



Spring 2003 Newsletter

# Turnpike Construction in Maroon Bells

By John Bauer

The Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness in Colorado's White River National Forest contains not only the much-photographed twin peaks for which the area is named but several other 14,000+ ft. mountains, and many alpine lakes and valleys of stunning beauty. In August 2002, ten volunteers helped the Sopris Ranger District complete a series of turnpikes (raised structures) along the Avalanche Creek in this beautiful place. The group included Gary and Karen Michaels, Gina Hugo, Catherine Petronino, Bill Farmer, Michael Ruhsenberger, the brothers Jason and Shane Spinell, and Gayle Marechal and John Bauer as leaders.

Most of the crew had no turnpike construction experience, but this did not impede this group's progress or enthusiasm. At first, the turnpike construction appeared to be a curious exercise. Much of the West experienced a severe drought in 2002, and the existing trail was intact, quite dusty, and otherwise looked fine. But Jon Thompson, our guide from the US Forest Service, assured us that the section earns its "Big Muddy" moniker during spring melt off and periods of intense rain - something we experienced on the second workday. We simply donned our rain gear and continued with the construction, working in the freshly moistened clay, and appreciating the utility of drainage ditches we had started to dig on the first day.

Despite the group's lack of experience at turnpike construction, everyone soon became proficient at his or her chosen task whether sawing, carrying logs, notching, or finding the perfect mineral soil. Jason, whose 17th birthday we celebrated during the week, impressed the team with his new-found finesse at

notching the ends of the logs. The turnpike construction exceeded Jon's schedule, and by the third work day, it was apparent to him that we would not only complete our assigned section of the work but the entire section of the turnpike construction he was hoping to complete that summer. The final workday saw us vigorously prepping logs, setting up a sand bucket brigade, and engaging in an impromptu conga line to compact the soil - all by lunch. With our mission completed, we had the rest of the day to hike or relax. Those of us who went on hikes admired our group's workmanship on the return to camp.



WV photo

Jon helped us visualize the trail in 10 to 20 years - the logs that currently contain the fill slowly rotting away, while the vegetation fills to the edges of the turnpike, the drainage culverts diverting the water, and the mounds of dirt, compacted by thousands of feet, provides dry passage for future hikers.

On our day off, most of the team began hiking in morning twilight to ascend the symmetrical and stately Capitol Peak. However, the weather conditions prevented a safe ascent, and the hikers took various side trips to lakes and minor summits. There is no shortage of diversions in this

beautiful wilderness. The skies, in addition to the rain, provided a wonderful show for us throughout the week, including an intense double rainbow and dramatic lightning. On our final morning everyone was up early for breakfast and to help break camp. We were all at the trailhead by 11:00 a.m. for a final group photo and to say our goodbyes, knowing we had accomplished much during our week in the backcountry.



Wilderness Volunteers loves stories and photos from service trips for use on our website, catalog and newsletter. We are particularly interested in photos of volunteers at work and of volunteers hiking in beautiful places. Please send submissions to Wilderness Volunteers, PO Box 22292, Flagstaff, AZ 86002-2292, or e-mail to: [debbie@wildernessvolunteers.org](mailto:debbie@wildernessvolunteers.org)



Wilderness Volunteers (WV) promotes national service trips in cooperation with the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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**LEADER PROFILE**

# Kathleen Worley and Don Meaders

When asked what she misses most when in the backcountry, Kathleen Worley replied, “a toilet, unless I’m with Ron Harton, who builds the best latrines.” This answer typifies Kathleen’s personality. This is someone who teaches theater at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, acts in local productions, and gives wonderful interpretive readings on Wilderness Volunteers trips. Obviously, Kathleen is equally at home in a sophisticated, urban setting or in the wilds of the eastern Sierras. Her involvement with Wilderness Volunteers dates to a trip she was on several years ago with John Sherman at the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge. Since then she has been an active leader with the organization in order to “help keep trail systems healthy and give WV a presence in the eastern Sierras,” Kathleen says.

Kathleen had a hard time naming her favorite Wilderness Volunteers trip, but when pressed she admitted to being partial to the first one she led near Davis Lake in the eastern Sierra. She had a great co-leader, a wonderful crew, and someone who made perfect coffee. This trip also ranks as one of three favorite wilderness experiences. The other two are climbing Mt. Whitney and backpacking to Dragon Lake where her father says she was conceived.



WV photo

As for what she wants to do first when returning to civilization, Kathleen says she wants to shower or head back to the wilds, but she also likes to eat fresh vegetables and ice cream, although not at the same time. And what advice does this long-time outdoor enthusiast offer to leaders and would-be leaders? “Cultivate your sense of humor, take care of yourself, and look for the best in people,” says Kathleen. Sage words from one of Wilderness Volunteers best.

Don Meaders is another of Wilderness Volunteers best and has been a part of the organization almost since its inception. This is fitting since Don’s involvement with the outdoors dates to his early childhood growing up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where his backyard was miles of mountains and canyons. As to why he is a leader with Wilderness Volunteers, Don says he wants to “introduce others to the wonders and rewards of service trips and the wonderful people who do them.”



WV photo

In the backcountry, Don can’t live without his Therm-a-Rest pad. His favorite new piece of equipment is his LED headlamp, and right now Don is using it to read *Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey* by Jack Loeffler. Don had no trouble naming his favorite Wilderness Volunteers trips: “the last trip and the next trip.” Despite his love for the outdoors, Don does miss his bed when in the backcountry, and he wants Mexican food, a cold beer, and French fries when he gets back to where they are available.

Right now Don’s best wilderness experience is camping at 12,000 ft. in the Pecos Wilderness at the edge of the tree line with freshly caught fish cooking in the pan. His dream camping trip is a one to three months trip in either Alaska or the Grand Canyon with good friends filling in “some blanks on our personal maps.” Don feels we often work too long and too hard, and wilderness trips help him stay a little saner. His advice to others is to take time to enjoy the land we all work so hard to protect.

# Ultralight in Action

Curt Mobley

*This is the second of a two part series*

A year after I invested in ultralight equipment, I started down the trail into the Grand Canyon with 24 pounds on my back, including four days of heavy, luxury food. What a difference from last year! I was returning to the Kanab Creek Wilderness, where I had worked the previous year. This seldom visited area is a paradise of hidden springs, Anasazi artifacts, and solitude. I wanted to take my time and do some serious photography, so I lugged along my good camera, tripod, and even a flash (all of which are ultra *heavy*). Thank goodness I was an ultralight convert. I also had been yearning all winter to do a solo trip in the Grand Canyon—another midlife crisis symptom, I suppose. There is nothing like being alone in some of the roughest and most remote country in the lower 48, with no prospect of help in an emergency, to clarify your relationship to nature. I figured that if a mountain lion jumped me, I would just whack him on the snout with a trekking pole; that would teach him a lesson he wouldn't soon forget! As for broken legs and scorpion stings—well, they would be a good test of my ability to endure pain.

I set up camp in a small alcove on the south side of the canyon, 100 feet from Mountain Sheep Spring. There were Anasazi pictographs on the wall above me. Within minutes, I spotted 7 Anasazi pot shards within 10 feet of my tent. My camping spot was likely a Motel 6 for Anasazi hunting parties a millennium ago. There are no signs that any archaeologist or pot hunter has ever visited this site. I wondered what pre-Columbian art treasures might be buried in the dirt beneath my tent. Last year I had watched a large Blackneck Garter Snake hunt for frogs downstream from the spring. I took an afternoon stroll to see if my friend was still there. Sure enough, there he was, hanging head down from the same rock. What a great life: get up in the morning, slither to rock, wait for frog, eat frog, slither home, go to bed, repeat the next day. What would he think about the hectic life I lead back in Seattle? I took a nap to get myself on snake time.

The next day I wandered down Sowats Canyon and up Jumpup Canyon, another oasis of running water. On day three I moved a few miles to Kwagunt Hollow. Along the way, I went a couple of miles cross country to find another spring shown on the topo map. I saw no sign of it, but maybe it was dry, since last winter was one of the driest on record in that

area. Kwagunt spring was almost dry. Last year, the canyon downstream had been a photographer's delight of small waterfalls and pools. This year it was just dried mud and sunbaked rock. Now I have an excuse to return next year for more photography.

I hiked out of the Grand Canyon the next day, or rather I almost floated out with my light pack. I was carrying about 16 lbs of gear, excluding my camera equipment, of course. I was now a total convert to ultralight equipment. Thanks, Dick! I still have a ways to go before I am fully ultralight, e.g., I still carried my old rain pants and a heavy MSR water filter. But if you think the 12 pounds I've already cut from my pack isn't enough to matter, you've obviously never hiked out of the Grand Canyon. The volume of the ultralight gear is also much less; my ultralight tent and sleeping bag are no bigger than loaves of bread. If my reaction to ultralight equipment is typical, *Backpackus giganticus* may be doomed to extinction.

"Without question there are places in nature that own a certain unique spirit, that are so peculiar and individual that they draw us to them, not that they care, but that they stand out in the surrounding solitude and vastness of the forest and act as magnets to anyone who passes their way."

Jim Harrison

## Tried & True Recipes

### Ratatouille (serves 12)

*(submitted by Robin Rose)*

1/4 c olive oil	2 eggplants, peeled and diced
2 c chopped onions	2-28 oz cans crushed tomatoes (with juice)
1 red and 1 green pepper, chopped	1 large can tomato sauce
6 garlic cloves, minced	1 tsp oregano, basil, marjoram
2 zucchini, sliced	

Sauté onions and garlic in oil. Add peppers, zucchini, and eggplant. Add crushed tomatoes and juice, can of tomato sauce, and all the spices. Simmer until eggplant is soft, about 20-30 min. The longer it simmers the more the flavors meld. Serve over rice, or polenta. Pass parmesan cheese for topping &, sliced black olives too, if you like.

### Polenta (serves 12)

3 c cornmeal	8 oz fontina cheese
1 tsp salt	1 c parmesan cheese
1 Tbsp basil, oregano, garlic powder	

Bring 8 c water to boil. Mix cornmeal and herbs with enough cold water to wet. Add wet cornmeal to boiling water, stirring constantly. Cook 5 minutes over low heat. Adjust water if necessary; should be slightly creamy. Add cheeses. Serve. Note: do not cook after adding cheeses. Make sure it's done before you add the cheese.

# Trailhead Precautions

John Sherman

On a Wilderness Volunteers service trip to Grand Gulch in southern Utah last October, participants' cars were broken into at the trailhead. This was a professional job. No windows were broken, and the car doors were professionally opened. The thieves did not bother with personal belongings such as clothes or gear; only cash and credit cards were taken. The Wilderness Rangers confirmed that this was the first incident of this type in the many years they had been at Grand Gulch. However, it turned out that other trailheads throughout southeastern Utah, including some in Canyon Lands N.P., have been sites of auto break-ins. Unfortunately, several volunteers left wallets in their cars, and the thieves found them and picked them clean.

Since I always take my wallet and valuables (such as airline tickets) with me in my pack, it did not occur to me to warn folks to pack in their valuables. My caution probably comes from hiking and backpacking in the Pacific Northwest where "car clouting" at trailheads is relatively common. I just assumed that everyone else would also pack in valuables as well. I learned a painful lesson as a leader: don't take anything for granted and always communicate with your crew. My new trailhead mantra is "Remind participants not to leave money, credit cards, driver's licenses, or plane tickets in their cars at the trailhead. Pack 'em in and then pack 'em out!"

## Mail bag

Thanks for making my first hiking trip with the Wilderness volunteers a memorable one. First I would like to say how lucky I was to get with the best group for my first trip. My thanks to the leaders for the special way they performed their tasks. It was great. The job went by like clock-work, and the food was outstanding. I loved it all. I liked our nights just sitting around talking about anything and everything. I have been telling everyone here at home that if they would like to give something back to nature and have a good time at the same time, they should call the Wilderness Volunteers and go on one of these trips.

C.S., Big Bend



## Directors Corner

Deborah Northcutt

Imagine you are on a trip, miles in the backcountry, when a participant falls, hits his head on a sharp rock, and suddenly blood is everywhere (scalp wounds tend to bleed profusely). How the trip staff responds to this and other emergencies can make the difference between a successful service trip and tragedy. The difference between Wilderness First Aid and Standard First Aid is that we can't pick up the phone and call for an ambulance in the backcountry. We must be prepared to deal with the emergency. Wilderness First Aid is one of those things that, if you are trained and prepared, you probably won't need to use because the fact that you are aware and alert to the risks helps you to make rational logistical decisions both in planning and running your trips.

The best way to prepare for leadership is to be exposed to as many situations as possible. The best way to have confidence in being able to deal with injuries is to seek out and participate in as much training as it takes for you to be comfortable. While the specific challenge you might encounter on your trip may differ from the scenarios presented during the training, the steps taken in making decisions to best deal with the problems are often the same. Knowing whether you can simply put some pressure and a Band-Aid on the wound, or whether you might be dealing with a major head injury is a skill you can learn.

Of course, most accidents can be prevented by good planning and by being alert to the hazards in the environment. Making sure that your participants are drinking enough water, eating frequent snacks, wearing appropriate clothing, getting enough rest, taking care of hot spots, and modeling all these behaviors yourselves can go a long way toward a healthy week.

Regardless of the details, readiness comes down to advance planning. Take the time to prepare yourself for the unexpected by taking classes, reading books, subscribing to newsletters — adding to your fund of knowledge so that when you are presented with the unexpected, you can deal with it.

I congratulate all the Wilderness Volunteers leaders who completed the Wilderness First Aid course and received their certification. This is information they will use not only on their backcountry trips, but also in their everyday lives.

Thank you very much for all the work you folks did. You are an invaluable asset to any park but here at Big Bend, we are most appreciative. Bill Jennings had nothing but good to say about your group...and you too. Take Care.

Don Sharlow Trails Supervisor  
Big Bend National Park, Texas

We definitely did a job of work didn't we? The trip was challenging, rewarding, satisfying, and smack dab in the middle of my favorite country in the lower 48: I'm deeply glad I was there. As to seeing me out with WV again, you can bet on it.

T.M., Glen Canyon

The trip was great and quite the challenge. It's a great sense of accomplishment to have pushed yourself so hard and made a difference in the environment. I know that <we> are already talking about which trip to do next year.

J.J., Escalante River

The rangers will send pictures when the last board of the ramp decking is down! They are soooooo appreciative of our doing the hardest parts of completely removing the piers, joists, stringers and decking of the old ramp and putting in the new and improved one, lacking only some decking! We got a lot done in a very short time.

C.C, Caladesi Island

# Wilderness First Aid

By Gayle Marechal

Beyond the glittering lights of Las Vegas lies beautiful Red Rock Canyon National Recreation Area, a 120,000 acre swatch of desert, mountains, and canyons whose most prominent feature is the red sandstone dominating its ridges. On a long weekend in April, twenty-seven Wilderness Volunteers leaders came here for a Wilderness First Aid course taught by Jake Schepps and Mary Jensen of the Wilderness Medicine Institute (WMI), an institute of the National Outdoor Leadership School. The intensive, two-day course covered such subjects as heat exhaustion, spinal stabiliza-



WV photo

*Wilderness Volunteers Staff at WFA , April 2003, Red Rocks, NV  
Back: Debbie Northcutt, John Sherman, Mark Viglianco, Tom Laabs-Johnson, Bob Jackson, Nic White-Petteruti, Jeanne Whiting, Donna Manion, Rusty Strum, Gayle Marechal, Vince White-Petteruti, Misha Kokotovic, Don Meaders, Debra Ellers, Ariel Litvin, Joyce Duncan, Bill Swanson, Paul Whiting  
Front: Rudy Duncan, Eric Anderson, Ashely Northcutt, Dale Grooms, Ruth Claypool-Sarvis, (Flat Stanley) Kathleen Worley*

tion, examination techniques, and fractures, with an emphasis on performing first aid at the “skin level” while in the backcountry. Skin level first aid refers to the fact that the first aid provider does not make any diagnosis, but rather treats what he/she observes after an examination of the victim and questioning conscious victims.

The classes were divided into lecture and actual practice on a variety of simulated wilderness injuries and illnesses. In the simulated situations, groups of “victims” were given specific injuries or complaints, often with wounds and injuries made more realistic with theatrical make-up. First aid providers then approached victims and tried to make a determination of the injury or complaint and provide appropriate treatment. In some scenarios, victims were unconscious, adding to the difficulty of making a determination of what was wrong. A highlight of the two-day seminar was a “fashion show” of improvised splints created by three person teams. The exercise called for each team to provide a splint for a particular type of unusable fracture in order to render the fracture immobile. Splints were created from such materials as Thermo-Rest pads, Crazy Creek chairs, and various articles of clothing. Each splint was then given a complete critique to assess its effectiveness.



WV photo

*Splint Inspection at WFA class*

Wilderness Volunteers, in cooperation with WMI, provided an opportunity for our volunteer leaders to hone their first aid skills, and as Debbie Northcutt stated to the group “gain confidence as leaders in the backcountry.” WV leaders from around the country benefited from the shared experience of the NOLS course as well as from exchanging stories of leadership challenges while on service trips. This was a weekend well spent by those in attendance.



WV photo

*Practicing spinal stabilization*

# A Landmark Trip

Ellen Maling

"Each of us belongs to a particular landscape, one that informs who we are, a place that carries our history, our dreams, holds us to a moral line of behavior that transcends thought. And in each one of these places, homework is required, a participation in public life to make certain that all is not destroyed under the banner of progress, expediency or ignorance. We cannot do it alone. This is the hope of bedrock democracy, standing our ground in the places we love, together." –Terry Tempest Williams, *RED*.

"This is going to be a landmark trip." said Bill Wolverton, a backcountry ranger at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. I agreed wholeheartedly, for it was my first Wilderness Volunteers trip, and I had recently quit my job and was preparing to attend graduate school within mere weeks. Our service mission was to



WV crew cutting Russian olive in Coyote Gulch

follow-up on the work of five years of previous Wilderness Volunteers by continuing the eradication of two invasive and prolific species in Southern Utah: Tamarisk and Russian olive. As a result of Bill's extensive planning in his sixteen years of seasonal work in the area, our group would have the pleasure of felling one of the last Russian olives in Coyote Gulch.

Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) is native to southern Europe and the Himalayas but was planted extensively throughout the West to provide windbreaks, wildlife habitat, and erosion control in the early 1940's. Voracious in both its propagation mechanisms and nitrogen fixing tendencies, Russian olive overpowers cottonwood and willow, both native to the area. It also has sharp two-inch spines radiating from the trunk and each branch. These thorns can puncture tires and lead to impressive battle scars on vulnerable skin. Many of the naïve land managers of the past are cursed by their successors who now have to spend extensive time, effort, and money to eradicate this invasive species. Russian olive is a threat to this beautiful canyon country's ecosystem, so our work here was critical. Bill kept our spirits up by reminding us, "The area you can cover as a group of volunteers is far beyond what I can do alone." His wiry presence and passionate attitude turned the group into an eradication machine that cut branches, felled trunks, and applied the herbicide Garlon to naked stumps.

In the many years I've spent guiding in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, I find my peace in the vastness and beauty of land untrammelled by man. To protect it, I write letters and encourage others to feel the spirit of this vast, wild place. Being in the Arctic Refuge is a gift, and I wanted to give something back to another special place. The Glen Canyon NRA is remarkable place with Navajo sandstone, huge cottonwoods, and musical rivers hidden below the vast plateau. Removing the invasive Russian olive felt like a cleansing of my own soul. The country restored my commitment to wild places, and I was able to do my part to help restore a unique ecosystem.

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## Caring for Down Sleeping Bags

Experienced backpackers and campers know the value of down sleeping bags. Down filled bags are light, warm, and feel luxurious when you crawl into them after a hard day on the trail. Down bags are also expensive so keeping them in good shape helps preserve the investment in a more expensive sleeping bag.

Over time the oil from a person's body accumulates on the down, turns acidic, and hinders the down's ability to loft. Washing the bag will help loft and keep the sleeping bag performing as it should. Follow the directions below for best results.

- Launder every 30 bag nights.

- Close zippers and Velcro tabs.
- Machine wash in a front-loading machine using mild soap such as Ivory Flakes, Woolite, or Sport Wash. Do not use an agitator type, top-loading machine. The agitator can damage the bag's shell. Do not use detergents, bleach, or fabric softener.
- Rinse the bag thoroughly, making absolutely certain that all soap is removed from the feathers.
- Dry the bag in a dryer either on a low heat or no heat setting. It may take several hours for the bag to dry in this way. An alternative is to sun dry the bag then put it in the dryer for a few minutes to break up any clumps and help fluff it.
- Clean tennis balls placed in the dryer can help restore loft to the bag.

# Heat Illness

*Almost everyone who participates in a week long trip will experience some degree of dehydration; the combination of hiking and working outside all day, often at a higher elevation than folks are accustomed to, almost guarantees this.*

*by Kim Critchfield, M.D.*

Heat illness is caused by the inability of the body to lose heat and regulate temperature. Factors contributing to heat illness are dehydration, poor heat acclimatization, a previous episode of heat illness, poor fitness, sustained exertion at high temperatures, and fatigue.

Warning signs of early heat injury include mild headache, irritability, poor appetite, weakness, and muscle cramps. If re-hydration and cooling do not occur, the condition will progress to heat exhaustion, consisting of a rapid, weak pulse; tingling sensation; chills; and pale, cool skin. As body temperature rises, the condition progresses to heat stroke. Signs of heat stroke are bizarre behavior; red, hot

skin; absence of sweating; vomiting; diarrhea; and loss of consciousness. Mortality rates can be as high as 80% at this stage.

Prevention of dehydration and heat illness requires aggressive fluid replacement before thirst occurs. Thirst alone is not the best indicator of dehydration since 2% of total body water is lost before thirst occurs. Pay attention to early signs such as headache, loss of appetite, and irritability. Rest often, preferably in the shade. Urine should be clear to light yellow. If you can't remember the last time you urinated, you're already dehydrated! Drink at regular intervals even if you are not thirsty. Drink large amounts of fluid and use salt freely at mealtime. Try using drink mixes instead of plain water to improve taste and replace electrolytes. If possible, acclimatize to the heat by limiting strenuous work to three hours per day with a gradual daily increase.

Following the above regimen can help the individual avoid heat illness, and in situations such as being in the back country far from help, this is the best way to deal with the problem.

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## Two Haiku

*by John Bauer*

Soft rain pings taut tents  
Night's tranquility vanished  
Soggy boots await.

A once proud spruce falls  
Shaved and trimmed, now serves hikers.  
Glad to be of use.

"The essence of true wilderness is big mammals that can eat you."

"I come more and more to the conclusion that wilderness, in America or anywhere else, is the only thing left that is worth saving."

Edward Abbey

## Leave a Lasting Legacy for Wilderness Volunteers

- Do you have an IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan?
- Do you have, or are you planning to write a will or bequest?
- Do you own any appreciated property or stock?
- Do you have a life insurance policy?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be able to make a special gift to Wilderness Volunteers that will have a lasting benefit to our mission of providing low-cost service trips to America's public wildlands.

Many of the giving options available to the Wilderness Volunteers Endowment Fund can earn you benefits such as savings on income taxes or estate taxes for your heirs, while allowing you to help Wilderness Volunteers provide stewardship for our precious natural treasures.

To learn more about the Wilderness Volunteers Endowment Fund, please contact Board President, John Sherman, 503.525.5870 or [john@wildernessvolunteers.org](mailto:john@wildernessvolunteers.org).

## Become a Supporter of Wilderness Volunteers!

Wilderness Volunteers has intentionally not become a membership organization because the expense involved in maintaining the membership would take money away from the service trip program. We don't like to get all those mailings asking for money any more than you do. We do, however, depend upon our supporters to keep the program going, and the trip prices affordable. Supporters receive:

- Wilderness Volunteers newsletters
- First chance to sign up for Wilderness Volunteers trips during supporter-only period.
- One Wilderness Volunteers T-shirt (circle size) or cap:    M            L            XL            Cap

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