



NEWS FROM TREK COUNTRY

Stories and Events from the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation

Thoreau, NM

December 2012

Where will You Wander?



Fall has arrived in New Mexico. Two weeks ago as I found my way to and from our Albuquerque office, the air smelled of roasting Green Chiles and the Sandias were dusted with a light snow. Evenings were cold and daytimes, as is often the case, were sunny and beautiful. What a great place to relocate and to now call 'home'. In the spirit of exploring our new home, Paul, Miso and I had the wonderful opportunity in late September to take an overnight backpacking trip up

Wheeler Peak (and Mt Walter too), the tallest point in NM. Climbing to 13,167ft above Taos and the Red River Valley, the views were stunning, the aspen shimmering in gold, and the temperatures perfect for a 4,000 ft, 16-mile hike. Paul and I rekindled memories of our Colorado Trail hike 6 yrs ago as we once again fell in love with the Rockies.

"I want to wander through the wilderness, along the back roads, and down trails the rest of my life. This place has taught me that."

Emma, MDT

What a great first summer I had at Cottonwood Gulch! A strong and capable staff wandered with 115 trekkers into the deserts, mountains, canyons and hot springs of the Four Corners. In the pages that follow, I hope you'll enjoy tales of adventure, challenge and friendship taken from the trek logs of Summer 2012.

As I have shared meals, talked on the phone and corresponded via



Top: Kris Summiting Mt Walter Above: Hiking with TT on Haystack Mtn.

email with many friends of the Gulch over the last 7 months, I am struck by the far reaching effect that this experience has had on the youth and adults that it has touched. I continue to hear countless inspirational stories about how "the trek" guided career choices, geographic relocations, environmental policy decisions, lifelong friendships, marriages and of course, a lifetime of wandering the wilderness, back roads and trails of the planet. I wonder if Mr. and Mrs. Howie knew how far their legacies would reach.

This year we introduced the language of 'legacy projects' for trekkers to frame the effects that their projects have on generations to come. You can read about New Hogan and Cabin Loop Roofs that were two of many Legacy Projects from the summer. Others included a new chicken coop, a greenhouse, refurbished Táchééh, campfire circle benches, erosion control berms, stewardship projects and many more. Trekkers and staff are about *Building A Legacy*. Several other projects are already being planned for next summer.

However, I need your help to make this happen! Each year we give over \$40,000 in scholarships, fund dozens of trekker and staff projects, manage a 540 acre base camp and nature preserve, house and feed over 500 trekkers, staff and students, and maintain a voice in the regional and national efforts to promote experiential outdoor education and environmental stewardship. **Your financial contributions do more than simply support the Gulch, they literally keep the doors open so we can continue to provide high quality meaningful programming that both educates and inspires future generations!**

Trek On,

Kris

Meet Your Directors at Gulch Recruiting Events In Your Area

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~ Call us for details! Or Check our Website and Facebook



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.

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Note from the Chair

Greetings from Down Under,

This fall I had the chance to visit our daughter, who is studying for her junior year in college in Dunedin, New Zealand at the University of Otago. Located on the south island of New Zealand, it is a long way from New Mexico! I wish I could send some of the rain to the Southwest, as it is gloriously WET and green here. Our daughter, Kathleen, has gone on some extraordinary hiking trips during her life and she had her first taste of alpine hiking as an Outfit and Turquoise Trail trekker at the Gulch many years ago. As a result, she is now a seasoned outdoorswoman who loves hiking (or tramping, as they call it here), camping, and climbing. It is fun for my wife, Tracy, and me to see all three of our children enjoy the wonders of nature on their own. The gift of the Gulch is a lifetime gift that keeps on giving throughout our family.

As Winter arrives in NM, Kris, Jordan, and Lezle have finished their many Fall school group treks, which were very successful. They are carefully working on the upcoming 2013 summer plans. To this end, I have a serious request: **Please take a moment and think of a family you know who has a trek aged child. I encourage you to share your story of how spending a summer in the Land of Enchantment inspired you.** Send their name(s) and contact information to Kris, Jordan, and Lezle, who will follow-up with the family. They can provide guidance on the perfect trek for the child and answer questions about the Gulch's unique programming, for this upcoming summer.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jordan and Lezle for their exceptional help this past summer. Without their guidance and constancy the summer would have been much harder and less smooth. At our fall board meeting, in honor of their commitments to 'see a job and do it', we gave them silver belt buckles from Palms in Albuquerque as a sign of our appreciation and gratitude. Thank you, again.

There are a few exciting opportunities on the horizon; a special Family Trek experience (see details highlighted in the brochure), Trek Institute's focus on Southwest Art and Music, and the addition of Fall Adult Treks. Also in the planning stages are Trek Reunions, and we look to you for your thoughts and ideas. (The 50th Reunion was so successful at our 85th Anniversary that we are eager to roll out a program that will encourage you to come back to the Gulch to rekindle old memories, visit familiar Southwest sites and connect with your summer friends again.)

Also, don't forget our year-end giving request. Please know that your annual gifts of both stock and cash to the Gulch bridge the gap for us to be able to balance our budget. We could not survive and thrive without you. Thank you for your continued generosity.

As New Zealanders always say, "Sweet As, Bro!"

Henry Hooper

Join us in Welcoming Irene Notah to the Board!

My name is Irene Notah originally from Coolidge, New Mexico close to Thoreau, New Mexico. I am the youngest daughter of the late Mr. Tom Henio, who had worked with Mr. Hillis Howie for so many years building cabins, the mess-hall, the arts and craft building, the hogan and the all of the stone chimneys. I was raised along with this camp and now am growing old with this camp. I was a Turquoise Trail trekker in the year of 1960 and 1961. Presently, and for the last 40 years, I am working with a school in Window Rock, Arizona as Native Culture and Native Arts and Craft Instructor. I live at Hunters Point, Arizona with my two boys Nathaniel and Nolan Notah. I have one daughter named Antionette Christensen, who lives in Wisconsin with her husband and with five children. My husband went back with the Lord about two and a half years now, his name was Thomas Notah. I am sure most trekkers who visited our place while on the road remember him. I have been a 4-H Leader for 20 years running 2 clubs in our community. My boys are 4-H leaders for shooting and archery as well. Yes, congratulations to our US Senator, Martin Heinrich. I called him my son since we've known him so long as friend and Camp Director. It was a privilege to be on Martin's campaign float last year for the Navajo Nation Parade.



I'm happy to be selected as a Board member for The Cottonwood Gulch Foundation. I am excited for this opportunity and looking forward to working together to create new ideas for the Gulch. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

- Irene N. Notah



On the Road with Paleontology

If there's one unique thing I can say about working at Cottonwood Gulch last summer, it's that not every camp counselor gets to watch their trekkers stumble across and subsequently unearth a couple hundred million years of history. Last summer I was able to accompany Group Leader Eric Peterson as staff on the Paleontology Trek. A bit of an odd duck when compared to the other treks, the Paleo Trek doesn't get to spend very much time at base camp or travelling New Mexico; instead, we pretty much headed straight to the De-Na-Zin wilderness area to meet up with paleontologists Bob Sullivan and Axel Hungerbuehler. Pitching our tents on a rough section of scrub-covered bluffs (with a fantastic view out over the miles of Bisti badlands), we quickly settled into a routine. In the morning we would wake up early and share a hearty breakfast with the paleontologists, who would drift over from their camp with coffee mugs in hand, and then all load up into our respective vehicles.

After driving as close as we could to the site, Bob and Axel would lead the hike through classic badlands terrain, occasionally stopping to point out some interesting geology, date the rock layer we were walking by, or talk about the history of the area we were traveling through. Once we reached the site, we'd split the trekkers into two groups: one to dig and one to scout for bones. The diggers would work with Bob, using picks and brushes to carefully flake away the dirt and rock surrounding the bone they were trying to excavate. The scouting crew would walk with Axel, who taught us how to spot bones on the ground as we tried to find new dig sites. At lunch we'd switch roles and continue our work, and work it was, as by the end of the day we'd all be dirty, tired, and half baked from the hot sun. The ride back to camp was usually silent as the trekkers fell asleep or stared blankly out of the windows, sipping water out of mostly-empty bottles.

The Paleo Trek is different, but at its core it is still a Gulch trek. Every meal is a road meal, and afterwards we have a traditional Gulch campfire, complete with song. We'd remember what we'd done that day, whether it'd been good, like having a trekker find a large forearm bone that Bob marked for excavation or actually being able to plaster and remove one of our finds, or bad, like having torrential rain and lightning cut our day short. We'd play silly games, laughing and joking, and I'd plink away at my ukulele as I tried to read the music by firelight. At the end of the night, the sky would be brilliant with stars. We'd sing "Desert Silvery Blue" and head to our tents, the Milky Way streaming across the night. *-Matt Gretton, pictured*



Paleo Trekkers working on excavation with Dr Bob Sullivan in the Bisti De-Na-Zin Wilderness



Finding her Passion through Silversmithing

The Outfit was a perfect experience for our 12 (now 13) year old daughter. Morgan has experienced all the stress middle school has to offer, and we considered CGF as a way of allowing her to escape that stress and reconnect with nature which she has loved since she was a small child. Morgan was extremely nervous about attending camp, and she was a little upset at being away from home the first night at camp. By the last night, however, she did not want to leave. When we picked her up from camp, she had the same beautiful glow about her that she did as a young girl. She loved her experience! In fact, while there, she got involved in metal working and made a necklace which she entered in the NM State Fair, earning a "Best of Show" ribbon. She now attends weekly metal working class to build upon the craft CGF introduced to her. *-Greg M., Morgan's Dad*

*July 18th PT Log
We also
found petroglyphs
in rock.
There were some symbols
that were easily
recognizable and some were
impossible to
decipher.
Alex Baie, PT*

Outfit Hogan gets a New Roof

Toward the end of the summer MDT'ers, toned and buff from summer adventures and ready to accomplish a "legacy project", donned shovels to work with Jeff and Paula Cloud to lift timbers into place and shovel countless truckloads of adobe onto the roof. The task was tremendous and back-breaking! This experience gave our older trekkers such an amazing sense of accomplishment and introduced them, in the most experiential way possible, to the Cultural Heritage of our friends and neighbors. With the added support of staff during our final clean-up week and many hours spent by Jeff and Paula to complete the details of the project, we can officially declare that the Outfit Hogan is intact and fully Trekker ready. Heartfelt Thanks to the many hands that made this project a success this summer! It goes without saying (but I will) that this effort embodies Mr. Howie's legacy of "See A Job and Do It" -KS

Summer Trek Schedule

Outfit 1	June 23 - July 8
Outfit 2	July 13 - July 28
Wild Country Trek 1	June 24 - July 13
Wild Country Trek 2	July 17 - Aug 5
Turquoise Trail	June 24 - July 30
Prairie Trek	June 24 - July 30
Mountain Desert Trek	June 24 - Aug 5
Trek Institute of Southwest Music & Art	June 25 - July 15
Paleontology	July 18 - July 30
Family Trek - Chet's 80th Birthday Celebration	July 28 - Aug 4
Womens Wilderness Retreat	Sept 19 - 28
Canyon Country Ramble	Sept 14 - 22
FlyFishing, Mountaintops & Alpine Lakes	Sept 28 - Oct 6



Outfit....doing Outfit things

Individual Moments - A Tribute to Chet

Everyone reading this has felt the crisp air early in the morning that makes the hairs on your arm stand up. We all remember the sun baking our skin the color of almonds. The dust, the sage, the lighting moving across the canyon – we remember those, too. In the evening, the sun stains the clouds blood orange before it disappears behind the mesa, and the stars, like diamonds, flicker millions of years away. We all share that nostalgia. We have all been there. We all care. But how much?

I was led out to the desert last summer by my own nostalgia. I went to replace metal roofing with Chet, and conquer the proverbial and existential dilemma of finding cosmic specialness, or unshakable meaning. I know I know - ridiculous. But I am young, and invariably oblivious so I thought I could answer it. What I did learn was that I had been trying to answer the wrong questions.

The experience solidified the indelible and seemingly simple truth that the greatest graces in life exist in individual moments, and idiosyncratic symbols like the Alamo. Working with Chet showed me how interconnected and vital those moments can be.

We re-roofed six cabins. We met bats and rats, and horned toads. We laid mortar and cement to keep mice out of places they are not welcome, and even removed a wall in the Mess Hall to find mice that had overstayed their welcome.

It is amazing how the oozing suppuration from a distended mouse covering your fingers will become a sentimental memory. It is one of those individual moments.

In the same way I failed to see that suppuration could become saccharine, I had failed to see, as a Trekker, how deep the tradition of The Gulch is rooted, and the strength of what is, when you think about it, just a collection of moments.

This summer Chet will be eighty. I don't think that is a secret.

I had the chance to hear a couple of Chet's moments. How he brought the metal sinks in the Mess Hall out to The Gulch in the back of his car, from a restaurant that had closed down in Indiana. How the road from town was not paved, and Trekkers were picked up from the train in Duffle Trucks. I even had the chance to learn 'the correct way' to do KP. I learned Chet Kubit was an industrial arts teacher at Westlane Jr High School in Indianapolis. He bought a house in Indianapolis around the time he first came out to the Gulch, which I believe was '65.

That detail might seem innocuous. You are probably thinking - 'wow, that is quite a bit of time.' Yeah, I almost missed it, too.

What I almost didn't realize is that Chet might have never spent a summer at his house in Indianapolis. He has come to the Gulch every summer since that first summer back in 1965. Then I realized that number is a multiple of my lifetime. I thought about all the individual moments that make up that time, and how much he has given for the place he loves – a place we all love. It ultimately showed me that a person's process of living, and contribution to the collective experience has the possibility of being embracing, nurturing and meaningful on a phenomenal level. I just hope I am able to do it half as well.

-Connor McGinnis

(Thanks to Chet, Connor, Nico and countless staff and trekkers for their hard work on restoring our Cabin Roofs. Thanks also to an alumni donation for funding the project!)

Great News for Walter Cloud

After 7 dedicated and delicious years of Walter cooking in the Gulch kitchen, we are happy to report that he has received an offer from the Culinary Arts Program at Navajo Tech College in Crown Point. For the next 18 months, Walter will be taking his trade to the next level. We look forward to tasting the results of this endeavor. Way to go Walt!



Walter Cloud, Chef

Congratulations Martin!

While most people don't think of the Trek as a bastion for political ambitions, come January we will be one step closer to establishing a Cottonwood Gulch Subcommittee in the US Senate. Former Gulch Director Martin Heinrich will join Gulch alumnus Mark Udall of Colorado in the Senate after Heinrich was elected this November. Martin led Cottonwood Gulch from 1997-2001. During his five summers as director he oversaw a dramatic rise in enrollment and demonstrated an uncanny ability to don an attractive ponytail. The hair is shorter, but his leadership qualities have only strengthened, and we are proud to see him earn a position of such national prominence. Martin continues to live in Albuquerque with his wife, Julie, and their two sons, who we hope to see on the Trek soon! -JS



Nico Seamons and Connor McGinnis working on Cabin 3



Paul Yoder (Snow White) with Outfit 1



Marina, TT on Haystack Mtn.

June 28, Outfit 1 Log

This was the day that Paul Yoder came to visit the Outfit Camp after our yummy breakfast of granola, orange slices, and broccoli-bacon muffins. Madeline says that he's like Snow White and can call down birds by communicating with bird whistles. While on our hike to the field, Paul Yoder was telling us to keep our eyes peeled for small movements. As he was saying this, I saw a hummingbird (female broad-wing) fly into a tree. As she landed, I saw her land in a nest. Paul Yoder says that it's very rare to see a hummingbird nest. We went birding and did a scavenger hunt with plants. - Imogen Davies

"I am glad I can share such good times with such great people."

-Alicia Quarles, T.I.

July 27, Wild Country Trek 2 Log

Everyone wants me to share the poem I wrote during solo time, so here it is:

Bzzzzzz.

They say solitude is silent
 That to be alone is to be unheard
 To let the ears go dead
 But I know better
 Chirp. Chirp. Chirp. Chirp.
 Because when men and women leave
 When the sights and sounds of humanity
 retreat
 New voices take over
 A million new whispers awake
 Whoosh. Whooooooosh.
 More than white noise
 Or a gentle background murmur
 It's a snowy symphony
 A lifetime caught on the breath of wind
 Croak. Croak.
 Life and death
 Pain and pleasure
 Whispered in an insect's footfall
 And the noise of an owl's wings
 Rustle, crack. Rustle, crack.
 Now listen
 Be silent, be alone, and listen
 Close your eyes
 And open your ears
 And when you are ready
 Tell me what you hear.
 -Connor McKey



Nate Nolan teaches MDT to Lasso

...all of us watched
 as the first
 blinding spot of
 orange rose above
 the mountains,
 casting a new light
 onto everything.

-Carmin, WCT



T.I. climbs Mt Taylor

To Anyone Who Hasn't Eaten Triscuits from A Stranger

To anyone who hasn't eaten Triscuits from a stranger,
 That means you haven't gotten to walk through Utah in the rain
 Which must explain why the smell of damp wood and wildflowers is
 still unknown to you.

To anyone who doesn't know how to sit in a van and let the view out
 the window tell a story,
 It's a shame, because all of us know that the good tales aren't printed
 in books.

It also means you won't have the patience for many things,
 Because we know that the amount of time a person can sit in a van is
 a testament to many other things
 Your type of people won't wait the extra minute for a snake to eat a
 fish,
 Or feel comfortable enough to enjoy a river so thick with silt it looks
 more like chocolate milk than water.

To anyone who can't hang a bear-bag in under 20 minutes,
 that's okay, we can't either. But what we do know how to do is suck
 in the forest air and lose ourselves in the simple challenge that a ball
 of rope and bag can present us.

To anyone who hasn't had a layer of dust so deep you start mistaking
 it for a tan,
 That means you never have gotten to scamper up and down ladders
 with such eagerness that you lose all awareness of dirt or traipse
 down a canyon with such confidence that the clouds of grime you're
 creating with every step are a mere symbol of your hardcoreness (and
 if you are one of those people that has done none of those things
 that probably means you will never get to exert *any* hardcoreness)

To anyone who has missed that perfect time in the morning when
 everything is a light grey but the sun hasn't risen or the sound of the
 aspen leaves dancing in the wind, I highly recommend it.

I recommend eating massive amounts of GORP and telling yourself
 that all the backpacking you're doing will burn it off because even
 though that may not be true, M&M's are truly delicious.

To anyone who thinks the sign of a perfect summer is bronze skin
 and silky hair, I can tell you you're wrong.
 A perfect summer leaves you with a hiking sock tan line and hair that
 still holds tangles from that one week when you didn't brush it once.
 A perfect summer gives you white shirts turned grey, the bumps and
 bruises only the best hikes leave you with and most of all the ability
 to receive Triscuits from a stranger.

-Marina Henke, TT

NOTE: This poem was crafted after an encounter with a man driving by in the
 Manti-La Sal wilderness that offered us Triscuits out of his car window. This
 was after an amazing day of backpacking and written in my tent during rest
 hour.

Our Legacy ~ Our History



Shiprock 1954. Photo by Michael Hays

I recently returned from a Forest Service Access Coalition Meeting at the Wilderness Risk Management Conference. This coalition was formed to address the challenges that we and many programs face in getting access to National Forest Lands. In discussing how to frame this issue to policymakers, my thoughts went to the many trekkers who have learned from the likes of Hillis Howie, Mr. Van, Lucy Kluckhohn-Jones, Molly Madden, Wenda Trevathan, Chet Kubit, any many other committed educators, avid outdoors advocates, and lovers of the wild places on the planet. No doubt these leaders of the Trek have inspired young people who later went on to become these very policymakers. We need not look far to see the legacy that this organization (and its very dedicated staff and community) has had, and will continue to have, on wilderness preservation and environmental education over its 86-year history. Perhaps one of the greatest arguments for allowing educational organizations continued and affordable access to the Public Lands rests in the impact we make on the future users and decision-makers of these precious lands.

-KS

Reflections from a School Group Student

The first day felt like it went by in two seconds. As night came I was surprised to find that I fell asleep easily, this was not normal for me, usually it takes me a long time. The next day I felt like I was going to jump out of my skin, so I ran quickly down to the Mess Hall for breakfast. When it was time to go to the slot canyon I could not hold still. When we arrived at the slot canyon they explained what it was. And the staff told us that it was a narrow passage made of rock. They told us that the rock was sedimentary rocks which we were learning about in class. We started walking to a small slope putting us on the top of a small hill. Two of the staff went one way and we went the other. We went to what they called a pot. A pot is a hole in the ground made by ice millions of years ago.

When we got out we all knew where we were going next, on top of a hill that looked quite vertical and there was a rope hanging down the middle of what looked like foot holes. Then they asked "who's first?" I raised my hand and they chose me to climb up first. I headed for the wall. Looking up I found that it wasn't so steep. I began climbing slowly at first, but picked up the pace quickly. After everyone was up we hiked and climbed a few more little hills. Then we came to the slot canyon part, the narrow passage made of rock. In order to get through we had to put our backs up against one side and our feet on the other and scootch along. It was scary, yet exciting at the same time because if you fell they would have to pull you out. Nobody fell and we were all okay. Before we left, the Gulch staff said it would be challenging and IT WAS.

-Zora Lehmer-Mearns MRGC 5th Grader

"Over the summer I was catapulted across the United States to the "middle of nowhere", my new favorite place. Yet, it would not have been possible without the scholarship I was granted. Without it, I would have stayed in the city, completely oblivious to what I was missing. You don't understand the South West until you go there, and walk through it's enigmas and adventure through the night, guided by the moon. Every single day was breath-taking, and the entire experience has completely reshaped who I understand myself to be. Everyone deserves a chance to take an adventure completely separate from their life, yet only few can. I had never gone to a summer camp prior to Cottonwood Gulch because of the expense, yet because of the scholarship I received, I had, by far, the most amazing summer of my life."

-Lily, MDT



Escuela del Sol Students



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- Expand Our Ropes Course \$19,000
- Plant a Fruit Orchard \$350
- Purchase 2 Expedition Road Tables \$450
- Bring a Visiting Scholar to the Gulch \$2,000
- Donate a Gently Used 4wd Extended Cab Truck



PT with Matt Mitchell, Falconer

June 28, PT Log - La Jencia

John and Terry took us down into the bottom of the valley to see the leopard frog pond they built near the river. On the way we saw some deer bones that John told us were the remains of a cougar kill. It is very encouraging to know that cougars now live in the area because it is a sign the valley is healthier. We walked through some tall grass and came to the pond. There was a pipe which fed water to it from the river and a small solar panel which supplied all the energy for the pump. Last year the pond was stocked with about 20 leopard frogs and now they had over 30. John and Terry were worried about flooding but had been reassured by their frog specialist who helped them start the project that the frogs can sense floods and will instinctively go to higher ground. **Nature is Awesome!** - Don, PT staff (pictured left)

