Monumental Arizona
Speaking Up for the Wild Colorado
Border Strife and Wilderness
A Future for Saddle Mountain?
The Indispensable Man
The Wilderness Act of 1964 motivated a wilderness 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 wilderness designation. This process created an enduring grassroots advocacy movement that swept across the nation.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition was created in 1979 to defend wilderness through the agencies' inventory processes. Under the leadership of Joni Bosh (current AWC Secretary), 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 reconsid- er 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 processes.

Where are we today? We have great news to report. Now, many years after the agencies were “released” from in- dustrial ownership, each wilderness area 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 wilderness designation. This process created an enduring grassroots advocacy movement that swept across the nation.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition was created in 1979 to defend wilderness through the agencies' inventory processes. Under the leadership of Joni Bosh (current AWC Secretary), 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 processes.

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 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 planning 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

Arizona Wilderness Coalition Main Office
928-339-4525
P.O. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920

Communications Office
602-274-5640
P.O. Box 2741
Prescott, AZ  86302

Central Mountains-Sonoran and Western Deserts Field Office
928-717-6076
P.O. Box 1033
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Sky Islands Field Office
520-624-7080
P.O. Box 41165
Tucson, AZ  85717

AWC Staff
Donald Hoffman, Executive Director, dhoffman@azwild.org
Katurah Mackay, Communications Director, kmackay@azwild.org
Jason Williams, Central Mountains-Sonoran Regional Director, jwilliams@azwild.org
Kim Crumbo, Grand Canyon Regional Director, kcrumbo@azwild.org
Matt Skroch, Sky Islands Regional Director, mskroch@azwild.org

AWC Board of Directors
Joni Bosh, National Board Director, Sierra Club
Curt Bradley, GIS Specialist, Center for Biological Diversity
Kelly Burke, Executive Director, Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
David Hodges, Executive Director, Sky Island Alliance
Douglas Huimes, Professor of Environmental Studies, Prescott College
Barry Koehler, Director, Wilderness Support Center, The Wilderness Society
Cary Miester, The Audubon Society, Yuma Chapter
Max Oelschlaeger, The Francs B McAllister Endowed Chair in Community, Culture, and the Environment, Northern Arizona University
President: Rob Smith, Board President, Southwest Regional Staff Director, Sierra Club
Vice-President: Matt Skroch, Program Director, Sky Island Alliance
Secretary: Brian Segee, Staff Attorney, Defenders of Wildlife
Treasurer: Dan Volo, Executive Committee and Treasurer, Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Chapter

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.

What is Wilderness?
Wilderness is an area of undeveloped federal land that appears “to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man’s work substantially unnoticeable,” as written in the Wilderness Act of 1964. Unlike national parks, wildlife refuges or monuments, wilderness designation from Congress provides the highest level of natural resource protection available in the world. The Wilderness Act created the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the last remaining wild lands in America. Currently, about 4.7 percent of all available land in the United States is protected as wilderness. In Arizona, wilderness designation protects approximately 6.2 percent of our land and wildlife habitat.

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

The Final EIS is due out from the park later this year.

The 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

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, allowing 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 Americas 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

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-some-thing 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

Residing 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 monuments 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.

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 the region’s avian 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.

Replaceable 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-Cesnate 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 archaeological sites, including 35- 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 areas cultural and natural resources. Existing paved, fenced highways may block wildlife movement, particularly pronghorn antelope.

Potsherd hunting has done considerable damage to the monuments 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.

Wildlands 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 Monuments 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
Arizona Strip, the spectacular canyons and grass-covered mesas of Agua Fria National Monument straddle the states Central Mountains and the Sonoran Desert ecosystems. This monument is located just north of Black Canyon City and east of Interstate 17. Agua Fria National Monument was created on January 1, 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 an 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 are present across the river corridor nurtures many sensitive wildlife species, including the lowland leopard frog, the common black hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, great blue heron, zon-tailed hawk, belted kingfisher, and summer tanager. The monument also contains critical habitat for 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 area. The archaeological resources of Perry Mesa 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.

Native plant species such as salt cedar and matra salt 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 communities of this area 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, Humboldt, 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 five units containing 151,564 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 home to a diverse 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 heart 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 washes surround the impressive Blue Plateau, while cactus 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 ongoing damage caused by illegal immigration and drug smuggling activities associated with the U.S. Mexico border. These activities are creating numerous wildlife 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 29% increase 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 off-road vehicle use on the monuments 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 thousands of years as well, and yet lives 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 wildlife.
Thousands of pounds of trash from illegal human traffic are severely damaging Ironwood's biological and scenic values.  

Photo: Jason Williams

**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, recreation 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 and the 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 falcon, 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.
WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

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 in 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 to/travel fold for water), jugies, 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 conta-

tion 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 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 search and rescue 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-

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 evaluated 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...
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 to 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 coupled 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 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.

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 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 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/SunFestival.htm

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.

Get Out There

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 andPhoenix-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.

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 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 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/SunFestival.htm

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.

Get Out There

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.

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. Get involved or find out more information contact: Jason Williams at jwilliams@azwild.org or (928) 717-6076.
Saddle Up: It's Time to Go Wild

by Craig Weaver

ue 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 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 inter-vening 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 of Tonopah, federal lands are the only significant blocks available for protection.

The inventory showed us how a set of designated OHV 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 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 residents 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 use as wilderness—this is the case of Tonopah.
A petroglyph at Saddle Mountain shows ancient people’s fascination with the starry night sky.

...
11

Thompson was tempered steel and a great friend of respect her. That was a serious mistake. Twinkle, however, had much heavy lifting to do. The two men warmly greeted each other, built over decades. Their families were among the depth of respect and admiration they had for each other.

With the liberal Mo leading the way to the Senate, Goldwater's conservative politics made no difference. A lifetime of mutual trust and respect had made all the difference.

Within 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.

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 a 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

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

Photo: Mark Trautwein

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

www.azwild.org
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, PO. Box 529, Alpine, AZ 85920. Questions? 928-339-4525

Tell us about yourself!

NAME:______________________________________________________
ADDRESS:___________________________________________________
CITY:___________________________STATE:_____ ZIP: _____________
PHONE:__________________________
E-MAIL:__________________________

I wish to receive your e-mail alerts and newsletter. Sign me up! (Your email is necessary for us to send you our electronic alerts and event notices, but we will not share your email address outside of AWC.)

Enclosed is my one-time donation of $_____________.

I wish to make a monthly donation to the AWC, in the amount of $_____________.

Card Type_________ Card No. __________________________________
Exp. Date _____________
Signature___________________________________

By sharing your interests and hobbies with us, we can be more accurate in sending you alerts, event notices in your region, and requests for volunteer help. Please take a few minutes to fill out the information below. Thank you!

On behalf of Arizona's Wilderness, Thank You.

Arizona Wilderness Coalition
P.O. Box 529
Alpine, AZ 85290