

# boatman's quarterly review

A photograph of a man with long hair, wearing a white bucket hat, safety glasses, and an orange life vest, sitting in a white raft on a river. He is looking towards the right. The background shows a rocky canyon wall.

## Brian Hansen

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## boatman's quarterly review

...is published more or less quarterly  
by and for GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES.

GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES  
is a nonprofit organization dedicated to

*Protecting Grand Canyon  
Setting the highest standards for the river profession  
Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community  
Providing the best possible river experience*

General Meetings are held each Spring and Fall. Our Board of Directors Meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of each month. All innocent bystanders are urged to attend. Call for details.

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Our editorial policy, such as it is: provide an open forum. We need articles, poetry, stories, drawings, photos, opinions, suggestions, gripes, comics, etc. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc.

Written submissions should be less than 1500 words and, if possible, be sent on a CD or emailed to GCRG. Microsoft Word files are best but we can translate most programs. Include postpaid return envelope if you want your disk or submission returned.

Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of February, May, August and November. Thanks!  
Our office location: 515 West Birch, Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Office Hours: 10:30-5:00, Monday through Friday

PHONE	928/773-1075
FAX	928/773-8523
E-MAIL	gcrg@infomagic.net
WEBSITE	www.gcrg.org

## Prez Blurb

EARLIER THIS SPRING, out there at Hatchland we had a stellar turnout for the Guides Training Seminar, in fact, it was near record attendance. And for the last few years as well. So why is that? Is it because of our collective desire for education? Just something to do before the season gets going? A chance to party with our fellow river runners that we may not see all summer? Or is it just that there are now simply more of us than there have ever been before? Who knows, maybe all of the above.

And despite the large number of boaters from all walks of life who come to this remote corner of the desert each spring to celebrate the uniqueness of our community, to partake in a little knowledge, fun and socializing, GCRG is still struggling for nominations to fill seats on the board, and in the presidency. We (the current board) cannot fairly nominate and vote in a new crew every year. We as individuals don't know every river guide out there that may be a perfect fit for this rewarding and important role in our community. We need diversity, (as a few people have mentioned) we *want* diversity.

It is essential to the success of this organization. We need some motor guides, some oar. Some new young perspectives and some experienced wisdom and knowledge. Grand Canyon River Guides is a real organization, we are a real voice that is heard. Not just a bunch of boatmen with opinions.

We need new fundraising ideas, new board members and general members. People who have a passion for all things Grand Canyon.

You know how all season long, after the kitchen has been cleaned up and things settle down, we congregate on the boats and tell stories and discuss the things that are worrying us about the way they are managing this thing or that? Or how we feel about pack rafters in river camps and not being able to hike up to Beaver Falls? We talk about new restrictions, and rules and not being allowed to collect driftwood during the commercial season. Projects such as the Skywalk and the Escalade are discussed at length and our feelings vocalized in many colourful expletives. These are just to name a few.

The point is that we all really care about this place. We want to see it taken care of, we want to see responsible choices made in regards to the future. Well? What do you think? Wouldn't it be great to be on the side of

Cover: Brian Hansen circa 1981.

proactive change? To be part of a collective voice that will be heard? To actually have a chance to make a difference? Think about it. Then decide if it is worth one hour per week of your time reading emails and doing some research. If it is worth one meeting per month either in person or over the phone. Next year, we need just a few more folks to nominate themselves or their friends for the future of GCRG and the Grand Canyon. The developers are not taking time off or sitting on their hands here. They are very much invested in moving forward with their dream and their future plans for this majestic landscape. We must also stay involved, and gather momentum and numbers to share in this battle for what we care about and what we value about the Grand Canyon experience.

After twelve seasons of living, breathing and loving my job as a river guide in the Grand Canyon. After collectively spending well over three years of my life on the river and below the rim. After much of who I am and how I view the world being colored by the experiences I have had here, I think I am ready to start a new adventure outside of the "Big Ditch."

I hope that I have made a small difference in a few lives, and maybe helped instill a love and under-

standing for our world in some of the folks who just thought they were going on vacation. I would sure like to know that this generation of Grand Canyon boaters, and the ones that follow, continue to take our role as stewards of this unimaginably valuable and precious place seriously. And that we do our best to keep those crazy development ideas such as the Escalade project and others like it out of the Grand Canyon.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have been a part of GCRG these past four years. It has been an educational and meaningful chapter of my life, and I hope that I've helped to make a difference.

Happy boating to all you lucky people that find yourselves on this crazy path in life. The place simply wouldn't be the same without you. Try to keep the bumpy side up, stay protected from the sun as best you can. Learn as much as you care to know, share what you are passionate about. And may the current always take you where you want to go. Most importantly, don't forget to have some fun while you're down there. All of you crazy river rats!

*Ariel Anderson*

## Changing of the Guard

**B**Y THE TIME THIS ISSUE of the newsletter goes to press, the polls for the GCRG elections will be closed, with the new president/VP elect and three new GCRG directors taking office on September 1st. Additionally, Katie Proctor (AZRA) will move up from vice president to president, bringing her boundless enthusiasm and stewardship ethic to bear as we face challenging issues over the next year.

I want to express our gratitude to outgoing GCRG president, Ariel Anderson, for her inspirational leadership born of a profound belief in the necessity of protecting the place we love for future generations to enjoy. We wish her the best for whatever her future may bring, knowing that her love of wild places and of the Colorado River will never wane. We also extend

our sincerest appreciation for all the energy and ideas exhibited by outgoing directors Kevin Greif, Greg Woodall, and Evan Tea. They exemplified the legacy of involvement and advocacy that GCRG has been blessed with over the years. You can bet they'll remain very involved in issues such as the Glen Canyon Dam EIS (LTEMP), lending their voices and professional perspectives to help craft a sustainable and healthy future for the Colorado River.

Next time you run into any of these fine folks on the river, please thank them for their dedicated service to GCRG and for a job well done. They really stepped up. It's as simple, yet as profound as that. What an amazing guide community we have!

# Farewells

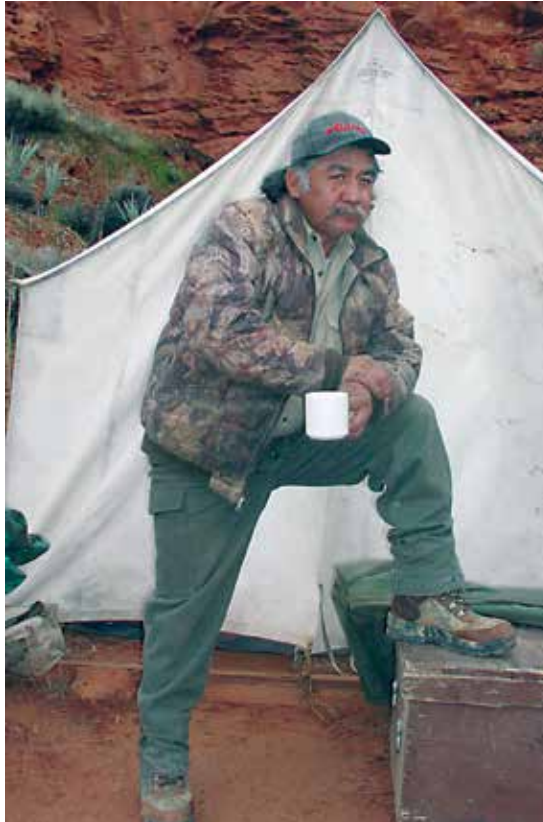
RON BEECHER — JULY 28, 1953–MAY 2014

THE RIVER COMMUNITY lost another good friend and boatman this spring. Ron was a boatman from the '70s–'80s era. One thing that made him unique is the fact that he was the first Hualapai to work full time in the Canyon. The following are some stories from, Roger Murphy, Bob and Clair Quist.

**BOB QUIST:** I first met Ron in the spring of 1971. I was working the summer for Fred Burke's start-up, Arizona River Runners. Fred had realized the potential of Diamond Creek as a takeout, if the road could be maintained. Towards that end he made friends with Ron's parents, Monroe and Margaret Beecher who were working for the tribe. In the process, Ron had been offered a job swamping for the summer. Ron fit in extremely well; he was already a seasoned hunter, total outdoors person and knew the lower canyon well. The first night out as young guys with too much energy, we started a little grab-ass wrestling on the beach. I had wrestled in high school, was not too long out of the Army and in pretty good shape. Thinking I would have no problem to put this young guy on the ground and in the process make sure he knew who the top dog was, I made my move. I suddenly found myself doing a flip in mid-air, came down hard on my back. Ron with a little chuckle walked over and with a little kick to the ribs, informed me that it probably was not a great idea to mess with him. Laughing, he helped me up; I knew I had made friends with this guy. The years went by. Ron rowed for Wilderness World and then for Moki Mac. He was a total natural on the oars and looked like a ballet dancer on the water. The memories flood in; Ron on a Cataract trip, patiently explaining to a matronly older woman how to tell the difference between a ram and a ewe bighorn, "You see you look between the rear legs." On our last Grand trip

together we had our sons with us. It was a pleasure working with someone who had such a great sense of humor and knowledge; a privilege to have known him. We'll miss you buddy.

**ROGER MURPHY:** I'll never forget the day we stopped at Hermit for photos. The rapid was poppin'. Ron gave me his camera and I said I would take a picture of his first flip. Well, you can guess the rest. He floated by holding on to his boat cursing me! His only flip. He was a master oarsman—smooth, no wasted strokes—made it look so easy. Ron was in demand along with his brother Lyman as hunting guides on the reservation. He was well known amongst sheep and elk trophy hunters for his successes. I feel very fortunate to have him a part of my life, a good friend—so long partner!



**CLAIR QUIST:** We can't say enough about Ron and his contribution to river running in Grand Canyon. He was a life long friend. When Pam's dad died unexpectedly, I was on the river with her brother Mark. We had just run Lava and were pretty darn happy when a helicopter comes and

lands on our beach. We knew there was serious trouble at home for one of us when we saw Ron get out of the bird. There were four of us guides standing on the beach waiting to see who Ron had come to replace. He walks up to Mark, hugs him and tells him about his dad. Mark says to receive that kind of news came best from such a good friend. Ron was a family man with kid's he loved and took care of his parents. He called us the week he died, not indicating how serious his health problem was; he just called to tell us not to worry about him. Adios Buddy, we love you.

*Roger Murphy, Bob and Clair Quist*

JOSH LOWRY DIED IN A FALL while scouting Benham Falls (Class v) on the Deschutes River in Oregon on August 2. Leaving his Subaru with kayaks on top, he traversed to a cliff above the falls to look it over when he slipped and fell 53 feet to the bottom of the cliff, landing in two feet of water. He was alone and no one saw him fall. Passersby were unable to reach him and alerted the county sheriff.

Josh first started paddling inflatable kayaks on rivers in Tennessee and quickly worked his way up to Class v runs. When he mastered the inflatable, Josh started running other river craft, including kayaks. Josh went with his brother, Dave Lowry, as a swamper on AZRA trips in Grand Canyon in the late-'70s and early-'80s. AZRA, Hatch, and Moki Mac recognized his talents and put him to work in Grand Canyon. Josh also worked for Hatch in Idaho for several years.



Josh kayaked in Chile with AZRA buddies, Wesley Smith, Suzanne Jordan, and Kevin Johnson in 1986. He quickly got hooked on the fun to be had down south. After several extended kayaking trips in the Andes in the mid-'90s, Josh moved to Futaleufu, Chile, and started his own river company, Futaleufu Explore, which ran paddle boats on the very challenging Class v Futaleufu River.

Kayaking aficionados know Josh for his many first descents in the western U.S., Mexico, and throughout the Andes. Josh put an incredible amount of energy into running as many different rivers as he could. Adventurous boaters exploring Chile are always fascinated to look through his COPEC gas station map of Chile. Josh kept a detailed ledger on the ocean side of the map that listed the names and difficulty of every Chilean and Argentinian river that he knew. He had run most of them, but he always had a list of new runs he wanted to complete.

Most captivating to Josh was the Rio Pascua. Dauntingly remote and one of Chile's largest volume rivers, the Pascua was slated for three hydroelectric dams. In March of 1999, Josh was able to round up three partners for a descent. This was not your standard river trip. Getting to the put-in required a

flight to the remote Chilean village of Villa Bernardo O'Higgins, only accessible by plane, or horse. From there, they negotiated a ten-hour boat trip across Lago O'Higgins to the outlet where the Rio Pascua begins. The river was steep with large volume (50,000 CFS), making it more powerful than any other river the group had run. The team was forced to be uniquely creative in their approach. Afraid to lose their paddles, they tethered them to their wrists so that they could not be torn from their hands while navigating the maelstrom. Scouting the river was nearly impossible

through the dense rain forest. Josh and his team emerged triumphantly five days later at the ocean where they had arranged for a launch to transport them sixty miles across the ocean to the village of Tortel. Since then only two more teams have dared to return!

In Futaleufu, Josh has long been known for his efforts to involve the community with the river and also for making sure that anyone with an interest in the river had the opportunity to experience it.

Likewise, Josh fit right in with the subsistence economy of the valley, pasteurizing milk from his neighbor's cows and canning preserves with the abundant fruit that the valley has to offer. No matter what the situation was, he always sought to enhance the community that had adopted him.

Josh always maintained an interest in any kind of river experience with a wide variety of boating partners all over North and South America. He was a great boater, a renegade, a man of few words with a big heart and a bigger laugh. He lived in the moment and lived for his passion, boating. Josh was introverted and was most comfortable in an environment where he knew he excelled—on the water. On land he was always slightly uncomfortable; in a kayak he was at one with himself and the river. He lived simply and lightly in the world, and focused on the present moment. Josh's friends and acquaintances will never forget his distinctive laugh or his infectious energy for running rivers.

*Dave Kashinski and Glenn Rink*

To read a wonderful 2010 profile of Josh by Tyler Williams, published in *Kayak Session* magazine, go here: [issuu.com/joshlowry/docs/josh-lowry-profile](http://issuu.com/joshlowry/docs/josh-lowry-profile)

# Grand Canyon Boaters Now Float Over Newly Discovered Endangered Razorback Suckers Spawning in the River

**T**HIS SPRING, as part of a study funded by the Bureau of Reclamation to determine razorback sucker conservation status, habitat use, and movements in lower Grand Canyon, recently hatched (larval) fish were discovered in several samples downstream of Lava Falls Rapid. Additionally, an adult razorback sucker that had been sonic-tagged and released in Lake Mead in 2010 was detected by an automated detection device a few miles below Lava

nership among Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey, who have worked for recovery of this species side-by-side with Arizona state officials, Indian tribes, private landowners, and researchers.”

Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) is an endangered fish historically found only in the Colorado River Basin, from the Green River in Wyoming to the Gulf of California in Mexico. The genus means “razor”–“neck” and the species name derives from an error—the first described razorback sucker was incorrectly labeled as being collected from Texas. They are the largest species of suckers that live in the Colorado River, reach a maximum length of 36 inches, and can weigh almost ten pounds. They can live up to forty years or more in the wild, feeding on a variety of insects, crustaceans, algae, and inorganic material. Dams, water diversions, poisoning projects, and the introduction of nonnative fish species have led to the decline in razorback sucker throughout the Basin, and listing as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act in 1991. Naturally spawning and recruiting fish are thought to be limited to Lake Mead, where the population has been stable or growing for many years.

The April 2014 discovery of larval razorback sucker is part of a new project to



Wild Razorback sucker in lower Grand Canyon. Photo courtesy NPS



Larval Razorback sucker pictured next to a penny, collected from Grand Canyon National Park in April 2014. Photo courtesy NPS

Falls. These are significant findings because the species was considered extirpated from Grand Canyon and was only recently rediscovered after a twenty-plus year absence. “The discovery that the razorback suckers are spawning in the national park far upstream from Lake Mead is good news for this endangered species,” said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Anne Castle. “It is also a demonstration of the power of the part-

learn more about how the species uses the Colorado River in Grand Canyon and the inflow to Lake Mead. Previous studies suggested that wild razorback suckers were migrating from various locations between Lake Mead and the Colorado River in lower Grand Canyon, and possibly spawning in several locations. In the last couple of years several fish were tracked upstream as far as Separation Rapid (River Mile 240), and wild un-



Looking for small Razorback sucker in lower Grand Canyon, April 2014. Photo courtesy NPS.

tagged fish were captured in lower Grand Canyon as part of annual monitoring in 2012 and 2013 conducted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The new study began in March of 2014 with the release of nine sonic-tagged fish into the river just below Lava Falls Rapid, and the installation of detection devices every five miles (from river miles 179–280) to monitor their movements in that portion of the river, with the hope that the tagged fish would lead the biologists to wild fish and spawning areas.

Sampling for smaller life stages (larvae and juveniles) is also being conducted to determine how the different life stages of razorback sucker use the river. This portion of the study has two components, with the principal difference being the size of the fish that are targeted. Both crews sample low-velocity habitats with seines, following a spatially balanced random sampling design that allows them to collect fish in habitats suitable for specific life stages but maintains unbiased samples. The “larval fish crew” targets fish that are generally less than half an inch-long, while the “small-bodied crew” targets fish two inches to six inches-long that were spawned during previous years. The larval fish portion of the study provides information on the date, duration, and location of spawning by this unique fish while the small-bodied component yields critical information on retention and recruitment of early (and rare) age classes (juveniles) of razorback sucker.

While the project has only been going for a few months, numerous sonic-tagged razorbacks have been detected in the river from Lava Falls downstream to Lake Mead. Furthermore, several smaller fish, likely hatched earlier this year or even last year, have been collected in seines. The sampling has even turned up several young-of-year humpback chub in the lower Canyon. The larval razorback sucker were a surpris-



Wild Razorback sucker captured during AGFD monitoring around Spencer Creek in 2012. Photo courtesy NPS.

ing find, especially since they were captured so far upstream in the river, and in numbers that seem to suggest that more than just a few fish are spawning at one time. While researchers are still identifying larvae from the initial surveys, 47 larval razorback sucker have been identified to date from nine sampling localities spanning 56 miles of the Colorado River through lower Grand Canyon. Additional sampling for larval fish will continue, but Howard Brandenburg of ASIR LLC, an expert on the early life stages of these fish, said the capture of so many larval fish this early in the study is certainly significant because it shows that adult razorback sucker are occupying portions of Grand Canyon, there are favorable spawning habitats in the river, and nursery habitats are available for the growth of larvae.

“Grand Canyon is becoming a significant basin-wide haven for the endangered fishes in the Colorado



“Listening” for sonic-tagged Razorback sucker in lower Grand Canyon. Photo courtesy NPS.

River,” said Leslie Fitzpatrick, biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Brandon Albrecht and Ron Kegerries of BIO-WEST Inc., have been capturing and counting the fish throughout Lake Mead as part of the now eighteen year-old study there. They both felt this information represents a new chapter in the evolving work on razorback sucker throughout the Colorado River Basin, and illustrates the resiliency of the fish and the ability to adapt to changing conditions in the Colorado River and Lake Mead. Although they cautioned against reading too much into the captures this early into the study, they are optimistic that this may indicate an important relationship between the lake and river for this rare species, particularly as related to reproduction and ultimately recruitment. While many questions remain and are emerging, both Ron and Brandon felt that the lake and river may both be equally important in providing habitat for this rare fish.

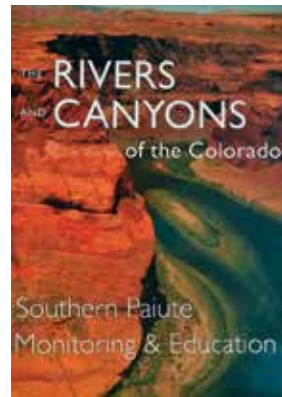
Fisheries biologists will continue to track the fish and collect more small fish during monthly river trips through September 2014. Grand Canyon National Park Fisheries Program Manager Brian Healy said “Razorback suckers continue to surprise us in Grand Canyon, first with the discovery of adults after a twenty-plus-year absence, and now by spawning within the Park. We’re all hoping to see evidence that these larval fish survive to adulthood in the coming years. This work is an important component in the park’s comprehensive Fisheries Management Plan that was developed to guide native fish conservation in Grand Canyon National Park.” So, next spring when you are rafting through the Grand Canyon, remember that you might just be floating over schools of spawning razorback sucker. Additional information about Grand Canyon National Park’s fisheries program is available online at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/naturescience/fish.htm>.

The project is a cooperative effort with the National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, BIO-WEST Inc., American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers, LLC, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Hualapai Tribe.

*Emily Omana Smith, Brian Healy, Clay Nelson, Brandon Albrecht, Ron Kegerries, Howard Brandenburg, Judith Barkstedt, Mark McKinstry, and Jim Stolberg*

## Book and DVD Announcement

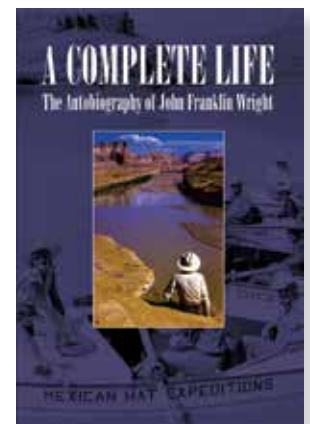
A NEW VIDEO, *The Rivers and Canyons of the Colorado—Southern Paiute Monitoring and Education* is now available on DVD. The video shares information on traditional uses and views of the Colorado River and Grand Canyon, as well as the Southern Paiute resource monitoring river trips.



Copies of the DVD have been given to each river company as well as the GCRG office for their interpretation libraries, so check it out! Copies are also available from the Southern Paiute Consortium ([SPC@kaibabpaiute-nsn.gov](mailto:SPC@kaibabpaiute-nsn.gov), 928-643-6278), and at local libraries.

*A Complete Life: The Autobiography of John Franklin Wright*, by JOHN FRANKLIN WRIGHT, Vishnu Temple Press, 200 pages, ISBN 978-0979505577, \$16.95.

FRANK WRIGHT LIVED to be just short of one hundred years old, mostly in Blanding, Utah. He first ran Grand Canyon in 1948 as a boatman for Norm Nevills whose business he took over after Norm’s death in 1949. Renamed Mexican Hat Expeditions, Frank and the Rigg brothers ran trips in Glen and Grand canyons before the dam. He was on the river trip that recovered Ed Hudson’s *Esmeralda II* in 1950. He started the marina at Hall’s Crossing after the dam. But Frank was so much more than a river runner. He was a jack of all trades, mostly self-taught, as a miner, driver, meteorologist, piano teacher, machinist, barber and photographer. This book, with family photos, is Frank’s story of his life, a complete life.





## Kolb On A Rope

RIVER RUNNERS KNOW the Kolb Brothers, photographers Ellsworth and Emery, as the first to take moving pictures on a river trip in 1911–1912 down the Green and Colorado rivers, from Green River, Wyoming, to Needles, California, below the Grand Canyon. However, their most iconic picture is off the river and on the South Rim of Grand Canyon, the so-called “Kolb on a Rope,” with Ellsworth lowering Emery and a camera by ropes through a crevice. There are many variations of this photograph, which entail Ellsworth’s stance on logs spanning the crack and Emery’s twirling on the rope into slightly different positions.

Ellsworth arrived at the Canyon in late 1901, Emery in early 1902. Their first photo studios had been built shortly after in a tent with a cave darkroom, and in a studio they acquired in Williams, near Ralph Cameron’s “Cameron Hotel” and “Bright Angel Toll Road.” Taking group photographs of the mule trains and riders on the Bright Angel provided a somewhat steady income, but the brothers were always looking for other photo, and money making, opportunities. One of those was the sale of photo albums, some with their black and white photographs and some that they had color-tinted. They copyrighted the albums as early as 1908, with photographs copyrighted even earlier, at least by 1905; not all of their printed photos have copyright dates. The albums were for sale by 1910, containing a variety and different numbers of images. The 1910 album contained two images also found in the August 1914 issue of *National Geographic*, devoted almost entirely to the brothers, “Experiences in the Grand Canyon.” (See these images from a 1913 album cover and Image 8.) The *National Geographic* issue appeared a few months before Ellsworth’s classic book about their river trip, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (the 100<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of both is this summer and fall). Following are the captions for them from the article.

“How a Difficult Photograph Is Secured: This rather dangerous method was necessary to take the photograph on page 129, showing one mile of trail. Two ropes are used; one tied to a log, the other given one turn around the log. The operator sits in a loop in this second rope and is lowered to a ledge below, from which point the desired view may be secured. Then he climbs the rope which is tied, and the second rope is pulled in as it becomes slack. Thus the operator can rest when he becomes tired. The ledge in this case was 55 feet below. Had anything happened, the drop would have been about 300 feet.”



Cover photo close up from Kolb Bros. photo album, © 1913, author’s possession.

“The First Mile of the Bright Angel Trail: The sheer wall covers the cherty limestone and the cross-bedded sandstone walls, 1,000 feet in thickness. The buildings on top, reading from the left, are El Tovar Hotel, the Bright Angel Hotel, and Kolb Brothers’ studio, a little below the top of the canyon wall. The photograph was difficult to secure, and was taken as described on the opposite page.”

From the text, they state that they obtained the image of the Bright Angel Trail and the buildings on the rim, including their photo studio, from the log/rope point of view, with the intentional purpose of using that method to obtain the scenic view. It has been speculated by some, this author included, that perhaps the brothers used the setup solely to create an interesting image. Views with copyright dates can be found, that of Bright Angel as 1905 and Kolb/

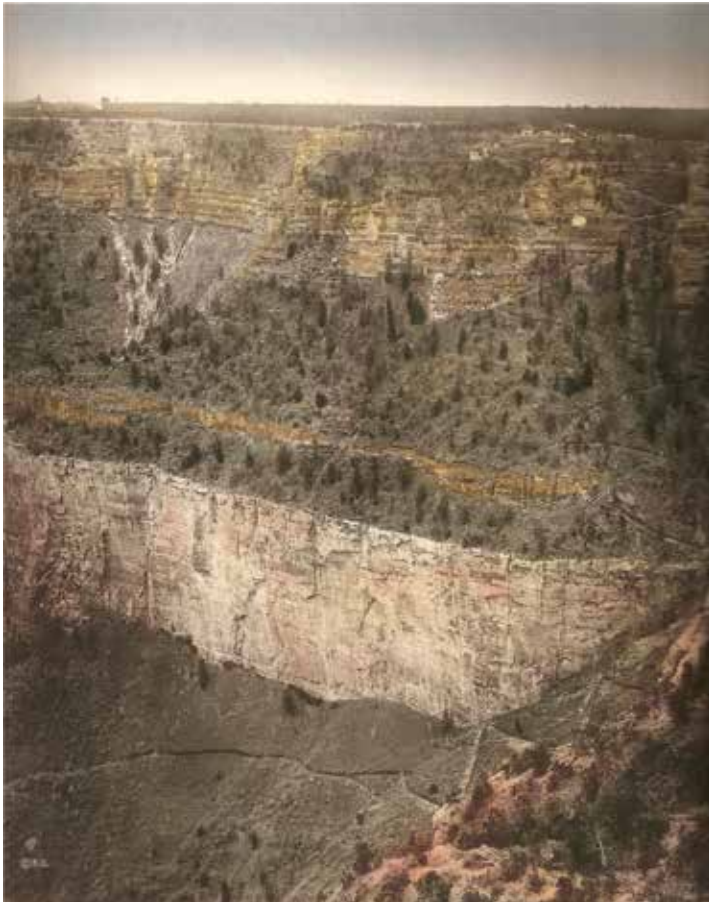


Image 8 from Kolb Bros. photo album, © 1913, author's possession.

Rope as 1908, which might indicate that the view shot had been taken three years before the brothers set up the rope shots. Rachel McLean Sailor, in “Performing the Pioneer: The Kolbs, the Grand Canyon, Photographic Self-Representation, and Moving Pictures” (in *Meaningful Places: Landscape Photographers in the Nineteenth Century American West*, University of New Mexico Press, 2014), postulated that when the brothers created “The View Hunters at Work in the Canyon,” as they titled “Kolb on a Rope,” they did so “to promote themselves and their work, capitalizing on the hazardous-looking situation—one that was carefully constructed to show their dedication and mettle as ‘view hunters.’” “In the photographs, the brothers were essentially displaying *themselves* as a tourist attraction,” using these “self-promotional tendencies” and their “desire to create a narrative about their lives in the canyon” (Sailor, 105, 108). They also would have needed a third person to take the picture of them in the process of setting up to take a picture; possibilities would include Ernest Kolb, their younger brother, and Blanche Kolb, Emery’s wife, both of whom assisted in the business operation as needed. Sailor adds that “the image is an odd conflation of subject and object”—

since they are working, “it is unclear who is taking their picture. Are the brothers really working, or are they just posing?” (Sailor, 108). Sailor’s book is thought-provoking and highly recommended.

During an October 2013 visit to the South Rim to lecture on John Wesley Powell and water in the west for the Grand Canyon Semester/ Prescott College course, I visited the Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, and quizzed Mike Quinn, the Park’s extremely well-informed Visual Information Specialist, about where the location of “Kolb on a Rope” might be. Mike told me to take the Rim Trail west from the Kolb Studio, along the Trail of Time past the Hermit Road shuttle bus stop and the worship site, to a crack that was easily found. It’s near the Trail of Time marker of 3230 Million Years Ago. I took a few photos, but did not drop down into the crevice, as I’m not as nimble as I once was, and never as nimble as the Kolb Brothers. At that time, I had my doubts as to the veracity of the location. I also doubted the view that the Kolbs said they obtained from that location, and walked uphill on the Trail of Time to the first viewpoint, Trailview Overlook; I guessed at the Kolb image which I did not have with me, and took a photo, figuring that I was too low in elevation and the angle was wrong, needing

to hike further up the trail. In April 2014, I was doing some arm-waving about Canyon/River historical archival research for Canyon Explorations/Expeditions, a Grand Canyon Colorado River commercial outfitter, and took them to the alleged location. Some of their boatman dropped into the crack and took pictures, confirming Quinn’s knowledgeable site re-location.

On July 8, 2014, Bill Bishop and I attended the 1956

Mid-air Crash events, a plaque unveiling at Desert Watchtower and reception at Kolb Studio. I had related to Bill my efforts regarding “Kolb on a Rope” and he asked to see the locations and to accompany me on further exploration. After stopping at the crevice, we walked



Trail of Time marker.  
Photo by C. V. Abyssus.

up the Trail of Time to Trailview Overlook; Bill confirmed this was the wrong location. Continuing, we stopped at an unnamed viewpoint between Trailview



"Kolb on a Rope" crevice from Trail of Time.  
Photo by C. V. Abyssus.



"Kolb on a Rope" photo match by Justin Salamon.

and Maricopa Point. We both agreed that the Kolbs took the photo in this area, probably lower down from where we were, on a rock outcrop a "Kolb scramble" below. We kept going to Maricopa Point, which was definitely not the place. I can safely conclude that the Kolbs did not obtain the rim view from the rope location, but used the two pictures and story as "a representation of their audacity" (Sailor, 108). Future research should reveal the location of another iconic Kolb Brothers image—"Leap for Life."

*C. V. Abyssus*



Photo taken from between Trailview Overlook and Maricopa Point.  
Photo by C. V. Abyssus.

## LTEMP Update

**Y**OU KNOW THE PLACE. You care about it. You've got some thoughts on how it should be taken care of. It's about time to make your voice heard.

The LTEMP EIS will come out later this fall. It's a major Environmental Impact Study that will set the course for how Glen Canyon Dam is operated and the Grand Canyon is taken care of for the next twenty years. A number of options will be proposed. One will be recommended. Then the world will be given about thirty days to weigh in with their comments.

Some agencies, and a lot of individuals, are going to call for more power generation. Bigger daily fluctuations. Fewer beach-building high flows. Make more money. Knock some pennies off my monthly electric bill.

What are you going to ask for?

The EIS isn't out yet so we don't have all the details, but we do know this:

- The High Flow protocols should be adopted as a full-fledged part of the management plan, and we should make the most we can out of every opportunity to have a beach building flood.
- The new management plan should focus on doing the best we can for the river and the Grand Canyon itself. We should act as stewards of the place for future generations, not use it as a cash register.
- The best available science should drive our decisions, and management should truly be adaptive to follow the science as it develops and our understanding improves.

When the EIS is made public later this year, we'll post information and our analysis on the Grand Canyon River Guides website, along with our suggestions for comments. We'll do our best to be part of the process, for the place we care so much about and for all the people who's lives it will enrich in the future.

We hope you'll use your voice, too.

Thank you much. Have a great time boating out there!

*Sam Jansen*



Beautiful post-HFE (High Flow Events)—North Canyon.



Beautiful post-HFE (High Flow Events)—Grapevine.



Beautiful post-HFE (High Flow Events)—GTS River trip checking out the sand piles in Marble Canyon Spring 2008.

## Fall Rendezvous You Won't Want to Miss— Page and Glen Canyon, Here We Come!

**R**IVER GUIDES IN GRAND CANYON tend to be very Grand Canyon-centric, understandably. This is your chance to break out of the mold and spend a couple days exploring the world above Lees Ferry.

**WHEN:** October 11-12, 2014

**WHERE:** Page, AZ and Glen Canyon

**WHAT:** Well, we're still working on the "what" but what we hope to include is:

- Take a tour of the innards of the dam that dictates the flows you boat on.
- Experience the serene beauty of Glen Canyon on a half day float trip with Colorado River Discovery, leaving and returning to the base of the dam.
- Dinner, music, and big party at Hoss Sanderson's super fun *Into the Grand* event venue in Page. Hoss is a third generation river runner – his grandfather Rod Sanderson was the 125th person (in 1951) to travel down the Colorado River through Grand Canyon with Dock Marston. Sanderson River Expeditions was his family legacy. This great venue features a bar, an enormous mural of Grand Canyon (of course!), boat exhibits, and lighted horseshoe pits – what a perfect place for a raucous river guide party! With a huge amount of indoor and outdoor space, you can throw your bedroll down anywhere – even on one of their many boats!
- Slide show by Gary Ladd on *Into the Grand's* 10' x 20' outdoor movie screen about Glen Canyon Dam, including footage of the damage from the '83 high water event.
- Let's explore some of great hiking opportunities around Page the next day before heading back home.

Sounds amazing, right? We'll send a postcard out to guides once we nail things down, but the event is open to everyone. If you're interested in this not-to-be-missed opportunity, **you must RSVP!** We have a size restriction of 40 people for the dam tour. Once details are finalized, GCRG will post this event on the Fall Rendezvous page of our website, [www.gcr.org](http://www.gcr.org) (look under Guide Resources), so you can pay easily and securely. Hope to see you there!

*Lynn Hamilton*







Runout © Margeaux Bestard



Juvenile Chub Monitoring © Margeaux Bestard







Pulse Flow Dig Out, Colorado River to Mexico © Margeaux Bestard



Turning The Tables © Margeaux Bestard



Bring It In Boys © Margeaux Bestard

## Swamping Grand Canyon

What's with swamping the Canyon?  
Two days rigging, one day derigging, and eight days  
    busting on the river from dawn to dusk  
Cooking for 32 breakfast, lunch, and dinner  
Scrubbing pots, setting up and tearing down our camp  
    kitchen on two beaches a day, remembering the  
    hand wash  
Keeping all safe  
Tying and untying the boat a half dozen times a day  
Securing the bowline and stocking pop bags  
Sweeping two dozen folks on a couple hikes a day  
Cleaning all 16 tents, throwing in the laundry 28 bags,  
    pads, and tarps  
Putting away all gear and provision for the next  
    expedition  
Traveling over 800 miles to get here and just as many  
    to get back  
Two weeks away from work, family and friends  
To really work

For what?  
Viewing Anasazi ruins from a granary above once  
    fertile floodplains  
Sliding down the otter run in turquoise Little  
    Colorado  
Echoing laughter and fun in curving Blacktail  
Hoping for a glimpse of fat chuckawalla at Stone  
Shimmying down the close water-carved canyon in  
    Matkat  
Jumping up from our butt damn to release a cool  
    captured stream,  
squealing as it roars down and away  
Panicking little in emergency  
steady as my pilot in white water  
Teetering across the ledge in Deer Creek to discover  
    the sacred space where all was created  
Bathing in falls tumbling out of rock and sky  
Belly flopping milky Havasu  
Drenching in a monsoon flash transforming this  
    desert canyon  
into a verdant garden of rim falls in the mist  
Guiding children chasing geckos and horny toad  
    lizards  
Cutting them marshmallow sticks  
Drinking in what stories red and green pictographs tell  
And the long and tall tales boaters strap on  
Rafting 277 miles through one of the seven wonders

We work for free not for miserly tips split four ways  
For the bragging rights  
Chasing the dream of piloting our own boat  
Joining the camaraderie and legacy of river guides,  
    explorers  
and others who lead expeditions  
We swamp for the sacred duty of showing others the  
    awe and wonder of wilderness  
Where mind and dreams wander unfettered by the  
    stresses and complexities we call life  
Elsewhere  
Here life is beauty, wild water, and the joy of living on  
    that edge  
And of simple grace that nurtures  
Where so much becomes ours to give as freely as it is  
    given to us  
Where the reason we take our children camping  
    becomes the soul of work  
The harder we swamp the harder we feed this soul  
The more we give the more we see to give  
As freely and deeply as the canyon

— *Dr. David Stube*

Doc Stube was a work-your-way for ARR in 2007 and in 2014 swamped for his daughter Ani Eastwood of GCE. When he is missing the Canyon he is a child and family counselor in Missoula, Montana.

## “Groover” Blues

“Pride cometh before the fall” or so they say,  
And the infamous “Groover” proved my undoing this  
way.

I found myself rafting on a river one June,  
Down the Grand Canyon before the monsoon.

My real tale begins with an act proud and bold,  
Grabbing line on a raft without being told.  
Rope whipped through my hands before I locked in,  
Left me wishing for gloves; heck wishing for skin!

Soon rafters swam by in search of their craft,  
It was upright and dry, clean fore and aft.  
I accepted their thanks with a tear in my eye,  
Those rope burns from Hell would make any man cry.

No tears of joy, only misguided Pride and  
Hands that now felt like fresh branded hide.  
Being helpful to folks should feel good, even fun,  
So why hands like raw burgers in want of a bun?

I slinked back to camp in need of attention,  
Where a shapely young Guide, too sweet not to men-  
tion,  
Then gauzed up my hands so I could finish the trip,  
Each mummified hand now a giant Q-Tip.

While I loved all the sympathy my bandages drew,  
When nature then called my anxiety grew.  
That common endeavor known across all the lands,  
Simply cannot be done with cotton-balled hands.

The Guide sensed my panic, my palpable fear  
And knew without help I might do the deed here!  
She tried to explain how I could manage alone,  
But realized at last I was scared to the bone.

She led me to “Groover,” ammo can with a seat,  
Where all Rafters squat, eyes fixed on their feet,  
To recycle granola in deep “Eco-thought,”  
With high self-importance that can’t be store bought.

She undid my belt, my hands pinned to my side,  
Then removed the can lid to hasten my ride.  
Off down the trail she left with a smirk,  
I then dropped my pants and got down to work.

The task now seemed simple; I had a clear mission,  
Pants at my ankles I assumed the position.  
Even now I recall my great sense of relief,  
Returning “organics” that dee-fied belief.

I am a man of the truth, the reverse being sin,  
It was just about then real terror set in.  
For my work almost done I was planning to stroll,  
So I glanced ‘round my throne for that all-crucial Roll.

It sat near in a case sealed tight as a jail,  
I then looked at my hands, my face turning pale.  
I leaned over to grab it but could not get a grip,  
The case rolled towards the water; I started to slip.

Losing my perch, pants wrapped ‘round my feet,  
I tumble downhill landing square on my seat.  
I then pulled with my heels to catch that rogue case,  
It rolled away fast with me close on the chase.

When my feet touched the river, what did I find?  
My odd little journey left brown slick behind.  
Appalled at the sight I jumped to my feet,  
Slipped in the mud, then face down in the peat.

Grit splashed in my eyes such that all now was dark,  
But with face in the dirt my nose found its mark.  
That streak in the trail was now beacon of sorts,  
Like Hansel and Gretel only with soiled shorts.

So I crawled up the hill like an eager blood hound,  
White buttocks in air, nose pressed to the ground.  
I sniffed every inch to the edge of that Groover,  
Then hugged both sides hard for a tricky maneuver.

I pulled that can towards me to help me to stand,  
But as it slid forward it caught in the sand.  
It would seem that Fate had the Devil befriended,  
For that infernal can did not tilt, it upended!

I felt the round seat then collar my head,  
While fear of “What Next” filled me with dread.  
There is no earthly reason to belabor my woes,  
As the ending involved soap, brushes and hose.

Yes, falling headfirst into that can was pure hell,  
But it was made much much worse getting caught in  
mid yell.

— *Michael F. Bigham*, 2014



# Save the Confluence Campaign Update: June–July, 2014<sup>1</sup>

**S**AVE THE CONFLUENCE<sup>2</sup> is a group of local families from the Bodaway/Gap Chapter of the Navajo Nation who are opposing plans to build a large destination resort on the remote East Rim of Grand Canyon and a gondola ride down to the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, Grand Canyon Trust accepted their invitation<sup>4</sup> to join the campaign to oppose Grand Canyon Escalade.<sup>5</sup> This update summarizes some of the significant events during the summer of 2014.<sup>6</sup>

## DEVELOPERS PUSH FOR FINAL APPROVAL

According to Scottsdale developer R. Lamar Whitmer, the idea for building a gondola into Grand Canyon began in 2009. Elements of the proposal were eventually shaped into a Memorandum of Understanding,<sup>7</sup> signed by Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and development partner Albert Hale on February 21, 2012. Negotiations among invited insiders followed. More than two years later, developers planned to push for final approval by the Navajo Nation Council during its 2014 summer session.

On June 10, 2014, Escalade developers posted the following statement on their website:

A final package of legislation was delivered to the Navajo Nation Council Office of Legislative Affairs. From there it has moved on to the Speakers Office, is being assigned a legislation number and is being assigned to committees for review, debate and hopefully approval...<sup>8</sup>

This pronouncement<sup>9</sup> and well-financed publicity campaign led many to believe that it was a “done deal.” Reporter Katherine Locke wrote: “R. Lamar Whitmer, managing partner of Confluence Partners, said over the last year and a half he believes opposition to the project from Navajos has lessened... ‘Our documents are in the legislative process with the Nation and we’re hopeful to have the Council act on it in June or July.’”<sup>10</sup> But that optimism faded by mid-July.

The Navajo Council’s Naabik’iyati Committee heard a report from *Save the Confluence* representatives on June 13. Delores Wilson-Aguirre, Pauline Martin Sanchez, and other family members presented their case against Escalade and received a generally positive reception. But Hopi Tribal Chairman Herman Honanie stirred controversy when the Speaker Pro Temp invited him to speak for two minutes. He reported that the Hopi Council had passed a resolu-

tion opposing the proposed Escalade Project because any development of this sacred area would violate religious teachings of Hopi people. Navajo Council delegate Leonard Tsosie led a successful vote against accepting the Chairman’s report because it was not on the agenda.

Nonetheless, the Committee voted to accept *Save the Confluence’s* report, which concluded with a plea “...to put a stop to this nonsense. We ask you to save the confluence and the people who have been trying to make a home since exiled. Bring all stakeholders together...the children and grandchildren. We have suffered enough. We want justice, protection for sacred sites. Thank you.”<sup>11</sup>

On June 25, developers published a full-page ad in the *Navajo-Hopi Observer*.<sup>12</sup> It attacked *Save the Confluence* families for protesting and putting up signs, instead of “working together” to “create jobs” and “a better future for the people of Western Navajo.” The ad also asked readers to call upon “your Council Delegate to move to approve Grand Canyon Escalade.” It promised 3,500 jobs but offered no details about negotiated agreements with President Shelly’s office.

Two days later, Escalade developers appeared before the June 27<sup>TH</sup> meeting of Navajo Council’s Naabik’iyati Committee. Mike Lee (architect), Albert Hale (legal advisor), Keith A. Lamparter (design and construction manager), and R. Lamar Whitmer (managing partner) reported that they had completed negotiations with the Navajo Nation and were ready for legislation to be presented for Council approval.

*Save the Confluence* families, Hopi cultural preservation director Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, and former Hopi Chairman Vernon Masayesva were among Escalade opponents in the audience. Council delegates Dwight Witherspoon, Mel Begay, and Jonathan Nez asked difficult questions of the presenters, including “what are the details of the agreement...and how much of the revenues go back to the communities?” Even sympathetic delegate Leonard Tsosie complained about the lack of transparency: “Every day that you do not give us the agreement, then you are losing my vote...I don’t want to continue the agitation at Bodaway...Give us a proposal in 30 days.”<sup>13</sup>

Renae Yellowhorse attended the presentation. She was shocked: “There was no substance. There was no information. There was nothing they could go on.”<sup>14</sup> Instead, Confluence Partner Albert Hale listed the social ills of Bodaway/Gap Chapter and how Escalade

jobs would solve those problems. As an example of the kind of interpretive center they were planning, developers showed a film about the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii, on which Confluence Partner Mike Lee had worked.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Yellowhorse said no one in Bodaway/Gap Chapter, where Escalade would be located, knew about the negotiations. “DOJ was there, NUTA was there, all these entities,” she said. “The closest stakeholders were not invited. Our chapter president was not even aware there were negotiations going on.” As for Escalade developers, “It’s time for them to share the information,” she said. “It’s time for them to be transparent. It’s time for them to come back to Bodaway/Gap Chapter and heal the rift they’ve caused in the community.”<sup>16</sup>

### MOMENTUM SHIFTS

For more than two years, *Save the Confluence* families actively solicited opposition to Escalade from Navajo Nation citizens, Council delegates, and political candidates running for office. They used Facebook and other social media to spread the word about Escalade’s threats to culture, community, and environment. But until the presentation by developers to the Naabik’iyati Committee, momentum seemed to be flowing in Escalade’s favor.

Tough questions from delegates during the June 27<sup>TH</sup> presentation revealed that negotiators had not disclosed terms of the proposed agreement to the Navajo Nation Council. Residents, grazing lease holders, chapter officials, religious leaders, and key agencies such as Navajo Parks and Recreation and Historical Preservation Office were left out of the process. As Navajo citizens alerted to the fact that decisions were being made without their consent, U.S. citizens learned that developers were planning to build an amusement ride into one of our nation’s most treasured national parks.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Julie Cart’s front-page article<sup>17</sup> in Sunday’s *Los Angeles Times* spawned a series of high-profile stories in national and international media. Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Dave Uberuaga cited Escalade and the proposed Tusayan development as the most “serious threats” the park has faced in its 95-year history. Lamar Whitmer countered that the park service offers visitors nothing more than “a drive-by wilderness experience... We want them to feel the canyon from the bottom.” Presumably, riding a gondola down to a riverside walkway and snack bar offers a more meaningful way to experience the Grand Canyon.

Southern California Public Radio interviewed Deswood Tome, who spoke in support of the Escalade development. As Special Adviser to President Shelly, Tome challenged the National Park Service’s opposition: “Don’t tell the Navajo Nation what we can do and what we can’t do. You stick over there on your side, and we’ll do what we want to do on our side.”<sup>18</sup> Others interviewed included Kevin Dahl, from National Parks Conservation Association, Renae Yellowhorse, and Grand Canyon Trust’s Deon Ben, who called in to the live broadcast.

During a CBS Morning News report the following Monday, Superintendent Uberuaga said: “I am the steward of this national park. It is my responsibility to preserve and protect Grand Canyon for future generations.” Lamar Whitmer dismissed opponents to the proposed gondola as “elitist” for wanting to limit access to only a “select few.” The television news report concluded with *Save the Confluence* spokesperson Renae Yellowhorse asking: “Is there any amount of money that people would take to sell their sacred places? No, it’s priceless.”<sup>19</sup>

The week prior to the July 21<sup>ST</sup> opening of the Navajo Council’s summer session began with *Save the Confluence* family members Wilson O. Wilson, Darlene Martin, Delores Wilson-Aguirre, and others speaking in a two-hour broadcast over KTNN, the most widely listened to radio station on the Navajo Reservation. Deon Ben moderated the radio program, which was mainly in the Navajo language. They shared personal experiences about stress and turmoil caused by the divisive proposal.

The radio broadcast included respected elder Mary Martin’s voice scolding Whitmer’s band of bilagáana developers and shaming Navajo enablers for selling out their communities and culture. Listeners were urged to call their Council delegates to oppose Escalade. Feedback to the program flooded in: phone calls, personal thanks, and praise in cyberspace rippled



Deon Ben and Mary Martin at KTNN studio.



"The closest stakeholders were not invited." Renae Yellowhorse, speaking against private negotiations to approve Escalade.



Dotted lines show area of proposed rim development and gondola route to riverside restaurant.



Hopi Tribal Chairman Herman Honanie speaks on July 18 to Save the Confluence coalition members about the Hopi Tribe's cultural, religious and sacred site concerns about the proposed Escalade development. Photo by Rosanda Suetopka.



"Generations of teachings and way of life are at stake." Sylvia Nockideneh-Tee. Photo by Melody Nez.



The Nockideneh and Saganitso families oppose Escalade. Photo by Melody Nez





Photo: National Park Service

## WHY ARE PROFITEERS STILL PUSHING Grand Canyon Escalade?

Escalade's memorandum with Rep Shelly said, if the Master Agreement is not executed "by JULY 1, 2013," then the relationship with the Nation "shall terminate without further action."



**THEIR ORIGINAL PLAN:**

- Land to be in the bottom of the Grand Canyon
- New Hotel & Conference Resort
- A destination near hotel & spa, other hotels, RV park
- Commercial/retail opportunities, and an airport
- 5,107 acres developed at the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers.

Source: Escalade's 2008 report and press releases; photo: National Park Service



**People of Dine' bi'keyah REJECT Grand Canyon Escalade.**

**IT'S TIME TO ASK:**

- Who is the "SACRED" ADVERTISER?
- Who is the "solid public support" President Shelly used to succeed before December 20, 2012?
- Who is support from Navajo presidential candidate and Navajo Nation Council?
- Who is going to profit?
- Who is going to pay \$200 million to cover for roads, hotels, and infrastructure?
- Who is the final package of legislation the Conference Nation and Tribe delivered to the Navajo Nation Council Office of Legislation Affairs on July 10, 2013?

**WE ARE the Sons the Confluence families, generations of Navajo shepherds with grazing rights and home-site leases on the East Rim of Grand Canyon.**








**Call your council delegate NOW!**

Council Delegates (928-671-7140), Navajo Nation President and Vice-President (928-671-7990). Please state your opposition to Escalade and outside developers. Support Save the Confluence: [savetheconfluence.com](http://savetheconfluence.com)

Full-page ad published by Save the Confluence in the Navajo Times on July 17.



Save the Confluence coalition members prepare banner prior to June 13 meeting with the Naabik'ayati Committee.



"Sacred Sites Not For Sale," Photo mural of Delores Wilson-Aguirre at Gray Mountain by Chip Thomas.

across the reservation. It was strong, emotional, and overwhelmingly against Escalade.

Following the KTNN program, *Save the Confluence* families published two full-page ads, one in the *Navajo-Hopi Observer* and another in the *Navajo Times*. Among the questions the ad asked was: “Where is the final package of legislation that Confluence Partners said they delivered to the Navajo Nation Council Office of Legislative Affairs on June 10, 2014?” It recalled that Escalade’s memorandum with Ben Shelly said if the Master Agreement is not executed “by July 1, 2013,” then the relationship with the Nation “shall terminate without further action.”<sup>20</sup>

Reporter Cindy Yurth’s front page story in the Thursday, July 17<sup>TH</sup> edition of *Navajo Times* began: “Contrary to information on the developers’ website, a bill committing the Navajo Nation to partner on a resort on the rim of the Little Colorado Canyon has not reached the speaker’s office and will not be on the Navajo Nation Council’s summer session agenda.”<sup>21</sup> On the back page of the same section of the paper was the *Save the Confluence* families’ full-page ad. Its headline read, “Why are profiteers still pushing Grand Canyon Escalade?” It also asked, “Where is the solid public support President Shelly said he needed before December 31, 2012?”

That same day, soon after Yurth’s story broke, an *Indian Country Today* headline appeared: “Controversial Grand Canyon Gondola Grounded for a Year.” Lamar Whitmer said “Because we haven’t been able to get to the Council in a timely fashion, the opening will be pushed back until May 2018.”<sup>22</sup> The previous opening date was the summer of 2017. Whitmer added, “It’s disappointing, having gotten to know the people in the area and the need that exists in western Navajo for jobs and economic opportunity.”

Not buying Whitmer’s sympathy, Renae Yellowhorse criticized the developer’s concept for an interpretive center: “If that’s the kind of Disneyland-like thing he wants to bring to the edge of the Grand Canyon, no. That’s not how we want our stories told. We’re here. We’re not a story from the 1800s. We’re not Pocahontas on the Rim. It was offensive.”<sup>23</sup>

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, the day after Escalade developers announced a delay in plans, Hopi, Zuni, and Navajo leaders traveled to the Confluence area.<sup>24</sup> Hopi Tribal Chairman Herman Honanie said to the Escalade opposition group that he wanted to clarify where the Hopi Tribe stands on the project: “With the Hopi Council’s backing, I and Vice Chairman Alfred Lomaquahu have invited both Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and their council members to sit down with us at our Hopi headquarters to discuss this Confluence project...So

far Shelly has not even responded in any way to our invitation or even to our formal opposition letters regarding the project sent to his office.”<sup>25</sup> The invitation was also extended to Albert Hale and Lamar Whitmer.

The summer session of the Navajo Nation began the following Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>. As is customary on opening day, Council delegates introduced members of the audience.<sup>26</sup> Delegate and a leading presidential contender Russell Begaye warmly welcomed Mary Martin and *Save the Confluence* members by name, followed by a burst of applause from the audience. Escalade developers Albert Hale and Lamar Whitmer were noticeably absent, as additional Council members acknowledged Earlene Reid, Renae Yellowhorse, and other opposition family members in attendance.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

As of this update, Escalade developers’ most recent public statement was printed in full-page ad in the July 24<sup>TH</sup> *Navajo Times*.<sup>27</sup> It said:

Over the last 4½ years we have invested more than \$3½ million of time and money to get the Grand Canyon Escalade resolution and agreements ready for a Navajo Nation Council vote...[In 2012, President Shelly] signed a nonexclusive MOU to negotiate for the building and running of Escalade. Over the next 2 years the project design was refined, and the Master Agreement, along with the Development and Operating Agreements were hammered out. The land use revenue to the Nation will start at 8% of gross revenues and then go up to 18% as visitor attendance increases (this is more than 3 times what the operator pays at Grand Canyon National Park). The Nation will also receive a significant amount of sales and hotel taxes from the project...We had hoped the Council would have voted before the end of July so that Escalade could have opened in May 2017, but because of delays the best we can expect is May 2018. Hopefully the Council will act soon and not risk another year of payroll for all those living in the Bennett Freeze.

The advertisement repeats well-worn talking points and provides few new details about negotiated agreements. It chastises the Council for delays, while seeking its approval. It asks citizens to embrace Escalade on face value and urges immediate approval to keep the project on schedule.

We don’t know exactly why Escalade developers have failed (thus far) to tee up a resolution before the Navajo Nation Council. Some delegates are concerned about massive subsidies that developers are demanding to pay for water, roads, electricity, and other essen-

tials. With August primaries and the general election slated for November, President Shelly may now view Escalade as a liability to his re-election. Resistance within permitting agencies and potential threats of lawsuits could also be factors. In any case, the *Save the Confluence* campaign appears to be having an effect.

Will Escalade developers overpower local opposition, traditional uses, and emerging efforts for community-driven economic development? Can the canyon (and our planet) survive self-proclaimed saviors whose promises of prosperity are mere alibis for short-term profits? And when they go away, who will be next?

There will always be people who are eager to sell the lie that providing universal access to fragile terrain where beauty and solitude still flourish does nothing to diminish the qualities that make those places so special.<sup>28</sup>

Our story is never over. Thanks to grandmothers and grass-root activists who are making a difference. Thanks to river runners, canyon lovers, and advocates everywhere. Please keep supporting [savetheconfluence.com](http://savetheconfluence.com).

—*Save the Confluence and Native America Program, Grand Canyon Trust*

FOOTNOTES:

1. To access a copy of this update, please see: [http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc\\_STC\\_Update\\_June\\_July2014.pdf](http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc_STC_Update_June_July2014.pdf)
2. <http://savetheconfluence.com/>
3. For more information, please see: <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2012/06/proposed-development-to-transport-visitors-from-rim-of-grand-canyon-to-the-canyon-floor/>; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2012/11/bodawaygap-families-continue-battle-against-escalade-project/>; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2012/12/will-navajos-approve-a-grand-canyon-megadevelopment/>; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2012/08/grand-canyon-escalade-project-presses-forward/>; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2013/10/the-escalade-project-and-gct-front-page-news/>; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2013/02/save-the-confluence-continues-opposition-to-the-escalade-project-in-2013/>
4. <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2012/10/grand-canyon-trust-to-support-protect-the-confluence-coalition-efforts/>
5. <http://grandcanyonescalade.com/>
6. While working in support of the Confluence families to stop the project, our team is also collaborating with community groups to help craft alternative economic development strategies that would bring much-needed jobs to this area of the Navajo Nation without threatening national park resources, sacred sites, or traditional culture. This community-based effort is a public process that continues as Escalade developers pursue private agreements between powerful allies who stand to profit from the proposed project. Please see: <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/news/2014/05/save-confluence-coalition-hopes-halt-escalade-development-project/>
7. [http://savetheconfluence.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/MOU\\_Between\\_NN-\\_Confluence\\_Partners-.pdf](http://savetheconfluence.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/MOU_Between_NN-_Confluence_Partners-.pdf)

8. <http://grandcanyonescalade.com/update-on-escalade-and-why-we-have-been-silent-for-over-a-year/>
9. Contrary to Escalade developers' statement, the legislation and negotiated agreements had not been released for public review as of 8/11/14. No delegate has stepped forward to sponsor a supporting resolution or legislation before the Navajo Nation Council. The bill was not assigned a number. Committees have not reviewed it, nor was it placed in the agenda for the summer session (July 21–25).
10. <http://www.grandcanyonnews.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&ArticleID=10888>
11. <http://www.dineresourcesandinfocenter.org/where-are-the-navajo-elders-why-arent-they-protesting/>
12. [http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc\\_Escalade\\_NHO\\_Ad\\_7\\_25\\_14.pdf](http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc_Escalade_NHO_Ad_7_25_14.pdf)
13. Please see: <http://www.dineresourcesandinfocenter.org/youtube-video-navajo-council-hears-proposed-grand-canyon-escalade-project-report-june-27-2014-part-1/>; <http://www.dineresourcesandinfocenter.org/youtube-video-naabikiyati-committee-hears-proposed-grand-canyon-escalade-project-report-6-27-14-part-2/>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aw1rFsI6WMo>
14. <http://navajotimes.com/news/2014/0714/071714confluence.php#.U-StlmBozCJ>
15. The Polynesian Cultural Center was opened by the the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on October 12, 1963, and occupies 42 acres owned by nearby Brigham Young University. Please see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polynesian\\_Cultural\\_Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polynesian_Cultural_Center)
16. <http://navajotimes.com/news/2014/0714/071714confluence.php#.U-StlmBozCJ>
17. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-grand-canyon-20140706-story.html#page=1>
18. <http://www.scpr.org/programs/airtalk/2014/07/11/38323/how-about-a-gondola-ride-down-to-the-floor-of-the/>
19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d4Wsn-pNj8>
20. [http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc\\_STC\\_Navajo\\_Times\\_Ad.pdf](http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc_STC_Navajo_Times_Ad.pdf)
21. <http://navajotimes.com/news/2014/0714/071714confluence.php#.U-S3H2BozCJ>
22. <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/07/17/controversial-grand-canyon-gondola-grounded-year-155911>
23. <http://navajotimes.com/news/2014/0714/071714confluence.php#.U-S3H2BozCJ>
24. To hear Laurel Morales' report on NPR's Morning Edition, please visit: <http://www.npr.org/2014/08/04/337144825/proposed-gondola-for-grand-canyons-rim-has-community-on-edge>
25. <http://nhonews.com/Main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&ArticleID=16314>
26. <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/50346329>; <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/navajo-nation-council>
27. [http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc\\_Escalade\\_NT\\_Ad\\_7\\_24\\_14.pdf](http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/documents/gc_Escalade_NT_Ad_7_24_14.pdf)
28. Editors cut this sentence from Kevin Fedarko's August 10, 2014, editorial in the New York Times. Please see <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/opinion/sunday/two-development-projects-threaten-the-grand-canyon.html?smid=tw-share>

## Brian Hansen

I WANT TO SHOW YOU this picture before we go any further. This is my great-grandfather and his younger brother. Those guys were born here in Arizona, but orphaned very early, and went into the cattle business because that's what was there for them. They both had ranches around the Willcox area. That's where I grew up. The reason I worked for Arizona River Runners was because Fred [Burke] knew people that lived in Willcox, and he was also kind of in the cattle business himself. So when I applied to Arizona River Runners, Fred knew two things: he knew people that lived in Willcox, and he also knew the high school I went to—New Mexico Military Institute—and he was aware of that because he was a military man himself.



The early Arizona Hansens.

When I started college in 1980, my parents didn't pay for any of it, so it was all up to me. After the first year I had gone through the scholarship I'd received from doing well at New Mexico Military, and I knew I had to have a job. I went to the job placement service at the University of Arizona. There was an opening as a camp counselor in Minnesota. So I applied for that and got it, but it wasn't going to make a whole lot of money. And I was basically desperate. It was getting towards May, and I needed to find a job that was going to pay a little bit of money. In the back of the school newspaper was an ad that said—you know, in the days before computers—"If you send us six bucks, we'll give you the address list and phone numbers of all of these outdoor companies..." that do river running, mountain climbing, biking. I knew nothing about river running whatsoever. I wrote to as many of them as I could afford—I think I spent like \$20 on stamps, and got half a dozen replies. Basically all of them said, "We can't give you a job this way, you're going to have to show up. We've got to look you over, and maybe you'll get a job, maybe you won't." That wasn't the financial position I was in—I needed to have a job *confirmed* before I even went somewhere. So there's no way I was going to spend the money on a bus ticket, show up, and then have them tell me I wasn't going to have a job. I needed to have a confirmed job. Fred [Burke] was the only one. He called me on the phone in the dormitory. There's a little pay phone that was in the hall. Someone said, "Brian, you've got a phone call." And that was the first time I ever spoke to Fred. So he told me I had a job if I showed up. What I needed to do was show up at Bitter Springs, and then we would go from there.

**STEIGER:** And that was because that's where you could get off the bus there?

**HANSEN:** Right, the old burned-out gasoline station that used to be there. Yeah, that's where the bus stop was. So I worked it out to where I took my last final exam, I had a suitcase and a guitar and twenty dollars in my pocket; that was all the money I had in the world; and I got on the bus and got off at Bitter Springs, and was standing out there in the sun going, "What am I doing here!?"

**STEIGER:** You'd never run a river or anything like that?

**HANSEN:** I didn't know what a boat looked like. So Pam [Manning] came and picked me up. As it turned out, I can't remember exactly how things got fouled up, but I was supposed to show up a day earlier than I did. She had come out the previous day, and I wasn't on the bus. So they didn't know if I was ever going to show up at all. But she had the foresight to come out the next day and look around. Lo and behold, there I was. And I was very happy that she picked me up. So she picks me up, we go to Vermilion Cliffs, and that's the first time I saw a boat. I think Ed Smith was out there working on a thirty-three that was unrolled on the ground, and that was the first time I'd ever seen a piece of rubber. I said, "Man, that is a *big* boat!" Of course they looked at me like, "Boy, you *are* green."

As it turned out, that first trip was quite a challenge. People ask you, "What's the worst trip you've ever had in your life?" And I think that's probably the one, the very first trip, because I knew nothing, absolutely nothing. I left on the very next day. It was Dennis Mitchem, Ed Smith, and myself... I mean, literally in three days I went from knowing nothing about the river business and taking my last final exam in college my freshman year, and then launching on the river with absolutely *no* idea... I didn't know how to tie a knot, for crying out loud! I didn't know anything at all about how the boats were put together, where things were stored. The fact that it was a people business... I didn't know how to act towards the people. I'd grown up in the outside all my life, I liked camping and that sort of thing, but certainly never had been on a journey like that ever before. So in the space of three days, I was thrust into the fire, literally. You remember that in those days the intimidation factor for new people was definitely there. There was a hazing system that existed for people.

**STEIGER:** Was there really?

**HANSEN:** Absolutely there was.

**STEIGER:** See, I didn't have that. Those assholes, if they did that to you... For me, it was Ross Garrison, Tom Moody, Pete Reznick. Those guys were great!

**HANSEN:** They accepted you into the fold right away?

**STEIGER:** Absolutely. I would have *never* made it without those guys, but they babied me along.

**HANSEN:** Well, you were lucky then. For me it wasn't like that. That first trip was most certainly—it was horrible!

**STEIGER:** Knowing Dennis and Ed like I do—I love both those guys—but I could see where they each could get a little cranky in their own individual ways.

**HANSEN:** It was tough all the way around.

**STEIGER:** Were they even getting along with each other?

**HANSEN:** They were. Yeah, they were. I think that was Ed's seventh trip in the Grand Canyon, and then Dennis was—I think that was right around his 50<sup>TH</sup>. So he was the old guy. But as luck would have it, the water wasn't very high that trip. I don't know if they were not expecting it, or if they didn't scout when they should have, or what, but I didn't really know where I was on the river anyway, so it didn't register to me. The fluctuation of the water, as great as it was back then, I just thought it was normal. You know, the water was fluctuating, especially in the gorge, up to twelve, fifteen feet. And so you wake up in the morning, and the boats are halfway high and dry and you've gotta push 'em in the water and get ready to go. Well, when it came to running Crystal, the water had dropped out. We were running it in the morning. And this was before '83, so this was... I didn't get to see it that many times, but I remember the very *big* hole on the left-hand side. That changed in the '83 flood. But then it seemed to me like it was just a strainer of rocks from the beginning to the end. There wasn't a clear-cut passage. It was trying to figure out not so much which rocks you weren't going to hit, but which ones you *were* gonna hit, because you knew you were going to, and you knew you were going to get stuck.

**STEIGER:** So you guys *got* stuck?

**HANSEN:** Both of us did. I was on Ed's boat, and somehow we managed to make it through. We got stuck twice. I had to get out and push the boat off. And I remember clearly the epiphany I had. I pushed the boat off the first time, and then I fell in the water, so I had to swim to the boat, pull myself back on, and then we got stuck *again*. It was a good-sized rock, because I could get out and stand on it while I was pushing the boat off. It was then I had my little epiphany of, "Oh my God, what have I gotten myself into?!"

**STEIGER:** "I just want to put myself through college!" (laughter)

**HANSEN:** I'm dripping wet, and it was dangerous. I almost got caught in between the boat and the rock while I was swimming, and pulled myself back on. It was pushing myself off the second time that it kind of struck me. Three days ago—or maybe it was four at that time—I was in college, knew nothing about this, and now I'm in the middle of Grand Canyon, pushing a boat off in this freezing cold water.

**STEIGER:** A guy could get hurt out here!

**HANSEN:** And I didn't know what I was doing. I just felt like I was overwhelmed and I'm in over my head. Dennis got stuck too, and he put a rip in his boat maybe six feet long. So that didn't make their moods any more pleasant, let's say. So that night they were grumpy, pissed off... Uh-huh, we had to de-rig and

patch it. You still gotta cook dinner. And I remember it being late because it was twilight by the time all of that was getting around. And then they want help—there's only three of you. We didn't have a fourth person. So they're expecting the third person to kick it into gear.

**STEIGER:** But you've been doing this three days now...

**HANSEN:** Yeah, three or four days. But, you know, how to set up the kitchen, how to cook this dinner, how do you help sew this boat up, how do you do *any* of that stuff? I was just overwhelmed by it. Needless to say, at the end of that trip, they said I was never gonna work out. They told Fred. "You might as well forget it and just send him on his way." So Fred sat me down at that little table in the back where we used to eat and told me it wasn't going to work out and I was going to have to go home. What Fred didn't realize was—I had nowhere to go. I couldn't go back home. I didn't have *any* money. I told him right there, "If you tell me to leave, this is literally what's going to happen. I'm going to pack my bags, I'm going to walk across the street, and I'm going to put my thumb out, and I'm going to go in the direction of the first person that picks me up. Because I don't know where I'm going, and I don't know what I'm gonna do." I don't know why, but Fred had pity. He said, "Okay, we'll give you a job, but it's not going to be permanent. So this first year here, I'll give you whatever trips *possibly* come up, but you're going to be the chore boy around Vermilion Cliffs." So that's what I was. I was basically doing everything around that place: fixing coolers, fixing the water line. I even picked the fruit off Fred's trees sometimes in his back yard. But any little job that was available. I mean, I cooked in the kitchen... I was an everything guy. I flipped eggs for Fred. I drove the truck a couple of times and picked people up at Pearce Ferry.

**STEIGER:** I remember you being this big stout—I mean, you were always really strong. I remember that.

**HANSEN:** Yeah, I tell my wife that, and I try to convince her I used to be big and strong at one time. (chuckles)

**STEIGER:** You were the strongest one of any of us, as I recall. Pam called you Bam-Bam.

**HANSEN:** Yeah, she did. I think Carol said about me in those days, "He's the perfect worker. The trouble is, we have to feed him." (laughter)

**STEIGER:** Now, I'm almost hearing you say that if you had another place to go, you would have: "Okay, seemed like a good idea at the time, but I'm outta here."

**HANSEN:** No, that's not true, because despite the severity of the interaction with the people during the day, there were times at night when it was quiet and

you could be by yourself and you could look around. I grew up in Arizona, and I had never been to the Grand Canyon. This was my first Grand Canyon experience.

First time I ever saw the canyon at all was when Pammy drove me across the Navajo Bridge. That was the first time I'd ever looked down. And so despite all of this other negative stuff that was going on, at night I would look up and I'd look around, and the feeling I got from it was pretty inspiring. I think that's true for so many of our people that we take down the river. It's a very unique place. And after you've done some traveling and you mature a little bit, and you see some other places, and see some other things, you realize it's even more so, there's something soul stirring about a Grand Canyon experience. And once that settles in, there's no getting rid of it, you're not going to forget it, ever. I certainly haven't. That first trip was 35 years ago, and I still feel that way. Despite some of the negative aspects of our business, the things that can be trying, and the things that can get to you—just like any other job or any other place—if that feeling is real, it's not ever going to be diminished. And I can say that with all sincerity.

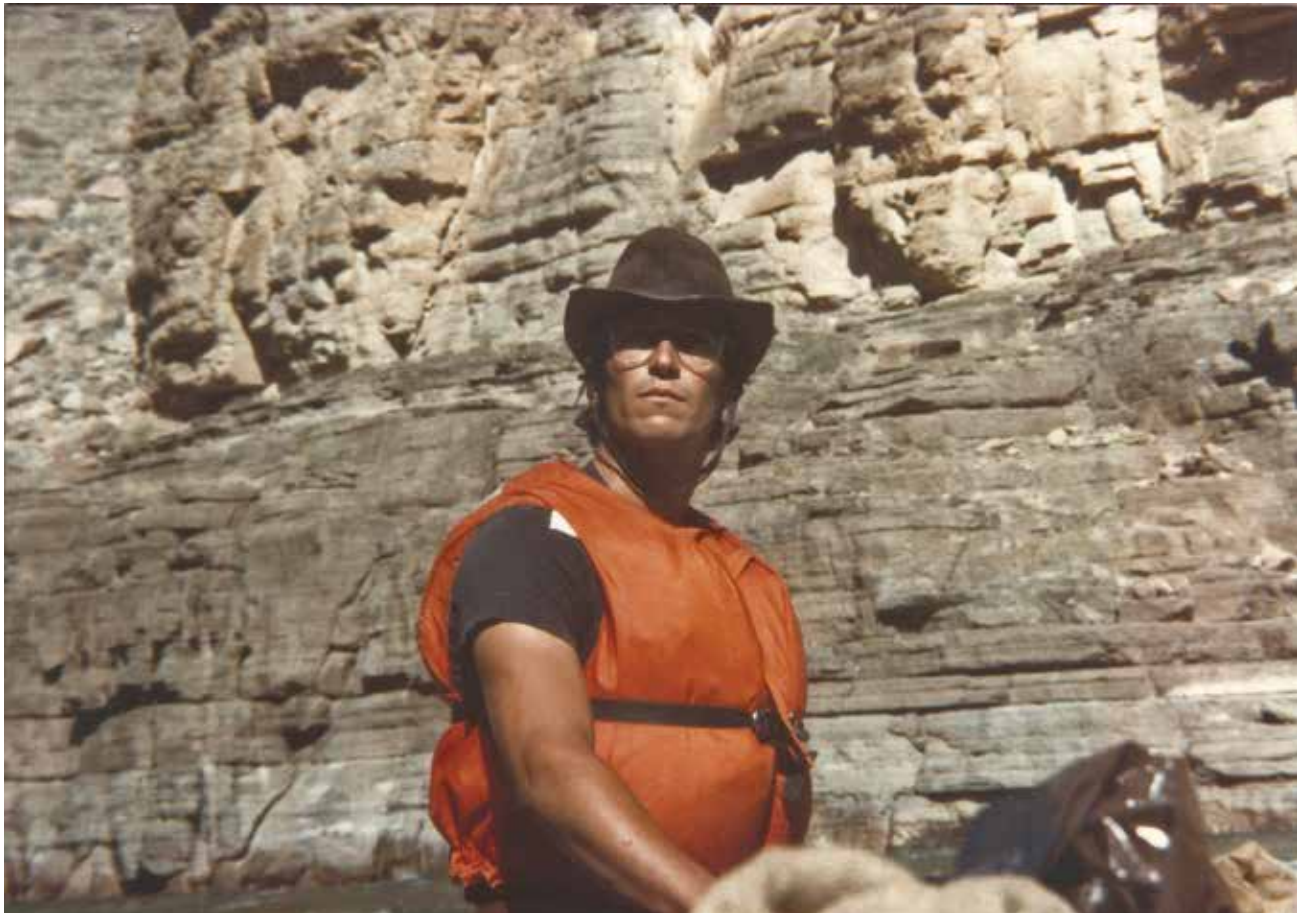
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*Brian Hansen started with Arizona River Runners in 1981. He was 18 years old and the company had six motor rigs: two two-boat nylon trip sets that were pretty good; a fifth cotton boat which wasn't "that" bad; and a sixth cotton boat that was, well, plausible. Today ARR/GCW is, by far, the biggest company down there. Brian—a husband, a father, and a nurse, still runs a trip a year for them. For more than a decade, Brian was the Project Coordinator for the Grand Canyon Conservation Program, wherein commercial outfitters and boatmen have teamed up with the NPS to lend a hand with the heavy-lifting of physically maintaining the park.*

*This Adopt-a-Boatman interview, though funded long ago, was conducted in March of this year.*

\* \* \*

It's true that characters existed around Vermilion Cliffs, and the list is long. Fred was one of those characters, for sure. One of the very first times I met my new boss, I remember him right next to the old office there in the trees that were growing just outside, and it was one of the very first—well, it wasn't a cellular phone, but it was a transportable phone. You could actually talk without being connected with a wire. And he had one of those in one hand, and a drink in the other hand, and he was wearing a cowboy hat,



Circa 1982.

no shirt... I think it was Bermuda shorts, and a pair of cowboy boots. And that image is just so humorous, and yet so perfect for Fred and who he was. But Fred, as you mentioned before, was a military man. So despite the fact that he could do that—he could look ridiculous, if that’s the word you want to use for it, he could look that funny, and that ridiculous, on the other hand he was a very strict—not a disciplinarian, but he ran things the way he wanted to run ’em, and he made sure everybody understood this is the way it’s going to be. And I appreciated that, coming from the small military background I had grown up in, in high school, I appreciated being led by someone that was in control. And I *knew* he always was. You know, having to run a river business is a tricky thing, especially for those people that did it way back then, like you said, on a prayer, right? You invested your money, and hoped you’d get a return on it. But you didn’t always know if that was going to happen. On top of that, you weren’t sure if the park service was going to change the rules on you at any time. So it was a hit-or-miss kind of thing. And I can only imagine the pressure that was put on some of these people who were starting back

then. I remember Fred was always concerned about money, he was always trying to make sure he didn’t spend too much here, too much there, but he was always Dad, it was a family. I remember that very clearly. All the girls that worked in the office and in the restaurant... Connie [Tibbitts] was one of the first female river runners and she was there. That was really cool. I think all of us really respected that—here’s Connie, following in the footsteps of Georgie [White] kind of thing. But then she was so unique to herself as well. I mean, what other women that you knew of could take a motor apart and put it back together blindfolded? And here she was running motorboats down the Grand Canyon. She was part of the whole business. And Stuart [Reeder] was there. We can list all the river runners that worked for Arizona River Runners at that time. But it was a family.

\* \* \*

There was a need for a swamper at Hatch, so Fred said, “They need a swamper, you want to go?” I said, “Hell, yeah!” So I went and did that trip for them. They were

impressed enough with me that they said, “You don’t have to work for Arizona River Runners, come work for us.”

**STEIGER:** Who was that?

**HANSEN:** Dave Foster and Bob Hallett. And so at the end of that trip they went to Fred and said, “Give him to us, we’ll take him.” But Fred was like, “Wait a minute.” So it worked out that I got another trip at ARR. Actually, I got two more trips that season, so I did four trips.

When I talked to Fred at the end of that first season, I told him, “I’m not coming back unless I have a full-time job.” And he laughed and said, “Well of course you will.” But if he wouldn’t have given me that opportunity, at least I knew enough then that there were so many other companies. I would have tried to have gotten a job with somebody else. I was not going to leave.

**STEIGER:** Well let me ask you this— You start out there, and you kind of get dissed by Ed and Dennis, and then you’re relegated to the warehouse, and then you go off with Hallett and Dave; they say, “Come work for Hatch.” —Why didn’t you? Fred’s like, “No, no, stay here.” You could have just said, “Sorry, Fred, screw you guys, I’m going to work for Hatch.”

**HANSEN:** I guess I could have, but you have to remember, I was eighteen years old. I’m also a very loyal person. If anybody ever gives me an opportunity, I will stick around with that person until they basically *kick* me out. And Fred gave me that chance.

**STEIGER:** So you weren’t gonna pull out on Fred?

**HANSEN:** I wasn’t going to do that to Fred, because Fred gave me a chance. Yeah, I think that’s the reason why.

**STEIGER:** Boy, that’s Fred. That’s him in a nutshell. “Fred and Carol Burke’s Home for Wayward Boys and Girls.” I didn’t appreciate with Fred, with Arizona River Runners—the unique thing about that company is, when Fred had it, and the warehouse was at Vermilion Cliffs, you got free room and board all summer, which was huge. You literally had *no* expenses. I didn’t even know, the first ten years I worked there, I got no education on how to fend for myself, payin’ rent and utilities and all these things, because I didn’t have to. I had this little place on a ranch in Prescott, and I’d just go from, like, summer camp to the winter camp. In the winter I had really cheap rent, and there were no utilities. Had to get diesel for the generator, but that was... But the room and board I didn’t appreciate until I really jumped ship and kind of left Arizona River Runners. Then it was like, “Oh, you mean I’ve gotta feed myself in between trips? And house myself? And do all that?” So that helped *a lot*. I mean, that was a big help

in the season, I thought.

**HANSEN:** Well that’s true, but don’t forget that Fred also made you work for that.

**STEIGER:** Oh yeah, he had a knack for comin’ by right after we’d had a big ol’ dinner and saying, “Oh, the toilet in Room 4 is stopped up. Who’s gonna fix that?”

**HANSEN:** Exactly right. You can point that out, you can say it was free room and board, but really, it wasn’t all that free. Some of the funniest times, and the camaraderie builders amongst those of us that worked for Fred, were those little chores he made us do in lieu of the room and board. Going out and fixing that water line, some of those events that would happen were just hilarious! And looking back on it, it was like, “Oh my God, that was kind of fun, wasn’t it?” At the time, it was drudgery.

**STEIGER:** Brian’s talking about fixing the water line. Vermilion Cliffs, to this day, is supplied by—there’s a spring. There’s a place they’ve captured it, there’s a little catchment box, and they catch this water in the spring that’s coming out of the Vermilion Cliffs, and there’s a one-inch plastic pipe that comes out of that, and it probably goes, what is it, two miles, three miles? A good three miles, down through this Chinle Shale and all this soft rock.

**HANSEN:** The “blue meanies,” as Pam called ’em.

**STEIGER:** And comes to this holding tank where Vermilion Cliffs’ proper is. And this black pipe moves around as the temperature changes, and it was always busting, and somebody would have to go up and find where it was broken, and screw that pipe back together. And when I was first there, Ross Garrison was the water line expert. But he kind of had us all sandbagged like it was this terrible job. He’d put on this pack and hike off and everybody’d be like, “Oh God, that’s so brutal. Please, God, don’t make me have to go fix the water line.” (laughs) But when you finally start doin’ it, there were lots of worse things that you could be doin’ other than hikin’ up there. It was a pretty nice little ol’ hike. Find where it was broke. Pretty satisfying, just put the thing back together. But you talk about an old place that was run by a wing and a prayer—that whole water line.

\* \* \*

**HANSEN:** I would like to talk about Bill Gloeckler, because if you think about the influences that were the greatest... We’ve been talking about Fred, but really, Fred is overshadowed by Bill’s presence, because who Bill was, and who he kind of still is, and what he offered to both Eve and myself, is tremendous. So there’s



a lot to talk about there. And then Bill offered me the opportunity to work for the Grand Canyon Conservation Program, and that's when I met Kim Crumbo. I think Kim was another figure in my life that truly influenced who I became as a trip leader. Working for Kim, and then eventually taking over a position that was similar to Kim's, taught me a *lot* about how to organize trips that are so far flung and spread out: what your communication systems are, what you have to do if someone *does* get hurt very badly. So I still want to talk about those people, because they were very important in my education.

**STEIGER:** So you want to talk about Gloeckler first?

**HANSEN:** Sure. In 1985, I believe it was, Fred decided it was time to retire, get out of the business. And so he announced that to everybody, and it was in—I believe it was in '86—that Bill showed up, and his presence was there permanently. We made the transition of starting the season in Vermilion Cliffs, and ending the season in Flagstaff. That was when I first met Bill and Bruce [Winter], because Bruce was down there too, also trying to figure out what were they going to keep, and how were we going to make this transition from what Fred had into what we have now. It wasn't easy, because what Fred had built was not going to transfer over to what Bill and Bruce wanted. They had an entirely different vision. I think that there was some reticence from us because we were so in love with what was going on that we didn't want to see anything change. And of course Bill, now he's up to his ears in debt, and he's worried about the park service maybe changing the rules on him like they had done in his RELCO days. He's got an entirely different world.... His experience is different than ours.

**STEIGER:** Yeah. Oh, very much so. Gloeckler had already had the rug totally pulled out from under him, just like Fred had a couple of times in his life. Both of those guys had already experienced significant losses. I remember drinking with Gloeckler at v.c. [Vermilion Cliffs], like the day after he found out he was gonna lose RELCO [*an earlier Grand Canyon company he'd been involved in*]. He was not a happy camper. So I'm sure when he started with you guys, he didn't want to do that again.

**HANSEN:** No. And having had that experience, he was looking at the situation with completely different eyes than we were. So there was—I don't want to call it friction, but there were just some misunderstandings. At one point, Bill just wanted to clean house altogether, just wanted to get rid of all of us, and put his own people in. But thank God he came to his senses! (laughs)

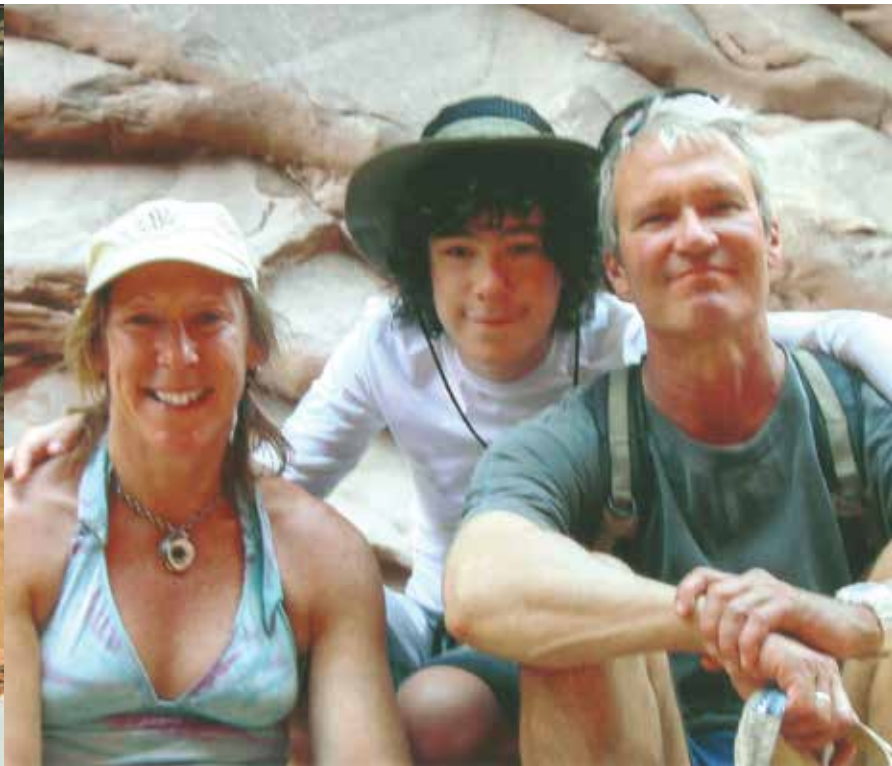
**STEIGER:** What do you suppose triggered that?

**HANSEN:** I don't know. I honestly don't know. All I

*do* know is there was one night when Bill was still in the midst of making his decisions.... Bill plays mandolin, as you know, and I've played guitar for a long time. And Howie Clark played banjo. One night we all got together while this was all goin' on, at v.c. We picked music and stayed up all night long. We waited 'til the sun came up before we decided it was time to go to bed. (chuckles) But at the end of that experience, Bill and I just had a quick conversation and I told him, "You know, Bill, I know you're thinking about who it is that you want to keep. I just want to let you know I'm in it for the duration. I'm here to help you make this work, and I'll do whatever you want me to do, and I'm here." So he understood that I was going to wave the ARR banner, and I was going to go forward. I've told people in the past that Bill Gloeckler took care of me. I think that was a misstatement. I think he didn't "take care of me," quote, unquote. What he did was he gave me opportunity. He always said, "Brian, do you think you're up for doing this? Can you do this?" And what he learned was that whenever he gave me an opportunity and I said yes, I was going to follow through, and he could count on that. You ask any employer, if you have employees that do what they say they're gonna do, you want to keep those people around. And so that's what he did for me and for Eve. He allowed us to work together for fifteen years. He gave us continuous opportunities to do that. Bill never gave me anything I didn't earn. But I worked for him loyally, and if I was still doing it, I still would. He is a very good role model for all the young people that are coming in. I mean, he has—not just by himself, of course—but he has taken that company from being one of the smallest river companies that existed, into the largest one that is.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, by far.

**HANSEN:** And when you see the transition and the change that has occurred from when Fred handed it over to them, to what's happening now, it's a completely different universe, it's a whole different thing. And it's largely because of his presence. He knew how to take all of these people with very strong opinions and very headstrong ideals, thinking about this is the way it should be, and somehow coalescing all of those different personalities into this company that worked. And it was great to be a part of it. It was really a lot of fun. But yeah, he offered me a lot of different things, not the least of which was to be the outfitters' representative for the Colorado River Conservation Program. And that was huge. In the beginning, Eve and I were doing those trips that Crumbo was putting on—the unpaid trips, the resource management trips—and we were doing them for free. And I don't know who came up with the idea of coalescing the park service with the outfitters,



Eve, Brian and Zachary Hansen on the river.

and kind of getting that whole thing together. I don't know whose idea that was, but they were looking for someone to represent the outfitters, so Bill offered it to me, and I said, "Fine." Bill had approached Crumbo, because Crumbo had been doing it for a while, but there was not a program that involved the outfitters and the park service as a cohesive unit. It was boatmen that were volunteering for working with the park service, but they weren't making any money. At the time my wife and I started doing it, there was no money involved at all, it was purely volunteer. And then eventually there became a \$200 stipend, but then there was this idea of involving all the outfitters and paying the guides that were involved with it. And Bill approached me and said they needed someone to kind of organize this new program. And since I had experience with it, he thought I would be a good candidate for it. So I interviewed for the job and I got it, and did that for quite a number of years. And that was really important, I think, in kind of softening the relationship between the boatmen in general—and I mean boatmen, not the outfitters per se, but boatmen in general and their perception about what the park service is mandated to do, and what they actually do when they're working in the wilderness area in Grand Canyon.

**STEIGER:** Now you said you and Eve were doing it on a volunteer basis? You were going on trails trips, just for...

**HANSEN:** Just for the fun of it.

**STEIGER:** Just to do the good works?

**HANSEN:** Well, that, and we were looking for a way to spend our time. We had these winters when we weren't doing anything, and it seemed like this was a good way to go. I think I told you earlier I really enjoyed being a boatman in Grand Canyon. It's all I ever really wanted to be. And so when there was an opportunity like that, it's like, "Wow, I get to do more of it!" So that's what we said, "Okay, let's go do this." So each company would sponsor one trip at a time, and they would give their boatmen the opportunity to work with the park service and do various things the park service is mandated to do. But it wasn't just trails trips, it was everything that was done in Grand Canyon: hydrology, archaeology, botany, wildlife. There were all kinds of trips that would monitor everything you could imagine, from counting birds to counting how many helicopter flights were leaving from the Hualapai side of the river—we did that one time, just monitoring the usage in the lower part of the canyon. So it was everything you could possibly imagine.

**STEIGER:** So you would run trips with commercial boats?

**HANSEN:** And park service boats.

**STEIGER:** But all that went through you? You were like doing logistics—kind of what GCMRC does now, is that right?

HANSEN: Yeah, that would be a good comparison. Off the top of my head I would say from, oh, '94, '95, and did that all the way up until 2002, 2004.

STEIGER: But the deal you were doing was funded by the outfitters—by the commercial sector?

HANSEN: Right. They were basically paying the boatmen and buying the food, so that the cost to the park service was minimal. It was a great deal for them.

STEIGER: Yeah, really good deal. It was the right thing to do.

HANSEN: Well yeah, I think it was. It really softened the stance a lot of boatmen had about the park service, because frankly, I think a lot of people were ignorant about what the park service is mandated to do, and why they're doing the things they're doing. You would often hear people put the park service down because of whatever. They would see people on the river building trails, or "manicuring the beaches" I used to hear people saying. "But this is a wilderness area, you're not supposed to touch it at all. You're not supposed to be impacting this." And what they didn't understand was that this was to *alleviate* the impact, it wasn't an impact in and of itself. So I think that this really helped a lot.

STEIGER: I remember in the mid-seventies there was a knee-deep trail, straight up the talus slope at Saddle, and there was this spaghetti of trails—there were like ten different trails goin' up to Nankoweap. And Crumbo wasn't even working for the park. Somewhere in there he was working for Ken Sleight, and then he was working for the park. And then my sense of it was that he got ahold of those guys and he was the guy that said, "We gotta start fixing these trails, or these people are gonna trample this canyon."

HANSEN: That's exactly what it was. It was his brainchild, and he took it upon himself to have park service backing to start this thing. If it wouldn't have been for him, I don't think it would have been done at all. The fact that it worked probably made a lot of people in the park service jealous of Crumbo, because he had the ability to see that this was something that needed to be done, and he was getting to go on river trips and do it. So yeah, the multiple trailing thing, making sure the trails were maintained so that they weren't knee deep, as you say—because that's what they'll do, the water will just run straight down a trail unless you check it, and you've gotta know how to do that. So yeah, it was him who started that. But then, of course, it grew from trails to all sorts of things.

\* \* \*

A few years ago this woman said, "I want you to tell a story to everybody around the campfire, and just

describe to us the most interesting person you've met while working here." I thought, "Wow. Of all the people I've worked with, of all the passengers that I've met over 35 years of river running. Pick *one* person?!" But I chose Randy Thompson, because he was so colorful. Randy was the kind of guy, that if he would have been in New Orleans, and was inside the stadium where everyone was thrown during Hurricane Katrina—you know how all this humanity was in there, and all that was going on inside of the stadium?—after a couple of days, every single person in that place would have known who Randy Thompson was. That's the kind of guy he was. Everyone would know who he was. Yeah, "Who is this crazy guy?!" And people loved him for it. He was tough and moody and partied *way* too hard, but you just had to love him. I don't know of one person who didn't enjoy the fact that they knew him—not one. After they cremated him, he had always said he wanted his ashes dumped in the third mule piss stop down Bright Angel Trail. He said that over and over again, numerous times. And so Crumbo said, "Alright." So they took about a third of his ashes, sure as shit they put it right there. They threw 'em in the third mule piss stop on the way down. The rest of it, I forgot what happened to one-third of it, but the other third they put onto a paddleboat on one of those Conservation Program trips, and the trail crew boys were going to take the paddleboat into the 209 Mile hole and intentionally spill it so that Randy would have a ride, and he would have his last... They couldn't turn that boat over! They ran that hole I think four times before they finally tipped it over, and Randy finally got to go into the river. So we camped at 220 that night, and I was on the beach, relieving myself, and I looked up, and here comes Randy's ash box down the river. I mean, it had sunk, it had gone, and it's just like, "Okay, it's gone, we're never gonna see it again." And there it was, out in the middle of the river! I could see it, *way* off in the distance as it was coming through that last little rapid. There's a lot of interesting currents right there, and you would think that it would at least go downstream, but it came right to me. It floated right up to my feet and landed right there. It was like, "Oh Randy," you know, "you're not givin' up, are you?" So I picked up that ash box and I showed everybody. And everybody was like, "Well, we *know* what we gotta do with that." So opened the whiskey bottle, poured the contents inside of the box, and everybody passed it around and drank Randy.

STEIGER: My God.

HANSEN: Did you ever meet Randy?

STEIGER: I can't remember, to be honest with you. I may well have.

**HANSEN:** Well Randy, in later years, had long white hair. He aged beyond his years in the last five or six years of his life, because he did live a hard life. He went with both ends lit. He was a Vietnam vet. I think he served two tours of duty in Vietnam, and he was a platoon leader. He was awarded, I believe it was the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, and was involved in some pretty heavy-duty fighting over there. His stories of the war are horrific, like so many of our friends that went there and came back—like Whale, for instance. And it affected Randy terribly. And when he came back, he had a really hard time reentering civilization, so to speak. I think he actually spent a little time in jail, always getting in trouble. But I remember him telling me that discovering the Grand Canyon saved his life. When he started working for the trail crew, he realized that this is it, this is where the end of the journey's gonna be. I'm not certain *how* long he worked for the park service, but I think it's somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty years.

Boy, was he a character! I'll tell you what, he's one of those people that strike you, because he was as hard as nails and very opinionated, and he had no problem at all telling you what he thought. And if he didn't like you, he'd tell you. But fortunately, he liked me; and he always liked Eve, he always thought that Eve had a really nice smile and he would tell her so. But he would just drink way too much. We had to put a lifejacket on him a couple of times so he wouldn't fall in the river and drown, but he was always up and always willing to work. And he was the guy that could never die. There's a story of him when they were working on—it might have been the Hermit Trail—they were working on the trail during the day, and they bivouacked on the trail itself at nighttime. And the edge of the trail was cliff, and it went down.... I wasn't there to see it, but the description is like 500 feet, just straight down on the other side. And Randy, doing what Randy always did at night, he gets up to go take a pee off the edge of the canyon, and he falls off the edge. They're saying, "Where's Randy? Oh my God! He fell off the edge! He's dead! He's dead! We're gonna have to go down there and retrieve him." They're, "Randy! Randy!" Then you hear this voice come up and say, "I'm down here, you sons of bitches! Drop a rope down and get me!" He'd fallen into this little scrub tree and was *in* it, hanging onto the tree. They threw a rope down and hauled him out. It's stories like that, that led people to believe Randy was indestructible. And that's not the only story like that. I mean he was involved in *several* near misses that you just couldn't believe anybody would survive. He had a number of them to his credit.

So when this trip happened where Randy was even-

tually killed, no one could believe it. It's like, "No, not Randy." We were working on the Tapeats Creek Trail, and that first chute—where you hike through that first chute to get up to the first level, that was where Randy was working. We broke up in different groups to work on different parts of the trail. Eve and I and our group, we went up to the base of the Redwall, right there by Thunder River. So we were past the Thunder River aquifer. We were camped up on that first ledge there, that little valley that goes across over into Deer Creek. It snowed that night and it stuck. I would say there were three, four inches of snow on the ground that night. So it was cold, and the weather was horrible, and it was socked in. Anyway, the morning that we took off to go up there, I think we were up there for two or three days... That morning I said goodbye to Randy. I don't know, I always wanted to say goodbye to Randy whenever we broke up. I don't know why, I just always did. It was just a little ritual that he and I had, just shake each other's hand and say, "See you in a couple of days." And Randy surprised me by looking out across the river—and this is no joke, this is what he said—he looked out across the river, then he looked up at the cliff behind the camp there, just the lower camp across from Tapeats Creek, downstream of there—and he looked up at the cliff and then he said, "This is not such a bad place to die." I just left it at that, I didn't question him, what he meant, what he was talking about.

**STEIGER:** You just went to him and said goodbye, "see you in a day or two?"

**HANSEN:** Yeah, "see you in a day or two," like we always did if the group broke up and we were gonna be apart for a couple of days. And he said that, and I am not suggesting that what he did was suicidal. I never saw that in Randy, and I don't believe that's true, but he did say that to me, and that statement has always resonated in my memory, because that's the last thing Randy said to me. That's the last time I saw him alive.

So anyway, we were up there for a couple of days, and the night before it happened, it snowed and the weather was just awful. It was our time to come back the next morning. Everything was wet and soggy and miserably cold and it was flurrying as we were walking back from Thunder River. As we approached that last chute coming down, we ran into a couple of the park service people, and they were acting kind of funny. I said, "What's up?" And that's when we heard what had happened. We saw where the stone was that had been dislodged and was being used for part of the trail there. The stone was good-sized, probably the size of this thing right here.

**STEIGER:** Okay, this is like a foot rest or something.

What would you call that?

**HANSEN:** Yeah, it's a foot rest, and it's about, oh, two and a half feet by two and a half feet by a foot in depth. That was about the size of the stone that was being used.

**STEIGER:** So that must have weighed 400 pounds.

**HANSEN:** Yup. And he was in charge of that section of trail, and he's well aware of the safety issues that are involved in this. And he put himself in that location, below where this heavy work was being done. I mean, he did it intentionally.

**STEIGER:** So these guys are trying to move this rock a little ways?

**HANSEN:** Uh-huh. And they're way up at the top of the chute, and he's working down at the bottom. For some reason—he wore glasses when he worked, and he usually put them on when he was working on the trail—he didn't wear his glasses that day. So not only was he in a bad location, but if something were to fall, he couldn't see it very well. And that's what happened. So the rock slipped free, and that's a pretty steep chute right there. So it picked up speed quickly. And the story I heard—because there were people that were kind of in the middle too—once they heard it coming, they raced to the edge of the little canyon there and avoided being struck themselves. But that rock started rolling, and then started bouncing. On, I guess, the second bounce, it broke in half, and so now there were two objects going down. One kind of veered off and struck the side of the cliff and stopped there, but the other one went directly towards him. And he was standing there, and didn't have his glasses, so I don't know how well he could have seen it anyway. The story is that he saw it, and he was stooping down. He was in the motion of getting down to where he could get behind another rock so that he could avoid getting hit, but he wasn't fast enough. So he was in a stooped position like this, and the rock struck him right here in the ribcage. I saw where he was standing, and I saw where it was that they started working on him. It threw him a good fifteen feet, just the impact of that stone. When they got to him, they asked him, "Randy, are you okay?" This is indestructible Randy kind of thing. They had witnessed what had happened, but no one was believing what they had seen. "Randy, are you okay?" He's like, "Fuck no, I'm not okay!" And they said, "Can you feel your feet? Can you feel your arms?" He said, "I can't feel anything from my waist down—I can't feel it at all." And then he must have had some internal injuries up here in his ribcage because he was having a hard time breathing. He didn't have any injury to his face or to his neck, so he didn't have that to worry about, but he was having a tough time

getting air. He probably had broken a bunch of ribs, maybe possibly had a hemothorax or pneumothorax going on. So by the time that they got the first aid kit up there and were thinking about moving him down, that was the first time he coded. And so they did chest compressions, basically CPR, and they got him to come back. So his heart started beating again. They got him on a back board and were starting to move him down the trail to where they thought the helicopter could land. And the weather was *lousy*, just awful. I think that if you would have called the park service, the helicopters wouldn't have flown. That's how bad the weather was. So eventually they got the Air Force from Vegas, and they brought in a *big* helicopter, and it landed there at the mouth of the creek, because there's a sizeable piece of sand there, and it's big enough to allow a large helicopter to arrive. But they said the pilot was thinking about ditching. The weather was so bad he said he wasn't gonna do it, but then eventually he found a way, so the helicopter was there. They said from the time they packaged him and were moving him down the hill, to the time that the helicopter arrived, he coded two more times. So they did CPR and brought him back three times, which is astounding. I mean, that is just an amazing thing, that he was still alive. So they got him on the helicopter and he was still living when the helicopter took him to Vegas.

We didn't hear until Lava—we were running Lava and that's when the helicopter came in. The weather was much better, and that's when a smaller helicopter came in and landed.

**STEIGER:** The NPS chopper?

**HANSEN:** Yeah. And they landed downstream there, first camp on the right below Lava. So we ran Lava and we all pulled in, and they told us he had died in the hospital. That's when the trip broke up. They were gonna have a service up at the South Rim for him, so Crumbo and a good two-thirds of the trip just took off right there. They were gonna take out at Diamond Creek as fast as they possibly could. But the trip was still on. So Crumbo put me in charge. He said, "Okay, you're the trip leader now. Go down to 209 and get the work done there." He had the itinerary and stuff. That's what I did. I was kind of sorry I *wasn't* going out, because I really wanted to go to the service. But on the other hand, I was also kind of proud that Crumbo picked me to be the trip leader. And I felt responsible, so that was what I did.

Interestingly, there was a Zuni man on that trip who was in charge of the trail building and flash flood hydrology over on the Zuni Reservation in New Mexico, and *he* was a Vietnam vet. His name was Gabriel Yuselew. He was describing this battle that he

had been involved in, to Randy, on that trip. He said, “Yeah, I was in this battle called Operation Ripcord,” and Randy said, “Oh, I was there too.” He was like, “Really?! Do you remember this helicopter...” Because they were surrounded by the Viet Cong, and the only way they were getting supplies in was by helicopter, and they were just shooting at it with everything they had, every time that the helicopter would come in or go out. So all their supplies were being brought in, and they were just shootin’ the shit out of these helicopters as they were coming in. There was one coming in that was loaded with ammunition, and a lucky shot hit some portion of the payload, and the whole thing blew up. So ten, twelve feet off the ground, this very large helicopter loaded with ammunition blows up and just puts this huge crater in the ground. And Gabe was up there, and he said he was a hundred yards away from that helicopter when it blew up, and he was inside of a deep trench, so it’s all earth behind him. And he was sitting next to this one fellow, and the power of this explosion was so great that it sent shrapnel *through* the ground and it killed the man sitting next to him. Shrapnel went through the earth a hundred yards. That’s an *amazing* explosion. And it killed the man sitting right next to him. He said it could have easily been him. He told Randy, “Do you remember this helicopter exploding?” And Randy said, “Yeah, I saw that. I was down the hill when that helicopter blew up.” So they were in the same place, and then they met again all those years later. So they had this connection, they understood what it was that they experienced—you can only imagine the relationship you would have with someone else who was in the same position all those years ago. So Randy’s death affected Gabe quite a bit.

**STEIGER:** Was Gabe there in the chute?

**HANSEN:** Uh-huh. So I guess the end to the story is not so much about Randy, but about Gabe, because Gabe didn’t really talk about it until the very last night when we were camped at 220, getting ready to take out the next morning. There was no party. As you can imagine, things were kind of somber after that. We didn’t have any driftwood, but I had a large bag of charcoal. So I lit the charcoal, so we had a charcoal fire. At least it was warm out, but it was just Gabe and myself, and Gabe didn’t drink. He had sworn himself off the stuff, but for some reason that night he said, “Brian, I want you to grab me a couple of beers and then come sit with me.” So we sat by that charcoal fire and he drank the first beers he’d had in probably twenty years, and he told me stories about Vietnam. It was kind of special. And it was all because of Randy.

There’s one story about Randy you’ll appreciate. Crumbo had this idea.... The minimum tool thing—

you know what that is?

**STEIGER:** That’s part of the Wilderness Act? You’ve got to use the minimum tool you can get the job done with?

**HANSEN:** Exactly. Like, for example, instead of using a chain saw, you have to use a hand-held band saw.

**STEIGER:** For tamarisk eradication.

**HANSEN:** Right, or any tree for whatever. But anyway, anything fell underneath that, including the transportation of human waste, and all of these toilets that existed in these wilderness areas, like at Tapeats Creek and Deer Creek and Hermit Creek. For a while there, we were stopping on these trips, hiking up there, pulling the poop container out, shoveling that dry shit into these containers, putting it on backpacks and hauling it down to the boat, putting it on the boats, and taking it out to Diamond Creek.

**STEIGER:** And putting a new container in? Or no, there was just a drawer that you’d shovel out and put back in there?

**HANSEN:** Yeah. And it was a big tub, but we were shoveling it into these smaller containers *because* Crumbo didn’t want there to be the impact of a helicopter, which is what was normally used: helicopter comes in, hovers in the air, you hook it up, it takes it away. *But*, because it’s a wilderness area, he wanted to get away from the use of this helicopter and do it with the minimum tool. So we were considered the minimum tool. He also tried it with mules. He brought mules in, and we were shoveling it into these containers, putting it on the backs of mules, and the mules were carrying it out. As you can imagine, this was not a very popular job, and everybody had a pretty strong opinion about this particular one. But we went up to Hermit because there was one toilet up there that hadn’t been working for a while. You know, there’s a little sun dish up on the top there that powers the little fan that’s underneath, and that fan is supposed to be running all the time to aerate the poop that’s in there. But that had been broken for months, and it, through the summer, had not been aerating. So this is wet poop that’s in there. And also, when hikers go into the canyon they, more often than not, carry much more gear than they need, so they’re bringing all this shit, and then they realize they’ve got to leave and they want to get rid of it. So where’s the most obvious place to get rid of it? The toilet. So mixed in with all of this stuff is everything you can possibly imagine. There’s magazines, batteries.

**STEIGER:** Whatever people aren’t carrying back out of there.

**HANSEN:** And you can only imagine. It’s all mixed in there. Well, you have to separate that stuff from the actual poop and put that stuff in bags and *then* put it into these boxes and put the lid on it. So you’re

there, and this was wet. So when we arrived to do this, when we pulled it out, the stench was *horrible*. And these are trail crew people, boatmen. These are people that are used to dealing with poop. It was so bad that no one would get within fifty feet of this thing. We actually had a few of us down by the creek, because they were throwing up the smell was just so vile. They had brought some respirators and hazmat suits so the people that were actually up there and shoveling it could be wearing the hazmat suits. But Randy, not only was he not wearing a respirator and the hazmat suit, he was wearing Bermuda shorts, a Hawaiian shirt, flip-flops, and he was chewing gum, while he's up there shoveling this shit.

STEIGER: "Nah, I don't need that suit."

HANSEN: No. "I don't need that. You guys are a bunch of pussies." That kind of thing. So we're up there with the respirators on, Randy's there looking like he's supposed to be at the beach, and he's shoveling through this stuff . . . and then he stops for a second. And then he reaches over and finds something and he's starting to pull it next to him, and the rest of us, of course we're all covered with respirators, but we're looking at each other like, "What is he gonna do now?!" And he pulls over this box of cigars, and it's still wrapped in the cellophane. He had this little knife that he always kept with him, and he opened it up, and he kind of (scratches) opens up the cellophane, and he opens the lid to this box of cigars. And with his *bare hand* he reaches in there, grabs a handful of these cigars and puts 'em in his pocket, and then he says, "Boys, that there is some good shit!" (laughter)

STEIGER: Not too worried about the little stuff.

HANSEN: So anyway, that was Randy.

STEIGER: And what was it he said to you there at Tapeats? "This is a good place to die"?

HANSEN: Yeah, "This is not such a bad place to die." Yeah.

STEIGER: But that was like two days before that happened?

HANSEN: Uh-huh. Yeah. I didn't question him. It just seemed to me to be an odd thing to say, but that's what he said. That's the last thing he said to me. Kind of eerie, huh?

STEIGER: Real eerie. You wonder if it was something *he* even thought of, or if it just kind of came out of his mouth right there.

HANSEN: People speculated on whether he had intentionally set himself up for that accident, and I just don't see that.

STEIGER: Doesn't sound like he would be that kind of guy.

HANSEN: No.

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If you look over the people that influenced me the most, Bill Gloeckler overshadows everyone; and then Crumbo, just by being around him, and I guess just by pure osmosis I just acquired so many things from him just by being around him. But as far as who taught me my craft, I have to say that Dick Clark was the biggest influence on me.

As a boatman, yeah, because his style, the way that he viewed running that big ol' motorboat, he viewed it as an art, and he taught me how to move it on a dime, how to back it just right, how to feel the river through the boat and into your feet. He treated driving that boat very much the way that he flies his little airplane. And he was a skydiver too—the thrill of feeling the air current. He acquainted that very much with water current. No slight against you or anybody else, because we all are very proud of our ability to drive our boats, because that's what we do for a living, but I never saw anyone else do it the way he did. And he taught *me* how to do that, and that was clearly a big influence on me, and has everything to do with the way that I taught people how to run a motorboat in the years that followed. So I have to mention him for that reason. . .

Dick's delivery with the people, he had some cards up his sleeve that were very good. I remember on the last night, on more than a few occasions he would recite from memory the last five pages of Powell's book, right there at the very end, that wonderful description of the Grand Canyon. Everyone knows that. He had memorized that, five pages of it, word for word.

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*As per usual in the editorial process for these BQR oral histories, there comes a point of despair—there won't be room for hardly any of all the great stuff Brian has lived through and talked about here in the overall interview: the epic flood at Havasu where Mike Tagget rigged up the Tyrolean traverse; that time the waterspout at Cove Canyon threw three row boats up on shore with one of them landing upside down on top of the doctor who would've surely been killed if the front deck lid hadn't opened just enough to hold the whole thing off him (and somehow the full Johnny Partner toilet vault just missed him too); the night the rocks fell at Trinity and Brian dove under the boats out of a sound sleep to escape and one rock punched a star-shaped hole through the diamond plate frame and on into the boat itself—how they patched that thing the next day; not to mention the time Brian carried the guy his same size who broke his ankle*

*on that big talus slope up Carbon all the way out to the river piggyback, single-handed, because there wasn't time to do it any other way and pull it off....*

\* \* \*

**HANSEN:** You know, the last time you were here I told you I've got a dozen stories that are good stories. I really should write them down and publish 'em.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, or at the very least, just record them. Just talk 'em out, but yeah.

**HANSEN:** Yeah, because they're entertaining, they're good stories, and I think people would enjoy reading 'em. I probably should.

**STEIGER:** Yeah. Well, what do we need to cover for your unborn grandchildren here?

**HANSEN:** You know, I could have gotten a degree—looking back on it now, I think that becoming a doctor wouldn't have been such a bad life, because I cer-

tainly had the ability to do it. Now that I've become a nurse—you know, I went back to school to get that degree, and now I work at the jail—being a doctor would have been fine. At least I wouldn't have had to worry about growing old and being monetarily stable. But on the other hand, all I ever really wanted to do is be a Grand Canyon boatman. I *loved* it. I absolutely *loved* my job, and I just couldn't get enough of it. If you were to ask me would I go back and do it over again, I would do it over again in an instant, even if I couldn't change anything; even if I didn't have the power to change my mistakes; or maybe I should have done this instead of doing that; or maybe my relationship with this particular person should have been better. Even if I could just go back and just do it all over again, I would do it in an instant, because I *loved* it, *loved* it. I would tell my grandchildren, "Find something that you love doing, and do it. Do as much of it as you possibly can." That's what I would say.

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## Who Are These White Water River Expeditions Boatmen, ca. 1980-'82?



Find the answer on page 46.



# Back of the Boat

## The Whale Foundation News Bulletin

### 2014 KENTON GRUA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Whale Foundation is proud to announce that this year's scholarship recipients are Alexis Kimball and Kent Wagner of Canyon Explorations and Somer Morris of AZRA. Thanks to all of our applicants and congratulations to the winners.

We encourage all guides with at least 5 years experience in the Grand Canyon to apply. Applicants do not need to be currently working as a guide. Grants are awarded to guides with traditional and non-traditional educational paths. All applications are blinded before a rigorous review to insure impartiality. Support from the community has allowed the Foundation to award up to three \$2000 scholarships annually. See our website for more info: [Whalefoundation.org](http://Whalefoundation.org). The next application deadline is June 1, 2015

### THE 2015 WHALE FOUNDATION CALENDAR IS ALL ABOUT WILDLIFE

The new calendar is coming! We expect it from the printers at the end of September. This year we asked boatmen to submit their favorite wildlife shots. The calendar is full of Bighorn, Beetles, Butterflies and Beaver. Check out our Facebook page to see a couple of the amazing images you will find inside the calendar: [www.facebook.com/WhaleFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/WhaleFoundation).

Calendars are \$12/ea and \$3/ea shipping. Order by calling, send a check, or email: [bigdanhall@gmail.com](mailto:bigdanhall@gmail.com). You can also pick one up at our office at 515 w. Birch Flagstaff AZ 86002 or retail stores in Flagstaff that carry it (a list of these will be provided on our Facebook page as well.) Special thanks to Bronze Black who singlehandedly designed it this year and to all the contributing photographers. If you are thinking about giving them as gifts, great! There are discounts for orders over ten.

### 13TH ANNUAL WING DING

Mark your calendars! We will hold our 13th Annual Wing Ding on Saturday, February 21, 2015 from 6-11pm at the Coconino Center for the Arts in Flagstaff.

### VOLUNTEERING

We will be saying goodbye to Ann-Marie Bringhurst and Laura Fallon this fall as they are finishing their three year terms. They have been invaluable in the positions of president and vice-president respectively. Even though they will be missed greatly, the board is looking for new members. If you are interest-

ed in volunteering for the board or in other capacities, please get in touch. We still have one position open on the Wing Ding committee and we sure could use a little more help this year. Volunteering for something big or small, either way we would certainly appreciate it. Contact us through our website, Facebook or email me directly at [bigdanhall@gmail.com](mailto:bigdanhall@gmail.com).

*Dan Hall*

## Monsoon at Diamond Creek



From the Everything We Know is Wrong file: "Hey! What happened to the truck we parked up at the 'safe spot'?"  
photo: Greg Woodall

## S (Smith) – Rigs

**O**CTOBER 2014 WILL BE fifty years since Grand Canyon Expeditions (GCE) ran its first commercial river trip. My uncle, Ron Smith, had the opportunity to guide a group of geoscientists through the canyon, spearheaded by Dr. Peter Foose of Amherst, MA. The crew consisted of Ron, Lee Richmond, and Les Jones—well recognized for his scroll maps of many rivers of the west—as well as their customers from Massachusetts. Dean Waterman, a friend that Ron had met when they were employed at Utah Resin, attended to getting everyone to the river, and, most importantly, driving the truck around to the “take-out.” The arduous task of hauling the surplus pontoon, Les’s solo hard hull, and all the other river equipment was well planned. Everyone pitched in and schlepped their gear with frame packs. The raft was carried on a sort of unicycle litter (a wheeled conveyance designed for hauling large game out of the backcountry) and presumably other contrivances were created on the Whitmore Trail, that made this unique “put-in” possible near mile 190.

Ron began running rivers in the 1950s and early 1960s. Sometime after his initial trip on the Green and Colorado Rivers, he met Ken Sleight who was working as a substitute teacher at East High School in Salt Lake City. Mr. Sleight invited Ron and a few other students to join him on a trip through Glen Canyon. Georgie White was a name well recognized, especially by people who were interested in running rivers. I am sure that Ron jumped at the opportunity to join her on a trip down the Colorado. It was on this trip that Ron met Dick McCallum. Their adventurous and easy going natures were a comfortable fit and resulted in some great years working together. Before Ron and his wife Sheila started GCE in ’64–’65, he worked on rivers in Utah and Idaho for Jack and Betty Ann Currey (Western River Expeditions) and Bus and Don Hatch. During GCE’s first season in business Ron accepted an offer from Gay Staveley to run a Cataract boat on the upcoming Barry Goldwater trip. It proved to be a memorable experience, as I believe getting to know Senator Goldwater “on the river” would be fascinating! Ron and his company have had tremendous success over the years. Grand Canyon Expeditions has been highly respected for its excellent guides and equipment, as well as its remarkable warehouse, office, and home base. Although I imagine there has been no greater accolade than being asked to be the outfitter for the 1968 National Geographic Society’s Powell Centennial Expedition. This particular Grand Canyon

trip was featured in the May ’69 edition of *National Geographic* magazine.

This summer’s 2014 BQR showcased sixteen historic Ron Hayes photographs (pages 10–13). The photo titled “Dory boats and motor rigs” includes three dories and three rafts nosed to shore with twenty or so people standing on the boats and in the sand. Ron is captured in the foreground of this photo wearing long jeans and a red East High ball cap. It appears he is standing on the furthest upstream raft (possibly a Harris-Brennan tail dragger). The other two rafts are undoubtedly GCE “Smith rigs” donning side tubes and the first generation of basket frames. In the spring of 1967, Ron introduced plywood/fiberglass insert frames with below deck storage, an inside motor mount, and Wooldridge adjustable transom (Jackass). And, interestingly, my father remembers Ron enumerating about how well the “new boat” performed in several of the major rapids, and in particular, “how incredibly great” it felt to be driving an inside motor mount though this challenging new rapid that formed at the mouth of Crystal Creek. (Ron ran a tail dragger with side tubes on his last trip of the season in August ’66 and was deep in the throes of creating a new boat design when Crystal Rapid formed in December ’66.)

In 1973, my Uncle Ron was contacted by John Blashford-Snell (J B-S) and Jim Masters of the Scientific Exploration Society (SES) of Great Britain. They were developing plans to run the 2,900 plus miles of the Zaire (Congo) River, essentially from its source near Zambia to its terminus in the Atlantic Ocean, at the Bay of Banana. The SES’s initial pitch was to be “the first” to run the Congo River and to commemorate the centennial of Henry Morton Stanley’s equatorial crossing of the African continent that included his navigation of a particular section of the Congo that flows through what is known as the “Heart of Darkness.” Due to Zaire’s recent independence and its dehumanizing colonial past, the expedition’s organizers realized that a celebration of the Welsh-born journalist H.M. Stanley was inopportune and saw the wisdom of supporting Mobutu Sese Seko and his programs of “National Authenticite” as well as his efforts to build Zairois Pride. The expedition officially became the Expedition du Fleuve Zaire (Anglo-initialized as ZRE with Z pronounced “zed”) which seemingly gave the SES an opportunity to garner support from “Le President Mobutu” who was staging a public relations coup of his own, known in Zaire as “le combat du siecle” (the battle of the century) and internationally as the “Rum-



Ron Smith running Lava Falls, 1968 Photo Credit: Walter Meyers Edwards-National Geographic Creative

ble in the Jungle.” Fortuitously, the expedition was informed a few weeks before the Foreman/Ali fight that a significant donation was kindly made to ZRE by one of the fighters, and it has been my understanding that in a fit of exasperation the reigning champ doubled the ante. The rest is history! GCE supplied ZRE with three complete “Smith rigs” that were transported by the Royal Air Force from Nellis Air Force Base to Gatwick, England where the expedition’s staging was taking place. In October 1974, after a season in Grand

Canyon, my father left for Zaire where he joined ZRE as lead boatman, and, as the title suggests, the whitewater expert of this multi-national group. After spending a few days in England, the entire expedition flew into the heart of Africa, the Congo Basin. The expedition travelled for four months on the waters of Zaire with the “Smith rigs” running some of the most imposing and formidable whitewater in the world.

*Latimer Smith*

Marc Smith running the Congo, 1974 Photo Credit: Kenneth Mason-The Daily Telegraph



# Major Contributors—

## July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

**G**RAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES proudly presents the very long list of major contributors who supported our organization in numerous ways during this last fiscal year (*July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014*). Due to space considerations, this list does not reflect the five-year memberships or contributions under \$100 (including general contributions and Circle of Friends), of which there were many. Your support helps us to move forward and maintain a healthy and vital organization that is better equipped to protect and preserve the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River experience.

We apologize in advance to anyone we may have missed in the lists below. Please let us know. And thanks again, not only to those acknowledged here, but to each and every one of you who support our efforts and believe in GCRG. We appreciate that support more than we can express. Thanks to you all!

### FOUNDATION, GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

Anne B. Wallace Foundation (Circle of Friends)  
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## Announcements

### BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Josephine May Smoldt was born on February 1, 2014, to Dennis Smoldt (AZRA) and Emma Wharton (GCY). She's already been on her first river trip and loved it! They are excited to welcome her as part of their family.



### JOB OPENING

Nordic Trail Groomer Wanted, Grand Mesa Nordic Council, based in Western Colorado. Use Cedaredge, Mesa, or Grand Junction as a winter home base. 20–30 hours per week November and December, then 15–20 hours per week January through March. Starting pay at \$18 an hour. Contact Dave Knutson, President, GMNC, [grandmesanordic@gmail.com](mailto:grandmesanordic@gmail.com).

## The Inevitable Lost and Found 2014

### LOST

Hearing aids in a grey plastic pouch, lost from an AZRA trip at the Ledges camp on the right below Havasu, Mile 158 on the night of June 24–25, 2014. If found, please contact Sharon Hester at AZRA, [sharon@azraft.com](mailto:sharon@azraft.com).

### LOST

Four blue splash jackets, a farmer john wetsuit, and a shorty wetsuit washed into the river during a rain storm across from Furnace Flats, above Unkar in August, 2014. If found, please contact Alyssa Garbett, [alyssagarbett@msn.com](mailto:alyssagarbett@msn.com).

### LOST

Panasonic Lumix DMC-TS25 16.1MP Tough Digital Camera with 8x Intelligent Zoom (Blue). It is water resistant. So there is a chance that even if the camera is broken the pictures are still there. Fell into Havasu Creek on June 8, 2014. If found, please return to Eva Marie Gomez, [Evamariagomez@msn.com](mailto:Evamariagomez@msn.com).

### LOST

Wedding ring lost at Camp 1911 (Kolb inscription), (AKA Mile 214) on June 24, 2014. If found, please contact Kim Lucy at AZRA/Grand Canyon Discovery, [kim@azraft.com](mailto:kim@azraft.com).

### FOUND

Wedding ring found at Hot Na Na (river mile 16.6L) on June 14, 2014. Contact Robyn Janssen via email at [watergirloo@gmail.com](mailto:watergirloo@gmail.com).

### FOUND

Wedding Ring found in the Little Colorado River on July 8, 2014. Contact Bev Caifa, [puppiesfeet@gmail.com](mailto:puppiesfeet@gmail.com).

### FOUND

A blue duffel with various fishing things and shoes in it. Found floating in an eddy around Mile 190 on July 3, 2014. Contact Laura Fallon, [lauraelizabethfallon@yahoo.com](mailto:lauraelizabethfallon@yahoo.com).

# Businesses Offering Support

*Thanks to the businesses that like to show their support for GCRG by offering varying discounts to members...*

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**You can pay securely on the GCRG website at [www.gcrg.org](http://www.gcrg.org) or send a check to: Grand Canyon River Guides, PO Box 1934, Flagstaff, AZ 86002-1934. Note whether you're a guide member or general member.**

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# boatman's quarterly review

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THANKS TO ALL YOU poets, photographers, writers, artists, and to all of you who send us stuff. Don't ever stop. Special thanks to the Walton Family Foundation, the Adopt-a-Boatman sponsors, "Circle of Friends" contributors, and innumerable GCRG members for their generous and much appreciated support of this publication.

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## Parting Shot

