

THE GRAND CANYON River Runner

Number Four

preserving public access to the Colorado River

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Elves Chasm © Katherine Bennett 2006



CRMP update

by Pam Whitney

An important part of the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) is the establishment of a monitoring program to assess whether management actions are meeting prescribed visitor experience goals and objectives. A Visitor Experience Monitoring Plan (VEMP) is being developed to guide this monitoring. This plan will not only provide information about the 2006 CRMP but it will be used during the next plan revision (expected in 10 to 15 years).

This past February GCRRA was invited to a meeting in Flagstaff, along with other stakeholders, to hear the initial report on the list of monitoring options and their advantages and disadvantages. The options were developed by researchers from Oregon State University and then under NPS direction they were more fully developed. The Draft VEMP reviews types of information to be monitored and describes the methods that will be used to monitor them. The meeting gave participants an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on the methods proposed and the types of information to be monitored.

Types of information to be monitored are: use information, on-river experiential impacts and non-commercial permit system (off-site) impacts. Use

information covers numbers of trips, numbers of people, numbers of user days and group sizes and trip lengths. Much of this information will come by analyzing the launch calendar which provides information for both commercial and non-commercial use from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. An important part of the CRMP was to assess trips-at-one-time (TAOT) and people-at-one-time (PAOT) as factors in camp competition and general levels of crowding. By using the actual data obtained under the implementation of CRMP the NPS will be able to see if the goals of the plan are being realized.

On-site impacts cover river encounters (contacts other than at camp or attraction sites), attraction site encounters, camp competition, launch congestion, hiking exchanges (number of search & rescue rates), helicopter impacts and motor/non-motor impacts. This section will also monitor "discretionary time"(DT) which is the "free time" river passengers have on trips that is not spent on logistics, sleep or travel on the river. DT was a concept developed by the NPS during the planning process of the CRMP so the research will be used to assess the assumptions regarding DT on trip quality vs. impacts on the resource. Consideration will be given to DT in relation to trip lengths, exploration impacts and personal benefits derived.

Impacts of the non-commercial permit system covers how the CRMP modified system will change the waiting times

[cont. pg 2]

and success for obtaining a permit. An annual report will give the statistics of use by season showing how many users applied and were successful as well as the disposition of users from the previous list.

The monitoring methods will vary depending on the type of information needed. The launch calendar will play the largest part in gathering statistics on use information. For the first time it will include use in the Lower Gorge (use below Diamond Creek), thereby incorporating the Lower Gorge into the VEMP. GCRRA supports all efforts to obtain information on visitor impacts in the Lower Gorge, a section of the canyon that has been ignored for too long.

Trip observers, post trip surveys, at site logs, at site observations, on site surveys, administrative diaries and search and rescue analysis are all proposed methods to be used to gather information on impacts from river encounters. This part of the VEMP is of most importance to GCRRA since it focuses on the quality of the river experience. We voiced some concerns regarding the impacts of trip observers riding along on trips and administering surveys on the last night/last morning of the trip. We feel it is intrusive to the passengers' experience and would prefer some other method be employed, post trip. We were also concerned when it became apparent that no real data had been used from search and rescue to support the new regulation in the CRMP requiring a guide to hike with commercial passengers leaving or beginning their trip at Phantom Ranch. We will continue to monitor this section of the VEMP closely and to make sure our concerns are addressed.

Monitoring methods for the non-commercial permit system are still to be developed and were not discussed at the meeting.



Watercolor © Ralph Fink

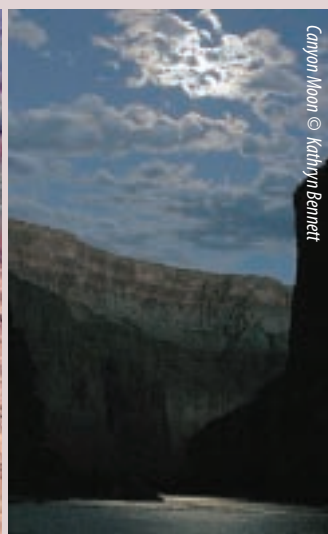
GCRRA has been recognized as a stakeholder in the development of the VEMP thanks to the support of our membership and our presence during the CRMP planning process. GCRRA plans to maintain an active voice since the VEMP will have immediate and long term effects on the current CRMP and on all future plans impacting the visitor experience. We are especially encouraged with the inclusion of the Lower Gorge in the VEMP which shows us that the NPS realizes the importance of this part of the canyon. We will be posting updates on this process on our website and we welcome any thoughts or ideas you might have regarding the VEMP.



LC Play © Catherine Cooper



Kanab Creek © Linda Doolittle



Canyon Moon © Kathryn Bennett

Message from GCRRA President

HERE WE ARE, standing on the threshold of the CRMP, wondering how it will all shake out. We won't have long to wait. On-river implementation began on January 1st while most of us were watching football games. The first commercial trips under the new plan will hit the water beginning in April, and we all want to know what it is going to be like down on the river.

While the CRMP was designed to provide a solid framework for a particularly complex set of river management issues, it has understandably left recreational users with a plethora of questions that will only be answered after months, perhaps years, of execution. As of this writing the NPS river managers have already demonstrated a willingness to 'bend' in order to make facets of the plan more workable, most notably with the new private boater access system. This flexibility was referred to throughout the plan as 'adaptive management', and it provides park management personnel with a means to adjust when adjustment is needed. Unexpected consequences of the plan can be recognized and ameliorated or perhaps even eliminated. Undoubtedly there will be surprises in the plan, and the extent to which they affect commercial passengers will be evaluated by everyone from Grand Canyon River Runners Association, the National Park Service and the outfitters, to the passengers themselves.

In other news, at the end of February GCRRA submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation our scoping comments on the Long Term Experimental Plan (LTEP) EIS for management of Glen Canyon Dam operations. GCRRA's comments focused on the need to apply environmentally sound science to all alternatives in the EIS, to adhere to legal requirements for the protection of endangered species and cultural resources, for beach habitat building flows with sediment triggers determined by well documented scientific data, and the addition of a selective withdrawal device on the dam in order to regulate downstream water temperature and quality. Several of these issues have been extensively addressed in previous issues of The River Runner. (See "Studying the Effects of Glen Canyon Dam Operations on Archaeological Sites," by Dr. Amy Draut, Spring, 2006; "Beach Habitat Building Floods in the Grand Canyon," by Dr. Linda Kahan, Fall, 2006.) When the EIS is presented we will assess and report on its content. GCRRA's scoping comments are posted on

our website, and more information can be found at <http://www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/gcdltep/index.html>.

On a personal note, I have to say how pleased I am at the quality of the articles that have been written for our first four newsletters. Many stories, poems and postcards have come from our own members. Well-known authors such as Wayne Ranney, Roy Webb, Lew Steiger and Richard Quartaroli, scientists Dr. Linda Kahan, Thom Lord and Dr. Amy Draut, educator Chris Cannon and our exercise guru, Dr. Erin Chapman – each contributed highly informative articles to our inaugural issues. The good news just gets better with the contributions of Gary Ladd and Brad Dimock in this issue of The River Runner. Both of these multi-talented gentlemen have long and illustrious careers connected to the Canyon, and each has submitted an article that is sure to get you talking.



Petroglyph, Tanner © Linda Doolittle

Finally, your Board is looking forward to some exciting events in the near term and into the future. We will be represented at the annual Guides Training Seminar sponsored by Grand Canyon River Guides at the end of March. We also look forward to meeting with and welcoming Steve Martin, who recently replaced Joe Alston as superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park. With your continued help and input we hope to send out our first member only e-newsletter in the near future, and of course there is always the next issue of The River Runner to look forward to. Best of all, many of us will have a Grand Canyon river trip this year. What better reminder of why we took this long and winding road in the first place!

Mari Carlos

HITCHHIKING by BOAT

through The Grand Canyon

By Gary Ladd



P-s-s-t.! I'm going to tell you a river secret.

In the mid-1990s, Bob Early, then editor of Arizona Highways, requested that I submit a proposal for an Arizona Highways Magazine anniversary book on Grand Canyon. The year 2000 would be the 75th year of the magazine and Bob wanted to commemorate the occasion with a book that celebrated the grandest landscape in the state.

He specifically wanted images that revealed the unexpected variety and beauty of the canyon's micro-environments below the rim. Bob knew I was an experienced Grand Canyon backpacker and active river-runner, and that I knew the diffi-

culties of photographing inside Grand Canyon.

So I wrote a proposal suggesting that the key to inner canyon photography would be the river, and if the book were to fulfill the editor's vision I needed a new "platform" for efficient access to the river corridor. I knew from long experience that for capturing a large number of compelling images, backpack trips move through the canyon too slow and river trips move far too fast.

The photography should be done on a series of river-running hitchhiking trips. If I weren't hindered by the limitations of either foot or river travel, then I could spend whatever amount of time was necessary for finding and making potent images, but when I was ready to move on I could do so with the help of passing river parties. The plan looked extremely efficient. I would be free to move downriver quickly by boat but my photography work would not be interrupted by river trip schedules. And being alone I could camp on tiny beaches at locations few, if any, had access to before.

This kind of trip, of course, was unheard of. Park Service rules stated that either you were a backpacker or a river-runner, each group governed by a unique set of regulations. I seriously doubted that permission would be obtained, but after more discussions with Bob we traveled to the South Rim to meet with the then superintendent, Rob Arnberger, and his staff. Bob and I explained the idea and the purpose of the trips, and what we hoped to accomplish with the book. We answered all questions and tried to assuage concerns about my safety, impact on other



Beautiful boulders along the Colorado River, river mile 213. August morning in a cobble bar deposit. © Gary Ladd 2005

visitors, and impacts on the canyon. In about an hour a decision was made.

The team accepted our proposal but only if one condition were met. The contract must be recognized as an intergovernmental agreement between the Department of the Interior's National Park Service and the State of Arizona (owner of Arizona Highways) for a one-time-only departure from the standard rules.

I walked out of the headquarters building completely astonished, and suddenly stricken by fears that a horrible mistake had been made. This thing could backfire—maybe the boatmen wouldn't cooperate, maybe the summer light would be too harsh for decent photography, maybe the passing boats would always be full, maybe my film would fry in the inner canyon heat, maybe a lot of things. I had nightmares about my good fortune.



August sunset, view from near Mather Point, South Rim. Moonsoon rains produce brilliant rainbow. O'Neill Butte behind the rainbow. © Gary Ladd 2006

Two summers were set aside for the special hitchhiking trips. Regrettably, no trips were made the first summer because I was timid and because of a paperwork snafu at the magazine offices.

Finally, in the summer of 1998, I began a series of hitching trips down the Colorado River in Grand Canyon in search of the most formidable collection of river corridor images ever captured.

Here's what happened: All my apprehensions quickly dissolved. The commercial boatmen were absolutely welcoming. I never had trouble flagging them down (what was this guy doing on the shoreline without a boat and without a way to get there on foot?), and, boatmen making lousy bureaucrats, they never once asked to see my official papers.

The boatmen wanted only one thing: to know how they could help with my project. When I boarded a boat for a ride, their questions were thus: "How ya doin'? How far do you want to go? We're going to have lunch in about an hour, do you want to join us? Do you have enough drinking water? Want any apples or oranges? Can we take any garbage?" I was treated like a king.

The passengers, on the other hand, usually hadn't a clue. Most didn't know that picking up hitch-hikers was highly irregular. But one or two of them would sidle over to me on the boat and ask, "What the hell are you doing? Are you crazy? Aren't you afraid? What about the

rattlesnakes, scorpions, jaguars, saber-toothed tigers, and poison ivy? You couldn't pay me enough money to stay out there alone."

One young woman started a conversation by introducing herself. She was traveling with two female companions and this was their first Grand Canyon river trip. The woman's name was Eve. We talked for a while and then Eve reached into a boat hatch and pulled out some snacks. It was then that I too began to wonder why I was doing this trip alone in the wilderness of the Grand Canyon.

I spent fifty days on the river that summer. Catching rides was usually easy and I rode with almost every outfitter. Only twice did I ride with private groups—they usually didn't have space for extra passengers or their gear. Mostly I rode on motor rigs. The average ride wait was about three hours, usually spent in the shade of a tamarisk tree. This was okay because midday offered only poor light. (Most of the photography took place in morning or evening light.) Many times I had only to wait a few minutes. Only once did no boats pass for a full day.

Sometimes I only hitched across the river, other times I moved many miles. Occasionally I carried my pack a mile or two along the river—but that was tough because there was never a trail, and all my large format camera gear, life preserver, river shoes, and camping gear came to eighty pounds.

As for rattlesnakes and scorpions, I had only one significant encounter. A windstorm blew in one night and I took shelter behind some bushes to get out of the blowing sand. As usual, I hung my wet socks on some branches next to my bed to dry. In the morning I found the socks had fallen onto the sand below. In the dim light I picked up the socks, squinted, and realized that the shape beneath the socks was that of a small rattlesnake. I muttered to myself, "I beg your pardon." Or something like that.

Once or twice my sudden appearance in what seemed to be a deserted beach came as a surprise to boaters.

Early in the summer I spent a morning photographing at the Nankoweap granaries and at river's edge nearby. When the sun angled too high and the photography became impossible, I retreated to the shade of the tamarisk trees next to the cooling river back at the main Nankoweap camp where I waited. No one showed for a couple of hours. Finally, at noon a river party pulled in just upstream of my hiding place. Lunch tables were hauled out and a gang of focused women headed straight from the boat towards the little beach in front of my hiding place. I realized that I'd have to jump out immediately, otherwise there'd be an "over-exposure" problem. When I burst through the tammys the group stopped short. It suddenly got very quiet and I had to explain myself.

It was near Nankoweap that I frightened another passenger. I had flagged down a boat and when the boatman motored closer I was alone, as usual, with a big pack and a big tripod. Apparently, one woman thought the tripod looked like a rifle—the summer of 1998 being when a couple of murderers were on the loose along the San Juan River. Lawmen were searching for them in Utah, and rumors had the criminals headed downstream towards Glen Canyon Dam and beyond. I fit the description—alone, grizzled, interested in shooting things—and one lady told the boatman he should motor on by.

Five hitchhiking trips were carried out, three starting at Lees Ferry and ending at Phantom Ranch, two starting at Phantom. On



Chuckawalla, near river mile 114 in Upper Granite Gorge. Mid-August, along the Colorado River upstream of Elves Chasm © Gary Ladd 2005

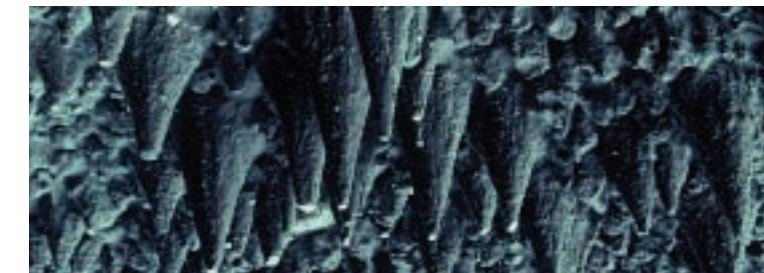
the trips that ended at Phantom I hiked out and arrived on the rim where I quickly discovered I was no longer considered royalty. I was just another schmuck, hot and dusty, hiking out in the dark. No one offered me a beer, soft drinks, a ride or to carry my garbage.

The photography made that summer was featured in the book Grand Canyon, Time Below the Rim, authored by Craig Childs. It was a complete success fulfilling what both the magazine and the National Park Service had hoped for.

My summer overflowed with beauty, interesting passengers, skilled and thoughtful boatmen, generous river outfitters and some unsurpassed photographic opportunities. The hitchhiking approach to inner canyon photography was extremely fruitful. The plan worked well for me as a photographer, and it worked well for the National Park Service too because the project didn't require massive oversight, dedicated river trips or an army of support personnel. It was low profile. Only a small percentage of the people headed down the river ever saw any sign of my presence because, when reasonable, I disappeared into the willow and tamarisk thickets as boats passed by, and whenever I camped on a pristine beach I afterwards smoothed out the sands to conceal my having stopped there.

Superintendent Arnberger and his staff were concerned that others would request similar variances from the rules. Therefore I agreed not to mention in the book that most of the photography was made on those special trips. We made it a secret between me, the book editors, the National Park Service...and a few hundred people traveling on 40 boats from which I hitched a ride!

I was able to carry out the kind of photography that most appeals to me—the details of where there's a confrontation between the restless waters and the timeless rock—the ripple marks, the carved stone, the debris fan boulders, the plants that struggle for life in a harsh land, monsoon clouds and roaring downpours. Looking back, I still kick myself for having failed to make a single hitchhiking



Close-up: tiny "pebble towers" sculpted from sand by dripping water from seeps. © Gary Ladd 1990

trip the first summer they were authorized. That was a huge blunder. (Dear Superintendent, can I make those lost trips this coming summer?)

It's a magical place along the river, as we all know, and I was extremely privileged to have been able to work and travel there as I did. And it was on the river that I was offered an apple by Eve in paradise. Now how often does that happen?



BERT LOPER

by Brad Dimock

Bert Loper. Every Grand Canyon traveler has heard the name.

River maps note the resting place, at mile 41, of Bert Loper's boat. This, in turn, often elicits a tale from a boatman, not of Bert Loper's life, but of his death: Just weeks away from his eightieth birthday, Loper rowed into 24-1/2-Mile Rapid. His passenger, Wayne Nichol, spraddled across the forward deck, noticed the boat drifting off course and hollered, "Look to your oars, Bert!" But it was too late. The boat flipped. Nichol dragged himself onto the slick wooden bottom of the boat and last saw Loper, lifeless, drifting straight down the tongue of Cave Springs Rapid. One last perfect run.

The rest of the trip soon found Nichol on the shore, picked him up, and spent the remainder of the day looking for Loper to no avail. Finding only his badly damaged upside-down boat, they righted it, dragged it high on the shore, and left it as a memorial to their friend and mentor. On its deck they wrote an epitaph to the Grand Old Man of the Colorado.

The night before, Bert Loper had spoken emotionally to the rest of



*Bert Loper on his boat in Red Canyon.
Photo courtesy J. Willare Marriot Library - Special Collections, University of Utah*

his group, saying four doctors had told him he would not survive the trip. Should he perish, he asked his cohorts to bury him beneath a pile of rocks along the shore, so that those who passed afterward could point and say, "There lies Bert Loper. He loved the Grand Canyon and he loved the River."

*Bert Loper running Asley Falls (now beneath Flaming Gorge Reservoir).
Photo courtesy J. Willare Marriot Library - Special Collections, University of Utah*

But what about Loper's life? Certainly there must be more to the Grand Old Man of the Colorado than a dramatic death in the river. There is, of course, but his trail is often tough to unearth for the simple reason that Loper lived in poverty his entire life. He made few waves and rarely caught the notice of the news writers of his day, his energies spent in mere survival.

Orphaned as a young child, Loper was taken in by his puritanical and severe grandmother. Upon her death, Loper's abusive uncle took custody until, at age 13, Loper and his older brother Jack ran away from home. For a few years Bert made his living milking cows, then wandered west to the San Juan Mountains of Colorado to work for another uncle. When that uncle told him to shift for himself, he migrated underground to the hard-rock and coal mines, there to spend the majority of his working life.

Loper caught the river bug as a result of the financial Panic of 1893. The silver mines collapsed and Loper was lured by the chimera of placer gold along the San Juan River. For most of two years he worked his way up and down its shore by boat, digging, sifting, and sluicing for elusive riches. He found none, but the joy of boating on rough water took a strong hold on him.

He returned to the Midwest for five years, hustling work where he could and spending six months in the Army during the Spanish American War. Although he never made it to Cuba or the Philippines, it is no stretch to say he fought in the deadliest battle of the war: the fight against malaria, yellow fever, and typhoid in the training camps. More Americans died there than in all the overseas struggles of the war. But his short military adventure served him well—it qualified him for an eventual pension.

Back in the West he continued his tour of the West's great mining camps—Telluride, Cripple Creek, Bisbee, Cananea, Goldfield—before succumbing to the call of the river. In 1907, at the age of 38,



Loper joined with mining friends Charlie Russell and Ed Monett to prospect the Colorado. Although the financial returns of his years on the San Juan had been slim, Loper believed in the theory of gold being precipitated out of the silts and sands of a whitewater river. The river was "nature's sluicibox" and Loper and gang were hoping to cash in.

The trio purchased three prefabricated steel boats and launched at Green River, Utah, in September, 1907. Loper taught his friends the art of rowing through rapids and with a few flips, crashes, and swampings, they survived Cataract Canyon. Nature's sluicibox, however, proved barren.

Unfortunately, Loper's camera got drenched in Cataract and needed to be sent back to Eastman for repairs. In the meantime, the three prospected Glen Canyon. In late October, Loper rowed upriver to Hite to retrieve his camera, planning to meet his partners a few weeks hence to complete their Grand Canyon voyage. Delays ensued: the camera was not back, Loper wrecked his boat in a small Glen Canyon rapid, the Panic of 1907 held up payments on the camera, supplies were slow in getting to Hite, and Loper had to



*Don Harris and Bert Loper scouting rapid in lower gorge (232?)
Photo courtesy of the author*

take work in order to support himself until he was ready to leave. When he finally set off to catch Russell and Monett he was six weeks late. It was little surprise to him that when he finally arrived at Lees Ferry, his friends were long gone. They left a letter of regret, but stated they had little option with winter coming on, supplies dwindling, and no indication of what had befallen Loper. And although they departed with no feelings of malice, newsmen later sensationalized the parting of the men, branding Loper as a coward—a charge Loper spent decades wanting to disprove.

Loper's choices were now limited. Running Grand Canyon solo seemed madness, and abandoning his boat, which was all he



*Rummy game. Bert Loper (upper right), flanked by boatmen Leight Lint (with pipe) and Elwyn Blake (reclining).
Photo courtesy J. Willare Marriot Library - Special Collections, University of Utah*

owned in the world, seemed equally uninviting. Instead, he turned around and rowed, waded, and towed 162 miles back up the Colorado, fighting bad weather, freezing water, and near starvation, until he finally reached Hite. There he began an eight-year stint as a placer mining hermit at Red Canyon, where he had obtained a short-term lease on an old cabin and ranch. Disgusted with the thought of returning to the wage-slave life of a miner, he chose instead to be his own slave to subsistence on a lonely gravel bar.

The work was desperately hard, unendingly repetitive, and heart-breakingly unproductive. After his nearest neighbor, Cass Hite, died in 1914, Loper was ready to try something else. When Charlie Russell wrote suggesting they reconcile and attempt another river trip to make movies, Loper was ready to try.

Russell purchased low-sided steel pleasure boats for the expedition, however, and when they launched on July's summer flows, they met disaster in Cataract Canyon. Russell's boat sank with much of their supplies and film aboard. They abandoned Loper's boat along the shore and hiked out.

During his years in Glen Canyon, Loper had seen the more modern Galloway-style whitewater boats and convinced Russell to let him build one of these new style boats for another attempt. He hired a handyman from Price, Utah, and built a remarkable steel boat, named the Ross Wheeler. Unfortunately tensions between Russell and Loper boiled over. Russell ended up with the Ross Wheeler, and Loper was left behind once more. Russell and a revolving cast of new boatmen made a valiant series of attempts to make the journey through Grand Canyon, sinking four out of five of their craft. Just over one-third of the way through Grand Canyon they gave up. Their sole surviving boat, Loper's Ross Wheeler, remains on the river bank at Mile 108 to commemorate their hapless voyage.

Loper finally quit Glen Canyon in 1915, casting his lot as a teamster hauling freight across central Utah. There, in the small hamlet of Torrey in 1916, he met and married a 22-year-old Scottish immigrant, Rachel Jamieson. That fall Loper hired on with Ellsworth Kolb, the famed Grand Canyon photographer and boatman, to row on the first descents of Westwater Canyon on the upper Colorado, and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. The boating work was short-lived, however, and soon he gave in and returned to wage-slavery as a coal miner in central Utah.

[cont. pg 10]

My Best Day in the Grand Canyon

As we are all lovers of the Grand Canyon, there are several small things that stand out in my memory about the critters that live in the canyon. First is the bats that flew over our heads for the first 7 nights of our trip; we did not know what a blessing they were until we got to a part of the canyon they were not on patrol and the insects ate us alive. I remember trying to thread a needle with the flies eating me while I was trying to stay steady but could not hold still for chasing flies and trying to escape them. Another critter was one I dreamed was chewing on my finger while I slept, but I woke up realizing I wasn't dreaming as I heard another chomp as I lost another piece of my finger. I also remember the Devil's postpile on the west side of Mammoth Mountain, it is an amazing geological formation; but in the Grand Canyon there is 30 miles of it and far more impressive. I was on an oar powered trip that was wonderful; Lee's ferry to Lake Mead.



Baron Battles

I am alone, I am at peace,
The gentle water whispers to me, passing by.
The canyon walls, surrounding me,
Become my fortress as they soar up to the sky,
A sky consumed with stars so bright
They cast a million diamonds dancing at my feet.
My heart is full, my thoughts are free.
I've finally reached this place and now my goal's complete.
Tomorrow comes, another day,
The river changes, running faster, growing strong.
The massive rocks call out to me
To let me know this is the place where I belong.
The river roars, an awesome sight
As water dances, unrestrained between stone walls.
We make it through, we have survived
And I'll return again because the canyon calls.
Now life goes on, my days are filled
With love and laughter, and with joys that never cease.
But now and then the canyon calls
Reminding me - I am alone, I am at peace.



Alice Dodgson

After seventeen days of floating and paddling through serpentine walls, in the greatest canyon in the world, our trip was coming to a close. Close friends, old and new, loaded the boats in early morning light. Our trip leader selected the placid waters, just upriver from our takeout at Diamond, to begin our silent paddle. Just prior to our final run together, Christa Sadler sang "Amazing Grace." The beauty of her voice still resonates in my memories. All of were mesmerized and tucked closely into the soul of the canyon.



Steve Kawaratani

Laguna Beach, CA

Reflections
Days of exploration, of endless sunshine and to scramble rocks I thought too big, thanks to helping hands giving me the final pull. Of jaw dropping geology and too many stones to collect, of silence broken only by the sound of oars on water, of the thrill of rapids and that wave which singled me out.
Nights of silence; of Milky Ways and stars too numerous to count; of low flying bats and being woken at 2 by a moon so bright it hurts your eyes.
A lifetime of wonder, of learning lessons told from others gone before, of retaining the spirit of the canyon within me. To return again and having the courage to never be the same, and to live each day and to find fulfilment within myself.



Leslie Pyne

Laura Bush says, "Every year I say the Christmas tree is the best one yet and I really mean it." every Grand Canyon trip is like that for me. 5 trips in that big ditch have all been magical. From the first sight of those beautiful dories at Lee's Ferry to our last morning on the river, I'm savoring my slice of heaven.



I love watching others being transformed by the Canyon and try to encourage them to put aside their fears. Doing a 'train' in the muddy waters of the LCR can be such fun, anybody can run it in the clear blue water. It takes a 'fun hog' to try it without being able to see the ledge or rocks. When we get close to Lava, I tell them about doing a girls' boat and wearing bright pink lipstick through Lava on one trip and how I rode with Art on his virgin dory run and that we had the perfect run.

I find myself drawn to different things each time. On my last trip it was the brilliant green of the Bright Angel shale, the numerous animal tracks in Redwall, and hiking up to Matkat with the boulder gone, and up to the patio at Deer Creek with a new rock fall. Having an up to the gunnel run in Hance and bailing like mad. A full moon with shadows coming down the Canyon walls, running to take a last pee in the river before the 'moon comes up'. A moonless night with brilliant stars, trying to stay awake to count 5 shooting stars, it's all good.

The first was on my second GC trip and first hike up to Beaver Falls in Havasu. Scared to death of jumping off anything, by this time the Canyon had nudged me to try to put away my fears. I had been too terrified to jump off Elves Chasm on both trips and although I jumped off the rock into the blue LCR I was shaking so badly that I didn't want to try it again. I felt more courage as the trip went on and was determined to squash my fear. I found myself swimming across the pond in front of the falls with a wingman; I happily arrived on the other side and began climbing with the few others. I jumped off the first rock, no problem and swam into the underwater cave, what was I doing? This was scary and well out of my comfort zone. No one would believe I had done this. I came out of the cave and realized now I had to jump off Beaver Falls. What was I thinking? Looking down and edging toward the jump spot, I was the last one, with much hesitation, and encouragement from everyone yeehaw I jumped. I was free and having a ball.

The second one happened last year. Early morning in camp a spectacular rainbow came off the canyon wall into the river just downstream. I yelled 'beauty alert', but no one heard me. Two of the guides, Lew and Doc were close by and saw it too. I ran and got my camera and took lots of pictures as it began to lightly sprinkle. I just stood looking at the rainbow and felt my mom's spirit with me and knew she had been able to come down the river with me on this trip. With tears in my eyes, I told Lew how I was feeling, he gave a little chuckle and said "Hi, mom." No one else saw the rainbow that morning, sometimes you just have to feel the Canyon to discover some of her secrets and listen to what she's saying so you don't miss those special moments.

Nancy Farrar - Montgomery Village, MD



Bert Loper overlooking Ruby Rapid. Photo courtesy of the author

[cont. from pg 7]

But somehow, in the very small world of Colorado River boatman, Loper's name was circulating. In 1920 when the government organized a survey of the Lower Colorado to locate the damsite where Hoover Dam was eventually built, Loper was one of the two boatmen hired. The following year Loper was chosen as lead boatman for the United States Geological Survey (USGS) trip down the San Juan. The voyage lasted six months—one of the longest river trips on record in the Colorado Basin. A year later, Loper led the 1922 USGS survey of the Green River, between the towns of Green River, Wyoming and Green River, Utah. On this trip Loper was the first boatman ever to run Hell's Half Mile, probably the steepest whitewater stretch of river in the Colorado system. Moreover, theirs was the first trip down the Green that did not portage. Although Loper by today's standards was not an expert boatman, he was breaking new ground and raising the bar. And although many of his proteges soon surpassed Loper's skills, they might not have gotten there without Loper teaching them the basics and boldly leading the way.

Sadly, Loper was overlooked for the 1923 USGS survey of Grand Canyon. At 54, he was considered to be too old, and once again he was left behind. Too old? Hardly. Instead, he returned to the back-breaking job of coal mining, writing one evening that he had shoveled seventeen tons that day (more than Tennessee Ernie Ford!) and that if he could keep it up he could get out of debt. He couldn't, of course, and was soon flat on his back with strained muscles, then a broken leg, later a broken foot. Although Loper was still plenty young enough to boat, coal mining was no occupation for a man in his fifties. Then, in the mid 1920s, Loper, with no other way to earn a living, no nest egg to fall back on, did the unlikely of things. He retired. His Spanish American War stint qualified him for \$30 a month. That, combined with five decades' experience of living without money, enabled the Lopers to survive the next twenty-five years taking only occasional odd jobs for income, often living rent-free as caretakers. As he entered his late sixties his dreams of running Grand Canyon seemed to fade, and he spent

much of his free time working with the veterans group and pursuing his work with the Masons. Other than occasional river forays in Glen Canyon, he spent most of his time onshore.

In 1936, however, he could stand it no longer. Building a plywood boat, he and friend Charlie Snell drove north and spent two months running Idaho's Salmon River. Ill health and shoulder problems kept him off the river for the next two years, but in the winter of 1938 when riverman Don Harris visited him in the hospital looking for advice on running the Green River, Loper made a counter-proposal, "Forget the Green. Run Grand Canyon. With me."

They did. Launching in July, 1939, just weeks before Loper's seventieth birthday, they became the first voyagers through Grand Canyon to run all their boats through every rapid. Finally, after a 32-year delay, Loper had shown the world that he was not afraid—as if, by that point, anyone had any doubts. So much did Loper enjoy it that he proposed they repeat the trip ten years hence, when Loper was eighty.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Loper joined Harris and others repeatedly over that next decade on river trips throughout the Colorado drainage, occasionally breaking new ground, and in 1941, completing a remarkable record of contiguous miles of boating the Colorado and its tributaries that, due to subsequent dams, can never be duplicated. And although he was only beginning his second Grand Canyon run when he died, he truly had earned his moniker, "Grand Old Man of the Colorado."

Some thirty miles downstream of Loper's boat a grove of willows stands on the upstream side of Cardenas Creek. Here, in April of 1975, a hiker found a human skull and parts of a skeleton in the driftwood. Coconino County Sheriff Joe Richards, upon collaboration with researchers, determined they were most likely the remains of Loper. Although Loper's relatives felt he should remain along the river, Loper's Spanish-American War comrades pressured them into removing the remains for an "honorable" burial in Sandy, Utah, next to his widow, Rachel.

Loper's wish for a riverside grave was never realized by his friends, who failed to find his body. But now, with the strands of Loper's life woven, we can grant his last request. Although a few dried bones—almost certainly those of Loper—were removed from Loper's Grove, the majority of Bert Loper, mind, body, and soul, lies forever mingled in the muddy banks of the Colorado. As modern river travelers pass the many reminders of Bert Loper, let them conjure tales, not just of his dramatic demise, but of his long, difficult, yet magnificent life. Next time you pass Cardenas Creek, pause, drift, and offer him this homage: "There lies Bert Loper. He loved the Grand Canyon and he loved the River."

This brief sketch of Loper's life barely scratches the surface of Loper's saga. Born the very day Major Powell discovered the San Juan, he died just weeks after the first motorboat navigated Grand Canyon. Loper knew virtually every riverman in between, and knew nearly every mile of the river. His is truly the story of river running, and is now told in full for the first time in Brad Dimock's 2007 biography: *The Very Hard Way: Bert Loper and the Colorado River*. It was released in March and is now available from Fretwater Press, www.fretwater.com. Dimock, with some two-hundred Grand Canyon trips over three-and-a-half decades, still works as a full-time boatman.

Condor Notes

by Thom Lord

In the time that I've worked on the Peregrine Fund's California Condor reintroduction project in Arizona, I've often been asked, "Why do condors like people so much?" There's a short, albeit incomplete, answer to that question: they don't. Having had to handle the birds many times in my condor career, I've acquired a number of scars that can attest to that fact. However, anyone that has observed condors at the South Rim, for instance, might initially wonder why they spend time near humans at all.

Considering the amount of space available in the Grand Canyon and surrounding areas, one might imagine that they would steer clear of people altogether—and for the most part, they do. The majority of the condors' time is spent foraging for food and interacting with other condors. The few occasions when humans and California Condors run into one another, though, can have negative consequences for both. Understanding a little about the biology of condors and how to deal with potential interactions can go a long way toward preventing any problems.

One of the most important keys to understanding California Condor behavior lies in the fact that condors are strict scavengers; they never kill anything for food. Because large, dead animals are a relatively scarce resource, condors must spend quite a bit of time looking for something to eat. In a place such as the Grand Canyon, finding a dead mule deer, elk, or bighorn sheep is somewhat akin to finding the proverbial needle in a haystack.

Condors rely primarily on their mobility and remarkable eyesight to find sources of food, and make the job a bit more manageable by scanning the landscape for other clues that could indicate the presence of a carcass. Certainly, one of the most promising signs is the presence of other scavengers; congregations of ravens, turkey vultures, and other condors are often a reliable giveaway as to the location of a potential meal. Condors also seem to be on the lookout for groups of the large mammals themselves, which makes perfect evolutionary sense. It's easy to understand that the best place to find a dead mule deer, for example, is in an area with a lot of mule deer.

Imagine that you're a young, recently released California Condor, progressively exploring more of your new world. Leaving the release site in the Vermilion Cliffs, you fly over House Rock Valley, then the Kaibab Plateau, and finally into the Grand Canyon itself. Up to this point in your journey, you've flown mostly over cliffs, desert, and pine forest—very occasionally seeing a car drive by far below, but little other evidence of human activity. Then, you come

upon the South Rim Village of the Grand Canyon. Concentrated groups of ravens and turkey vultures circle lazily above huge masses of two-legged mammals, and there is more general bustle and activity than you've ever seen in your life. Upon soaring into this scene, millions of years of evolution come forward and tell you one thing: "There's a FEAST down there!"

One can understand, then, why condors are sometimes attracted to areas that happen to have a lot of human activity. Making a living as a condor is tough business, and a healthy sense of curiosity goes a long way toward being able to make a living at it. This curiosity, along with the fact that condors have very few natural predators, results in the kind of bold behavior that is sometimes mistaken for tameness around humans. Of course, if condors in these situations are fed by people, then they do learn to directly associate people with food. We want to prevent this, as the cultivation of a healthy respect for the dangers that humans pose could ultimately be the difference between life and death for a condor. In addition, when a condor's curiosity is directed toward some other novelty, such as a tent or sleeping bag, the birds' sheer size and strength can inflict quite a bit of damage to the object of their attention.

For these reasons, condor biologists always "haze" birds away from unsafe areas or areas with a high potential for human interaction. Most birds respond to such hazing eventually, learning where they should and should not be. They also develop wariness around humans, and learn to maintain a safe distance. As long as there are young, inexperienced birds out there, though, there is the potential that they'll get into mischief. If you are lucky enough to see a condor in the wild, remember a few simple guidelines:

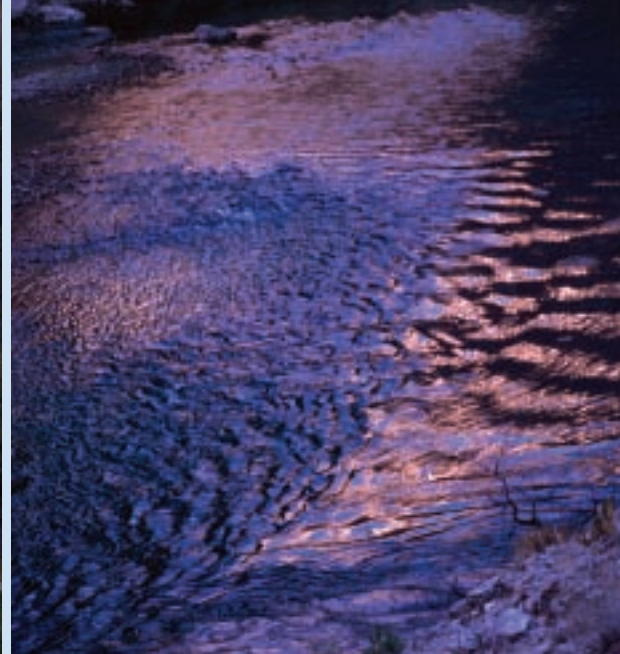
1. Maintain your distance while observing condors. It is important that condors remain wary around humans. The more time that you spend near them, the more comfortable they become, and the more problems will eventually arise. Enjoy them from a distance.
2. Never feed a condor, and don't let anyone else in your party feed it. In addition to creating an association between humans and food, which can be dangerous for the birds in the future, this can be dangerous for you. Condors are wild animals, and can bite—hard!
3. Try not to leave gear unattended in condor country. Although rare, there have been instances of condors "investigating" unattended campsites and damaging equipment. If a condor is exhibiting unacceptable curiosity toward you or your equipment, running toward it and clapping is usually sufficient to flush the bird away.

Keeping these guidelines in mind will help to ensure that these magnificent wild creatures will remain wild, and will always be around for us and future generations to enjoy.

Thomas Lord is Field Manager for The Peregrine Fund's California Condor Restoration Project. For more information please visit The Peregrine Fund at www.peregrinefund.org



River Morning © Ann Quinn



River Light © Catharine Cooper



Morning Reflection © Katherine Bennett 2006

My Grand Canyon — by Rachel Webb

Sleeping in contact lenses is uncomfortable. As a general rule I submit myself to near blindness in the nighttime because having thin plastic sheets in my eyes while trying to doze off never makes for a solid, restful night. However, I make an exception whenever I am on a river trip with my dad. After the contacts come out, an object a foot away from my face becomes so blurry that I couldn't identify it if my life was on the line. At home, this doesn't matter because the only thing I am looking at is my pillowcase or the ceiling. But on the river, if I take out my contacts, I can't see the stars that are so vivid in the sky with no interference from city lights.

Rafting down a river is physically uncomfortable – I get doused in river water every ten minutes, the sun is so intense that my hairline is burnt red well into October, there are no showers or toilets, and the sand gets everywhere. In a canyon, there is no cell phone service, no radio, and it would be electronic suicide to bring any sort of music player or timepiece on the river (remember the sand?). The activities are simple, the food is simple, life is simple. I am never happier than when I am on the river with my dad.

In the river community, everyone knows the ultimate rafting experience is floating the Grand Canyon. People apply for private permits to run the river decades in advance, and commercial trips cost over \$2,000 a person. When I was 15, my dad and I were lucky enough to snag a spot on a twelve day trip. While my dad had been on countless Grand Canyon trips, this was my first time. I packed my dry bag with a dozen books and said goodbye to civilization.

On the drive down to Las Vegas, the starting point of our river journey, my dad and I engaged in long conversations about school, family and life. During an especially memorable discussion about his passion for the Grand Canyon, he quoted one of his favorite authors, Ann Zwinger. Writing about her time on the river, she said "Days of the week have no meaning....time is only today on the river and tonight on the sandbar."

After we launched the trip from Lee's Ferry and floated deeper and deeper into the bowels of the canyon, that thought kept coming back to me. For the first time in months my brain wasn't preoccupied with the tiny material issues of high school life. Instead of obsessing over homework, I spent the afternoons hiking straight uphill in the 100 degree heat to discover an obscure side canyon or a particularly beautiful vista, while evenings were occupied with watching the sun set behind the ruby red cliffs. Extracurricular activities consisted of playing Frisbee in Redwall Cavern, an enormous chasm carved into the canyon wall by eons of flowing water, and jumping off the waterfall at Elves Chasm, a tiny pristine spring hidden behind arid desert boulders.

My best friends were thrown together on this expedition. On this trip my dad and I chummed with a Mexican priest, a family of ten, an artist, and three mothering, animated teachers from New Jersey that would come to be known affectionately as "The Joisey Girls". Instead of scarfing down our dinner in twenty minutes so we could catch Law and Order, we lingered over Dutch oven spaghetti and cherry cobbler, feasting on simple food, wonderful conversation, and breathtaking scenery. After twelve days in the most beautiful, serene, isolated place in the world, it was jarring to go back to the artificial world of Las Vegas.

Luckily, I realized that I carried my voyage with me. While the Grand Canyon takes people out of themselves, it also leaves a little bit of itself in return. That trip caught me just before I was about to descend unknowingly into an overscheduled, shallow hell where life consisted of AP classes and sales at Old Navy. I have never been anywhere else that made me examine every aspect of my life and my relationship with the world around me. To this day, whenever I need to relax, slow down, and remember what is really important in life, I close my eyes and see the stars in the Grand Canyon.

Rachel Webb, Salt Lake City, Utah

Saints of the Colorado

(Chorus)
A Teacher, a Preacher
A father, a sister
Walking the traveled road
A real estate junkie
A restaurant flunky
No way could they know
That their fortunes lay not in their hands
Because God had other plans
For the Saints of the Colorado

Adorned by the love of a billion years
A temple with thousand foot walls
Some hear the call - it captures their soul
And the canyon just never lets go
It's the river, they say
Nature's way
Rock of ages

A poet's dream, but how much the cost
This river's a jealous lover
What's left for others who cannot contend
With a spirit that rests on the wind
It's the river, they say
Nature's way
Rock of ages

Chorus

So those who are chosen, the Canyoneers
The daring, the lonesome, the few
Your place in the heavens is waiting for you
With a river, with rocks, and with galloping waves
To forever be part of the river they say
Nature's way
Rock of Ages

Chorus



Canyon © Judith Smith



Cholla © Linda Doolittle



Moon Above Canyon Wall © David Hey 2006



River Scene © David Hey 2006

Lets Go Boating

By Nick Honchariw, 2006

"Lets go boating" was the cry we came to expect,
On mornings of dread, so early, no time to defect.
The Four Boatmen were poised to shepherd us through,
Captain Andy, Kate, Allen and Lew,
And Connie and Amber, too.

On day one Captain Andy took us aside,
He said, boys and girls, if you want to stay on the ride,
Whenever you see a big standing wave astride,
Drop what you're doing and do the high side.

I was leery, it sounded scary,
And the water was cold, so hard to be bold.
But my aversion to the perversion of a river inversion
Made me determined to do as I was told.

On day two the Boatmen scouted House Rock Falls,
They talked of laterals, I stared at the walls.
Then we crept on the tongue with the big Viking dude,
When he muttered "too far right", I figured we were screwed.

We sped toward the guardian lateral askew,
But when we looked in its eye, we said "Nuts to you".
We did the high side, we exited the right side,
And with a sigh of relief we said "Whew".

It was with such glories
That we were able to face Lew's fearsome stories,
Of mayhem and dread,
In the unforgiving rapids ahead.

Tomorrow we hear "Lets go boating" no more,
We have reached our final shore.
But the trip has been peachy,
We even had time to read Nietzsche,
And so, finally, today, we can say, in a small and humble way,
"Veni. Vidi, Vici".

And though we leave the great Colorado nation,
We have the modest consolation,
That as we cross the Dam Hoover,
We can say "Up yours" to the groover,
And return to usual sanitation.



North Canyon © John Beauwillers 2006

Canyon Withdrawal

A poem by David Hey (though it may not rhyme, I'm so relaxed)

It started that last night, knowing we were soon to part ways.
Blowing sand in the morning from the rotor blades brought
more reality to it.

Peering out the small window, pointed towards Vegas, watching
what might be the most beautiful place on this planet as it
passes beneath me and shrinks from sight, playing fetch with
"Kip" at the Bar-10, the first shower in seven days (does Bar-10
recycle the silt?), it's clear there ain't gonna be anymore more
Ringtail Bobcat tracks or wild turkeys sharing camp and I feel a
sadness deep inside.

Traffic, civilization, the throngs on the "Strip", it's now going full
tilt.

I'm moving at slow, slow speed, it must be slow speed squared,
hoping to stave off the inevitable return to my normal medium
high speed (depending on the time of day). I do think I will be
different now, forever changed by that amazing journey.

I collapse on the soft motel bed, immediately missing my
sleeping bag, exhausted (but a good exhausted) from seven
incredible days spent coursing down that magnificent river
through that majestic canyon. I want to feel sleep, but not here.

Stirred from sleep by some noise, for a moment I hope to open
my eyes and realize our guides are beginning to prepare
breakfast and the canyon walls and moonlit sky will greet my
gaze, but alas, my motel room ceiling and "art auction" paintings
only deepen my withdrawal.

As the key opens the door to my home "camp" and I drop the
remnants of my "day" and "trip" bags on the floor, I'm beginning
to begrudgingly accept the "canyon withdrawal", content with
the images created by the mixing of my five senses with the
river and canyon (though it might be six senses, if you count the
"feeling" of history past, a presence, the "spirit" of the canyon). I
will hold these images forever close, remembering those
incredible seven days, guided and educated by our river guides
and swampers, as they call themselves. I will always marvel at
being allowed the "sacred" privilege to experience the
wonderful assault on the senses and the soul that is the Grand
Canyon (especially my morning " sunrise breakfast").

Hey, at least I cleaned the condo and did the dishes before I left,
that takes a little edge off the withdrawal..... And
knowing I will return someday helps too!!

*This poem is dedicated to the "River Sisters" as I call them, Erica, Dee, Suzanne
and Erika, four amazing women who, I know, realize they are so lucky to work
somewhere they love and respect, and they do such a great job to boot. (if only
we were all that lucky)*

Memories of A Childhood Trip

by Linda Doolittle



Linda Doolittle 1960 South Rim

scenery from the South Rim; oblivious to the fact that these
instructions have ended the lives of many a visitor. The sun was
setting on another spectacular day, it was August 1960. As a
young girl with hardly a care in the world, I was like a sponge
soaking up every new experience. Every evening we would go to
the look points and watch the sun go down. It was a ritual. My
father would take one picture after the next in hopes of capturing
the magnificent grandeur of what the eye beheld. With another
day gone it was back to the cabin to sleep, for tomorrow we
would ride the mules to the plateau.

Of the family of five, just my father, one of my brothers and myself
were taking the journey. After the instructions we were assigned
our mules, mounted up and off we went, zigzagging back and
forth, trying to take in all the sights that unfolded before us. We
reached the plateau after a brief stop at Indian Gardens. Looking
down, you were able to see the mighty Colorado River. Even
though it was pre-dam, the river was still dwarfed by the
immenseness of The Canyon. I felt so privileged, special, and
fortunate to be there, an adventure to be forever cherished. I did
not pass this way again until over forty years later. Little did I
know it would be on that river looking up at where I was then
standing.

Four years ago, in a casual conversation, my cousin mentioned
she was taking a rafting trip through the Grand Canyon. My

"Step back a little
further, ok move a
little to the right. Now
look into The Canyon.
Right there, that's
good". These were the
instructions given me
by my shutterbug
father as he took
another photo of me
against the amazing

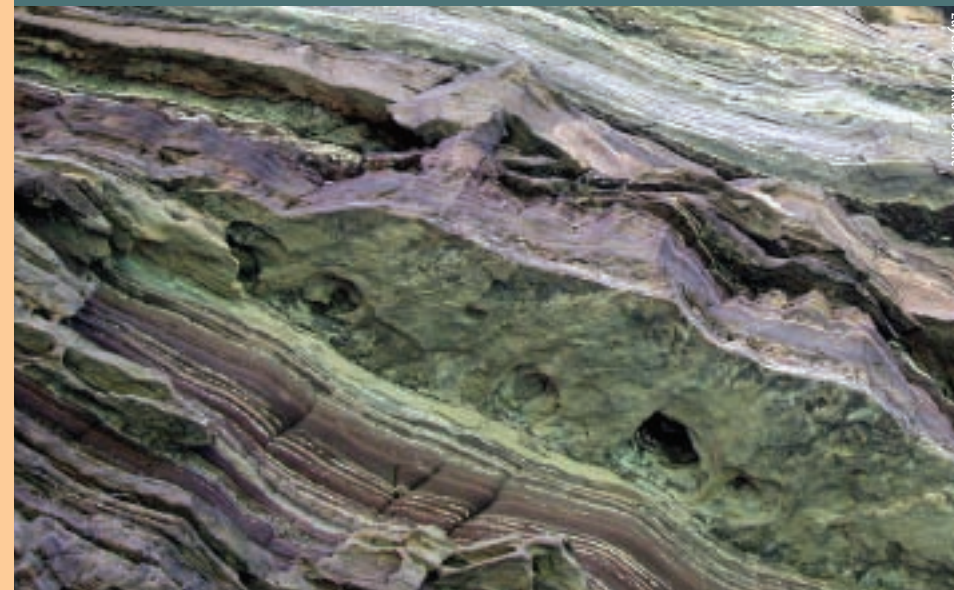
instantaneous response was, "Are there any more seats available"?
Alas, no, I would have to wait until the following year. An eternity
later I was on my first trip. As for many that proceeded me, it was
a life changing experience and now it is an addiction.

From the rim the canyon seems unchanging and frozen in time,
desolate, dry, lifeless and inhospitable. Just the incredible size of
it is hard to comprehend. In reality it is the opposite. There is a
totally different world at river level and it is constantly changing
ever so slightly. The forces of nature combined with the geology
of the earth are slowly and methodically working together to
continuously change the landscape. The abundance of life is
astonishing. The visuals are jaw dropping, yet the other senses
are stimulated by the bombardment of an incredible array of
information. The scent of the river, the sound of the canyon wren
and the smoothness of the schist polished by millions of years of
erosion stimulate the senses to an unmatched intensity. It is one
of the most magnificent
and incredible places on
our planet. It is
something to witness,
behold and experience.



Linda Doolittle's Dad 1960 South Rim

As I made the week long
journey, we arrived at the
point in the river just past
Phantom Ranch where you can look up and see the fence at
Plateau Point. I remembered the expedition our father had taken
us on to look down at that spectacular sight, the bottom of the
Grand Canyon and the Colorado River. Then I saw it, the fence -
for an instant I was looking at the past and the future simultane-
ously. The journey was complete. I was inside looking out. I have
made a trip every year since and I always look for the fence. I
picked up the love of photography from my father and continue
to try and capture the spectacular images that overwhelm your
senses. It is an inspirational place, and the journey continues.



Lakes © Linda Doolittle

Kalobah Plateau © Linda Doolittle



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