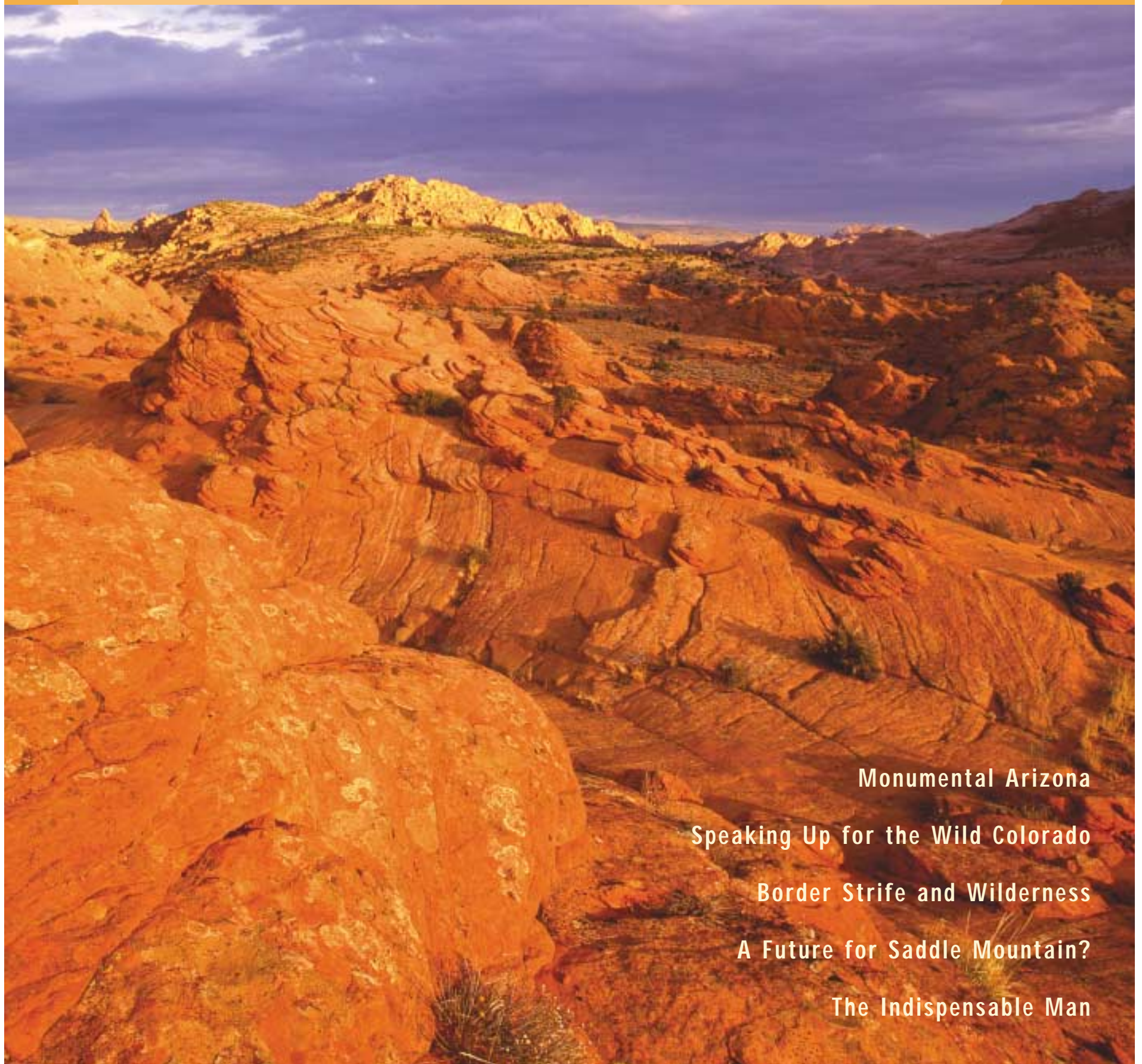


NEWSLETTER OF THE ARIZONA WILDERNESS COALITION

ARIZONA
WILD



Monumental Arizona

Speaking Up for the Wild Colorado

Border Strife and Wilderness

A Future for Saddle Mountain?

The Indispensable Man

SPRING/SUMMER 2005

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Mission Statement

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition's mission is to permanently protect and restore Wilderness and other wild lands and waters in Arizona for the enjoyment of all citizens and to ensure that Arizona's native plants and animals have a lasting home in wild nature. We do this by coordinating and conducting inventories, educating citizens about these lands, enlisting community support, and advocating for their lasting protection.

We need your help! To get involved, please consider joining the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. See back page for details.

OUT OF THE BLUE

Alive and Well in Arizona

The Wilderness Act of 1964 motivated a wilderness advocacy movement beyond the wildest expectations of most who supported it. The architect of the bill, Howard Zahniser - then Director of The Wilderness Society - foresaw this outcome. In a compromise, he re-drafted the bill so that instead of Wilderness areas being created by presidential proclamation (and being subject to the obvious whims of that office), each wilderness area could only be created through an act of Congress. Conversely, this meant that Wilderness could only be declassified by Congress - never an easy task. The Wilderness Act of 1964 also required that public land management agencies take inventory of potentially eligible Wilderness lands and to evaluate their suitability for Wilderness designation. This process created an enduring grassroots advocacy movement that swept across the nation.



Photo: Janie Hoffman

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition was created in 1979 to defend wilderness through the agencies' inventory processes. Under the leadership of Joni Bosh (current AWC Board Director), we played a very positive role in passing two large statewide wilderness bills. The Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 addressed roadless lands that had been identified by the U.S. Forest Service, plus the wilderness study areas inventoried by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) along the Arizona Strip, north of the Grand Canyon. The Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 addressed the remaining BLM lands in Arizona as well as our National Wildlife Refuges. Collectively these two bills created about 3.5 million acres of new Wilderness in Arizona.

While the two statewide bills created 3.5 million acres of new wilderness in Arizona, they also released a larger amount that was no longer required to be managed for preservation of wilderness character. Traditional opponents to wilderness including mining, logging and to some extent the livestock industry could celebrate the temporary release of these lands. However, the legislation was explicit that the Forest Service would reconsider the wilderness option when it revised their land management plans. BLM is also required to evaluate all of its resource values, including wilderness characteristics, in their planning process.

Where are we today? We have great news to report. Now, many years after the agencies were "released" from being required to maintain the wilderness character of roadless lands, our current inventories indicate that most of those lands are still eligible and perhaps even more worthy of wilderness designation today. Our volunteers

and staff have completed inventory protocol for more than half of the state and we now estimate that about 7 million acres of federal public land are still eligible for wilderness designation.

Why not initiate another statewide wilderness bill? My answer: it is unlikely that we will ever again engage in a statewide legislative effort. Now that the agencies are no longer required to protect the "released" lands, it is up to us to build overwhelming local grassroots support; to build support among local businesses, town councils, county commissions, and relevant editorial staffs; and ultimately gain the political support to pass legislation. All along the way, we need to enlist everyone "who gets it" to become a part of this movement so that we can create an overwhelming support for wilderness - perhaps one region, perhaps one unit at a time.

For instance, we are currently expending as much organizing effort in the Tumacacori Highlands campaign as we did in either of the statewide campaigns. Is it worth it? You bet it is. By organizing deep community support we are creating long-term advocacy for wilderness in Southern Arizona, and in turn we are revitalizing the wilderness movement in Arizona.

In other regions of the state we are busy advocating for interim protections through the public land panning processes. This will preserve the wilderness option until we are able to duplicate the conditions in Southern Arizona, and then fund and orchestrate selective legislative campaigns. Yes it is a lot of work, but it is also a lot of fun. Our volunteers and staff get to experience and enjoy the most remote, beautiful, and ecologically important places in our state. We have the satisfaction of putting our hearts and souls into a selfless, altruistic mission. We work and speak for the wild, for the plants and animals that need it. That just plain feels good.

The wilderness movement is very much alive in Arizona. Of course, Howard Zahniser predicted this. At a 1961 Sierra Club wilderness conference he said:

"Working to preserve in perpetuity is a great inspiration. We are not fighting a rear-guard action, we are facing a frontier. We are not slowing down a force that inevitably will destroy all the wilderness there is. We are generating another force, never to be wholly spent, that, renewed generation after generation, will be always effective in preserving wilderness. We are not fighting progress. We are making it. We are not dealing with vanishing wilderness. We are working for wilderness forever."

Donald Hoffman
Executive Director

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Cover photo © Mark Miller, Paria Canyon. Vermillion
Cliffs National Monument
Design by Mary Williams/marywilliamsdesign.com

We Couldn't Have Said it Better Ourselves

Letters on behalf of Wilderness for the Colorado River

The below excerpts were taken from comment letters that were submitted on behalf of wilderness protection for the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park. The letters, collected this past fall and winter, were a result of the park's last public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Colorado River Management Plan. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition sincerely appreciates the thousands of people who wrote in to the park expressing their support for a better alternative that would protect the rare wilderness character that makes Grand Canyon unique. The Final EIS is due out from the park later this year.

Dear Superintendent Alston,

As a wilderness lover living in Las Vegas, but who has spent many glorious days and nights in and around the Grand Canyon, I would like to submit the following comments regarding the Colorado River Management Plan. Although I understand that you are being pressured by commercial operations to maintain or even increase their use of the river and I know that some people make a living this way, you must make your first priority the long term health of the area and the opportunities for a true wilderness experience. These priorities are compatible. Commercial gain from our public lands must be the last consideration in your management plan.

Our beautiful public lands need to be protected for the long term, then maintained for public use and enjoyment. They are not a resource to be exploited by a few. The Colorado River should be accessible to all who want a wilderness experience, not just those who can afford the expensive, overused, and crowded commercial trips. It is a shame that those willing and wanting to experience the river in its natural, wild state must wait years to be able to access the river, while those willing to pay for a noisy, crowded ride have easier access. Again, I ask you to make the long term health of the Colorado River and surrounding lands your first priority, allow for a true wilderness experience for those who desire that, stress a quality experience over the quantity of people who have access, and don't bow down to the pressures of commercial operations. This is what your job requires and what is in the best interest of America's public lands.

Thank you,
Susan Potts

Dear Superintendent Alston,

I'm presently president of the Glendale Equestrian Club of Arizona and I, along with the entire club membership, support all efforts to maintain the natural beauty of our wilderness area that, more and more, are becoming commercial. Please DO NOT let this happen to the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River.

Thank you,
Allen L Dickinson

Dear Superintendent Alston,

Grand Canyon National Park is an inspiration to all who have visited her and a natural resource that must

remain a legacy for future generations to enjoy. As a taxpayer and Arizona resident who has had the privilege to hike within the Grand Canyon, I join my voice to others who are expressing a strong opinion against extending the use of powerboats within these canyon walls.

Let me include a personal anecdote to demonstrate how unsettling powerboats can be.

Years ago, my husband and I were camping along the Colorado River in the summer near Moab, Utah. After settling in our sleeping bags and enjoying the starry skies, the whole canyon area was disrupted with a loud band playing on board a showboat where their bright lights played against the canyon walls. Needless to say, the remote wilderness experience was totally lost and we wound up packing up and going into town for a motel. Please don't make the mistake of turning the Grand Canyon into a Disneyland-type experience.

Thank you,
Beatrice Perry



Canyon wall above Nankoweap Rapids. Photo © Mark Miller

Dear Superintendent Alston,

In my five years here in the SW, I've been to the Grand Canyon (including a four day backpacking trip to the bottom of Thunder River) a total of six times. I LOVE the Arizona outdoors!

Water-skiing and other water sports are a LOT of fun! I totally enjoy those activities *in their proper locations*. It's my belief that we have ample amounts of designated areas for motor sports and we need not encourage the defacement of this world-renowned resource.

While I enjoy engaging others in society, nature is a place to quiet the mind and reflect. This is very annoying to attempt in a crowd or a noisy environment. Most who enter a natural park are doing so specifically to leave civilization behind.

Thank you,
Michael Browning

Dear Superintendent Alston,

I recently did an educational river trip down the Colorado. It was a great experience. The Colorado is an amazing place to find peace, strength, and solitude. In the DEIS alternative H allows for some activities I think would be detrimental to future river runners experiences on the Colorado. Alternatives B/C are much more appropriate. Motorized trips are not as rewarding for the individual participants, and have a

higher possibility of environmental degradation. I strongly disagree with helicopter trips in the canyon. They are unnecessary, and take the emotionally nourishing experience of being in the wilderness away from other visitors.

The Grand Canyon, and the Colorado River is a visually beautiful, emotionally healing, and spiritually uplifting place to visit. Let us keep it that way, by not adding in the "theme park" experience. About two years ago I visited Glacier Lake National Park. I had seen pictures of the park for years, and I was very excited to finally have the opportunity of visiting this natural wonder. However I was very disappointed when the people I had come with said "look out your window, there it is". The Lake is surrounded by a road used to view the lake. It was not an experience of nature as I had hoped it would be. Let us not turn the Grand Canyon into this kind of experience. Lastly I want to ask you to reduce the 20-year waiting period for public access to the park.

The Canyon is a meaningful experience that more people should be able to partake in especially low-income and disabled people. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Francisca Rivera

Dear Superintendent Alston,

I would like to comment on the current recommendation of Alternative H for the Grand Canyon "plan". I thought that years ago you had decided to make the wilderness experience the goal of the NPS in the Grand Canyon. There should be no helicopters flying in the canyon—it's not a sound of the wilderness. There should not be motorized water vehicles of any kind in the Grand Canyon—again these are not the sounds of nature or the wilderness. I'm not even sure I agree with the raft trips—how can 20-something people not create their own disturbance of the wilderness. I remember hiking down into the canyon in the 70's and meeting the experience with the awe it deserved. It disgusts me to think that the NPS can't commit to protecting a valuable natural wilderness experience like the Grand Canyon.

Although Alternative B & C are not the nirvana I would like to see, at least it meets some of the criteria necessary to return this beautiful place to more of the wilderness that inspired me.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my point of view. I believe future generations will agree with me.

Thank you,
Kathy Colston

Dear Superintendent Alston,

My only visit to Grand Canyon was delightfully peaceful, being in October.

The only sounds were those of Western Bluebirds, and the voices of a few other park visitors. The thought of motorized boats ruining the peace and quiet is abhorrent to me. And the air pollution of such engines is inappropriate with such a setting.

Thank you,
Kurt R. Schwarz

Monumental Arizona: Finding the Wild Corners of Arizona's Newest National Monuments

"It is ... vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds and mammals — not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements. But at last it looks as if our people were awakening."

—Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President, signer of the 1906 Antiquities Act

by Kim Crumbo and Jason Williams

Rising in two great stair steps from the austere Mojave Desert, the dramatic Grand Wash Cliffs create the rugged spine of one of our nation's newest national monuments, the **Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument**. Using Theodore Roosevelt's Antiquities Act, President Clinton proclaimed the 1.2-million acre Monument that offers "a vast, biologically diverse, impressive landscape...of open, undeveloped spaces and engaging scenery...located on the edge of one of the most beautiful places on earth, the Grand Canyon." The monument extends from the imposing Virgin Mountains near the Utah and Nevada borders in the north and plunges southward into the untamed grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Here lies the confluence of four distinct biomes—the Sonoran and Mojave deserts and the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau provinces. The resulting diverse ecosystem, ranging from stark, desert badlands to high, pine covered mountains, creates the monument's unique collage of habitats.

The Grand Canyon-Parashant's relatively undisturbed, fossil-rich Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary rock layers reveal the region's immense geologic history. Ancient lavas flowing from the Toroweap and related faults forged Mount Trumbull's and Mount Logan's now pine-covered peaks, and cascaded into the Grand Canyon damming the river many times over during the past several million years.



The Grand Wash Cliffs in Grand Canyon Parashant N.M. support grassland, woodland, and forest ecosystems.

Photo: Kim Crumbo

This region provides important habitat for a diversity of species including pronghorn antelope, goshawk, tassel-eared squirrels, mule deer, mountain lions, resident and migratory birds, and a splendid diversity of other native wildlife.

West of Grand Canyon-Parashant lies Arizona's other recently designated national treasure, the

290,000-acre **Vermilion Cliffs National Monument**. Here, 2,000-foot crimson escarpments guard the majestic Paria Plateau, the heart of the new monument. Above the cliffs lies an expansive plateau of rolling sand dunes, grasslands and woodlands, and colorful sandstone buttes. Renown for its grandeur, intimate narrows and challenging hikes, the Paria River Canyon provides important riparian habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, as well as inspiration for its human explorers. The Paria's largest tributary, Buckskin Gulch, has incised an undulating, 12-mile canyon so narrow a hiker can at times simultaneously touch both walls of a chasm whose overhanging cliffs often block out the sky.

Pinyon/juniper woodland, shrub lands, and limited upland grasslands dominate the Paria Plateau, also referred to as the "Sand Hills." Here federal and state government agencies worked together to restore bighorn sheep into the lower Paria and upper Grand Canyon. Recent efforts to reintroduce the endangered California condors appear successful and the threatened Brady pincushion cactus occurs around the base of the Paria Plateau.

Gray wolves, a critical keystone species in many ecosystems, once inhabited the Southwest, including the Paria Plateau. Although the last known gray wolf of the Grand Canyon region fled across the Plateau trying to escape from pursuers, reintroduction efforts in the Southwest hold promise that this top carnivore will someday return to northern Arizona's wild.

Irreplaceable rock art, quarries, villages, watchtowers, agricultural features, burial sites, caves, rockshelters, trails, and camps reveal the antiquity of human presence in the Grand Canyon-Parashant. Ancient artifacts demonstrate that a small numbers of hunter-gatherers roamed the region in search of food and shelter during the Archaic Period, 7000 BC to 300 BC. Southern Paiute people replaced the Pueblo groups sometime after 1300 AD. Paiutes were living here at the time of Euro-American contact

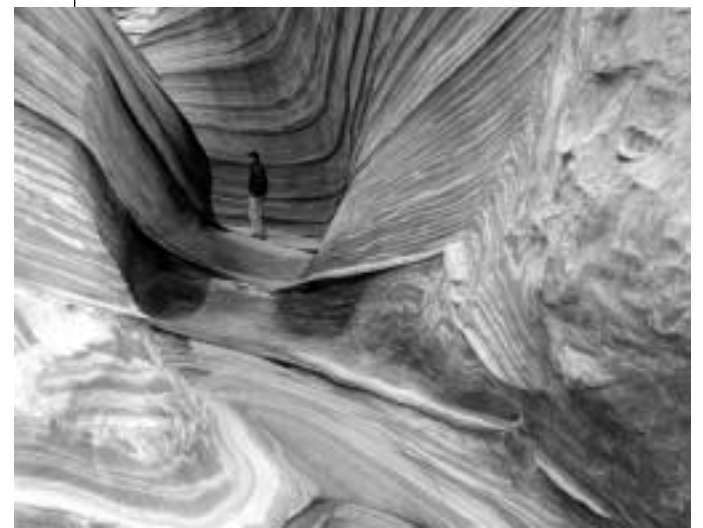
beginning in 1776 when the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of Spanish explorers passed near Mount Trumbull.

In the 12th century, Virgin Branch Pueblo II and III—also referred to as the Anasazi people—occupied the Paria Plateau and its surrounding vicinity. A relatively high density of archeological sites, including 30-

to 50-room pueblos, lie scattered across Paria Plateau. Although groundwater on the Plateau is scarce, these ancient people used rainwater from natural catchments and small, constructed reservoirs.

Off-road vehicles continue to pose a considerable threat to the monuments' wildlife, archaeology, vegetation, and tranquility. A network of primitive roads beckons off-road enthusiasts and continues to impact the area's cultural and natural resources. Existing paved, fenced highways may block wildlife movement, particularly pronghorn antelope.

Potsherd hunting has done considerable damage to the monument's archeological resources. In one of the few cases to be investigated, a potsherd hunter excavated and looted 34 pits and trenches in two large prehistoric sites on the Paria Plateau.



The Paria Canyon provides important riparian habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, as well as inspiration for its human explorers.

Photo © Mark Miller

Wilderness Protection

While the effectiveness of National Monument designation, particularly under the auspices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), remains to be seen, the additional layer of wilderness designation of all suitable areas would afford the highest level of protection for the Monument's diverse natural and cultural values. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition proposes a 775,000-acre Grand Canyon-Parashant Wilderness consisting of 23 separate units and a 169,000-acre addition to the existing Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs wilderness. In addition, the AWC has developed proposals for five wilderness areas and additions to the existing Kanab Creek Wilderness. While the majority of both National Monuments would be protected as wilderness under the AWC proposal, approximately 500 miles of primitive road in the Grand Canyon-Parashant would remain open as motorized, non-wilderness corridors. About 120 miles of primitive roads would remain available on the Paria Plateau.

The BLM and National Park Service intend to reveal their draft Resource Management Plan in fall 2005, providing an important opportunity for the public to insist on effective protection of the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments. Public support will be critical to convince the agencies and an often hostile Congress and administration to support wilderness for these magnificent lands.

Traveling south from the high and lonesome



Hikers take in the wild beauty of Agua Fria National Monument Photo © Mark Miller

Arizona Strip, the spectacular canyons and grass-covered mesas of **Agua Fria National Monument** straddle the state's Central Mountains and the Sonoran Desert ecoregions. This monument is located just north of Black Canyon City and east of Interstate 17. Agua Fria National Monument was created on January 11, 2001, to protect the rich cultural landscape and artifacts found throughout the area and to safeguard significant biological resources such as threatened native fish, birds, and reptiles. As with all five new national monuments, Agua Fria is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, which is currently developing a land management plan for the region. This management plan will guide the monument's use and enjoyment by the public over the next 15-20 years.

Perry Mesa is excellent example of a semi-desert grassland ecosystem supporting pronghorn antelope, deer, and elk. The grassland is one of Central Arizona's most endangered ecosystems due to rapid urban development. The river and numerous small tributaries flow year round supporting four species of native fish, including the longfin dace, the Gila mountain sucker, the Gila chub, and the speckled dace. The thick riparian vegetation of willows and cottonwoods that is present along the river corridor nurtures many sensitive wildlife species, including the lowland leopard frog, the common black hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, great blue heron, zone-tailed hawk, belted kingfisher, and summer tanager. The monument also contains critical habitat for the Sonoran desert tortoise, Mexican garter snake, and Gila monster.

The Agua Fria River Canyon and the surrounding mesas contain numerous archeological sites that represent a time when thousands of people inhabited the now sparsely populated region. The archeological resources of the Perry Mesa area are one of the primary reasons for the creation of the Agua Fria National Monument as a whole. The mesa alone contains more than 450 documented archeological sites and six major site clusters with more than 100 ground-floor rooms.

Illegal pot hunting and archeological site vandalism, irresponsible off-road vehicle use on the mesas and in the riparian areas, invasive species, and upstream groundwater pumping threaten the Agua Fria National Monument. Pot hunting activities have been a serious issue in the past 100 years because many of the major archeological sites are accessible by roads, which allow pothunters easy access. Rock art has been damaged by recreational gunshots or by uninformed visitors making their own pictures on or next to existing 1,000-year old images.

Off-road vehicle use on well-established existing roads can offer an enjoyable way to see the monument, but the long term cumulative impacts of illegally created trails creates vegetation damage, soil loss, and

wildlife disturbance, which dramatically harms the natural and historic values for which the monument was created to protect.

Invasive plant species such as salt cedar and malta star thistle are becoming an increasing issue for the health and viability of the riparian and semi-desert grassland ecosystems. Invasive and aggressive weeds can drastically alter the plant and wildlife compositions of an area by out-competing native species and removing viable food sources for moths to pronghorn. Furthermore, upstream pumping by the growing communities of Prescott Valley, Dewey, Mayer, Humbolt, and Cordes Junction

will continue to affect the flow of the Agua Fria River, as water for the development of these towns comes from the river basin.

Wilderness Protection

Protecting the wilderness characteristics of the Agua National Monument can provide the added level of protection needed to counter the threats listed above. Monument status provides an added level of protection, but it does not prohibit construction of new roads or permanently close existing routes that were either created illegally, are causing significant resource damage, or for uses that were compatible with land use before the monument was created. The Bureau of Land Management can close roads and protect the monument under its land management plan, but that plan can be amended and will be changed in 15-20 years. Wilderness is the most protective designation that can be given to public lands. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition citizen inventories have found three units containing 38,213 acres in the Agua Fria National Monument that are worthy of federal wilderness protection. This represents only 53% of the entire 71,000-acre monument.

Spreading south of metropolitan Phoenix, the **Sonoran Desert National Monument** is the showcase example of Arizona's spectacular Sonoran Desert Landscape. The monument contains rugged mountains covered with stands of saguaro cactus and large expansive flats of creosote braided with ribbons of ironwood, palo verde, and mesquite growing along the washes. The monument is host to a wide array of wildlife, such as desert bighorn sheep, bobcats, mule deer, mountain lions, Sonoran desert tortoise, Sonoran green toads, and more than 200 species of birds, including 59 species known to nest in the Vekol Valley area.

Sonoran Desert National Monument is not only a biological jewel, but also reveals a rich cultural history of prehistoric desert peoples and historic expeditions. Hike around and more than likely you will come across prehistoric trails marked by scatters of pottery and shells brought all the way from the Pacific Ocean or Sea of Cortez for trading with the once thriving cultural of the Hohokam and other native peoples. The current Butterfield Overland Stage Route that is clearly marked in the monument is also part of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the Mormon Battalion Trail.

Of special interest and significance are the Sand Tank Mountains located in the Southwest corner of the monument. The naturalness of the Sand Tank Mountains is outstanding because of its remoteness, ruggedness, and previous management by the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range. Grazing has not occurred here for more than 50 years and native vegetation is

thriving. Elevation in the Sand Tanks ranges from over 4,000 feet on top of Maricopa Peak to 1,000 feet in Sand Tank Wash. Numerous canyons and deep washes surround the impressive Blue Plateau, while craggy spires top off the Javelina and Sand Tank Mountains.

The most pressing threat to the Sonoran Desert National Monument and many surrounding public, private, and state lands is the tragic, complicated, and ongoing damage caused by illegal immigration and drug smuggling activities associated with the U.S. Mexico border. These activities are creating numerous wildcat routes that will lead to lasting scars on the landscape, causing severe erosion and impacts to wildlife. This issue is outside the scope of the Bureau of Land Management's planning effort and must be addressed at the Presidential and Congressional level.

Beyond the illegal border issues, population growth in Arizona and especially the cities of Maricopa, Buckeye, and the rest of Maricopa County is the largest threat facing the Sonoran Desert National Monument. Maricopa County grew by 44.8% between 1990 and 2000 (one of the highest growth rates in the country). Buckeye, which 10 miles north of the monument has and will continue to grow in the next couple of years to have over 200,000 new homes, and the once sleepy town of Maricopa will have 150,000 new homes shortly as well. With a 291% growth in sales of off-road vehicles in Arizona between 1995 and 2000, this combination of factors spells trouble for the untrammeled landscape of the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

Wilderness Protection

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition citizen inventories have found five units containing 151,564 acres in the Sonoran Desert National Monument worthy of wilderness protection. The monument already contains 3 wilderness areas designated in 1990 totaling 157,357 acres. If the citizen proposed wilderness was adopted, 61% of the entire 498,407 acre monument would be protected as wilderness. These protections would permanently prohibit new road building and any type of development with the wilderness areas, which would significantly reduce the threats from off-road vehicles and the spread of invasive weeds. Protecting these areas as wilderness would help to maintain and enhance the existing wildlife corridors that are necessary to ensure viable wildlife populations into the future.

Can you think of a tree that lives to be 800 years old and then leaves its remains for hundreds more years before it disintegrates? The ironwood tree can live this long and for this reason is a keystone species in the Sonoran Desert. The **Ironwood Forest National Monument** was created on June 9, 2000 to protect the unique and diverse Sonoran Desert vegetation, namely the ironwood tree. The monument is located about 30 miles northwest of Tucson bordering the eastern boundary of the Tohono O'odham Nation, with the northern part of the monument only 16 miles south of Casa Grande.

Within the monument, the Sawtooth Range rises up as rugged, volcanic mountains with many jagged "teeth," giving a saw-toothed appearance. A variety of small and large arches can be found on the numerous sharp ridgelines. Ragged Top Mountain abruptly rises 1,600 feet from the desert floor with spires and crags piercing the skyline that stand in marked contrast to the smooth silhouette of the nearby Silver Bell Mountain Range.

Within the monument, 474 species and subspecies of plants thrive, 8% of which do not occur in the nearest protected desert areas, the Tucson Mountains, or Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. A preliminary assessment of wildlife found up to 177 vertebrate species and 821 invertebrates. This includes a variety of sensitive



Thousands of pounds of trash from illegal human traffic are severely damaging Ironwood's biological and scenic values. Photo: Jason Williams

species such as desert bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, California leaf-nosed bat, Mexican long-tongued bat, lesser long-nosed bat, Western red bat, Merriam's mesquite mouse, Rufous-winged sparrow, Tucson shovel-nosed snake, ground snake, Pima pineapple cactus, Nichol's turk's head cactus, and 3 species of talus snail. The Monument also includes historic and potential habitat for the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl.

The Silver Bell Mountains in the monument support the highest density of ironwood trees in the Sonoran Desert, especially in upper parts of north and west-facing bajadas. The ironwood trees found in the monument support more plant species than anywhere else in the country. Ironwoods and other desert legumes are so important as nurse trees that many cacti, including saguaros, might not survive in our climate without them. Unfortunately, ironwoods are becoming threat-

ened as the demand increases for their hard wood, which is used for ornamental carving and other human uses.

Humans have inhabited the Ironwood Forest area for more than 5,000 years. More than 200 sites from the prehistoric Hohokam period (600 A.D. to 1450 A.D.) have been recorded in the area. Two areas within the monument have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Los Robles Archeological District, and the Cocoraque Butte Archeological District. The archeological artifacts include rhyolite and brown chert chipped stone, plain and decorated ceramics, and worked shell from the Gulf of California. The area also contains the remnants of the

Mission Santa Ana, the last mission constructed in Pimeria Alta.

Ironwood Forest National Monument also suffers from illegal border activities. These activities are creating numerous wildcat routes and mountains of trash that are causing dramatic effects on the biological and scenic qualities of the landscape.

The desert bighorn sheep that reside in the monument represent the last population of desert bighorn sheep in Pima County. The transmission of deadly diseases from domestic goats that trespassed on the monument in December of 2003 from developer George Johnson's proposed La Osa Ranch housing development has severely jeopardized the health of this remaining wild sheep population.

Like the other national monuments, rapid human population growth and the associated pressures from

off-road vehicle use, route proliferation, the spread of invasive weeds, and habitat fragmentation and conversion also threaten Ironwood Forest.

Wilderness Protection

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition citizen inventories have found four units containing 35,246 acres in the Ironwood Forest National Monument worthy of wilderness protection. If the citizen proposed wilderness was adopted into the BLM's management plan, 18.5% of the entire 189,742-acre monument would be protected as wilderness, placing management emphasis on safeguarding the naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation for future monument visitors. No new roads would be built and old illegal routes would be allowed to return to natural conditions. These wilderness protections would help stem the tide of threats that are mounting against Ironwood Forest and help as a restoration tool to reclaim the dramatic impacts that have occurred due to the illegal border activities inside the monument.

Help Us Help the Monuments!

For information about how to get involved with inventory and wilderness service projects, contact the Arizona Wilderness Coalition: azwild@azwild.org. Or visit our website at www.azwild.org, where you can sign up to receive our action alerts and receive our newsletter on a regular basis. We also recommend taking to the hills or desert, so that you can experience these wild gems on their own terms. Passion is the first ingredient to healthy activism.

SHORT TAKES

Let the Sun Shine In: April 30 - May 1

Join us in Scottsdale for a weekend of Sun Festival 2005! Sun Festival inspires change through a dynamic and evocative sun- and fun-filled educational weekend that addresses the social and environmental challenges of our times.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition will be the featured "green" group at this year's Sun Festival weekend and will be offering all attendees a special entry package, including subscriptions to magazines of your choice and \$15 off the regular membership fee to the AWC—a combined \$60 value! The Coalition will also be presenting a workshop on Saturday that will highlight one of our major campaigns to protect the Tumacacori Highlands as federal wilderness—an area of outstanding species diversity and recreational opportunity. Please join us on April 30th and find out how you can help ensure this wild area and its denizens remain for future generations.



Tubac Chamber of Commerce Gives Resounding 'Yes' to Wilderness

In a unanimous vote in March, the members of the Tubac Chamber of Commerce voted to support federal legislation that would permanently protect approximately 85,000 acres in the Tumacacori Highlands as wilderness. The group is the first chamber in the area to support wilderness designation for the Tumacacori Highlands in Southern Arizona.

Before a vote was taken, Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands (FOTH), the local group driving the wilderness proposal, presented the Chamber with data supporting the benefits of wilderness to local economies, wildlife and hunting opportunities, and clean air and water. FOTH has been building a coalition of wilderness allies for more than two years using grassroots outreach to local communities, businesses, recreational groups, ranchers, and politicians.

"Given the outstanding benefits of wilderness and the population growth we see projected for Southern Arizona, we felt that protecting the Highlands for residents and visitors alike was the best long-term decision we could make for the future of Tubac and our quality of life," says Tubac Chamber Executive Director Carol Cullen. "We hope it will show people that we view our natural landscape as an asset to living here—not an obstacle to economic growth." Tubac is situated just north of the proposed wilderness area off of Interstate 19.

Located on the Coronado National Forest south of Tucson, the Tumacacori Highlands is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the United States, providing exceptional intact habitat for 74 federal- or state-listed species. It is also home to such rare and elusive creatures as black bear, peregrine falcons, elegant trogons, Chiricahua leopard frogs, and the American jaguar. The Arizona Game and Fish Department has ranked the Highlands as one of the top white-tailed deer hunting grounds in the state.



"Tubac's artist community will only stand to gain from protecting the magnificent wild qualities that make it such an amazing area to live," says Roberta Stabel, a representative of FOTH and a former real estate agent. "This is a victory for businesses, for residents, and for wilderness. We've worked hard to educate business leaders that nearby wilderness draws many people looking to relocate who also want access to protected public lands in their free time."

Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-District 7), who has been working with FOTH on the proposal, is expected to introduce a bill for the Highlands later this year. For a listing of businesses, organizations, and individuals supporting Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, please visit www.tumacacoriwild.org.

Song Catcher Music Catches Spirit of Nature

Inspired by nature and wilderness, Ajo resident Tim Lengerich's folk music chronicles his life, liberty and pursuit of happiness in the backcountry of America's wild deserts, forests, mountains and streams from Alaska to Arizona, California to Colorado.

Tim's CDs, *Out There*, *Anywhere*, *All The Time* and *Greenfire Revival*, reflect the passion and delight he feels when rambling through these wild places. Grizzly bears and bluebirds, rattlesnakes and butterflies, wildflowers and cacti, all are regular visitors in the images of his music—Mother Nature's folk music. Tim donates \$5 of each sale of his CDs to the environmental organization of your choice!

Visit <http://songcatchermusic.com> to purchase his CDs and read more about Tim.

A Wilderness Under Siege

by Don Hoffman and Katurah Mackay

- 4,000 – 6,000 undocumented immigrants a month
- 2 million pounds per year of scattered trash
- biohazard sites from accumulated human waste
- 20 – 25 abandoned vehicles at any given time
- 15 deaths, including one U.S. government worker
- seizure of illegally smuggled drugs
- 180 miles of illegal roads...

Sounds like the ugly reality in a war torn country somewhere overseas. But the above list is status quo these days for the largest wildlife refuge wilderness in the lower 48 states. It's all happening right here in Arizona.

The Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge stretches across an amazingly tranquil portion of the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona, sharing a 56-mile border with Mexico. The refuge encompasses 860,010 acres, more than 90 percent of which was designated as federal wilderness by the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act in 1990. It is home to the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, lesser long-nosed bat, desert tortoise, and the pygmy ferruginous owl.

By daylight, the refuge appears mostly as it should: quiet except for the bird calls of its desert denizens and the occasional buzz of bees on a collection mission for pollen. During a mid-March visit, the plentiful rains that drenched Arizona this winter had set the ocotillo blossoms ablaze with red gems and lit the Mexican poppies aglow in bursts of yellow and orange. Stand facing in any direction and you will see a different mountain range each time, all within the boundaries of the refuge. It is Wilderness, in every sense of the term.

But when darkness blankets the land, the Cabeza becomes a heavily traveled, drug and human-smuggling underworld. Most illegal crossers move at night to better avoid detection by Border Patrol and to make the most of cooler temperatures. Most are on foot and are not equipped with the proper shoes, rations, or water supplies to make it to the Promised Land of Phoenix, where the majority of them are ultimately headed for work. Sensors along the border indicate that 4,000 – 6,000 illegal immigrants a month may cross the eastern portion of the refuge each spring. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Wilderness, which borders the refuge to the east, estimates that 300,000 illegal individuals cross during a year's time.

As they travel north from the border, illegals discard items that are no longer needed and will weigh them down. On a recent trash pickup in Organ Pipe, volunteers collected rusted tuna tins (easy travel food), water jugs, holey socks, shirts, pants, tequila bottles, broken glass, shoes, and other sundries.

At Dripping Springs, a popular watering hole for bighorn sheep, endangered bats, and other wildlife in the Monument, rangers discovered fecal matter in the spring's collecting pool. Human waste had accumulated in several spots in the Cabeza and caused such a level of con-

tamination that Fish and Wildlife officials had to call in a biohazard team to clean the sites up.

While most illegals in Organ Pipe are on foot due to a new 36-mile long vehicle barrier along the border, officials at Cabeza can find 20-25 broken down vehicles at any given time on the refuge. Removing the vehicles often causes even more impacts to desert soils and vegetation, as tow trucks and other equipment must go off-road to reach them. Cabeza officials estimate that there are roughly 180 miles of roads that have been created by illegals on their trek north in the last 4 years.

Perhaps the most alarming impacts from illegal migration are the effects this level of human activity is having on desert wildlife and habitat. Although no definitive studies have been done, monument and refuge officials have been carefully documenting the impacts for years. In both Organ Pipe and the Cabeza, natural water sources that are regularly relied upon by wildlife have been polluted, drained dry, or receive so much human activity that they are no longer desirable. This causes concern for biologists following the survival of the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, which need dependable water sources to reproduce, lactate, and successfully rear their young. In the Cabeza, drug and human smuggling activities caused the abandonment of one of four known maternity caves of the endangered lesser long-nosed bat in the United States.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition firmly stands behind the men and women who are defending our borders from illegal drug and human traffic and those who are defending our wild lands from further deterioration. Border Patrol, which operates under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), should be given adequate resources to do their job to protect United States citizens and deter illegal crossings as best they can. But because both Organ Pipe and the Cabeza are federally designated wilderness areas, the law dictates that the agency use the minimum tools necessary to accomplish their mission. DHS is currently seeking exemption from compliance with

such laws as the Wilderness Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. They claim that the regulations required by these laws pose red tape and slow procedures for constructing new infrastructure such as walls, vehicle barriers, patrol roads, and stadium lighting. They also wish to reduce or eliminate restrictions on off-road travel—beyond that which is allowed for emergency health and human safety concerns—and construct permanent outbuildings, towers, and search beacons for law enforcement purposes with little restriction in wilderness. Implications of this on the wild and primitive character of the refuge and monument are pro-



A vehicle barrier along Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument's border with Sonora, Mexico
Photo: Katurah Mackay

found, yet without Border Patrol's presence, both public lands would likely close for safety concerns.

AWC has become actively engaged in an effort to implement viable, long-term solutions to the border/wilderness issue. In March 2004, Don Hoffman, AWC Executive Director, made a personal commitment to Senator John McCain (R-AZ) to help facilitate constructive dialog between the conservation community and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This offer has gone a long way toward creating a positive relationship based on shared concerns with the Senator and his staff at both his DC and Arizona offices. Since then:

- AWC Director Don Hoffman spent his winter vacation in Cabeza Prieta Wilderness where he had a chance to meet with the Refuge Manager and various enforcement officers working for the Department of Homeland Security;
- AWC submitted comments to a Draft EIS that evaluates a comprehensive proposal by DHS to upgrade and construct infrastructure along the Arizona border;
- AWC attended the Border Ecological Symposium hosted by the Wildlands Project and Defenders of Wildlife, which convened groups of scientists, agency managers, representatives from Senator McCain and Congressman's Grijalva's offices and conservation organizations with a clear stake in the issue;
- AWC participated in a two-day tour of Organ Pipe National Monument and Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuges, which also included a number of professional writers who hope to inform the public of the impacts and need for comprehensive solutions.

AWC consistently prefaces our comments on border issues by stating that comprehensive reform of our nation's immigration policies is necessary to monitor our borders in a secure, safe, humane, and environmentally sensitive manner. Fortunately, Senators McCain and Kennedy (D-MA) are planning to introduce immigration reform legislation this summer, but in the meantime we must react to the current situation. We respect the mission of DHS and we want to work with them to develop a comprehensive strategy that safeguards our sensitive desert lands, reduces the risk to migrants, and provides law enforcement officers defending our borders with a safe and effective working environment.

When AWC met with Senator McCain this March, we expressed our concern that the Real ID Act, which already has passed through the House of Representatives, would exempt DHS from being required to comply with laws meant to safeguard our environment along all of our international borders. We anticipate that passage in the Senate would all but eliminate any incentive for DHS to engage with



Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Superintendent Kathleen Billiangs speaks to an audience in front of the new vehicle barrier meant to deter illegals from crossing into the monument.

Photo: Katurah Mackay

conservation groups in a constructive manner. We also were able to highlight the extreme impacts that some of DHS's proposals could have, especially those to threatened species that migrate across our border with Mexico.

An open dialog between the conservation community and DHS is a must, and Senator McCain is well positioned to open communication channels. We look forward to future opportunities that are in the works. For starters, conservationists are considering:

Strategies that intercept smugglers and undocumented migrants at or close to the border;

Vehicle barriers in association with high tech surveillance systems positioned at the border deter illegal vehicle entry and provide early detection of illegal foot traffic;

Wherever possible, border infrastructure such as vehicle barriers, surveillance platforms, and patrol roads be constructed within the 60 foot Roosevelt easement directly adjacent to the border and outside of wilderness boundaries;

Identifying key wildlife linkages and, within these areas, implement strategies that will allow for wildlife to migrate back and forth between suitable habitats. Reduced lighting can be compensated with other electronic detection systems;

Alternative means of transporting illegals that are pursued and apprehended in wilderness. Driving cross-country in four-wheel drive vehicles is severely damaging to desert ecosystems. For instance, consider stationing a patrol helicopter in Ajo or Welton to provide prompt enforcement back up and rescue personnel and consider stationing a larger transport



Conservationists met with Senator McCain in mid-March. (l to r) Sandy Bahr, Rob Smith, Eva Sargent, Jenny Neely, Senator McCain, Don Hoffman, Kim Vicariu.

Photo: Jana Pierce

helicopter to remove large groups—at least during the dangerous summer months.

The Cabeza Prieta and Organ Pipe Wildernesses represent the very best of the Wilderness Preservation System in the lower forty-eight states and function as true wildland systems. Wildlife like the endangered Sonoran pronghorn antelope and desert bighorn sheep move freely among the mountain ranges to take advantage of available food and water. There are no highways to cross or housing developments to avoid. You can *feel* the wild. Even with all of the impacts associated with the border, they feel as wild as any place in the state.

We must believe that brighter minds will prevail and that someday, in the not too distant future, the problems we see today will subside. Until that time we have a mandate to manage for wilderness, to minimize

impacts while effectively controlling our border, to clean up what we can, and to eventually restore these wild national treasures. AWC is one organization that intends to stick it out.



Curt McCasland, assistant refuge manager at Cabeza Prieta, stands beside a 1000-lb marijuana load captured from illegal drug traffickers crossing the refuge. Photo: USFWS

Get Out There

April 21st thru 24th:

Verde Valley Nature and Birding Festival

Volunteers needed to help staff the Arizona Wilderness Coalition table display at this event. Duties will include talking to people about wilderness, what it is, what it does, why Arizona needs more, and signing up all those interested in helping to protect Arizona's wilderness. Volunteers will get free entry into event and time to participate in event activities. The more volunteers the better. For more info on the festival visit: <http://www.birdyverde.org>. The Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival provides a unique recreational experience to anyone interested in the natural world and fosters awareness of the importance of habitat for the enrichment of all life in the Verde Valley. To volunteer or for specific directions and information contact: Jason Williams at jwilliams@azwild.org or (928) 717-6076.

April 30th thru May 1st:

Sun Festival Southwest

Volunteers needed to help staff the Arizona Wilderness Coalition table display at this event. Duties will include talking to people about wilderness, what it is, what it does, why Arizona needs more, and signing up all those interested in helping to protect Arizona's wilderness. Volunteers will get free entry into event and time to participate in event activities. The more volunteers the better. For more info on the festival visit: <http://sunfestival.net> Sun Festival inspires change through a dynamic and evocative sun- and fun-filled educational weekend that addresses the social and environmental challenges of our times. To volunteer or for specific directions and information contact: Jason Williams at jwilliams@azwild.org or (928) 717-6076.

May 27th - 30th:

Upper Blue River Tamarisk Survey Project

Join Sky Island Alliance and the Arizona Wilderness Coalition in a project to map locations of this invasive weed that is sucking our precious rivers dry! This will be the first step in an eradication program along the Beautiful Blue! Get wet and wild! -5 hours from Tucson and Phoenix- To volunteer or for specific directions and information contact: Don Hoffman dhoffman@azwild.org or (928) 339-4525

June 24th - 27th:

Lower Blue River Tamarisk Survey Project

Join Sky Island Alliance and the Arizona Wilderness Coalition in a project to map locations of this invasive weed that is sucking our precious rivers dry! This will be the first step in an eradication program along the Beautiful Blue! Get wet and wild! -4.5 hours from Tucson and Phoenix- To volunteer or for specific directions and information contact: Don Hoffman dhoffman@azwild.org or (928) 339-4525

July 23rd thru 24th:

Pine Mountain Retreat

All members, volunteers, and anyone else interested is welcome to enjoy the cool upper regions of the Pine Mountain Wilderness, where perennial waters flow and old growth ponderosa pines flourish. No work involved, except setting up your own tent and helping with camping tasks. Call or email Jason Williams at 928-717-6076, or jwilliams@azwild.org for more information and directions

October 1 thru 2nd:

Prescott National Forest Wilderness Inventory

No experience necessary for this very important wilderness inventory trip. Camping and hiking on the forest both days. Mapping, data recording, and photography of the area. Contact Jason Williams for more information and to participate. 928-717-6076, or jwilliams@azwild.org.

Wilderness Adopter Program

There are many unadopted roadless and potential wilderness units across the state on BLM and Forest Service lands. Adopting a potential wilderness or roadless area is one of the best ways volunteers can help protect Arizona's wildlands. Duties could include documenting natural features, impacts to these features, route inventories, volunteer projects, backpacking and hiking trips, attending public meetings, and writing wilderness proposals. You don't need to be prepared to make a huge commitment, you can help out by going to areas that no one has adopted, we just need people to at least visit some of these places, as we can't protect them adequately if no one has ever been there. Please think about taking one day or one weekend out of the next 6 months to do something for wilderness. To get involved or find out more information contact: Jason Williams at jwilliams@azwild.org or (928) 717-6076.

Looking north from the scenic Little Horn Mountains. Photo: Jason Williams



Saddle Up: It's Time to Go Wild

by Craig Weaver

Due west of metropolitan Phoenix, past the tsunami wave of new residential development, a band of wildlands are increasingly under threat as the growth machine reaches out in all directions. Saddle Mountain and the Palo



Lukas and Kerstin Alicki enjoy Saddle Mountain, February 27, 2005 Photo: Jason Williams

Verde Hills is on this axis, 20 miles west of the White Tank Mountains, and is on the edge of what will someday be another basin filled with master planned communities totaling 750,000 residents.

Within the Tonopah Desert, the distinctive faceted shape of Saddle Mountain has made it an easily recognized landmark for thousands of years. An island within an island is how Saddle Mountain looks on many maps. Two mountain masses form the rugged core that is floating within the surrounding 48,000 acres of federal land, which includes the neighboring Palo Verde Hills. On the ground you'll see a landscape of towering cliffs, spires, and buttes. Inviting backcut canyons, rugged washes, and varied topography are the result of intervening erosion that wore down and softened the volcanic core.

However, the island appearance of Saddle Mountain is inaccurate. While the north portion is near rural residential development and agricultural parcels, the entire southern portion reaches into the still mostly wild terrain of the Gila Bend Mountains and Woolsey Peak region. This expanse currently provides wildlife corridors that are critical to the future of this region's desert bighorn sheep population.

Recognizing the combination of outstanding recreational features, critical habitat, and significant cultural components has led a range of Tonopah residents to commit to the protection and restoration of Saddle Mountain and Palo Verde Hills since 1989. Recently, members of the Tonopah Area Coalition (TAC) compiled a trail inventory that is the basis for creating a balanced approach for the protection of Saddle Mountain's most significant assets. TAC's protection approach will still maintain vehicular access on the northeast portion

where established routes have existed for several decades. At the same time, the largely roadless southern portion of this complex (at least 24,000 acres) still offers the opportunity to protect the wilderness characteristics of this large natural landscape. Currently, the BLM is crafting a long-term management plan for the Sonoran Desert National Monument and other areas, including Saddle Mountain. Illegal activities, trash dumping, vandalism, theft of cultural artifacts, and the proliferation of off highway vehicle (OHV) trails threaten the very qualities that make the Sonoran Desert unique in the world. At Saddle Mountain, a volunteer trail inventory showed that, in one area, 44% of the routes were redundant - duplicating another nearby two-track trail. Also, the inventory found OHV routes that crossed archeological sites and allowed drive-up wildlife poaching at water catchments.

"The inventory showed us how a set of designated routes can provide reasonable OHV access on the north side where current access is occurring," says Judith Shaw, TAC President. "At the same time non-motorized backcountry makes the most sense for protecting the most scenic and sensitive parts of Saddle Mountain and the Palo Verde Hills".

Wilderness characteristics are also part of what Ms.

Shaw and others are working to protect. When a visitor turns his back on the thread that delivered him to the mountain, he quickly finds wilderness values.

Whether hiking in a remote side canyon, or looking south at a carpet of blooming Sonoran desert reaching 40 miles to the Woolsey Peak Wilderness, numerous opportunities for "solitude and primitive or unconfined recreation" exist—some of the essential, legislatively defined elements for wilderness designation. Moreover, a small but stable population of desert bighorn sheep exists at the mountain, which indicates that conditions are good for a species that requires very limited human and vehicle disturbance.

Today, Saddle Mountain is at a crossroads. The current BLM draft plan provides an Alternative for protecting key values found in the area as an Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC). This would include a limited set of designated OHV routes. Management as an ACEC would begin to protect wilderness characteristics and could lead to better and more effective protections for wildlife and cultural sites. Conversely, if the BLM selects a different mix of management options, such as those detailed in the agency's Preferred Alternative, wilderness advocates fear that the damage detailed by the TAC in the past ten years will continue to escalate as residential growth continues in western Maricopa County.

In the 1960s, Apache Junction was like Tonopah is today: a scattered, rural community bordered by the Superstition Wilderness Area. Since then, this protected area has become the backdrop to a growing town that recognizes that the "Sups are Super." From snowbirds to a large number of horse owners and hikers, Apache Junction residents have grown to appreciate the varied recreation and outstanding wildlife this Wilderness Area protects. The Peralta Trail is one of the most popular in Arizona. The recreational and aesthetic benefits of this protected landscape to the residents of the east valley are incalculable. For more than a decade, Scottsdale resi-

dents have worked to preserve the McDowell Mountains—the backdrop to their community. This effort has included votes of over 70% in favor of preservation taxes to purchase this block of land. Scottsdale voters have committed five times to raise the hundreds of millions of dollars needed to purchase this land for conservation.

Many other communities are deciding that the highest and best use of some land is leaving it as is – in its natural condition. Low impact non-motorized recreation options are preferred when voters pay to protect land. Unfortunately, most communities cannot afford to purchase land for preservation and in the case of Tonopah, federal lands are the only significant blocks available for protec-



From the valley floor, Saddle Mountain appears to be a castle of towering cliffs, spires, and buttes. Photo: Scott Hulbert



A petroglyph at Saddle Mountain shows ancient people's fascination with the starry night sky.

tion in a natural condition. Saddle Mountain is to Tonopah what the Superstition Mountains are to Apache Junction—a natural backdrop that defines the community. Protection now will provide incalculable benefits for the future.

Arizona residents have shown time and time again that interest in conservation is broad and is strong even in rural communities like Tonopah. Today the protection of interconnected habitats for wildlife is better understood and the benefits of large, non-motorized, wild lands are better appreciated. Yet a simpler reason for saving places like Saddle Mountain is more obvious everyday. It's the desire to protect some of what is left of the unmarred landscapes that make Arizona unique—before the growth machine eats it all.

Craig Weaver has lived in the Tonopah Desert for 20 years and became an active member of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition in 1989, after learning about our efforts to analyze, inventory, and permanently protect Arizona's remaining wilderness lands.

Saddle Mountain and the Palo Verde Hills are an easy one-hour drive west of central Phoenix, via I-10. Tonopah exit #94 provides gas, groceries, and restaurants and is about 8 miles from Saddle Mountain. Two track routes off Salome Road provide access.

For more information about how you can help protect places like Saddle Mountain and other great areas within the Phoenix South planning area, contact the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, 928-717-6076.

Your Gifts Pay Tribute to Wilderness

Tribute gifts—made in honor of a special person, event, or memory—are a thoughtful and timeless way to protect wilderness and a cause that may have held special meaning for a friend or relative. Tribute gifts are often made in lieu of gifts to a newly married couple, or of flowers for a recently departed loved one. This winter, three families have chosen the AWC as the recipient of tribute gifts to honor their friends and relatives. More than \$1000 was contributed to support our work and several new members have been introduced to our organization.

All gifts can be made online at www.azwild.org or by sending a tax deductible check made payable to "Arizona Wilderness Coalition" to: P.O. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920. Please indicate if you wish your gift to be anonymous or if you would like to acknowledge the tribute by name in our database. **Thank you.**

The Indispensable Man

by Mark Trautwein

Arizona wilderness is special. And it's not just because the mix of desert, mountain, and riparian lands is so compelling. Arizona is the only state outside Alaska to have set aside wilderness statewide on both its Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Many Arizonans can rightly claim credit for this singular achievement. But one man stands above the rest—an indispensable man. His name was Mo Udall.

Mo represented southern Arizona in the House of Representatives for 30 years, and for the last 15 years, was chairman of the House Interior Committee. It was the great privilege of my life to work on Mo's Committee staff for more than 12 of those years as his assistant on parks, public lands, and wilderness. During Mo's tenure, the national parks were doubled and the wilderness system tripled, a conservation

of the bill. He could have written an unbalanced bill in private, rammed it through Congress, and forced a long, tortured, secretive series of horse trades. A lot of powerful chairman worked that way. But that wasn't Mo's way. Mo believed in fairness and inclusion, in listening to the other guy, and compromising when he had a point. But he never got unmoored from his own high standards and so his legislative genius was the art of principled compromise. Some mistook his style for weakness, but it was a potent political tool that gave him credibility others lacked.

So I was excited and, frankly, terrified by the assignment. It was a golden opportunity, but daunting for a bicoastal 34-year old who knew little about Arizona's wilderness and had never before been given start-to-finish responsibility for a bill. Mo was not a detail-oriented legislator—he left that to staff, which



During Mo Udall's tenure in Congress, the national parks were doubled and the wilderness system tripled.

Credit: Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Papers of Morris K. Udall; MS 325, Box 738

record that will never be equaled. His vision and skill are responsible for the single greatest stroke of wild land preservation in the history of the world—the Alaska Lands Act. In fact, in every state, there is some treasure of natural, cultural, or historic heritage that has been protected because of Mo Udall.

Mo was proud of the Alaska Lands Act and the sheer enormity of his conservation resume. But he took an intimate pride in the stamp he left on Arizona's landscape. Arizona was bred in Mo's bones. The Udalls were one of the state's founding families and he felt a keen responsibility to leave Arizona his own legacy. Mo had seen how, in Arizona and throughout the West, 'progress' had gobbled up land faster than anyone could have imagined. Looking back at the results made the road forward clear to him: Wilderness Dead Ahead.

In 1983, Mo asked me to prepare a bill to designate wilderness on Arizona's national forests. As chairman of the Interior Committee, Mo was in an unassailable position to control both the process and the substance

meant me, and in turn, that meant that I had to know my stuff. But the man responsible for the Alaska Lands Act wouldn't have put me in charge of drafting a bill so important to him if he didn't have confidence that I would work in a Mo-like way—that I would be thorough, that I would be accessible, fair, and attentive to everyone, and that our choices would honor what Mo often called his 'love for the land.' Only a fool would disappoint a man who put that kind of trust in you.

So we invited ranchers, miners, and anyone with a stake in the outcome to help prepare the bill. It was not only good politics: it was sheer necessity. We needed to know what they knew. The Arizona wilderness community in 1983 was not what it is today and in many ways, it came of age working on Arizona's first wilderness bill. Back then, it was a small band of dedicated activists, widely scattered and loosely connected. It had to become much more than that. With the help of Rob Smith and Joni Bosh—now with the Sierra Club—and others, the Arizona Wilderness Coalition



Mo secured passage of the 1984 Arizona Wilderness Act, which was signed into law by Ronald Reagan.

Photo: Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Papers of Morris K. Udall; MS 325, Box 738

went to work. Every Wilderness Study Area was assigned an “adopter.” Their job was to know that area better than their own backyard. Before computers, email, and GPS, these adopters did invaluable hard work, preparing dossiers of data on each area and providing often more useful information than the Forest Service. In effect, every area had a lobbyist, something other interest groups couldn’t match.

Within about six months, I was able to present a draft bill to Mo. To my astonishment, he then suggested that we ask Senator Barry Goldwater to introduce it in the Senate. Goldwater’s conservative politics made this a pointless exercise to me, but I didn’t understand the depth of respect and admiration they had for each other, built over decades. Their families were among Arizona’s founders. They had both run for President and lost. They were relaxed, humorous men, comfortable in their own skins. They both loved Arizona. Mo thought that might be bankable.

We walked across the Capitol grounds to the office of ‘the Senator’. The two men warmly greeted each other, but decided to ‘walk and talk’ as there was a roll call in the Senate. I followed, dragging two armloads of file folders in case detailed information was required. But from Goldwater’s door to the Senate floor, the two men never mentioned wilderness. They talked about family and health. They joked and told boyhood stories. I couldn’t understand what Mo thought he was doing, but when we got to the Senate, Goldwater asked Mo what had brought him over. Mo explained that Arizona needed to address its wilderness issues, that I had put together a reasonable bill and he would be honored if Goldwater would introduce it in the Senate. Neither Goldwater nor his staff had a clue what was in the bill, but he instantly replied, “Sure, Mo, no problem.” My fact-filled file folders had made no difference. A lifetime of mutual trust and respect had made all the difference.

From that moment, the Arizona Wilderness Act was a done deal. With the liberal Mo leading the way in the House and the conservative Goldwater, guided by his able staff assistant Twinkle Thompson, sponsoring the same bill in the Senate, opponents had no angle of attack. Twinkle, however, had much heavy lifting with Arizona’s ranchers and miners who expected Goldwater’s help. Because she was a woman, and perhaps because of her unusual name, they often did not respect her. That was a serious mistake. Twinkle Thompson was tempered steel and a great friend of wilderness.

Five years later, Mo knew his career was winding down. The constant pain and ravages of Parkinson’s

disease were taking a terrible toll. But he did not want to leave office without addressing wilderness on Arizona’s BLM lands. This had never been done in any lower-48 state and posed problems that Forest Service wilderness did not. BLM lands are typically ‘downstream’ lands with contentious water rights issues and are often thought of as less attractive, left-overs. But again, Mo was in a position to force the state to act. And again, Mo had an ally on the other side of the Capitol and the other side of the aisle. John McCain had served on the Interior Committee during passage of the first Arizona wilderness bill. Now in Goldwater’s Senate seat, he did not want to be part of the GOP’s abandonment of its conservationist roots. Mo’s fairness, gentle nature, and willingness to share the credit and limelight had made a deep impression on McCain, who later honored Mo with a chapter in his book, *Heroes*. He shared, perhaps a little more than others, the sense of the entire Arizona delegation that while this was a bill they preferred not to pass, their affection for Mo was too genuine to stand in the way of his legislative swan song.

“I loved Mo Udall. Absolutely loved him,” says Senator John McCain (R-AZ), who supported Udall’s Arizona Desert Wilderness Act. “By the time I knew him he already had Parkinson’s, so we spent less time outdoors than I would have wanted. But we traveled the state together. There was no greater environmentalist than Mo Udall.”

Ultimately, it was that personal esteem for Mo that powered the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 through some turbulent waters. Other states have conservative Congressional delegations and other states have fantastic wilderness inventories. But only Arizona has passed statewide Forest Service and BLM wilderness bills because only Arizona had Mo Udall.

When Mo asked me to prepare his floor statement on that bill, we talked about what he wanted to say. It was clear Mo did not want just the usual thanks to the distinguished gentlemen. He wanted to explain himself and why he cared so much. So in his final remarks on his last major bill, Mo said:

Each generation has its important tasks to complete. The generations of Udalls before me met their challenge to tame the wilderness, to settle it and make it a home. ... But the challenge of our generation is different. We must show

ourselves capable not only of conquering nature but also of caring for it. ... It is important that those who come after us know that we cherished these living deserts, their waters and all the life that regenerates itself there season after season, generation after generation. In wilderness, we value that which man did not create and by restraining man’s altering hand, we hope to honor this powerful work. Long after our own footsteps have been forgotten these places will remain. Their eloquent stillness will bear testimony that we as a people are grateful for our chance to walk upon this Earth and that we have the strength, the courage and wisdom to leave at least these places as we found them.

I pray that Mo is forever remembered for all the good he did. And while Mo wasn’t so humble he would have opposed naming a mountain after him—Mt. Mo is pretty catchy—its not the way he’d have wanted most to be remembered. He’d have wanted the next generation to meet its challenge to ‘honor this powerful work’. Mo knew he’d done a lot, but he knew he hadn’t done everything. From the Arizona Strip to the Tumacacori Highlands and lots of points in between, there’s much of Arizona’s wilderness yet to be cared for, yet to be honored. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition, by assembling the inventories, organizing the grassroots, and engaging the politics, is doing the increasingly hard work necessary to make that happen. They carry the torch that lit Mo’s path and hopefully will light the future. Their success in protecting the wild lands Mo couldn’t protect would be his greatest memorial.

There will never be another Mo Udall, the Indispensable Man. But his indispensable work remains for all Arizonans who share his love for the land.

Mark Trautwein worked for Congress for 18 years. He retired from the Interior Committee staff in 1995 and now lives near San Francisco, where he is an editor for KQED public radio.



Photo: Mark Trautwein

JOIN US!

Yes! I want to help the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Together, we can build a lasting legacy of Arizona wild lands for this and future generations. You may make tax-deductible donations payable to "The Arizona Wilderness Coalition." Enclose your check with this card to: The Arizona Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920. Questions? 928-339-4525

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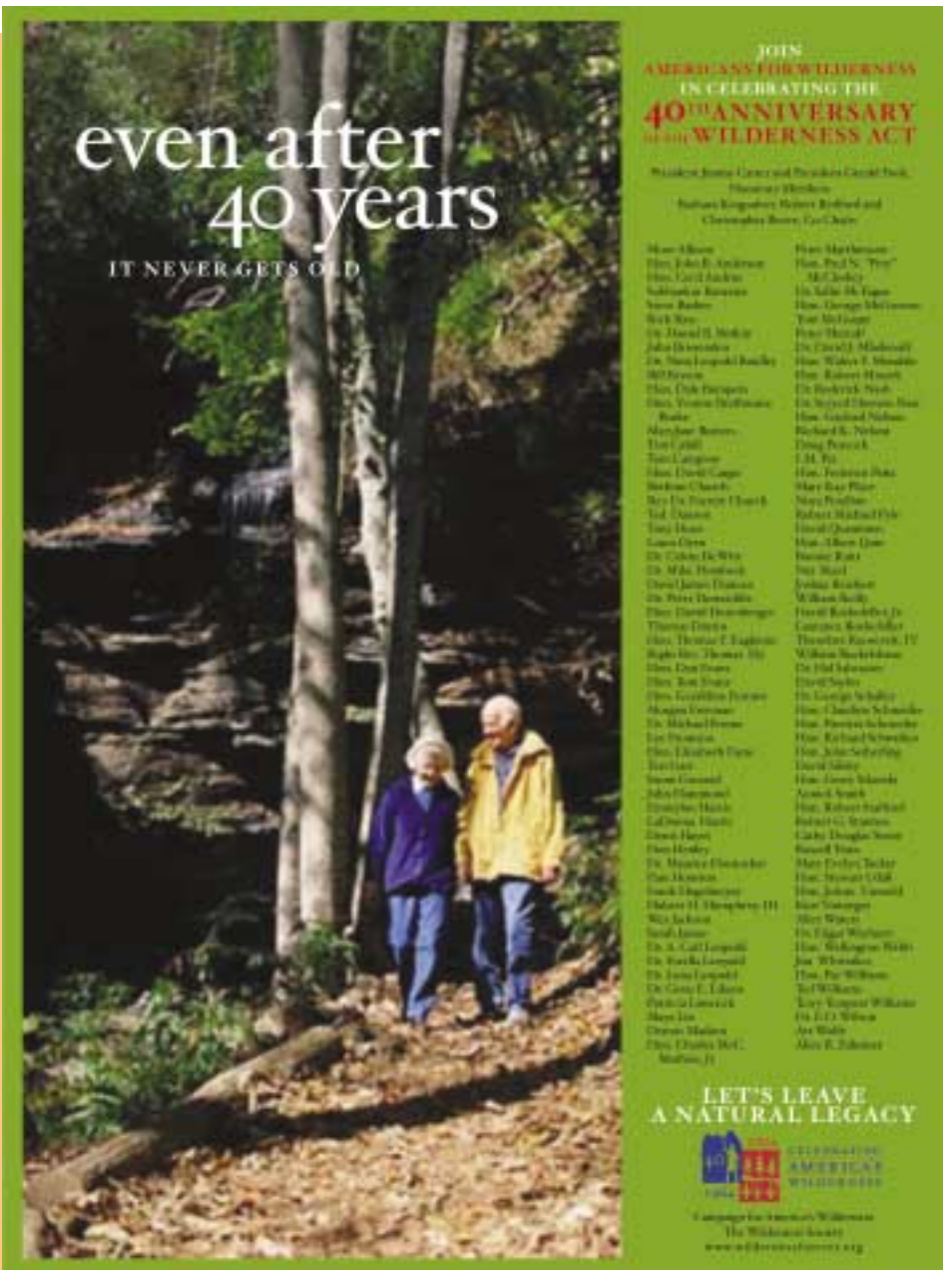
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On behalf of Arizona's Wilderness, Thank You.

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