Still ‘UNPLUGGED’ after 87 years

Tod	ay marks a year since I parked at the proverbial trailhead of this well-travelled organization. What a great hike it’s been! I’m now completely bathed in the hues of Southwest Sunsets and covered brom to boots with the finely ground green chile-sage scented dust of New Mexico.

This week I had the opportunity to venture out of the Gulch’s one-room Albuquerque office to embark on an eye-opening adventure with a bunch of young scientists. These brave 6th graders rolled into Tent Rocks (Kasha Katuwe) near Cochiti Pueblo as chilly spring winds started to blow through the slot canyon that would act as their outdoor laboratory for the day. On hands and knees, we searched for Apache Tears, small obsidian pieces worn by years of battering from winds and water. I watched as students made their week’s vocabulary words - weathering, erosion, capstones, tuff, igneous, sedimentary, hoodoo, rhyolite - come alive with the experience of touching, seeing, smelling, hearing and sometimes tasting the world around them. With eyes wild and alive and words spilling from their excited lips, they declared that this was the “best” field trip that they had ever experienced. What I had in front of me was a bunch of young geologists eager to explore the next bend in the trail.

After summiting the top, they guided me back to the vans and I thought to myself that we had succeeded in “hooking” them on the outdoors, challenging their young bodies and minds to grow in their confidence and independence. After all, isn’t that one of the big reasons we do what we do at the Gulch?

I was walking past a sign the other day that caught my eye. It said, “Sitting is the new smoking.” I stopped to ponder this for a moment and reflect on the numerous studies I have been reading on childhood obesity and hours spent in front of a screen. Kids spend on average over 50 hours in front of a screen each week, and that number is only increasing. In a world where technology is a main course rather than the condiment that I might prefer it to be, I am THRILLED to be offering meaningful programming that unplugs kids and tunes them in to the natural world and to each other.

This summer is our 87th year! That means that after 87 years, our programs are still unplugged. Our “summer vacations” are a way for young people to vacate their electronics and give their bodies, minds and emotions a time to recharge and reboot. I have been hearing about this UNPLUGGED movement spreading across the country and I am happy to say that we could have written the manual on the topic.

To this end, I need your assistance. If you are like me, you recognize the irony of me writing this article on a keyboard and in front of a screen with a Facebook logo at the bottom of the page. The irony certainly is not lost on me. However, we have also seen the kids walking around town or sitting in front of their video games, consumed to a degree that you might wonder if they have a port connecting them at the hip with these devices. Help us make a difference in the lives of young people by telling them about the Trek and inviting them to join this passionate community. It’s sometimes tempting to walk past a young plugged-in person, assuming that “they could never be interested.” But I promise you that there is a young trekker waiting to get out from under the cords and devices and wanting an exciting adventure. Help me to share the Trek!
Our thoughts and prayers are in Boston this day as we hear details about the explosion during the Boston Marathon. The tragedy is poignant for me, as a 2005 and 2011 participant in that great race, but also because my sister, Mary Hooper Klaff, a member of the TT in the 80’s, crossed the finish line just 20 minutes before the first explosion. My sister, Millie Hooper Lafontaine, TT and KP pusher in the late 60’s, was in the crowd, waiting for Mary in the ‘family meet and greet’ area. There are many other Gulch connections to Boston and the marathon, so it is worth pausing and honoring those families.

My first exposure to Boston came from our family’s camping trips to New England. My second exposure came from a tent mate in Group II, Richard McGinnis, who grew up in Massachusetts. At the time the Gulch had a cook from Newton (Henry Berman) and some other campers from Needham, Cambridge, Hingham and Lowell. My sister, Millie, went on to Harvard and now lives in Concord, NH. To paraphrase a statement I heard this week on the NPR show Here and Now, “In crises like this, we are all Bostonians.” The Gulch is also an international institution as I have heard from trekkers from Greece and Italy and France, who are horrified at this attack on our soil. Our hearts go out to the Bermans and McGinnises and the Lafontaines and all of the Gulch families in the area. We are indeed all Bostonians. And Bostonians are resilient. We emulate that resilience by committing to live to see another day.

On a happier note, I am glad to report that we have waiting lists at the Gulch for a couple groups this summer. There is still room for campers in the Mountain Desert Trek (MDT) and the Prairie Trek (PT), but time is of the essence. So be sure to contact Jordan Stone and Lezle Williams with the names of teenagers who are interested. I will also point out that the special participant in the Family Trek (FT) this year is Chet Kubit. Chet promises to bring out his favorite magic tricks, ‘mostly true’ insider Gulch stories, and favorite places on the FT this summer. Camper slots (for all ages) are going like Chet’s sourdough hot cakes, so be sure to sign up now, before you lose out.

In mid-May, the Board joined over 25 members of the Henio family in the Camp Opening exercises. Base Camp floors were scrubbed, cobwebs were removed, latties were emptied, and the hoop house was covered. We have a new-found appreciation of our Henio friends, who were there in honor of Grandfather Tom Henio and Hillis Howie. We particularly want to thank Irene Notah, who was on the TT in the late 50’s and early 60’s, for her help coordinating the Opening and Joe Chavez, who offered the traditional Navajo blessing and pointed out areas needing attention. The Base Camp is now ready for the school groups, staff training, and summer camp sessions. Let the games begin!

Lastly, the property to the west and north of the Gulch (formerly owned by the Bass and Carver families) has been bought in its entirety by the Pratt family. We welcome Geoffrey Pratt, the patriarch in the family, to the Las Tuces Valley, and we are excited to get to know him and his family.

Henry E. Hooper Chair, Board of Directors

Photos:
Top Left - Joe Chavez (and his wife Madeline) offering prayer
Top Right - Chapo family moving mattresses to cabins
Bottom Left - Nolan Notah cleaning windows in the Mess Hall
Bottom Middle - Richard McGinnis and Greg Barker struggle with the wind to put up the hoop house
Bottom Right - Sarah Henio works to clean mess hall benches
Bottom Far Right - Hoop house is ready!

Photos courtesy of Bill Donald

Henry E. Hooper Chair, Board of Directors

MAY 2013 News from Trek Country 3
Remembering Ned

A tribute to Ned Merrell

by Larry Barker

To remember Ned Merrell is to honor a man of charm, intelligence and accomplishment. As I look back on his long productive life, it seems to me, Ned had it all: A wonderful family, life-long friendships, vibrant energy, engaging personality, enduring work ethic, an affable soul. I could go on and on, but I think Ned would be uncomfortable with all this. It simply wasn’t his style. His strengths were subtle and real. The Ned Merrell I knew was down to earth. His innate warmth was as infectious as his smile.

Ned’s life-long love affair with Cottonwood Gulch had its beginnings more than 70 years ago when he joined Mr. Howie on some of the earliest pioneer Prairie Trek Expeditions. I don’t know if Ned actually won the Silver Buckle when he was a Trekker in 1939, but through the years he certainly earned a drawer full of silver buckles. Throughout his life Ned made significant and enduring contributions to the overall success of Cottonwood Gulch. He was often called upon by Mr. Howie for advice and counsel.

In the late 1980s, some years after Mr. Howie retired, the Cottonwood Gulch Board of Trustees was relocated to Albuquerque. The first Chairman of the newly reconstituted Board was Ned Merrell. I served with him during some difficult times for the organization. Faced with shrinking enrollments, a lack of innovation and a lean bank account, Cottonwood Gulch was in trouble. I can tell you first-hand, the steady leadership, strong commitment and solid business direction provided by Ned Merrell (along with Sam Sherwood) served to ensure the survival of our historic organization. Today, Cottonwood Gulch is financially healthy and a real leader in outdoor education thanks to people like Ned Merrell. I know Ned would scoff at this observation. He wouldn’t want the credit. That’s the kind of guy Ned was.

Ned looked for the best in others and he gave the best he had. Thank you Ned. We’ll miss you and we will never forget you.

In 1958 my father, Peter Fortune, was sent on the Prairie Trek from his home in Indianapolis, Indiana. His father, Robert Fortune, had spent two summers exploring with Hillsie Howie in 1934-35, which must have had some bearing on his choice to send his son. However, when we ask my father about his time on the Trek, or what significance that single summer had for him, his memories are somewhat unsatisfying, disjointed and seemingly insignificant. His most vivid memories of that summer in 1958 are of visiting Sunset Crater, coming across a ghost town and finding an old newspaper, and uncovering a freshly shed, wholly intact rattlesnake skin. And that he loved it. Not much to go by.

However, when we press him, it is clear that it is not the content of the memories themselves that are so important, but the feelings the experiences evoke. An awakening sense of a world beyond Indianapolis. The wonderment of connecting what is learned in books to real life and holding it in your hands. Surely my father had heard of Cowboys and the Wild West, watched them on TV and in the movies, but to find a town that had once been inhabited by these characters, to discover a newspaper and realize that this town had once been alive with people with news to tell in print, is a very different thing. To know that a rattlesnake sheds his skin is a random fact, but to find the skin, pick it up and feel how light and dry it is makes it real and important enough to remember for over 50 years.

Similar stories of awe and discovery have been shared by hundreds of former trekkers over the last 87 years, myself included. My father was good enough to allow me to share in the beauty of a Trek summer (which has turned into 13 years, including time as staff and on the board), and it is something he would like to share with many others. We are very aware of the fact that for many a summer camp experience such as the Cottonwood Gulch is not financially possible. So, when my father turned 70 in January and a friend asked “What do you get for a man who has everything?” we thought of setting up a scholarship fund in my father’s name so that more children, who may otherwise not have the chance, could share in what was, and is, such a life changing experience for so many.

Thanks to the friends and family of Peter Fortune for your generous contributions! The Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund sends young people to the Gulch to experience much the same awe as Mr. Peter Fortune did in 1958. For more info email kris@cottonwoodgulch.org.
Notes from the Red Rock Society by Jameson French

Twelve years ago at the Gulch’s 75th Anniversary rendezvous celebration a group of alumni expressed interest in establishing a planned giving group for the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation. In my remarks at that time, I made the case for raising at least a million dollar endowment for the organization for which we all care so deeply. At that point, we hoped that funds would help support scholarships, facilities and potential land protection projects and to date, they indeed have done this. After that speech, several guests came up to me and told me that they either had named or would consider naming the Gulch in their estate planning documents. We heard from people that they were unlikely to be able to give large cash contributions during their lifetimes, but would love the idea of the Gulch benefiting at the time of their death.

Out of this spirit, the Red Rocks Society was created with a handful of charter members. More than a decade later we are working hard to reach that million dollar endowment goal. Like many others, we were challenged by the decade of miserable financial conditions and three years of the worst recession since the 1930s. However, with new leadership on the Board and a new ED, an effort is afoot to re-energize the Red Rocks Society and I invite you to join me in becoming a member. We would love to add a dozen new Red Rock Society contributors by the 90th Reunion in 2016. Remember there are so many ways to support Cottonwood Gulch through planned giving vehicles—from life insurance, to IRAs, to charitable gift annuities. Please contact me (jameyf@northlandforest.com) or Board Chair Henry Hooper (henryhooper@gmail.com) or our ED Kris Salisbury (kris@cottonwoodgulch.org) for additional information or if you are willing to acknowledge your membership in this esteemed group. I promise a special mesa top cocktail gathering for the membership at the 90th!
Summer Treks - ‘Unplug’ and Tune In

What’s in store for Summer 2013:

**Prairie Trek (Boys 13-16, 36 days)**

River Trip? Yes. High mountain peaks? You bet. Rock climbing? To your heart’s content. Not to mention an abundance of delicious food that tastes even better when your kitchen overlooks the golden glow of a New Mexico sunset. This is the 87th rendition of our Prairie Trek Expedition, and this year’s group will venture into the diverse canyon country of southern Utah to paddle the rapids of the Colorado River and backpack to the top of the mountain peak that towers over the Moab area: Mount Tukuhnikivatz. And like all our groups, you will work alongside our staff to explore hidden ruins, peregrine falcons, ghost towns, horned toads and organic farms of the Southwest.

**Turquoise Trail (Girls 13-16, 36 days)**

How do we know that girls on the Turquoise Trail LOVE this group? They keep coming back year after year, and they tell us about the amazing experience they had traveling as a group of emboldened young women into the backcountry of the Southwest. Over the last three years, nearly every girl from this expedition has returned to the Gulch the following summer. Cottonwood Gulch turns into a second home for TT Trekkers, and how could it not? It’s a magical place to spend your summers. The 2013 crew will backpack through two of New Mexico’s most beautiful areas: the Gila Wilderness and the Carson National Forest, which includes the highest peaks in New Mexico. TT’ers are sure to find a wilderness hot spring or two while in search of ancestral puebloan cliff dwellings, and walk through an expansive field of mountain wildflowers on their way to the summit of a mountain peak.

**Mountain Desert Trek (Ages 16-18, 42 days)**

Gulch staff recently scouted the MDT’s backpack down the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, and we were mightily impressed. The Grand Canyon is truly awe-inspiring, and while the hike is challenging and hot, the feeling of satisfaction when you hike out of this 5,000-foot gorge is second to none. But the Grand Canyon adventure is only a small portion of the 2013 Mountain Desert Trek Expedition. As our longest and most challenging group, the MDT will embark on the longest backpack of any Trek: over a week in the alpine mountains of Colorado, surrounded by redolent summer wildflowers, crystalline mountain streams, and 14,000-foot peaks. You will also explore New Mexico’s Pecos Wilderness, work to restore a degraded streambed, and investigate the lizards, snails, cacti, butterflies, condors, andprehistoric artifacts you find along the way.

**Why are Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions so long?**

“I know when I was in the Outfit, 5 weeks seemed like a ridiculously long time and now I don’t want to go home. Tell people that it is the longer period that cultivates relationships and makes the TT so special.”

--Turquoise Trail Trekker, 2012

When families initially hear about the Gulch, the first question they often ask is, “why are Cottonwood Gulch expeditions so long?” The short answer: our Trekkers tell us that’s what they want and enjoy. For over 85 years Trekkers have been joining us for 5, 6, even 8 weeks and every year we hear how quickly it went by. Our expeditions are outdoor adventures and so much more. Trekkers develop new passions and interests, form long-lasting friendships, and discover new ideas and perspectives. Our expeditions give Trekkers the opportunity, the support, and the time to discover personal independence, pursue deep burning curiosities, and reflect on where they have been and where they want to go in life. Life on an expedition is very different from life at home: weeks away from home, weeks away from the barrage of technology, weeks of self-sufficiency.

These are things that take some time to understand, explore, contemplate and truly appreciate!
Bryon Schroeder, Base Camp Archaeologist

Hello Cottonwood Gulch Trekkers! My name is Bryon Schroeder and I was born and raised in Wyoming. I have both a BA and MA from the University of Wyoming and I am currently finishing up a PhD from the University of Montana, all in anthropology. My archaeology career began in my own backyard roaming the hills and finding remnants of the people who had called Wyoming home long before me. I became so passionate about studying these people's lives that I pursued an archaeology career at the age of 16 and have now worked for over a decade as a professional archaeologist in several states. For the last six years my research has focused on the alpine archaeology of the Intermountain West and seeks to answer how humans used the environments we now think of as difficult to occupy. I am excited to be in the Southwest, the birthplace of so many great archaeology theories and research methods. I look forward to exploring the prehistory of the region with you and helping the complexities of the past come to life. Bryon lives with his wife in Belen, NM while he completes his dissertation. Pictured: Soapstone Bowl Preform in the Wind River Range of Wyoming (Photo: Rich Adams)

Candene Myers, MDT Staff

Both my parents grew up in rural Jamaica and had a close relationship with their environment. Because of this, a lot of my childhood vacations were spent exploring vast acres of land in the country at my grandparents. My brothers and I spent many hours climbing trees, picking fruits, making beds and huts in tall grass, and digging for insects. Our family frequented beaches, waterfalls, rivers, and had barbeques in the mountains. Jamaica has world famous landscapes and have become absorbed into my daily life, filling it with awe and inspiration. Being outdoors makes me feel alive and extremely relaxed. At the same time, nature engages all of my senses which has kept my mind filled with questions.

This inspired my deep interest in Biology which led to my undergraduate study of Environmental Biology and my continued study of Environmental Science for my Masters degree. Mother Nature continued to surprise and educate me so I felt it had to become a main component of my vocation and soon thereafter, I discovered Outdoor Education, which has become my vocation. Working with youth energizes me as much as the outdoors and it has been a happy marriage so far. I am uber-excited to meet and engage the Trekkers this summer while exploring the gorgeous Southwest landscape with them! Candene currently hails from the American Northeast. Pictured: Candene paddling the Battenkill River

Carla Ehlinger, WCT Staff

We had been in class all day. I think I remember it being a particularly long day: mid-shaft compound femur fracture, paralysis, one guy lost his hand. It was a dune buggy accident. It was exciting. I walked into the spice aroma that fills Kris and Paul's warm home and sloughed off my pack next to my bedroll on the floor. Victims with impaled objects and patient assessments were still swimming through my mind. Did I ask her if she had any allergies? Why didn't we check the back board straps a second time? “Hey Carla Jo?” Kris' voice coaxes me back into the life about us. She looks tired, too. I think she had a full day preparing for the board members' arrival tomorrow. “What's up?” I say through an empathetic smile. Her glasses were reflecting the blue computer screen in the dimness of the night's kitchen. “I was wondering if you'd write an article for the Gulch paper. Just a little bit about yourself.”

Myself? A few words about myself. I tell her that I would write it before I have an idea of what I will say. Is it important that I was born in Texas? Is it important that I studied at Texas A&M? I suppose so; both of these facts are usually flushed out within an hour of knowing me. It was Texas that taught me to appreciate the land. It was A&M that honed my passion for wildlife and the outdoors — and rugby. Each semester's end found me burning highways in search of a summer season chocked full of adventure. One summer was spent in the Southwest mountains of Colorado carving tread and busting granite on a trail crew. Another was spent in the blistering Texas heat working cattle and breeding whitetail deer for an honest, rough-handed man on a ranch.

My final summer was spent as a backcountry ranger working for the U.S. Forest Service in Washington's Cascade Mountains. When I wasn't patrolling the backcountry, I was working on a beaver relocation project and an ongoing hawk migration study. It may have been the jagged, snow-crusted Sawtooths, or maybe it was the pure desolation and solitude that made this my most pivotal season. Regardless, it was that summer in the mountains that introduced me to my own self for the very first time. This is the person you all will know. I am a person of conviction; I care too much most of the time; I haven't lived without regret; I usually have a joke on hand; my dog Boone is my best friend. I am the most happy when I'm making a difference — a difference in another's life, or a difference to improve the environment. But many times it's as small as making a difference in myself.

The past few months have found me brimming with excitement after receiving Kris' email offering me the opportunity to be a part of The Gulch by leading the Wild Country Trek. The Gulch endorses an inventive program that is matched by few in the outdoor industry of today. This season I look forward to exhausting days spent under the sun, and brisk nights under the star-gemmed desert sky. I expect I'll learn from the Trekkers just as much as they learn from me. Pictured: Carla Jo releasing a beaver into its new habitat
Where are they NOW?
Tales from alumni and staff

Gaea McGahee & Christina Chavez

In February 2011, we were “extracted” from Egypt. Our Egyptian archaeology season had just begun—some mapping, some excavation—when the events in Cairo (though far from Abydos) began to escalate. Soon it was clear that the aspirations of archaeologists, photographers, artists, and conservators would give way to the revolutionary events in Cairo and other cities in Egypt. After we returned home to New Mexico, we watched events of the Arab Spring unfold.

Two years later, we are now back in Abydos working on an archaeology project: the PYIFA Abydos Expedition (Pennsylvania-Yale-Institute of Fine Arts, NYU). We’ve had the opportunity to work in this landscape for a number of field seasons with both Egyptian and Western archaeologists, and we’re glad to be back. Being here gives us the chance to fulfill what we had hoped to accomplish in 2011—officially we provide survey and GIS support for the PYIFA project. This means we walk together through the majestic desert and we see things. Our perspectives adjust: far away from home we find this an opportunity to change, and to fill our reservoirs with material we’ll draw from as teachers and anthropologists.

Our friendship is rooted in another desert—the landscape of southern New Mexico where we worked on our first archaeology project in 2001. In 2004 we worked for that same archaeology project and were fortunate to visit archaeological sites in the Chihuahuan desert in northwestern Mexico. Since then, we have each spent several summers as the Cottonwood Gulch archaeologist, and we look forward to sharing some of our stories with you all around a campfire ring, or out on the road back at the Gulch.

Luke Gullickson

In 2011, I was a resident in the music program at the Banff Centre for the Arts. I went there to study jazz piano, but also took time to work on guitar fingerpicking and record a short album of folk songs. One day a soul singer from Calgary incisively diagnosed my restless creative approach when she observed, “Luke, I don’t think you really want to be a jazz musician. What you want to do is explore.”

Which, of course, was exactly right. I find the same pleasure delving into new and unfamiliar musical projects that I do trekking through isolated forests and canyons. What impels me in each case is a value highly endemic to the Cottonwood Gulch community: what I’m pursuing is the basic joy of exploration.

Since last summer I’ve continued to explore music through numerous performances in Chicago with my group Grant Wallace Band, as well as through more artist residencies. This year I earned fellowships to visit the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and Wyoming’s Ucross Foundation. I spent a few weeks composing new music at each of these artist colonies, and each experience put me in touch with forceful places inhabited by powerful creative spirits.

As group leader for the Mountain Desert Trek this summer I’ll have the tremendous opportunity to introduce our trekkers to the fascinating places and people of the southwest, and I have no doubt that these experiences will instill—and intensify—the fundamental zest for exploration that informs my own paths and those of my fellow staff.

This spark is a gift, one the trekkers can carry with them wherever their individual interests and passions lead.

Ben Finkel

Back in middle school, I couldn’t stop talking about John James Audubon and birding. Fortunately, I spoke with Ellie Ellington, long time friend of the Gulch, who introduced me and I joined the ranks of the Philadelphia Friends who have spent their summers in the Southwest.

In my nature-camp filled childhood, the Gulch always stood out. During three summers on expeditions (PT and MDT), staff and other Trekkers introduced me to sustainability and our fragile relationship with ecosystems. Since then, my field experiences have ranged from Costa Rica to South African parks as I embraced ecological studies. Most recently, I spent a summer tracking chimpanzees in Uganda, watching them eat figs all day.

The Gulch’s deliberate approach to foster independent discovery helped me better understand my own way of learning. It is also where I first saw nature as a classroom.

I am now graduating from Duke University with degrees in Evolutionary Anthropology and Environmental Sciences and a plan to pursue a PhD in primatology. This upcoming fall, I will start a field research position in Argentina studying owl monkeys.

I’ll be joining the group staff of the Mountain Desert Trek as a cool! I can’t wait to return to the Southwest landscape. Like in treks past, I’ll love the thrill of summiting a peak and singing around a campfire, but this time I will enjoy sharing my love for the natural world with young students. Living in the field- or the bush, the wild, or wilderness— is always an exhilarating challenge. The Gulch first presented me with those challenges and taught me the skills necessary to thrive in a new and foreign place. To be adaptive, resilient, and attentive are always the hallmarks of a successful trekker.

Chuck Whitney

After spending four seasons educating youngsters in the wilds of the Four Corners, new adventures were calling my name. (Probably whispering from a hidden spot just off the edge of Muley Point or the depths of a Sangre De Cristo mountain lake...I’m still not sure.) I listened, and decided to leave the packing of the Coms and organizing of the QM Shack in the capable hands of a new generation of Gulch Instructors. It was finally time to become a Wildland Firefighter, a plan hatched some years earlier.

In the spring of 2012 I caught on with the Black Mesa Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC), giving me the chance to fight forest fires in some of the most extreme conditions most of us will see. This highly trained and accomplished crew is one of the best in the Hotshot-heavy Southwest region. I don’t exactly claim to be an expert after one season, but I can say that I was continually impressed at not only the physical and mental toughness but also the technical savvy, overall discipline, and leadership abilities of the crew members.

Throughout 6 months of 16-hour days filled with heat, smoke, 100-foot burning snags, and more noise and chain saw exhaust than you can imagine, Black Mesa stayed safe, efficient, and effective.

Last season was one of the busiest in recent memory and we logged nearly 1200 hours of overtime on fires, including the Whitewater-Baldy Complex in New Mexico’s Gila Wilderness which, at nearly 300,000 acres burned, is the largest in state history. Extended drought conditions continue to be the norm across the western states and all signs point to this season being much the same. All I know is that I’ll be out there, most likely with a Pulaski in hand (unless the stars align and they let this second year grunt run an actual chainsaw)! Here’s to hopin’.
“Where’s Cottonwoods?”

New Trekkers and staff often ask that question when hearing at breakfast on their first day to meet at “Cottonwoods.” You know, the place where we all gather in the morning and figure out what we are doing for the day... Down there in a circle under the big trees. Have you been there recently? You might notice that the trees are getting older (if they are still there) and starting to show signs of weakening. Some have even fallen. These lovely large trees, which are a welcome site to anyone seeking shade or water when wandering the Southwest, start to deteriorate at about age 60, but can still live twice that long. We imagine that is why they are showing signs of age about now.

The Lanceleaf Cottonwood, *Populus acuminata*, graces the banks all along Sawyer Creek on the Gulch land. Their leaves are just now starting to turn that new leaf green of Spring. By summer, they will be a welcome respite for Trekkers and staff seeking a cool shady spot for Siesta. Our staff, board and friends started noticing that our large trees were slowly starting to reach the end of their life and were struggling even more in our recent drought. Curiously, the Lanceleaf is thought by many to not be able to bear fertile seeds. The jury is still out it seems. I have heard a number of reports of how the Lanceleaf came to be. It seems it is a cross between a Fremont Cottonwood and a Narrowleaf Cottonwood, although some suggest that it is a Narrowleaf crossed with a Plains Cottonwood. It is unique, to say the least, and grows at a particular elevation at which the Gulch Base Camp happens to be located: 7,500’. It seems that Fremont Cottonwoods grow to around 6,000’, the Narrowleaf grow to 7300’ and the Plains Cottonwood to about 6500’. As it is not known for seed germination, the Lanceleaf spreads by rhizome or flood: that bury fallen branches and allow new trees to sprout.

Floods of that nature are pretty rare at the Gulch and rhizome spread is not producing large trees fast enough. Thus, some years ago, a call to action was put out to determine how to remedy our problem. We have since been on a mission to find ways to get our Lanceleaf Cottonwood Bosque to replenish itself since the Cottonwoods are an essential part of our ecosystem, erosion control and stream health. Read more about our overall stewardship progress below.  - KY

Land Stewardship - A Priority at the Gulch

New Cottonwoods Planted

As part of a work-trade for a Turquoise Trail trekker, we recently brought out the trekker’s father, Rob Hairston (a local landscaper), to plant cottonwood and fruit trees on our property in early April. Much of the money to purchase trees was donated by alumni, and despite frustratingly rocky soil, the planting went well.

The need for new cottonwoods is becoming more apparent every year. The problem (or, as we like to think of it, the challenge) is that most of our cottonwoods are very old. Additionally, most of them are of a particular hybrid variety called Lanceleaf cottonwoods (*Populus acuminata*), which do not readily produce seeds. Lanceleaves are able to send up new shoots from their roots, and those shoots are capable of turning into fully grown trees, which they do with abandon at the Gulch. They have been so good at it that we’ve estimated there are only about five unique individuals in our streambed, each of them having sprouted new trunks multiple times.

In 2007-8, former Trekker and staff Alex Nees spent many months researching the Gulch property, with the following conclusion: “In other words, from a genetic and root-system perspective, we only have about 5 cottonwoods, and they are all quite old, as much as 100 years old in some cases.” Many of our cottonwood trees are dying. This is problematic for many reasons. Most obviously, we are Cottonwood Gulch, and Juniper Gulch or Pinon Gulch doesn’t have quite the same ring. Programmatically, the cottonwoods provide the most pleasant and shaded environment on our property. Ecologically, they are considered a keystone species, so their demise would have a disproportionately negative effect on the entire ecosystem of our property—the birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, mammals, and plants that live in Sawyer Creek would be dramatically and negatively affected.

So what can we do? The best option is to plant new trees, which we did this spring! We put 13 cottonwoods in the ground, most of which were the Lanceleaf variety that has thrived in Sawyer Creek for decades. Our hope is that these new trees will provide the new genetic material needed to re-create a healthy cottonwood bosque at the Gulch. They require care, and their survival is not assured, but it is an encouraging step in the right direction.  - JS

State Forestry Plan Underway

We have been working closely with Todd Haines of New Mexico State Forestry to put together a stewardship plan for our property. Much of the legwork had been completed by Arch McCallum several years ago, but this new plan will open doors to funding that was previously inaccessible to us. This funding could help pay for a variety of projects, most notably wildfire prevention through additional thinning, removal of downed logs, and possibly a prescribed burn. In order to access money from governmental organizations such as NRCS and the state of New Mexico, we need a government-approved stewardship plan such as the one Todd is preparing. Additionally, Scott’s expertise as a forester will be a valuable addition to one Todd is preparing. Additionally, Scott’s expertise as a forester will be a valuable addition to the work already done by Arch, Alex Nees, and others. The plan should be completed by early May.

- JS
Help us “See a Job and Do It”

Your Donation Can...

- Replace Outfit Cabin Roofs $2,800
- Upgrade/Renovate our Ropes Course $19,000
- Restore Sawyer Creek Cottonwoods $120/tree
- Purchase new climbing equipment $500
- Upgrade our Mess Hall Kitchen Equip $2000
- Bring a Visiting Scholar to the Gulch $2000
- Purchase wood for Museum curation cabinets $1700
- Chronicle our Gulch Archives $1500
- Improve forest health $ varies

Recognize Anyone?

Join us on Facebook to identify old friends and assist us in chronicling our history
The following individuals and families have given generously to the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation during the dates of October 1, 2012 - April 30, 2013. We are extraordinarily grateful for all of the support! Your contributions are the mortar for our Foundation. Thank you very much!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacesetters ($5000 or more):</th>
<th>Bill Donald</th>
<th>Douglas Hanna and Jean Meyer - <em>In memory of Ned Meyer</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.M.R. Barker Foundation</td>
<td>Chris and Melissa Elkinton</td>
<td>Michael Hays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter and Joan Fortune - “For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Elicia Elkinton</td>
<td>Thomas Hearty - <em>In honor of Thomas Hand Hearty</em></td>
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<td>French Foundation</td>
<td>Matthew Grayson</td>
<td>Thomas Hecht</td>
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<td>John Mayer</td>
<td>Ned and Kelly Hooper</td>
<td>Pete and Shirley Heinrich</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Pierce</td>
<td>Lawrence Hooper - &quot;In Honor of Laurie Hooper Sr.&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Hirschland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane Wenzel</td>
<td>Theresa Kavanaugh - “On behalf of the Lienhard Family”</td>
<td>Henry Hooper - “In Honor of Bill Donald”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Benefactors ($1000-$4999):</th>
<th>Matthew Kayes</th>
<th>Hillis Howie</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fred and Susan Beckhorn</td>
<td>Deborah Korol</td>
<td>Dale Kaiser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis or Janette Englehardt or Sheryl Nagle or Sherry Brooks - “In Honor of Peter Fortune”</td>
<td>Boris Meditch</td>
<td>Marjorie Kirtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert and Shirley French - “To Honor Jameson French”</td>
<td>Danila Oder</td>
<td>William and Linda Koons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy French and the NH Charitable Foundation</td>
<td>Andrew and Nancy Ramage</td>
<td>Shirley Kovacs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles and Jane Gaillard - “To establish the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Wenda Trevathan and Gregg Henry</td>
<td>William and Linda Koons</td>
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<tr>
<th>Donors ($100 - $499):</th>
<th>Peter Abrons</th>
<th>Jamie and Sarah Kresburg</th>
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<tr>
<td>Richard and Linden Aerts</td>
<td>Anonymous - “In honor of Chet Kubit and staff recognition”</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kubic - “In Memory of Samuel F. Sherwood”</td>
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<td>Sharman Babiour</td>
<td>Peter Broder</td>
<td>Michael and Mildred Lafontaine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Barker</td>
<td>Hugh Camitta</td>
<td>William Lazarus</td>
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<td>Seth Batti</td>
<td>Ceredwen Cherry</td>
<td>Jerome Lidz</td>
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<td>David and Jeanne Bennett</td>
<td>Tommy Cleveland</td>
<td>McKee Foundation</td>
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<td>Jim and Cathy Birman</td>
<td>Paul Cowden</td>
<td>Jill Macvicar</td>
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<td>Peter Broder</td>
<td>Lesley Davison</td>
<td>George and Stephanie Mendelsohn</td>
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<td>Hugh Camitta</td>
<td>Lisa Deutscher</td>
<td>Sally Merrell</td>
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<td>Ceridwen Cherry</td>
<td>Liz Doubleday</td>
<td>Lawrence and Margaret Nees</td>
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<td>Tommy Cleveland</td>
<td>Lee and Ann Farnham</td>
<td>Sara Nosenchuk</td>
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<td>Paul Cowden</td>
<td>Peter Fleisher</td>
<td>Tanya and Alex Nees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesley Davison</td>
<td>Catherine Fortune - &quot;For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Peggy and Jonathan Peters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Deutscher</td>
<td>CR Fortune - “For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Claire Priest</td>
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<td>Liz Doubleday</td>
<td>Margaret Fox and Mark Udall</td>
<td>Dena Rakoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee and Ann Farnham</td>
<td>Jennifer Friedman</td>
<td>Lin, George, and Diane Robinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Fleisher</td>
<td>Jamey French</td>
<td>Robert Robinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Fortune - &quot;For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Tim Elliott</td>
<td>Alan Rojer and Ellen Relkin - “To plant a fruit orchard”</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR Fortune - “For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund”</td>
<td>Michael Exstein</td>
<td>Jonathan Rose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Fox and Mark Udall</td>
<td>George Grove</td>
<td>Mike and Tobi Salmanson Zemsky</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Friedman</td>
<td>Margaret Fox and Mark Udall</td>
<td>Kealy Salomon - “On behalf of Robert Cook and Kealy Salomon”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamey French</td>
<td>Philip Walton</td>
<td>Joseph Schmaltz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Elliott</td>
<td>Jeff and Courtney Zemsky - “On behalf of Pennsylvania”</td>
<td>Deborah Swartz and Mark Elson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Exstein</td>
<td>Eve Zimmerman - “For would-be trekkers”</td>
<td>Margaret Fox and Mark Udall</td>
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| Sponsors ($500 - $999):      | Robert and Vivian Hairston | Jeff and Paula Cloud |
|------------------------------| Jeff  and Paula Cloud | John Bloch |
| Henry and Traci Bagli Hooper Fund | Jennifer Friedman | Jeffrey Schmaltz |
| Larry Barker                 | Jamey French            | Robert and Vivian Hairston |
| Henry and Carole Berman      | Tim Elliott             | Steve Katz |
| Michele Fortune Davidson - “For the Peter Fortune Scholarship Fund” | Michael Exstein | Chet Kubit |
|                             | George Grove            | Orlando Pioche |
|                             |                         | Kris Salisbury |

With your help this year we have...

- Re-built the Outfit Hogan Roof
- Planted 13 new Cottonwood Trees
- Planted 20 Fruit Trees
- Re-roofed the Main Cabin Loop
- A backroad-worthy 4x4 ‘new-to-us’ truck
- Provided 23 partial scholarships
- Brought a ceramics scholar to the Gulch
- (Are) developing a Geocaching course
- (Are) building a raw materials kiln
- (Are) rolling out our new Art and Music Trek
- and so much more!
Adult Fall Treks for those wishing to rekindle some old memories while crafting a few new ones!

Grandeur abounds on this 9 day Full Moon trek through the Four Corners. We think that the cooler temps of Fall make this the best time of year to wander the trails and slots!

Join us as we explore the magical ruins of Canyon de Chelly, discover what lies behind each bend in Paria's slot canyon, watch the moon rise over the Grand Canyon, wander through native arts and crafts on Gallup's famous Route 66 corridor and complete our journey with a soak at a backcountry hot springs in the Jemez Mountains.

For the bold adventurer, you may have a chance to hike into the canyon depths from the North Rim as well.

We will start each day with a powerful cup of Gulch coffee sampling from a few local coffee roasters (or tea), enjoy three hearty meals cooked by our road chefs and finish most days around a fire with a glass of wine from one of New Mexico's local wineries.

During this expedition you may find yourself hiking, rock climbing, canyoneering, and simply gawking at the wonders we see along the way.

September 14-22 Tuition $1650
Minimum Participants: 10 Maximum Participants: 15

Canyon Country Ramble

Womens Wilderness Retreat

This is your invitation to explore, discover and create in the outdoors while getting to know a passionate group of women who share a love of adventuring in the Southwest.

Join our experienced female guides, as the Full Moon rises, to wander through abundant fall colors, explore areas of ancient cultural significance, discover mystifying geologic formations, challenge yourself to reach the highest point in New Mexico, and tempt yourself to try your hand at capturing the beauty around you in a creation of art.

Our journey begins by returning to the days of the dinosaur at Ojito Wilderness Study Area, continue to Volcanic areas around the Jemez Mountains, explore ruins and mesas at Bandelier National Monument, enjoy a wine tasting at an old Dixon winery, make a town stop at the historic, charming, and artsy town of Taos, wander our way to the top of a Peak and before sending you off to the airport, we may be able to slip in a behind-the-scenes art museum stop or a glimpse into a Chimayo weaver's studio. The last night, we will be sure to soak our bones at Ojo Caliente Hot Springs.

September 19-28 Tuition $1650
Minimum participants: 10 Maximum participants: 15

Womens Wilderness Retreat

September 21-30 Tuition $1650
Minimum participants: 10 Maximum participants: 15

Womens Wilderness Retreat

This is your invitation to explore, discover and create in the outdoors while getting to know a passionate group of women who share a love of adventuring in the Southwest.

Join our experienced female guides, as the Full Moon rises, to wander through abundant fall colors, explore areas of ancient cultural significance, discover mystifying geologic formations, challenge yourself to reach the highest point in New Mexico, and tempt yourself to try your hand at capturing the beauty around you in a creation of art.

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