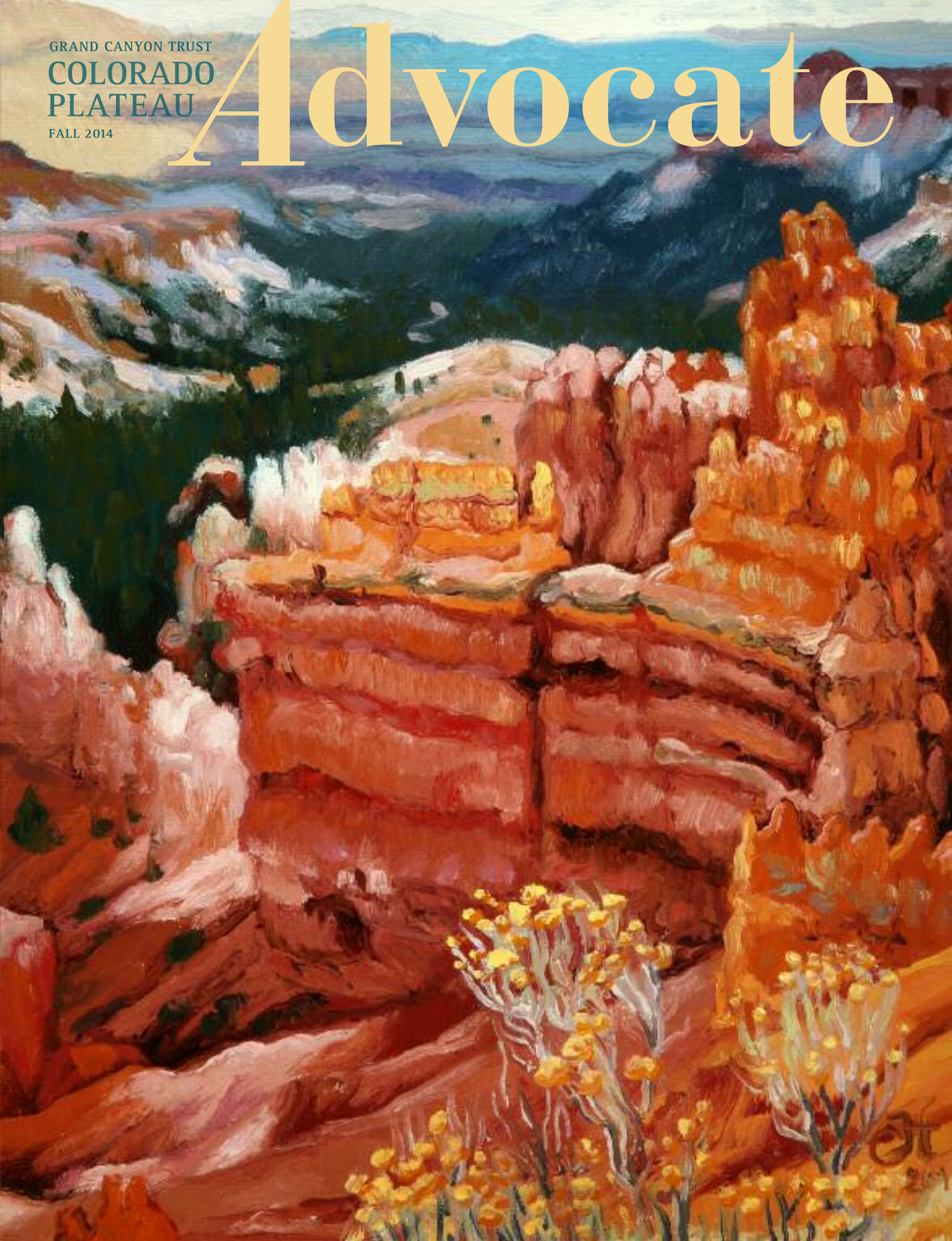
GRAND CANYON TRUST

COLORADO PLATEAU Advocate

FALL 2014



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www.grandcanyontrust.org

Eating a single corn kernel treated with these

Forty years ago, my wife and I moved to a hayfield in a remote valley in southeastern Utah and camped out through a full turn of the seasons while we built our house.

Though the land was intensely disturbed, it was riotous with wildlife. Meadowlark song was the underlying narration of our days. Kingbirds strafed the meadow for insects and orioles built elegant hanging nests in the bigger trees. Foraging killdeer waded in the irrigation water and practiced their broken wing act to draw predators from their eggs. Mowing the field was a slow process punctuated by repeated stops to move garter snakes or pheasant chicks. Porcupines clung to the branches of the cottonwoods. In late summer the valley throbbed with the sound of crickets and katydids. Evening brought skunks and raccoons and coyotes and, when insects were hatching, squadrons of dragonflies, swifts, nighthawks, and bats. Great horned owls called from the nearby box canyon. After our house was complete, the front porch light created a niche for a big brown bat who covered the wall with guano and littered the stoop with the bug parts he wouldn't eat.

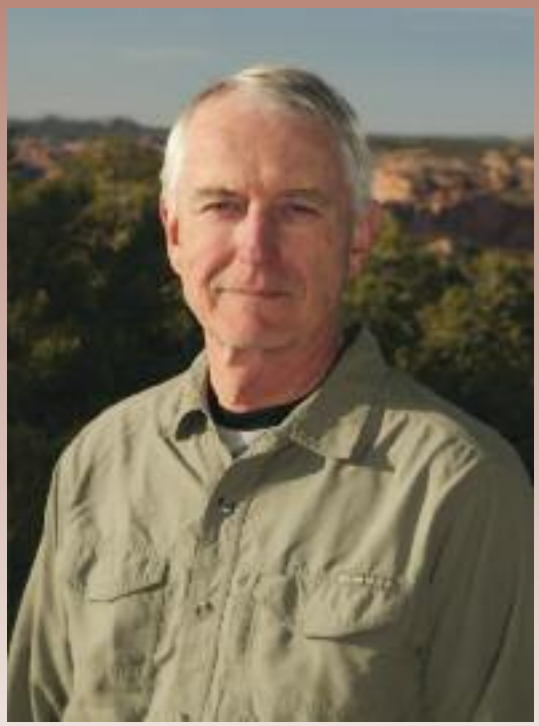
Today, the habitat here is much more varied, with edible plants in copses, hedgerows, wild areas, and big trees punctuating the meadow; but I have been noticing in recent years that we are slowly moving into the *silent spring* Rachel Carson predicted so powerfully more than half a century ago. It has been a long time since I heard a meadowlark or saw a kingbird. When I mow the field, it is just hay. Even the magpies seem to have disappeared. What we have is a large murder of crows, some skunks, and beautiful gray foxes that filled the niche vacated when the local hobby rancher and his hired hands took upon themselves the task of exterminating the coyotes. It is all happening slowly enough that it sneaks up on me until I am sometimes stopped in my tracks by the silence. Our valley has always enjoyed a quiet filled with the soft sounds of animal life, but this is the silence of the grave.

copiously sprayed nerve poisons can kill a songbird.

Tortillas, anyone?

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Hedden



Tim Peterson

The Audubon Society has been compiling the results of their citizen bird counts over the same forty year period and they document my anecdotal observations nationwide. The average populations of the common birds that are in decline have fallen by two thirds. Suburban sprawl, industrial development, intensification of farming, and destruction of forests and wetlands are all taking a toll. Powerful new insecticides called neonicotinoids are nearly sterilizing waterways and landscapes, starving insect-eating birds and animals and accumulating in crops, soil, and waterways. Eating a single corn kernel treated with these copiously sprayed nerve poisons can kill a songbird. Tortillas, anyone?

Because most of these small disasters arise unintentionally from the innocent, seemingly benign actions of our everyday lives, and because they unfold slowly, we are oblivious to the fact that 7.25 billion people have made a good start at creating a world that none of us would choose. I am always mystified by skeptics who will acknowledge that something as challenging as global warming is happening, but insist that humans are not the cause. Personally, I take comfort from the fact that we are deeply implicated, because it means that we can do something about it. It is not an asteroid hurtling at us. There are sensible solutions at many scales beckoning to us from every direction. We just have to acknowledge what is happening, feel the sadness looming ahead on this track, and then begin work with the determination necessary to make a different future.

This issue of *The Advocate* is filled with people-sized and important solutions that would profit from your activism and support. Physician Brian Moench describes the health crisis attending the Uinta Basin's air quality crisis, and makes cogent suggestions for changing Utah's energy policies. Attorney Anne Mariah Tapp makes the radical suggestion that the uranium mill that has become the de facto dumping ground for some of America's nastiest radioactive sludge ought to follow the laws governing air pollution and management of the waste pits. Perhaps the most obvious solutions involve simply protecting the best, wildest, most fully functioning lands as sanctuaries for wildlife and fonts of potable water and breathable air—places like the Greater Canyonlands at the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers, or the watersheds draining into the Grand Canyon.

Another sane approach is to learn from the traditional knowledge earned by indigenous peoples through their long inhabitation of the Southwest, exemplified here by the Diné Bikeyah proposal for protection of lands in the San Juan River drainage. And since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was a powerful catalyst to enactment of the Wilderness Act, it is appropriate that Brooke and Terry Tempest Williams offer a compelling meditation on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of wildness in honor of the Act's 50th anniversary this year.

Paper, Rock, Scissors The Wilderness Act 1964 – 2014

by Brooke Williams & Terry Tempest Williams

Rock, paper, scissors is a game made of three hand gestures played by two people in need of a decision, like a coin toss, a roll of the dice, or the drawing of straws. Rock crushes scissors; scissors cut paper; paper covers rock. But in thinking about the wilderness debate, what if we mix up the order and begin with a piece of paper? On the paper are words that cover millions of acres of rock. A pair of scissors in the hands of Congress could shred this document. Rock. Bedrock of civilization. Wilderness cannot be decided by random moves or chance.

LEFT: Cherry Creek Canyon in the Greater Canyonlands Region, San Juan County, Utah. TIM PETERSON
BELOW: Lizard and petroglyph at Butler Wash near the San Juan River, San Juan County, Utah. TIM PETERSON

PAPER

The Wilderness Act of 1964 was conceived as an open hand, a gesture of peace on behalf of wild lands. On this piece of paper, The Wilderness Act brought the eloquence of the land into the elegance of language. On this piece of paper, these words stand as a definition of wilderness:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain…an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence…

By honoring wilderness, we honor beauty. Beauty is not peripheral, but central to what sustains us. Awe and wonder ignite our imagination. We pause to see the world differently. Wilderness becomes a homecoming; a reminder that we were born into beauty. Wild nature is not only to be protected, but celebrated.

On September 3, 2014, the Wilderness Act celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. How has our thinking around wilderness evolved in these five decades?

The reasoning behind The Wilderness Act has not changed, but we have. It is doubtful that the Act's authors could have foreseen the levels of "*increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization*" which now threaten to move wild lands from a place of protection to a place of denigration. By denying the value of wilderness, we denigrate the integrity of natural systems and in the process, denigrate ourselves. Two words, "climate change," were unknown to the public fifty years ago. These words are now being used to redefine why wilderness matters in the twenty-first century.

As the Earth heats up, wilderness offers a cooling of the senses, a storing of the waters, and a bank of biodiversity where carbon is held, not spent. Wilderness becomes an insurance policy against disasters caused by desertification and mindless development that leaves the land bare of beauty. Without wilderness, erosion becomes the story, dust the narrative, sentencing the American Southwest to a scorched stratigraphy.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 becomes an act of temperance in 2014.

Must we develop everything? And at what cost? The importance of wilderness expands as open space contracts. Wilderness creates ecological health through its complex system of interconnected relationships, but it also creates greater mental health through its gift of solitude.

The quality of our listening improves in silence.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 has not changed, but we have. We read the landscape of our lives differently. Our connection to the world is virtual, not real. An apple is a computer first and a fruit second. A mouse is not a rodent, but a controlling mechanism for a cursor. We have moved ourselves from the outdoors to the indoors. Nature has become a source of images for our screensavers. We sit. We stare. We text on our

Wingate Mesa, San Juan County, Utah. Tim Peterson

iPhones and type on our keyboards, and await an immediate response. Patience is an endangered virtue. Intimacy is a threatened landscape.

Wilderness brings us home to our bodies. Part of being human is to be challenged physically and stretched emotionally. We watch the weather. Lightning strikes. Thunder rolls. Rain falls. We take shelter and then keep moving in the midst of adverse conditions. The rain stops. We dry as the land dries. A rainbow appears. We stand in the presence of change—a calm returns. Storms are temporary. In times of crisis, this knowledge stored in the body becomes a reservoir of strength.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is an act of wisdom.

If we destroy what is outside us, we will destroy what is inside us. America's freedom of spirit mirrors the great expanses of wild country that define our nation from the Maine woods to the Dakota badlands to Utah's redrock desert. When Theodore Roosevelt spoke of the importance of "the strenuous life" he was talking about life lived in wild country. If "the land of the free and the home of the brave" is diminished, we are diminished. Madness fills the void. Wilderness becomes a stay against insanity.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is a prescription for health.

Rock

In the beginning, the Wilderness Act of 1964 focused on rock and ice. Nine million acres were protected stretching from the mountains of the Sierra Nevada to the Bridger-Teton National Forest to the Adirondacks of New York. Signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Wilderness Act became an act of generosity that recognized the value of roadless areas as a breathing space not just for the cause of our species but the cause of life. "Americans have wisely and have courageously kept a faithful trust to the conservation of our natural resources and beauty," President Johnson said.

To designate wilderness is to respect the natural order of nature free from the hands of humans. Yet, the Wilderness Act is not without its irony. It was through human hands that this law came into being. And it is in human hands that wilderness will be maintained.

Vigilance is required.

"The idea of wilderness needs no defense, it only needs defenders," wrote Edward Abbey. And defenders we have, hundreds of thousands of them, who made certain that fifty years later, nearly 110 million acres have been acknowledged and protected with over 750 wilderness areas secured in all fifty states. We have moved beyond rock and ice to wetlands

and estuaries, prairies and deserts, with wilderness bills pending in Montana, New Mexico, and Utah.

Scissors

A pair of scissors is one tool that can cut, slice, stab, or wound depending on whose hand directs them. But in the reimagined game of "Paper, Rock, Scissors," the rock beats scissors every time. The rock of resistance can crush the political scissors of bureaucracy and bias that threaten to destroy the paper bills that protect wildness, even the Wilderness Act itself, drafted by Howard Zahnhiser with friends on the porch of the Murie cabin in Moose, Wyoming.

Evolution as a Strategy

There is a revolution, an evolution, occurring on our public lands. There are those who want to develop them fully for oil and gas, sell them off as real estate, seeing more designated wilderness as a federal power play that threatens their individual rights and freedoms. And there are others who see our public lands as a public trust held in the name of future generations—whether it is a child or a wolf pup or a canyon wren singing in the desert. Designating wilderness is designating a wider definition of freedom beyond our own species. This revolution, taking place primarily in the American West, can be viewed as a battlefield or a turning point in how we choose to live and what we value.

Here is a prediction: *The decade ahead will be one of the most crucial breakdown or breakthrough moments in the history of our species. Conservation is a prayer and a practice for the continuum.*

These pragmatic visionaries, Olaus and Mardy Murie among them, believed as Thoreau did that "Wildness is the preservation of the world." They made a commitment to the future. They saw wilderness not as the haunt of the elite, but the domain of democracy where every man, woman, and child could claim their rightful inheritance. They knew an investment in wildness would become the wealth of our country, a hallmark of our humanity. They built a foundation from which to care, a platform where humility embraced an intelligence of the wild. Nancy Newall, a friend of the Muries, wrote in *This The American Earth*, "Wilderness holds the answers to more questions than we yet know how to ask."

Wilderness preservation is a generational stance that carries the longstanding view that wild lands and wild lives deserve our devotion.

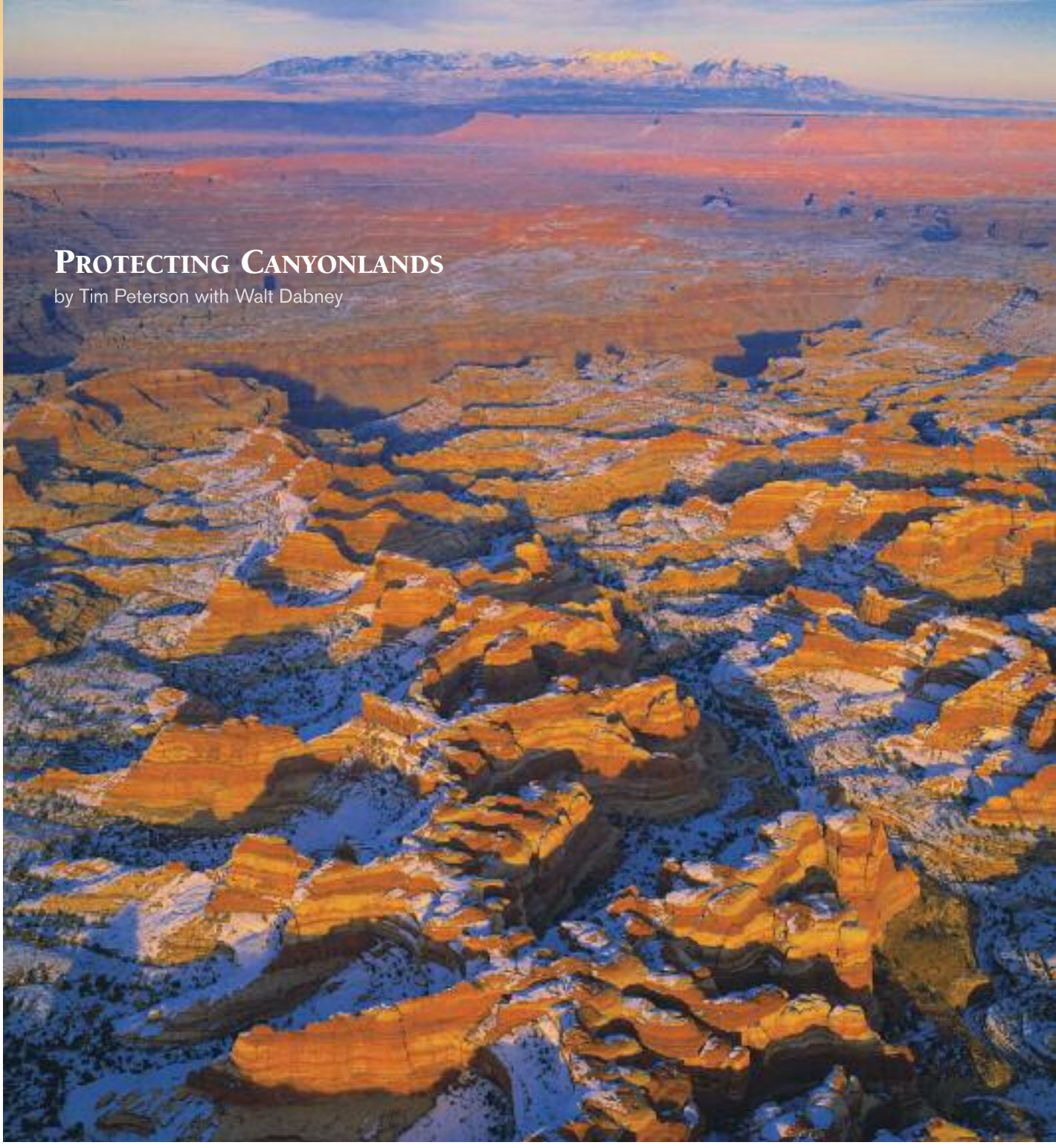
Wilderness is not a game but grounds for survival. We must change the rules of engagement. Paper can be used for a map. A rock keeps the map in place. And the scissors can be retired. We have cut enough wilderness out of the heart of the American landscape.

Here is a prediction: The decade ahead will be one of the most crucial breakdown or breakthrough moments in the history of our species. Conservation is a prayer and a practice for the continuum.

As humans, we evolved in wilderness and we will continue to evolve with wilderness. Wilderness is a place where all elements are working in concert as a natural system with one goal: passing life on to the future. Evolution is about adapting to changing conditions. But climate changes are occurring faster than we can biologically evolve or adapt. Because we humans have so quickly modified the planet's ability to support life, we must call on a different form of evolutionary adaptation, something conscious and deliberate, diverging away from anything we've yet been able to perceive.

What if wildness is the highest form of imagination? Imagination leads to creative acts. Wilderness in the twenty-first century is not a site of nostalgia for what once was, but rather the seedbed of creativity for what we have yet to imagine. Wilderness safeguards possibilities. Saving wilderness is about saving ourselves.

Brooke Williams and Terry Tempest Williams are authors and activists.



Protecting Canyonlands

by Tim Peterson with Walt Dabney

Wherever we look, there is a wilderness of rocks, deep gorges where the rivers are lost below cliffs and towers and pinnacles, and 10,000 strangely carved forms in every direction, and beyond them, mountains blending with the clouds.

–John Wesley Powell, on his expedition in Canyonlands

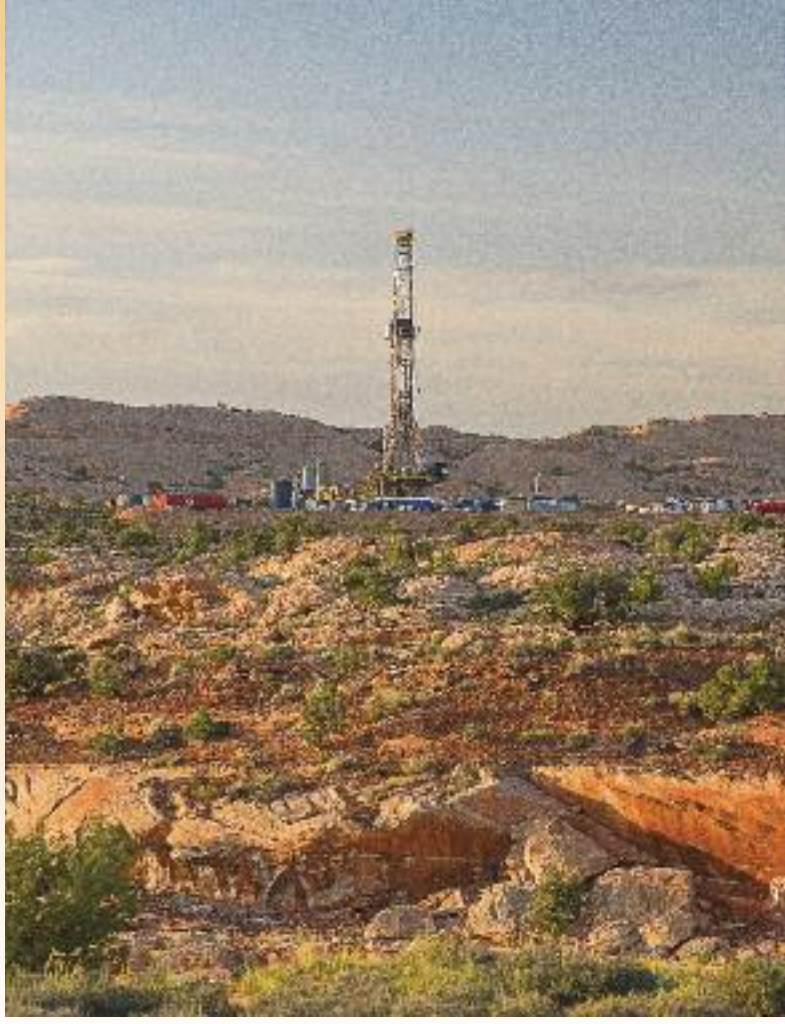
Few places capture the imagination like southern Utah's Canyonlands. Its sculpted hoodoos, austere pinnacles, sinuous canyons and grand vistas are like no place else on Earth. The historical record here stretches back 12,000 years, from the Ancestral Puebloans to older civilizations still shrouded in mystery, like the Archaic peoples and the Clovis hunter-gatherers. Densely populated one thousand

Sent to explore the country for potential oil development, government petroleum geologist Harry Aurand was so impressed by what he saw that he recommended that Canyonlands' highest and best use was not development, but preservation.

years ago, today it's a largely uninhabited place whose beauty, cultural history, and recreational attractions draw visitors from all over the world. Only the barest core of it is preserved as a national park, and securing even that was a saga.

Proposals to protect the lands around the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers came soon after European settlement. Wilderness champion Bob Marshall found a nine million acre block in the Canyonlands that was still roadless and wild in the early 1930s. Sent to explore the country for potential oil development, government petroleum geologist Harry Aurand was so impressed by what he saw that he recommended that Canyonlands' highest and best use was not development, but preservation. The seed planted by Aurand, Marshall and others grew into Interior Secretary Harold Ickes's proposal for a 4.5 million acre national monument by 1936. But Utah Governor Harry Blood and Utah's Congressional delegation balked at the proposal, buoyed by local cattlemen and mining interests. Years of back and forth resulted in a stalemate until the Kennedy administration, when Floyd Dominy, dam-builder-in-chief for the Bureau of Reclamation, took newly minted Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall on a flight over Canyonlands to show him a favorite site for a new reservoir.

Gazing on Canyonlands from the air, Udall saw not dam sites, but America's next national park. Udall quickly gathered dignitaries and set out on an expedition in 1961 led by the local "Father of Canyonlands" Bates Wilson, the man who would eventually become the new park's first Superintendent. After seeing the place with Udall and Wilson, Frank Masland, chair of the National Parks Advisory Board, wrote: "I do not believe there was a person on the trip who was not impressed by the grandeur of its loneliness, its beauty and its form. With complete unanimity all agreed that as a national park it would rank second to none."



LEFT: Green River Side Canyons, The Maze District, Canyonlands National Park. © TOM TILL
ABOVE: Oil Drilling Rig at Deadman Spring in the Greater Canyonlands Region, Grand County, Utah. TIM PETERSON

Democratic Utah Senator Frank Moss introduced legislation to protect Canyonlands shortly thereafter, triggering virulent opposition from Utah Republicans Senator Wallace F. Bennett and Governor George Dewey Clyde. They instead envisioned a new kind of park where mining, grazing and development would continue unabated. Interior and Congress, not wanting to turn the National Park Service's preservation mission on its head, demurred. By the time the park was signed in to law by Lyndon Johnson in 1964, horse-trading and compromise avoided Bennett and Clyde's odious mining and grazing provisions, but reduced the footprint of protection to just 257,640 acres, quite a drop from the original 4.5 million acres proposed by Harold Ickes. Unduly constrained by politicking, the straight line park boundaries make little sense when viewed from the air or even from perched vistas like the Needles Overlook. Many areas that any fair-minded observer would consider prime landscape were left out of the park.

Below: Operations to prepare for drilling for oil on Deadman Point in the Greater Canyonlands Region, Grand County, Utah.
Tim Peterson

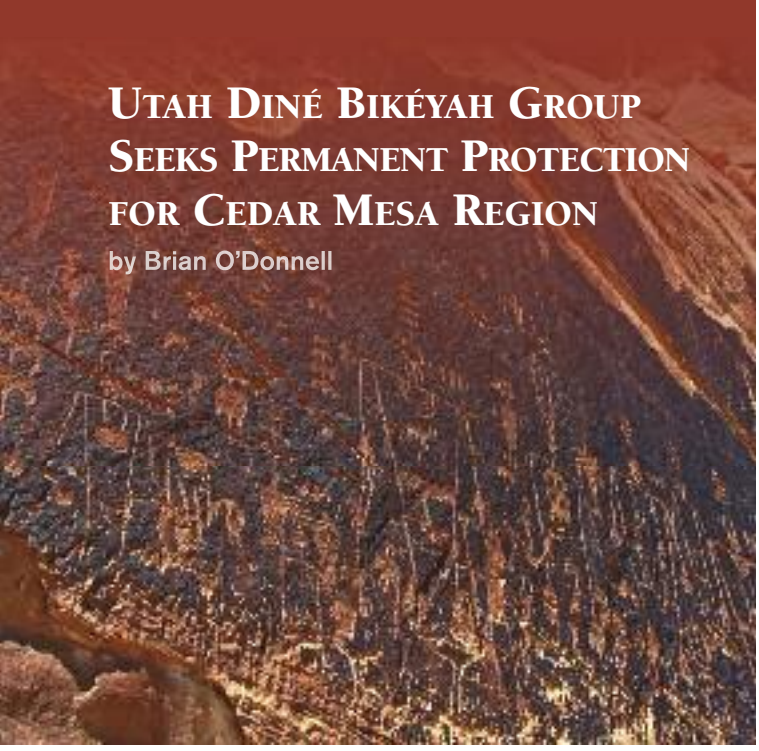
Since the creation of the park, pressure on the lands that should have been included has grown more intense. Some truly macabre threats have been beaten back, like a 1983 proposal to store the nation's high level nuclear waste against the park's boundary fence in Lavender and Davis Canyons. Other bad ideas persist and multiply. Paradoxically, lands for which a government petroleum geologist recommended protection in the midst of the Great Depression are sporting new oil rigs today. Oil wells, pipelines and constant heavy truck traffic are now a regular fixture on the Island in the Sky. "They are in what should have been Canyonlands National Park already, and it's unconscionable that it continue," says Walt Dabney, a former Superintendent who has fought for years to enlarge the park. New leasing and drilling for oil and gas is the region's most immediate threat, along with irresponsible off-roading, potash and uranium mining, and even far-fetched and desperate schemes like extracting tar sands, Earth's dirtiest fuel. All of these activities are reducing the grandeur of this one-of-a-kind treasure, chipping away at our collective legacy.

Walt Dabney is working to get the region the protection it has always deserved. "I think there is some real exigency in this effort. We have the opportunity to make Canyonlands the only national park in the entire system that would be a *complete* park. This is a treasure and we hold it in trust for all the people of the world," he says. "What would you put there that would make it better than it is now? An oil well? A potash works? No. If you look at the millions and millions and millions of visitor dollars that are coming in to this area, it's incredible. Canyonlands, as any national park, is like a big gold mine—except that you can mine it forever, *if you don't screw it up*."

Present day politics read much like the mid-twentieth century history of Canyonlands. Those with vision propose a bold new national monument known as "Greater Canyonlands National Monument"—for superlative and threatened country. Local officials howl about the overreach of presidentially-proclaimed national monuments and commit to solve the issues through home-grown legislation. Will we find success as we work with the Governor's office and Utah's delegation on new congressional protections for Utah's public lands? (See "Cautious Optimism as Utah's Representative Bishop Engages in Land Use Initiative," The Advocate, Summer 2013.) Or will the region be graced by a new national monument, as was the case with Zion, Arches, Capitol Reef and Grand Staircase-Escalante? Either way, the Trust is working with influential partners to assure that Canyonlands finally gets the protection it deserves. As Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune said when he saw the Greater Canyonlands region for himself in 2012, "*Our chances of success are 100 percent*."

Tim Peterson is the Utah Wildlands Program Director for the Grand Canyon Trust.

Walt Dabney was Superintendent of the Southeast Utah Group of National Parks (Arches, Canyonlands, Hovenweep NM, and Natural Bridges NM) and Director of the Texas State Park system. He was awarded the Harry Yount Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Park Service in 2005.



Petroglyphs at Butler Wash in the Diné Bikéyah Region near the San Juan River, San Juan County, Utah. Tim Peterson

Utah Diné Bikéyah Group Seeks Permanent Protection for Cedar Mesa Region

by Brian O'Donnell

The greater Cedar Mesa region is not a destination to check off on a backpacker's bucket list, but rather the sacred home place for many cultures.

Any modern adventurer who has been to Utah's Cedar Mesa region knows that this is a place unlike any other. Stone, sand, wind and water have sculpted a landscape of paradoxes. Serpentine canyons have been cut by floodwaters, and yet dryness fills the air and lungs. Stone dwellings and other structures perched improbably on high cliffs remind visitors that 1,000 years ago this was a bustling population center; today, it is silence that stops visitors in their tracks. Prehistoric peoples, despite the inhospitable conditions they faced, created intricate artwork on rocks and canyon walls across the region—surely a sign of a society thinking far beyond basic needs.

Most modern-day visitors to the Cedar Mesa area come to explore the canyons that drop away from the top of the Mesa, hoping to "discover" even a tiny fraction of the region's thousands of archeological sites. They are awed by the relics of some of America's earliest cultures, found where they were last used centuries ago. Some ancient dwellings are so well preserved—by ingenious siting, bone-dry air and rugged terrain—as to give visitors a sense that the original occupants could return any minute.

It has been 800 years since those who built Cedar Mesa's famous dwellings left the area, but most of the change there has come in the last few decades. In more accessible areas of the Mesa and surrounding lands, archeological sites face ongoing threats from looting and vandalism, unintentional damage, road building, livestock grazing, mining and drilling.

To the south lies the San Juan River, the official border of the Navajo Nation. Before the reservation was established in 1868, many Navajo made their homes in the region; some even managed to avoid Kit Carson's "long walk" to Bosque Redondo, New Mexico. Chief Manuelito was a principle figure in the signing of the treaty that ended the Navajos' forced removal to New Mexico. He was born above Cedar Mesa between the Bears Ears, two buttes that resemble a giant bear hiding under the horizon. The Ute and Paiute people also lived in the region, and modern Puebloan people, including the nearby Hopi, as well as the Zuni, Acoma, Taos, and the Rio Grande Pueblos of Northern New Mexico, all trace their ancestry to the ancient peoples who lived around Cedar Mesa and present-day San Juan County, Utah.

For the Navajo and other tribes whose cultures have been shaped by these lands, this place is not simply a recreational getaway. They use the land and its resources for religious ceremonies, medicinal healing, woodcutting for heating, and other purposes they view as central to their heritage and well-being. They believe that unless the land is protected, along with their interests on it, part of their culture will be lost forever. The greater Cedar Mesa region is not a destination to check off on a backpacker's bucket list, but rather the sacred home place for many cultures.

Despite their deep connection to the land, Native Americans have been largely left out of land planning and management decisions. Recent efforts in Utah to legislatively address federal public lands have at times created a discriminatory atmosphere for Native Americans and the issues they'd like to address. Enter Round River Conservation Studies, a Utah-based group that has worked successfully in Canada and Africa to empower indigenous peoples in their efforts to have authentic input on natural resources decisions on ancestral lands. With a 2012 grant from the Conservation Lands Foundation, Round River supported

Map by Stephanie Smith, GIS Manager, Grand Canyon Trust

the development of the Utah Diné Bikéyah as a formal group to advocate for the region around Cedar Mesa including White and Dark Canyons, the Abajos and other wildlands north of the San Juan River. Their first action was to fuse an immense amount of Navajo elder knowledge with cutting-edge conservation science to produce a Navajo National Conservation Area proposal that includes 1.9 million acres.

When it came time to find a Navajo executive director, the group turned to trusted Navajo leader and former San Juan County commissioner Kenneth Maryboy, who discussed the effort with his brother, Mark.

"When my brother Kenneth and I first discussed this work, we both were reluctant to commit," said Mark Maryboy. "We knew in our hearts that we must convey our people's sentiments and convictions for these lands, [but] we did not want to disappoint our elders. How could we be sure that their words would be listened to, and not once again ignored?"

Their concerns are well informed by a history with few examples where Navajo participation in federal or Utah state government processes led to favorable outcomes. Despite this, the brothers launched a project to gather the existing elder knowledge from local political units—called Chapter houses—spread across the 27,000-square-mile Navajo Nation. By combining elder knowledge with conservation biology and GIS mapping, they could account for the values and resources on these lands. That is a key step in any land planning process, but the added step of gathering elder knowledge, with the specific goal of contributing a Native perspective to a land planning process, is unique—and long overdue.

As Utah Diné Bikéyah has so eloquently stated—"If our voice is not recognized as legitimate, then whose is?"

"We interviewed elders because they have so much knowledge of native species, the habitat, the ecological condition," said Mark Maryboy. "The elders described the importance of landscape features to Navajo culture, and talked about sacred sites, the looting and desecration of these sites and what a deep concern this is to our well-being as a people."

Meanwhile, Congressman Rob Bishop (R-UT) has initiated a new public lands legislative process and invited all concerned parties to submit their proposals. The Utah Diné Bikéyah submitted their proposal in the summer of 2013, and have yet to see a map or legislation put forward from the Congressman's office. Back in Washington, D.C., Congressional fecklessness has resulted in their failure to protect a single acre of land in the West since 2009. This Congressional inertia, combined with the urgency the Navajo feel on the ground, suggests executive action may be the only path toward permanent protection for the greater Cedar Mesa area.

"This land has shaped our culture," said Utah Diné Bikéyah Board Chair Willie Grayeyes. "It is time for all people to get involved in some form of conservation—this is the message we are spreading among Navajo communities to restore the lands and bring back traditional Native American stewardship practices."

Utah Diné Bikéyah has another opportunity though, beyond protecting this sacred landscape. In leading this conservation effort, they will be changing the way conservation is done in America.

"The sound that comes off of your tongue is the same as the voice coming off the tongues of the birds. They are both holy and spiritual and Navajo people view the world and each other in this way," says Utah Diné Bikéyah Board Member Jonah Yellowman. "It is important to remember this when we sit down and talk to each other. Respecting each other and the world around us is central to the Navajo way of life."

Brian O'Donnell is the executive director of the Conservation Lands Foundation, an organization that works to protect, restore and expand the Bureau of Land Management's National Conservation Lands. He lives in Durango, CO.

ABOVE: Land clearing for tar sands mining at U.S. Oil Sands' P.R. Springs mine. Uinta Basin, Utah, July 2014. TAYLOR MCKINNON/ECOFLIGHT
LEFT: Utah bitumen mined from U.S. Oil Sands' P.R. Springs Mine. Uinta Basin, Utah, May 2014. TAYLOR MCKINNON

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF UTAH'S ENERGY POLICIES

by Dr. Brian Moench

In simpler times, land use battles in the West pitted the economic benefits of extractive industry and livestock grazing against the soul cleansing experiences of breathtaking sunsets, red rock monoliths, and wilderness refuges—some people's aesthetics versus other people's wallets. But in the rear view mirror that turf war now seems almost quaint, just scratching the surface of what is really at stake. For people close to today's hydrocarbon extraction, this is rapidly becoming a battle of life and death.

Looking out from an airplane 30,000 feet above the West's big oil and gas fields, the thousands of fracking pads and their connecting roads make the earth look like the needle scarred and pock marked body of a hardened drug addict. Indeed, as George W. Bush admitted, America is addicted to fossil fuels. As with heroin, the addiction is irrational, all consuming, and life threatening. The oil and gas industry is the eager pusher, and just like corrupt cops on the take, our politicians are protecting the pushers, not the victims.

The fossil fuel "drug dealers" fully control the Uinta Basin of Utah where over 11,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled so far. Bumper stickers in the town of Vernal say, "Honk if you love drilling." Vernal politicians certainly do, Utah state lawmakers do, and our Congressional delegation does. Everyone is in on the fix. With jobs, tax revenues, new community recreation centers, burgeoning store fronts on Main Street, people with money to spend and abundant corporate campaign contributions—what's not to like? Well, perhaps stillborn babies.

Acting on Our Beliefs

by Tim Wagner

After more than 20 years as an environmental advocate in Utah working a host of issues from public lands to air quality and everything in between, I have learned that building a movement requires us to help people to see the personal side of an issue. When they finally do, they take ownership and then action.

We saw this on full display last January when more than 4,000 people came to Utah's Capitol Hill to participate in the largest air quality and environmental rally in state history. My message to the crowd that day was simple. "If you think our air is dirty now, wait until you see what Governor Gary Herbert and his dirty energy buddies have in store for you. If they have their way, whether you live in Vernal, Heber City, Moab, or Salt Lake City, those air masks are destined to become standard attire."

Utahans are beginning to understand the critical nexus between our staple environmental issues, the protection of our majestic public lands, and our air and water. As noted in the adjoining piece by Dr. Brian Moench, the quest for quick profits from the increased mining and burning of oil and gas, oil shale, and tar sands in Utah is the largest looming health crisis for millions of people in America's great Southwest – people who depend on clean air and the water of Colorado River for their very life.

Now is the time to act. Reach out to groups like the Grand Canyon Trust, Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment, and the Sierra Club. Lend your voice to the cause. Your children will thank you.

Until recently, Tim Wagner was the Sierra Club's national campaign staffer in Utah working on a variety of public lands issues. He is now serving as Executive Director of the Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment in Salt Lake City. He can be reached at: twagner@xmission.com.

Evidence is mounting that state and federal regulators have turned a blind eye to the creation of a pollution nightmare in the Uinta Basin. Most cities with pollution problems have either high ozone, like Los Angeles, or high particulate pollution, like Salt Lake City. But in the last few years Vernal has experienced both simultaneously, making it unique and one of the most polluted areas of the country. The two can act synergistically to impair human health.

But the most dangerous byproducts of the oil and gas industry are the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like benzene, toluene, and xylene. They are extremely hazardous compounds known to cause cancer and birth defects at minimal exposures. Every one of those 11,000 Uinta Basin wells leaks VOCs. In March this year a study revealed concentrations of VOCs in the atmosphere over the Uinta Basin equivalent to the tail pipe emissions of 100 million cars—eight times more cars than in greater Los Angeles[1]. The researchers measured VOC levels 200-300 times above regional and seasonal background and noted that they are among the highest ever reported.

Wherever you have a pollution nightmare, be assured that you will find a public health nightmare right around the corner. Donna Young, a midwife in Vernal, found one. Donna has been managing home deliveries in Idaho and Utah for 20 years. On May 8, 2013 she had her first stillbirth. At the funeral service a few days later, noting what seemed like an extraordinary number of recent infant graves at the cemetery, she decided to investigate.

She didn't get any help from local authorities, but information gleaned from obituaries and mortuaries revealed 15 cases of infant mortality in 2013, many stillborn with birth defects. Looking back to 2010 revealed a modest upward trend, but then a huge spike in 2013. Vernal is a town of about 10,000 people, with a surrounding county population of about 35,000, so we're talking small numbers. But per capita this is six times the national average.

Mortality rates in every age group rise with increased air pollution, so this is consistent with well-established medical research and not unexpected. Seeing obituaries and grave sites of people in your

The state of Utah spent upwards of $80 million upgrading Seep Ridge road to facilitate oil shale and tar sands extraction in the Uinta Basin. TAYLOR MCKINNON

Evidence is mounting that state and federal regulators have turned a blind eye to the creation of a pollution nightmare in the Uinta Basin.

home town, however, puts a haunting personal face on the tragedy. The public health toll became more ominous when a Vernal mother contacted Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment about a rare birth defect her six month old has that threatens her baby's breathing. Our preliminary investigation suggests there could be 30 cases of the same birth defect in the area. Given the population, that would be a rate seven times higher than expected.

Certainly more study is needed to determine whether the unprecedented VOC concentrations are causing a tragic loss of infants and deadly birth defects in Vernal; but one would expect a cautious approach to new drilling near people's homes. Instead, the Duchesne County Planning Commission just relaxed setbacks to allow fracking wells a mere 300 feet from residences, twice as close as before. Each well emits VOCs equal to those from about 7,000 cars, so Duchesne children and pregnant mothers can now suffer air pollution equivalent to a nonstop traffic jam outside their door. Even oil field workers opposed that.

The Utah Division of Air Quality (UDAQ) admits the Basin has an ozone problem, and they are willing to "study" various control strategies that would only be applied in the winter because, as UDAQ said, "We don't want to be controlling or restricting people when it isn't necessary"[2]. Memo to the UDAQ: If you have the VOCs of 100 million cars in the Uinta Basin and you're only concerned about winter ozone, that's like shopping for a used car and only being concerned about a scratch in the paint job while ignoring that the car doesn't have an engine, steering wheel, or brakes.

For its part, the EPA is using an irrelevant technicality to avoid enforcing national air quality standards in Vernal, because, you guessed it, more study needs to be done. Meanwhile, industry intends to triple the number of oil and gas wells over the coming years.

The Uinta Basin drama also has global implications. Eastern Utah could be considered ground zero for the battle to keep the world's dirtiest fossil fuels in the ground. In addition to the fracking frenzy for oil and gas in the area, Utah is also home to the largest unconventional fossil fuel reservoir in the United States and perhaps the world—oil shale and tar sands deposits far larger than those in Alberta, Canada. The U.S. Geological Survey estimated a total of 4.285 trillion barrels of oil are buried in the oil shale of the Green River Formation, near Vernal, with perhaps as much as 1.1 trillion barrels of that offering high development potential[3]. That equals the amount of hydrocarbons consumed worldwide since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, though this dirty fuel would emit far more carbon than the sweet, light crude we once burned. Undeterred by the nightmarish consequences, Utah state officials have issued the permits for strip mining of Utah's vast tar sands. Shrugging off lawsuits, the bulldozers have begun ripping up the earth.

The international medical community has called the climate crisis "the biggest global health threat of the 21st century and... could put the lives and well-being of billions of people at increased risk"[4]. The most vulnerable will be infants and children. Those that didn't survive in Vernal are likely just a few of the early victims. "Drill, baby, drill" is starting to sound like a sinister lullaby sung by our oil drug dealers to a hopelessly addicted, self-destructing species.

Dr. Brian Moench is President of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment and a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists. He can be reached at: drmoench@yahoo.com

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Climate Action at Last

EPA's 111(d) Rule on Existing Power Plants, Clean Energy, and What It All Means for the Colorado Plateau

by Patrick Von Bargen

Since the 2010 mid-term elections and the resulting paralysis of the Congress, the conventional wisdom has been that the United States would be unable to take any significant action on climate change for the foreseeable future.

But then about a year ago, President Obama outlined his "climate action plan" in a speech at Georgetown University. He announced that he would order the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to draft a rule limiting future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at existing electric-power-generating plants by June of 2014. The draft rule would then become final by June of 2015. Notwithstanding the specificity of his order, few pundits paid much attention, and the pessimistic conventional wisdom continued to thrive in political and policy circles in Washington.

That conventional wisdom became very old news on June 2, 2014.

On that day, right on schedule, the EPA proposed a rule to regulate GHG emissions from existing coal power plants under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act. EPA estimates the regulation will reduce carbon dioxide emission levels by up to 30% by 2030. With the proposal's release, the public now has until October 16, 2014 to file comments, before the rule is finalized and goes into full effect in June of 2015. No approval by Congress is required.

Under the rule, state governments will submit their emission reduction plans for approval by EPA. The rule gives the states the flexibility to choose from a menu of policy options under four "building blocks" to meet their state-specific reduction goal: (1) reducing carbon emissions by improving efficiency of existing power plants; (2) replacing generation at the power plants with less carbon intensive power generators, like natural-gas combined-cycle plants; (3) substituting coal plants with renewable or nuclear power generators; and (4) reducing the amount of carbon emissions through measures such as increasing consumer energy efficiency and deploying residential solar and other smaller generating options throughout the electrical grid.

Rather than picking a uniform emission reduction goal for each state to meet, the EPA calculated state-specific emission reduction targets, depending on the emission profile of their existing fleet of power plants. The key in the final rule will be in how each energy resource and its application—in the four "building block" categories—is valued in the methodology used to determine compliance with the state's reduction goal.

In this draft, the EPA asks specifically for input in a variety of areas, including clean energy technologies. The proposal is ambitious, yet there is room for improvement. Key points for clean energy advocates are:

- EPA seems conservative in estimating the emissions reductions possible from efficiency and other measures to reduce consumer demand (1.5%); there is an opportunity to ensure state methodologies can fully value such emission reducers as residential and community-scale solar programs and more energy efficient appliance and building standards.
- EPA also underestimates the impact larger, utility-scale renewable energy resources can have in meeting emission reduction goals.
- EPA's rule could do more to increase the amount of energy storage that is possible by improving efficiencies in generation and transmission across the electrical grid, while integrating cleaner resources throughout the system. These could include options such as augmenting storage capacity by integrating electrical car batteries into the grid.[1]
- EPA's rule needs to promote the cost-effectiveness of reducing carbon emissions through a more comprehensive assessment of conservation, efficiency, and clean energy technologies and policies.
- There are enormous opportunities to utilize low- and zero-emission resources to reduce our reliance on coal and enable the goals to be met faster than anticipated.

So now is the time for clean energy advocates to engage with the EPA; the agency wants and needs input to refine credible methodologies and solutions that can

With the proposal's release, the public now has until October 16, 2014 to file comments, before the rule is finalized and goes into full effect in June of 2015.

Navajo Generating Station, near Page, Arizona, is the West's largest coal-fired power plant.
Michael Collier

help states meet these targets. The final rule will affect the generation mix in the U.S. for the next 15 years, and if a technology is not included and counted in the framework, it may lose its place in that mix.

When the rule is finalized in June of 2015, EPA will give the states until June of 2018 to finalize their plans, and has stressed that these plans should include feasible, cost-effective, and reliable solutions to reducing emissions on our nation's power grid. In addition, EPA has suggested that states could combine efforts in a regional approach that could maximize their resources and benefits.

As an advocate for climate action on the Colorado Plateau, the Grand Canyon Trust should keep a close eye on the development of the rule by EPA, but also consider what smart and sound projects and programs the states that comprise the Plateau might include in the compliance plans they submit for EPA approval. We need to think creatively about bringing "solutions" to these states as they grapple with the "problem" of complying with the EPA rule. Those solutions must promise to reduce GHG emissions in the region, but they could also advance other resource protection goals that the Trust has long championed.

Patrick Von Bargen is co-Founder of 38 North Solutions, a policy and business strategy consulting firm in Washington, DC focused entirely on clean energy and innovation. Patrick is also a member of the Board of the Grand Canyon Trust.

[1] http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-sell-power-from-electric-cars-back-to-the-grid/

Challenging the Country's Last Uranium Mill

by Anne Mariah Tapp

A few things happen every time I drive past the White Mesa Uranium Mill, hidden in plain sight off Highway 191 between the White Mesa tribal community and Blanding, Utah. First, I roll up the windows in my van, cut the air inflow, and hold my breath for the 90 seconds it takes to pass the site. Whether or not this mitigates the exposure from radon-222 blowing off the mill's tailings impoundments, it's become a habit that I have no interest in breaking. Second, some wisdom from fellow *Advocate* author Terry Tempest Williams echoes in my head: "To bear witness is not a passive act. It's an act of consequence that leads to consciousness."

But how can we, the Trust community, bear witness to a story that is not being told? And how can the larger Colorado Plateau community take action to fight for the restoration of air, groundwater, migratory duck flyways, wild sagebrush, and tribal ancestral homelands contaminated by a uranium mill that many of us don't even know exists? I think the answer begins with telling the story, casting light into the shadows, and—having borne witness—standing together to craft a new chapter for White Mesa.

Of all the shadows, the darkest may be the fact the White Mesa Mill has become the long-term receptacle for highly toxic radioactive materials. For the last twenty years, contaminated sites across continent, including the Nevada Test site, have shipped radioactive waste to the White Mesa Mill for processing—a practice some have termed "sham recycling." After the small amounts of uranium and thorium are extracted from the waste, the remnants are disposed of in the Mill's tailings impoundments—highly acidic storage pits ranging from forty to seventy acres in size.

The baseline for any facility disposing of such toxic wastes should be that it operate in absolute conformance with all protective laws and regulations. However, the reality is far from that baseline. The White Mesa Mill's operations are likely threatening the long-term health of the White Mesa region and nearby communities.

In 2012 and 2013, radon emissions and the operation of tailings impoundments violated the standards established by the Clean Air Act. These standards are specifically designed both to protect the public against radon and to ensure timely reclamation of the impoundments. Despite recognizing the Mill's Clean Air Act violations, neither state nor federal regulators have acted. Seemingly oblivious to the violations, the Utah Division of Radiation Control is preparing to approve two separate requests from the mill operators that will allow it to process over 10,000 tons of uranium waste from the Midnite Mine Superfund site in Washington, and from the Sequoyah Fuels Site in Oklahoma.

The White Mesa Mill risks leaving a toxic legacy for both present and future generations. The radon exceedances threaten immediate health effects to anyone within an 80 kilometer radius—a distance that includes White Mesa, Bluff, and Blanding. More insidiously, both White Mesa and Bluff are located down-gradient of the mill, meaning that any groundwater contamination from the tailings impoundments may threaten the water supplies of both communities. The Ute Mountain Ute tribe has vigorously participated in public comments, bringing attention to radon emissions, catastrophic liner failure beneath the tailings impoundments, and the ongoing problem of radionuclide laden dust blowing off of the mill site.

Abandoned and inadequately reclaimed uranium mills litter the Colorado Plateau, and local communities have borne the costs—both financial and personal—of that legacy. The Trust itself led the efforts that resulted in the billion-dollar reclamation effort of the former Atlas Mill site adjacent to the Colorado River in Moab, Utah. With clean-up costs of other Colorado Plateau uranium mills estimated at over a million

Map by Stephanie Smith, GIS Manager, Grand Canyon Trust

dollars per acre, the White Mesa Mill's violation of laws intended to ensure timely reclamation becomes even more alarming.

To address these problems, in April of 2014, the Trust filed a Clean Air Act citizen suit against Energy Fuels in Utah federal district court. The case challenges both the excess radon emissions at the White Mesa Mill, and the failure to adequately reclaim the tailings impoundments. In a separate action, the Trust protested the Utah Division of Radiation Control's proposed approval of the shipment of waste from the Midnite Mine Superfund site to be processed at White Mesa. The goal of each of these actions is to force both responsible operation and timely reclamation.

Why fight this particular campaign? Beyond the need to assure that a major disposal site for toxic waste is being operated in compliance with pollution laws, the answer to this question lies in the unworldly light that paints the Henry Mountains a glowing rose at dusk and dawn, the red rock towers that appear like birthday candles hovering over a windblown terracotta cake, and the unlikely springs emerging from sagebrush fields. There is also the livable future of the Plateau's communities—ensuring that the residents of White Mesa, Bluff, and Blanding can continue to thrive in this remote landscape that they call home. Perhaps most of all, it's because the Colorado Plateau—more than any other region—issues a challenge for us to fight for our fullest potential. In our White Mesa Mill campaign, I see the Trust responding to the region's challenge, realizing our potential, and writing a new chapter in the Colorado Plateau's uranium story.

Anne Mariah Tapp is a staff attorney at the Grand Canyon Trust.

Toward a Unified Colorado Plateau Grazing Program

by Mary O'Brien

"We have 100 flavors of vanilla," *Fishlake National Forest Supervisor Allen Rowley said to the Collaborative Group on Sustainable Grazing for U.S. Forest Service Lands in Southern Utah.*

Rowley was describing the 58 annually-grazed cattle and sheep allotments, all with similar grazing rotations and similar seasons of use, which cover 99.8% of the Fishlake National Forest. At the time, the Collaborative Group was discussing the need for a diversity of grazing arrangements, including such alternatives to conventional grazing as experimentally-grazed allotments, ungrazed reference areas, grass banks, and non-use and closed allotments.

The 12-member Collaborative Group ultimately urged three types of diversity in its recommendations for sustainable livestock grazing on the Dixie, Fishlake, and Manti-La Sal National Forests of southern Utah. These include a variety of grazing arrangements; use of ecological and social indicators of sustainable and unsustainable grazing; and inclusion of diverse participants in grazing decisions.

Grand Canyon Trust is in the process of articulating and planning a Colorado Plateau-wide strategy on ungulate grazing (cattle, sheep, elk, deer, mountain goat, bison) that will rely on these same three forms of diversity. Why? In the face of increased temperatures, drought and invasive species, ungulate grazing poses myriad challenges across the Colorado Plateau, and only diverse solutions will do.

Diversifying Grazing Arrangements

As one example of diversifying grazing arrangements, the Trust purchased voluntarily-proffered grazing permits throughout the Escalante River corridor of southern Utah. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) subsequently closed the river corridor to cattle grazing. These retired permits constitute the only portion (3.6%) of the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument that is not grazed by cattle.

The Trust's 2005 purchase of the Kane and Two Mile ranches in northern Arizona included a transfer of grazing permits to over 850,000 acres of Kaibab National Forest and BLM lands. Now, less than 200,000 of those acres are annually lightly grazed by cattle in an ongoing rotation. 250,000 acres are not grazed at all as part of a research effort designed to address numerous conservation and land management questions, including the impacts of grazing after forest fires, risk of invasion by exotic species, and restoration strategies for springs. This collaborative effort is supported by colleagues at Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, University of Nevada-Reno, the Agricultural Research Service, and state and federal land management agencies.

In Utah, through an agreement with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the Manti-La Sal National Forest, the Trust is constructing boundary fences on the 28,000-acre White Mesa Cultural and Conservation Area, an allotment whose permit is held by the Tribe. In exchange, the area will not be grazed by livestock for the coming ten years, providing an invaluable reference area in an otherwise totally grazed landscape.

The Trust continues to co-chair the 19-member Monroe Mountain Working Group. In order to restore aspen decimated on this mountain by cattle and/or elk for the past 100 years, the Group is recommending increased livestock rest and reduced elk pressure as well as the use of fire among stands of aspen overtopped by conifer.

These and other arrangements allow us to learn how Colorado Plateau lands respond to changed livestock management.

Diversifying Ecological Indicators

While the Forest Service and BLM have long focused on how much grass cows eat as the key indicator of sustainable versus unsustainable grazing, the Trust has been working to broaden this focus. We urge, for

LEFT: A Utah sensitive species, boreal toad, is captured and measured by a Trust volunteer on Monroe Mountain, Fishlake NF. EMMI COLUNGA

BELOW: Landowner Richard Knezevich takes notes as Kate Watters helps botany workshop participants identify plants in Johnson Lakes Canyon, a private, ungrazed property within the grazed Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. MARY O'BRIEN

RIGHT: Big Deal Botany trainer Dorothy Lamm, examines a small detail that will identify a grass species. MARY O'BRIEN

instance: assuring the growth of cottonwood, aspen, and willow sprouts above the height at which they will be severely impacted by grazing animals; valuing native plant diversity in meadows and beneath aspen and sagebrush; attention to the condition of springs; and meeting the habitat needs of native pollinators (e.g., bees, wasps, butterflies, and hummingbirds).

Our staff and volunteers demonstrate the value of considering these and other management goals with scientific field data and reports; site-specific photographs; and field tours with agency staff, ranchers, and other interested parties.

Diversifying Participants in Grazing Decisions

The most time-consuming and crucial of all efforts is active participation in grazing decisions and encouraging participation by others. This is a key to ensuring that diverse grazing arrangements will be considered and diverse ecological indicators will be used by both agencies and citizens.

Historically and oddly, the Forest Service and BLM have made nearly all decisions about livestock grazing solely with ranchers. At the same time, state wildlife agencies have made decisions about wild ungulate (e.g., elk, deer, mountain goat, bison) grazing on the Colorado Plateau's national public lands almost exclusively with hunters.

Given that both livestock and wild ungulate decisions affect, for good or ill, the condition and functioning of nearly every natural resource on our Colorado Plateau national public lands, grazing decisions must be opened to participation by diverse interested parties.

Demonstrating the value of multi-interest decision making, the Trust has helped lead and participated in numerous consensus collaborations (with state wildlife agencies present as participants) regarding public lands grazing. We have also developed an extensive partnership to inform research and grazing on Kane and Two Mile ranches.

The Trust has initiated meetings with the Forest Service regarding troubled grazing allotments. We write comprehensive, site-specific proposals for consideration in grazing-related decisions, and our data and suggestions are beginning to find a place in the annual operating instructions that govern ranchers' use of these public lands. We are training citizens as botanists capable of measuring and reporting on the diversity (or lack thereof) of native plant species on grazed Colorado Plateau public lands compared to rare ungrazed reference areas.

By strategically expanding Trust engagement in grazing policy and decisions across the Colorado Plateau, the Trust's Arizona, Colorado, and Utah staff will be able to distribute and magnify progressive decisions, policies, and practices implemented by individual Forests, BLM Districts, and state wildlife agencies.

Our comprehensive, prioritized regional strategy will encourage Forest Service and BLM managers to support grazing changes in light of global warming. And most importantly, our Plateau-wide grazing initiative will bring citizens into the 100-year old grazing decision making system that heretofore has appeared so impervious to change.

Mary O'Brien is the Utah Forests Program Director for the Grand Canyon Trust.

Map by Stephanie Smith, GIS Manager, Grand Canyon Trust

A Grander Canyon?

Campaigning for Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument

by Jim Babbitt

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt used the new American Antiquities Act of 1906 to set aside more than 800,000 acres in northern Arizona as the Grand Canyon National Monument. Declaring the national monument, Roosevelt famously said: "Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is. You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is keep it for your children, your children's children and all who come after you as the one great sight every American should see."

In 2000, nearly a century after the Grand Canyon National Monument (later Grand Canyon National Park) was established, President Bill Clinton used the Antiquities Act to set aside the more than one million acre Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument to the northwest of the Grand Canyon and the nearly 300,000 acre Vermilion Cliffs National Monument to the northeast.

Situated between the Grand Canyon and the new national monuments is the Kaibab Plateau, home to the Southwest's largest unprotected old-growth Ponderosa pine forest and many rare plants and animals, some of which are found nowhere else in the world. Among the distinctive species that call this landscape home are the endangered California condor, the rare northern goshawk, the Kaibab squirrel, the mountain lion, and the Kaibab mule deer herd immortalized in the conservation literature by Aldo Leopold. The plateau is an irreplaceable pathway for wildlife migrating between already-protected lands.

The Kaibab Plateau—along with the adjacent House Rock Valley, the Kaibab-Paunsagunt wildlife corridor, the Kanab Creek watershed, and the watershed flowing into the Grand Canyon from the south rim are now being proposed for protection as the Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument. Encompassing some 1.7 million acres, the proposed monument holds lands of great significance to the Kaibab-Paiute tribe as well as to the Hopi, Zuni, Havasupai, and Navajo peoples. More than 3,000 ancient Native American archaeological sites have been documented in the region, ranging from seasonal habitations to camps, settlements, granaries, and rock art. Some of these sites date back as far as the Paleo-Indian period—11,000 years B.C.E. The Kaibab Band of Paiutes call the Kaibab Plateau "Kai Awvahu"—the "mountain lying down."

The areas proposed for monument designation face several ongoing threats, including the logging of ancient forests and travel on an extensive network of primitive roads resulting in soil loss, vegetation

destruction, and degradation of archaeological sites and water sources. Uranium mining also continues to threaten water quality and wildlife habitat in much of the Grand Canyon watershed.

National monument designation for the Kaibab Plateau and surrounding lands of the Grand Canyon watershed would protect landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic and scientific interest as authorized by the Antiquities Act. Monument status allows for continued public access, rights-of-way, hunting, fishing, hiking, appropriate livestock grazing, and many other activities, including traditional tribal access and uses.

The idea of protecting the entire Kaibab Plateau and Grand Canyon watershed is not a new one. Between 1882 and 1886, Senator (later President) Benjamin Harrison introduced Grand Canyon National Park bills that included the Kaibab Plateau. In 1905, President Roosevelt recognized that forests, like those of the Kaibab Plateau, should be set aside "for the wild forest creatures to afford perpetual protection to the native fauna and flora." In 1906, Congress and President Roosevelt established the Grand Canyon Forest Preserve for the "protection of game animals… recognized as a breeding place therefore." In more recent times, conservation-minded individuals and groups have proposed protection for wildlife corridors, wildlife conservation areas, and landmarks in the proposed monument region. These ideas have now come together as a single monument proposal, unified by the concept of the natural watershed.

Presidents often act to protect public lands late in their terms. The time appears ripe for President Obama to use the Antiquities Act to set aside more national monuments. National and regional conservation organizations are uniting to urge the president to act on proposals like that for the Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument. To view a full draft of the proposal, visit the website of the Grand Canyon Wildlands Council at grandcanyonwildlands.org. Then add your voice to the many calling for presidential action to preserve and protect one of this country's iconic landscapes for "our children and our children's children."

James E. Babbitt is Advisor Emeritus of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a Trustee of the Grand Canyon Trust.

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NEW LEAF PAPER

Bill Godschlax

I was born and raised in Utah's wild red desert, but have had the great fortune to call many special places around the world my home. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, I paint large oils and illustrate children's books. My first children's book, "The Illuminated Desert," written by Terry Tempest Williams and published by the Canyonlands Natural History Association in 2008, won The Mountains and Plains Bookseller's Award for Best Children's Book. I currently reside in Los Angeles and show my oil paintings in The Mark Gallery in Englewood, New Jersey and Walker Fine Arts in Denver, Colorado.

chloehedden.com

The ***Mission*** of the Grand Canyon Trust is to protect and restore the Colorado Plateau—its spectacular landscapes, flowing rivers, clean air, diversity of plants and animals, and areas of beauty and solitude.

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