



# The Desert Sage

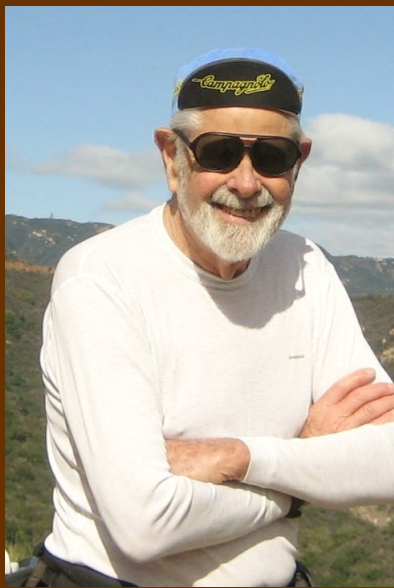
**OUR 75th SEASON**

**MARCH-APRIL 2016**

**ISSUE NO. 362**



<http://desertpeaks.org/>



# Chair's Corner

by  
Paul Cooley

Qué semana! Or, what a week, for any gringos out there...

On Wednesday, Lee and I were in Morro Bay, being disillusioned about democracy in California as I and about 200 others spoke in support of Doctor Charles Lester as executive director of the staff of the California Coastal Commission - to no avail. Seven members of the Commission clearly had made their decision without benefit of public input, so the vote was seven to five to oust Doctor Lester. Frustrating and infuriating as it was, it was certainly educational for both of us; and of course, it was fun to watch grebes, loons, cormorants and gulls in the bay and around Morro Rock - which by the way is an element of the State Park system and is maintained as an ecological reserve.

Still seething, my mood was soothed immensely Friday morning as, next to the headline on the front page of the Los Angeles Times saying "Coastal panel defends firing of its director" was another headline with the best news I have heard in years about the California deserts: "California desert gains 3 national monuments". Whoopee! Castle Mountains, Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow are now protected by President Obama's designation of them under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Thanks are due to Senator Feinstein for her support and to President Obama for his action on this.

On top of that, Porter Ranch appears finally, we hope, to be out of danger from the escaping gas

leak; and the malcontents are out of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge. A pretty good week, for everyone except Doctor Lester. We wish him well, hope that he will get an even better position - perhaps with a conservation organization - and hope also that the Coastal Commission will recognize that many of the people of California are going to be paying close attention to what they do in the future.

In the meantime: our Desert Peaks Section needs a few volunteers for our management committee. If you are interested in helping please let me, Jim Fleming or anyone else on the current committee know.

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THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
IS APRIL 10, 2016

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The Desert Peaks Section maintains a website at: <http://desertpeaks.org/>

# Desert Peaks Section Leadership for the 2015 - 2016 Season

## Elected Positions

### **Chair**

Paul Cooley  
4061 Van Buren Place  
Culver City, CA 90232  
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[prc.calif@gmail.com](mailto:prc.calif@gmail.com)

### **Vice Chair / Outings / Safety**

Leo Logacho  
11150 Dunning Street  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
(562) 714-1272  
[leologacho@hotmail.com](mailto:leologacho@hotmail.com)

### **Secretary**

Jim Fleming  
538 Yarrow Drive  
Simi Valley, CA 93065-7352  
(805) 405-1726  
[jimf333@att.net](mailto:jimf333@att.net)

### **Treasurer**

Laura Newman  
11755 Entrada Avenue  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326-1933  
(626) 665-7937  
[lanewman@me.com](mailto:lanewman@me.com)

### **Program / Banquet Open**

Please contact any Management Committee member if you're interested in becoming the Program/Banquet Chair

## Cover Photo Credit...

goes to James Barlow. The photo is of Picacho Peak and was taken on December 2, 2012. The peak, which is 1,920' high, is the lowest peak in elevation and one of the most technically challenging climbs on the DPS list.

## Appointed Positions

### **Archives**

Barbara Reber  
PO Box 1911  
Newport Beach, CA 92659-0911  
(949) 640-7821

### **Conservation Chair**

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1664 Buttercup Road  
Encinitas, CA 92024-2451  
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### **Mailer**

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3760 Ruthbar Drive  
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(310) 675-4120  
[DWBaldwin@aol.com](mailto:DWBaldwin@aol.com)

### **Membership Records Chair**

Ron Bartell  
1556 21st Street  
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(310) 546-1977  
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[lanewman@me.com](mailto:lanewman@me.com)

### **Mountaineering Committee Chair**

Leo Logacho  
11150 Dunning Street  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
(562) 714-1272  
[leologacho@hotmail.com](mailto:leologacho@hotmail.com)

### **Mountaineering Committee**

Ron Bartell  
[ronbartell@yahoo.com](mailto:ronbartell@yahoo.com)  
Tina Bowman  
[tina@bowmanchange.com](mailto:tina@bowmanchange.com)

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### **Webmaster**

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[Kathrynrich@gmail.com](mailto:Kathrynrich@gmail.com)

### **Mountain Records (Summit Registers)**

Mark Butski  
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[hbmark58@yahoo.com](mailto:hbmark58@yahoo.com)

## The Desert Peaks Section

explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.



## Trips & Events March 2016 — December 2016

From left to right, Greg Gerlach and Jim Morehouse on the summit of Pico Risco (photo taken by Tommey Joh).

MARCH 5	SAT	DPS	Panamint Butte
MARCH 6	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
MARCH 12	SAT	DPS, HPS	DPS Chili Cook-off
MARCH 12	SAT	DPS, HPS	Black Mountain # 6
MARCH 13	SUN	DPS, HPS	Red Mountain
APRIL 2-3	SAT-SUN	DPS, HPS	Sandy Point and Last Chance Mountain
APRIL 9-10	SAT-SUN	DPS, SPS, LTC	Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice
APRIL 10	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
APRIL 13	WED	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Basic Safety System)
APRIL 16	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Belaying)
APRIL 23	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Rappelling)
APRIL 23-24	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Warren Point Navigation Noodle
APRIL 30-1	SAT-SUN	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Techniques/Anchors)
MAY 15	SUN	DPS	Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet
JUNE 11-12	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
SEPT. 18	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
NOV 19-20	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Indian Cove Navigation Noodle
DEC. 11	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Warren Point Navigation Noodle

♦ **MARCH 5**                      **SAT**                                      **DPS**  
**I: Panamint Butte (6,584):** A nice and steep cross country climb in Death Valley, which is 8 mile roundtrip and has 5,000' of gain. Send climbing resume, conditioning, and carpool information by SASE or email (preferred) to Leader: Gary Schenk ([gary@hbfun.org](mailto:gary@hbfun.org)). Co-leader: Tina Bowman.

♦ **MARCH 6**                      **SUN**                                      **DPS**  
**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck:** Join us at the home of Tom Sumner in Sylmar for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Tom at [locornnr@aol.com](mailto:locornnr@aol.com).

♦ **MARCH 12**                      **SAT**                                      **DPS, HPS**  
**O: 22nd DPS Chili Cook-off :** This spring join us in the Mojave Desert on a BLM primitive camping area near Red Mountain and the historic mining town of Randsburg for this DPS Classic! Whether you like your chili Texas- style (no beans), traditional or vegetarian, bring your favorite recipe or just hearty taste buds to this DPS classic. Cook for free or taste for \$10.00. Cooks prepare chili from scratch at the site, then all enjoy happy hour, chili tasting and judging, and campfire. Prizes will be awarded by category, with special recognition for the Spiciest Chili, Best Presentation, Most Original Recipe, and the coveted Best Overall Chili. With the recent rains, we are sure to enjoy some spring wildflowers. Moderate peaks, 2000 year old petroglyphs, and great exploring opportunities abound for the weekend!! Send ESASE with your choice as Taster or Cook with chili type to receive directions, contest specs, carpool info and exploring/hiking activities. This is a DPS social event co-sponsored by the HPS. Hosts: Gloria Miladin, Linda McDermott, and Julie Rush. Emails: [julierush1@gmail.com](mailto:julierush1@gmail.com) or [miladingloria@yahoo.com](mailto:miladingloria@yahoo.com).

◆ **MARCH 12**                      **SAT**                                      **DPS, HPS**  
**I: Black Mountain #6 (5,244')**: Join us for this slow paced, but appetite inducing jaunt up to the high point of the El Paso Mountains Wilderness near Randsburg, California for some truly amazing views out into the vast Mojave Desert. Expect 5.5 round trip miles with 1,425' of gain over rugged, cross country desert terrain. After climbing the peak and returning to our cars, we'll head over toward Randsburg to partake in the Desert Peaks Section's 22nd Annual Chili Cook-off. Well behaved dogs are welcome. Email contact info, recent experience, conditioning, and if you're bringing one along, your dog's name and breed to [mkelliher746@gmail.com](mailto:mkelliher746@gmail.com) for trip status and details. This is an HPS outing co-sponsored by the DPS. Leaders: Mat Kelliher, Mike Dillenback, Lilly Fukui, and Chris Spisak. For information about the DPS Chili Cook-off including how to sign up for it (pre-registration is required) contact Julie Rush ([julierush11@gmail.com](mailto:julierush11@gmail.com)) or Gloria Miladin ([miladingloria@yahoo.com](mailto:miladingloria@yahoo.com)).

◆ **MARCH 13**                      **SUN**                                      **DPS, HPS**  
**I: Red Mountain (5,261')**: Join us as we come off the 22nd Annual DPS Chili Cook-off by taking a short climb at an easy pace up the volcanic slopes of this fine peak high above the old mining town of Johannesburg, California. Expect about 3.5 roundtrip miles with 1,500' of gain over road, trail, and rugged, cross country desert terrain. Well behaved dogs are welcome. Email contact info, recent experience, conditioning, and if you're bringing one along, your dog's name and breed to [mkelliher746@gmail.com](mailto:mkelliher746@gmail.com) for trip status and details. This is an HPS sponsored outing co-sponsored by the DPS. Leaders: Mat Kelliher, Mike Dillenback, Lilly Fukui, and Chris Spisak. For information about the DPS Chili Cook-off including how to sign up for it (pre-registration is required) contact Julie Rush ([julierush11@gmail.com](mailto:julierush11@gmail.com)) or Gloria Miladin ([miladingloria@yahoo.com](mailto:miladingloria@yahoo.com)).

◆ **APRIL 2-3**                      **SAT-SUN**                                      **DPS, HPS**  
**I: Sandy Point (7,062') and Last Chance Mountain (8,456')**: Join us for a spring weekend in the Last Chance Mountains way up in northern Death Valley National Park near Scotty's Castle, CA. Both peaks require a strenuous effort, which we'll exert at a moderate pace, and will require comfort on rocky, thorny, steep, and loose class 2 desert terrain. Saturday we'll head south up a long ridge and enjoy fantastic views down into Eureka Valley as well as of the seemingly numberless peaks and ranges that surround us as we make our way to Sandy Point. We'll return the way we came, with a brief diversion to the imaginatively named Peak 6,277, for a day's total of about 11.0 round trip miles with 2,700' of gain. Saturday night we'll camp out at the primitive and dry Eureka Dunes Campground and enjoy a festive Happy Hour and Potluck under star-packed, new moon night skies. Sunday we'll head up through the Pinyon Pine and Juniper filled slopes of Last Chance Mountain, upon whose summit we'll relish the superb views that can only be found atop P2K peaks. We'll return the way we came in for a day's total of about 5.0 round trip miles with 3,000' of gain. Feel free to join us for one or both days. High clearance vehicles recommended. This is a DPS Outing co-sponsored by HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at [mkelliher746@gmail.com](mailto:mkelliher746@gmail.com) with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson.

◆ **APRIL 9-10**                      **SAT-SUN**                                      **DPS, SPS, LTC**  
**M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice:** This workshop is for M and E candidates who want to check-off leadership rating, and others who want to practice new techniques. The workshop is restricted to Sierra Club members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email address, and home and work phone numbers to leader: Nile Sorenson ([nsorenso@pacbell.net](mailto:nsorenso@pacbell.net)). Co-leaders Doug Mantle and Neil Robbins. E, C, Mountaineering.

◆ **APRIL 10**                      **SUN**                                      **DPS**  
**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck:** Join us at the home of Larry and Barbee Tidball in Long Beach for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Barbee at [lbtidball@verizon.net](mailto:lbtidball@verizon.net).

◆ **APRIL 13**                      **WED**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Basic Safety System:** First of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today's indoor evening workshop of four hours reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets and basic climbing gear will take place in Pasadena. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

◆ **APRIL 16**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Belaying:** Second of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on belaying and principles of anchor building. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

◆ **APRIL 23**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Rapelling:** Third of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on repelling. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

◆ **APRIL 23-24**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS**  
**I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, and campfire. Sunday, checkout. To participate, send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers ([rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

◆ **APRIL 30– MAY 1**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Rock climbing techniques and anchors:** Fourth of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on climbing and anchors. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

◆ **MAY 15**                      **SUN**                      **DPS**  
**O: Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet:** Join your fellow DPS members and friends for a wonderful evening at the Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park. This year's speaker will be Doug Kasian, who will present "Climbing Remote Peaks in the Mountain Ranges of Arizona". The Social Hour and No Host Bar starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. and awards. Please see the banquet flyer located on page 8 of this issue of the Sage or on the section's website for more information, or to sign up for the banquet.

◆ **JUNE 11-12**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS**  
**I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice; Sunday is for checkoff or additional practice. To participate, send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers ([rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)).



# DPS ANNUAL BANQUET

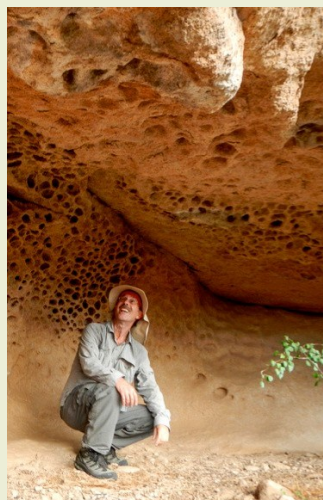
**Sunday May 15**

**Where:** Luminarias Restaurant  
3500 Ramona Blvd.  
Monterey Park, CA  
*near junction of 10 & 710*

**Time:** 5:30 pm Social Hour  
7:00 pm Dinner  
*Includes complimentary  
wine at each table*



*Kino Peak from the south*



**Doug Kasian presents:**

## ***“Climbing Remote Peaks in the Mountain Ranges of Arizona”***

Although originally from Canada, Doug has lived and climbed in Arizona for the past 30 years. He created the list of the 193 Mountain Ranges of Arizona and climbed all of their high points back in the 1980s. As a peakbagger, he enjoys working from lists and has climbed over 1000 peaks in AZ. Nowadays, he spends much of his time working on climbing all the peaks on quads, and all peaks in mountain ranges. However, his greatest passion is climbing peaks that have never been previously climbed, and in remote areas. Over the years, he has climbed with a number of current or former DPSers. He also writes a blog (<http://www.desertmountaineer.com/>) which tells of his many climbs and recently wrote a fascinating 2-part series featuring our very own Barbara Lilley.

### **Silent Auction**

We continue our silent auction of donated items. Please contact Mark Allen for more info.

### **Classic Wilderness and Climbers Cheap Book Sale**

(Be sure to bring books to donate to the Sale)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner selection: Prime Rib/Potatoes \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon/Rice \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta Primavera \_\_\_\_\_

Desert selection: Chocolate Mousse Cake \_\_\_\_\_ Raspberry Sorbet \_\_\_\_\_ *Indicate number of each*

Number of reservations: \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 until April 28 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 after April 28 Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please reserve by May 9. Mail check payable to DPS and completed form to DPS Treasurer:**

**Laura Newman, 11755 Entrada Avenue, Porter Ranch, CA 91326. Tickets will be held at the door.**

**For questions, e-mail Laura Newman at [lanewman@gmail.com](mailto:lanewman@gmail.com) or Mark Allen at [markallen4341@socal.rr.com](mailto:markallen4341@socal.rr.com)**



# Conservation Chair

by *Dave Perkins*



## Conservation Status of the Mojave Desert

### Habitat Loss and Degradation

Roughly half of the Mojave desert remains as intact habitat, and the remaining half has been altered by human activity. The main reasons for habitat loss

in the region include urbanization and suburbanization from Los Angeles and Las Vegas, the increasing demand for landfill space (Los Angeles and San Diego are proposing a large landfill in the region), agricultural development along the Colorado River, grazing, off-road vehicles, and military activities. Areas under particular pressure include Ward Valley (near Mojave National Preserve) and Riverside County, west of Joshua Tree National Park. A falling water table also threatens Death Valley National Park.

### Remaining Blocks of Intact Habitat

The most important remaining habitat blocks include:

- Death Valley National Park - eastern California.
- Desert National Wildlife Range - southern Nevada.
- Joshua Tree National Park - southeastern California.
- Lake Mead - southeastern Nevada and northwestern Arizona.
- Nevada Test Site - southern Nevada.

In addition to the habitat blocks listed above, important protected areas include:

- Kingston Range.
- Mojave National Preserve - southeastern California.
- Sheephole Wildlife Area - southeastern California
- Greenwater Range.

•Lands covered under the California Desert Protection Act.

### Degree of Fragmentation

Habitats in the Mojave desert are generally contiguous, with a high degree of connectivity. Roads, however, have fragmented habitat for certain species, such as desert tortoise and some species of snakes. Big horn sheep migration routes also are not adequately protected between reserves.

### Degree of Protection

By historical accident and the California Desert Protection Act, the Mojave desert is one of the best protected ecoregions in the United States. The full range of habitats are included in reserves, although riparian areas need more protection.

### Types and Severity of Threats

Threats to the Mojave are concentrated in the southwest and east central portions of the ecoregion. Lower elevation valleys are largely in private hands and lack protection. Off-road vehicles and development threaten these valleys, and development also is harming creosote bush areas. Tamarisk is invading springs, and grazing is damaging mid-elevation pastures. Wildlife hunting and trade threaten chuckwallas, gila monsters, and desert tortoises. The most important conservation activities in the Mojave desert are to protect riparian areas and low elevation valleys.

### The World Wildlife Fund lists as its Conservation Partners

- California Desert Protection League
- California Native Plant Society
- Sierra Club
- The Wilderness Society

This report is abstracted from a piece written by: B. Holland, G. Orians, and J. Adams for the World Wildlife Fund.

# DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

## Membership Summary

<u>Type</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Member	116	21
Household	27	
Subscriber	24	2
Totals:	167	23

## Activity Report

## Achievements

## Emblem

#591 Leo Logacho 1/2/16 Signal Peak

## New Member

Rana Parker Pinto Mountain

## Sustaining Renewals

Jim Prichard 1 year  
 Michael Scuderi 2 years  
 Robert Wyka 5 years

## Renewals

Mark Adrian 1 year  
 James Barlow 1 year  
 Daniel Baxter 1 year  
 Doug Bear 1 year  
 David Beymer & Maura Raffensperger 1 year  
 Gary Bowen 2 years  
 Mark Butski 1 year  
 Gary Craig 1 year  
 Guy Dahms 1 year

John Fisanotti 1 year  
 Terry Flood 1 year  
 Jim Fujimoto 1 year  
 Bruno Geiger 1 year  
 Ron & Ellen Grau 1 year  
 Edward Herrman 1 year  
 Gerry Holleman 1 year  
 Ron Hudson 1 year  
 Gary Hughes 1 year  
 Patty Kline 1 year  
 Jim Long & Susan Cooper 5 years  
 Mary McMannes 1 year  
 Robert Michael 1 year  
 Gloria Miladin 2 years  
 James Morehouse 1 year  
 Paul & Pat Nelson 1 year  
 Wayne Norman 1 year  
 Ken D. Olson 1 year  
 John Palka 1 year  
 Chuck Pospishil 1 year  
 George Quinn 1 year  
 John Ripley 1 year  
 Gregory & Mirna Roach 2 years  
 Shelley Rogers 1 year  
 Elena Sherman & Scott Sullivan 1 year  
 Eric Sieke 2 years  
 Michael Stallard 1 year  
 Roger Weingaertner 1 year  
 Charlie Winger 3 years

## Donation

\$15 from Jim Prichard

**THE DESERT PEAKS SECTION NEEDS MEMBERS TO RUN FOR THE DPS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE!**

Please contact any Management Committee member if you're interested in serving on the DPS Management Committee.

## Outings Chair

by *Leo Logacho*



Greetings Everyone,

Leaders, please report any accidents or incidents promptly to the link below. There is a new website for Leaders (live since December) that also incorporates the LTC, OMC and Safety websites, which can be found at:

[http://angeles.sierraclub.org/leadership\\_and\\_outings](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/leadership_and_outings)

### Kudos “Heart to Heart”

*“To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.” Eleanor Roosevelt*

I believe Eleanor Roosevelt paints what a leader is with her fabulous words. Hiking is such a healthy, social and pleasant activity, and we hikers enjoy the outdoors. There has been an increase in the number of outings in the last couple of months. Many thanks for the leaders that are making this possible for the Desert Peaks Section. As we all know, outings are the life blood of the group.

I would also like to encourage hikers to become leaders. Please check this link for more information:

[http://angeles.sierraclub.org/get\\_outdoors/becoming\\_leader](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/get_outdoors/becoming_leader)

Regards,

Leo Logacho  
DPS Outings Chair



## Treasurer's Report

by *Laura Newman*

*DPS Account Summary from  
January 1, 2016 to  
January 31, 2016*

### INCOME

Banquet Book Sales	\$-
Banquet Silent Auction	\$-
Banquet Ticket Sales	\$-
Merchandise	\$-
Subscriptions	\$620.00
Donations	\$20.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$640.00</b>

### EXPENSES

Banquet Awards	\$-
Banquet Expenses	\$-
Banquet Payment	\$-
Postage for Merchandise Mailing	\$-
Sage Mailing	\$-
Sage Printing	\$-
Sales Tax	\$5.13
Web Page Expenses	\$-
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5.13</b>

<b>CHECKING BALANCE</b>	<b>\$4,303.31</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>	<b>\$4,303.31</b>

### UPDATES ARE NEEDED TO THE CURRENT DPS ROAD AND PEAK GUIDE!

Please send road and climbing route updates to the DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor, Jim Morehouse, at [desertpeakssection@gmail.com](mailto:desertpeakssection@gmail.com). Jim is working on a new Version 6 of the guide, so be sure and send him a quick email after climbing a peak with suggested updates to the Guide while the information is still fresh in your mind. The DPS and Jim also welcomes volunteers to join the DPS Road and Peak Guide Committee to assist with updating the current Guide. Please contact Jim via email for further information.



# Trip Reports

White Mountain from Benton Valley (photo taken by Alois Smrz on January 23, 2015).

## Solomon's Knob (4,474') and Turquoise Mountain (4,400')

By: Jorge Estrada  
November 22, 2015

After a successful DPS outing to Kingston Peak on Saturday, my wife and hiking partner Diana and myself decided to stay in the Baker area and find a hike that would not take too long so that we could beat the Sunday traffic from Las Vegas to Los Angeles. I had pulled Andy Zdon's Desert Summits book from my bookshelf to see what we could do in the area and found the Turquoise Hills, which are located about 12 miles east of Baker and just north of I-15.

We found two peaks, Solomon's Knob and Turquoise Mountain, to visit. To get there, we exited I-15 at Halloran Springs Road and drove north about three miles, then drove another 3 miles east on a graded and sandy dirt road to a mine area, where we parked. From here we could clearly see Solomon's Knob, our first destination, about a couple of miles away. We saw a straight route to the base of Solomon's Knob via a northwest ridge, but decided to stay in and explore the washes. I somehow interpreted the route

in Zdon's book to head to the west side of the peak, then look for breaks in a cliff bands. Around the peak we went and found a steep chute that required a very loose class 2 scramble. We climbed up about 150', carefully trying to avoid kicking rocks down. I would climb up 15 feet or so, then wait for Diana to meet up with me, then we would do it over again. We finally reached the summit plateau and headed to the north rim where there is a large rock cairn with the register can and book, which was placed in 1992 by none other than Gordon Macleod and Barbara Lilley. For this year there were only 2 signatures in the register book, and two more in 2014 and only 1 in 2013. We enjoyed the views from the top, including Telescope, Charleston and Kingston Peaks. After walking around the plateau we saw a very easy slope on the east side of the peak that we would descend. Once down from the summit plateau, we decided to stay in the washes to return to the mine area. From here it would just be a drive up to Turquoise Mountain, which is located about 5 miles to the northwest via a very broken paved road. There is a microwave station on top of the mountain, and we walked around it to the highpoint with the benchmarks. The views to the north and east were enough to make us forget the buildings located behind us. I was not able to find my camera for our summit photos. We looked in our backpacks and truck but still nothing. We determined that we must have left it at the parking area for Solomon's Knob. We drove back to the trailhead and I spotted the red pouch containing the camera in the middle of the dirt road. What a relief to find it!

We were happy to have visited two desert peaks that we had never considered before. We had the Turquoise Hills all to ourselves this day.

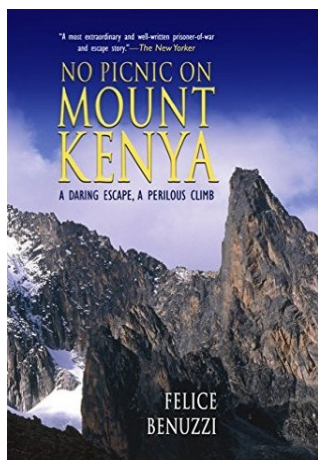
Solomon's Knob was about 4 miles round trip with 800 feet gain and Turquoise Mountain was about a 100 yards walk to the highpoint.



View of Solomon's Knob.

# Trip Reports ... continued.

**Point John (16,020'), Nelion Peak (17,021'),  
Mount Kenya (Batian Peak, 17,057'),  
and Point Lenana (16,335')**  
**January 5-9, 2016**  
**By Rob Woodall**



In his classic book *No Picnic on Mount Kenya*, Felice Benuzzi describes how, captivated by a distant view of the soaring twin-spined peak, with two fellow prisoners he escapes from a British POW camp, hikes for a week up the Nanyuki River, attempts Batian Peak by a hitherto unclimbed route, in crampons home-made from meat tins, is repulsed by a blizzard and returns foodless to captivity.

We take a more conservative approach, first climbing Kilimanjaro to get some altitude under our belts; the crossing overland from Tanzania to Kenya presenting only minor challenges. Our trip had been two years in the planning – Greg Slayden and UK friend Adrian Rayner and I finding ourselves drawn to the big, rocky peak which we felt should be just within our grasp and certain to be an adventure. We're also drawn by its topographical prominence – Mount Kenya is in the world top fifty, weighing in at #32, along with Kilimanjaro at #4 – two high-value prizes.

At Naro Moru River Lodge west of the peak, we admire a painting of the peak - the style reminiscent



**A Painting of Mount Kenya at the Naro Moru River Lodge.**

of 19<sup>th</sup> century artist Heaton Cooper who painted-up the modest peaks of the English Lake District into some quite alarming profiles – plenty of vertical exaggeration. We are met that evening by our rock climbing guide David Muigai, a man of

quiet authority and an excellent climber who knows the route intimately. We review our climbing kit: David has a 50 meter rope and rack; Greg will bring his 60 meter rope and rack; we'll take ice axe and crampons.

**Day 1 – approach.** We're transported by the ubiquitous Toyota Landcruiser to the Naro Moru gate where Ken takes care of National Park formalities. The drive to the Met Station trailhead is the first challenge – a short section with deep mud sees us all



## **Questionable driving conditions on the approach.**

collecting stones to fill the deep wheel ruts. At the 10,040' trailhead (there really is a met station) we meet our porters (not mandatory for this peak but so much easier), lose a banana to a marauding baboon, and set off with our guide, who's very knowledgeable about the bizarre plant life (giant groundsel, giant lobelia – a toned-down version of Uganda's Rwenzori landscape). We make a lunch stop at Picnic Rocks – whether or not named with Felice Benuzzi in mind, the chance for an actual Picnic on Mount Kenya isn't to be missed!

Mid-afternoon, we cross the infant Naromoru River and the clouds part to reveal Batian Peak, Nelion Peak and Point John - looking disturbingly like the painting we saw yesterday - that was no vertical exaggeration! Viewed from Mackinder's Hut

*(Continued on page 14)*

# Trip Reports ... continued.

*(Continued from page 13)*

(13,779') bathed in evening sunshine, the peaks look magnificent. The hut consists of a rather squalid kitchen and three large dormitories – nevertheless our crew serve up a good meal.



**Mount Kenya from Mackinder's Hut.**

**Day 2 – practice climb.** Today we climb Point John (16,020') – we're already acclimated but the purpose

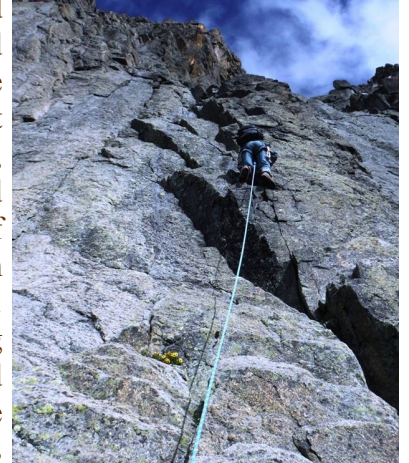


**Our practice climb, Point John (16,020').**

is to spend some time climbing with David. We're not in the best of health after Kilimanjaro – I've had a cough for a week and lost my voice briefly; Adrian has an upset stomach and most unusual for him is off his food. On the steep climb to the start of the Point John route, Adrian accepts he'll be unable to do the climb, and continues to the next hut.

Point John looks outrageous, but isn't very hard, and the rock is nice and sound. The first pitch follows an easy gully, about class 3-4. The next few pitches have the occasional hardish move, around class 5.6. We're climbing in approach shoes – stiff soles but reasonably light, yet warmer and more comfortable than rock shoes. The 650' route has some 7 pitches in

all. David leads, Greg belays, with him and I tied onto the end of the 60 meter rope about 20' apart. Most anchors are fixed rappel points, and changeovers are quite efficient. The ascent takes around 2 hours, 30 minutes. David takes us to the foot of the summit rock which is a 10' rock blade. Staying roped, Greg and I scramble round the back and up to the highest point, where it's possible to sit on without too much difficulty.



**Guide David Muigai leading Point John's crux pitch (class 5.6).**

We enjoy the views of Batian Peak and Nelion Peak, which are close at hand with a short but tricky looking passage between them. Voices can be heard on the Nelion Peak ascent route (that evening we see some headlamps descending). There's a cold wind, so in half an hour after a quick lunch we head down, in 6 rappels, once tying the 60 and 50 meter ropes together for faster progress. Greg and David have developed a good rapport and we are as ready as we can be for tomorrow's ascent. Bypassing what's left of the Lewis Glacier we make the tough, rubbly moraine ascent to the Austrian Hut (15,748', a little lower than today's summit), small and busy, where we eat well and sleep badly and briefly.

**Day 3 – summit day.** We leave the Austrian Hut at 4:45 a.m., David leading us towards Nelion Peak down the steep, awkward moraine we ascended yesterday, but now by headlamp. We fit crampons to cross the Lewis Glacier. On the far side is a 650' steep, loose ascent. Adrian is climbing slowly, still not recovered from a week's sickness, and decides to forgo the climbing. A tough decision but probably correct as the climbing is very strenuous at times; especially the hardest climbing moves, at 50% of sea level oxygen saturation and with heavy overnight

*(Continued on page 15)*

# Trip Reports ... continued.

(Continued from page 14)  
packs.

An Austrian/Swiss couple are on the first pitch as we arrive at 6:30 a.m., now full daylight. On the first few easy pitches the three of us move together roped, occasionally placing protection. This gives freedom, yet a tight rope is available if required. A few harder passages are belayed (about 6 of the 20 pitches), including a very exposed quite hard left-right traverse (class 5.7), the other team mostly keeping pace just ahead of us, occasionally getting directions from David (as he points out – if they get into trouble he’s the rescue team!).

After a long (exhausting) section of simul-climbing we come to an airy perch looking down over



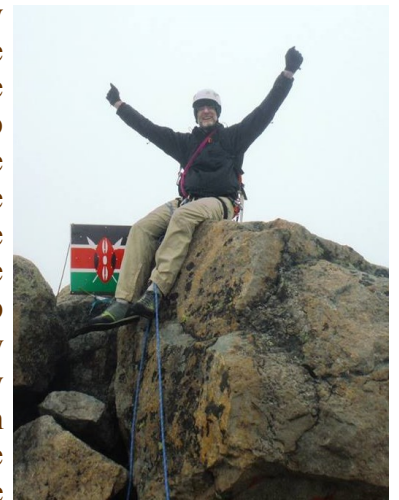
**Guide David Muigai leading De Graaf’s Variation, the crux chimney on Nelion Peak (class 5.8).**

but they go. It feels like class 5.8 but it’s hard to tell with a heavy pack, 16,404’ elevation and wearing approach shoes with not quite enough friction.

The last few pitches are fairly easy, with the odd hard move, and the tiny box of Howell’s Hut a few feet below Nelion summit (17,021’) comes into view, after 5 hours climbing, with maybe 30 minutes spent waiting for the party ahead. We chat with them for a while, then they head for the first rappel point. Doing

just Nelion Peak in a single day has obvious advantages – no need for axe, crampons or overnight gear. But it doesn’t work if you’re a peak bagger.

Leaving our overnight gear in the hut, at 12:15 p.m. we commence the traverse to Batian Peak, at 17,057’ the high point of Mount Kenya, just 36’ higher than Nelion Peak. It starts with an axe and crampon descent of steep snow and rock. Then we make a 65’ rappel on a single rope with prusik backup (much easier to lose control with a single rope, less friction, hence the failsafe). The Gate of the Mists is living up to its name today, very atmospheric with a view down onto Point John and Midget Peak. The first pitch out of the notch is mostly steep snow with some rock. This gets us past a big gendarme, then we cross to the left side for a nice interesting rock pitch with great friction climbing on a narrow arête. A second, short pitch gets us to the summit with its scrambly summit block and Kenya’s flag. We’re up in two hours from Nelion.



**Greg Slayden on top of Batian Peak (17,057’), Kenya’s national highpoint.**

It starts to snow so we soon head down. The first rappel is very odd, teetering down the edge of a foot-wide arête, but it soon becomes easier. Down at the saddle things are a little complicated. David’s red rope was left in place after the rappel from Nelion. We’ve been climbing on Greg’s rope and remain tied into it. The rock gendarme isn’t really climbable hence the need to leave a top rope for the re-ascent to Nelion. David heads up the steep slope, carefully protecting what is a pretty precarious climb around an exposed corner on poor snow, then disappears up the main slope; Greg and I are standing in the snow-swept saddle getting cold. At last we get the call and join

(Continued on page 16)

# Trip Reports ... continued.

*(Continued from page 15)*

David above the snow slope. The red top rope is then retrieved and we're soon back at the hut.

The Howell Hut is about 6.5' square and 3.25' at the highest end, with enough side slope to mean we have



**Howell Hut on Nelion Peak (17,021').**

to make an effort to avoid rolling into each other while sleeping. Dinner is the remains of our packed lunch: not the sort of place you want to lug a stove and try cooking.

**Day 4 – descent.** The morning weather is much improved: with impressive views of the so-near-yet-so-far Batian Peak; Kilimanjaro and Mawenzi are visible in the far distance. It's light soon after 6:00 a.m., but David suggests 7:30 a.m. is a good time to start, when the sun has some strength. It's pretty chilly getting gear organised in the cold wind.

We make our first rappel at 8:10 a.m. David and Greg soon have a good system going, using two ropes, so that the next rappel is already setup once we've got down the previous one. One rappel point is on a small two foot wide ledge - a small target from above and an exhilarating situation. Rappel 5 is the crux chimney - De Graaf variation. De Graaf has the last laugh as the rope gets stuck and David has to re-climb several feet to retrieve it. Below De Graaf we traverse left to the tiny Baillie's bivouac on the ridge out to Point John. The remaining descent is pretty much

straight down. We're back at the foot of the climb at 11:00 a.m., just under 3 hours, with the two-rope plan probably saving at least an hour; some 12 rappels in all.

The sting-in-the-tail re-ascent to the Austrian Hut is pretty gruelling, and we're ready for lunch. Adrian has already left and after an hour's break we follow him to Shipton's Hut via Point Lenana, 16,335', third highest of the range and a popular and worthy trekking target, with the afternoon clouds parting briefly at the summit to give us a view of the Point John – Nelion Peak - Thompson Peak skyline. The surrounding area abounds with other steep castellated peaks. Our eyes are drawn to the magnificent twin peaks Terere and Sendeo which dominate the view ahead as we make the easy descent to Shipton's Hut (14,010'). The views of Batian's north face towering above the hut are also impressive as the skies continue to clear. It's a grade harder than our route, longer and only attempted in July/August when there's less ice and snow on that side. The hut is large, and has a healthy population of mice!

**Day 5 – exit.** We hiked out northwest to the Sirimon Gate (8,694'), lingering over the stunning mountain scenery and fascinating plant life, until cresting a hillside we find ourselves crossing peaty moorland more reminiscent of Northern England. We pass a large in-bound party, noting with interest the mix of white and Kenyan clients – this seems not to happen in Tanzania.

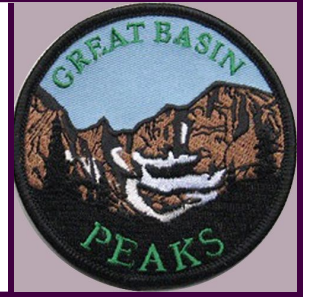
A week later, having done some safariing, returned to Tanzania and climbed Loolmalasin and Mount Meru – Greg and I can still barely believe we've summited Batian Peak. A superb peak, which with a few hours training at the indoor climbing wall back home and a guide on the peak, proved to be achievable for a couple of fairly low-grade climbers.

A more detailed account can be found at:

<http://www.peakbagger.com/climber/ascent.aspx?aid=610002>



# Great Basin Peaks Section News



**Great Basin Peaks Section News**  
by Sharon Marie Wilcox

Great Basin Peaks Section at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe/great-basin-peak-outings>

Last year the following members shared their current progress on the Great Basin Peaks list. Here is an update of their new peak numbers. More snow in the mountains this year will make it challenging to find dry roads and peaks until later in the season. We'll check in again at the end of the year to see how many new peaks our members have experienced.

Robert Stolting 9  
Franklin Enos 11  
Niki Houghton 13  
Mitch and Janice Brown-Silveira 31  
Gerry Pennington 23  
Marge Sill 24  
Jim Scott 25  
Gretchen Nelson 25  
Ute Dietrich 27  
Laura Newman 28  
Daniel Baxter 29  
James Barlow 29  
Bob Michael 35  
Bob Morrill 35  
Kathy Rich 35  
James Morehouse 38  
Tobi Tyler 46  
Howard Steidtmann 49  
Al Sandorff 50  
Dave Porter 54  
Randy McNatt 63  
Mary Brooks 66  
Larry Grant 73  
Ken Jones 79  
Daryn Dodge 80  
Charlie Winger 82  
Sharon Marie Wilcox 89  
Larry Dwyer 102  
John Ide 114

We now have a page on Facebook. Please add pictures or trip reports from your trips to share with other hikers. Join the GBPS! For details on membership, recognition categories, peak list, and trip reports check out

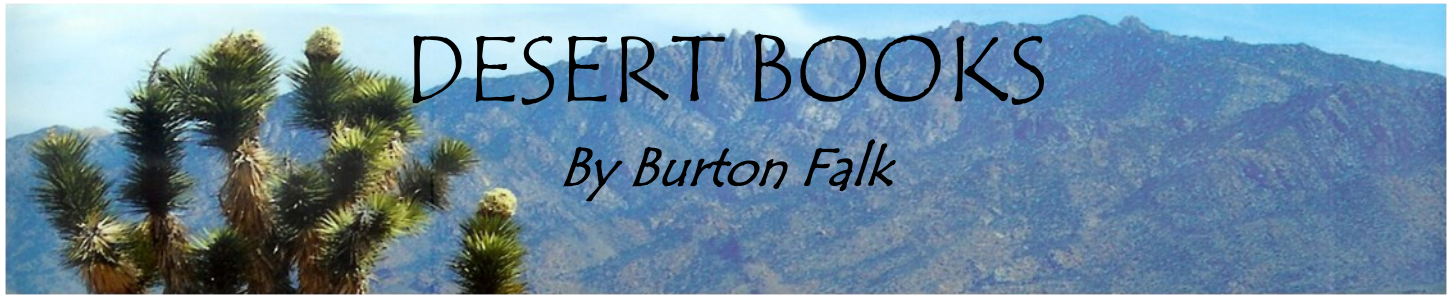
## **Deseret Peak, Utah (11,031')** **October 11, 2015** by Sharon Marie Wilcox

Deseret Peak sits in the Deseret Peak Wilderness, and with 5,000' of prominence qualifies for a number of peak lists. At 11,031' in elevation, it is the highest peak in the Stansbury Mountains, plus it's the highpoint of Tooele County (pronounced Tu-will-uh).

On October 10, 2015 Great Basin Peaks Section members headed for Deseret Peak, leaving Reno at 6:30 a.m. to reach the trailhead at Loop Campground before dark. We had a brief lunch stop for Cornish pasties at B.J. Bull in Elko and topped off gas in Wendover before heading across the Bonneville Flats. This large desert expanse gave an illusion that surrounding peaks appeared as ships floating on a white sea. The unusual Tree of Life sculpture added an interest point as we drove through this desert. From Grantsville, our drive up South Willow Canyon twisted through sun-blazed aspen between high rock walls. Deer with fawns greeted us in the campground as we set up camp and prepared our yummy potluck dinner. The night sky was clear and littered with stars as we retired early to get some sleep before our early start time.

Our morning start with headlamps allowed us to see the many color changes of first light on the mountains as we hiked up the canyon. An 1,800' climb in the first 1.5 miles kept us warm on this chilly morning. Unlike many Great Basin Peaks, Deseret has a trail to the summit and can be found in numerous hiking guides. We had the trail to ourselves all the way to the summit. Enjoying the solitude and clear day, we sat an hour on top eating lunch, taking photos, and relishing the impressive views. There is a register and benchmark on the summit. After the most leisurely summit rest I've ever enjoyed, we returned on the loop trail, descending Pockets Fork/Dry Lake Fork Trail for variety.

Another day to treasure on a great basin peak!



**ALL THE WILD THAT REMAINS:  
Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner, and the  
American West (2015), David Gessner**

David Gessner, author of *All the Wild That Remains*, was born and raised in Massachusetts and is a 1983 graduate of Harvard University where he drew political cartoons for the *Harvard Crimson*. A sampling of his prior volumes include *Under the Devil's Thumb* (1999), a collection of essays describing his years in the West while recovering from testicular cancer; *Return of the Osprey* (2002), chosen by *The Boston Globe* and the Book of the Month Club as one of the top ten nonfiction books of the year; and *Sick of Nature* (2005), of which one critic wrote, "Gessner has positioned himself as a sort of Woody Allen of environmental writers." More recently, he has been a professor at the University of North Carolina, and is currently the Editor in Chief of *Ecotone* an environmental journal he founded in 2004. His credentials as a conservationist seem solid.

In *All the Wild That Remains* (2015), Gessner sets out to examine the contrasting lives of the authors Wallace Stegner (1909-1993) and Edward Abbey (1927-1989), and how they both played important roles in the preservation of the U. S. Western wilderness.

Having read almost everything Stegner and Abbey published, I was intrigued as to how Gessner would entwine the legacy of the two giants of the American West literature with a look at the current state of the wilderness they fought so hard to preserve. I was also curious how two men with such differing personalities and styles could become so important in raising the country's awareness of the need for wilderness preservation.

Stegner, winner of the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for *The Angle of Repose*, and the 1977 National Book Award for *The Spectator Bird*, was the first to win his conservation stripes. During the early 1950s, at the urging of his friend, the historian Bernard DeVoto, Stegner wrote a series of environmental articles that came to the attention of David Brower, the "charismatic single-minded executive director of the Sierra Club" at the

time. At the urging of Brower, Stegner edited a book, *This is Dinosaur* (1955), describing the wonders that would be lost if Echo Park Dam was built on the Green River within the borders of Dinosaur National Monument.

Gessner contends that there had been "something upper-crust and musty about the Sierra Club and the other environmental organizations, but with *Dinosaur* they would go from fuddy-duddies to fighters. Over the next decade great gains would be made as a new style was forged: full page ads in major newspapers comparing the damming and drowning of the Grand Canyon to the flooding of the Sistine Chapel, beautifully photographed books would help change our national consciousness, and park land would be purchased as it hadn't been since the days of Teddy Roosevelt, culminating with the Wilderness Act of 1964."

As for Edward Abbey, he sounded the alarm against what he termed "industrial tourism" in his landmark 1968 volume, *Desert Solitaire*, in which he criticized the park services and American society for its reliance on motor vehicles and technology. He believed that wilderness should be preserved as a refuge for humans and thought that modernization was making us forget what was truly important in life. In 1975, Abbey published *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, a hugely popular novel that advocated the concept of eco-terrorism. Remarkably, his fantasy of a gang of eco-fighters was translated into reality by several of the book's readers. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which sold more than a million copies, in fact, became a kind of training manual for many eco-terrorist groups, including Earth First!

Gessner structures *All the Wild That Remains* in a linear/trip report manner, describing his months of travel through the Rocky Mountain west, including his conversations with people who knew or were related to Abbey and Stegner, meetings with figures notable in the current environmental fracas, and, most touchingly, the excellent days he spent on the road bonding with his bright ten-year daughter, Hadley.

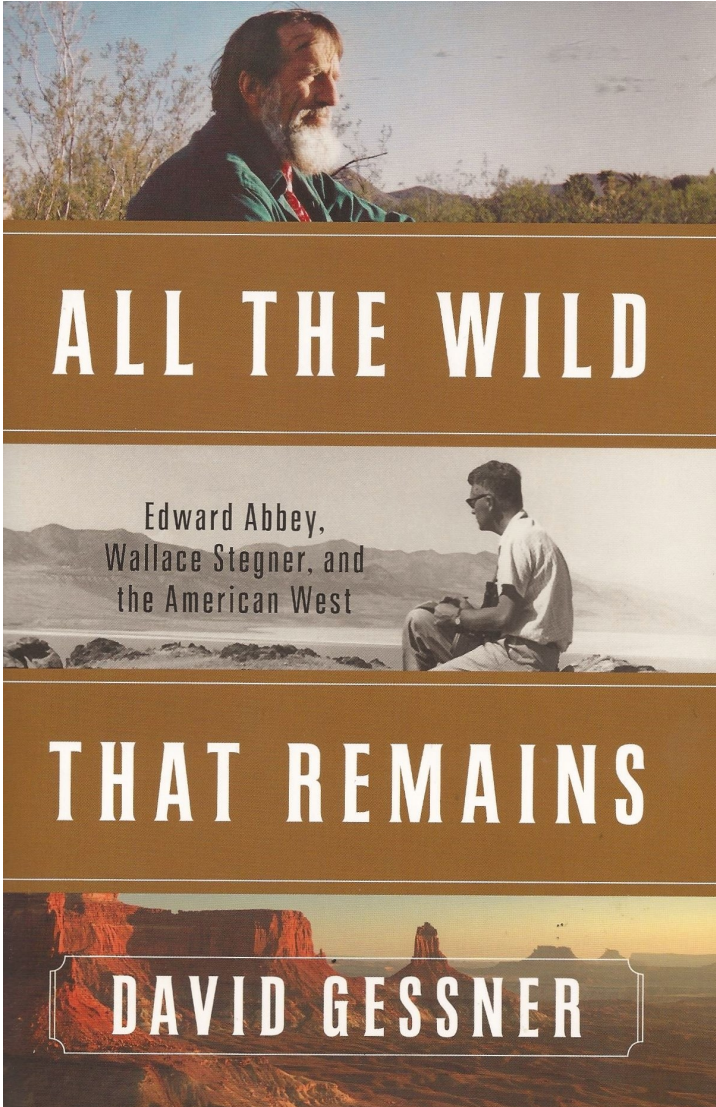
*(Continued on page 19)*

# Desert Books – continued...

(Continued from page 18)

To me, however, Gessner's notions of the manner in which Abbey's and Stegner's backgrounds shaped their careers is the most interesting part of the multi-tasked volume.

Wallace Stegner, for instance, had a less than ideal childhood. His father, George, a ne'er-do-well, seemed



always to be on the move around the west in pursuit of "the big strike." Wally and his brother Cecil "were (once) deposited in a (Seattle) orphanage so that their mother, Hilda, could work." The closest the young Stegners ever came to a settled childhood occurred between 1914 and 1920, when the family lived in southern Saskatchewan hoping each summer for a profitable wheat crop. Stegner would later describe that experience as an "incomparable intimacy with the earth,

(notable) for the sun struck afternoons when we lay in the sleeping porch listening to the lonesome wind in the screens and dreamed of buying all the marvels pictured in the Sears Roebuck catalog."

Later, after moving to Great Falls, Montana, and then to Salt Lake City, young Stegner's intellect began to shine through. While attending the University of Utah, a professor saw promise in Stegner and "finagled" a teaching assistantship for him in the English Department at the University of Iowa.

In his early novel, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (1938), Bruce Mason, a character based on Stegner's own life, is found driving back to Utah from Iowa, cursing his father's vagabond tendencies, and envying those who have lived in only one place, when "...suddenly, the land rises, ...the air grows drier, the towns farther apart, the colors more sere and less green." It occurs to Mason/Stegner that "for him home is not a particular house or town but an entire region. He settles on a new definition of himself: He was a westerner, whatever that was."

Ed Abbey was raised in a small town in the "green skunky hills of western Pennsylvania." His father, Paul Revere Abbey, was an "unrepentant Socialist who cried when the Soviet Union fell and fearlessly spouted his political opinions." His mother, Mildred, was a "ball of energy, (a woman who) taught first grade, raised five children, and essentially ran the Presbyterian church down the road." In addition to roaming the nearby woods, reading hundreds of books, and avoiding chores, Ed grew up "showing an early gift for indolence."

Abbey's adult life seems to be the antithesis of his childhood. In his prime he drank to excess, threw beer cans out of car windows, rolled a tire down into the Grand Canyon, toted guns, and smoked cigars. In his writings he argued for the right to bear arms, for decentralized government, and he protested immigration. Marrying five women during his 62 years, he was "openly lustful and sometimes writes of his desire to copulate with every woman he sees."

Politically, Abbey thought that American culture was "lodged completely in an economically dominated paradigm," and that fighting it was a moral imperative. He believed that anarchy was "democracy taken

(Continued on page 20)

# Desert Books – continued...

(Continued from page 19)  
seriously."

In Gessner's opinion, Stegner was "a tough-minded workaholic," while Abbey was a man endowed with "chronic melancholy, but also sparks of joy. Slouchy sensuality and bursts of courage. His is a restless mind, always jumping to the next thought, the next idea, the next dream."

Gessner interviewed Abbey's biographers, Jack Loeffler and James Cahalan; Stegner's wife, Mary, and son, Page; environmental activists, Wendell Berry, Rob Bleiberg, and Doug Peacock; and many others, including the river-rafter, Ken Sleight, the person for whom *Seldom Seen Slim*, a main character in Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, was based. During his research for *All the Wild That Remains*, he commendably read or reread virtually everything Stegner and Abbey ever wrote.

As for current environmental issues, Gessner describes his flight over the fracking developments in Vernal, Utah, during which he viewed "rectangles, the straight, squared lines that didn't quite fit in nature, and that turned out to be the hundred of drilling pads and evaporation ponds and holding tanks dotting the area...The land below was scarred so badly that in places it looked as if someone had taken a knife to a beautiful woman's face."

Gessner also takes aim at cattle-raising in the West, citing a speech that Abbey made at the University of Montana in 1985, explaining to a booing, jeering crowd that, "Western cattlemen are no more than welfare parasites." That they are "a highly subsidized special-interest group--a group of about 35,000 individuals who controlled 400 million acres of *public* land, land that after it was used was left 'cow burnt' and useless."

As a reviewer my main problem with *All the Wild* is its chronological trip report layout. As published, important nuggets of information are buried throughout the text making it difficult to form an overview. Only after collating my notes could I organize this review.

Or maybe my memory is failing.

In his summation, Gessner notes that "far from being regional or outdated, (Abbey and Stegner) have never

been more relevant; (that in this) overheated and overcrowded world, their books can serve as guides, as surely as any gazetteer, and as maps, as surely as any atlas."

## **FINDING ABBEY: THE SEARCH FOR EDWARD ABBEY AND HIS HIDDEN DESERT GRAVE (2015), Sean Prentiss**

In 2015, in an unlikely coincidence, Sean Prentiss, a single, 30-something, school teacher living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, also published a book on Edward Abbey, a volume covering much of the same material reviewed in David Gessner's *All the Wild That Remains* above.

Prentiss' volume, however, concerns only Abbey, and focuses primarily on locating the author's hidden grave. As a subplot, Prentiss, born and raised in Idaho and a westerner at heart, also wonders what hell he's doing living by himself and teaching school in Grand Rapids.

The circumstances regarding Abbey's death are thus: In March, 1989, at the age of 62, Abbey was well aware that he was dying. Although he didn't consider himself an alcoholic, he was suffering from esophageal varices--throat hemorrhaging--a recurrent disorder usually associated with heavy drinking.

Living at the time in Tucson, Arizona with his fifth wife, Clarke, Abbey conspired with his good friends, Jack Loeffler and Doug Peacock, and his in-laws, Tom Cartwright, Clarke's father, and Steve Prescott, Clarke's brother-in-law, to ignore state laws and have his body taken to some remote part of the desert where he could be secretly buried--no embalming, no coffin--in a hand-dug hole. In an earlier journal entry, he had written, "The earth has fed me for a half a century; I owe the earth a meal--that is, my body."

As for a funeral, Abbey wrote, "No formal speeches desired, though the deceased will not interfere if someone feels the urge. But keep it all simple and brief." He further requested gunfire, bagpipe music, "[a]nd a flood of beer and booze! Lots of singing, dancing, talking, hollering, laughing, and lovemaking."

An article in *Outside Magazine* described the day of Abbey's death thusly: Loeffler, Cartwright, Prescott, and

(Continued on page 21)

# Desert Books – continued...

(Continued from page 20)

Peacock wrapped "Abbey's body in his blue sleeping bag, packed it with dry ice, and loaded (him) into Loeffler's Chevy pickup. After stopping at a liquor store in Tucson for five cases of beer, and some whiskey to pour on the grave, they drove off into the desert. The men searched for the right spot the entire next day and finally turned down a long rutted road, drove to the end, and began digging. That night they buried Ed and toasted the life of America's prickliest and most outspoken environmentalist."

Prentiss begins his existential almost two-year long search for Abbey's gravesite in August 2009, by visiting the Abbey family cemetery plot in Home, Pennsylvania, near Abbey's birthplace of Indiana, PA. The following spring the author sets off for Santa Fe, NM, to interview Jack Loeffler, Abbey's best friend, a meeting during which he keeps secret the fact that he's attempting to find Abbey's burial spot.

A few days later Prentiss turns up in Durango, CO, to interview David Petersen, who met Abbey while doing a review for *Mother Earth News*, and who later edited three volumes of Abbey's writing--his journals in *Confessions of a Barbarian*, his postcards in *Postcards from Ed*, and his poems in *Earth Apples*. Again, Prentiss doesn't ask for specific instructions on how to find the gravesite, even though he knows that Petersen visited the site every March for several years after Abbey's death.

It's as if Prentiss really doesn't want answers. "Answers don't solve questions," he writes. "Only searching does."

As Prentiss continues his quest during the summer of 2010, he visits Arches National Monument, where Abbey worked and gathered material for his first and most famous volume, *Desert Solitaire*. While in the area, he also visits Ken Sleight (Seldom Seen Slim) at nearby Pack Creek Ranch, where the famous river-rafter describes reading a first manuscript of *The Monkey*

*Wrench Gang*, as "the most fun-filled time I ever spent, seeing what came in and out of Abbey's mind."

In early October, Prentiss finally visits Tucson where Abbey, his wife, Clarke, and their two children, Rebecca and Benjamin, lived, and where he taught at the University of Arizona.

A few days later in Ajo, Arizona, drawing ever closer to his end game, Prentiss visits Doug Peacock, "best known as the inspiration for a character in *MWG*, the foul-mouthed, woman-chasing, beer-guzzling, former Green Beret George Washington Hayduke." It was Peacock who in a 1998 article, "Desert Solitary," published in *Audubon*, provided Prentiss his best clues as to the location of Abbey's grave. Again, however, Prentiss does not ask Peacock for specific information on the location of the gravesite.

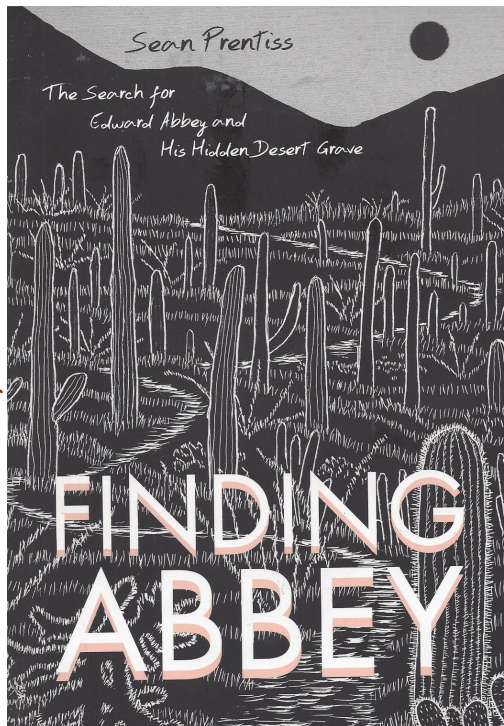
Finally, on October 16 and 17, Prentiss and his long-time friend, Haus, drive into the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Area and begin their search on foot for the rock inscribed "No Comment," under

which Abbey was buried.

Do they find the grave? Does it really matter? Sorry, you'll have to read the book to find out.

In his parallel personal search, however, Prentiss seems to have been successful. At the time of *Finding Abbey's* publication, he no longer lived in flat Michigan, but had moved and was teaching in a college town surrounded by mountains. He had also found and married a woman who, too, had "wandered America...By foot and thumb and the gear shift of a car."

*Finding Abbey* is an exceptionally good read. Give it a shot.

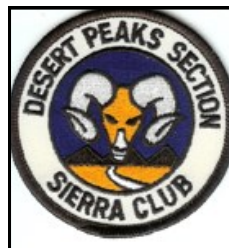
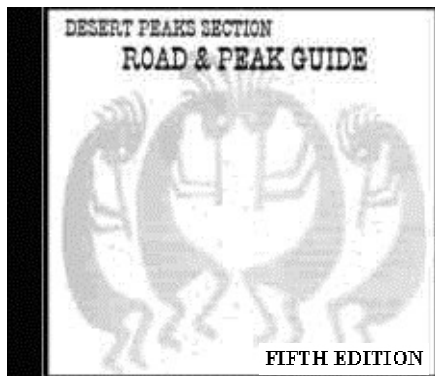


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