



BROADSIDES

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In A Broad Sense by Ronni Egan

I've just finished reading *The Nature of Generosity*, by William Kittredge. Written before the advent of the current Presidential administration, this book is amazingly prescient in that Kittredge repeatedly laments the increasing commoditization of those things which, throughout human history, have belonged to everyone and to no-one. Included in these things are clean air and water, wholesome food, healthy living space, and freedom to move around on the land and water. More intangible are the things that we don't "consume" directly, but that are nevertheless important to our well-being. These include genetic biodiversity in plants and animals, both domestic and wild, suitable habitat to foster such biodiversity, and empty places where we humans may re-connect with the rest of the natural world. That last sentence, of course, describes wilderness.

Kittredge says, "...thinkers in the modern environmental movement have revealed to us that the complex biological exchanges that are absolutely necessary to continue adaptive evolution, without which life on earth will eventually be dead in the water, can take place only in extensive tracts of wilderness. This is not sort of true; it's scientific fact, the practical reason for supporting wilderness." Yet, around the world, wild places are

being gobbled up by those who see only short-term economic gain. Whole river systems are drowned or desiccated to irrigate, among other things, cheap livestock feed. Mountain tops are bulldozed to get at the coal beneath them. We see ancient forests leveled for lumber and toilet paper.

We are all responsible for some level of consumption of resources, and the choices we make are directly linked to the health of the entire planet. While we



From horsewoman to conservationist--sometimes there are difficult choices to be made in order to best protect our public lands.

obviously aren't going to choose to regress back into hunter-gatherer mode, (and hunter-gatherers had a profound effect on their local environments too) there are choices we can all make that will make a difference on some scale.

In my case, a change in livelihood from outfitter-guide to non-profit executive director gave me the opportunity to change my lifestyle dramatically in a way that I'd been resisting for years. While my outfitting business enabled me to take folks into

the backcountry on horseback, and my environmental "soapbox" was atop my favorite saddle-horse, I began, years ago, to reflect upon the environmental costs of my equestrian pursuits. Now, I know that there are hikers out there who decry the use of packstock in Wilderness, and I also

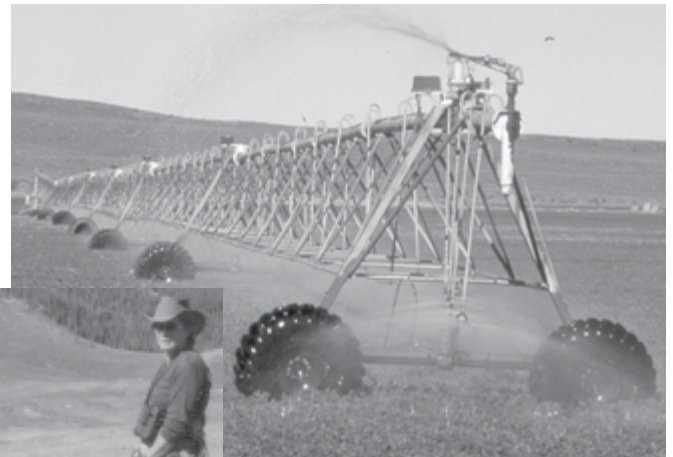


Photo by George Wuerthner

realize that there are some heavily used areas where commercial outfitters create serious impacts to trails and meadows. However, since the time that Don Juan de Onate first brought horses into New Mexico, the horse has been a partner in the way we Americans, both Native and otherwise, relate to the land. The horse remains an important tool in Wilderness trail maintenance and recreation, and enables many who would otherwise not be able, to access wild places. I firmly believe that our single-toed, long-legged friends, responsibly managed, belong in the backcountry.

Having made the above disclaimer, I now must confess that, for the first time since junior high school, I am
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see page 9 for more details*

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without a single horse, and here's why. When I came to Durango to take over the reins of Great Old Broads (pun intended!) I still had a number of horses and mules, and imagined I'd continue to do some packing into the mountains and canyons. But as I began to investigate the various challenges to our wild lands and waters, I learned of the incredible environmental costs of growing alfalfa and other irrigated feeds in the arid West. Mind you, I'd always "had a hunch" that this was an expensive proposition, resource wise, but I just didn't have the heart to give up my addiction, which, as any horse-person will tell you, it truly is.

Then, Great Old Broads joined the Dolores River Coalition, and I learned how that wonderful river, which I had rafted only once years ago (my other addiction) had been essentially "killed" in the 1980s, below McPhee Dam and reservoir outside of the town of Dolores, Colorado. Not only had it become essentially un-boatable, but during the severe drought years from 2001 to 2005, its flow was reduced to a trickle, and the low flows and warm water destroyed the fishery as well. What had been a marvelously diverse

and fecund ecosystem was sacrificed for economic gain. What became of the Dolores River, you may ask? It is now growing thousands of acres of irrigated crops, primarily alfalfa. Most of this hay is fed to cattle, but it is also sold as horse feed. How could I presume to be a defender of that mistreated river, and continue to buy cheap horse feed? I came to realize that my horse habit would have been of little consequence to the river had I lived on large acreage and didn't have to buy feed, or if I lived in a well watered place like, say, Ohio, where the grass actually grows all by itself. But I have chosen to live in a desert, which can in no way support large numbers of hungry hooved animals. I decided that I needed to let them go. I have found good homes for all of them, and I confess that I don't miss the twice daily chores.

So, what has all of this got to do with the nature of generosity? Well, I'd finally concluded that my horse-habit didn't fit with my mission at Great Old Broads. In choosing not to support an economic activity that contributes to the degradation of the Dolores and other rivers, I am beginning to live a little more lightly upon the land. It may not be much, but I hope that the few tons of hay I don't

buy every year will mean a little more water in the streams.

We all make decisions every day that have repercussions for the planet. We Americans, in particular, consume far more than our share of earth's finite resources, and we need to start making some hard choices. I like to think that our membership is more conscious of these choices than the average American, and I hope that we can, by setting an example for our families and friends, gently increase their awareness of how everyday choices can make a difference. To me, this is what Broadness is all about.

Since this essay was written, Hurricane Katrina and Rita have occurred, reminding us that "mother nature bats last." There will be volumes written about this disaster, but the bottom line remains that we humans have the hubris to think that we can control our environment. Clearly, as a nation (and as a species), we need to realize that we are part of "the environment," and we presume to control it at our peril. All of our hearts go out to those who've suffered so horribly and now we must strive to live in balance with our planet, or face repetition of this tragic event.

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Great Old Broads for Wilderness is a non-profit, public lands organization that uses the voices and activism of elders to increase, protect, and preserve wilderness.

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Great Old Broads for Wilderness was conceived in 1989 by older women who loved wilderness and organized to protect it. The wisdom of their combined years (more than three centuries!) told them that the Broads could bring knowledge, commitment, high spirits, and humor to the movement to protect our last wild places on earth.

Today, the Great Old Broads has over 3,000 active members throughout the United States. You do not have to be female, or old, or even great for that matter! to join—but you must be "bold" for wilderness. Please join us on the adventure. Wilderness needs your help!

Protector of Washington Wilderness: Polly Dyer

Every once in a while you meet a woman who has dedicated her life to a cause and has made a considerable difference—Polly Dyer is one such woman. Since the 1950s, Polly has been actively involved in wilderness issues, working passionately and fervently to protect wild landscapes, particularly in the state of Washington. And at 85, Polly shows no signs of slowing down. She recently became President of a new organization called the Olympic Coast Alliance, founded to protect Olympic Coast resources.

Polly first became passionate about wilderness in Ketchikan, Alaska, where she moved after high school with her family. Hiking Mt. Deer, Polly describes herself as being “hit” by the landscape. “I had never heard the word wilderness,” she said, but standing on the peak of Mt. Deer, looking out at all of the vast wild country before her, she said she did not know what she was recognizing, but recognized it nonetheless.

On that same mountain top Polly also met her husband, John Dyer. In the late 1940s they moved to Washington state, where they joined the Mountaineers Club and soon thereafter Polly found herself working actively to protect wild areas across the state.

Perhaps Polly’s most known efforts are with the Olympic Park Associates (OPA) and the battle to keep the west side forested valleys from being eliminated from the Olympic National Park boundaries. As Phil Zalesky writes in *The North Shore of Lake Quinault: A Tribute to Polly Dyer*, “If it had not been for OPA’s current president, Polly Dyer, we would have lost many acres of the Park adjoining

Lake Quinault and up river.” Polly was instrumental in actively lobbying for the area’s protection, shoring up citizen support, with over 300 letters submitted requesting that the west side not be removed from the Park, and submitting a minority report along with Emily Hiag, of the Seattle Audubon Society, which argued for the preservation of all the forested valleys, including Lake Quinault’s North Shore.

Another of Polly’s great efforts for wilderness protection was with the North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC), which she founded along with Phil and Laura Zalesky, and Grant and Jane McConnell. The purpose of the organization was to



Polly at the Wild Sky Broadwalk.

provide protection for Glacier Peak and the North Cascades. Success came in two pieces, first in 1964, when Congress passed the Wilderness Act, Glacier Peak was added to the new National Wilderness Preservation System. Then, in 1968, NCCC was able to get a national park bill passed that created the North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas, totaling almost 671,000 acres.

However, as Polly points out, her work is never done. “I have a favorite saying,” she said, “If you’ve won and want to sit on your laurels, then you’ve lost, because someone will come back to defeat you.” She points to the Olympic Coast as a perfect example. Although she fought hard for its protection, now the area is again in danger. Impacts from on shore use are affecting resources off shore, and have therefore created a need for the formation of the Olympic Coast

Alliance to deal with these new conservation issues.

Over the years, Polly has learned a few important lessons about effective activism. “I learned to stick my neck out and say what I want,” she said. “My long time friends used to say I was shy, but now I don’t hesitate to speak up.” She also cites getting as much of the general public behind you as possible as another key element. “If you have enough people behind you the politicians will sit up and take notice,” Polly said.

Perhaps the greatest lesson Polly can offer though, is her unwavering passion and dedication. Despite working fulltime for over twenty years, Polly remained a dedicated activist, even when it was difficult. She used to take the Greyhound bus to evening meetings and had to wait until 1:00 am to catch a bus back home, but it never stopped her from going. “You just have to be dedicated to protecting the natural world,” said Polly.

There is no question about Polly’s dedication and no question that without Polly, Washington’s wilderness system would not be what it is today. As Joshua Reichert, Director of Policy Initiatives and the Environment Program for the Pew Charitable Trusts, remarked at a 2004 ceremony honoring Polly’s work, “Polly has mentored, inspired and nurtured three generations of wilderness activists and leaders in the Pacific Northwest. She’s fed them, given them a place to sleep for the night when they needed one, encouraged them and urged them on. Polly Dyer embodies all of the best qualities of wilderness advocates in this country.”

Great Old Broads is proud to have Polly as a member. We would like to thank her for her dedication to wild places. —BL

Wilderness is the Best Antidote

by Pat Cary Peek

Know anyone with nature deficit disorder? In July Broads visited an area that will surely help—the proposed Wild Sky Wilderness in the majestic Cascade Mountains is the perfect cure. Administer in small doses, however, lest the person become a raging nature fanatic. She might throw her computer out the window, deprive the children of T.V. and run wildly through the forest with moss between her toes.

Take her gently into the ancient old growth stands and sit at the feet of a seven hundred-year-old cedar that is more than thirteen feet in diameter. Breathe deeply and let the odor of warm bark, pungent mushrooms and green ferns calm her soul. Amble along a trail spongy underfoot with moss and fir needles and watch her



A little "Broad" help goes a long way. Broads assist Washington Trails Association in trail maintenance in part of the proposed wilderness area. Photo by Nancy Blackadder

spirit lighten with each step. When you come to a clearing, look above your heads to the bare rugged peaks that still hold traces of last winter's snow. Then notice delicate pink twin flowers, star-like bunchberry, and minuscule misty foam blooming at your feet. Suddenly, without warning, administer a fat ripe huckleberry between the lips. Guaranteed to bring a smile!

As you venture deeper into the spell of the woods, point out the pattern of the gnarled knotted roots on the forest floor and the shelf-like conks on the old, old trees. Miracles, seen and unseen, surround you. There's magic in the witch's butter, brilliant yellow fungus that's puddled along the trail. Just saying the name softly inside your head brings peace to a troubled heart.

The Broads, more than 40 strong, gathered in Index, Washington, like bees to a patch of clover, to lend our support for the proposed Wild Sky Wilderness Bill which has passed the senate three times but has been stalled in the Republican-controlled House for several years. We came from Vermont, California, and points in between, to speak for this wild country and renew our own defenses against the dreaded disorder that seems to affect so many of our citizens these days.

The bill, which designates 106,000 acres in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest as Wilderness,

includes land that is unique in several ways. First, it is within a 90 minute or less drive from 2.5 million people in the greater Seattle area, many of whom are teetering toward nature



Great Old Broads enjoy hiking in the beautiful areas included in the Wild Sky Wilderness Bill. Photo by Libby Ingalls

deficit disorder (NDD) if they don't already have full blown NDD.

The proposed wilderness is also unique compared to other wilderness areas because 30% of it is below 3000 feet. This means many rare lower elevation plants and animals will be protected. Most other wilderness has 6% or less area in lower elevations. So from the huge old Sitka Spruce in the low zone through the venerable Douglas fir and up to the towering Western Hemlock at the tree line, the Wild Sky needs our help and millions of suffering humans need strong doses of its wildness. Even if they never sit under that tree or taste that huckleberry, just knowing it's there can be enough.

Our dear Broads staff and Board, all specialists in treating even latent symptoms of NDD, once again executed a memorable Broadwalk that *continued on next page*

The Broader Wilderness Movement

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leaves us all stronger and more knowledgeable. Competence isn't a big enough word for what they do. Cheerful, poised, friendly, down to earth and dedicated to wild nature, their leadership appears effortless, but we know otherwise. We learn from their examples and from each other to carry on the campaign to rid the world of an insidious affliction of modern life and keep wild country safe for generations to come. **To stay informed on this issue visit www.wawild.org**

*Pat Cary Peek is the author of **One Winter in the Wilderness** and **Cougar Dave, Mountain Man of Idaho**. E-mail pcaryp@moscow.com or phone 208-882-3694*

Wilderness Faces Tough Times

House Vote Guts Endangered Species Act

On Thursday, September 29, the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly approved the first major changes to the Endangered Species Act since 1988. This vote represents the most serious attack on endangered species protections in nearly 30 years.

The vote sharply diminishes critical habitat protections, politicizes what should be scientific decision making, cuts wildlife experts out of the loop indetermining whether agency actions would harm endangered plants and animals, and complicates listing of new

species and the implementation of recovery plans for already listed species. It would also require tax payers to pay developers to refrain from killing endangered plants and animals.

It is now up to the Senate to act more responsibly. In 1978, the Senate stepped between the overly-hasty House, which passed a bevy of crippling amendments to the ESA. The Senate rejected virtually everything the House had done and the Endangered Species Act survived. The Senate must again reject the overreaching of the House. Please urge your Senators to do so. —Visit www.stopextinction.org

National Parks Threatened

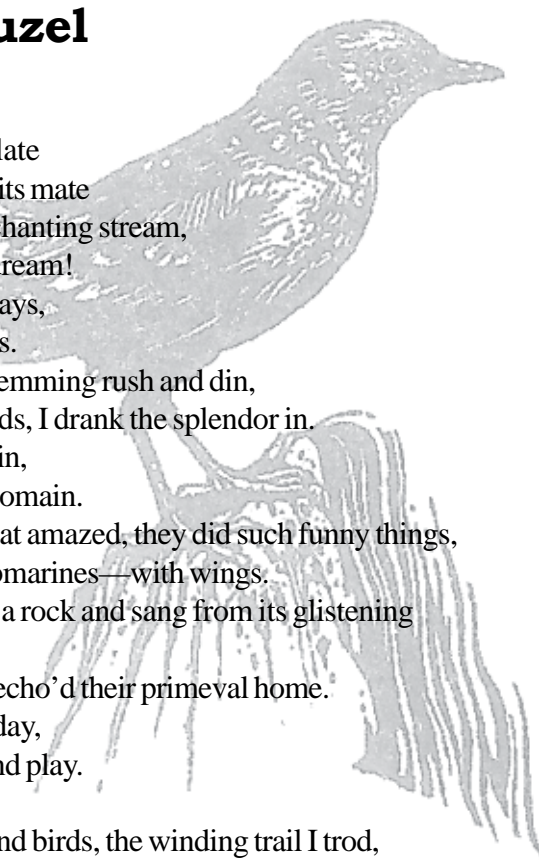
Paul Hoffman, a political appointee in the Interior Department, has undertaken the task of radically altering the basic mission of the National Park Service. If implemented, these changes will negate more than a century of conservation philosophy that has been called “the best idea America ever had.”

Under the new proposed policies, millions of acres of roadless lands that have been managed as de facto wilderness within our National Parks will be at risk of development and exploitation by motorized recreation, mining, and other activities. Hoffman and supporters claim the current policies are too restrictive, concentrating on resource protection rather than visitor use. However, of the 250 million park visitors each year, every year 90 percent-plus say they were satisfied or very satisfied with their visit. Why change management policies that put resource protection as the top priority while providing enjoyment for all?

Contact your Senators and ask them to demand our national parks remain protected. —Visit www.npca.org

The Water Ouzel

by Bob Heirman



I saw a bird with hues of slate
Bobbing and dipping with its mate
Among the rocks of an enchanting stream,
A paradise—a botanist's dream!
Dripping moss in sunlight rays,
Waterfalls and misty sprays.
Far from city crowds, the lemming rush and din,
Beneath the billowed clouds, I drank the splendor in.
A stranger in the wild terrain,
Trespassing on the birds' domain.
I stood and gazed somewhat amazed, they did such funny things,
Just carefree, feathered submarines—with wings.
The gray birds teetered on a rock and sang from its glistening
dome,
An aria, trilling and sweet echo'd their primeval home.
Close by me this summer day,
They continued to swim and play.

Then, leaving the stream and birds, the winding trail I trod,
Richer than inspired words, I had seen the hand of God.
I thought of what I'd left behind,
The beautiful place... the peace of mind.
I knew as shades of eventide gathered in the west,
The water ouzels were safe inside their hidden ledge-rock nest.

—1992, from *A Poet's Paradise*

A Broad At the Border

by Ginger Harmon

From time to time I look behind me to see if the man with the submachine gun is still following me. I am hiking in the Wilderness Area of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. Yesterday, hiking in the Wilderness of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, another man, gun in hand, followed me.

Not quite your picture of wilderness hiking? Not mine either. The men with the machine guns are from Monument and Refuge Law Enforcement. I am with a group of environmentalists and media people who have been invited by Sonoran Desert Protectors—a group founded by Great Old Broad Fred Goodsell—to have a look at why the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge had the dubious honor of being named by Defenders of Wildlife as one of the top ten most endangered wildlife refuges and why Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument was named in a top ten list of most endangered national parks by the National Parks Conservation Association.

Ninety four percent of Organ Pipe and about ninety percent of the Cabeza is Wilderness. The areas are contiguous and together they are one third larger than the state of Rhode Island. The two areas have a total of 85 miles of border with Mexico and a width that runs from around 15 to 30 miles.

An amazing variety of flora and fauna thrive on the extreme heat and aridity of this harsh basin and range country of southwestern Arizona's Sonoran Desert. Plant species number around 400. Among the many cactus are the giant saguaro, organ pipe, the rare night blooming cereus, and teddy bear cholla. Trees found on the shallow slopes (*bajadas*) and along the dry washes include mesquite, ironwood, and palo verde. Spring

brings a ubiquitous cover of brilliant wildflowers including orange poppies, pink primroses, purple verbena, scarlet penstemon and yellow desert marigolds.

More than 300 species of wildlife have been identified in this parched land that is home to the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, desert bighorn, the rare lesser longnose bat, and the seldom seen tortoises. Cold blooded reptiles including rattlesnakes and Gila monsters thrive on the hot desert. Birders can delight in a colorful array of flycatchers, wrens, vireos, warblers, sparrows and finches. Gila woodpeckers peck out a home in the saguaro and humming birds find nectar in the bright red *chuparosa*.

The most severe damage to the resource we saw on our tour was caused by off-road vehicle travel. Cars and trucks, mostly stolen, are driven from the border and across the desert by smugglers carrying drugs or *coyotes* transporting undocumented aliens. In the Cabeza, more than 200 miles of "ghost roads" have been created in the last four years. Unfortunately, when one track becomes impassable, drivers strike out in another direction leaving a network of tracks seldom more than a few hundred feet apart. When the Border Patrol leaves established roads to chase miscreants, they do additional damage. Cross country vehicle travel has caused extensive surface destruction of fragile desert soils. The results are large areas of erosion and changing drainage patterns. While the tire tracks may take decades to heal, the gulying they cause may be irreparable.

Vehicles that get stuck in the desert are simply abandoned. Removing them is difficult, expensive and time consuming. Huge amounts of litter are left behind by immigrants.

Water jugs, cans, bottles, clothing, plastic bags, even water coolers clutter vehicle routes, walking trails, and camping spots. Our group cleaned up one hillside along a foot trail, but we were told the garbage would all be back in a few days. Large amounts of human waste seriously compound the problems.

Natural water tanks (*tinajas*) are often polluted, drained dry or receive so much human activity that wildlife will not use them. Both the endangered lesser longnose bat and the endangered pygmy ferruginous owls have been driven from their roosts by increased human activity.

Fire and weeds are a new problem in these wilderness areas. Illegal immigrants build fires for cooking or warming and often these fires spread. The Sonoran Desert did not evolve with intense fires. Plants in burnt areas are slow to recover, which allows invasive species to move in. The luxuriant foliage of the weeds is a tinder box for what is becoming exponentially bigger fires and, in turn, larger areas of invader weeds. Collecting material for fire can strip a crossing route bare thus depriving an area of nutrients from decaying plant debris and eliminating habitat for small critters.

Death in the desert surely transcends the issue of environmental damage, but both are problems that must be dealt with and solutions found. Immigrants die far too often from heat and thirst related causes. A park ranger was shot by smugglers a few years ago. Border Patrol people are in constant danger. Roger di Rosa, the Manager of Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, put it this way: "The amount of environmental destruction and restoration costs, degree of human death and suffering, and large operational costs incurred by

federal units on the border amount to a major disaster. Solutions need to be developed within that context.”

In addition to the problems listed above, of even more immediate concern is the issue of terrorist infiltration across the border. At the moment, a terrorist can simply walk across the border along with illegal aliens. As one expert said, “Finding a terrorist at the border is like finding a needle in a haystack.” Migrant flows and terrorist incursion are two issues that are inextricably mixed. It is frightening that a solution will probably be a long time coming.

The Sonoran Desert Protectors and other organizations concerned with human death and natural resource damage favor a much improved system for interdiction of the estimated 300,000 undocumented aliens per year who attempt to cross into the Cabeza and Organ Pipe. Improvement in border interdiction would require extensive installation of state-of-the-art surveillance equipment at the border both on the ground and from the air. An increased Border Patrol would be concentrated along border area. There is a 60 foot easement on the United States side of the border where a road could be built for surveillance installations and pursuit of undocumented aliens. It is hoped most crossing attempts would be stopped at the border and that pursuit of aliens by the Border Patrol would be limited to the border area.

The National Park Service is in the process of building a vehicle barrier along the 36 miles of Organ Pipe border with Mexico. This metal and concrete barrier is built in such a way as to keep vehicles out, while people and wildlife can still cross. If this barrier is extended to include the Cabeza Prieta Refuge border with Mexico, it could be a solution to the problem of vehicles crossing into the Wilderness Areas.



Photo of Cabeza Prieta Peak. Photo by Fred Goodsell

Senator John McCain of Arizona and Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts have recently introduced comprehensive legislation that would substantially strengthen border enforcement. The most important aspect of the bill, I believe, is a guest worker program that matches up willing workers and willing employers. It would open up legal, controllable channels through which workers can come into the United States. The bill, also, includes a plan that offers the 11 million illegal immigrants already in the United States a way to become legal residents. This bill is a sensible answer to an immigration system that is out of control. Passage of the legislation will be difficult, but it would surely have an immediate positive effect on the illegal border crossing problem and the attendant environmental degradation.

I came away from our tour of the Wilderness Areas of the Cabeza Prieta and Organ Pipe Cactus with a greater appreciation—if not understanding—of the complicated and multifaceted issues of border security. I certainly have a greater

awareness of the need for immigration reform. Mostly, I came away with a feeling of great sorrow for what is happening to this perfect piece of quintessential Sonoran Desert—a place of world class beauty and natural phenomena as evidenced by its recognition as a United Nations International Biosphere Reserve.

Under the Wilderness Bill, Wilderness is set aside because it is “an area where earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...” Man is moving all too quickly to “trammel” the once pristine and unique wilderness qualities of the Cabeza and Organ Pipe Wilderness. This desecration must be stopped. Please communicate your concerns and ideas to your Senators, Representatives, and the President.

—*Ginger Harmon*
(*ginharmon@aol.com*) is co-chair of Great Old Broads Board of Directors. She spent the summer of 1991 doing volunteer outdoor work at Organ Pipe Cactus NM. Ginger was told she was the only person who ever volunteered at the Monument in the summer.

Valle Vidal — New Mexico’s “Yellowstone”

by Sue Agronoff

As Rose and I drove into the Valle Vidal, I was struck by the beauty of this lush landscape. I certainly never had imagined that there could be such a verdant area anywhere in New Mexico. Our eyes were drawn especially to the stream that we were following, and all that we had learned about stream health from our Days in the Desert training earlier in the spring was flashing before our eyes. As we entered through the narrow canyon we commented on all the signs of a healthy riparian area that we were seeing. As the canyon widened and we began to see cattle grazing we also saw the stream health degrade.



Broads help build stream exclosures. Photo by Kathleen Kershaw

When we arrived at Shuree Lodge, our campsite, I was thrilled at the combination of newcomers and old-timers, locals and out-of-staters, young and old, and men and women all coming together for the camaraderie and their passion for saving our remaining wild lands. The first evening we were entertained by Rod Taylor, the chief wrangler of the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch, which uses the Valle Vidal for its programs. Rod gave us his thoughts on what the Valle Vidal has meant to him over the years interspersed with some guitar

playing and singing. Other evenings we had talks from members of the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, the Quivira Coalition, and the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance about their organizations and projects they are working on in the Valle Vidal.

Friday, the District Ranger gave us a tour of the eastern half of the Valle Vidal, which is in danger of being leased for coalbed methane development. He discussed the management issues and we learned about the timetable and steps involved in this decision process. We were all struck by the beauty of the area and realized that oil and gas development would undermine the local recreation-based economies and destroy this beautiful place.

Saturday we awoke to menacing skies, but we weren't going to let the weather deter us. Some stayed behind to paint, enjoy the ponds, and relax, but the majority of us picked one of three scheduled hikes. Those of us who chose the toughest hike up to a peak got rebuffed by thunder and lightning and many of us ended up soaked and a bit chilly, but once again we were just happy to spend time recreating in this beautiful area.

Sunday morning George Long, USFS Fish and Wildlife Biologist, talked to us briefly about the wildlife of the Valle Vidal and then took us out for our volunteer project building several stream exclosures on Comanche Creek. All 40+ Broads got involved in building these exclosures and we got to see the improvement in

some areas where George had already built exclosures.

As we returned to Shuree Lodge, we were greeted by a group of Boy Scouts camping on the lawn behind the lodge. They were about 2 weeks into a backpacking trip and were thrilled with our invitation for a gourmet dinner. That evening they joined us for the dinner and a discussion around the campfire. They provided me with some of my best memories of the weekend. What struck me was the fact that this group of young boys wanted to join in and be sociable with a group of Old Broads. Not something that most of the teenagers I've seen recently would want to do. Then, to hear the passion that they had for nature and wild places was a wonderful affirmation that there are some in this younger generation who do care.

Monday, after packing up and saying good-bye to everyone, Ronni, Rose and I went for a tour with George Long to see some of the areas where he has been working to restore the health of the riparian areas. Each area he showed us had different issues and he used different techniques to bring each back to a healthy state, but it was just amazing to see how much of a difference his efforts had made. Besides the Boy Scouts this is the other most poignant memory that I have of this trip. It was good to see an example of something the Forest Service is doing well (or at least something one employee of the Forest Service is doing and being allowed to do superbly).

—On September 15, Congressman Tom Udall introduced legislation to permanently shield the Valle Vidal from mineral extraction. To add your voice to the protection of the Valle Vidal visit www.vallevidal.org

A Road Trip to the Valle Vidal

by Sue Graff

I went to the Valle Vidal in New Mexico in June because some friends were going, the scenery was intriguing, it was a new and different locale for me, and of course, the adventure factor...a 3,000 mile road trip from California.

What I found was all of the excitement and beauty of a new place, the Carson National Forest, and more importantly, a beautiful wisp of land illustrating huge impending troubles on all our country's open spaces. The Valle Vidal is a small portion of the Carson National Forest, which was donated by the Pennzoil Company to be managed primarily for its wildlife resource and outstanding scenic value. However, because the area was added to the Forest after the last

management plan was completed, the Forest Service is now in the process of amending the management plan to include management provisions for the Valle Vidal. This plan amendment *could* include language that would prohibit oil and gas leasing in the Valle Vidal. Otherwise, if the possibility for leasing is left open, it will be much more difficult to deny leasing. Gas rich Raton Basin and the Turner Vermejo Ranch, which border the Valle Vidal, are both already in gas production and riddled with roads and pads.

Our speakers at our Shuree Lodge campsite were phenomenal. They carefully explained the proposals, took us to various incredibly beautiful areas,



The vast alpine meadows of the Valle Vidal provide critical habitat for the largest herd of elk in New Mexico. Photo by Ronni Egan

and responded to our questions. The Broads worked one day on restoring cattle and elk exclosures along a creek to protect the almost endangered New Mexico cutthroat trout. The Forest Service showed us how these mitigations could restore the creek, and thus the trout, to its natural state without an endangered species listing.

We hiked through forests of ancient bristlecone pines, streams of wildflowers, and saw huge vistas of snow capped mountains. We were given explanations of the Carson National Forest's solution to over grazing, which is to cut the permitted cattle allotments and add a herder paid for by the cattlemen to keep the animals moving and out of the wetlands.

I came away with a real sense of how a national forest plan is put together. The Valle Vidal has a huge beauty and recreation factor and gas and road infrastructure should not be allowed. The Valle Vidal Broadwalk showed those fighting to protect this area, those dedicated people who are so concerned for the future of this beautiful area, that others cared. I don't think they'd met a group quite so large, knowledgeable, and personable as the Great Old Broads. They were as impressed with our passion as we were with theirs.

Wild For Wilderness Online Auction November 1-21, 2005

Great Old Broads for Wilderness is launching an exciting new fundraiser—an online auction from **November 1-21**. What a great opportunity to make holiday shopping both easy and meaningful. 100% of the auction monies raised will be used to support Broads work for wilderness.

Items being auctioned include: outdoor gear, vacation getaways, outdoor adventures, original artwork, restaurant meals, gift certificates, and lots of other great items. Nearly 100 items have been donated for this event, so there will be a great selection to choose from. Don't miss it!

To bid on auction items go to www.greatoldbroads.org. Starting November 1, there will be a link on our homepage to our auction site. The auction will work similar to Ebay, which allows you to bid at increments up to any amount designated by you and to be notified via email if you are outbid at any time during the auction.

Please also spread the word to your family and friends. Auction items are diverse and will appeal to a lot of folks. The more folks we have bidding, the more money we will be able to raise for our wilderness work! Mark the dates on your calendar today!

Great Old Broads Broadwalk the North Shore Road

by **Danny Bernstein**

Fifteen Broads came to Broadwalk the North Shore Road on the North Carolina side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The North Shore Road area is the largest unbroken tract of mountain land in the eastern U.S. Unlike the Western parks, the Smokies were carved out of land bought from private individuals and are steeped in human history. The proposed road would follow the northern shore of Fontana Lake for 35 miles from the existing tunnel to the vicinity of Fontana Dam. Until the 1940s, people living north of the current lake in Swain County had one road out of the area, but that road was flooded when TVA constructed Fontana Dam to create electricity for the war effort. When the residents moved out, the federal government promised to build a road on the North Shore after WWII. In the early 1960s,

a small section of road was started but was stopped when acid-bearing rock was found, leading to "The Road to Nowhere." [For a detailed history, see the article in the summer 2005 issue of *Broadside*.]

"This is the Broads' first visit to the Southeast. I think the Smokies are gorgeous," Rose Chilcoat, Broads Programs Director, said. "The road is not a local issue; this is a national park and needs to be managed for the good of all of the people. It's better not to be tied to the past but to look to the future. Times have changed. Maybe if the road had been built back then ..."

The first day, we took the boat to the deserted community of Proctor, accompanied by local environmentalists. Ted Snyder, a lawyer and a past president of the Sierra Club who has been involved in this controversy since 1968, explained that "with over a 1,000 people at its height, Proctor was the largest

settlement in the 44,000 acres that was taken by TVA for the dam. However, when the lumber company pulled out in 1928 because they had logged the whole area, many residents also left. Proctor became a farming community again."

We walked into the Calhoun House, the only house still standing in Proctor and noticed the kitchen stove. "My grandmother had a stove like this," said Great Old Broad Sandra Hardenbrook from Seattle. Sandra, now 73, hiked the Appalachian Trail, by herself in five and half-months when she was 60 years old. She had not been back East since her A.T. hike and was eager to see the trail again. "The last time I was here, I knew nothing about the North Shore Road – I just walked."

Each evening at the campgrounds, the Great Old Broads invited local experts on both sides of the issue. Linda Hogue, chair of the North Shore

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Please consider joining our Sustaining Member program and help provide critical support for our work to protect our nation's pristine roadless public lands. Giving on a monthly basis provides reliable funding for Broads so that we can focus our energy and resources on the many wilderness issues at hand. It's easy and secure—you can sign-up using a credit card or a voided check. Please, give Broads the greatest gift you can—your ongoing support.

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Road Association, which supports building the road, gave her perspective. “My family has ties to the area. Building the road is a moral and legal obligation. Our men went off to war and the women had to move out of their homes by themselves. They were told that they would be back in a year.”



Hazel Creek arm of Fontana Lake. One of the three bridges would be built over this section of the lake and would be visible from all high points in the Park. Photo by Rose Chilcoat

Environmentalists and the Citizens for the Economic Future of Swain County have been advocating for a \$52 million settlement to Swain County instead of completing the road at an estimated cost of \$374 million. The county is poor, with over 33% of its people below the poverty line. With the interest that the cash settlement would bring, the County could improve its infrastructure and schools.

Lynda Doucette, a Supervisory park ranger, explained that, “from 1970 until 2000, the park was against the road. Since 2000, when Congress appropriated \$16 million for further construction of the road, the park went



Great Old Broad Sandra Hardenbrook back on the Appalachian Trail after 13 years. Photo by Danny Bernstein

back to not voicing an opinion.” She encouraged members of the audience to give input on their preferred alternative. “All opinions are equal. People in Montana have just as much as say as local people. But the decision will not be based purely on a popular vote.”

For the next two days, the Broads had a choice of hikes led by locals. Susan Doughty from Tennessee chose a strenuous hike, which took her on the A.T. up to a tower where she saw the unbroken wilderness, which would be destroyed by the road. Then she hiked down to the Lake Shore Trail where rusty old cars from the 1940s still stand. “I can understand both sides,” Susan said. “Maybe they [the pro-road people] are still fighting the War Between the States. Us against the government. But I don’t want to see a road built either.”

Ted Snyder noted, “in one option, three bridges would be built, each the size of the Brooklyn Bridge. The only fair and viable option is for Swain County to get a financial settlement.”

To give input to the North Shore Road EIS Planning Process, go to <http://www.northshoreroad.info>.

Danny Bernstein is a hiker and outdoor writer based in Asheville, NC. She can be reached at danny@hikertohiker.org.

This poem was written while participating in the Broads Smoky Mountains Broadwalk. The “Road to Nowhere” is what the locals call the partially built North Shore Road through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Road to Nowhere

This is where I am,
On this road to know.
Where the world’s oldest
mountains
Cry boulders like tears.

Everywhere I look
There are rocks the size of
dinosaurs.
I climb their mossy curves
Barefoot.
I find salamanders,
And logs so worn they look like
feathers.

I am called here,
Where I am.
First by screech owl, crow,
Then sharp-shinned hawk.
It seems I am always wading
upstream.
Hemlock becomes hickory
becomes birch
Here, where there is little sunlight.

I am listening.
Trying to place one steady foot
Then another.
The long arms of laurel offer
balance
And I make my way
Until where I am
Is cool and moist
And the timeless flow of this icy
creek
Erodes my rocky veneer.

I sit and wait.
Knowing nothing
More than
Where I am.

- terry deal-reynolds

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The hills are alive with Old Broads at the Wild Sky Broadwalk! Photo by Erin Moore

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