

NEWSLETTER OF THE ARIZONA WILDERNESS COALITION

A R I Z O N A
WILD

AWC's Wild Stew Program: A Recipe 34 Years in the Making | Larry and Kathy Lopez
Sonoran Desert Heritage: HR 1799 | Wilderness and Noxious Weeds | Elias Butler Photography



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A VIEW THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS



DESIGNATIONS DON'T PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS: PEOPLE DO

by Les Corey

On a crisp September day in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson penned his signature to an historic piece of conservation legislation, the Wilderness Act, launching an unprecedented process to establish a National Wilderness Preservation System of permanently designated wild lands where nature would be revered over other resource uses. Under the mantle of the Wilderness Act, Arizona's own Congressman Mo Udall became a champion for the establishment of parks and wilderness areas across the western United States, working across the politi-

cal aisle with Senators Barry Goldwater and John McCain to ultimately endow Arizona with a rich wilderness legacy of 4.5 million acres of mountains, deserts, forests and canyons among 90 sites statewide. The Wilderness Act turns 50 next year, spanning multiple generations and protecting thousands of iconic American landscapes.

Wilderness areas are only designated by an act of Congress – but nearly every designated area is advocated for by local citizens who organize and persevere for years building the local constituent support required to stim-

Ultimately, it is people who make the difference in securing and stewarding our wilderness network – sharing the passion and sense of duty to ensure that this legacy is passed on to future generations.



President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Wilderness Act of 1964.

ulate action and ultimately secure an act of Congress. Mo Udall crafted two major pieces of legislation to establish Arizona's network of wilderness areas – the 1984 AZ Wilderness Act, which dealt primarily with U.S. Forest Service lands, and the 1990 Arizona Desert Wilderness Act, which established the majority of Bureau of Land Management wilderness areas and wildlife refuges that serve our state's wildlife and citizens so well today. Citizen activists and volunteers were an essential element in

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DESIGNATIONS DON'T PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS: PEOPLE DO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the process of identifying and advocating for sites nominated for inclusion in both wilderness acts—and they still are today. Read more about our locally driven Sonoran Desert Heritage Act on page 9.

AWC volunteers became “adopters” for many of these areas as they inventoried and documented the case for each sites’ inclusion in the statewide wilderness bills. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) was founded by citizen volunteers in 1979 to respond to the U.S. Forest Services RARE II requirement to inventory and catalogue all forest lands with wilderness character, followed by a similar process initiated by the Bureau of Land Management in the 1980s. Serving as our earliest and most dedicated wilderness defenders, these citizen advocates gave generously of their time: completing field inventories; compiling wilderness proposals, maps, and photos; taking elected leaders out on the trail; writing letters-to-the-editor; making phone calls; attending endless meetings; and lobbying Congress—all of it done as a loosely orchestrated group of passionate, motivated volunteers.

One of these adopters was Bobbie Holaday. Click here to read her incredible story, featured in the April 2013 issue of *Arizona Highways*. With more than three decades of effort, Bobbie’s energy and conviction helped protect some of Arizona’s most iconic places: the rugged spires of the Eagletail Mountains Wilderness and the plunging canyons of Hellsgate Wilderness, where Bobbie took the time to learn from ranching



AWC wilderness stewards in the Eagletail Mountains Wilderness area.

families just what could be done to protect the land and their way of life. Today, at 90 years of age, Bobbie considers Eagletail Mountains to be the “crown jewel” in the system, admitting to a small measure of prejudice on her part.

Designating wilderness is only the first step. Stewardship of these lands requires an endless stream of advocates and defenders to ensure that this legacy is upheld. Federal land management agencies are vested with the primary oversight and stewardship of Arizona’s wilderness, but the sheer magnitude of the challenge requires that volunteers remain an important component of the stewardship efforts. You can read more about our “wildly” popular Wild Stew program on page 5.

Bobbie exemplifies how one person can make a profound difference by taking personal actions to protect wild places.

Larry and Kathy Lopez are a dynamo duo of dedication, helping us restore Apache Creek Wilderness one trip at a time (p. 7). There are so many other stories to be told and while we can’t share them all here, we want to pay tribute to those incredibly dedicated and effective “advocates” and “stewards” who shape the architecture of Arizona’s wilderness legacy.

We modestly attempt to thank our volunteers in a variety of ways – writing letters, offering personal recognition, and special announcements. We tell people over and over that their efforts are making a difference. But it’s never enough. Perhaps, in the end, the most meaningful thank you is found in the very wilderness areas they have worked so hard to defend and steward. Every individual effort to conserve our nation’s wild lands is an essential component to solving our global environmental crisis. As Margaret Mead once remarked, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Ultimately, it is people who make the difference in securing and stewarding our wilderness network – sharing the passion and sense of duty to ensure that this legacy is passed on to future generations. Thank you for making a real difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Les Corey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Les Corey is AWC’s executive director who lives and works in Tucson.



Congressman Mo Udall visiting with President Reagan.



President George Bush signing the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990.

Support the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Click here to make a financial contribution.



Group at Munds Mountain Wilderness, Coconino NF. Photo courtesy of Elias Butler

AWC'S WILD STEW: A RECIPE 34 YEARS IN THE MAKING

by Sam Frank and Carla Olson

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition was founded in 1979. At that time, the U.S. Forest Service was in the process of inventorying all of the land they managed in order to determine which areas had the potential to become wilderness. Concerned citizens in Arizona recognized there were thousands of acres of Forest Service lands in the state that deserved the protections afforded by the Wilderness Act. They utilized typewriters to draft comment letters, they held meetings in their own houses, they worked day jobs and then worked late into the night—and they did it all as volunteers.

A lot has changed for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) since those formative years: incorporation as a non-profit organization in 2003, offices in Phoenix, Tucson, and Prescott, and paid staff. But AWC's roots in volunteerism remain a core principle of the organization to this day. In 2010, AWC launched the Wilderness Stewardship

Program, which is its newest effort aimed at engaging volunteers. In the three years since Wild Stew (its loving moniker amongst staff) began, it has been a progression of success stories.

WILD STEW SATISFIES

The thinking behind what led to the creation of Wild Stew was actually very simple: designations don't save places, people save places. In other words, the work that AWC began in 1979 to secure the 4.5+ million acres of designated wilderness in Arizona today was only half of what was needed. Those designations are law, but what good is a law without people to see that it is upheld?

Not only do wilderness areas need volunteers, but the agencies that manage those wilderness areas need volunteers too. Only four federal agencies can manage wilderness lands: U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In Arizona, the

BLM manages the most wilderness areas (47) and the most wilderness acreage (1,485,949), but the Forest Service (36 areas, 1,339,993 acres), Fish and Wildlife (4 areas, 1,352,475), and Park Service (4 areas, 444,055 acres) all manage significant amounts of wilderness lands as well (www.wilderness.net, 2013). 4.5+ million acres is a lot of wilderness for those agencies to oversee, especially with budgets that shrink every year.

Looking at the figures that the Wild Stew Program has been turning out over the last few years, it's become evident that Arizonans love their wilderness areas and are willing to prove it by giving of their time and effort. Wild Stew volunteers have donated over 5,000 hours of service in the field worth the monetary equivalent of more than \$100,000 dollars. Service projects have been carried out in 18 different wilder-

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AWC'S WILD STEW: A RECIPE 34 YEARS IN THE MAKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ness areas and in five of the six national forests in Arizona. Service projects have included surveys for non-native plants and recreation impacts, removal of non-native plants, trail maintenance, educational outreach, trash clean up, sign installation, and other important tasks such as reporting on sightings of unique or sensitive animal species.

It's clear that Arizona has a wonderful compilation of diverse wilderness and the agencies that are charged with maintaining those areas are dealing with budget and personnel short falls. But why should that matter to someone? Why should that matter to you? Because wilderness areas are meant "... to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." And wilderness areas "... shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people..." (Public Law 88-577, 16 U.S. C. 1131-1136). Wilderness areas are both a gift to all American people today and an endow-

ment to all Americans in the future.

Since its inception, Wild Stew has focused primarily on Forest Service wilderness areas for a few reasons. First, AWC already had a very close working relationship with the Prescott National Forest and was therefore familiar with the finer points of that particular forest. Second, the U.S. Forest Service was in the midst of what is called the 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (WSC). In conjunction with the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014, the 10-year WSC aims to have all Forest Service-managed wilderness areas at a standard level or higher of management and baseline information for categories such as wild fire plans, air quality, non-native plant surveys and eradication, and more. Due in part of AWC's Wild Stew program, the Prescott National Forest has already achieved 'passing scores' for all eight of its wilderness areas - more than a full year before the conclusion of the 10-year Challenge. It is one of only two

national forests in Arizona to do so.

THE MISSING INGREDIENT: YOU

The Wild Stew Program is made up of two distinct components: AWC-hosted group outings that are open to anyone, and trained Individual Wilderness Stewards who go out on their own (or with some family or friends).

AWC is successfully hosting about 15 group events each year that are open to the public and require no previous training. This is a great way for people to come out and see what Wild Stew is about, what we do in the field, get to know wilderness areas, and meet some great folks.

Individual Wilderness Stewards are core to the program and what is needed to achieve the next level of success. To become an Individual Wilderness Steward, one must go through a free one-day training hosted by AWC, choose a wilderness area to 'adopt', and agree to visit that wilderness area at least twice per year. In other words, gain new knowledge and an extra reason to go hiking or

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Group hiking Munds Mountain Wilderness, Margs Draw Trail. Photo courtesy of Elias Butler

AWC'S WILD STEW: A RECIPE 34 YEARS IN THE MAKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



Group at Munds Mountain Wilderness where AWC Wild Stew trips have hiked every trail in the wilderness except one. Photo courtesy of AWC.

backpacking and you'll be giving back to wild places in more ways than you know. Some people choose to become an Individual Wilderness Steward for a wilderness area they already visit regularly, while others prefer to get to know a new wilderness or visit different wilderness areas each time. In addition to being a healthy, low cost, educational, and altruistic opportunity, becoming an Individual Wilderness Steward offers unique opportunities like attending a Wilderness First Aid certification course for free (usually about \$250), becoming a certified Leave No Trace trainer, working with horses, and learning traditional backcountry techniques. Because the Wild Stew Program is flexible, participants can become involved at whatever level best suits their interests and availability.

NON-PERISHABLE STEW

There are 90 wilderness areas in Arizona, the second most only after California. Arizona has a wilderness legacy that stretches back to when Aldo Leopold was a young Forest Service employee who still believed popular mantra that the only good wolf was a dead wolf. Many like Leopold, just 100 years ago, had yet to realize the true value of intact wild lands. Many policy experts

and elected officials still struggle to fully comprehend the benefits of protected wilderness to the planet as a whole. But Arizona has a bright wilderness future – because of people who care enough about wild places to get involved and

be a part of the solution. The 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge comes to an end in 2014 as the Wilderness Act celebrates 50 years, but AWC's Wilderness Stewardship Program is just beginning to blossom. Looking across the vast Sonoran Desert, beyond the rugged Rim country, above the snowcapped Mt. Humphreys, and past the Grand Canyon, the future of Arizona's amazing and irreplaceable wilderness areas are in the hands of everyday people. Can you lend a hand?



Sam Frank is AWC's Central Arizona Director and oversees the Wild Stew program from Prescott. Carla Olson is AWC's Conservation Outreach Associate who assists with the program from Flagstaff.



John Watkins, Pine Mountain Wilderness Steward, crossing Tonto Creek in Hellsgate Wilderness, Tonto NF. Photo courtesy AWC.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Larry and Kathy Lopez on a Wild Stew adventure. Photo courtesy of AWC.

LARRY AND KATHY LOPEZ, AWC STEWARDS FOR THE APACHE CREEK WILDERNESS

Interviews by Sam Frank, story by Will Smallwood

Retired outdoor advocates Kathy and Larry Lopez love any excuse to get into wilderness. From bushwhacking through Poland Creek to making mean Ohio tacos (don't ask), they have become an integral part of AWC's volunteer team. But their love of the outdoors started long before AWC.

Kathy grew up on a farm in the Hocking Hills of Ohio, seven miles from the closest town. Kathy says, "On the farm, staying indoors meant doing housework and homework. Spending time outdoors meant exploring forests, meadows, caves, and creeks with my family and friends." Naturally, Kathy spent as much time outdoors as she could.

According to Larry, "When I was a young tyke my mother would drop me off in the agricultural fields of Ventura County in southern California. I always found my way back home, much to her amazement! After I served in Vietnam, I realized my feet could take me beyond those fields, and I started hiking in the mountains of California."

The Lopezes first met because Larry got lost while hiking in the Los Padres National Forest northwest of Los Angeles. No, Kathy didn't lead the search and rescue team after her partner-to-be was reported missing. Actually, after Larry lost his way on that hike, he decided to take an orienteering class: Kathy was facilitating.

According to Kathy, "He told me about Serrano Canyon in the Santa Monica Wilderness. I thought Larry was cute so I asked him how to get there. He offered to take me hiking in the canyon, which was deeded to his family by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904! Over the next few years, we hiked miles of trails together, which led us back to the place we originally met and finally married at the Chumash Interpretative Center in Thousand Oaks, California."

As avid outdoor enthusiasts, the Lopezes have volunteered with many organizations.

"We devote our efforts to working with AWC because we get to go to locations we would not go to on our own, and there are always fellow hikers to share

in the fun and the work," says Kathy. "Plus, Sam and the rangers take care of all the logistics!"

Larry adds, "AWC gives me good reason to buy neat tools like my Fiskars 9625 18-Inch PowerGear Bypass Lopper, my Ultimate Survival U-DIG-IT Stainless Steel Folding Shovel w/Case, and my Garmin Oregon 450t World-wide Handheld GPS Navigator." One wonders just how heavy Larry's backpack is when he's out in the trail.

The Lopezes began volunteering for AWC in 2010. "After perfecting our skills as trail builders, campfire cooks, trash picker uppers, and all around delightful hiking companions, we were hand-selected from a vast field of applicants to serve as Wilderness Stewards for the Apache Creek Wilderness area fifty miles northwest of Prescott," says Kathy.

Larry translates: "At an AWC meeting about two years ago Sam asked, 'Who knows where Apache Creek Wilderness is?' I raised my hand. Next thing I knew Kathy and I were promoted to

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Wilderness Stewards!"

Located in the northwest portion of Prescott National Forest, just over an hour's drive from Prescott, the Apache Creek Wilderness area encompasses over 5,600 acres. It lies just within the Verde River watershed, a vital resource in central Arizona, and includes an important perennial riparian corridor with native fish habitat. The area also protects a grove of old growth ponderosa forest, a unique feature as most of the original timber in the national forest has been logged over time. There is archaeological evidence from Yavapai people dating back hundreds of years, and it is one of the routes early Spanish explorers followed on their ventures into Arizona and the greater Southwest. The area was designated as Wilderness in 1984 as part of the Arizona Wilderness Act. Apache Creek is not a busy wilderness area: it's a little known secret in this part of the state. Non-native plant species are a big concern, and AWC started its tamarisk remediation work at Apache Creek in late 2012.

"Kathy and Larry have truly embraced being the stewards of Apache Creek Wilderness," says Sam, AWC's Central Arizona Director based in Prescott. "Not only do they go there themselves regularly to monitor for recreation impacts, trail conditions, non-native species, any changes in forest conditions,

Kathy and Larry Lopez in the field. Photo courtesy of AWC.



but they have also been vocal about the area, bringing people there and touting AWC's work and Apache Creek at meetings."

Larry especially enjoys work with AWC in Apache Creek because after the trail crew has "chopped, lopped, tromped, and reaped destruction upon the tamarisks, the hard work can be followed by a lovely dunk in the pools of Apache Creek."

The Wild Stew program has quickly become popular with a steady increase in participation every year. In 2013, the program expanded to the Coronado and Coconino national forests, and restoration work is now being done in five of Arizona's six national forests. Last

"When in the wilderness, learn to go with the flow, because that is where the adventure begins!"

year, 79 volunteers donated a total of 1,600 hours to the program. For more information about Wild Stew, check out the feature article on page 5.

Another highlight for the Lopezes from their numerous overnight trips with AWC are the camp dinners provided by the AWC staff. Larry hopes all AWC volunteers have an opportunity to enjoy Sam's trail chili, which is "jampacked with high-octane veggies," according to the Lopezes. Kathy says the Best Dessert in a Wilderness Setting award clearly goes to... (drum roll please): Sam's Baby Brownies served by candle light with camp stove coffee.

Among the staff and volunteers at AWC, the Lopezes are known for their devotion to picking up trash along the trail. According to Kathy, she has been picking up garbage since the late 1950s, "when my mother taught me that not picking up litter was a sin only surpassed by littering." How much has she picked up over the years? "I don't think I could estimate the tonnage, but I do remember a memorable experience in Bhutan when a young girl asked me if I was picking up roadside trash to take back to America!"

Larry doesn't believe in talking trash, but says he did learn in an AWC-sponsored Wilderness Training class "not to open a freezer if we find one in the for-

est." One imagines there is more to that story. Ask Larry next time you see him out on the trail!

One volunteer outing that is especially memorable for Larry is the time they hiked the depths of Lower Poland Creek. The trip, in the rugged Castle Creek Wilderness, was to monitor non-native plants and recreation impacts. The crew hiked along Poland Creek to look for tamarisk; there was no trail, and the terrain was very difficult. They had to circumnavigate waterfalls, deep pools of water, and thick brush.

"If it wasn't for Sam, I don't think we would have made it back alive!" jokes Larry. Despite the harrowing adventure, AWC is returning to Poland Creek this year to remove the tamarisk that was identified, possibly an even bigger task.

What is it about the wilderness areas of Arizona that draws people like the Lopezes and fires their passion for conservation and stewardship?

"It's the sound of the wind in the pines, the trickle of the meandering streams, dusty trails, imposing boulders, the azure sky, the twinkling starry nights, the chance encounters with God's furry creatures, and so much more," says Larry. Kathy sums it up by saying, "It's like: 'Ahhh... wild.'"

Kathy and Larry have one last recommendation: "When in the wilderness, learn to go with the flow, because that is where the adventure begins!"



Will Smallwood is a freelance writer based in Tucson.

Note from the interviewer: Questions were submitted to Kathy while she was on a hiking trip in Argentina and Larry while he was on an AWC project in the Castle Creek Wilderness area (obviously the more dedicated AWC volunteer).



A rare cloudy day over the Sand Tank Mountains. Photo courtesy of Ian Dowdy

SONORAN DESERT HERITAGE BECOMES HOUSE RESOLUTION 1799

by Ian Dowdy, AICP

Three years ago, members and volunteers of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition were bouncing around the back roads of western Maricopa County with clipboards and GPS units, trying to finalize a thorough inventory of wilderness quality lands on the outskirts of the Phoenix region. The tide of homes, businesses, and human infrastructure was creeping ever closer to the wild Sonoran Desert as communities in the West Valley struggled to accommodate the seemingly endless surge of new residents.

AWC and a cadre of other watchful conservation groups assembled a pragmatic coalition of partners who could advance a plan to prevent valuable

wildlife habitat and recreation values of the BLM lands on both sides of Interstate 10 from being destroyed. Today, after seven years of meetings, field work, and complex negotiations, that plan is in the hands of Congress.

In late April, Congressman Raul Grijalva introduced the Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act of 2013, which embodies the countless hours of work by staff and volunteers of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Sonoran Institute, and The Wilderness Society, among others. From the on-the-ground efforts including inventories, photographs, and many miles hiked, to visits to Washington D.C., meetings with local stakeholders and community leaders,

and public meetings in communities throughout the West Valley—this is a bill long on collaboration and simple in its purpose: to protect some of Arizona's last intact desert ecosystems and the recreation opportunities it offers outdoor-loving Valley residents.

H.R. 1799 while visionary in its scope and purpose, is also groundbreaking in its pragmatic and open process, incorporating the needs and concerns of the broader community into a single vision that combines both realistic designations and progressive legislative language. The Sonoran Desert Heritage Act incorporates the letter and spirit of the Wilderness Act along with

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SONORAN DESERT HERITAGE ACT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

innovative approaches to wildlife management issues and renewable energy infrastructure.

The amazing amount of research and collaboration that went into the legislation should result in an easier passage through Congress – though it's been 23 years since the last wilderness area in Arizona was designated.

Much work is left to be done. The ultimate success of the legislation would be more attainable with the support of Arizona Republicans. Ranchers, mining interests, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts were engaged in the process, but they have yet to voice their support for the proposal, even though the majority of their specific concerns were addressed through revisions to the boundaries of the project and clari-

fying language in the legislation. Organizers are hopeful that upcoming meetings with the Arizona delegation will bring about additional support from members of Congress.

Please contact your Representative and encourage them to support the pragmatic and reasonable Sonoran Desert Heritage Act of 2013 by signing on as a co-sponsor of the legislation. Arizona will be a better place with the protection of our most treasured landscapes, especially near the high growth areas around Phoenix, which are more vulnerable to degradation and misuse than ever before. With the help of concerned citizens and volunteers over the past seven years, AWC has been able to evaluate and develop defensible boundaries for the Sonoran Desert

Heritage proposal. Your involvement can help us make the Sonoran Desert Heritage Act a reality – with real protections on the ground for this amazing, one-of-a-kind landscape and its natural and cultural resources.



Ian Dowdy is AWC's Conservation Outreach Associate based in Phoenix.





The non-native Yellow Starthistle. Photo courtesy of Patti Fenner

TOP TEN REASONS A WILDERNESS ENTHUSIAST SHOULD CARE ABOUT NOXIOUS WEEDS

by Patti Fenner

10. It's the year 2020 and you can't land your kayak at your favorite campsite on the Verde Wild and Scenic River anymore. Why? Salt cedar, a tree native to Eurasia, has encroached into the native cottonwood/willow vegetation community. It has formed thickets right along the river, so thick you can't begin to think about crawling through, let alone unload your kayak. How is it out-competing native trees in an untrammled Wild river? Hadn't you been told that salt cedar only takes over where humans have displaced some kind of natural balance? Well, that can be true, but not always. Salt cedar invades when it has an advantage, like when a dam retains water that would

*I do believe I see a weed
Grown from a pack of flower seed...
And tell me please, who had the notion,
To bring this thing across the ocean?*

ordinarily flow downstream during the limited time cottonwood & willow are producing seed. But think about this - salt cedar trees produce seed about 10 months out of the year; cottonwood and willow produce seed for about one month in the spring. Which is going to win?

9. Using horses for your wilderness trip? Better not camp where there's an infestation of yellow starthistle or Russian knapweed. These weeds con-

tain a neurotoxin that causes brain lesions in horses, leading to "chewing disease", an ailment that paralyzes the horse's neck muscles. The horse slowly starves to death because it cannot swallow. There is no cure.

8. Tired of seeing trash left by other campers? Noxious weeds are like trash - they are not native to the ecosystem, are often inadvertently brought in, and are often an eyesore. But unlike trash, noxious weeds reproduce and take over larger and larger areas every year if not controlled.

7. Would you rather do something around the campfire besides pick weed seeds out of your socks? Some

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NOXIOUS WEEDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

of the worst sock-magnet weeds are spring annual grasses that were introduced from Europe, like red brome and foxtail barley.

6. If you miss a few, you might bring some of those weeds home. Then you get to fight them in your own yard every year!

5. Not seeing as much wildlife as you used to? Might be the drought. Might also be due to native food plants being replaced by unpalatable or toxic noxious weeds. Wildlife isn't digging the new buffet.

4. What happened to all those wildflowers that used to be there?

They've been replaced by a boring monoculture of ugly weeds. Weeds crowd out native annual flowers easily – they often germinate before the native plants and suck up available soil water.

3. What happened to your favorite fishing hole? Taprooted weeds, such as bull thistle and knapweeds, sometimes replace native fibrous-rooted bank vegetation. Fibrous roots hold bank soil in place so that overhangs develop, where fish can hide. No more overhangs, no more fish habitat.

2. Ever try to walk through a meadow of yellow starthistle? Ow.

1. What kind of wilderness are your kids going to see?



AWC Wild Stew volunteers search for invasive tamarisk plants to remove from wilderness areas.



Patti Fenner is the Noxious Weed Program Manager for the Tonto National Forest.



Trained volunteers put a special herbicide on a tamarisk stem. Photos courtesy of AWC.



Tamarisk flowers are easy to spot.



Photo courtesy of Elias Butler

ELIAS BUTLER PHOTOGRAPHY: FOCUSED ON CONSERVATION

by Carla Olson

Catching up with photographer, musician, and writer Elias Butler is no easy task. When he's not hiking, backpacking, or canyoneering, he's apt to be giving public slideshows or perhaps playing guitar with his band, The Petty Thieves. So when he recently sat down with AWC to talk about his work and how it relates to wilderness, it was a rare opportunity to find out what makes this Arizona native tick.

"I grew up in Phoenix often wanting to escape its confines and reach the mountains around the city," says Butler. "I'd look at them and think of how nice it would be to be up there in the Superstitions or Mazatzals instead of walking on asphalt."

Butler had an early connection to the outdoors through his parents, who took the family on camping and river running trips. By the time Butler graduated from Northern Arizona University with a journalism degree, he was convinced he needed to find a job that kept him close to nature.

"I'd read Arizona Highways for years and was transfixed by landscape photography of my home state," says Butler. "I didn't decide to become a photographer until taking a black-and-white class in school, but after that I dedicated myself to it."

It took a number of years to build up a collection of images, during which Butler worked various jobs in Alaska, the

San Juan Mountains of Colorado, and at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. He spent one memorable summer with the National Park Service volunteering at Navajo National Monument. "That is some beautiful, wild canyon country up there and the Navajos I worked with changed my perspective on things," he says.

Butler's work has appeared in the pages of Arizona Highways many times. But the first time in 2003 was a test of endurance as he participated in a bid to reach the largest natural bridge in Grand Canyon National Park with photographer Richard L. Danley. Kolb Bridge was discovered in 1955 by Bar-

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Elias Butler in Paria Canyon. Photo courtesy of Elias Butler.

ry Goldwater, who had noticed it from his helicopter while flying past the Canyon. Butler and Danley visited on foot, resulting in some of the first photographs of the remote bridge in decades.

"We had to get past tall cliffs, thick brush, and miles of dry canyons. But it was fun," Butler recalls. The Grand Canyon became a place of special meaning for Butler.

"I found a real desire to see it. There's so much beauty and history there whether on the river or in one of the side canyons," he says. "I got an invitation to help write a book about Harvey Butchart, the Grand Canyon hiking legend, and it led to a journey that brought some incredible experiences." Following five years of research, the result was the book *Grand Obsession* which was published in 2007 and co-authored by Dr. Tom Myers.

Butler's plans include another book, which will be tied to the Arizona backcountry. "I've still got research to do," said Butler. "But I have stories about the wilderness I'd like to tell. Personal experiences and investigations."

Meanwhile he stays focused on photography and music. With his work on display at Sedona Giclee Gallery in Sedona and in regular publications, he remains

busy. "My aim is to make more and better photos and try to do things that haven't been done before."

Butler's conservation photography recently expanded into motion pictures by releasing his first film, *A Not-So-Simple Exchange: Why Arizona's Oak Flat Deserves Continued Protection*



Photo courtesy of Elias Butler.

from Copper Mining.

This work explores the contested land swap bill currently in Congress that would give Resolution Copper mining rights at Oak Flat Campground near the town of Superior. Butler is also working with AWC to produce a short film on our Wild Stew program.

Butler's passion for the outdoors in Arizona's sweeping and varied landscapes drives him to capture the fleeting beauty of a sunset, the majestic scope of the Sonoran Desert, and the 'hidden gems' that make Arizona's wild places like no other.

"When I make a print, I try to infuse it with the feeling of actually being there. Beyond that, I also feel an obligation to let the public know what is in danger of being lost. It's a continual challenge but one that I enjoy."

If you've attended the Wild & Scenic Film Festival over the years, you likely have seen Butler's framed prints on display. He also donates work for fundraising efforts, our Annual Report, eNews bulletins, outreach materials, and in particular for the Wild Stew program. It is also Butler's band, The Petty Thieves, that often plays at AWC's special events.

"AWC is a great organization that I enjoy working with," said Butler. "We share the same goals of preserving and promoting wilderness, and of course that isn't easy but it is necessary."

Elias Butler is a Renaissance man of sorts. A photographer, writer, musician, filmmaker - all wrapped together by a passion for wild spaces. He's an advocate and friend of wilderness, and AWC extends its gratitude for his support over the years. With a home base in northern Arizona, Butler works throughout the Southwest. His work can be seen at www.EliasButler.com.



Carla Olson is AWC's Conservation Outreach Associate, based in Flagstaff.

WELCOME HAYLEY SAYRS, OUR SUMMER INTERN!



I have always been an outdoorsy, adventure-seeking kind of gal. From catching waves with the kama'āina (locals) on the south shores of Maui, to skiing in the powdered mountains of Utah, to most recently backpacking on the Coconino National Forest to the mineral rich waters of Fossil Creek Springs, I do not discriminate against nature's wonderful diversity. One of my favorite landscapes is the desert valley where I reside here in Phoenix. Another beautiful landscape is the green campus of Trinity University in San Antonio, where I'm currently studying environmental science with a focus on biology. Although extremely different environments, both of these places are home to me now. In both Texas and Arizona, I make time to go bike riding, practice yoga, recycle, and most importantly, observe nature's rich diversity.

For some, nature is a peaceful escape from the busy modern world. For others, nature is a spiritual healer that withholds any judgment. For many,

nature is raw beauty. For me, nature is all of these things, and that is why it is so critical that I protect it. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition shares a similar point of view, which is the main reason I chose to intern with this organization over the summer. As an intern, I plan on generating innovative ideas that bridge conservation efforts with community support and involvement. I will be focusing mainly on media and outreach for AWC, and working closely with Kate Mackay and other staff. I'm enthusiastic about all the great things to come for AWC this summer and am grateful to be able to participate in the changes I want to see in the world.

Hayley can be reached at her AWC email, hayley@azwild.org.

EYE CANDY: PRONGHORN NEAR THE VERDE RIVER



Photo courtesy of Ian Dowdy

EYE CANDY: THE VERDE RIVER NORTH OF CLARKDALE

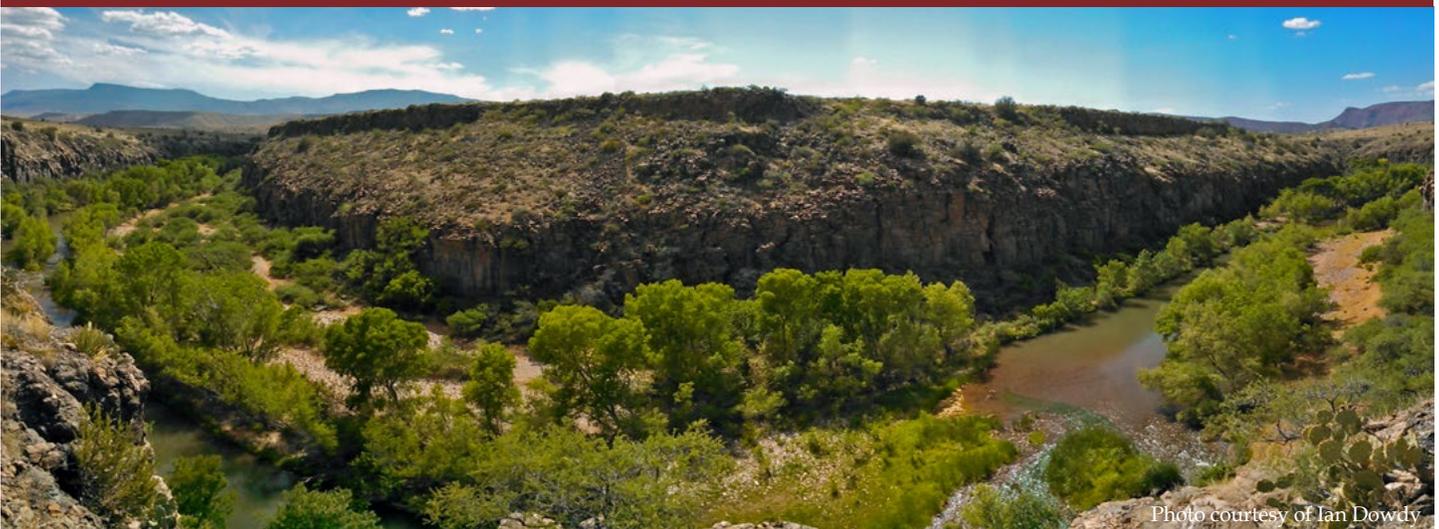


Photo courtesy of Ian Dowdy

MEET SHELLY TORKELSON, OFFICE VOLUNTEER!



Looking for a way to help conserve wild lands and waters in Arizona, Shelly has kindly volunteered to assist in the Phoenix office. As a glutton for punishment, she has requested the painful tasks of filing, cataloging paperwork, and assisting with whatever strange and annoying jobs we can come up with. Her assistance is much appreciated! Thanks so much Shelly for your help!

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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 mans' 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.

What is a Wild and Scenic River?

To be eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, a river must be free-flowing and contain at least one "outstandingly remarkable value," i.e., scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar value. The Act mandates that selected rivers be preserved in a free-flowing condition and be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Today, approximately 600,000 miles of once free-flowing rivers (approximately 17% of the America's rivers) have been altered by 60,000 dams.

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Joe Trudeau on Mt. Wrightson. Photo courtesy of Sam Frank