

Arizona vs.
California

North Rim
Road Trip

Adventure
Photography

Q&A: AZ Icon
Eddie Basha

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

AUGUST 2008

Endangered
12 Arizona
of the state's most
threatened natural wonders

[You really need to read this]

PLUS:

The Most Unlikely
Bookstore in America

AND:

Hiking the State's
Third-Highest Peak



Features

14 Endangered Arizona
Off-road vehicles are destroying fragile vegetation in Ironwood Forest National Monument. Lake Mead could dry up by 2021. And Fossil Creek, a shining example of environmental restoration, is now being trashed by the deluge of people drawn to its sparkling water. That's not all. Turns out, many of Arizona's most beautiful places are in jeopardy of losing their allure. BY KERIDWEN CORNELIUS

22 Games of Risk
For the average Joe — and just about everyone he knows — an extreme sport is a spectator sport. That's it. There's no way he'd ever try anything that radical. There are some, however, who go out of their way to find the danger zone. Call 'em nuts, but these rock-climbing, whitewater-running risk-takers get a spine-tingling look at some of Arizona's most incredible landscapes. Of course, if you want to see the same thing, all you have to do is check out this month's portfolio. Life jackets and carabiners not required.

32 One for the Books
A herd of unicorns, Jimmy Hoffa, the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, Arizona's most unique bookstore ... the chance of running into any of these on a remote cattle ranch seems unlikely. Yet, just outside of Benson, down a long dirt road, is the Singing Wind Bookshop, an unimaginable repository in the middle of nowhere. BY LISA SCHNEBLY HEIDINGER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL GRIMES

38 Third Climb Is a Charm
Humphreys Peak and Mount Baldy rank one and two in Arizona, but Escudilla Mountain, the state's third-highest peak, is nothing to scoff at. Aspen groves, wildlife, spectacular vistas ... no wonder Aldo Leopold loved this place. BY RUTH RUDNER PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID MUENCH

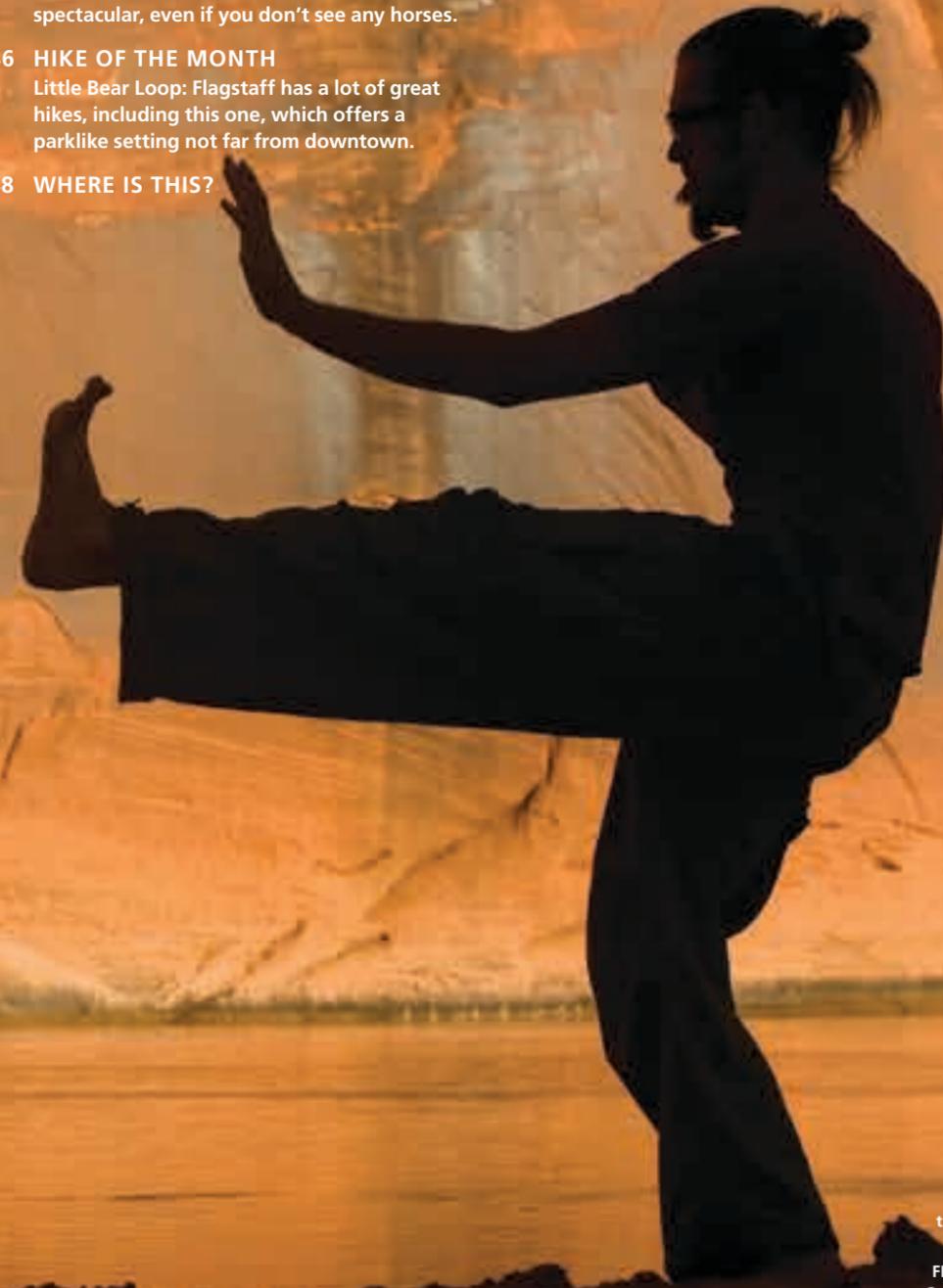
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DISCOVER ARIZONA Plan a trip with our calendar of events.

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.



SAY CHI Nate Davison balances his yin and yang as the sun illuminates the Colorado River in Glen Canyon. Photograph by Dawn Kish

FRONT COVER Ominous clouds lumber over the Grand Canyon at Mohave Point. Photograph by David Muench

BACK COVER Sunlight silhouettes a hiker and paints streaks of gold on the wind-eroded sandstone of The Wave, in the Vermilion Cliffs. Photograph by Dugald Bremner

For most people, a walk in the woods is an outdoor adventure. Extremists, however, like to do things the hard way. See page 22.



KYLE GEORGE



JEFF KIDA

FOSSIL CREEK IS SPECIAL. It has a constant temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit, it's a safe haven for two endangered fish species, and it flows at a rate of almost 25,000 gallons per minute — for those of you who live in Germany, Croatia, or Topeka, Kansas, that's considered a torrent in Arizona.

Indeed, in this neck of the woods, this creek is something special, but it's

more than just the fish and the steady stream of water. Fossil Creek is an extraordinary example of environmental restoration, and the pat on the back goes to Arizona Public Service, the power company that shut down two dams in 2005, thus undoing nearly 100 years of hydroelectric engineering that dried up 96 percent of the creek. It was a bold move that drew praise from tree-huggers and conservatives alike. It was a feel-good story, but as you'll see in *Endangered Arizona*, it's turning into a Catch-22.

"Dammed if you do, damned if you don't." That's how writer Keridwen Cornelius describes the situation. "Ironically," she writes, "this inspiring restoration story has attracted a deluge of unmanaged visitation." As a result, the surrounding wilderness is being polluted with everything from plastic bottles and coolers to tires and deflated rafts. What's more, "Campers are breaking tree branches and trampling vegetation to forge new trails." That's the bad news. The good news is that it's not too late to address the situation, and that's the point of our story.

In all, we'll tell you about a dozen natural wonders around the state that are being threatened for various reasons. It's not our place to judge the causes and effects; however, it is our mission to promote travel in Arizona, and when some of our favorite places are at risk, we think it's our responsibility to let you know about it. Among other things, we'll tell you about what's happening at the Grand Canyon and along the San Pedro River. We'll also tell you about Escudilla Wilderness, but that's a different story.

If you're not familiar with Escudilla, it's located in the mountains of Eastern Arizona. Like so many places in this state,

Escudilla is stunning, especially in the summer. Aspen groves, wildlife, endless vistas ... no wonder Aldo Leopold memorialized this area in his compelling essay, *Thinking Like a Mountain*, which was published in *A Sand County Almanac* in 1949. The essay still has a powerful effect. Of course, several decades have passed since Leopold's visit, so we asked writer Ruth Rudner to retrace his steps and give us a modern perspective.

As always, we sent her out with her husband — legendary photographer David Muench, a longtime contributor to *Arizona Highways*. In *Third Climb Is a Charm*, they paint a picture as beautiful as Leopold's, one that suggests time may have stood still on Escudilla Mountain. Other than the effects of a major wildfire in 1951, this natural wonder hasn't changed much over the years. And neither has Winn Bundy.

You may have heard of Ms. Bundy. She runs a little bookstore about 200 miles south of Escudilla, off a dirt road just outside of Benson. It's no ordinary bookstore, though — Singing Wind Bookshop is crammed into a ranch house in the middle of nowhere. It's an unlikely location, but that's typical of Winn Bundy. As Lisa Schnebly Heidinger writes in *One for the Books*: "She took it into her head that she'd like to own a bookstore. So, in 1974, without a market study to show there were no customers to support it, she used \$600 earned from dog-sitting, and stocked two shelves in her foyer."

It's true there are some people who open bookstores as a respite with no real desire for customers, and that might have been the case with Winn Bundy. Nevertheless, the customers showed up. "First from nearby, then, as word spread, from other states and even other nations."

There's no telling how much longer Ms. Bundy can handle the physical demands of running a 640-acre ranch and a popular bookstore, but she's hoping her granddaughter will take over someday soon. We hope so, too. Like Escudilla and Fossil Creek, Singing Wind Bookshop is something special, and it's worth keeping around for future generations.

— 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 Robin Sewell. For broadcast times, visit arizonahighways.com and click the *Arizona Highways Television* icon at the bottom of our home page.

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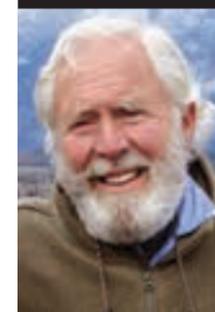
KERIDWEN CORNELIUS

Writer Keridwen Cornelius has lived in Arizona her entire life, but some of the issues facing the state's natural landscapes — like uranium mining claims near the Grand Canyon — came as a surprise (see *Endangered Arizona*, page 14). "I think it's good that we're drawing attention to it, even though it's scary," Cornelius says, adding that the intent of her article is not to discourage people from visiting these areas. "That's the worst thing that could happen, because it's people visiting these places and loving them and advocating for them that is going to save them." In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Cornelius also writes for *National Geographic Adventure* and *The New York Times*.



RUTH RUDNER

When writer Ruth Rudner, a New York native, first came to Arizona, she expected to find mostly desert. "Well, I was very wrong," says Rudner, who now lives in New Mexico. "I've hiked a lot of Arizona's mountains now, and there's so much wildness there, and so much incredible beauty." Rudner fell in love with Escudilla Mountain (see *Third Climb Is a Charm*, page 38), which is shaped like a buffalo. "I've written a book about buffalo ... so maybe a part of Escudilla's magic for me is that it does connect in a certain way with an animal that matters a lot to me." In addition to her work for *Arizona Highways*, Rudner also writes for *The Wall Street Journal*.



DAVID MUENCH

Summer storms on Escudilla Mountain don't bother photographer David Muench — in fact, the aftermath provides stunning photo opportunities. "There's dew on the grass and mushrooms," Muench says. "Those red poisonous mushrooms are absolutely beautiful after a rain." While shooting *Third Climb Is a Charm* (see page 38), Muench also discovered pronghorns and beds of yellow wildflowers scattered across the open meadows. "It's spectacular country; you almost don't want to share it because it's so gorgeous and expansive." Muench has been contributing to *Arizona Highways* since the '60s. His work has also appeared in *National Geographic* and *Audubon*.



JOEL GRIMES

When Joel Grimes arrived at the Singing Wind Bookshop on a Sunday afternoon to photograph Winn Bundy (see *One for the Books*, page 32), she had a meal waiting for him. The two traded stories until Bundy realized she carried a book about Navajos by Grimes in her store. After the connection was made, Grimes was "released" from the table to scout setups in the waning light. Grimes says Bundy refused to remove her glasses or change her outfit for the shoot. "She wouldn't take any of my suggestions," Grimes says. "She was tough, but she had a real sweet spirit." In addition to Arizona, Grimes' photography has taken him to nearly 50 countries and every state but Maine.



Mmm Mmm Good!

Thank you for your recent story about Arizona's best restaurants [*Forks on the Road*, April 2008]. I don't remember *Arizona Highways* ever covering restaurants before, but it really came in handy when I was visiting my brother in Fountain Hills. We were planning a trip to Flagstaff, and we used the magazine to figure out where to eat. We had a great meal at Brix. Thank you. I look forward to trying the other 24 restaurants.

— Renee Larson, Washington, D.C.

Photoshop Feedback

Having read and enjoyed your wonderful magazine for the majority of my life, I find I'm still awed by the extraordinary photographs, which are in every issue. Your April 2008 issue is no exception. Special kudos go to your director of photography, Peter Ensenberger, for his commentary on the special cover. I remember being told about 50 years ago that the Soviet Union had banned *Arizona Highways* because no place on Earth could truthfully be that magnificent. I wonder what the Kremlin bosses think of Photoshop? The cover results are both breathtaking and mind-stimulating. Thank you for the "true confession" on its creation and your ongoing philosophy on the honest use of such enhancement. A dear friend and Arizona native gives me my subscription annually knowing how much I enjoy it. Now I await her invitation to visit your 25 restaurant choices — if not all, certainly Dot's in Bisbee!

Cindy Ker Elrod, Laramie, Wyoming

EDITOR'S NOTE: *That's a true story about the Soviet Union. We have no idea how Russian President Dmitry Medvedev feels about Photoshop, but we're pleased to say that we now*

have subscribers in many of the former Soviet republics.

G-Whiz

I read every issue from cover to cover, so of course I start with your editor's letter. The April [2008] letter immediately struck a resounding chord. No self-respecting shiner would ever say "corn squeezings." They made a lot of "corn squeezin's," but not ever with a "g" on the end. Thanks for your great magazine about this wonderful place in which we live.

Bill McCollum, Skull Valley

A Little English

I am so thrilled to know that you still exist. Many, many years ago, my husband had some copies passed on to him and we loved reading them and looking at the wonderful photos. We've since been to Arizona, and have seen it for ourselves, although, that was a long time ago, when we were both mobile. I see from your Web site that February had Lake Powell in it — I remember it well. Thanks for a great magazine.

Marion Pyke, Berkshire, England

Razing the Bar

This is a poem I wrote in the 1940s while

having a beer at the old bar that was recently torn down at Kohl's Ranch. I am now 90 years old, and reaching for 100.

Mary Kathryn Lucek, Payson

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Most people know Mary as Miss Kitty. She's an amazing woman. Here's her wonderful poem:*

*Kohl's Ranch a noted name of the West,
Emblazoned
When men drove covered wagons, and with
courage were possessed.
They came across plains, they came across
the mountains,
And oft' attacked by Indians, were their
covered wagon trains.
They built a place called "Kohl's Ranch,"
Where they came to live and die, a place
where snow-clad mountains
Reach to kiss the murky sky. Where
ranches now prevalent,
And great herds of cattle roam, where men
hewed trees
And hauled the logs to build a cabin home,
and at this place called
"Kohl's Ranch," where it rests beneath the
Rim, there stands a noted
Barroom, it's grim ... it's old ... it's aged
with sin.
Its name stands out o'er all the rest and was
christened a great place.
And when we gather 'round this bar to sip a
drink and laugh
The old cowboys are still talkin' of the
ghosts ...
That are there in the past. ■■*

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.



Cloud Cover

As if the meadows and mule deer and magnificent evergreens weren't enough, DeMotte Park on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon also offers great views of summer thunderstorms. The park is located 25 miles south of Jacob Lake on State Route 67, and includes a campground with 38 single-unit sites. Concession services are available nearby.

■ *Information: Kaibab National Forest, 928-643-7395 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai*



TOM BEAN

ask AHM

Q What's the story behind the bullet-riddled historical marker dedicated to Charles Churchill Small on Yarnell Hill on State Route 89 north of Wickenburg?

Bill Williams, Prescott Valley

A Dubbed the "Father of Arizona Highways" by his road-engineering co-workers, the self-educated Small never attended college, yet, from 1919 to 1932, helped design Arizona's roadways, his final four years as deputy state highways engineer. In all, he oversaw the construction of 1,000 miles of roadway, including what is now known as "Old Route 66."

■ *If you have a question about Arizona, please send an e-mail to: editor@arizonahighways.com.*



TOM STORY

PEOPLE
He's on Fire

Kirk Rowdabaugh takes his job seriously — when you're the man in charge of fighting wildfires in the state of Arizona, there isn't any choice.

KIRK ROWDABAUGH'S FIRST DAY AS A Phoenix resident was hot. With the temperature topping out at 122 degrees on June 26, 1990, it was hardly an ideal day to move to the Valley of the Sun from Anchorage, Alaska. But, as luck would have it, Rowdabaugh can handle the heat.

As the state forester for Arizona, he leads the government office responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands. And even though he spends a fair amount of time in Washington, D.C. — he's chairman of the National Association of State Foresters — Rowdabaugh has ample opportunity to explore Arizona.

"It might sound surprising, since I spend so much of my time trying to prevent fires in our state forests, but I'm really a desert person," Rowdabaugh says. "Most of the year, I'll head

south to places like Tubac."

When it comes to his day-to-day job, he's most excited about working with other government agencies.

"I fought my first fire when I was just out of high school. It was over the Fourth of July weekend, and I knew that I wanted to be a firefighter for the Forest Service. Now, what I enjoy most about my job is my association with other interested professionals," he says. "The governor has done an excellent job of bringing together diverse people through the Forest Council. It's much more diverse than what I'd experienced before."

Having spent the first 20 years of his career working with other foresters across the West, he says he's been given an opportunity to share that experience with people who haven't spent the bulk of their lives in the field. Those relationships were particularly important in the wake of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire in 2002.

The fire, which burned more than 400,000 acres of managed forest throughout the Fort Apache Indian

Reservation and the Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto national forests, merged from two separate fires, both of which were man-made.

"Rodeo-Chediski brought real focus to what many of us in the profession had begun to believe was happening," Rowdabaugh says. "The fire environment has fundamentally changed over the past several decades. Just look at fuels, demographics and climate. Those kinds of challenges are going to remain with Arizona for the foreseeable future, particularly as the state continues to grow."

In addition, he adds, significant climate change has hastened seasonal snowmelts, doubling the length of the fire season.

"The bottom line is that Rodeo-Chediski really increased a lot of people's awareness about wildfires," he says. "The majority of Arizona's fires are started by people. We concentrate a lot on public awareness. Regardless of where people come from, they need to be aware of the environment they're in, the potential for starting a fire and the implications of their activities. We want people to get their heads up, look around, and realize that the fire environment has dramatically changed, and people aren't likely to catch up."

— Kelly Kramer

CELEBRITY Q & A



Eddie Basha
Grocery Magnate
by Dave Pratt

AH: If you were trying to convince your friends around the country that Arizona is one of the most interesting places in America, where would you take them?

EB: The Zelma Basha Salmeri Gallery of Western American and Native American Art at our corporate headquarters in Chandler. Call 480-895-5230 for information.

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

EB: Neither. To see the topography from an aerial perspective is magnificent.

AH: If you had designed the new "Arizona" quarter, what would you have put on it?

EB: An image depicting Arizona's five C's [cotton, cattle, copper, climate & citrus] of industry. Or former Governor Rose Mofford's beehive.

AH: What are some of your favorite Arizona-made food products?

EB: Unquestionably, it would be the vast array of Mexican foods and the fry breads of the various Indian tribes.

AH: What's your most memorable family vacation in Arizona?

EB: Spending time with my family, past and present, is my most treasured time; location doesn't matter.

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

DINING

Now That's Italian

Zane Grey left Payson in a huff — probably because there weren't any authentic Italian restaurants. Well, now there is.

A PLACARD THAT READS "CUCINA CREATIVA ITALIANA" hangs on the wall of Gerardo's Italian Bistro in Payson. It's a testament to the innovative Italian dishes offered by Gerardo Mocerri, the restaurant's owner and chef.

"Other people open Italian restaurants, but they've never cooked in Italy," says Mocerri, who left his family's produce business in Detroit at the age of 19 to study in Italy under renowned chef Angelo Paracucchi. From there, he traveled to France, Switzerland and Mexico, learning the specialties of each area.

Today, Mocerri brings his worldly influence to the tables at Gerardo's, which opened in 2000. For example, his appreciation for Asian cuisine inspired his use of Japanese-style panko breadcrumbs in his meatballs, while his time in Hawaii gave rise to his calamari Caesar salad.

Whatever culinary theme imbues his dishes, the staple of fresh ingredients never changes. Goat cheese for his specialty flatbread — an exquisite combination of chicken, basil, roasted red peppers and diced tomatoes drizzled with olive oil — comes from Fossil Creek Creamery, 15 minutes up the road in Strawberry. Tomatoes are shipped from Modesto, California, where Mocerri once spent two days in the fields hand-picking the finest specimens.

The staff's favorite dish, Organic Capellini alla Checca, combines these imported tomatoes with fresh basil and garlic atop a bed of organic whole-wheat capellini sautéed with organic Italian extra virgin olive oil. "We like to toss shrimp and red chile flakes in it," Mocerri says. "It's a nice dish that's very light."

On the heavier side, homemade lasagna baked to order by the slice oozes with ricotta, mozzarella and Romano cheeses. A miniature Italian flag tops off each mouthwatering piece. Of course, for many people, Italian means pizza, and the "Le Pizze" menu allows customers to get creative and style their own pies. Oak wood fires the brick oven where hand-thrown pizza dough bakes to thin, crispy perfection.

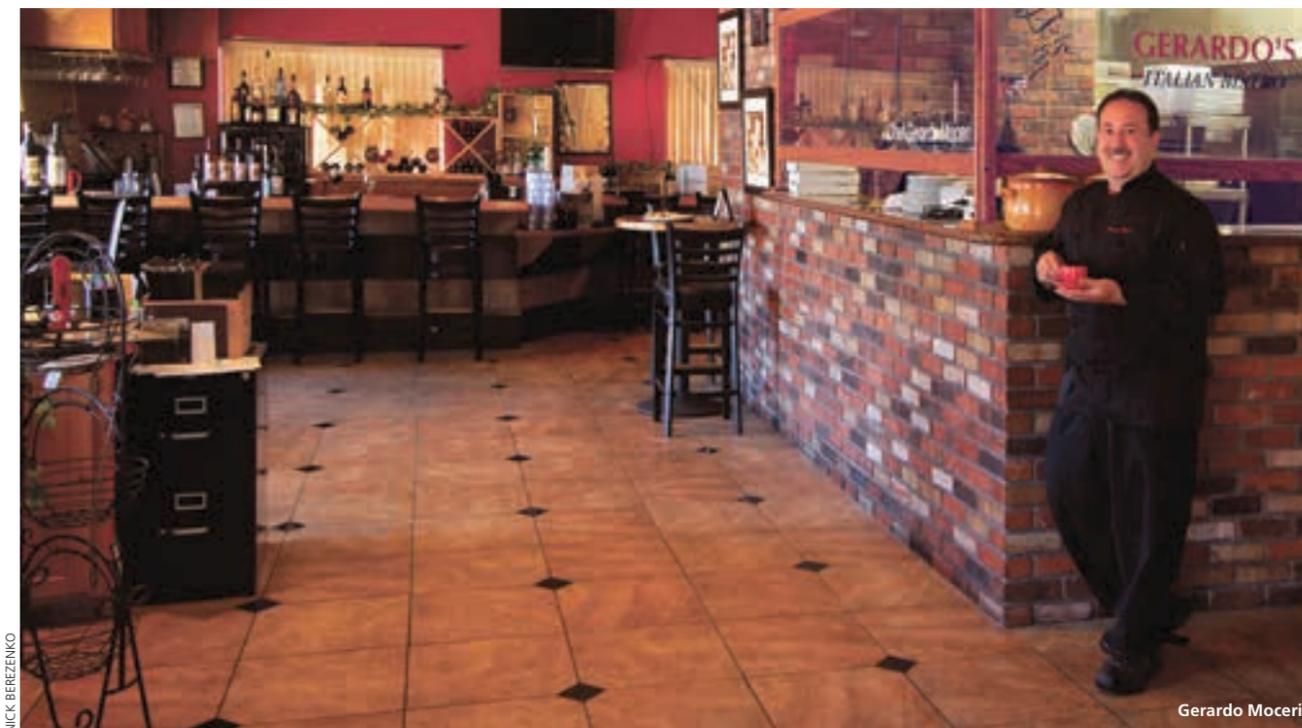
For a hands-on creative experience, Mocerri offers cooking classes where participants can fashion thick, Sicilian-style pizza and fresh mozzarella cheese. For those who would rather watch the experts, Mocerri plans to transform the rear storage section of the restaurant into an exhibition area where customers can observe chefs making pasta in the traditional Italian manner.

Meanwhile, the bar features exclusive wines from Small Vineyards, a Seattle-based company that imports wines from Italy. The labels are decorated with pictures of Mocerri's relatives, echoing the importance of cultural tradition and heritage. The same themes show up in the photographs decorating the restaurant's mint- and brick-colored walls, and in the patrons themselves, who are treated like family.

"It's a simple family bistro," Mocerri says. "We take our time."

■ Gerardo's Italian Bistro is located at 512 N. Beeline Highway in Payson. For more information, call 928-468-6500.

— Leah Duran



NICK BERZENKO

Gerardo Mocerri



MOREY MILBRADT

LODGING

To a Tea

Originally built as a farmhouse in 1926, the Teapot Inn in Chino Valley is a great place for a good night's sleep. The sourdough pancakes are something special, too.

TOMBSTONE, TUBAC, GREER, THE GRAND CANYON ... THESE are the places people think of when they think of weekend getaways — Chino Valley rarely cracks the top 10. One night at the Teapot Inn, though, and people might start thinking otherwise.

Originally built as a farmhouse in 1926, the two-story tan structure is easily identified by its brown shutters and white picket fence. The sofa on the front porch and the soft ringing of wind chimes give it away, as well. Other than that, only a hand-painted sign out front tells visitors that this old house is now the Teapot Inn.

Like most B&Bs, this one has been through its share of remodeling projects, including the addition of rooms in the 1980s. Still, it retains much of its original country charm.

Jim and Vera French opened the Teapot in November 2004, and they were perfectly suited to the bed-and-breakfast business. Vera had worked in the hotel industry for more than 30 years, and Jim worked in home construction for decades.

So far, they've spent about \$50,000 on renovations, adding modern amenities while maintaining the integrity of the farmhouse. Vera says she always wanted to open a B&B, and Chino Valley seemed perfect because of the great weather and friendly townspeople.

"It was always my idea of retirement," she says. "You get more one-on-one time with the guests."

It's been a big change for Vera. Instead of managing large hotels, she now oversees the five-bedroom Teapot Inn and cooks breakfast for the guests. The menu varies, but some of her specialties include sourdough pancakes, eggs Benedict, and biscuits and gravy. It's more than just great food, though. Breakfast is served in a charming dining area decorated with flowered curtains and several tea sets. Guests can also eat in the living room, where a hodgepodge of furniture creates a casual, easygoing environment.

That feeling carries through to each of the five guest rooms. Personal touches are everywhere — bright flowers or plants, quilts at the feet of the beds, and stuffed animals resting on the pillows.

In all, the Teapot Inn comfortably accommodates up to 14 guests, although some rooms have rollaway beds, allowing for a few more people. Three of the rooms have private baths, while the two smaller rooms share a hall bathroom.

Vera says that many of their guests travel to nearby Prescott, Jerome and Cottonwood during their stays, but, she stresses, there are things to do in Chino Valley, too, including wine tastings at Granite Creek Vineyards. Regardless of where people go during the day, they always come back at night. Jim and Vera say they get a lot of return customers because they treat their guests like family. If you're looking for a reason to add Chino Valley to your list of weekend getaways, this is it.

■ *The Teapot Inn is located at 989 W. Center Street in Chino Valley. For more information, call 928-636-7727 or visit teapotinn.com.*

— Hilary Peelle

PHOTOGRAPHY

Fear Factor

Adventure photography isn't for dilettantes. In fact, it requires calculated risks, nerves of steel and a few loose screws.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE WERE made for each other — there's a symbiosis between the two. Together, they chronicle the exhilaration of the human spirit at play.

Adventure photographers are more than voyeurs with good hand-eye coordination. They put themselves in the middle of the action. Anticipating the dramatic moments, they artfully capture feats of accomplishment at close range. With steely nerves, they catch the peak action of rapidly unfolding events. They take calculated risks to show the rest of us a side of life that we might never get to experience.

This issue's photography portfolio, *Games of Risk*, gives you a look through the lens at some of the best heart-pounding, white-knuckle outdoor recreation that Arizona has to offer. Enjoy the photos, but don't try this at home.

Author and photographer John Annerino discusses his approach to adventure photography in our latest book, *Arizona Highways Photography Guide: How & Where to Make Great Photographs*. He admits that sometimes the lines become blurred in his quest to conquer nature's barriers.

"I used to ask myself a question," Annerino writes. "Is photographing the adventure the goal, or is the adventure the means of going deeper into the land to photograph remote vistas? I started out shooting the former until it evolved into the latter."

No doubt there's an adrenaline surge that comes with getting the shot under stress. Photographer Kate Thompson makes her living pushing the boundaries of her comfort zone on adventure photo assignments. She's equally at home being tossed around in whitewater rapids or climbing on a glacier. Facing physical and creative challenges in extreme conditions is part of the appeal.

"My path of editorial photography symbolizes my path of



ANDREW BURR

Sammy Burrell reaches for a splitter crack on the Pillow Wall at Paradise Forks near Flagstaff.

savoring life intensely, while meeting the many challenges that arise," Thompson says.

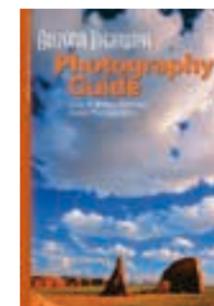
For all-around adventurer Andy Burr, photography intertwines with his exploits as a surfer, kayaker, canyoneer, climber and snowboarder. On his Web site, Burr makes his case for the American Southwest as the best backdrop for living his outdoor dreams. He's climbed its desert towers, explored its slot canyons and floated many of its major rivers — all with camera gear in tow.

"My goal is to capture rare moments of intimate human emotion set on the amazing background that is our natural environment," Burr says.

So, what makes photographers want to subject themselves to such difficult working conditions? Most were hooked on extreme sports before they introduced cameras to the scenario. They're serious about their outdoor experiences, living close to the edge and waiting for the thrills to happen. And they're passionate about sharing their triumphant moments of adventure, along with the blood, sweat and tears it takes to get there.

— Peter Ensenberger, director of photography

PHOTO TIP



Check the Weather

Nature can be powerful and unforgiving. It's important to research the locations you'll be photographing, and be informed of the potential dangers the wilderness presents. Arizona's slot canyons are prone to torrents of runoff during the summer monsoons, and flash floods have claimed the lives of seasoned canyoneers. So timing is everything. Check the latest weather conditions before entering a canyon.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available now at arizonahighways.com.

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

HISTORY

A Federal Case

He's not a household name, but the late Mark Wilmer made history in 1963 when he clobbered California in front of the U.S. Supreme Court.

IN 1931, ARIZONA HAD BEEN IN THE UNION for less than 20 years, and Phoenix and Tucson were small towns with populations that hovered around 40,000. That's also the year that two of the most important events in state history took place: 1) The state suffered defeat in its first Supreme Court battle with California over Colorado River water, and 2) a young attorney named Mark Wilmer began practicing law in Arizona.

Like all states, Arizona was dealing with the Great Depression, but there were other issues, too. In particular, the state's power brokers were working to improve Arizona's water resources, which were being usurped by California. After several failed attempts to get Congressional approval and funding for Colorado River water, Arizona's politicians took drastic measures.

On August 13, 1952, the state of Arizona filed suit against California, asking the Supreme Court, once again, to settle the issue of water rights related to the Colorado River. For the next five years, California's lawyers employed repeated delay tactics in the case, which was known as *Arizona v California*. Worried that the case could drag on for another 10 to 15 years, Governor Ernest McFarland decided to make changes to his legal team. The year was 1957. The change was Mark Wilmer.

With a reputation as Arizona's best litigator, Wilmer accepted Governor McFarland's proposal and took on the fight for



COURTESY WILMER FAMILY

Mark Wilmer (center) worked diligently to improve Arizona's water rights.

Arizona's survival, which depended heavily on water. Along with a small team, Wilmer inherited a case that he described as being "in a hell of a mess." He went right to work, stating rather strongly that Arizona's prior argument was no longer operative and, in fact, was not based in the law. For the next several years, Wilmer and his team hammered away at the lawsuit.

In January and November 1962, during more than 20 hours of argument, Wilmer made his case before the Supreme Court. Then, in June 1963, after 11 years, \$5 million, 340 witnesses, 50 lawyers and 25,000 pages of testimony, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Arizona — upholding Wilmer's claims.

It's not a stretch to say that Wilmer's legal genius helped shape the economy, population and culture of the American Southwest, and for the past 45 years, Arizona has benefited from his efforts to ensure the state's rights to the Colorado River.

■ To learn more about this landmark case, read *Dividing Western Waters* by Jack L. August Jr., available at amazon.com.

— Sally Benford

NATURE

Color-Coordinated

A leopard lizard can run on its hind legs and change colors. Because of that, it's the official lizard of our August issue.

IMAGINE IF BRIDES' FACES automatically tinted with lipstick and rouge when they were prepping for their weddings. Or if a man could pull up to a fast-food drive-thru, order a three-quarters-of-his-body-sized cheeseburger and swallow it whole. We humans might have invented the wheel and the Internet, but when it comes to eating, and so-called nuptial coloring, we've got nothing on the leopard lizard.

Long-nosed leopard lizards scurry throughout the western United States, including all of Arizona except the White Mountains and Mogollon Rim. Unlike their relatives in California — the endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizards — long-nosed leopard lizards appear to be thriving.

These masters of camouflage prefer a habitat that matches their skin color: rocky, beige and brown desert flats with scant vegetation. They frequently borrow the burrows of kangaroo rats and pocket mice, where, to avoid temperature swings, they hibernate and estivate (that's summer hibernation).

The leopard lizard feasts on insects like grasshoppers and crickets, plus smaller lizards of both its own and other species. As an ambush predator, it lurks in the shadows till prey moseys



KIM WISNIAK

along, unsuspecting. Then it pounces, devouring its victim in big gulps. One apparently very patient scientist reported witnessing a leopard lizard spend three hours eating a desert iguana that was more than three-quarters its own size.

When frightened, a leopard lizard dashes under a bush, flattens its body against the ground and freezes. If caught by the hind end in the jaws of a predator — most commonly raptors, snakes, coyotes, badgers and foxes — it can escape with everything but its tail, a skill known as caudal autonomy.

But this lizard is no coward. If captured, it might squeal (it's one of a few vocal lizards) and bite, though it lacks the jaws to do humans much harm. It can also sprint on its hind legs, using its tail for balance while swerving at high speed.

Perhaps its most eye-catching trait is the brushstrokes of bright vermilion that paint the female's body during breeding season. This lipstick-y pigmentation is produced by a rush of hormones, including estrogen and progesterone. Paired with her leopard-print skin, it's a fitting look for this feisty, distinctive lizard.

— Keridwen Cornelius



50 years ago in arizona highways

Native Americans were the focus of our August 1958 issue. Among other things, we looked at the art and culture of Arizona's tribes, and the history of the Hubbell Trading Post, an Arizona landmark. Today, the trading post is a National Historic Site where visitors can still see traders and Navajo Indians negotiating deals.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- On August 7, 1864, the Reverend Hiram Walker Read conducted the first Sunday school for children in Prescott.
- On August 10, 1867, Camp Crittenden was established in Southeastern Arizona to protect the settlements of Sonoita and Babocomari, and the Santa Cruz Valley.
- In August 1867, Tucson citizens voted to join the Confederacy, stating that the federal government had abandoned Arizona and left the state to the Apaches.
- On August 26, 1928, the city of Prescott dedicated the Ernest E. Love Airfield. Free airplane rides were offered during the festivities.

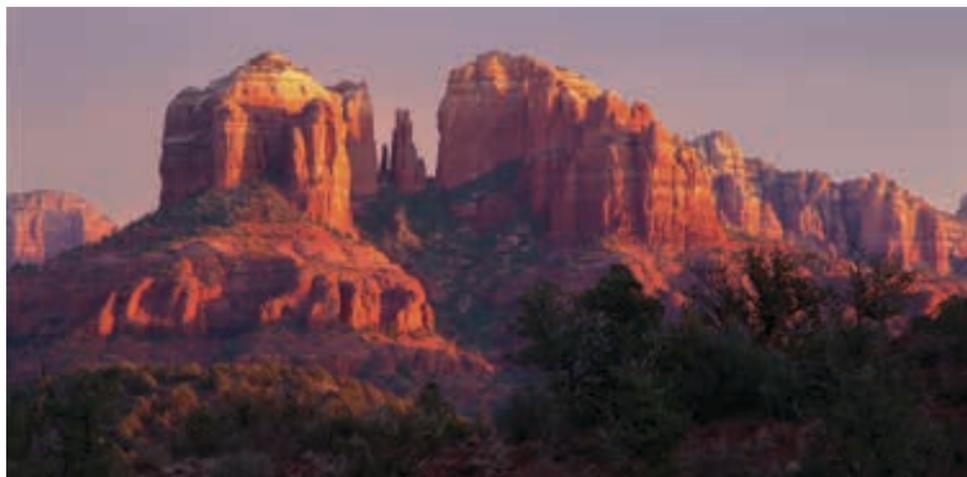
nature factoid

Early Bloomer

In Arizona, the coral bean plant is what you'd call an early bloomer. In the first weeks of June, the plant's waxy, red blossoms begin appearing, before the plant's leaves, which don't sprout until the summer rains begin in July. Later, dark pods split open to reveal brilliant scarlet seeds inside.



BRUCE D. TAUBERT



THINGS TO DO

Red Rocks Music Fest

SUMMER ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE in Sedona at the Red Rocks Music Festival, **August 23-31**. This weeklong event features classical and jazz concerts by accomplished musicians, including David Erlich, Nancy Buck and Thomas Landschoot.

■ Information: 877-733-7257 or redrocksmusicfestival.com

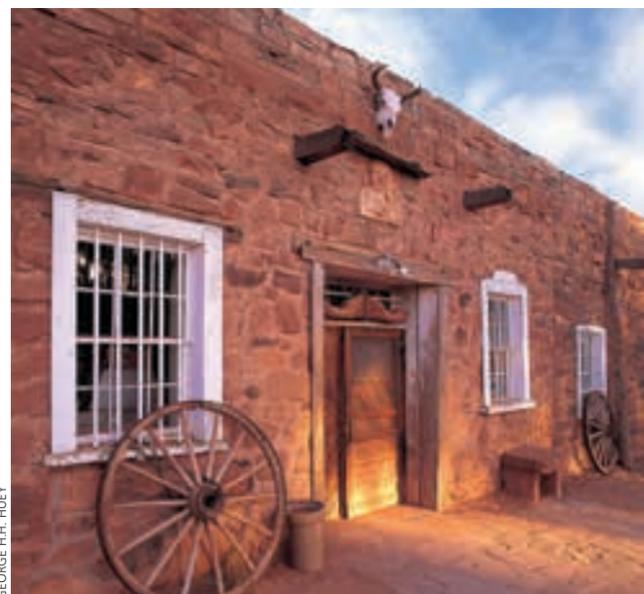


COURTESY SHARLOT-HALL MUSEUM

FORT HUACHUCA HISTORY

In 1892, Fort Huachuca welcomed its first African-American troops — the 10th Cavalry — which came to be known as the Buffalo Soldiers. These legendary troops fought in Arizona's Indian Wars and went on to become one of the most celebrated regiments in the state. Learn about their accomplishments during Fort Huachuca's Guided Tour of Buffalo Soldier Historical Sites on **August 16**.

■ Information: 520-417-6960



GEORGE H.H. HUEY

Hubbell Trading Post

HUBBELL TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE in Ganado is the location of the Native American Arts and Crafts Auction. Works of the Navajo and Hopi tribes will be auctioned at noon, **August 23**, with a preview beginning at 9 a.m. More than 400 items are offered, including Hopi kachina dolls, carvings, sash belts, Navajo baskets, rugs and paintings. Native American vendors will sell food, jewelry, musical instruments and folk art. Proceeds benefit Indian youth.

■ Information: 928-755-3475 or friendsofhubbell.org



MARTY CORDANO

FUNGI IN FLAGSTAFF

Forage for fungi in Flagstaff during the Mushroom Retreat at The Arboretum, **August 22-23**. The retreat will focus on identifying, preserving and preparing all types of edible wild mushrooms, and a foray to Hart Prairie Preserve offers mushroom lovers a chance to hunt for their favorite fungi.

■ Information: 928-774-1442, ext. 110

Vail's Big Bug Hunt

THE FIRST SUNDAY of every month, Colossal Cave in Vail offers visitors a new adventure. On **August 3**, join Carl Olson, an associate curator for the University of Arizona Department of Entomology, as he presents a slide show on insects and leads a bug hunt through the park.

■ Information: 520-647-7275 or colossalcave.com/visit.html

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Learn how to photograph Arizona's most stunning geological formations during a Friends of Arizona Highways Slot Canyon Photo Workshop. Join photographer Chuck Lawsen or J. Peter Mortimer to discover the secrets of capturing these dramatic landscapes.

■ Information: 888-790-7042 or friendsofhighways.com



JACK DYKINGA

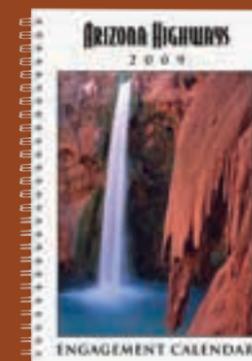
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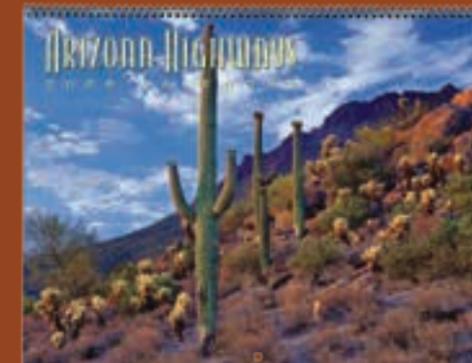


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OFF-ROAD VEHICLES ARE *destroying* FRAGILE VEGETATION IN IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT. LAKE MEAD COULD DRY UP BY 2021. AND FOSSIL CREEK, A SHINING EXAMPLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, IS NOW BEING *trashed* BY THE DELUGE OF PEOPLE DRAWN TO ITS SPARKLING WATER. THAT'S NOT ALL. TURNS OUT, MANY OF ARIZONA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES ARE IN *jeopardy* OF LOSING THEIR ALLURE.

By
Keridwen Cornelius

Endangered Arizona

TURNING TIDE Oceanfront property in Arizona? No, but with more than 550 miles of shoreline when full, Lake Mead is the nation's largest man-made lake. Photograph by Randy Prentice
To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



EDITOR'S NOTE: *Our mission at Arizona Highways is to promote travel in Arizona. Considering the state's cultural diversity, Old West history and spectacular landscapes, it's an easy sell. Especially when it comes to the great outdoors. Among other things, Arizona ranks third nationally in terms of biodiversity — California and Texas are first and second, primarily because of their coastlines, something Arizona doesn't have.*

As you've seen in this magazine over the last 83 years, Arizona's landscapes vary from tundra in the north to tropical "sky islands" in the south. In between, endangered native fish splash in the rivers, rare Sonoran pronghorns dash at 60 mph across the borderlands, and elusive jaguars prowl the savannas.

The biodiversity is unique, to be sure, and it's one of the main reasons people from around the world visit the state. As in California and Texas, however, some of Arizona's most beautiful places are being threatened. The reasons vary, and in many cases, the threats aren't visible to the naked eye. In others, it's more apparent.

Either way, it's not our place to judge the causes and effects. However, it is our mission to promote travel in the state, and when some of our favorite places are in jeopardy of losing their allure, we think it's our responsibility to let you know about it. What follows, in no particular order, are some of those places. As you'll see, we've illustrated this story with photographs that show off the beauty of the various places. Nobody wants to see the ugly side — that's why we did this story in the first place.

OAK FLAT CAMPGROUND

To the Apache, Yavapai, Hopi and O'odham people, Oak Flat Campground near Superior is a spiritually significant part of their ancestral lands. To rock climbers and boulderers, it's a scenic challenge and the former venue of the largest climbing competition in the world. To the National Audubon Society, it's among the top three birding sites in Arizona.

Enter a foreign-owned mining company that wants to swap property it owns across Arizona for the 760-acre Oak Flat, despite the fact that in 1955 President Eisenhower specifically deemed it off-limits to mining. The company would tap the rich copper vein presumably beneath the land, devastating the area and potentially withering the riparian habitat of nearby Devils Canyon.

Nevertheless, many people find the deal tempting. The mining company has proposed creating another state-of-the-art rock-climbing park, an avian habitat, and an area where Apaches could collect traditional foods like oak acorns. Plus, some of the land it would exchange is well worth conserving. The land swap presents the state with a *Sophie's Choice*-like decision: Which swath of land will be destroyed and which will be preserved?

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE A popular rappelling spot, Devils Canyon (left) lies downstream from the rock-climbing and bird-watching mecca of Oak Flat Campground. Photograph by Robert McDonald

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

SEND IN THE CLOUDS Blushing monsoon clouds billow over the Verde River, Arizona's only federally designated Wild and Scenic River. Photograph by George Stocking

SAN PEDRO RIVER

Trace your finger along a map of the San Pedro and Verde rivers, and you'll follow the same lush, vertical corridor that sustains millions of migrating animals. You'll also notice that the rivers skirt some of the most populous cities in Arizona — putting both waterways in danger of drying up because of unsustainable groundwater pumping.

The San Pedro River area boasts one of the highest diversities of land mammals in the world. It's home to 180 kinds of butterflies, 87 varieties of mammals and 68 species of reptiles and amphibians. Every year this migratory flyway is aflap with 4 million visiting birds, in addition to its bevy of permanent nesters.

Meanwhile, the surrounding population annually taps billions of gallons of groundwater from the river — more than can be replenished by rain. Experts project a 4.2 billion-gallon annual deficit by 2020. Currently, only four of the river's 13 native fish species remain. A look at the parched, treeless lower Gila, Salt and Santa Cruz rivers offers a possible glimpse of the San Pedro's future.

Coincidentally, the Gila River was recently named one of the 10 most threatened rivers in the U.S. by American Rivers, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of rivers in North America.

VERDE RIVER

The Verde River has been designated a Wild and Scenic River — the state's only river with such a designation — and it's one of the last places in Arizona where native fish, river otters and beavers thrive. Its riverside habitat teems with bobcats, mountain lions, mule deer, bald eagles and rare songbirds.



However, Prescott, Prescott Valley and Chino Valley plan to tap 13 million gallons of water daily from the Big Chino aquifer, the main source of upper Verde spring flow. With new developments mushrooming across Yavapai County, that figure could quadruple in 20 years, according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

“It might last a few decades, but at some point, the water supply will diminish and the [Verde and San Pedro] rivers will be gone,” says Patrick Graham, state director of The Nature Conservancy in Arizona. A coalition of groups is working hard to save these



sanctuaries of diversity, while still balancing the population’s water demands.

“Both rivers are at a crossroads right now,” Graham says. “People have good intentions to resolve these issues, but few have an awareness of the enormity of the problem.”

CABEZA PRIETA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE & ORGAN PIPE CACTUS NATIONAL MONUMENT

“Cabeza Prieta’s wilderness character has been compromised to the point that if it were being considered for wilderness status today, it wouldn’t pass,” says Roger DiRosa, who until recently managed Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. This starkly beautiful frontier bristling with nearly 700 species of plants and animals — including the endangered Sonoran pronghorn — suffers from its location on the Arizona-Mexico border.

Approximately 1,200 miles of illegal roads and trails crisscross Cabeza Prieta. “At one point we estimated that at any given time there might be 35 abandoned vehicles on the refuge,” DiRosa says. Recently, foot and vehicle traffic has slowed, but drug smuggling has ratcheted up, and now the U.S. Border Patrol wants to increase the infrastructure for construction and patrolling. The

Department of Homeland Security is installing about 40 miles of vehicle barriers, and has proposed 80- to 100-foot-high surveillance towers nearby.

Next door at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the landscape is enduring similar problems. The 30 miles of closely spaced metal posts in place since 2006 to deter vehicles “have curtailed smuggling activity by 95 to 98 percent,” says superintendent Lee Baiza. But there’s been strong resistance to pedestrian fencing, which severs animal migration corridors and requires denuding swaths of desert for infrastructure.

In May, 5.2 miles of thick mesh pedestrian fencing were erected in Organ Pipe, although Baiza says that because the construction is adjacent to an urban area, the effects on wildlife will be minimized. He also stresses that “there are still a lot of things worth seeing in the monument,” including the distinctive organ pipe cactuses, which don’t exist naturally anywhere else in the country.

THE GRAND CANYON & KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST

In the last five years, mining companies have filed 2,215 new claims within 10 miles of Grand Canyon National Park. Approximately 2,100 of those are in the Tusayan District of the Kaibab National Forest, which is home to some of the state’s most scenic trails and campsites.

Uranium mining in particular may have left a dark legacy in Arizona, including skyrocketing cancer rates, respiratory problems and birth defects on the Navajo Nation. Uranium and its byproducts — which pollute water, ground and air — are so toxic that even dust generated by uranium-laden trucks renders areas dangerously radioactive, according to Dave Gowdey, the program director for the Grand Canyon Trust.

Mining activity could usher industrial development, traffic, noise and air pollution as close as 1.5 miles to the Canyon. Even though safety precautions would be taken, uranium could slowly leach through the porous sandstone into the South Rim aquifer that feeds the Colorado River. On the North Rim, radioactive toxins could flow through sinkholes and fissures into the river. If that happens, Gowdey says, “it means increased levels of uranium in the Colorado River and increased risk for all downstream users — that’s 30 million people.”

According to a recent editorial in *The Arizona Republic*, which argued against the authorization of uranium mining near the Canyon, “Governor Janet Napolitano asked Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne to make an emergency withdrawal of the area from

UP IN ARMS At Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (above), saguaros greet the morning, just as they have for thousands of years. Photograph by Randy Prentice

GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS The Seventh Wonder of the World needs no introduction. The view from Mather Point (right) ripples over Wotans Throne and Vishnu Temple. Photograph by Les David Manevitz
 ■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.





STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN Mineral deposits in Fossil Creek form staircaselike travertine terraces and pools — essential habitat for Arizona's rare native fish.

Photograph by Nick Berezenko
 ■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

Fossil Creek began flowing again at a perennial rate of 410 gallons per second.

“It’s really rebounded as an important habitat,” says Michelle Harrington, rivers conservation manager for the Center for Biological Diversity. Agencies have reintroduced native fish, including the threatened loach minnow and spikedace, which have found essential habitat in the creek’s newly forming travertine pools. Shoreside, native vegetation is sprouting, providing shelter and food for landlubbing critters.

Ironically, this inspiring restoration story has attracted a deluge of unmanaged visitation. “People have been taking extreme liberties with the area,” Harrington says. “You see a whole lot of trash, human excrement, tissue paper, and everything from plastic bottles to coolers, tires and deflated rafts.” Campers are breaking tree branches and trampling vegetation to forge trails.

Conservation groups are pressing the Forest Service to increase its presence, designate camping areas in less fragile zones, and provide trash receptacles and restrooms where there currently are none. Legislation has also been introduced to designate Fossil Creek a federal Wild and Scenic River. “We have hopes that [the bill] will get through this year,” Harrington says.

AGUA FRIA NATIONAL MONUMENT & IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT

Though separated by more than 150 miles, Agua Fria National Monument and Ironwood Forest National Monument share characteristics.

They’re both rich in rock art, archaeological sites and rare species. They’re both just 8 years old, currently lacking management plans, located close to a city (Phoenix and Tucson, respectively), and presided over by a single park ranger.

“These are not national parks, so there are no visitor centers and not a lot of information on how to recreate and be a good steward of the land,” says Scott Jones, board secretary of both Friends of Agua Fria National Monument and Friends of Ironwood Forest. So scores of illegal off-road vehicles cut and bruise fragile vegetation. Pothunters pilfer pottery shards. Shooters haul in broken washing machines and computers to use for target practice, or take aim at the desert itself.

“So many saguaros and petroglyphs have been shot up,” Jones

says. Plus, encroaching development is dwindling open spaces and blocking wildlife corridors. However, “friends groups” are stepping up to help — volunteers clear out trash, monitor resources and cultural sites, and try to educate the public about protecting these scenic wildlands.

LAKE MEAD

The news shocked even the scientists conducting the study: If water use is not curbed and climate continues to follow predicted patterns, Lake Mead has a 50 percent chance of drying up by 2021.

“We were stunned at the magnitude of the problem and how fast it was coming at us,” said one of the researchers, Tim Barnett of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. “Make no mistake, this water problem is not a scientific abstraction, but rather one that will impact each and every one of us who live in the Southwest.”

The scientists found that population-driven water use, evaporation and global warming are causing a net deficit of more than 325 billion gallons of water every year from the Colorado River system, which includes Lake Mead and Lake Powell. That’s the equivalent of losing 56 Olympic-sized swimming pools every hour.

Although climate models are contentious, the results jibe with other studies, one of which — published in the journal *Science* — forecast that the Southwest will revert to Dust Bowl conditions by midcentury.

TUMACACORI HIGHLANDS

Getting land designated as protected wilderness is a race against time. Without preservation status, all it takes are a few off-road vehicles barreling through a landscape to prevent its being protected in the future. A race against time is under way at the 84,000-acre Tumacacori Highlands, the state’s largest unprotected roadless Forest Service area.

Tucson’s expansion and the urbanization of the Santa Cruz River valley are nibbling away at this unique habitat of crinkled mountains, rolling savannas and subtropical species. It’s home to black bears, peregrine falcons, endangered Chiricahua leopard frogs, Mexican vine snakes and the elusive American jaguar.

Several organizations are pressing Congress for wilderness status, which would provide another level of protection against new road construction and trail abuse.

BLUE RANGE PRIMITIVE AREA

It’s the last remaining Primitive Area in the United States — 173,762 acres of quiet forests, dewy meadows, jagged

mountains and a single dirt road. The area was considered an ideal place in which to reintroduce Mexican gray wolves, then teetering on extinction and no longer living in the wild.

“It’s the last great biological treasure in Arizona that could house a free-roaming wolf population,” says Don Hoffman, who managed the area for 25 years. In the last decade, 99 wolves were released into the Blue Range, but after illegal poaching, plus shooting or permanent removal by the government, only 52 remain.

Years ago, a federal review recommended that the Primitive Area be expanded, upgraded to official Wilderness status, and enveloped by a buffer zone. But that didn’t happen, so roads and off-road vehicle zones are whittling away its edges, and a proposed gravel pit could be built within the Primitive Area.

Under the 1964 Wilderness Act, the Forest Service is obligated to protect both the Primitive Area and its surrounding lands from anything that would prevent future Wilderness designation, Hoffman explains. It remains to be seen whether such protection can defend this diamond in the rough. ■■

Keridwen Cornelius is a graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University, and a regular contributor to Arizona Highways. She also writes for National Geographic Traveler.



mining,” ... and the “Arizona Game and Fish Commission, fearing the impact on wildlife and habitat, wrote a letter to Arizona’s congressional delegation urging permanent withdrawal of these federal lands from mineral activities.”

They’re not alone. In fact, several state-run and nonprofit groups oppose the claims, but they’re trumped by the 1872 Mining Law, which gives precedence to mining above every other land use.

FOSSIL CREEK

Dammed if you do, damned if you don’t. For nearly 100 years, Fossil Creek was dammed and tapped by two power plants that dried up 14 of its 14.5 miles. In a bold environmental move, APS, the power company, shut down the plants in 2005, and eventually

Games of RIS



For the average Joe — and just about everyone he knows — an extreme sport is a spectator sport. That's it. There's no way he'd ever try anything that radical. There are some, however, who go out of their way to find the danger zone. Call 'em nuts, but these rock-climbing, whitewater-running risk-takers get a spine-tingling look at some of Arizona's most incredible landscapes. Of course, if you want to see the same thing, all you have to do is check out this month's portfolio. Life jackets and carabiners not required.

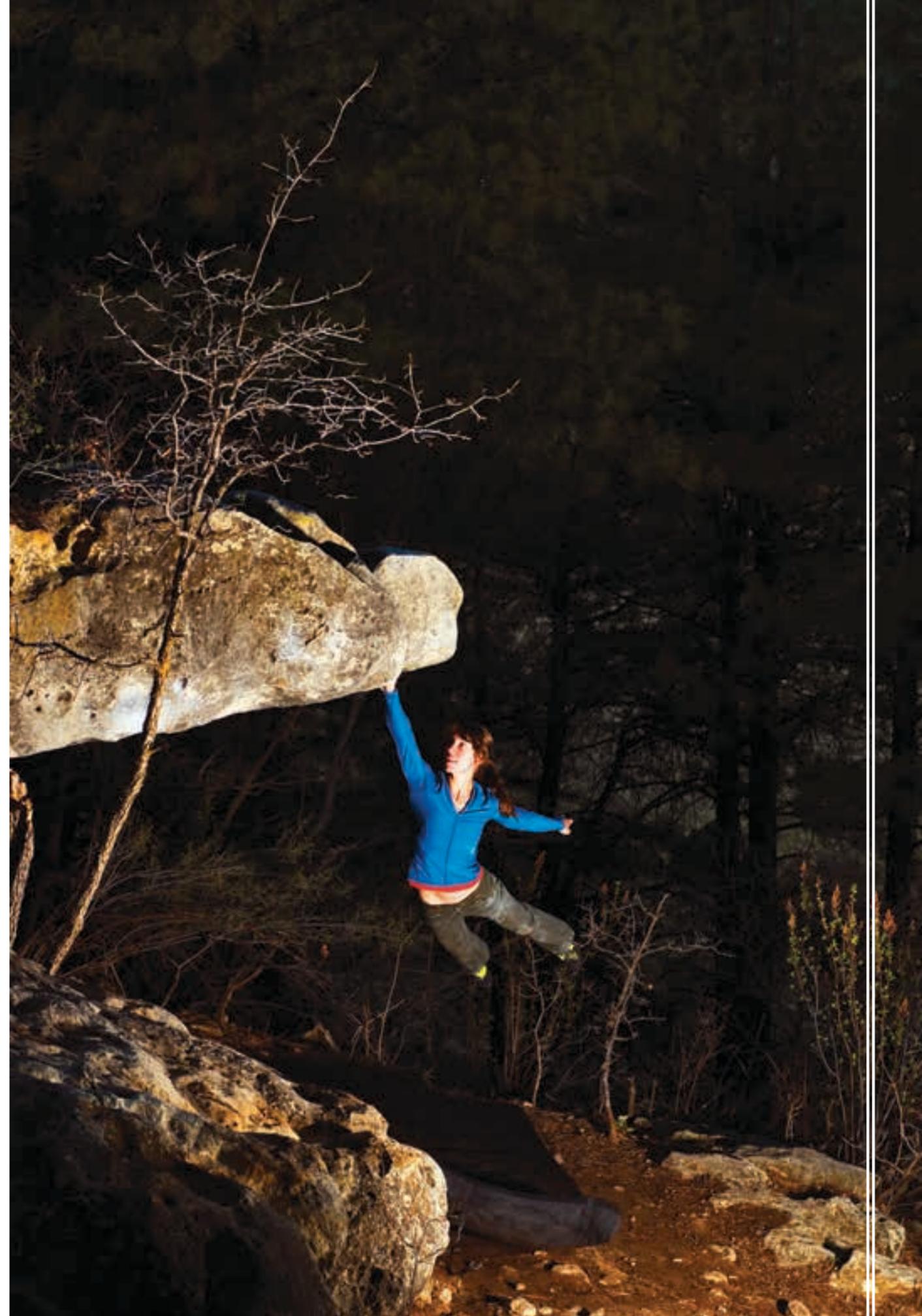
CLIFF HANGER Timmy Alexander free-climbs at Lower Wailing Wall in Grand Canyon National Park for an adrenaline-packed challenge. Photograph by Andrew Burr

Lean and Mean IT In the Coconino National Forest near Flagstaff, Jeff Lemaster leans into Humphreys Peak, burning 45 percent more calories snowshoeing than he would walking or running at the same speed. Photograph by David Wallace



EXISTING HAZARDS Jutting rocks and other unmarked obstacles, as well as the threat of avalanches, add thrills to backcountry skiing (below) in the Kachina Peaks Wilderness north of Flagstaff. Photograph by Tom Brownold

SWING LOW Naturally pitted limestone outcrops at Priest Draw south of Flagstaff provide hand- and footholds for boulderers such as Carrie Cooper (right), who maneuver across "problems" or routes without ropes or harnesses. Photograph by Kyle George





Got SOAP? Spring snowmelt in the intermittent Little Colorado River makes Grand Falls a spectacularly muddy 185-foot backdrop for hikers on the Navajo Nation northeast of Flagstaff. Photograph by Kate Thompson



BALANCING Act A kayaker (opposite page) balances in counterpoint to a prismatic arc of color as he prepares to enter Fossil Creek south of Camp Verde. Photograph by Tyler Williams

AIR TIME Framed by glowing aspens, Cooper Carothers and his mountain bike (left) take momentary flight in the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff. Photograph by Tom Brownold

WHO NEEDS SNOW? Undaunted by a lack of the white stuff, Lisa Gelczis (below) carves her way downhill through cinders at San Francisco Volcanic Field near Flagstaff. Photograph by Tyler Williams **AH**



ONE *for the* BOOKS

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HOME BASE At home on her Singing Wind Ranch, Winn Bundy stands by a relic from former landowners, the base of a water tank now serving as storage in a corral.





SHELF LIFE Singing Wind Bookshop's handcrafted shelves (opposite page) hold volumes Bundy has purchased through catalogs, self-published authors, salespeople, and referrals from media reviews and readers' recommendations.

Some of us shape our living spaces more than others. Winn Bundy has shaped hers more than most. Her Singing Wind Ranch, with its Singing Wind Bookshop, has been chosen, restored, expanded, fenced, paced by Bundy, and imbued with her indomitable spirit, style and stories for more than a half-century. And if language gets a bit rhapsodic when describing Bundy, people who have been to her bookstore — which means being invited into her home and included in her day — understand.

*Take a last, slow, lingering look around, prairie woman.
You made your country strong.
Still we'll have to find a way to get along without you.*

These lyrics — written by Larry Armstrong and performed with the Tucson band Copper Moon — are about Armstrong's

great-grandmother, but they also describe Winifred J. Bundy. A woman who takes joy in both the vast outdoors and cozy spaces, who describes getting up at 7:30 a.m. and going to bed at 1 a.m. as “banker's hours,” and who's moving briskly from task to task most of that time. Slight and swift as a girl, her pale ponytail of original gold now glinting with silver, she seems a hybrid of sprite and settler, both whimsical and wise. Her skin is all that reveals her pioneer status, tanned and weathered like good leather, because as she fetches a stool and clambers up to examine the faded writing on an old photograph, reading in a clear voice with her back to you, she is surely 25.

Built you a house from the wilderness and the sod, prairie woman.

Winn Bundy could have made other decisions when she came to this place just outside Benson in 1956. She could have pursued her studies at the University of Arizona, as her admired mentor

and teacher, Lawrence Clark Powell, urged her to do. She could have focused on running cattle on her 640-acre spread, which has now become a sideline. She could have raised her children the way she did, baking every day and encouraging their dreams, without becoming a businesswoman as well. But Bundy took it into her head that she would like to own a bookstore. So, in 1974, without a market study to show that there were no customers to support it, she took \$600 earned from dog-sitting and stocked two shelves in her foyer. And, they came.

Oh, they came ... first from nearby, then, as word spread, from other states and even other nations, travelers stepping off buses or out of cars in the dusty clearing, having exited Interstate 10 and followed the dirt road through the gate between stretches of barbed wire, past an occasional bovine ambassador of Singing Wind Ranch, stopping by the low building that still looks like what it is — Bundy's house. Surrounded by the brick paths and patios she wants to show you in order to derail inquiries about her health, the Singing Wind Bookshop — now with many more shelves — attracts returning visitors eager to share their find with relatives or friends, and new pilgrims carrying long-kept directions to the bookshop in the wilderness.

This is a bookshop without boundaries; the sales floor and living space are fluid. If Bundy is heating honey to send as a gift when you get there, you follow her into the kitchen while she gives instructions: “If it hardens, put it in a pan of cool water, not warm — set it about four, and keep an eye on it. It's our mesquite honey,” she says as she moves from sink to stove. Her kitchen is a blend of old and new. The smooth-top stove sits on a brick floor; the thick counter supports a gleaming wine cabinet. She'd rather talk about her friends than herself, pointing out tiles painted by Marion Sinclair.

“She does all media,” Bundy boasts, “and she'll be 84 in April. I'd love to get her some recognition!” Paintings in the front rooms are by artist friends Gloria Giffords and Sonya Gavin.

“Gloria [who is U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords' mother] did one for me of Joe and my dog — my two loves.” Bundy met Joe Smelt after she'd been widowed for a decade, and she comfortably mentions her children's father, Bob. She says she and Joe recently celebrated their 12th wedding anniversary at a resort in Phoenix, where they were attending the Arizona Cattlemen's Conference. “I wrote something for the Cowbells and the San Pedro Cattlemen's Association, and they gave us some kinda thing for being old.”

The first of the two loves, Joe, seems to genuinely enjoy Bundy's company without crowding her. He can smile when the talk turns to her years with her first husband. In her turn, Bundy might bustle about, and even bluster a bit when the wood in the stove runs low, but the smile she turns on Joe is genuinely feminine.

The other love of Bundy's life, Chester the dog, shamelessly craves her attention. While neither will admit that some spoiling goes on, he wags his tail as she describes his doggie birthday party, and his canine friend Zoe being invited. “Animals know if they're being

invited to a birthday party, and they have such a good time.”

We walk between thick hand-hewn mesquite wood shelves in what used to be the porch, and into her daughter's former bedroom. Listening to Bundy rattle off what books fill which sections is like witnessing an auctioneer or vaudeville entertainer.

“Indians of the Southwest, here to the floor, primarily southern, but some Arapaho and Cheyenne, northern and central Plains; jump up to short Californians — the size of the book, not the people — bad men and ladies, gunfighters, Lewis and Clark, Buffalo Bill, Utah and the Mormons,” is said with accompanying gestures and without a breath. She similarly describes dozens of sections.

As the bookshop has grown, ranching has waned. Since Bundy is well-mannered, she doesn't rebuff the query about how many cattle she runs, from someone who doesn't know that to a rancher, it's like asking how much money one has. But she doesn't answer, either, just as she won't say flat out how many books she has. “A few” and “a lot” are the best you'll get about cattle and books. She wryly recounts that one national newspaper mentioned she served lunch to a reporter who was writing an article about the Singing Wind.

“We had a whole lot of people start showing up right before noon after that.”

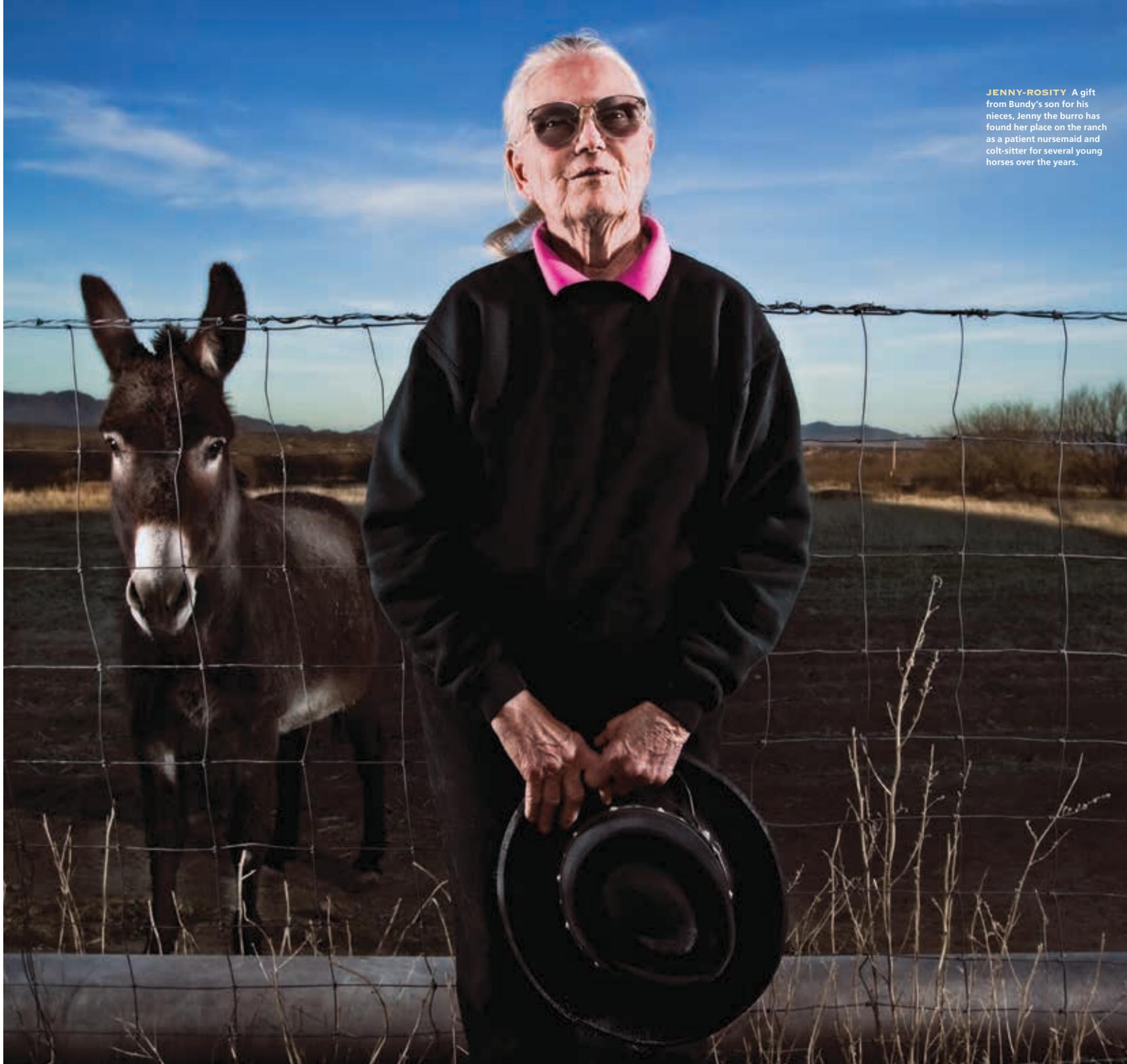
When Bundy does cook, everyone comes to the table at the same time. Tea is the drink of choice. Grace is said. The one group Bundy cheerfully feeds is any batch of children, even those who arrive by busloads for field trips.

“At first they have to get out and just run, to get rid of the energy,” she says. “Then they're starving, and get bag lunches. After that I put out popcorn, cookies, cakes and lemonade. And they feast. Then, they wash their hands before coming in the bookshop. And some have never been to one before. We usually have authors and poets come to give programs for them.”

*Raised up your sons with your own two hands, prairie woman.
Some took the ways of the world and some took the ways of the land.*

In her dining room is a wall-sized bulletin board covered with photographs taken by her son. Bundy is clearly pleased to say all three of her children still live in Arizona. Her daughter Sharon — called Cookie, at least by her mother — is a law librarian.

Bundy is also proud of her own mother. She brings out huge black scrapbooks that reverently document the first Winifred's life. Filling the pages are report cards from the early 1900s in spidery black script, photographs of a young blond woman, often shown with a fox fur around her neck, and dance cards on which men had signed their names to reserve time with Winifred. Even letters from Bundy's father-to-be, Gene, on old business stationery, are saved. One begins: “Dearest, I have been chasing over the whole darn office looking for a pen. Gee, but I'm lonesome, dear,



JENNY-ROSITY A gift from Bundy's son for his nieces, Jenny the burro has found her place on the ranch as a patient nursemaid and colt-sitter for several young horses over the years.

mostly blue, sweetheart, because I have worked so hard and then to think that I will not be able to see you tonight, dear!"

*You knew all your neighbors and you treated them well;
some went to heaven and some went to hell;
now they won't even let you draw your own water
from your own well any more.*

The closest Winn Bundy comes to complaining is when she explains that the ranch has only recently had to be fenced, "to keep those ATVs from tearing everything up," she says with an edge in her voice. And she reports sadly that the San Pedro River that crosses her property is now 50 feet below her land instead of just 35. She says earnestly: "This is the second-fastest-eroding river valley there is today in the United States."

Reminded that architect Mary Jane Colter once said, "There is such a thing as having lived too long," Bundy mentions that many women writers live until their mid-90s, possibly because they do what they love. "The purpose is to have a good time. The mind and body are equal, and you have to use both," she asserts. Honesty compels her to add that as much as she admires them, she is not a writer. "If I were really a writer, I'd be doing it."

She politely listens to the first part of Larry Armstrong's song, which I say describes her. But real prairie women aren't self-indulgently self-reflective, or self-descriptive. She will not be lionized, nor called legendary. She will obliquely answer my unstated question: "Is there someone who can take this over after you?" She lists several women friends as her co-workers, not her employees. There's a granddaughter who, though married to a Frenchman and living in Paris, will bring her prodigious language skills and bright promise to this place, this literary haven removed from city lights and high culture, and let people come to her, and to the bookshop.

There are women to carry on. And in the meantime, Bundy won't waste time speculating whether or not she is the last of an archetypal woman who accomplishes more than most of the younger generations. Instead, she points out that while her father lived to be 101 years and 2 months, her mother lived to be 101 and 4 months, adding that in terms of longevity, her mother had "really wanted to beat him." For Bundy herself, that could mean another quarter-century of shop-owning, ranch-running, loving, nurturing, cooking, serving, laughing, and savoring good local wine and good conversation, before she'll take her own last, slow, lingering look around. **AH**

Lisa Schnebly Heidinger is the author of five books, including Chief Yellowhorse Lives On!, published by Arizona Highways Books. She first visited Singing Wind Bookshop 20 years ago while doing a story for television.

> when you go

Location: 700 W. Singing Wind Road, Benson

Directions: From Benson, take Interstate 10 eastbound to Exit 304, Ocotillo Road. Turn north onto Ocotillo Road. At just over 2 miles, turn right onto Singing Wind Road and drive .5 miles to the bookshop in the main building.

Hours: Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Information: 520-586-2425 or benzonvisitorcenter.com



Third This is a Charm

By Ruth Rudner Photographs by David Muench

Humphreys Peak and Mount Baldy rank one and two in Arizona, but Escudilla Mountain, the state's third-highest peak, is nothing to scoff at.

Aspen groves, wildlife, spectacular vistas ... no wonder Aldo Leopold loved this place.

THE COLOR PURPLE Asters add a splash of purple to a sunflower-dappled meadow at the base of Escudilla Mountain.

A hummingbird flits back and forth behind the camper,

perhaps misinterpreting the red clearance lights as penstemon. Early morning. Three shots. A coyote cries in extreme distress. Walking a short trail from the parking area to Hulsey Lake, we hear a vehicle leaving the gated entrance to the lake, the road blocked to benefit wildlife. The cries of the coyote stop.

Photographer David Muench and I are alone here now. We, and whatever death we cannot see. Later, after our hike up Escudilla Mountain, we will return to search both sides of the road. We will find nothing beyond the memory of three shots.

Maybe the shooting is apropos. Some think Escudilla is the mountain where author-naturalist Aldo Leopold had his epiphany after shooting a female wolf. Understanding in the “fierce green fire dying in her eyes” how all the parts of the ecosystem are necessary to one another, Leopold transformed forever how we think about nature. In his extraordinary essay, *Thinking Like a Mountain*, published in *A Sand County Almanac* in 1949, he does not name the mountain. People in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests like to think it's Escudilla. Given Leopold's connection to this mountain and another essay tribute he offered it, they might be right.

Two trails climb Escudilla — the officially maintained Escudilla National Recreation Trail, and the Government Trail, which is maintained, indirectly, by hikers' use of it. It's 3 miles to the summit on the Escudilla Trail, 4 (plus 1.9 road miles) via the more exposed Government Trail, which switchbacks steeply up talus, then joins the Escudilla Trail in a large sloping meadow about a mile below the top.

Atop the 10,912-foot summit, the highest lookout tower in Arizona offers 360-

degree views of the surrounding country. To the north is Escudilla Wilderness. To the south are Middle Mountain, the Blue Range and the Mogollon Rim; southeast, New Mexico's Gila National Forest. Mount Baldy and the Big Lake area lie to the west. The Government Trail provides westward views, although, after joining the Escudilla Trail and crossing the meadow, you walk through a forest area to the top. The forest is a Natural Research Area, a place to study how flora and fauna rejuvenate after a fire without human interference. Results here become measures for other activities elsewhere.

Escudilla is part of the 6,845-square-mile Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, which includes all of the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila national forests. Wolves released anywhere into the recovery area might naturally roam into Escudilla Wilderness.

A riveting, massive presence, Escudilla Mountain rises, always on the horizon.



FOREST FUNGI A variety of wild mushrooms (below) dot the slopes on the way to the mountain's summit.

BLAZING SADDLE During autumn, a mountain saddle in the eastern Escudilla range (right) blazes with golden aspens.



Shaped like a buffalo, the mountain's profile insists on recognition as a living entity. "Sleeping buffalo" is the historic local translation of the word "escudilla," something David and I didn't know when we began calling the mountain "the buffalo." A more accurate translation is "a broad shield." As the third-highest mountain in the state, Escudilla anchors Arizona on the imagination's map of high, wild places. In his essay titled *Escudilla*, Leopold wrote: "Life in Arizona was bounded under foot by grama grass, overhead by sky, and on the horizon by Escudilla. Look up anywhere, anytime, and you saw Escudilla."

The maintained trail, starting on an erstwhile logging road, passes through deep aspen forest regenerating more than 20,000 acres that were burned in 1951. In autumn, you walk through shimmering gold. Here and there, you spot an old conifer. Young ones have begun taking hold.

The 5,200-acre Escudilla Wilderness covers the entire top of the mountain. Wilderness designation came in 1984, years after the animals that make a land wild had been exterminated here: the Mexican wolf, the last grizzly. The griz was shot by a government trapper. Leopold's Escudilla story is really the bear's story. "There was, in fact, only one place from which you did not see Escudilla," he wrote. "That was the top of Escudilla itself. Up there you could not see the mountain, but you could feel it. The reason was the big bear."

Leopold's story is short. Each spring the bear crawled out of hibernation, descended the mountain and killed one cow. That was it — enough to end a winter's fast before going on to roots and berries. "The ... trapper who took the grizzly knew he had made Escudilla safe for cows," Leopold wrote. "He did not know he had toppled the spire off an edifice a-building since the morning stars sang together. Escudilla still hangs on the horizon, but when you see it, you no longer think of bear. It's only a mountain now."

With the advent of wolves, Escudilla



TOP NOTCH The summit of Escudilla Mountain (above) offers 360-degree views of Eastern Arizona's White Mountains.

FIELDS OF GOLD A forest road cuts a path through a field overrun with summer sunflowers (left).

ceases to be "only a mountain." It becomes, instead, the wild place its landscape proclaims. Wolves influence my experience, producing in me an alertness dormant in places tamed for cows. That alertness is our kinship with all that is wild. It is connection to our own beginnings.

The trail bounds a vast, sloping meadow edged on the far side by conifers. It seems a meadow made for elk, although, on several hikes here, I have yet to see them. Myron Burnett, a local forest ranger, says he sees elk all over, but fewer deer than previously. Mountain man that he is, Burnett tells me he considers deer the heart of the food chain, and says, "They've all gone somewhere deep inside the mountain in order to find any peace with all the elk around."

David and I are hardly more than a half-mile up the trail, still in aspens, when a light rain begins, grows insistent, and then turns to hail. Just before we cross the large, exposed meadow where the Government Trail enters, thunder crashes close to us.

That alertness is our kinship with
all that is wild. It is connection
to our own beginnings.

White lightning jags nearby. We take shelter in a spruce copse, careful not to stand under the tallest one.

I'm afraid of lightning. I have been ever since two horses I worked with as a guide at Yellowstone National Park were killed by it. But halfway up a mountain, with storms everywhere, there's nowhere to go. Up and down offer the same dangers. You do the best you can. You find an even-height group of trees. You place anything metal

far from you. You pray a lot.

As thunder and rain move off, we cross the meadow. David stops to photograph. I continue on a path lined with myriad mushrooms. Backing away into the forest duff, they're everywhere, rain-wet, glistening. Approaching the top of Escudilla Mountain, the trail narrows, becomes rockier until it simply spits me out onto the open summit. Distant thunder rolls on two sides of me. Eager to climb the lookout tower to gaze at this huge, wild country, I move quickly. The storms will not remain distant. In every direction, the sky is as gray as wolves. The tower's top platform is closed (the tower is occupied during fire season), but it's possible to climb high enough for the 360-degree view.

The storms roll in. I rush down the metal stairs, quickly returning to the forest where I find David photographing the mushrooms. Wet light — it was bound to snare him. I tell him about the coming storm and we race down the meadow, reaching the lower side as the sky lets loose.

When we return to Escudilla a few weeks later, it's the height of hunting season. We drive the mountain's circumference on a rutted dirt road and see a few parked vehicles, probably belonging to hunters. This is my first view of the back of the mountain

— not that you can actually see it from anywhere but from a distance.

Close up, what you see is forest, grass, rock and streams. You see light slanting in late beams through thick conifers, splashing off what is left of the gold. I resolve to do some rugged exploration here. Just not during hunting season. ■

■ *Information: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, 928-333-4301 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf.*



Horse Spring Point

Like everywhere else on the North Rim, the views along this route are spectacular, even if you don't see any horses.

"Today is a birthday and I celebrate the time, for those who climb the mountains, know the far away places, who touch the people and the Earth and their lives."
— INDA EATON

IT'S MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY, and my family has gathered at a campsite on the North Rim, just a few hundred feet from the edge of the Grand Canyon. Over morning coffee, my stepfather, Dean, and I decide that the best gift we can give to Mom today is time — time to sleep in, time to lounge with her books, time to take a lei-

surely hike, and time to forget that her children are now older than what she once deemed middle age.

With a promise to be back around sunset to serve a birthday steak dinner, Dean and I load the Jeep and set out for adventure in the Kaibab National Forest. After fueling up at the North Rim service station near the campground's entrance, we head north on State Route 67 — a beautiful two-lane road alive with Mother Nature. From there, we turn left onto Forest Service Road 22, near a pond

optimistically called Deer Lake. FR 22, or the West Side Road, runs along the west side of the Kaibab Plateau and passes through a rich mixture of pines and firs, until a grove of young aspens interrupts the dark forest.

Aspens can cover an entire slope with genetic clones that sprout from a complex root network — especially in open patches created by fires. This particular grove sprang up as a result of a 550-acre "timber blowdown" caused by tornado-like winds in 1958. What's visible today repre-

OVER THE RIVER At Horse Spring Point (above), tawny hillsides plunge into Snake Gulch as it slithers into the Kanab Creek Wilderness.

sents 50 years of "new" growth, which was planted after a salvage timber sale.

We stick with FR 22 for nearly 20 miles, despite the temptations of many roads branching off toward canyons, springs and hiking trails. Eventually, we turn left onto Forest Service Road 447, and as we descend from our high point of 8,701 feet, the vegetation changes. In less than 4 winding miles, we drop 1,000

AND THROUGH THE WOODS Purple lupines (right) poke up through ponderosa pine needles at Pine Hollow, along Forest Service Road 447.

feet into Pine Hollow — a fairy tale enclave of shady oaks and looming ponderosa pines.

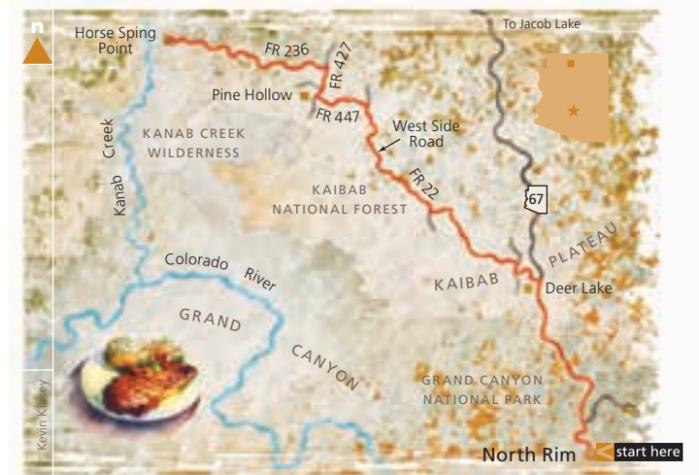
Approximately 3 miles from FR 22, the forest changes yet again to reveal a hillside blanketed with colorful clusters of infant oaks and yellow grass. In the summer of 1996, the 53,000-acre Bridger Complex Fire consumed this area. Although charred "snags," or tree skeletons, stand as eerie reminders of the devastation, there's an abundance of new life against old.

In the next few miles, we leave FR 447 and turn right onto Forest Service Road 427, and then left onto Forest Service Road 236, which we take toward Horse Spring Point. It's getting warmer as the road winds down through piñon pines, junipers, desert

shrubs and tall, dry grass. The landscape isn't the only thing that's changed. Earlier, Dean and I were shivering in fleece jackets, and now we look like we've gotten lost on our way to a Jimmy Buffett concert.

Like everywhere else on the North Rim, the views are spectacular. To the southwest, Mount Trumbull and the Sawmill Mountains rise from the Arizona Strip. To the northwest, we see the Kaibab Paiute Indian Reservation and Vermilion Cliffs — a line of brightly colored rock that meanders into Utah toward Zion National Park.

We take FR 236 for another 10 miles to Horse Spring Point. Beyond the point, the Kaibab Plateau drops into Kanab Creek Wilderness. At the end of FR 236, before



route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- **Begin on State Route 67** at the North Rim and drive north approximately 8 miles to Forest Service Road 22 and turn left (west).
- **Drive northwest on FR 22** for 20 miles to Forest Service Road 447 and turn left (west).
- **Drive approximately 5 miles** to Forest Service Road 427 and turn right (north).
- **Drive 3 miles** to Forest Service Road 236 and turn left (west) and follow for approximately 10 miles to Horse Spring Point, where the road ends. Retrace the route back to SR 67, turning right (south) to return to the North Rim.

looping back around, we get out of the car and stretch our legs. We haven't seen a soul for two hours. Standing at 6,100 feet, we gaze out across a maze of swirling color and confluence. Below, the dry limestone and sandstone beds of Snake Gulch, Slide Canyon and Little Spring Canyon create a small, forested delta where they merge into Kanab Creek.

travel tips

Vehicle Requirement: Four-wheel-drive, high-clearance recommended.

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 are going and when you plan to return.

Additional Information: Kaibab National Forest, 928-643-7395 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai.

(511) Travelers in Arizona can visit az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.

The canyons are dusty white and brown, lined with high, totemlike talus slopes and accented by bright red cliffs of Hermit shale, which conjure images of giant slabs of well-cooked meat, cut to reveal its raw insides.

The metaphor of filet mignon reminds us that we'll be dead meat if we don't hustle back to camp. We've been so engrossed in the scenery that five hours of driving just flew by. As the sun begins to set, we climb back up the plateau while wondering if we should give Mom the gift of time again tomorrow. She'll probably need it after eating her birthday dinner at midnight.

■ *For more back-road adventures, pick up a copy of our book, The Back Roads. Now in its fifth edition, the book (\$19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, call 800-543-5432 or visit arizonahighways.com.* **AH**

Little Bear Loop

Flagstaff has a lot of great hikes, including this one, which offers a parklike setting not far from downtown.

SOME MOUNTAINS wear a mantle of adjectives as easily as they'd wear a cloudbank. Words like "soaring" and "majestic" cling to their mighty shoulders. Other mountains embody a more approachable persona, slouching toward the cosmos with shaggy charm. Put Flagstaff's Mount Elden in the second group.

Mount Elden anchors a prime location (right across the street from the mall) and sports a clustered network of trails, bestowing it with special status among Flagstaff residents. As mountains go, they don't come more accessible or inviting. Elden rises above the town like 9,299 feet of hooky bait, a perpetual temptation to blow off school, work or whatever to spend the afternoon on sun-splashed slopes.

The Little Bear Trail, one of the newer additions to the Mount Elden/Dry Lake Hills Trail System, provides a vivid introduction to high-country terrain. Combining this feisty canyon route with the Little Elden and Sunset trails creates an easily managed 8.5-mile loop, which is popular with hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians.

Start on Little Elden Trail in a grassy meadow, streaked summer-to-frost with wildflowers. The trail ambles upward at a gentle tilt through a parklike setting of ponderosa pines and Gambel oaks. You'll pass the signed junction with Little Bear Trail, but continue straight ahead. Soon small groves of aspens and firs

crowd the path. After about 3 miles you'll curve past Schultz Tank, a mere footprint of a pond, but rare in this porous volcanic landscape where water seeps but seldom collects.

Still, Schultz Tank, named for a prominent sheep rancher, makes a shimmering accent for the looming San Francisco Peaks in the background. Just beyond the tank, turn left onto

Sunset Trail. Navigating broad meadows and elegant forest, Sunset climbs at a moderate pace. Snatches of peak panoramas frequently appear, framed by big timber. The perfume of warm pine wafts along these woods, like Heaven must smell on laundry day.

Don't be surprised if you're heckled by an Abert's squirrel or if you spot mule deer or elk

grazing. This chunk of mountain teems with wildlife. And because you'll be hiking a trail named for a certain large mammal, one question will undoubtedly come to mind. The answer is yes. Black bears do reside in the area. Your

MARSH AND MOUNTAIN Fremont Peak, part of the San Francisco Peaks, dominates the view from Schultz Tank near Flagstaff.



WALK IN THE WOODS Hikers find their way along Sunset Trail, which intersects with Little Bear Trail in the Coconino National Forest.

chances of seeing one of the shy creatures remain exceedingly rare, but keep an eye peeled for tracks.

Where the route intersects with the Brookbank Trail, take a sharp left to stay on Sunset Trail. Soon you'll junction with Little Bear Trail and begin a descent along wide switchbacks through a forested canyon. Little Bear officially opened in 1998, constructed largely by volunteers. The angled swoop of the trail suggests that thrill-hungry mountain bikers had some input into the design.

Kudos to the spoke junkies. The Bear carves a graceful route down the canyon, even brushing by a section of oddly terraced basalt cliffs. Assorted shrubs and wildflowers spill

from ledges and burst from crevices. Right beside them, claret cup cactuses thumb their spiny "noses" at high altitudes and winter chill.

This is one of the few spots on the mountain where firs outnumber the pines, thanks to a northern exposure and cool air channeled through the canyon. A few aspens mingle, as well, along with a scattering of Rocky Mountain maples, known for their gaudy autumn displays. Twice along the route, the forest falls away, providing dramatic vistas of Sunset Crater, bracketed by the soft pastels of the Painted Desert.

After 3.5 miles you'll end up back on Little Elden Trail. Turn right and mosey to your vehicle. You can use this quiet stretch to practice your sick-sounding phone voice. It's never too early to start planning your next hooky day atop Mount Elden. **AH**

trail guide

Getting There: Drive 5 miles northeast of Flagstaff on U.S. Route 89 to Elden Springs Road (Forest Service Road 556) and turn left. Continue on this road approximately 2.5 miles to the Little Elden trailhead.

Length: Approximately 8.5-mile loop

Elevation Gain: 1,275 feet

Difficulty: Moderate

Payoff: Scenic forest, wildlife and panoramic views

Travel Advisory: Stay on designated trails and minimize your impact by not trampling vegetation and by avoiding muddy areas. Dogs must be leashed at all times. Hikers and mountain bikers should yield to equestrians, and mountain bikers should yield to hikers.

Additional Information: 928-526-0866 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino



online For more hikes in Arizona, visit our hikes archive at arizonahighways.com.



Sanford & Son?

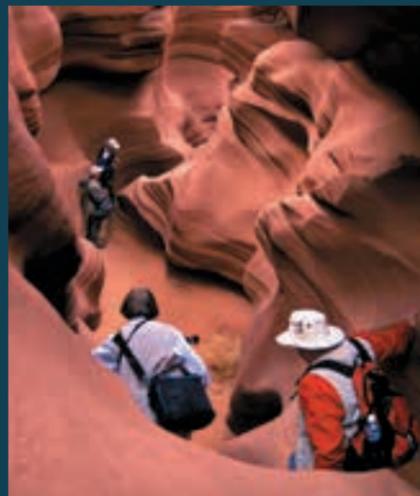
It might appear long-forgotten, but this place is all about memory. Memorabilia, that is. Looks can be deceiving. Pull up looking for some unleaded, and you'll discover the pumps are mere shells of their former selves. Once a convenience store that time passed by — literally — this ramshackle building was resurrected first as a visitors center and then as a curio-fest for nostalgic road-trippers. Today, you can quench your thirst for yesteryear with trinkets, vintage cars and a signature route beer, er ... root beer.

Win a collection of our most popular books! To enter, correctly identify the location featured above and e-mail your answer to editor@arizonahighways.com — type "Where Is This?" in the subject line. Entries can also be sent to 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. Please include your name, address and phone number. One winner will be chosen in a random drawing of qualified entries. Entries must be postmarked by August 15, 2008. Only the winner will be notified. The correct answer will be posted in our October issue and online at arizonahighways.com beginning September 1. *June 2008 Answer: Watson Lake. Congratulations to our winner, Vicky Kaye of Palmer, Alaska.*

KERRICK JAMES



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: GARY LADD, HAL TRETBAR, SUSAN SILKEY



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