



# NEWS FROM TREK COUNTRY

*Stories and Events from the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation*

Thoreau, New Mexico

Nov 2009



*John Bloch investigates Tsankawi Caveates at Bandelier National Monument during Family Trek II*

## Loop Report: The 2009 All-Star Family Trek

*by Sidsel Overgaard*

Here at the Gulch, we always aim to provide a multi-disciplined approach to exploring the Southwest, and in this sense, the last loop of the summer provided a very grand finale. This season's Family Trek II was a Renaissance wo/man's dream! The late-summer FT expedition went above and beyond with an all-star alumni staff including one biologist, two anthropologists, and two geologists. And that's not to mention the naturalist, artist, librarian and environmental historian who joined in as support staff for the group's five day road loop through northern New Mexico.

Led by veteran Trekker (and biologist) Lucy Kluckhohn Jones, the group's 24 participants ranged in age from six to sixty-something and included both old time Trekkers and folks new to the Gulch and Southwest. After just one day in Base Camp, the Family Trek hit the road run-

ning with a trip to the beautiful and bizarre rock formations of Ah-shi-sle-pah, where Trekker Travis Phelps (age 16) discovered what geologist John Bloch declared to be most likely a Hadrosaur bone. What an auspicious start to an educational adventure! As the group headed to El Malpais the very next day, several Trekkers also managed to cross paths with an adult bull snake and a mama tarantula, both of which Mike held aloft (carefully--eegad!) for everyone's viewing pleasure.

A jam-packed itinerary later took the group to the famous School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe where staff anthropologist Wenda Trevathan had recently spent a year working on her latest book "Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives: How Evolution Has Shaped Women's Health." There, the older generation of Family Trekkers had the rare opportunity to get a look in the facility's vaults with its vast collection of Native pottery, baskets, rugs and paintings both historic and modern. That night, they drove to the Camino de Paz Farm School in Espanola, where the group camped in a meadow located beyond organic gardens and paddocks full of horses, goats, sheep and chickens. The intrepid Family Trekkers spent their final nights near Bandelier National Monument, where they explored ancient pueblo ruins in the well-traveled Frijoles Canyon and a nearby lesser-known but spectacular site called Tsankawi. A few interested folks also traveled into nearby Los Alamos to visit the Bradbury Museum of Atomic Science.

Of course, through it all there were the campfires, the jokes, the escapades and the meals that always round out even the most well-rounded of expeditions at the Gulch. We can't say thank you enough to the stellar academic staff that made it all possible: Lucy, John, Wenda, Jack Oviatt and Gaea McGahee. We look forward to more of these Treks in the future!

## 2010 Summer Calendar

### Prairie Trek

June 27th to August 1st

### Turquoise Trail

June 27th to August 1st

### Outfit Expedition

Session 1: June 27th to July 11th  
Session 2: July 18th to August 1st

### Wild Country Trek

Session 1: June 27th to July 15th  
Session 2: July 18th to August 5th

### Trek Institute

July 11th to July 29th

### Mountain Desert Trek

June 27th to August 5th

### Adult/Family Trek

Session 1: July 11th to July 18th  
Session 2: August 1st to August 8th

### Paleontology Trek

July 11th to July 18th





The Cottonwood Gulch Foundation sponsors educational wilderness expeditions and outdoor programs in the American Southwest that promote personal growth, scientific, historic, and cultural discovery as well as a knowledgeable environmental ethic among all those who participate.

#### *Board of Trustees*

Jameson French, Chairman  
 Marjorie Kittle, Treasurer  
 Michele Davidson, Secretary  
 Greg Barker  
 Ellen Ebersole  
 Tom Henio  
 Henry Hooper  
 Neil Macneale III  
 Molly Madden  
 John Mayer  
 Jack Oviatt  
 Scott Pierce III  
 Wenda Trevathan

#### *Administration*

Mike Sullivan, Executive Director  
 Tallie Segel, Assistant Director  
 Lezle Williams, Office Manager

#### *To Contact the Foundation:*

(800) 2-Go-Trek  
[www.cottonwoodgulch.org](http://www.cottonwoodgulch.org)  
[info@cottonwoodgulch.org](mailto:info@cottonwoodgulch.org)

#### *From June to September:*

HC 62, Box 2200  
 Thoreau, New Mexico 87323  
 (505) 862-7503 (phone/fax)

#### *From September to June:*

P.O. Box 25106  
 Albuquerque, NM 87125  
 (505) 248-0563 (phone)  
 (505) 248-3319 (fax)



## Note from the Director

In some parts of the country, autumn smells like falling leaves. In Albuquerque, it's green chile. Here,

a heavenly smokiness wafts from giant roasters on almost every street corner, while high above hot air balloons fill the sky during the International Balloon Fiesta. One hundred miles west, Base Camp is in hibernation mode; the buildings, vehicles, and tools tucked away for winter. But inside this newsletter, summer will spring back to life with reflections from another exhilarating year at the Gulch. You'll also read about exciting developments for the coming year including the creation of a new scholarship fund.

In honor of the new Sidney Stogel Scholarship Fund, I'd like to highlight a few of this year's summer programs that encouraged Trekkers' scientific pursuits. Beyond the collaborations of the Base Camp Naturalist, Archaeologist, and Farm Manager, all of whom created opportunities for scientific exploration at every turn, Trekkers also engaged in scientific studies on the road. One notable excursion saw the Prairie Trek spend three days in southern Colorado with former Trekker, staff member, and caretaker Alex Nees, where he is studying Sudden Aspen Decline as a graduate student at Stanford University. The PT boys camped with Alex for two nights, helping him locate and count new growth features on aspen roots, all in an effort to understand why aspen groves throughout the West are inexplicably dying.

Meanwhile, the girls of the Turquoise Trail met with wildlife biologists from the Wolf Project in southeastern Arizona to learn about the Mexican Grey Wolf reintroduction program. After sharing some of the science that goes into monitoring the population, the biologists handed over their tracking devices and took the TT out to locate a few members of the pack. And the Mountain Desert Trek wrapped up its 20 day road loop with a tour of an Earthship community in Taos, NM, learning about the science and architecture behind the sustainably constructed, off-the-grid homes from Tanya, Peter, and (fellow Trekker) Hollis Parks.

Trekkers who participate in the 2010 expeditions through the Sidney Stogel Scholarship Fund will have all these opportunities and more. One new development that I'm particularly excited about is a partnership with Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari, NM to provide a "Dino Trek" in vertebrate paleontology, featuring a week-long dig in Arizona's Petrified National Forest!

We're honored by the generosity of the Stogel family in helping us bring the thrill of scientific discovery to new Trekkers throughout the next decade. I wish to thank the Stogels and *all* Trek families for the passion

you share for the Gulch. It is this powerful connection to the Trek that enables us to maintain the same original spirit of adventure and exploration through new projects and programs.

Keep on Trekkin'!

-Mike Sullivan

## Note from the Chair

Sometimes the Board Meetings aren't all about budgets, long range planning, and development. In July, we had the pleasure of an overnight at Ah-shi-sle-pah, a geologic phenomenon not far from Chaco Canyon. Many of us from the pre-1970s had never been to this now-favorite Gulch campsite. Among us, were many talented ex-cooks, CAs, and QMs to make sure we settled back into appropriate Gulch road behavior. We had a few culture shocks -- like the lattic ("groover") -- and a few laughs when Henry Hooper and I, intent on using a classic Baker tent, soon discovered that were setting up an old TT lattic tent. We also discovered that our ED Mike is not only skilled with the drums, but also with catching whole peaches in mid-air!

Besides the good fun and quality bonding time, we had our first board-meeting-in-motion as the shade from an overhanging rock formation changed with a rising sun. We considered the meeting finished as the heat and glare took control, but at that session, we discussed the importance of creating an elite "core staff" team -- Group Leaders and Base Camp Specialists who are able to return to the Gulch for multiple summers.

Trek traditions and culture are sacred to most of us. It is the long-serving leadership from key individuals like Chet Kubit, Mr. Van, and Monty Billings that help carry these traditions through multiple generations. For management purposes, staff training, and for the benefit of Trekker experience, we know that attracting committed employees is a great investment. Over time, the Board hopes to build the necessary resources to ensure that valuable core staff members will be able to return for several consecutive summers. You will learn more about this plan in the near future.

As usual, I hope that all of you will consider supporting Cottonwood Gulch Foundation with your year-end gifts. Your support enables our Base Camp to be maintained at the highest level, our hardworking staff to be compensated, and most importantly, for kids of all backgrounds and circumstances to be able to grow (as most of us have) under the cottonwoods along Sawyer Creek.

Thanks in advance and Happy Holidays,  
 -Jamey French



Shane Woodford at Chaco Canyon

### New Gulch Video in Post-Production

by Sidsel Overgaard

Just when you finally figured out email, text messaging came along, and now we're all supposed to share our thoughts—constantly—in 140 characters or less. It can be hard to keep up! But isn't it nice to know that a few things still happen the old fashioned way? Every summer, the good old mailbag still hangs in its designated corner of the Mess Hall, collecting stories destined for home. Trekkers still share adventurous and hilarious reports of their loops during every Rendezvous. And, just as in the days of Model-Ts and Baker tents, word-of-mouth continues to be our most powerful recruiting tool for the Trek.

That said, there are certainly moments we wish we could gather together alumni and potential Trekkers for even more slide shows and dinner parties. Alas, the time and cost associated with travel (not to mention the carbon emissions) sometimes prevent us from getting to all the places we'd like. But that may be about to change.

No, unfortunately, we haven't found the key to time travel (although a few overheard conversations among Trekkers in this summer's TI expedition make us think this generation may get close). What's underway is the production of a DVD that will enable us to take the Gulch into more homes, in more cities all around the world. We are extremely grateful to Shane Woodford and Emily Williams who helped get the project off to a great start this summer. Shane, who hails from Vancouver and is connected to the Trek via the Hyde/Overgaard line, recorded hours of beautiful footage during a hard-working vacation in July. When not tagging along with Mike and the Trekkers on trips to El Malpais, Chaco Canyon and of course, the Albuquerque Sunport, Shane was diligent about capturing every Base Camp ritual in every possible light, along with a few outstanding interviews (yes, he even got the notoriously camera-shy Chet on tape!). Shane even contributed to the education at the Gulch by leading a rousing post-dinner quiz show in all things Canadian. At the end of his stay, Shane passed on his footage to Emily, who is the artistic daughter of Office Manager Lezle Williams, and who recently graduated from the Digital Arts Technology Academy. Emily is currently using her stellar editing skills to create a multi-chapter DVD and slideshow for the Trek. We are very excited about the completion of this project in time for the 2010 recruiting season and we're eager to post clips on the Foundation's website this fall.



Emily Williams

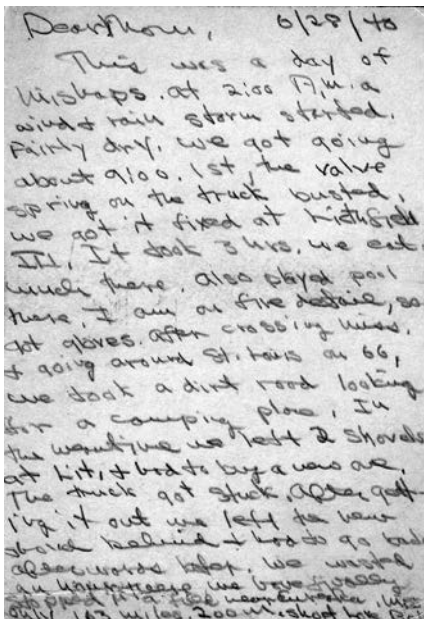
But all ye of luddite tendencies, have no fear! The goal of the DVD is not to replace personal interaction. Our plan is to use the DVD as a tool for alumni who would like to host small-scale Gulch gatherings in their own classrooms or living rooms. In this way, the video will serve as an exciting jumping-off point for the personal stories that have always made Gulch slideshows special. Interested in taking it for a spin?

Stay tuned!

### Memories of summers past...

*An excerpt from Prairie Trek - summer of 1940. Bob Meeker generously donated over 50 penny postcards documenting his summer of long ago.*

*David Mitten graciously donated over 200 photographs documenting his Prairie Trek in the summer of 1951.*



Dear Mom, 6/28/1940

This was a day of mishaps. At 2:00 a.m., a wind and rainstorm started. Fairly dry. We got going about 9:00. 1st, the valve spring on the truck busted, we got it fixed at Litchfield, Ill. It took 3 hours, we ate lunch there, Also played pool there. I am on fire detail, so got gloves. After crossing Mississippi and going around St. Louis on #66, we took a dirt road looking for a camping place. In the meantime we left 2 shovels at Kit, & beds by a new one. The truck got stuck, after getting it out we left the new shovel behind & beds go back at Litchfield. We wasted an hour there. We finally stopped in a field near Eureka. Made only 163 miles. 200 short.

Love, Bob



*Mechanical problems- some things never change!*

### Thank You to Our Contributors

The following individuals, foundations, and corporations have given generously to the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation during the dates of October 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009. Our thank-you notice will now appear in each newsletter and will reflect the calendar year, rather than our fiscal year. We are extremely grateful for all the support. Your kindness sustains the Trek. Once again, thank you very much!

#### Pacesetters \$5000 or more:

John Bloch  
Jameson French  
JMR Barker Foundation  
Scott Pierce III  
Shoolman Children's Foundation  
Jane Wenzel

#### Benefactors \$1000 - \$4999:

Martha D. Borthwick  
Henry and Tracy Bagli Hooper Fund -  
Community Foundation for  
SW Washington  
Margaret M. Howie  
Thomas Hyde – Schwab Fund for  
Charitable Giving  
Bruce Kluckhohn  
Jonathan Kohn  
Richard and Hannah Mark  
John G. Mayer  
Judy and Richard McGinnis  
William Milius Jr.  
Lynn and Jorgen Overgaard  
Nancy H. Ramage  
Margaret Shaklee  
Wachovia Foundation  
Ann and Robert Zemsky

#### Sponsors \$500 - \$999:

Lucy French – Atlantic Fund of the NH  
Charitable Foundation  
Carole and Henry L. Berman  
Edith Binder  
Joseph M. Bloch Jr.  
Michele and Thomas Davidson  
Thomas Elkinton  
Peter Fortune  
Nancy and Frederick Gehlbach  
Mathew S. Grayson  
Toby A. Herbst  
Lawrence L. Hooper Jr.  
D.S. Johnson  
Matthew M. Kayes  
Molly and Rick Madden  
McKee Foundation  
Boris Meditch  
John H. Messenger  
Danila B. Oder  
Christine and Douglas Preston  
Jonathan F. Rose  
Tom Shanley  
Lon Topaz

Wenda Trevathan and Gregg Henry  
*"In honor of the Trevathan Clan"*

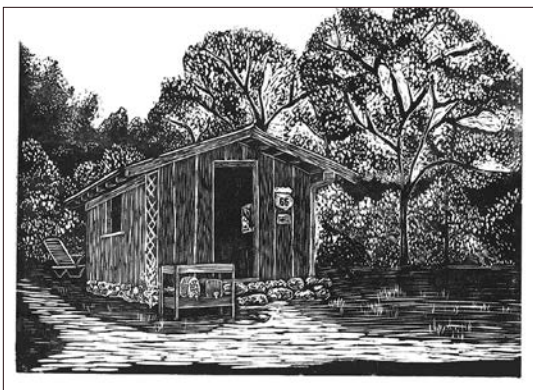
#### Donors \$100 - \$499:

Lawrence Barker  
Carole and Henry L. Berman  
*"in honor of Else Sullivan"*  
Carl and Linda Blicher  
Dorothy S. Chidester  
*"In memory of Don Simpson"*  
Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation  
Louisa C. Dubin  
Douglas H. Erwin  
Lee and Ann Farnham  
Grace Hansen Gilmour  
Amy E. Golodetz  
E.M. Goodkind  
Pete and Shirley Heinrich  
John D. Herring  
Kelly and William E. Hooper  
Tracy and Henry Hooper Community  
Foundation  
Dale L. Kaiser  
Steve Katz  
Marjorie Kittle and David Williams  
Linda and William Koons  
Deborah and Bill Korol  
Shirley A. Kovacs  
Elizabeth S. Kubie  
Susan B. Kwasnick  
Trammel C. Lacey Jr.  
Michael LaFontaine  
William B. Lazarus  
Jerome S. Lidz  
Neil and Ellen Macneale  
Richard F. Madden Sr.  
Paul M. Mayer  
Andrea Meditch  
Katherine A. Merrell  
*"In honor of Ned Merrell"*  
Charles and Esther Oviatt  
Mary and David Palm  
Jonathan, Peggy and Jill Peters  
*"In honor of Scott and Jill and their  
love of the Gulch!"*  
Jon Peterson  
Bruce Rosenblum  
Richard Schultz  
Deborah Swartz and Mark Elson  
Charles D. Test  
Robin Torrence

Wachovia Foundation  
Jane Weiss  
*"In memory of Tom Hunter"*

#### Contributors \$1 - \$99:

Jim Bazemore and Sue Trevathan  
*"In honor of Tom Hunter"*  
David and Jeanne Bennett  
Theodore Chase Jr.  
Samantha Cuthbert  
*"In honor of Rick and Molly Madden"*  
Lucy Daley  
Robert Doeppers  
Jennifer Gervasi  
Gary Glessow  
George Grove  
Roger Hirschland  
Henry Hooper  
*"In honor of his brother Lawrence"*  
Lawrence Hooper  
*"In honor of Eleanor White"*  
Bruce Huckell and Lisa Washbon  
Elise Hunt  
Jefferson Johnson  
Lewis Koch  
Janie and Rick Levis  
Geraldine and Max Markovitz  
Howard Meeker Jr.  
Barbara Mitchell  
Robert Patzlaff  
*"On behalf of myself, staff member  
1947-1950 with Howie and Olmstead"*  
Jenny Price  
*"In memory of Tom Hunter"*  
Dena and Todd Rakoff  
Joseph Schmaltz II  
Thomas Schrader  
Peter Stone  
Bryson Thompson  
Emily Ullman  
*"In memory of John Binder"*  
Eleanor White  
Tobi Zemsky  
**In-Kind Donors:**  
Seth Battis  
Chet Kubit  
Jack and Susan Oviatt



*Chet's Cabin - a wood engraving by Lezle Williams, presented to Chet Kubit in honor of his 45th summer at the Gulch*



*Above: TT led by Erin Whitney at Chaco Canyon  
Zach Zanetti, Kody Marx, and Nico Seamons of the PT square off in a round of Mudgie against the TT at 3rd Rendezvous.*

## A Nearby Treasure

*Erin Whitney*

I was driving my truck down Highway 66 on my way back from a long day of teaching a couple weeks ago when I was transported in mere seconds by Johnny Cash's voice blaring through the speakers above the diesel engine. Johnny's "Long Black Veil" momentarily picked me up and dropped me thirty miles east of where I was and for that short amount of time, I basked in sweet memories of bucketball, SS cups, campfires, greasy hair, flat tires, hiking boots, sunburn, and the smiling faces of some adorable young ladies that I wished more than anything were in the back of my vehicle giggling and gossiping. All too quickly I was snapped back to battling the traffic but it was enough to quite nearly make me hop the median sans blinker (which if you're familiar with these parts, is completely legal and commonplace) and go directly out to the Gulch in attempt to recapture that memory again.

Yes, I live only thirty minutes from that magical place all of you reading this know as Cottonwood Gulch. With all due respect, this fact makes my life just a little better than all of yours. Now, before you quit reading due to your burning jealousy, let me explain and share with you my newfound excitement for a place that many of you have had love and excitement for much, much longer than I. I was new to Cottonwood Gulch this summer and had barely even heard about it even though I grew up in Gallup, NM just thirty miles west. I took on the challenge and adventure of leading the Turquoise Trail this summer. Being a high school teacher afforded me the opportunity of doing what I really love during the summer--enjoying the wilderness with a most excellent collection of people. Admittedly, I was apprehensive and worried at the beginning of the summer as to what the Gulch was all about but I soon realized that I was truly in for an adventurous and thrilling summer. The staff I met over the summer gave me new lifelong friends, the girls on the Turquoise Trail gave me joy and laughter that I haven't had since I was a fourteen year old, and the places we explored gave me renewed peace and balance in my life.

Being a native of this area I was so inspired by the genuine good that comes from Cottonwood Gulch. The commitment to outdoor education, physical fitness, and community are things that I see so desperately needed in this area. Now that I know such a place is literally right under our noses here, I think the possibilities are endless. I often think about ways to connect my students here in Gallup to the Cottonwood Gulch. I want students who know and love this area to be immersed in such positive reconnection to nature, culture and community. I realize that making these connections might take time and certainly lots of planning but as the Cottonwood Gulch continues to morph and develop in the 21st century I think that it can be a vital element of education to students and families in Northwest New Mexico as well as those in Massachusetts, California, Maryland and Oregon just to name a few. As an educator, the value of having students participate in programs like the Cottonwood Gulch is a priceless tool for helping students succeed--especially when they come from a place that can be dismal and tough for teens today.

Yesterday was the first day of fall and I couldn't help but reflect on all that the summer months had brought to my life because of Cottonwood Gulch. Now, as I encounter hundreds of high school students a day in my classroom I can only hope that in some way I can help bring the two together in an effort to continue the mission of the Gulch and to help kids and families in the Gallup area appreciate such a marvelous place. Speaking of which, I've never seen the Gulch in the fall months; the cottonwoods turning colors, the creek bubbling with an abundance of the September rain, the mice scurrying to collect rations for the winter, and the wildflowers closing in on themselves until next spring. I think I may just have to jump in the truck and go check in on things soon--so nice to know I can do this all within the time of five or six Johnny Cash songs.

The Prairie Trek loop report for Third Rendezvous was sung to the tune of Johnny Cash and Geoff Mack's  
**"I've Been Everywhere"**

*"We were hauling our packs up a muddy and a rocky trail, when we passed another biker exhausted and quite pale. He asked us if we had ever biked a trail as steep and long as this? And we said: Listen!  
We've traveled every trail in the Southwest!*

*Blanding - Hog Spring - Farmington - La Salle -  
Keet Seel*

*Abshislepab - Arizona - Loa - Mount Peal*

*Gallup - Base Camp - Truck Ramp*

*Shiprock - Chimney Rock - Mount Tuginikivats*

*Gold Hill - New Mexico - Pueblo Bonito*

*Chaco - Fish Lake - Snow Lake - for Pete's sake!"*

by Nico Seamons, PT '09

### A Summer at the Gulch, *Internalized* – Nell van Noppen

Reflecting on one's past thoughts can be a very embarrassing activity to engage in. I know, because as a supreme over-analyzer and master of self-deprecation, no one's ideas receive more of my criticism than my own. I am still undecided over whether this nitpicking is a result of my strict upbringing and type-A personality, or just a natural consequence of having a lot of stupid thoughts. But I digress. The following article is about one particularly ludicrous notion of mine, which developed in the weeks leading up to my arrival in New Mexico this past June.

The idea, which I'm going to state right now was an erroneously false assumption, was that while at the Gulch, I would be able to observe a clear division between the local Navajo population and visiting campers and staff. My brain hatched this vagary sometime around mid-May, while I was in the midst of writing a grant proposal for a summer painting project I titled (brace yourself now) "Bridging the Gap: Portrayals and Self-Portrayals of Children living in Thoreau." The basis of my proposal was

that I would paint portraits of campers and children on the Reservation, and then have each of my subjects do their own self-portraits. Of course, I had absolutely no clue what I was talking about: I did not yet know that many of the staff members and campers at the Gulch are local (both Navajo and otherwise), and I had never heard of the last name Henio. I also had not yet met Walter and Nick Cloud, who turned out to be among the closest friends I made while in New Mexico, and who really showed me how much the history of the Gulch is retold by and embodied in the Navajo families surrounding Base Camp. Everyone—including the Gulch website—had stated that Cottonwood Gulch is closely tied to the Native community, but it wasn't until actually arriving in June that I believed them. What they really meant was that the Gulch created its own community, between worlds that might not otherwise touch. And it's true: what impressed me the most about everyone there was that they treated the Gulch as a home rather than just a playground for personal interests; coming back year after year to pick up that hammer or whisk or paintbrush to help keep things running. Once you visit, you become part of the family.

Needless to say, I did not follow through with my initial project idea. Instead, I did what all interns do; worked in the kitchen, taught a few cottonwoods, and helped lead a group of sixteen young outfitters on a mini road loop. So, while I wasn't able to paint, I did get the chance to bake chocolate cake for fifty people, teach sessions on figure drawing, play bedtime games with a cabin of giddy twelve-year old girls, and take the three AM shift overseeing a roasting pig. Not to mention making new friends and exploring a mindblowingly beautiful landscape and all that other stuff. Since being home, I've also gotten a chance to look over the photos and sketches I collected this summer and paint from them, of which one in particular I hope Nick enjoys.



### A Back-To-School Trek for Local Students

In the last few years, the Gulch has had the pleasure of working with a number of school groups during the off-season. Not only does this allow us to share our knowledge and facilities with a wider audience while earning some extra income for the summer operations, it's also helped us to build a strong circle of local friends.

One of our most long-standing relationships is with Escuela del Sol Montessori School, located here in downtown Albuquerque. The Senior Elementary kids (ages 9-12) have been making an overnight trip to Base Camp each spring for years now. Last May, the Junior Elementary students (ages 6-9) joined in. And just this September, we worked with the wonderful teachers at EDS to arrange a fall expedition to one of our favorite places: Bandelier National Monument, near Los Alamos, NM. This was the students' first Gulch trek that didn't involve Base Camp, and they loved it.

With a total of 53 kids, 9 adults, and 5 Gulch staff, it was one our most ambitious (and boisterous) road loops ever! We hiked in Frijoles Canyon and explored ancient cliff dwellings carved out of volcanic ash desposits, reaching the distant Alcove House with its butterfly-inducing, 140-rung ladder climb. We also took a trip to nearby Tsankawe, where resident archaeologist Gaea McGahee led us along centuries-old stone paths to the remains of the beautiful cave homes of people who, despite their proximity to Bandelier, spoke a language all their own.

As you may imagine, meal times were quite an event with three sculleries, two stoves and every ss cup and plate in our arsenal in use at all times. At night, the group huddled under nearly every tent that we could pull from the Com Barn. But the trip was a great success and all the equipment served us well, including the newest addition to the Gulch fleet, a cargo van once used for delivering flowers. Despite the medley of gear it's digested this season, the van still smells faintly of daisies.

This fall's school trek to Bandelier served as a great shakedown experience for the Junior Elementary students, who, for the first time, will spend two nights at Base Camp with their older peers in May, 2010. We're thrilled to be working so closely and frequently with our friends at Escuela del Sol and we're eager for our new relationships with many other schools to grow in this way.





**A Growing Success –** *by Levi van Sant*

As I sat on the fourth floor of the University of Georgia library yesterday, ostensibly organizing archive materials, I found myself struggling to focus on the task at hand. To be sure, this is not as rare a phenomenon as say, doing my laundry, but this year’s post-Gulch transition has been especially marked by distraction. I often try to visualize the tomatoes ripening; to mentally mark the growth of the cover crops; to smell the microbes at work in the compost pile. All of this day-dreaming has made me realize that growing vegetables this summer added a whole new layer to my connection with the Gulch, one that continues even in absence.

**Excerpt from the Mountain Desert Trek Log:**

7/31/09

*Sam Levine*

Dear Log, logarific, logalicious, loginator, L.O.G.,

Just over 5 weeks ago I was entrusted with the responsibility of filling you with the first tales of our adventures on the road, and now by some combination of fortune and chance I am here scribbling the end of our adventures to you. The pages that fill the space between my first entry and this one are filled with echoes of tales that are both heroic and not so heroic, but provide a living, breathing example of how 16 lives headed in all different directions have come together to form both one heart and one mind. More than anything what this trip has reminded me of every day is that every single person, whether they are from new York, Virginia, North Carolina, Michigan, Maryland, Oregon, Massachusetts, California, or New Mexico is unique, has their own stories to tell, and most importantly is an indivisible part of any whole that they choose to enter into.

Tomorrow we will go on a sunrise hike of Mt. Taylor and the sun will set on our time on the road. After tonight we will be treated to lavish cabins and meals (not to say that the cooking has not been exquisite thus far) and we will be stationed in one place. Yet, there is something romantic about being on the road and in the back country. There is something about not knowing what lies around every bend, or knowing where you are headed, or not showering and growing excessively long hair in places we never expected, or ending each day sweatier and dirtier than we ever thought possible, that reminds us that we human beings can in fact survive outside of society. These things remind us that the pressures of our lives that we confront on a daily basis are often manmade and can suddenly dissolve when left for the immovable forces of nature. When these anxieties dissolve we are left to ponder what is really important – what is meaningful to us, and are not constrained to act how others expect us to act. I wish that I could stay in this liberated state forever but this is the great fault of the human condition as we are constantly growing faster than the world around us. Even though the mountains, valleys, deserts, canyons, and streams will be here for thousands of years after we are gone, we never will be as we were at this moment. We may come back to these places again, but we will be older with longer beards, and hopefully a little wiser. We may point out to our children certain places that we camped, rivers that we got ourselves soaked in, and trees and mountains that we once climbed. But these will only be memories, and perhaps the other biggest tragedy of life is that memories will never be as good as the real thing. So what can we do? Does this mean that everything that has happened this summer is lost once our road loop ends? No, I certainly hope not. Instead, when we are at home and are feeling anxious or stuck we can silently hum DSB to ourselves, look up and find the Big Dipper, and remember that we once lived a life where the pressures were none and the possibilities infinite.

Goodbye for my last time, Sam

I hope that this is true for all of those who helped work in the gardens as well. It was truly a community effort. Mike spent many days in the spring brainstorming and budgeting. Jeff Carver gave freely of his time and tractor. The staff members who came out in early June helped prepare beds and plant bulbs. Walter “The Wall” Cloud and his talented kitchen crew often helped harvest and always turned the raw vegetables into tasty victuals. And, of course, Trekkers were a consistent source of youthful energy throughout the growing season. As has been said of other desert dwellers, toil was our strongest asset and could only be stored in one another.

What do we have to show for all this time and energy? Most obviously, we ate a lot of fresh, organic vegetables; 44 pounds of lettuce, 25 pounds of kohlrabi bulbs, and nearly 300 pounds of summer squash, just to name a few. We also managed to sell about \$500 worth of organic produce to local co-op markets and CSA groups (Community-Supported Agriculture) in Gallup and Albuquerque at the end of the season. Currently, we have about 50 pounds of corn stored away for the beginning of next summer and bunches of dehydrated goodies for hike groups in 2010. But I think we also learned a lot through this work, about ourselves, the land, and – probably most importantly – the interaction between the two. The kind of direct engagement that farm work necessitates is one of the best ways to come to know a place, and is thus a solid foundation for both human and environmental values. As Aldo Leopold would say, we can be ethical only in relation to something that we can see, feel, and understand. Farm work, then, offers good food and good foundations.

It was a real gut-buster closing out for the season after all the Trekkers and most of the staff departed – largely because the tiller broke and we had to prepare all the beds by hand – but things are in good shape. As I write this in mid-September, the peppers and tomatoes are still growing (under the watchful eyes of Mike, Sidsel, and the Cloud brothers), while everything else has been cover-cropped to prepare for next year. Pulling up and composting the vegetables lent an air of finality to the season, but this feeling was shortly replaced by one of excitement for the plantings to come. I hope everyone will be back for a taste of the Gulch next summer.



Cottonwood Gulch Foundation  
P.O. Box 25106  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87125

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM  
PERMIT NO. 669

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## New on our web site

2010 expeditions     [www.cottonwoodgulch.org/expeditions](http://www.cottonwoodgulch.org/expeditions)

### Can You Help The Gulch Grow?

We are always eager to visit homes and schools to recruit new Trekkers, but we have more luck when we already have contacts in the community. If you would like to help us share the wonders of the Gulch, and if you know some potentially-interested families, or if you work at a school (or if you know someone who does!), then please contact us. We are currently scheduling slideshows around the country and we'd love to reach new communities to meet new Trekkers. Thank you!

