

Conservation Connections

Newsletter of Plateau Restoration from Moab, Utah

Fall 2009

Service, Science, Education and Exploration since 1995



Students from NYU, Univ. of Northern Colorado and Central College, IA, carrying water to assist with a revegetation project at Arches National Park

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Record Year for Alternative Break Programs

PRI hosted a record number of colleges and students in the six weeks of various spring breaks from the last week of February through the first week of April. Ten colleges from Maine, New York, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Colorado, Montana, Illinois and California participated in our conservation service-learning programs. A total of 104 students and two professors helped out with various projects around Moab.

Volunteers contributed over 3000 hours to Castle Valley watershed protection,

Arches National Park revegetation and tamarisk control along the Colorado River.

In Castle Valley, we hand dug up invasive Diffuse Knapweed and reseeded areas disturbed by fire. The project's goal is to reduce the threat of herbicide contamination of the aquifer.

For the tamarisk project, we dug and cut this invasive exotic tree below the root-crown, the only way to effectively kill tamarisk without herbicides. This was a very popular activity and students and staff dug up over 2000

trees. These were decade-old trees in a relatively dense stand of young native cottonwoods that are competing for water and at risk of fire from the highly flammable tamarisk.

At Arches, we planted native grasses in the disturbance area near a recently installed foot bridge on the Delicate Arch trail. A group of over 30 of us also carried water two miles to water blackbrush transplanted into a pipeline repair project.

As a reward, students all enjoyed a guided hike in Arches NP or Colorado River trip, depending on weather.



Spring breakers from Alma College, MI transplant grasses into an area disturbed by repairs to the new foot bridge on Delicate Arch trail, Arches NP (left) and remove tamarisk from banks of the Colorado River (right)



Univ. of Maine service-learning students ponder space at Arches National Park.

Seedballs a Part of Castle Valley Revegetation

PRI embarked on a new revegetation strategy this spring, involving seedballs. These are clay balls, impregnated with seed and some compost that are dried and later dispersed and left for the seed to germinate. An activity often employed by environmental educators, we believe the strategy has merit, especially in the desert and in the face of climate change

where rains are intermittent and germination rates slow.

The strategy is that seeds are protected from foraging by birds and mammals until there is enough moisture for germination. As the ball disintegrates with intermittent rains, seeds are buried and unavailable for wildlife in the meantime.

Continued on page 2



2000 seedballs drying

National Forest Foundation Supports Fire Revegetation

A major fire in August 2008 that burned 3600 acres of upper Castle Valley near Moab, prompted us to gain support from National Forest Foundation (NFF) to aid the rehabilitation of the burn area. Over 97% of the burn area is in the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The rest is on Porcupine Ranch and State land.



Skeletons of burned oaks in upper Porcupine Ranch burn area, Castle Valley

Revegetation activities under the grant we received from NFF have included dispersing seed (and seedballs) in the burn area and actively planting a variety of native shrubs and grasses into US Forest land. Additional planting will take place in spring 2010 with help from our university and college spring break service-learning participants. In the meantime, we are staging these shrubs and grasses in our native plant nursery over the winter.

In addition to revegetation, there is concern about diffuse knapweed, a Utah noxious weed that was prevalent at fire-fighting staging areas. PRI staff have surveyed most routes used by fire-fighters and removed hundreds of knapweed plants from the burn area. Thanks also go to PRI members, whose contributions have helped to provide the cash match required by the grant.

Unfortunately, September 2009 saw a major downpour at the upper part of

the burn area that resulted in significant flood damage to residents downstream along Placer Creek. Such debris flows are what the revegetation efforts are supposed to help prevent, along with limiting weed invasion.



Planting shrubs in the Porcupine Ranch Fire burn area.

Science Shorts

Fire Power

People used fire to prepare stone tools, which makes stones easier to flake, as many as 164,000 years ago, according to a new study in Science. That's more than 125,000 years earlier than previous evidence from Europe had placed tool firing. This technique was common in South Africa 72,000 years ago.

Animal Facts

- Humpback whales create the loudest sound of any living creature.
- A dog's sense of smell is 1,000 times stronger than humans.
- Mosquitoes are most attracted to the color blue.
- A woodpecker can peck 20 times per second.
- Dragonflies are one of the fastest insects, flying 50 to 60 mph.

Weather Facts

- Lightning bolts can travel up to 60 miles.
- The chances of being struck by lightning is about one in three million.
- At any given time, on average, there are 1800 thunderstorms occurring on earth with 100 lightning strikes per second.
- Snowflakes falling at 2-4 mph can take about an hour to reach the ground.

Seedballs a Part of Castle Valley Revegetation.....(cont. from p. 1).....

This strategy was used at the Cerro Grande fire near Los Alamos, NM and is also underway on large wildfire areas in California. It is too soon to evaluate results.

Our students made over 20,000 seedballs. This is a bit low compared with rates that involve mass production. The material we used was not pottery clay, but sifted reject sand from the local gravel pit. Having weed-free soil was important to us and it is hard to justify hauling dirt

to Utah!

This was a great filler activity when we just had part of a day and when the weather was bad. Students worked together to perfect techniques and shared good laughs and great discussions. They also got to put the seedballs out in recent burn areas in Castle Valley.

Right: Students from Northwestern University enjoy good conversations while making seedballs.



PRI launches Moab River Rendezvous

In celebration of Plateau Restoration's 15th year of operation, the staff of PRI has created a new event and fund-raiser, the 1st Annual Moab River Rendezvous. But this is much more than just a birthday party, it is a celebration of community, conservation, history, rivers and river running. River Rendezvous events have been held in the past in places like Telluride, or



Boatman rows through Ashley Falls on the Green River, now submerged under Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

by just meeting at a beach in Cataract Canyon on a certain date. But it seems that these have faded over time and this is a new beginning to an old tradition. A time to come together to share stories, learn more about places you love, meet with old friends and make new ones.

The River Rendezvous features some of the Colorado Plateau's best authors, educators and legends of river running (see p. 5). Authors will be available for signings and to share more with registrants throughout the event. A couple of articles by one of the presenters, Herm Hoops is also included in this expanded newsletter.

The Plateau Restoration staff and board of directors would like to thank all our sponsors, supporters and underwriters: The University of Utah, J. Marriot Center, Roy Webb, Red Cliffs Adventure Lodge, Grand Canyon River Guides Association, Northwest



Poster for the warm-up Historic River Film Festival with Roy Webb, Univ. of Utah.

River Supply, Canyon Voyages, River Management Society, Utah Guides and Outfitters, Canyonlands Field Institute, and Outdoor Utah Magazine.

Finally, The Murl Emery Story

by Michael Dean Smith

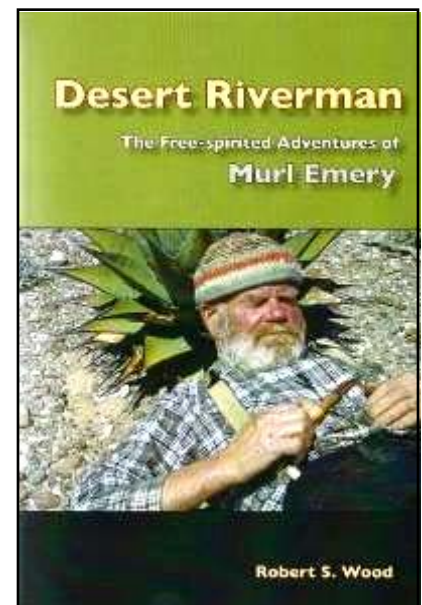
After more than three decades, author Robert Wood has released his wonderful view of the life and times of Murl Emery. Murl was the kind of person that you could not forget. He had worked at numerous occupations from a beaver trapper to cattle rustler, from bootlegger to lead boatman during the construction of Hoover Dam and so much more. Robert felt that Murl had a story that must shared so he began writing back in 1963 but it had just collected dust over the years and was never published. But fate has a way of just happening and this story began its rebirth after a trip down Westwater Canyon.

Robert and his wife Deanne had booked a trip with Canyon Voyages down Westwater while they were staying at the Red Cliffs Lodge just outside of Moab. I still dove into guest guiding from time to time and a trip down Westwater at 6000 cfs. sounded like a hoot. I considered Bob and Deanna to be pleasant, quiet couple I had in the back of the boat. We had been talking along the way through Marble Canyon Rapid and Funnel Falls but as I was

setting up for the pull through Skull that Bob said something that really caught my attention. "So you're setting up to pull across those lateral waves?" I looked back at him and said "So are you a boatman?" He replied "well, I was for a while". We made a nice clean run through Skull and out to the flat water and the stories began to fly. We talked all the way back to Red Cliffs about his amazing travels over the years. We exchanged cards and said our goodbyes but I had a feeling we would meet again. This was one very interesting guy.

The following spring PRI was setting up the spring education seminars for guides and I came across Robert's card and asked if he could come join us as a presenter and show slides of Murl and Glen Canyon from his 1963 trip. He said he was unable to make it but was trusting enough of me to send slides to share with everyone. Roy Webb was in attendance and was very interested in obtaining copies for the J. Willard Marriott Library on the campus of the University of Utah. Roy is the multimedia archivist along with being an author and river historian. So from there, things

just came together as Roy connected with another author and river historian, Brad Dimock and we are now blessed with this outstanding story. I am honored to have Robert at the first Moab River Rendezvous to present his book and slideshow. Nothing seems to beat a good river story!



A History of River Guidebooks on the Colorado River System

By Herm Hoops

Until the 1970's a river trip remained an expedition. Shuttles were long and difficult, river information was hard to obtain, and once you launched there was little help in case of a mishap.

When John Wesley Powell planned his descent of the Green and Colorado Rivers in 1869 he accumulated as much information about the rivers and their surroundings as was possible. That desire for river information continues to this day. Today's river guides contain a wealth of information, from natural and human history to regulations, access and shuttle information, hikes and camps and maps of the river. Some even include drawings of rapids with little lines that indicate how the rapid should be run! Modern guides are in color and come in waterproof editions. Powell had no such luxury, making his maps and notes on onionskin paper with pencil and ink. Although the intent of Powell's maps and information were intended to fill in an unknown section of the country, early river runners found them the only information available to plan their trips. From then until the 1950's Colorado Plateau river maps, guides and information were hard to come by.

By the mid-1970's non-commercial river running began in earnest. Land managing agencies provided simple maps showing major rapids, campsites and basic information. U.S. Geological Survey maps also provided information to river runners, but even at that late date some sections like the Orange Cliffs were only in draft stages. Bureau of Reclamation had detailed maps that included features like river profiles, but a person had to know they were available and ferret them out.

LES JONES SCROLL MAPS

Les Jones, of Heber City, Utah, was an engineer and avid river runner. Jones began running rivers at the age of eleven. He built a kayak, running

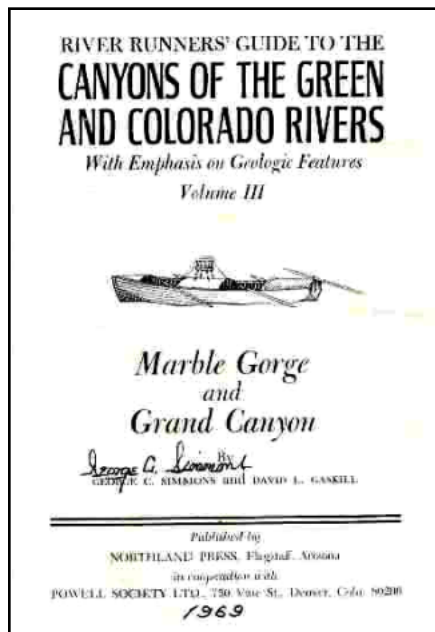
most rivers solo, and taking movies from a camera mounted on a football helmet.

By the early 1950's Les began taping USGS maps together and filling in the missing contours (early USGS maps were usually detailed only to the headwaters of the planned impoundment.). Les began using aerial photos, USGS maps and his own drawings and notes to trace and draw detailed maps on a scroll paper strips 7-10 inches wide. The maps were not waterproof and faded in sunlight, so they had to be protected from water and sunlight. Later his maps were copied onto waterproof mylar. Jones copied a river profile on the map above the river segments, labeling rapids and features on both. The maps contained rapid ratings, drawings of major rapids, Powell and other historic river camps, historic inscriptions and other detailed information. Les' maps were amongst the first to contain conservation messages. His Flaming Gorge/Red Canyon map included the following message: *"Oppose Marble canyon Dam M. Pt. 37 1/2 below Lees Ferry and Bridge Canyon Dam M. Pt. 238 in the Grand Canyon. They cut off river boating forever thru Grand Canyon Park & back reservoir into Grand Canyon Parks. Get Lees Ferry to Lake Meade plus Dinosaur National Monument on the Wild Rivers Bill S1446. WRITE % Mr. Church Wild Rivers Bill House of Congress Washington D.C. The Grand Canyon is the worlds finest Guided White Water Run for ages 8 to 80."*

Jones never advertised his maps; one found out about them through word of mouth. His maps covered just about every river segment on the Colorado Plateau (and other Western rivers) even segments like Flaming Gorge - now damned. Although somewhat inaccurate by today's standards, Les Jones' maps were loving works of art and a boon to river runners seeking information.

THE POWELL SOCIETY GUIDE BOOKS

In the sixties the Powell Society began as a loose organization of river running lawyers, doctors and professionals from Boulder and Denver, Colorado.



In 1967 the U.S. Geological Survey, Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society planned a trip to commemorate the Powell Expedition of 1869. Gene Shoemaker, a famous astronomer, combined his knowledge of geology and river running to re-photograph the pictures taken on Powell's second exploration of the Colorado River in 1871-72. Their work, *"In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell,"* was published in 1987, and began photo matching work continues. The Powell Society of Denver, CO was in the process of writing a series of river geological and historical guidebooks. Members of the Powell Society accompanied the six segments of the trip to gather information for their guidebooks.

The Powell Society guides covered Dinosaur National Monument and Vicinity; Desolation & Gray Canyons;

Continued on next page

Labyrinth, Stillwater and Cataract Canyons; and Marble Gorge & Grand Canyon. These guides authored by well-known geologists covered geological information, historical information and rated the rapids (Colorado River Rating System). Although the river maps were small, one could follow the progress down the river through the detailed descriptions in the booklet. Again, unless one knew about the "Society" the guidebooks were only advertised by Park Service Natural History Associations.

FOUR CORNERS GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY SAN JUAN GUIDE

The Four Corners Geological Society was formed in the 1950's and they conducted geological trips down the San Juan River. In the 1960's Don Baars, a geology professor at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, led many trips down the San Juan and wrote profusely of the region's geology. Baars conducted trips and collaborated with the Nevills' and Kenny Ross in conducting the geological trips.

Although many of Baars' papers were published in the 1960's, it was not until 1974 that the Four Corners Geological Society published a very complete guide to the San Juan. Primarily oriented towards geology, the guide in the image of the Powell Society Guides, also covered river history subjects. Small cairns, no longer present, were placed along the river as keys to the guide.

THE BELKNAP GUIDE BOOKS

Bill Belknap was a well-known photographer of the Grand Canyon, who rubbed elbows with the likes of Buzz Holmstrom, Norm Nevills, Don Harris, Bert Loper, Lois Jotter, Frank Wright, and Doc Marston. Bill was an avid river runner with many notable runs including the jet boat up run-of-the Grand Canyon in 1960.

In the 1950's the Belknap family conceived the idea of producing river guidebooks. Bill, Buzz, Fran and Loie Belknap all played key roles in preparing the guides. Their endeavor evolved into the Belknap family's publishing firm, Westwater Books, and included

guides for Westwater Canyon & Canyonlands National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and Desolation & Gray Canyons. The guides that eventually were published in waterproof editions contained accurate maps, interpretive material covering history, geology, flora and fauna, and many of the Belknap photographs. These guides were the forerunners of today's modern river guides. Still in publication and revised regularly, the Belknap guidebooks still contain some of the best information on rivers for river runners.

MAJOR RIVER RAFTING BOOKS

Until the early 1970's most river books were oriented to canoeing and Eastern Rivers. In 1973 Michael Jenkinson published *Wild Rivers of North America*, a potpourri of river information and history. The book was an important link to sources for Western river rafters. William McGinnis, a graduate student at a California university published a river runner's guidebook in 1975 for his master's thesis project. McGinnis book, *Whitewater Rafting*, was the first major definitive and inclusive compilation of information about Western Rivers.

In 1972 I traveled around the country running rivers to gather information to write a detailed river guide. During my travels I ran a 12' Selway down Lodore and flipped in Disaster Falls. Shaken, I roped my boat down all major rapids in Dinosaur. On that trip I met Bill McGinnis, and shared all of my information with him, much of which he used as the basis for his book. In the meantime I had sent my draft out to many river runners for their review and comment. I received many suggestions, but a disturbing remark from a long time Oregon river runner left its mark on me: "Are you writing this guide because you love the rivers and want to help them, or to feed your ego." After several weeks, hurt and deep in thought about that remark, I burned my manuscript and began looking at rivers and river

running in a different light.

River guidebooks can provide important information to river runners. But river runners should understand that conditions can change rapidly and dramatically, rendering a guide meaningless. While a river guide's basic orientation can be critical, too often river runners allow the guidebook to take away their right to discovery of places and self. As Kenny Ross told me: "Recognize, don't memorize. The river tells you what it is doing and what it's about to do." In these days of store-bought river runners and agency bought information, there is no feeling comparable to making one's own discovery. To learn to scan for anomalies that contain miracles and nonsense along the river is to begin to understand our place in these beautiful and fragile canyons. A river guide does not take you down the river - you must do that.

References:

Herm Hoops personal interviews with: Les Jones (1972); Dr. Roger Toll, Powell Society (1982, 1986); Kenny Ross (1986); Laurie Belknap Evans (1986); Personal correspondence; William McGinnis (1973-74) "*Boatman's Quarterly Review*"; Grand Canyon River Guides, Vol.14 #2, (2001); *Whitewater Rafting*; William McGinnis (1975) *Wild Rivers of North America*; E.P. Dutton, Michael Jenkinson (1973); Les Jones Scroll Maps; Powell Society River Guide Books; Four Corners San Juan River Guide; Belknap River Guidebooks.

River Rendezvous Presentations:

Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau - **Wayne Ranney**

The River Knows Everything - **James Aton, Ph.D**

Desert Riverman- **Robert Wood**

History of River Maps- **Herm Hoops**

Geology Field Interpretation - **Tamsin McCormick, Ph.D**

Legend of Warm Springs Rapid- **Roy Webb**

Tamarisk BioControl - **Wright Robinson**

The Challenge of Watershed Restoration for the Colorado River - **Jack Schmidt, Ph.D**

The Powell Society

By Herm Hoops

The Powell Society was an interesting assemblage of kindred souls: geologists, doctors, lawyers and professionals from Boulder and Denver, Colorado. The Society, as a collection of free spirits, had never taken life too seriously, but one day, relaxing in the shade by the river bank below Powell Point, Dave Gaskill suggested that the Powell Society “get serious.” He and George Simmons proposed a geological log and river guide of the entire Colorado River from Green River to Lake Meade. At that time the best map and information was from the river survey.

They selected the name “Powell Society” on their application to participate in the Bureau of Reclamation’s 1958 river trip to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of John Wesley Powell’s passing through the site of Flaming Gorge Dam.

The commemoration was the idea of well-known Denver attorney Jerry Hart. The trip wouldn’t be able to be conducted on the 100th Anniversary because of the dam construction at Flaming Gorge. The trip was probably the last transit of Flaming Gorge before the coffer dam materials, piled along the sides of the river canyon, were pushed together to close the channel. Ten years later, again to the date of the occurrence, The Society marked the 100th Anniversary of the parting at Separation Rapid in the Grand Canyon.

Society members George Simmons and Dave Gaskill became aware of Gene Shoemaker’s plan to repeat Powell’s trip of 1868 and replicate all of Hiller’s photographs of the Powell trip. The U.S.G.S., Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society planned to sponsor the trip. Gene Shoemaker was a famous astronomer who combined his knowledge of geology and river running. (The publication “In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell,” was published in 1987, and began photo matching work that continues.)

Simmons and Gaskill proposed to

Gene that they combine the trip and create geological river logs for six segments of the Colorado River. The Society’s proposal was accepted and Gene Shoemaker, Dave Gaskill, Phil Hayes and Felix Mutschler spent the entire summer running the Colorado River in 10-man rafts from Green River to Lake Mead. Several other members of the Powell Society joined in various segments of the trip.

U.S.G.S. funds were originally budgeted to publish the comparison photographs as a professional paper. Ultimately the money budgeted was not available and the Powell Society, working with Johnson Press of Boulder participated in the publishing of the book “In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell.” In the meantime the Society published their river logs:

- Dinosaur National Monument and Vicinity by Hayes and Simmons
- Desolation and Grey Canyons by Mutschler
- Labyrinth, Stillwater and Cataract Canyons by Mutschler
- Marble and Grand Canyon by Simmons and Gaskill
- Yampa Supplement

The Yampa supplement was eventually incorporated into the Dinosaur publication. Most of these river guides are out of print. Mackay Marine and Outdoor Supply of Murray, Utah have recently republished the Desolation and Grey Volume.

Although the river maps are small, one can follow the progress down the river through detailed descriptions. The guides locate and rate all of the rapids, rating them on the 1 to 10 Colorado River Rating System. Thus the ratings are open to some individual interpretation, but they

provide historic insight on the old silt-laden Colorado and the present day river.

The authors, now retired, are well-known geologists. David Gaskill lives west of Denver, Colorado. George Simmons, who, since his retirement from the U.S.G.S., has served as a N.P.S. volunteer in Big Bend, Canyonlands (Cataract), Yellowstone, Bryce Canyon and the Uinta National Forest. Felix Mutschler, recently deceased, was a Professor of Geology at Eastern Washington University. Phil Hayes lives near Grand Junction, Colorado. Non-geologists who have contributed to the work of The Powell Society include Parkman T. Brooks of Ketchum, ID; Bob Gaskill of Winona, KS; Dr. George Ogura of Denver, CO; Marvis Ogura who organized the lecture programs, and Dr. Henry W. Toll Jr. who is today’s contact with this “interesting assemblage of free spirits!”

References:

- Personal interview with Dr. Henry W. Toll Jr., Powell Society; 1982;
- Letter to Herm Hoops from Dr. Henry W. Toll Jr., Powell Society 1986
- Powell Society River Guide Books



Can we still go boating? First week of April, 2009

The Fun Never Ends.....

Who's the Sucker?



Liberty from Central College, IA celebrates her eighteenth birthday with a dutch oven cake made by PRI river guide an chef extraordinaire, Mark Ludwig.



University of Montana students taking a break from tamarisk removal



PRI's Tamsin gets an opportunity to hold a very rare razorback sucker, about to be re-released after being caught, measured and tagged on the Colorado River by fish biologists from the Endangered Fish Recovery Program.

The leadership was amazing! A perfect balance of leading, learning and allowing us to lead ourselves.
Mellisa, Alma College

Recycling Trivia

- The average person in the U.S. produces about 6.5lbs of trash everyday.
- Every ton of recycled office paper saves approximately 380 gallons of oil.
- The energy saved from recycling an aluminum can operate a television for 3 hours.
- Every 3 months, Americans throw away enough aluminum to rebuild the nation's commercial air fleet.

Kangaroo Rats

Genus Dipodomys

Kangaroo rats have the ability to convert the dry seeds they eat into water. They neither sweat nor pant to keep cool like other animals. Kangaroo rats have specialized kidneys which allow them to dispose of waste materials with very little output of water. They are solitary animals with a home range of less than on half acre. There are 22 species of Kangaroo Rats in North America

Source: Desertsusa

Summer Intern Enhances Our Knowledge

Alisa Dean joined us for three weeks as an intern this summer. Alisa was the student leader for the alternative break group from Alma College, MI that was in Moab in February. Being accomplished at building websites and social media, she brought PRI up-to-date with Facebook and developed several websites, including one for the Moab River Rendezvous.

Taking few breaks from the computer, Alisa also helped with some

valuable repotting of plants in our native nursery and seeding and weed monitoring in Castle Valley.

Alisa also enjoyed a couple of river trips: a "Geo on the Rio" Colorado River daily and an three-day inflatable kayak trip on the Colorado below Loma, CO with PRI staff and Board members Michael, Tamsin and Leif. About her adventures, Alisa said "I appreciate that you let me become part of your world for a few weeks." She is still part of our world!



Alisa at home in an inflatable kayak

Healing Visitor Impacts at Arches NP

Following relocation of toilets at the Delicate Arch trailhead, Arches NP, PRI assisted the Park Service with rehabilitation of the old toilet site and social trails this Fall. PRI Board member, Brad Jones who lives in Tennessee came to Moab and helped with initial planting.

About two hundred grasses, wildflowers and shrubs have already been planted, all of which were collected from within fifty miles of the park. Fall is usually a great time to plant, although particularly dry weather this year has required

us to hand water the transplants on a weekly basis.

Numerous visitors stopped to talk to us about the project, including professional horticulturalists and landscapers from around the country, regional residents seeking to learn more about native plants and international visitors wanting to understand more about revegetation challenges in the desert.

More work in the area is planned for next spring when student volunteers will help with additional planting and weeding.



Social trail (L) at Delicate Arch trailhead disappears with replanting (R)

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PRI contributes an information booth on soil and water protection and enhancing biodiversity at the Moab Sustainability Conference in October

Plateau Restoration, Inc.

A 501(c) (3) tax exempt non profit organization

Mission

To protect and restore native habitats of the Colorado Plateau through hands on education, landscape restoration, revegetation and research.

To learn more about Plateau Restoration or to join or donate, please visit our website www.plateaurestoration.org, or contact us:

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Indian Ricegrass collected for a revegetation project