

Wild Horse Mesa

Story by Morgan Sjogren

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“So, have ya found Everett Ruess yet?” The wiry man holding trekking poles and wearing binoculars chuckled at his witty comment, but I shuddered. Thinking about a young vagabond artist who went missing isn’t exactly what I like to focus on before heading into the wild alone for long stretches.

It’s as awful as my other favorite cautionary joke, “Don’t end up like Aaron Ralston.” As if the fate of solo desert wanderers in the Southwest is either disaster, disappearance or death.

While I do love solitude in the wilderness and admire Everett’s hauntingly beautiful prose, I also crave historical heroes who live to write about their adventures. A friend suggested I pick up a copy of *To the Foot of the Rainbow*, Clyde Kluckhohn’s account of his 1925 adventure to Rainbow Bridge at the age of 20. Of note, his expedition took place five years prior to 20-year-old Ruess’ explorations of the same territory. I ordered a used copy and received a disturbingly paradoxical version printed in 1980 that integrates modern photos as propaganda for Lake Powell – house boats and restaurants – into Kluckhohn’s idyllic tale about the pre-dam Glen Canyon region. In it he laments long before the current site of travesty, “We are living in an age of tourists rather than an age of romance.” (Kluckhohn, Clyde, *To the Foot of the Rainbow*, 1927, p. 105.) The book’s photos infuriated me as I read about the once-untramed Glen Canyon while staring at the modern industrial scars across the landscape.

Even though this spring I hiked to the foot of the same stone rainbow that captivated Kluckhohn, his book gathered red sand in the back of my Jeep, as I focused my energy on following a trail of mysterious inscriptions. Forget finding Everett Ruess – I was hell-bent on finding Clyde Whiskers, or at least find out who he was. I got more than I ever imagined when Clyde Whiskers found me this summer (“Writing on the Wall,” *The Gulch*, Issue 10). When we finally met in person, he pulled out his wallet to show me his San Juan Southern Paiute tribal card with his full name: Clyde Kluckhohn Whiskers. Clyde only recalled that his parents named him after somebody fa-

mous. Stunned, I immediately went to excavate Kluckhohn’s *To the Foot of the Rainbow* in my dusty rig, perhaps it might reveal more subtle details about the San Juan Paiutes, or even about Clyde Whiskers’ parents.

That night camped out beneath the cliffs of Cedar Mesa, I read Kluckhohn’s delightful tale traversing 2,500 miles of desert on horseback from New Mexico to Rainbow Bridge. With no money to hire a guide, Kluckhohn and Anderson, another “knight of the road” (Kluckhohn, p. 45) he met in New Mexico, traveled self-supported successfully to the bridge (ironically crossing paths with John Wetherill and Zane Grey who inspired their destination). Lying in the dirt alongside my modern mare, Sunny the yellow Jeep, I waxed nostalgic and imagined exploring the desert long before paved roads, with Kluckhohn’s words lulling me to dreamland: “It was the desert we grew to love so well, the strange and desolate, the mysterious and colorful desert with its scorching heat and bitter cold. Its loneliness, its siren beauty, haunt me now.” (Kluckhohn, *To the Foot of the Rainbow*, p. 109)

A few days later, I shared the surprising Clyde Whiskers/Clyde Kluckhohn connection with my pen pal Bill Lipe, who introduced me to the book. Lipe is perhaps best known for co-directing the Cedar Mesa Project, an archaeological survey in the 1970s and 2000s in what is now Bears Ears National Monument. His response was inspiring, “You may think of CK as an adventurer like yourself, which he was in his early days, but he also became a leading figure in cultural anthropology. Clyde spent his career on the faculty at Harvard and his writing was on every graduate student’s reading list.”

However, it was illness, and not adventure, that first brought Clyde Kluckhohn at age 17 to



the Southwest or “what he later described as ‘the fringes of the Indian Country.’” This experience, matched with his “omnivorous” reading habits, was to be decisive in shaping his subsequent career as a leading anthropologist. In fact, throughout *To the Foot of the Rainbow*, Kluckhohn detailed observations and interactions with Indigenous populations, including Paiutes on the backside of Navajo Mountain where Clyde Whiskers was born. “The Navajos and Paiutes living in this cañon seem to enjoy an especially happy and undisturbed life. The Paiutes are a vanishing race; in a few years they will be completely absorbed by the Navajos.” (*To the Foot of the Rainbow*, p. 222). Amidst Whiskers’ murky explanation about his name, his pride and stories about helping to restore San Juan Paiute Tribal recognition are much clearer. Kluckhohn’s observation was not altogether wrong as the SJ Paiute tribe does not have federally recognized reservation land and currently resides on Navajo and Hopi tribal lands. In the case of Clyde Whiskers, it was Kluckhohn’s keen awareness and kind interactions with the people he met that hint at why a San Juan Paiute family named their son after him. It also foreshad-

ows his work as an ethnographer focused on the Navajo, as well as broader topics like how anthropology can help reconcile conflicting cultures, in his subsequent book *Mirror for Man* (1949).

Lipe himself had severe asthma as a child, and in lieu of sports he read lots of books about “the West,” outdoor adventures and natural history. He recalls, “I was allergic to most pollen-generating plants most of my growing-up time, so we never went camping or hiking, although I read about people who did such things.” By high school, Lipe’s asthma cleared up, and his outdoor experience began to open up when he enrolled in University of Arizona’s archaeology field school. “In my adolescent years, after I got over severe asthma, I almost desperately sought out physical activity, and in my college years, found that among other options, archaeological fieldwork met my need to be physically as well as intellectually active,” he said. “That and other physically demanding pursuits were a way of continually proving to myself that even though I was still a nerd, I wasn’t a physically wimpy nerd.” His lifetime of work in Southwest archaeology began with the Glen Canyon Salvage Project led by Jesse Jennings (1956-63).

“It was the desert we grew to love so well, the strange and desolate, the mysterious and colorful desert with its scorching heat and bitter cold. Its loneliness, its siren beauty, haunt me now.” - Clyde Kluckhohn



It was a massive effort to excavate, document and research the archaeologically rich area before the dam was built – essentially a lavish ceremony preceding an underwater burial.

Lipe recalls Jennings’ distaste for ill-prepared archaeologists, specifically expeditions led by Clyde Kluckhohn in his youth. Jennings advised

his young padawans, Lipe included, “‘Adventures’ only happen to people who don’t know what they are doing.” It didn’t rub off on Lipe who went on, “Still, we all succumb to the excitement of exploration and the possibility of adventure (at least until it becomes life-threatening). I know that being out in the great empty canyon country played

a big role in my personal and emotional history.”

Lipe suggested that I pick up a copy of Kluckhohn’s second book, *Beyond the Rainbow* (1933), recounting his 1927 adventure with several friends to cross the Colorado River from the Rainbow Plateau and ascend Wild Horse Mesa. Today, it is known as the Kaiparowits Plateau in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the flanks of which are a part of the submerged Glen Canyon. I googled *Beyond the Rainbow* and encountered immediate shock--the out-of-print title is currently for sale via Ken Sanders Rare Books at a steep \$900. Reading this book felt as out of reach as summiting Wild Horse Mesa must have felt for Kluckhohn, and yet another barrier to learning about a place I will never see in its natural state.

However, I am not the type of person to give up easily, especially not with my drugs of choice: a rare book and unique adventure. While I will leave my procurement methods to the imagination, I found a way to read an original copy of *Beyond the Rainbow*. For 271 pages, I joined Clyde “Kluckster” and the “Filthy Five” (his school friends) on their journey. From the Rainbow Plateau, the ventured across the undammed Colorado River to ascend and explore the mysterious Wild Horse Mesa, as named by Zane Grey.

Wild Horse Mesa remained an enchanting mystery to me as well. In 2018, I meandered the Escalante canyons while writing a conservation-focused guidebook, my gaze always turned upward toward the imposing fortress (also known as Fifty Mile Mountain and the Straight Cliffs). The time spent in canyon country instills a patient enthusiasm alongside an insatiable wanderlust. I added this rugged behemoth of coal-infused sandstone to my ever-growing list of places to explore. Like Kluckhohn, I had a lot of ground to cover first. The following spring while exploring the Rainbow Plateau, Wild Horse Mesa loomed like a great wall on the horizon. The seemingly separate world of Grand Staircase-Escalante, an eight-plus-hour drive by highway, now felt so close I could walk there. But aside from the tangle of canyons, there is an immense pool of water that stands between the edge of the Rainbow Plateau and the flanks of Wild Horse Mesa. To get beyond the rainbow now required a sturdy watercraft.

Even before the dam shame of Lake Foul,

Kluckster and the Filthy Five were faced with an intense crossing of the Colorado River. Their Navajo guide Dogi helped them find an abandoned fishing boat so dilapidated it looked like it was made from wood and gunny sacking. (Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 184) They built homemade paddles on the riverbanks and successfully coaxed their pack animals to follow them and swim across. This proved the crux of their adventure, as the once-imposing climb up Wild Horse Mesa was tiring but not nearly so uncertain.

This fall, a window of time finally opened for me to scratch the surface of Wild Horse Mesa with my boots. My hopes to backpack several nights atop the plateau shifted as a cold snap blew through and dropped the low temperatures atop the mesa into single digits. So instead, I set up basecamp on the 50-mile bench, just below the higher and chillier rise of Wild Horse Mesa topping out at 8,000 feet. Reading about Kluckhohn’s adventures on Wild Horse Mesa, I imagined myself a filthy sixth member of the crew, pondering what I might discover through my own experience. “There is no zest like that of exploration, no longing like that for desert places, no call like that of the unknown.” (Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 63)

Kluckhohn’s mission was tinged with initial disappointment upon learning from Ben Wetherill that he’d already been atop the plateau in 1915 with Ben’s father, John. “A white man on the mesa more than 10 years ago. That was hard. Our frontier gone.” This fantasy, to be the first non-natives atop Wild Horse Mesa, was no doubt derived from Zane Gray’s fictional novel *Wild Horse Mesa*: “The mystery and insurmountable nature of Wild Horse Mesa” (Grey, Zane, *Wild Horse Mesa*, 1924. p. 1); and “Biggest mesa in Utah ... so the Mormons say, an’ no white men have set foot on it,” (p. 46). Yet the historical record speaks otherwise. John Wesley Powell had already been up there in the 1870s, Kaiparowits is Paiute for “one arm,” so named for the legendary river explorer (as explained to me by my friend Yermo, a guide in southern Utah). Next came prospectors and cattlemen beginning in the 1880s, geologist Herbert Gregory in 1915 and 1918 (guided by John and Ben Wetherill), and even a few records of tourists. (Fowler, Don D., *The Glen Canyon Country*, 2011, p. 133-34) Despite this, Kluckhohn’s writing about

[Photo] Clyde Kluckhohn and friends inspect an antiquated corn-grinding machine during their 1928 Wild Horse Mesa expedition. Courtesy of Cline Library Special Collections and Archives, Northern Arizona University.



Rainbow Bridge pokes fun at the very incentive originally spurring their summit bid: “First woman to drink black coffee under Rainbow Bridge. First girl to cartwheel under the bridge.” (Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 120)

Why this obsession with firsts? Perhaps unlike any other sort of record that can be conquered and taken by another, a first ascent gives an illusion of possession, importance and meaning. It’s an absurd notion given the obvious signs of Indigenous people on nearly every inch of the Southwestern sand. And yet, it’s hard to fault the once-bedrid-

den Kluckhohn for pursuing such a challenge as the heuristic trap of adventures pushed him on a deeper quest for meaning.

Here his adventures shifted to exploration, “But still the grey cliffs called, and our enthusiasm was freshened ... undoubtedly individual canyons had never been explored. We had dreams of emulating John Wetherill and his brothers.” (p.171) He mentions several times the influence that Wetherill’s discoveries had on his outings, “We expected that first day to find a ruin as great as Cliff Palace on Mesa Verde. In this we were dis-

appointed.” (p. 196.) Again, he was seeking thrill and accolades and as a result of falling short, on the cusp of something far grander.

In fact, he and his crew would not even be the first to explore atop Wild Horse Mesa, as Donald Scott, director of the Harvard Peabody Museum, recorded sites on the mesa just weeks before Kluckhohn’s crew in 1928. (Fowler, Don D., *The Glen Canyon Country*, 2011, p. 133-34) What does stand out about Kluckhohn’s unique self-funded adventures is that his writing is some of the first to describe the Kaiparowits from firsthand experience, and to connect his observations with native cul-

tures’ past AND present (Fowler, p. 134). This a direct counter to Grey’s imaginary prose in *Wild Horse Mesa* after his own failed attempt to summit, Wetherill again serving as his guide (Roberts, David, *The Lost World of the Old Ones*, 2015). Rather, their month spent atop Wild Horse Mesa instilled a greater appreciation of the landscape and their time in the wild, “Indeed in all the southwest no single spot is quite so rich and varied as Wild Horse Mesa. It has its own natural bridge, petrified forest, painted desert, cliff ruins, and canyons ... The view from the rims of Wild Horse Mesa is purchased at high price and is therefore understood and appreciated more” (Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 206-207).

Taking note, I left my original route objectives behind with my Jeep, I had nothing to prove or achieve here. I committed to spending time walking around Wild Horse Mesa listening to the stories it wanted to tell. Amidst the frigid air, I broke a sweat hiking up the steep trail, one of the few man-made paths ascending the mesa. Passing through thick boughs of maple leaves blushing in red hues from autumn’s kiss, I looked down upon the warmer sea of sandstone a step below me on this Grand Staircase. Upon the rim, the plateau’s narrow width felt like a startling contrast to its immense 50-mile length; I was staring directly at the smokestacks of the Navajo Generating Plant in Page, Ariz. With no trails atop the mesa, I explored the natural contours and lines of the landscape dotted with piñon-juniper forests and occasional outcroppings of massive sandstone blocks. Despite the remoteness, I noted human traces almost immediately ranging from stashed plastic water bottles to vintage booze bottles and tin cans – all interspersed with lithic scatters and pot sherds. With each footfall in the dirt, I contemplated the traces that each of us make on the earth throughout our lives, both conscious and unconscious, lasting and ephemeral.

Kluckhohn’s goal to discover “the next cliff palace” like the Wetherill’s never came to fruition. But he and his friends (some of whom also went on to academic research careers) experienced the delight of organically encountering ancient sites on their jaunts, the beauty of living at the mercy of nature and the camaraderie of their group effort. As I hacked my way through thick brush for hours, at times even crawling on my belly, I covered so few miles I felt like a crazed fool. Yet when I stood face-to-face with Ancestral Puebloan granaries and dwellings with thatched roofs and some red paint still intact, how could I still feel that way? I will likely never comprehend the plight of the ancient people who hid their food here, nor why the portion of the Kaip-

[Photo] The southeastern end of Wild Horse Mesa seen from across Glen Canyon.

arrowits on which these structures are concealed has been removed from national monument protections. However, I can understand why this all matters as I breathe the thin air of difficulty, smell the sweet must of preservation, observe the memories of those who walked here earlier and contemplate the enigmas of human decision.

Atop Wild Horse Mesa, I stood in awe of an incomprehensible view of such a vast territory. The lower steps of the Grand Staircase striding up from the Grand Canyon to the Chocolate Cliffs, next the Vermillion, passing the white layer, then on up to the Gray Cliffs beneath my feet. My eyes traversed the Waterpocket Fold toward the Henry Mountains, the distinct trio climbing toward the pink cliffs of the Aquarius Plateau. In the distance, Bears Ears listened to the sandy rattle of Comb Ridge snaking toward Monument Valley's towers. The tentacles of the Escalante and San Juan rivers wiggled between petrified walls of sand. Directly across from me, and at the heart of this desert kingdom, stood the monolithic Navajo Mountain surrounded by a man-made lake severing these arteries.

Sacred isn't the same as safe. Grand Staircase-Escalante, including Wild Horse Mesa, and Bears Ears all wait in perilous limbo facing the implementation of a destructive new land management plan, with large swaths altogether removed from national monument protections. It's a move that highlights the capitalist directive pushing untapped resource extraction over untapped research potential, cultural significance and wilderness. And perhaps it is the missing link, Glen Canyon, that has propelled my obsession with trying to piece together these landscapes, to witness what remains before it also changes or vanishes. During my meeting with Clyde Whiskers he vividly recounted the rise of the waters near his home behind Navajo Mountain and Glen Canyon, his descriptions sounded like a slow death.

While Ruess receives praise from wilderness worshippers for lamenting his return to civilization, Kluckhohn ranted about the threat of encroaching development destroying the wilderness. In my humble opinion, his observations and ideas about protecting the wilderness generated on Wild Horse Mesa were the expedition's greatest success. His insight into the complexity of public land protections nearly predicts our modern predicaments as well as potential solutions. He

acknowledges the earlier efforts of Wetherill and Bernheimer, the explorers whom he wished to emulate, to use the knowledge gained from their explorations to seek national park protections for the surrounding canyons and mesas.

And yet, Kluckhohn is perceptible to the dangers of our National Park Service to the very landscapes they aim, on paper, to protect. "We may rejoice that the Parks are so popular with the American people as recreation centers, and yet we ourselves would be frightened away by the statistics of how many hundred thousand visit a park every season. The Parks seem a little too near commercialized wilderness. That is why I wonder if we want to make Wild Horse Mesa into a National Park after all. At least I doubt if 'Park' is the word. It suggests too much carefully built roads and elaborate regulations. Simply turn the Mesa into a nature preserve denied to settlement. NO ROADS. NO BUILT TRAILS." (Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 207-208) Then again, perhaps this is the story that places like Wild Horse Mesa begin to tell you if you stay long enough and listen.

Hole-in-the-Rock Road itself epitomizes man vs. nature as it stretches 57 miles from the town of Escalante to a cliff dropping into Lake Powell. In 1880, Mormon pioneers blasted dynamite through the sandstone to continue on their journey across the Colorado River and settle the town of Bluff. The blasted hole now overlooks stagnant dammed waters in lieu of a river. On its shores are the smokestacks of Navajo Generating Plant, which processed coal by desecrating Black Mesa, sacred to the Hopi. The coal plant now out of business, stands as a monument to short-sighted destruction over cultural value.

And so continues the evolution of Manifest Destiny, manifesting our own destruction. Today Hole-in-the-Rock the road has been removed from Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument spurring rumors it may eventually be paved to aid increased recreation, or even mining operations. Portions of the fossil-rich flanks of the Kaiparowits Plateau were also removed from the national monument boundaries. Still, the top of Wild Horse Mesa remains mostly undeveloped, save for a few Jeep roads including the roller coaster Smoky Mountain Road connecting the towns of Escalante and Page.

As development looms, Wild Horse Mesa and



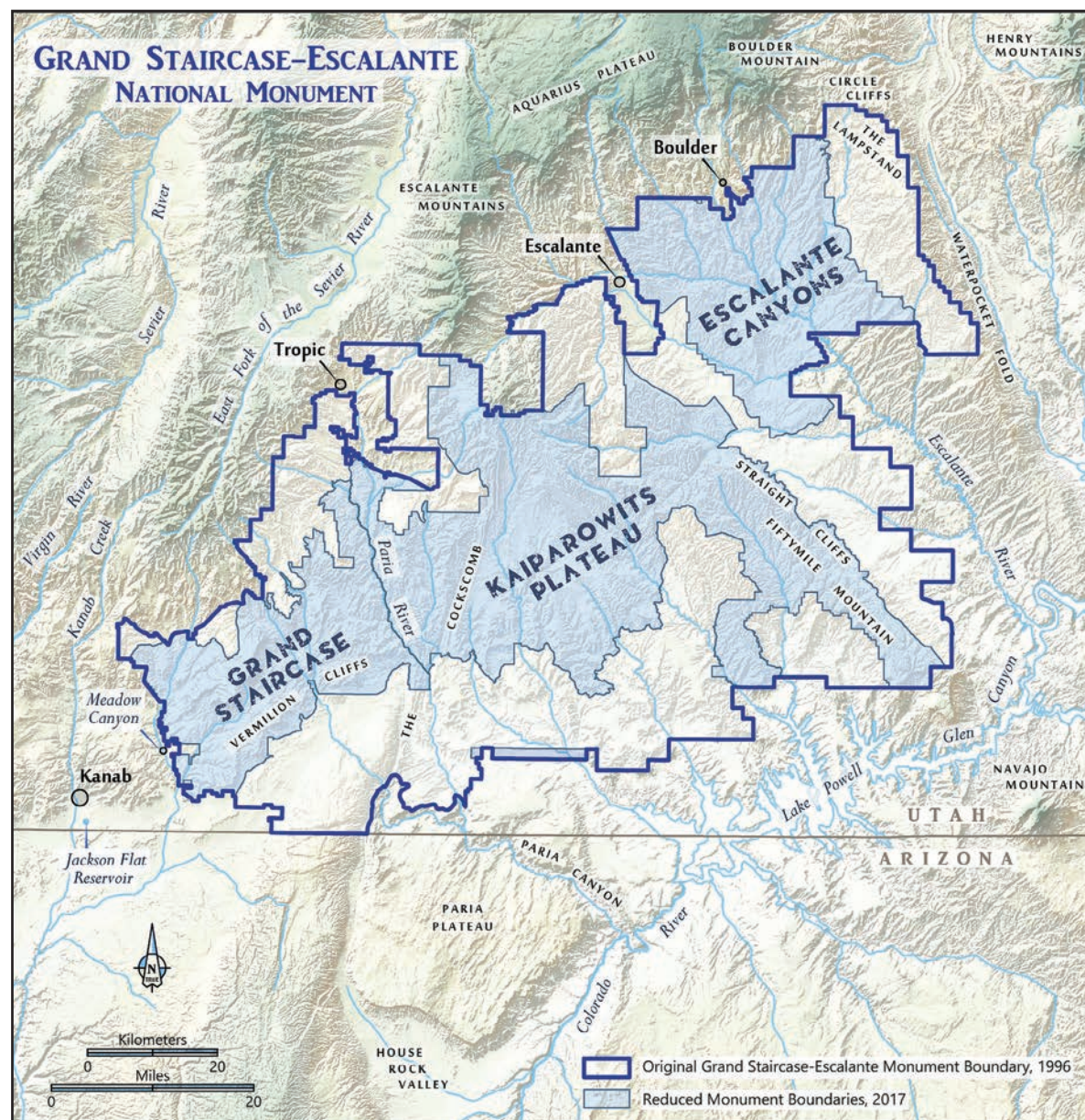
GSENM also remain largely unstudied – in fact only 10 percent of GSENM has been archaeologically surveyed. The research of the monument has been unable to reach its full potential in over 20 years through lack of funding. The money is now being funneled to dismantle it altogether via a new management plan that cost \$2.3 million to produce and prioritize “resource use and reduce constraints” and “manage resource uses less restrictively.” The plan specifically singles out the Kaiparowits, “Managing more public lands ... as available for mineral and renewable energy development and increasing acres available for grazing.” This lies in stark contrast to the original plan in 1996 to manage the 1.8 million acres with research as the priority.

Written long before this area received any federal protections, Kluckhohn the soothsayer's words were seemingly echoed in Wallace Stegner's preamble to the Wilderness Act, and in President Bill Clinton's 1996 National Monument proclamations. All three outline the potential of this

unique and varied landscape forged by geological time for scientific and archaeological research and as a refuge for wildlife and wanderlusting humans alike.

“Wild Horse Mesa, if protected against the encroachment of civilization, would not merely be a dynamic and creative memorial of the old West. Its prehistoric remains would attract the archaeologist. For comparative study the botanist would have here, a cross-section of the vegetation of semi-arid regions. The geologist would find petrified forests, faults, coal seams, and a 4,000-foot outcrop presenting unusual structural problems. He would be able to observe from a new point of vantage one of the greatest geological phenomena in the whole world – the erosional work of the Colorado River system. The naturalist, amateur or professional, could occupy himself ... The ruins, the fine springs and cool caves, the delightful climate, the fair timbered valleys would charm every wanderer.” (*Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 208-209)

As a lifelong runner, I often challenge myself



with the existential question, “Why?” and “What is the point?” Competitive running especially lacks a creative, intellectual stimulus that I crave, not to mention wondering what good these pursuits have for anything but my own ego or pleasure. I think many of us who relish our experiences outside, some even devoting our lives to them, encounter the same thoughts. I often think deeply about this on my jaunts through the wilderness. As the awareness of threats to public lands, and the planet, increase, our time outdoors is the missing link between what’s on the news and what’s real. With the sound of each crunchy step into the earth, we are reminded of the eternal

why, the reason we are all here.

Lipe, also a runner once he broke free from his asthma, describes this significance of human-powered movement, “Striding through a landscape under your own power generates an imagined release from ordinary limits, and is something that allows you to appreciate and enjoy the physical elements of who you are.” Through his adventures, Kluckhohn observed this innately human connection to landscapes, wild places and each other. Later, his anthropological philosophies focused on the commonality of humans across cultures. Today, as the powers that be continually seek to sever our connection with nature – be

it with a dam, a strip mine or even a paved road within a national park – we need wild places more than ever to remind us of our human capabilities to endure, observe, experience, connect and live. Should we also choose to use our intuition, imagination and energy to explore beyond what we already know, each of us holds the potential to use our bodies and our minds to become a protector of these places.

When I finally pulled myself away from Wild Horse Mesa, I slowly drove down the heinous washboards of Hole-in-the-Rock Road not ready to leave. I pulled over at a well-known trailhead for a pit stop, and to my utter shock found not a few cars, but an overflow. By my estimation, there must have been a line just to enter the slot canyon less than a mile away. After experiencing the remoteness of Wild Horse Mesa, the cluster of humans felt overwhelming. I felt civilization encroaching on the wilderness. I ruminated on the new Grand Staircase management plan that allows larger group sizes, highlighting the ethos that the landscape is an attraction for human use, not a living entity to be protected. At first, I wanted to turn around, drive to the end of the road and walk far away from all of this like Ruess, knowing I can be more than content alone with my friends the coyote, wind and cacti.

How quickly I forgot that last year, while walking and running these same canyons I pondered these same sentiments. Ultimately my guidebook co-author and I came to the conclusion to which he wrote, “maybe that secret/favorite spot of yours, which is likely not secret, could have a better chance of survival if more people cared about it. Had Glen Canyon had the notoriety of its sister canyon, or dare I say its national monument status, one could perhaps still visit those deep dark canyons that are now lost beneath a sea of powerboats and irrigation runoff.” (Sjogren and Versteeg, *The Best Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Hikes*, 2018, p. 16)

The memory snapped me out of my funk, *what if all these people falling in love with this slot canyon became defenders of Grand Staircase-Escalante and helped reinstate full monument protections? What if they urged Congress to set aside more land as wilderness? As they clamor for the more popular canyons, write protest letters and vote in favor of protecting these places, their efforts will unknowingly help keep Wild Horse Mesa*

wild as Kluckhohn wished it, as do I.

Back in the Jeep, the I replaced the dread of returning to the world of pavement and Wi-Fi with a sense of purpose, the urge to ceaselessly wander and drift dissipating as I picked up speed. Disappearing into the landscape will do nothing to save it. Keeping these places and their stories to myself is as fruitless as picking up rocks and adding useless weight to my backpack. Chris McCandless, the modern Ruess, declared in his own journal, “Happiness is only real when shared” before fading forever into the Alaskan winter. Well, I’d say, protecting the wilderness is only real when shared. While my own experiences in the backcountry have transformed my entire being and outlook on life, it feels static without using the wild love I’ve received from the muddy canyons, forested plateaus and free flowing rivers to infect others. Like Kluckhohn, I too “wished that everyone whom we loved could have been with us to see that valley in the moonlight ... to look through the darkness searching for the silhouette of the high plains.” (*Beyond the Rainbow*, p. 93)

I clearly understand why we need the wilderness, but now I also am beginning to recognize my own path within the landscape and why I must occasionally reemerge. Back in town, I pulled over at a coffee shop and took my laptop inside. I let stories from the wilderness flash flood the pages – the marks of ancient humans on stone and the song of endangered birds, the paths of modern explorers and scrappy young adventurers, cries of marginalized tribes and endangered landscapes. If you’re reading this, know that I am content that I crawled out of the canyons so that the messages from the Colorado Plateau can be passed on to you: adventurers, readers, locals, explorers – everyone is not only wanted but needed to defend the wilderness. **TG**

Morgan Sjogren is the author of The Best Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Hikes. She is optimistic that her guidebook and stories like this will help generate a broader awareness for the 50% reduction of the 1.8 million-acre monument.

[Map] The respective districts and reduced boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Catherine Gilman, courtesy of Archeology Southwest Magazine.