CLUB'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID BROWER LIKewise SLIPPED DURING A BOAT TRIP STAGED BY NATURE WRITER JOHN MCPHEE. "YOU CAN'T DUPLICATE THIS EXPERIENCE — THIS LAKE — ANYWHERE ELSE," BROWER ADMITTED.

I'm spending five days on Lake Powell in a kayak, nominally to scribble a travel story, but I'm gnawing on a deeper personal agenda that I haven't shared with the five other members of our plastic flotilla. In a microboycott to honor my environmental ethic, I never came here during the quarter-century that I lived in Arizona. I believed then, and now, that we humans hold a moral responsibility to tread as lightly as possible on the Earth. How can anyone reconcile that principle with the colossal bootprint of this desert lake?

This is a dilemma that overflows the borders of a travel story. It's worth visiting Lake Powell solely to consider the rightness or wrongness of its existence. The conjunctions of nature and civilization are among the most powerful issues of our time, and they're becoming more pressing as the planet grows more crowded and our uses of its resources more daring. Lake Powell, though nearly 50 years old, is perhaps the most radical and

controversial transformation of a landscape yet undertaken by humankind.

The idea of man-made lakes first occurred some 4,000 years ago as small reservoirs for drinking water and irrigation in China, Egypt and Mesopotamia. But these were little more than beaver dams that happened to be built by two-legged land mammals. The great reservoir boom had to wait for concrete (huge earthen dams tended toward spectacular and lethal failures), and in North America, the New Deal and its public works ambitions. With Hoover Dam in 1935, the second of six stoppers

EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS A houseboat navigates the curves of Reflection Canyon (above), exposed due to low water levels in the lake. **MIRROR IMAGE** Tower Butte (right) reflects on the blue-green water of a quiet cove in Labyrinth Canyon.

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



along the Colorado River in Arizona, an era of titanic dams — and vast reservoirs behind them — was in full bloom.

Glen Canyon Dam, which created Lake Powell, was unique because the landscape upstream was no everyday desert basin. It was a labyrinth of crinkly canyons, some as dark and foreboding as dungeons, others as dramatic as Gothic cathedrals, punctuated by occasional waterfalls and sunlit splashes of Gambel oaks and willows. Abbey, who devoted a chapter of his book *Desert Solitaire* to his rubber-raft trip through the canyon before the lake backed into it, concluded that the landscape was “an Eden, a portion of the earth’s original paradise.”

The dam’s raison d’être, strangely, is murky. The Bureau of Reclamation sold the idea to Congress as a means of hoarding Colorado River water for irrigation and hydroelectric power. But Arizona and Utah also saw it as a catalyst for mass tourism, which Glen Canyon’s wilderness had not been. After the lake arose, its unique beauty seemed to overwrite all other considerations. A brochure authored by Floyd Dominy, the Bureau’s commissioner from 1959 to 1969, is empurpled with prose likely not matched by any bureaucrat in modern times: “Colors like a symphony of Nature’s music ... a front-row seat in an amphitheater of infinity ... a oneness with the world and God.”

But the lake has not forged a oneness of opinion. Countless writers have seconded Abbey’s alternating heartbreak and fury

over the loss of Glen Canyon, and in 1997 Richard Ingebretsen, a Salt Lake City physician, formed the Glen Canyon Institute with the goal of draining the lake. The most remarkable second thought about the lake came from Arizona’s rock-ribbed Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, who said in 1976 that in all his Senate years, what he most wished he could change was a vote he cast to construct Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River. Goldwater was remembering the river he’d visited in 1940, gone forever.



Arizona is a land of audacious schemes, partly because it’s young and open, and also because the outrageous landscape seems to provoke us into competing with it. More than a millennium ago, the Hohokam created the largest canal system in North America in the valley that now cradles Phoenix. On the modern Colorado Plateau, artist James Turrell has spent more than three decades remaking a volcanic crater into an experiential observatory. Metropolitan Phoenix, an oasis supporting more than 4 million people, is an act of faith in a desert that enjoys 8 inches of rainfall a year.

Most of our schemes alter the landscape. Some respectfully: The prehistoric Sinagua pueblo of Tuzigoot crowns a Verde Valley hill so gracefully that Mother Nature herself could have arranged the rock walls. And some do not: Modern homes perch on the slopes of Phoenix’s Camelback Mountain and Tucson’s Santa Catalinas, each making its personal architectural statement, and the cumulative effect is grandly scaled clutter.

But it’s dreamy naiveté to imagine that ancient Native Americans were more enlightened stewards than we are. Pueblo architecture flows with the mood and shape of the land because of its builders’ limitations. They couldn’t truck in materials from distant places; they had to fashion their architecture out of whatever the site provided: sandstone, clay, pine. Naturally, it took on an organic air. Tuzigoot and similar pueblos probably assumed their tight, clustered forms from the necessity of defense. Modern mountainside homes, widely separated on acre lots, grow out of a different need — the yearning for privacy.

Whatever the reasons, transforming landscape is what our species does. At whatever level the technology of the moment allows, we build roads, bridges, dams, canals, fences, fortifications and houses. The Hohokam built vast earthen mounds and scooped out ball courts; we move dirt to sculpt golf courses and parking lots. These ambitions are as legitimate a part of our nature as building nests is for eagles. Every living organism’s biological imperative is to exploit its environment, to maximize opportunity. For better or worse, we humans are equipped to make more of this mandate than any other species.

We’re also uniquely equipped to predict



the consequences of what we’re considering doing, but we haven’t used this feature of our brains very well. This, I think, is the unspoken debate at the heart of the Lake Powell issue. John McPhee suggested it in his 1977 book *Encounters With the Archdruid*: “Possibly the reaction to dams is so violent because rivers are the ultimate metaphors of existence, and dams destroy rivers.”

Lake Powell is a monster metaphor. It’s a summation of modern technology’s nearly unlimited power to revise nature, and its opponents fear that it stands as a precedent. Draining the lake, on the other hand, would be an equally monumental but opposite symbol: a scaling back of human aspirations, a recognition that the human species is only part of a much larger community of life on Earth, one over which opposable thumbs do not automatically give us dominion.

That’s a seductive idea for someone who believes that our species needs a booster shot of humility, as I do. The problem is that when applied to Lake Powell, it disregards the human capacity for creating beauty, another piece of our biological uniqueness. We are rearranging nature whenever we design a garden, build a house, sculpt a figure out of stone or wood, or even make a painting. (Canvas is a reorganization of plant fibers; pigments derive from minerals.) If Lake Powell is, as Abbey intimated, “the most beautiful reservoir in the world,” then it also serves as a stunning example of artistic success. Most of our meddling with nature, from suburban lawns to other man-made lakes, is not nearly as laudable.

Of course, Lake Powell’s beauty only builds on what was

CANYON COUNTRY Lake Powell twists through the winding narrows of Cascade Canyon (left).

KAYAK CONVOY A kayaker tries to stay afloat in the waves below a 120-foot-high waterfall in Bridge Canyon (above, left). Surrounded by towering Navajo sandstone walls, kayakers paddle through slots in Anasazi Canyon (above, right).

there before: the spectacular canyons and slickrock shelves. The spectacle that transfixes us today is the starkly dramatic juxtaposition of pink stone, sapphire sky and turquoise water, all on a scale never before seen in a desert. And yes, another spectacle, precious and irreplaceable, has been drowned underneath it. How to weigh the value of each against the other? Most of us, including me, never visited Glen Canyon in person. What we’re really weighing is the symbolic power of the engineered lake versus the natural canyon.

One of my fellow kayakers throws out a provocative thought as we fabricate a camp in a stony bowl embracing a bay. “If this were natural,” he says, “no one would ever think anything other than that it’s fabulous.” Why, then, condemn it for its human-engineered origins? Or to ask a question one step deeper: Why is a lake unnatural when it was made by creatures who are, unquestionably, part of nature?

Behind our camp, the moon rides over a ring of serrated bluffs. Its white light, cold and sharp as ice, renders the red mountains into silhouettes that glow with vague menace, like charcoal hoarding a secret fire. Then intimations of lightning begin flashing on the southern horizon, and for the next two hours we watch — warily — as a late-summer thunderstorm scribes a half-circle around us. Faint orange virgas scratch the sky, but the rain never finds the ground — a reminder that despite the 27 million acre-feet of water beside us, we’re in the desert.

Possibly we humans have a legitimate role to play in this grand scene, or perhaps we already have improvised beyond what the desert’s script will tolerate. Lake Powell eventually will prove to be a dramatic example of what we should or should not do. All I know is that in this flicker of geologic time, I’m in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, and no longer appalled. ■

Lawrence W. Cheek lives near Seattle, where he’s a boat builder, sailor, kayaker and architecture critic for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.



GUARDS AGAINST GRAFFITI Volunteers remove modern-day graffiti that has damaged historical inscriptions and ancient petroglyphs on the red-rock surfaces lining the shores of Lake Powell.

CleanUp CREW

“Rob and Kathi” have no respect for Mother Nature. Neither do the thousands of other vandals who carve their names in the red rocks surrounding Lake Powell. The task of removing the graffiti falls to volunteers, who are doing their best to make a difference. It’s a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

Written & Photographed by Gary Ladd



It’s a Friday morning, and Jim Page is issuing me a hat, work gloves and a T-shirt. He’s an ex-Marine who hates Lake Powell’s shoreline graffiti. Because of that, he’s volunteered to pilot *True GRIT*, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area’s houseboat, and lead volunteer groups eager to scrub rock walls until they’re graffiti-free. This week, I’m one of the crew members.

Five years ago, four longtime Powell enthusiasts decided they’d seen enough — Lake Powell’s graffiti problem was out of control. That’s when Bob and Vicki Schwartz, and Bill and Carol Williams, donated a houseboat. The boat was christened *True GRIT* in April 2004 — GRIT is an acronym for “Graffiti Removal & Intervention Team” — and it’s patrolled the lake ever since, armed with binoculars, buckets and brushes.

Two other crew members are joining me on this trip. John Dowding is from Salt Lake City, and Sally Foti is from Greentown, a small town near Page. Our commander, Jim Page, is from Big Water, Utah. The four of us are going to focus

our efforts on historic locations around the lake.

After a quiet cruise up the lake to a camp in Oak Bay, I ask Page about the program’s funding. “It comes mostly from the National Park Foundation,” he says. “And Antelope Point Marina helps by contributing a boat slip at the dock and boat maintenance.” Elbow grease does the rest.

The next morning, we pile into the speedboat we’re towing behind *True GRIT* and head up the lake to Hole-in-the-Rock, the cleft in the rim of Glen Canyon where, in 1879, Mormon pioneers blasted an improbable wagon route down a 1,000-foot chute to the Colorado River. After six weeks of labor, they skidded 83 wagons down “The Hole,” ferried them across the river, then forced their way out of the canyon. Six months after leaving civilization, hardened and exhausted, they founded the town of Bluff in southeastern Utah. It’s one of the most celebrated migrations in the history of the West.

These days, Lake Powell boaters can anchor at the foot of

Hole-in-the-Rock and climb the 700 feet to the rim. Along the way, remnants of retaining walls, drill holes and numerous historic inscriptions are still visible. Unfortunately, Hole-in-the-Rock, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, has been defaced, and recent inscriptions vastly outnumber the historic messages.

That’s why Foti, Dowding, Page and I climb to the top. Sixty miles of dirt and slickrock road ends at the summit of The Hole, and we suspect that many of the vandals arrived via this route. We circle around from the road’s end back to the rim of the canyon where there’s a stupendous view eastward. We can easily see across the lake into Cottonwood Canyon, and with binoculars we can see remnants of a road leading up to the far rim at Aladdin’s Lamp Pass. It’s too bad that such extraordinary landscapes have been covered with graffiti, even if the destruction wasn’t perpetrated by calloused criminals, but rather average people like “Rob & Kathi,” who probably fail to comprehend their own depravity.

The next day we park the speedboat near the mouth of the Escalante Arm of the lake. Nearby we locate an inscription hidden in a yawning sandstone alcove: “J.W. Black, 1896.” Black was a pioneer trail builder and explorer. But again, disrespectful boaters have scrawled scores of names, dates, blasphemies and declarations of love around Black’s name. We go to work. Four hours later, we’ve cleaned the alcove, leaving the Black inscription alone and unblemished.

On our last full day we head to Rainbow Bridge, a place revered by Native Americans, archaeologists, geologists, historians and just about every intelligent biped. Despite its stature, we find blighted rock. All we are allowed to do, however, is make notes and take photographs because restoration work at Rainbow Bridge National Monument must be supervised by a

National Park Service archaeologist and representatives from Native American tribes.

During our trip back to Antelope Point, I open *True GRIT*’s unofficial ship’s log. Inside, I find descriptions of weekly adventures and discoveries, brilliant sunrises, cartoons and praise for the graffiti-removal program, all recorded by the volunteers. It’s a distinguished record of daily adventures and hard work. In 2005 and 2006, 85 volunteers removed more than 11,000 square feet of graffiti around Lake Powell.

A few months after my trip, a *True GRIT* volunteer discovered one of the most egregious examples of graffiti vandalism. In a rocky ravine near Padre Bay, a Spanish inscription read: “We passed this way, 1776.” It’s believed to have been carved by a member of the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition on its return trip to Santa Fe. After failing to reach Monterey, California, before winter, the expedition reversed course, traveling through this area just before a climactic fording of the Colorado River. The inscription survived intact for 218 years until Rob & Kathi scratched their names over it in 1994.

Rob and Kathi: If you’re reading this, the National Park Service would like you to give them a call. ■■

EDITOR’S NOTE: Several months after the discovery of the 1776 inscription near Padre Bay, Gary Ladd helped carry 175 pounds of laser-scanning equipment to the site to test it for authenticity. Preliminary results indicate the inscription is genuine.

■ True GRIT heads out approximately 12 times a year, for five to seven days at a time. For information, call 928-608-6200 or visit nps.gov/glca.

Gary Ladd can’t imagine what some people are thinking when they visit Glen Canyon and surround themselves in its beauty, and then sabotage the very landscape they went to experience. Ladd lives in Page at the edge of Glen Canyon.

An aerial photograph of the Glen Canyon Dam and Bridge. The dam is a large, curved concrete structure spanning a deep canyon. The bridge is a long, steel truss structure extending from the dam towards the right. The surrounding landscape is rugged and rocky, with a winding road and a parking lot visible on the right side. The water in the reservoir is a deep blue-green color.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW An aerial view of Glen Canyon Dam reveals its graceful concrete curve. The adjacent Glen Canyon Dam Bridge was dedicated in 1959.

If one cubic yard

of concrete landed

on your head,

you'd die.

If 5 million cubic yards

of concrete landed

in Northern Arizona,

you'd have something

called Glen Canyon Dam.

Love it or hate it,

this thing is big —

really big.

DAM BIG

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY GARY LADD



OPTICAL ILLUSION The sun casts a straight shadow of the Glen Canyon Dam Bridge onto the curved surface of the dam.

“Everybody brings their own eyes to this place,”

Joanna Joseph says with a smile. “Kids ask if anybody’s ever skateboarded its face. Calculus students look at it and wonder what part of a conic section it might be, engineers see formulas expressed in concrete, and environmentalists see a river being thwarted.”

For a little more than a decade, Joseph led tours of Glen Canyon Dam, telling visitors from around the world about the concrete Goliath that gave birth to Lake Powell, which winds for 186 miles through the canyons of southern Utah and Northern Arizona. More than seven years went into the construction of the dam, and it took another 24 months to finish the power plant. The lake took even longer — although it started rising in March 1963, it didn’t hit its high-water mark until June 1980.

Glen Canyon Dam was authorized by Congress in 1956 as part of the Colorado River Storage Project. The Bureau of Reclamation oversaw the construction, and today operates the dam as one of several projects along the Colorado River.

Despite its immensity, the dam doesn’t sit still. The hydroelectric power plant at its base pulses with the spinning of eight 400-ton turbine rotors. It hums, too — a German visitor once pointed out that the buzz of the power plant is a continuous B-flat. And like a living organism, the dam squirms a little in its sandstone seat. In the summer, the sweeping concrete face heats up beneath the sun and bulges upstream. The annual expansion is measured by engineers, who use lasers and plumb lines to track the movement — the recordings show an upstream shift of 1.5 to 2 inches at the dam’s center every summer.

Not surprisingly, engineers are constantly looking for signs of any unusual movement or change. That’s why the dam houses 3 miles of inspection galleries, which form a labyrinth of tunnels throughout the dam, from top to bottom and canyon wall to canyon wall.

“We’re continually updating our monitoring equipment,” says Jeff Jones, foreman of the dam’s group of electronic equipment mechanics. “The trend has been to go from daily, weekly and monthly physical checks to continuous electronic checks.”

For subtle, long-term movements within the dam, there are hundreds of strain gauges and piezometers to measure the resolve of the lake to slip beneath the dam. And there’s a seismograph to measure larger, more sudden stirrings. So far, the seismograph hasn’t revealed anything of interest.



RAPID RELEASE Hollow jet valves, located at the base of the dam, release water from Lake Powell when necessary.

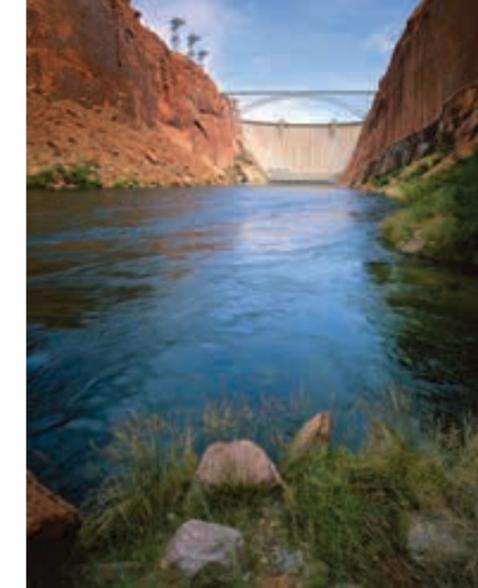
Like Hoover Dam to the west, Glen Canyon Dam is a gravity arch dam — its 10 million tons of mass help prevent the deep waters of Lake Powell from shoving it aside. Equally important is the arch-shape of the dam, which maximizes geometry to facilitate stability. Because the arch hunches against the force of the water behind it, the push of the lake only wedges the dam more tightly into the canyon walls. (The same geometry stabilizes nearby Rainbow Bridge — the world’s largest natural bridge.)

Of course, the dam wasn’t built to be a lab exercise for engineers. Or a tourist attraction, for that matter. It was built to generate electricity and store water for use in drought years. And it’s served its purpose. From 1985 to 1993, during a period of below-normal snowfall in the Rocky Mountains, Lake Powell released half of its water to downstream users. It gained back most of that water in subsequent wet years. But in the summer of 1999, another drought rolled in, and by April 2005, Lake Powell had surrendered two-thirds of its volume to water users in Arizona, Nevada and California. Since then, the lake has rebounded to about half-capacity.

Drought, however, isn’t the only thing affecting lake levels. Evaporation from the surface of Lake Powell skims off about 4 feet of water per year. That translates to more than 800 cubic feet per second, averaged over a year, when the lake is full. By comparison, the Colorado River typically loses about 10,000 to 20,000 cubic feet per second. The decrease in water is a concern.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The height of Glen Canyon Dam from the river below is 587 feet, which makes it taller than the Washington Monument.
- ▶ The height of the dam from its bedrock foundation is 710 feet, which is just 16 feet shy of Hoover Dam.
- ▶ The maximum thickness of the dam is 300 feet, which is the length of a football field.
- ▶ There are almost 5 million cubic yards of concrete in the dam.
- ▶ The maximum hydropower output of the dam is 1,320 megawatts, which is enough to serve the needs of more than a million people.
- ▶ The maximum capacity of Lake Powell is approximately 27 million acre-feet, which is a little less than Lake Mead.
- ▶ Lake Powell comprises 252 square miles with a shoreline of 1,960 miles, which is more than the U.S. Pacific coastline from Canada to Mexico.



STANDING TALL
Glen Canyon Dam towers 587 feet over the Colorado River, making it the fourth-highest dam in the United States.

And so is the increase in sediment.

Like all lakes, natural or man-made, Lake Powell will eventually fill with sediment. Surveys conducted in the mid-1980s theorized that silt would choke off the lake in a few hundred years. No one knows for sure. What is certain, however, is that dredging won't help, because the rate of siltation is staggering — on average, Lake Powell's tributaries pour the equivalent of 10,000 dump truck loads of silt and sand into the lake every day.

Ironically, the silt that now clogs Lake Powell above the dam is sorely missed downstream in the Grand Canyon, where the natural riparian habitat is starved for spring floods and fresh sand. The ancient ecosystem of the Grand Canyon has been altered by Glen Canyon Dam, and a new, post-dam ecosystem reigns with an array of both positive and negative effects.

Ken Rice, the dam's facility manager, says the bureau is well aware of the challenges. "We're discussing reasonable options for handling the growing silt accumulation," he says. There's a "pandemic plan" as well, he says, for dealing with any situation where routine operations and maintenance are interrupted for long periods of time.

Time will tell what's necessary. Meanwhile, the water continues to flow. And not just to meet water commitments downstream. Recently, a team of environmental scientists and other experts was given a voice in the operation of the dam. Their concerns are many: the preservation of downstream archaeological sites, the enhancement of wildlife habitats, the maintenance of water quality, the contentment of river runners, and the protection of Native American cultural resources, among others. Of course, not every need is met every year, but a largely workable compromise has been achieved, and that seems to appeal to locals and visitors alike.

"There are quite a few tourists who come here specifically to learn more about its pros and cons," Joseph says. Beyond that, the reactions of the tourists vary, depending on where they're from. According to Joseph, the Germans ask, "How tall, how wide, how does it work?" The French remark, "Look at those beautiful curves!" The Japanese ask, "Is it cost-efficient?" And the Americans wonder, "How does this compare with Hoover Dam?"

■ For information on dam tours, visit glencanyonnha.com. For information on Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, visit nps.gov/glca. ■■

BRIDGING THE GAP The steel arch of Glen Canyon Dam Bridge spans 1,028 feet with a deck length of 1,271 feet. Before the bridge was opened in 1959, motorists traveled almost 200 miles to reach the other side of the canyon.

From his home in Page, Gary Ladd can hear the hum of Glen Canyon Dam's electrical transformers, but he prefers the rumble of the Colorado River as it hurries toward the rapids of the Grand Canyon.



Paria Plateau

Located within the boundaries of Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, the Paria Plateau is tough to drive across, but it's well worth the effort.

"We leave behind a long line of cliffs, many hundred feet high, composed of orange and vermilion sandstones. I have named them 'Vermilion Cliffs.' I look back and see the morning sun shining in splendor on their painted faces."

— John Wesley Powell, 1870

EVEN BEFORE WE CROSSED the Colorado River at Marble Canyon, we could see the distant "painted faces" that John Wesley Powell had described more than a hundred years earlier. Soaring 3,000 feet above the Colorado River, the Vermilion Cliffs are almost

as impressive in height as the Grand Canyon is in depth.

The vast and mysterious wall defines the Paria Plateau's impenetrable south side, which comprises 200,000 acres of shifting sands and sculpted rock known as the "Sand Hills."

For this trip, my husband and I had a plan to cross the plateau from west to east, coaxing our ancient Suburban along unmarked "roads" that are little more than sand-drifted trails, where landmarks are few, and so are other human beings.

Because a rare rain had

drenched the area just before we got there, we were optimistic that we could maneuver the axle-deep sand that barricades Joe's Place — the picturesque remains of the oldest ranch house on the plateau — and ride the moist sand all the way to Powell Monument at the southeastern edge.

Our base camp was Lee's Ferry Lodge at Vermilion Cliffs, better known as "Maggie's place." Maggie Sacher, the corporate dropout who owns the motel, oversees a community of free spirits, ranging from her restaurant crew, to Peregrine

Fund staffers who keep vigil at the nearby condor release site, to a regular clientele of ranch hands and government employees. She welcomes tourists, too — folks who are fascinated by the mystery and history of the vast plateau.

On the day of our trip, we woke at dawn and loaded our camera equipment, along with a sheaf of BLM and topographic maps, energy bars, water, a tire pump, a shovel, a first-aid kit, and a notebook with scribbles of advice and directions. We also packed a satellite phone, which we'd rented in Flagstaff.

PERFECT BACKDROP Rising 3,000 feet above the Colorado River, the rugged escarpment of the Vermilion Cliffs (above) showcases the region's intriguing geologic timeline.

According to the maps, there were five potential routes from House Rock Road east onto the plateau. Through a process of trial and error, we decided that BLM Road 1017 was the route with the fewest impediments.

It helps to know the "lay of the sand."

For directions to Joe's Place and Powell Monument, we talked to a retired ranch foreman, who, we were told, knows the area as well as anyone. He wasn't impressed

GOOD OL' JOE On Northern Arizona's Paria Plateau, a 19th century structure, known as Joe's Place (right), sits abandoned on the barren landscape of Sand Hills.

with our maps and GPS coordinates. Turns out, he didn't need them — if he said there was a sliver of road spanning the plateau, we'd later realize that he was right. We also realized that with a little practice, even novices learn to recognize the remnants of roads

that haven't been reclaimed by the sand. Still, with each fork in the sand, the route got more obscure and the maps less definitive.

Nevertheless, we found our way to the unmistakable landmark of Pine Tree Pockets, the now-abandoned

headquarters for Two Mile Ranch's water operation. At the time, the three-room dwelling was occupied by the plateau's sole human inhabitant. These days, the warning cry of a raven is about all that breaks the silence.

Back on the road, stretches





WHAT A VIEW A crevice along the cliffs (left) opens up to the valley below, where the Colorado River begins its journey through the Grand Canyon. In the background, the Echo Cliffs bracket the valley's eastern border.

of deepening sand forced us to shift the Suburban into a lower gear as we headed toward Joe's Place, which is 14 miles beyond Pine Tree Pockets.

At Joe's we stopped in some shallow sand near a gap in the ancient pole fence that connects the 19th century ranch house to its sizable store of water. Recently replenished, the pond sparkled with reflected light. While we were there, a battalion of ravens seemed to scold us. They were persistent and vociferous in their defense of the territory.

To the delight of the black birds, we left Joe's Place and headed for Powell Monument. And along the way, we took note of the route, knowing it would be dusk, and then dark, when we backtracked off the plateau.

On the high perimeter, the conifers were heavy

with cones, succulents were plump, and in the damp sand, the comings and goings of wildlife were vividly recorded. We saw evidence of rabbits, coyotes or foxes, and what was either an elk, an overweight deer or maybe even a bighorn sheep.

As it turned out, the sand tracks took us almost to the precipice. The condor's-eye view of the valley 3,000 feet below is, in the truest sense of the word, awesome. From where we were standing, we

travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: A high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle is required. Because of long stretches of loose sand that can be difficult to maneuver, this road is not recommended for anyone with limited backcountry driving experience.

Warning: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so beware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return.

Information: North Kaibab Ranger District, 928-643-7395; Bureau of Land Management, 435-688-3200; Lee's Ferry Lodge at Vermilion Cliffs, 928-355-2231 or leesferrylodge.com.



TRAIL'S END At 6,700 feet, Powell Monument sits above Marble Canyon on the Vermilion Cliffs' northeastern face.

could see Maggie's place. And even though the buildings were barely distinguishable, like anthills in the sand, the surroundings were easily identified by the incised contours of the Colorado River just beyond. In the distance, we could see cars and trucks crawling soundlessly along U.S. Route 89A.

At Powell Monument, a butte that anchors the eastern façade of the Vermilion Cliffs, we looked for petroglyphs. Although we found a few panels, we didn't have time to look for more. The setting sun told us it was time to go.

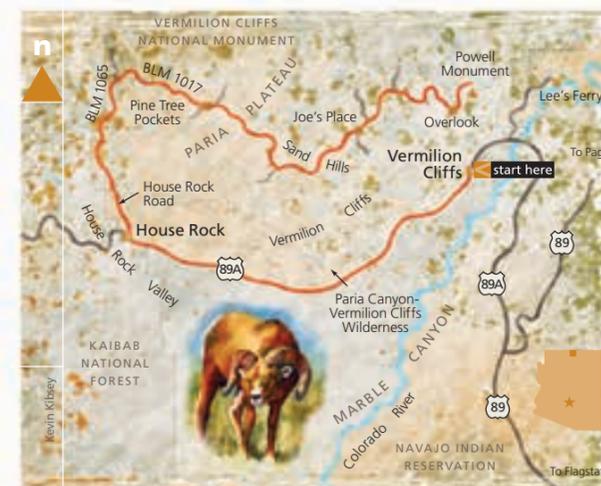
Heading back to Joe's Place

in the company of our long-trailing shadow, we were tempted to bed down in the Suburban in order to catch a glimpse of the watering hole's early morning visitors. But when we used the satellite phone to call Maggie and let her know our plan, she mentioned something about steaks for dinner. Without a second thought, our plan went out the window. Maybe next time we'll make it an overnighter. **AH**

route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- > Begin at Lee's Ferry Lodge at Vermilion Cliffs driving west on U.S. Route 89A for 24.2 miles, and turn right (north) onto House Rock Road (BLM Road 1065).
- > Drive north 9.4 miles to Pine Tree Pockets Road (BLM Road 1017) (36°51.67'N, 112°03.79'W). A corral on the west side of House Rock Road locates the turn-off. The following mileage is referenced from this point.



- > In Corral Valley, at 3.15 miles (36°51.56'N, 112°00.67'W), note a fork to the left and continue straight on BLM 1017.
- > Reach Pine Tree Pockets at 6.3 miles (36°50.61'N, 111°57.67'W), and take the road, BLM Road 1104, to the right (south) of the line shack and well.
- > At 6.65 miles (36°50.51'N, 111°57.44'W), take the left fork onto BLM Road 1105.
- > At 11.5 miles (36°48.82'N, 111°53.40'W), bear right at a fork, continuing on BLM 1105 and begin a long, sandy downhill stretch.
- > At 13.15 miles (36°47.42'N, 111°53.24'W), note a water tank ahead, taking a left fork to find a sand track (still on 1105) in front of the tank heading northeast.
- > At 14.5 miles (36°47.57'N, 111°51.98'W), note a road joining from the left; continue ahead as 1105 becomes BLM Road 1110.
- > Joe's Place is at 20.25 miles (36°49.33'N, 111°47.61'W). The sand is very powdery here, making driving difficult.
- > Continue northeast on BLM 1110 to a sand track "intersection" at 22.8 miles (36°51.21'N, 111°46.51'W) and take the right (east) track.
- > At 24.2 miles (36°51.30'N, 111°45.07'W), bear right at an unmarked junction, continuing through difficult/powdery sand to a "T" intersection with a fence line at 26.5 miles (36°51.18'N, 111°43.39'W). Turn right (south) and follow the tracks along the fence line.
- > At 28.3 miles (36°50.12'N, 111°42.11'W), stop and enjoy the view of Marble Canyon, 3,000 feet below. Continue following the sand track northeast toward Powell Monument and Paria Needle, parking at 30.2 miles (36°51.12'N, 111°40.85'W).
- > To return, backtrack along the same route.

Sand Hill Crack

A nontechnical route to the top of the Vermilion Cliffs in Northern Arizona features scenic views, pioneer history and some very large birds.



KID CONDOR A product of reintroduction efforts begun in the Vermilion Cliffs area in 1996, juvenile California condor No. 10 (above) perches on a sandstone ledge. One of several hoodoo formations (right) greets hikers who complete the climb through Sand Hill Crack.

IN ARIZONA'S NORTH country — far north — sandstone flanks the Colorado River like a misplaced slab of the Great Wall of China, forming the centerpiece of one of the state's newest national monuments: the Vermilion Cliffs, which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The prospect of scaling this 3,000-plus-foot-high bulwark can be intimidating — even on a mild spring day. Fortunately, any hiker in halfway decent shape can get to the top through a gap known as the Sand Hill Crack.

When you go, park near the fenced ranch house next to the trailhead, which is located off U.S. Route 89A in House Rock Valley. The home's rough stone walls are decorated with cowboy graffiti, and none other than Buffalo Bill Cody watered his horses at this place in 1902. The site also was a stopover on the Honeymoon Trail as Mormon newlyweds returning from the temple in St. George, Utah, camped under stars scattered above like juniper berries.

My hike began on a faint dirt road that took me into the foothills. Along the way, jackrabbits — their ears drawing attention like translucent pink exclamation marks — zigzagged among yucca spikes, saltbushes and blooming globemallow, while the

morning light flushed the enormous cliffs in front of me.

A ravine parallels the trail toward the rainbow-colored Chinle sandstone swells, and, against all expectation, willows burst from a hillside above. Insiders know this oasis as Rachel's Pools, the homestead of a woman who lived on the site in a wattle-and-daub shack. The remains of the nearby rock corrals, somehow surviving on the bleached badlands in the distance, serve as testimony to pioneer resilience that is beyond my imagination.

After filling my water bottles at the spring, I tackled the gullied slope to the left, switchbacking to where the trail levels off and is marked by cairns. It then follows a huge sand slide to the base of the cliff, hundreds of feet below a northeasterly notch in the rim. The deep sand slowed me down, but I still outpaced some darkling beetles that struggled uphill.

From there, a breach opens in the cliff face, steep and boulder-choked. This is one of several ancient routes traveled by Ancestral Puebloans who farmed, hunted and gathered wild plants on the Paria Plateau. At this point, I took a short break to gear up for the toughest stretch of the hike, thankful I wasn't climbing in June or July.

Halfway up, I had lunch on a rock ledge and tried

to catch my breath. Views opened onto Marble Canyon, the snowy North Rim of the Grand Canyon and flat-topped Shinumo Altar on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Swifts whistled by, reeling in updrafts.

I continued up a defile, past petroglyphs pecked into the desert varnish more than 800 years ago — some so crisp they looked as if they could have been created the day before.

Piñon pine and juniper trees welcomed me to the top, where I pitched my tent. While I was making camp, six gigantic black shapes glided along the escarpment's lip. To my surprise, the shapes

were California condors, which were released nearby in an effort to re-establish the species in its former range. The birds flew close enough for me to see their heads and to hear the whooshing of their feathers. Although their eyesight is superb, I doubt that the condors' perspective of this landscape could have been more impressive than mine. ■■■

▶ trail guide

Length: Approximately 4 miles round-trip.

Trailhead Elevation: 3,000 feet.

Elevation Gain: 2,000 feet.

Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous.

Payoff: Views, condors.

Getting There: Turn north from U.S. Route 89A between mileposts 557 and 558, near the Escalante-Dominguez marker. Drive this fairly good dirt road about 2 miles toward the Vermilion Cliffs. Park south of the ranch house at Jacobs Pool.

Travel Advisory: Avoid this hike during summer months or lightning storms. Carry water, or treat water from the spring at Rachel's Pools. Take snacks and a good topographic map. Loose rock and sand might make climbing hazardous. In wet conditions, access might require four-wheel-drive.

Information: Bureau of Land Management, 602-417-9200 or 435-688-3200.

