

GRAND CANYON TRUST COLORADO PLATEAU

FALL/WINTER 2021

Advocate

THE HEALING ISSUE

ROCK MEDICINE
IN HAVASU CANYON

PLUS

A Community Farm That Grows More Than Just Food
Developer Surrenders Little Colorado River Dam Permits
How to Turn Your Backyard into Habitat



Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ETHAN AUMACK

Mending broken bones. Replacing knocked-out teeth. Stitching back together torn skin. In my younger years, I tested my mettle playing frivolous games and exploring wild places. And did so with enough devotion that I came to appreciate the healing process in a personal, visceral, and sometimes painful way. As I chose a life path in conservation, my sense of a need for healing, and my role in that healing process, broadened considerably. Aldo Leopold’s admonition quickly came to the fore—that I amongst so many others would be working “alone in a world of wounds.”

Conservation and environmental justice work, by its very nature, is healing work. With policy and law, shovel and drip torch, placards and ballots as its instruments, this work aims to stitch back together and, in many cases, stitch anew a world that is vibrant, diverse, equitable, and just.

This last year felt to me, and I believe to many of us, like the world was tearing apart. A global pandemic, divisiveness and division amongst friends, families, and communities, climate catastrophes, the painful but necessary quest for justice. This was a year of consequence, and it wasn’t an easy one. Emerging out of conversations among our staff, we decided it was timely to bring forward key elements of our work that are hopeful, restorative, and, in many ways, redemptive.

In this issue of the Advocate, we update you on our work to restore Bears Ears National Monument, a cultural landscape that has been, since time immemorial, and will be, for generations to come, a place for healing. We survey the scars wrought by uranium mining near the Grand Canyon, and describe the work that will immunize the Grand Canyon from further mining, dam construction, and other ill-founded ideas into the future. We explore the path toward sustenance and community health through the lens of food sovereignty. And we present the medicant of hope in stories of a new generation of curious, committed, passionate advocates.

Exploring the idea of reciprocity, Robin Wall Kimmerer suggests that “as we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us.” We can’t thank you enough for partaking in the struggle and appreciating the gift that is our collective work to heal the Colorado Plateau.

Sincerely,

Ethan Aumack

OUR MISSION

To safeguard the wonders of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, while supporting the rights of its Native peoples.

ON THE COVER

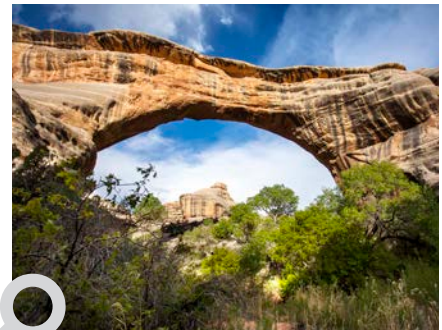
Havasu Creek, on the Havasupai Reservation, is one of the largest tributaries of the Colorado River within the Grand Canyon. ED MOSS

EDITOR’S NOTE

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Name That Place QUIZ



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, JACOB W. FRANK

Do you recognize this bridge?

Hint

It’s in Utah’s first national monument.
Find the answer on page 31.

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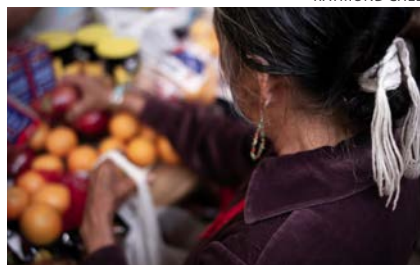


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Watching the Water

THE KERLEY VALLEY COMMUNITY FARM
NURTURES MORE THAN JUST FOOD

By Alicia Tsosie





The Kerley Valley Community Farm sits just outside of Tuba City, close to the Moenkopi Wash, near where the Navajo Nation and Hopi Reservation meet. When our fields are planted, the valley itself is a ribbon of green surrounded by tall red cliffs. The valley soil is rich from many years of sediment carried by runoff from storms, and it is carefully and patiently tended. It's here, in the bright heat of this high desert, that we coax our traditional corn from the earth.

Our community farm is made up of eight families that are a mix of Navajo and Hopi. We use low-water farming techniques, such as flood irrigation, and heirloom seeds that have been bred to be drought resistant and heat tolerant. Our farming is natural; we don't use any pesticides or herbicides. These traditional farming practices have sustained our people for centuries and are a form of cultural knowledge that has been passed down through generations, from mother to daughter and father to son. In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic proved just how important traditional agriculture can be when it comes to resiliency and food security in our communities.

When news broke of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation, our community of farmers immediately thought about how this would affect our growing season. The majority of the families

Providing food for yourself and your community is healing and very powerful.

that farm within Kerley Valley only have one or two people who can devote most of their time to planting and tending to their plots. Low-water farming requires knowledge but also patience, and, above all, time. Some families had elders who were worried if they helped with digging the ditch line to run irrigation water or “watching the water,” they could potentially be exposed to the virus. But like everything else we do at the farm, we met this challenge and took care of it together.

Between our eight families, our community farming group was able to clear the ditch line for everyone to use to irrigate their fields. The Moenkopi

Wash is fed by the large aquifer system that it sits on. The wash used to flow year-round. Hopi elders remember a time when they could visit the stream and it was full of life. Now, with climate change, and likely because the aquifer has been depleted by a coal mine, the stream only flows from early March or April until late June. Outside of this small window, you can walk across the stream without getting wet.

Before farmers can irrigate their fields, we must clear out the main diversion dam where we divert water from the wash into the main ditch line. Once water is released into the ditch line—a trench that uses gravity to move water—someone must watch it. Our main ditch line runs past our farmers' fields; some parts are lined with old sandstone rocks while some are lined with concrete. Many farmers have dug earthen ditches from the main line, which feed into their plots.



LEFT: The author standing in the ditch line at Kerley Valley Community Farm. The line has to be frequently weeded to allow water to flow. BELOW: Kerley Valley farmer Jeff Manygoats tends melons, beans, and corn with his son. PHOTOS BY DEIDRA PEACHES

To show not only the nation
but the world that we as
Diné people are still here,
practicing our traditional way
of life, growing corn, is a true
testament to being resilient.

Watching the water while you irrigate your fields—making sure it is flowing correctly and not backing up or spilling, which often means walking up and down the ditch in the hot sun with a hoe or a shovel for hours—is very taxing. Even so, we couldn't help but think how fortunate we were, and are, to still grow corn. One memory I have about irrigating is when we were sitting down talking about how excited we were for the upcoming planting season. I stood up to scan the plots and our entire road was covered in water. We found the culprit: a gopher hole. These can turn into catastrophic problems if you can't find where the water is coming out. With such little water to use to irrigate, it can take the wind out of your sails when you see your water break over the ditch line or flow into an area that's not a farming plot.

Even as the pandemic brought so many businesses and industries to a halt across the world, disrupting supply chains and leaving supermarket shelves bare, our community of farmers kept planting, weeding, and watering our fields. Through farming, we provide not only sustenance for our families but traditional things such as corn pollen to pray with. Corn is very sacred not only to the Southwestern tribes, but also to many Indigenous people across the globe. One of the first foods that babies eat is corn, and Navajos use many different varieties of corn to pray with and conduct ceremonies. When a girl first reaches womanhood, she grinds corn to bake a cake underground. That cake is shared with her family and sometimes an entire community. This strong sense of community is part of our culture and infused in our farm as well.



The community farm was initially started by the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health and was transferred to the Grand Canyon Trust around 2016. We've had numerous families and young people visit and spend time here to learn how to farm from two master farmers in the area. Everyone's growing abilities are different. We have some farmers who have grown food most of their lives and some who are only a few years in. Thankfully, we can learn from one another and build up our capacities, sharing that knowledge with others who want to learn.

Trying times during the COVID-19 pandemic, including curfews and stay-at-home orders in areas where the nearest grocery store might be hours away, made it starkly apparent that we must depend not only on our direct family units but our community. The

entire Navajo Nation was on lockdown, and we could only leave our homes to work if we were essential workers or to purchase much needed supplies. But we were able to band together and tend not only to our own individual plots but to those of our neighbors, especially if they had family members who were immunocompromised. The resiliency of our community farm and of farmers in general was powerful. You could sense that the crops we planted knew we were depending on them. My melons and corn were abundant. I had enough to share with my family, my coworkers, and my community. Providing food for yourself and your community is powerful and healing.

Even now, when we are in the middle of our growing season, to see our fields along the highway brings inner peace and tranquility. To see

the fruits of our labor in the middle of the pandemic is breathtaking. To show not only the nation but the world that we as Diné people are still here, practicing our traditional way of life, growing corn, is a true testament to being resilient. I thank not only the Creator but the Holy People that I'm still able to practice my traditional agriculture. When you tend to your plants you must have a positive frame of mind. While I am in my field, I can't help but think about how far we have come as a community and as a nation. This pandemic is far from over, but if we can come together, pray to the Creator using corn pollen, and maintain that balance, we can make a better place for the next generation.

Alicia Tsosie serves as Native America coordinator for the Grand Canyon Trust.





Beaver Falls, Havasu Creek. MIKE POPEJOY

ROCK MEDICINE

Working toward
healing from
the trauma of
uranium mining

By Ophelia Watahomigie-Corliss



The author standing before the sacred mountain, Red Butte, not far from the site of Canyon uranium mine. DEIDRA PEACHES

A permanent ban on uranium mining near the Grand Canyon has been proposed through the Grand Canyon Protection Act. This would mean enacting a law that no new uranium mining claims could ever be made or developed on about 1 million acres near the Grand Canyon. But what would something like this mean for me, and the rest of the Havasupai Tribe?

The complexities for people, especially those who live with traumas resulting from settler colonialism, are so vast there would be no way to summarize a single correct answer representing the Havasupai as a whole. When a tribal member is speaking from the heart, differing opinions always exist amongst the people in the conversation, and all opinions matter. I speak for myself only.

As with the many issues I faced while working as a Havasupai Tribal Council member, and the many issues I have faced in my life, I choose to focus on what the benefits could be when it comes to a permanent ban on uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region. First, future generations would

never have to worry about additional mining threats to the Havasupai's only water source, Havasu Creek, thus allowing the Havasupai Tribe to focus on Canyon uranium mine (recently renamed "Pinyon Plain Mine"). Identifying that mine as the largest threat to our community would be comforting and empowering, and help us better understand where our resources need to go. Instead, since the inception of Canyon Mine near our sacred mountain, Red Butte, new mining claims could pop up at any time that would directly affect our lives on the Havasupai Reservation and endanger the permanent residents of Supai Village. That constant threat makes it difficult to focus.

To end all uranium mining in the greater Grand Canyon region is to end the threat against hundreds of lives, the lives of Havasupai people who still reside at the bottom of Havasu Canyon at this very moment. Our aquifer is large and vast; this is the source from which our people drink water that travels through the earth from all over Coconino County and discharges into Havasu Creek. Catastrophic events that threaten water on the Colorado Plateau, such as uranium contamination, threaten our only water source, which has given us the ability to farm, raise animals, and build our lives in the Grand Canyon both historically and currently. We must protect the Havasupai people so that we may continue to live in our canyon home. The water is currently safe for all life to use; this is the way it has been since the dawn of our people.

However, since the U.S. Forest Service first approved the permit that allowed what was then known as Canyon Mine to move forward in 1986, we have been living with the fear of our only water source being contaminated. The mining ban established in 2012 is valid for only 20 years. This ban gave the tribe some relief and a temporary reprieve from looming threats which could spread the tribe's resources too thin. The Grand Canyon Protection Act, introduced and passed in the U.S. House this year, would give permanent comfort that no future uranium threats would ever appear. We may be a small tribe, but that has never stopped the people or the Havasupai Tribal Council from pursuing the fight against uranium mining on our aboriginal lands. Even when it means fighting a multimillion-dollar corporation, even if it means we will surely lose, we know that protecting our people and our future is the only way forward.

Water is everything to us. While it is considered a commodity in many communities, we do not charge people for their water consumption because its importance is far greater than money. Water is life.

The passage of this law is paramount for the future of the Havasupai and is one of many measures that could help facilitate some healing for our people. It would allow us to redirect our focus to current threats and alleviate our fears of future uranium mining. It has always been important for Supais to live in the moment, as culturally we are taught to never look back or live in the past. This law would generate peace of mind by allowing us freedom from the opposite problem—looking ahead at the looming threats of the future—and focus instead on other pressing issues. This in turn would help us to build the strength of our people and implement the education needed to defeat Canyon Mine.

When you look at government structures across the United States, you see a separation perpetuated among people, services, and social programming. When you look at a tribal government and its programming, however, there is a vast difference in the disbursement of wealth and services. Yes, many aspects are the same such as food assistance, social services, and even programs like Medicaid and food stamps, but the difference lies in what the tribal

government does for the community as a whole. It is therefore impossible to ignore the importance of resources, namely, our water supply. Water is the lifeline of the Havasupai community; it grows our crops, provides for domestic animals and wildlife, raises our children, sustains our elders, and strengthens our community to complete daily tasks. Water is everything to us. While it is considered a commodity in many communities, we do not charge people for their water consumption because its importance is far greater than money. Water is life.

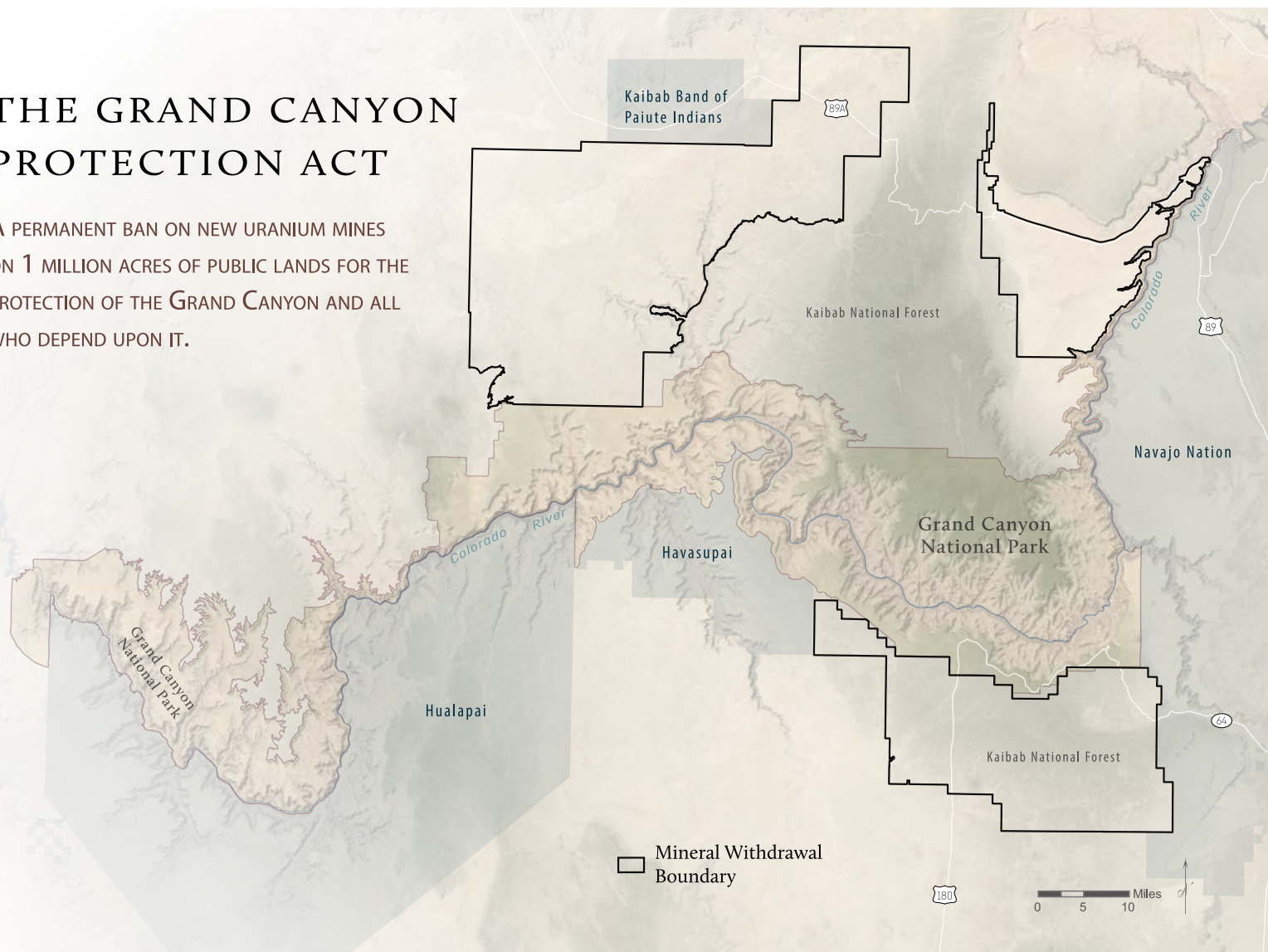
Outsiders would seek to monetize the distribution of such a resource and profit from the people who so deeply depend on it. But this is not how the Havasupai tribal government has ever chosen to view its people, and I hope this never changes. Perpetually providing what are categorized as “commodities” to their people for free is one thing that truly separates tribal communities from capitalist motivations, and this demonstrates a genuine concern for the welfare of all people; this is true community.

The village of Supai and the Havasupai people are truly one of a kind, living at the bottom of the Grand Canyon since time immemorial, adapting to the outside world to the best of our abilities, surviving settler colonialism and all the unfathomable terror our ancestors could never have dreamed of and yet had to endure. The “people of the blue-green water,” Havasu “Baaja, do not want to leave our home because uranium contamination decimated our entire water supply! In the grand scheme of obstacles we face today, this is the largest prevailing issue that would affect our entire lives and our future.

Now that the Grand Canyon Protection Act has passed the House, senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark

THE GRAND CANYON PROTECTION ACT

A PERMANENT BAN ON NEW URANIUM MINES ON 1 MILLION ACRES OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE GRAND CANYON AND ALL WHO DEPEND UPON IT.



The 2012 Northern Arizona Mineral Withdrawal banned new mining claims on about 1 million acres of public lands for a period of 20 years. The Grand Canyon Protection Act would make that temporary ban permanent.

During my first year living permanently in Supai, every day that I woke up, the canyon walls were waiting for me when I stepped outside; we experience this as "rock medicine" that protects the Havasupai people.

Kelly have introduced a version into the Senate, and this is where the bill sits as I write this in August 2021. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee still needs to schedule a hearing before the bill can move to the Senate floor for voting.

As a Havasupai woman, this ban on future uranium mining claims becoming law means an opportunity

to have hope for the future of the Havasupai people, and for my daughter: that our people will continue to adapt and find a way to eliminate this threat to the future, our future, her future. During my first year living permanently in Supai, every day that I woke up, the canyon walls were waiting for me when I stepped outside; we experience this as "rock medicine" that

We need to activate our power
from a place of confidence that
there will be a Grand Canyon
left for us to protect, and a
community left for us to fortify.

protects the Havasupai people. One day these walls started asking me, “Ophelia, who is going to continue the good fight, who is going to continue to fight for the people when you are gone?” Their questions flooded my mind for weeks until I realized the answer would be my future child, or children. Something different awoke inside of me, something I had never experienced before, an internal will for a child and for the future. And what future does a child have, if not a home in which to learn and grow?

If my daughter should choose to advocate for the Havasupai people, it is a tough job. The “ethics” that have traditionally run the U.S. are riddled with institutionalized discrimination, which is only beginning to be recognized. Structural racism in our colleges, our museums, and our tribes has worked its great destruction into multiple aspects of all our lives, such that it is hard to distinguish racism from normalcy at times. A law preventing future uranium mining claims would allow that next generation of leaders to focus on the issues at hand, because the issues at hand require a lot of time, attention, work, and dedication to solve. Policy, healthcare, education, land rights, water rights, social justice, and human rights are just some of the broader issues that

need our attention. We need to activate our power from a place of confidence that there will be a Grand Canyon left for us to protect, and a community left for us to fortify.

I learned about a decade ago that my pursuit to change the world was too large an endeavor for one person alone. For a short while, I felt jaded, upset that school had tried to convince me to change the world. But over time, this allowed me to become more open and less self-centered. I was only one person. I had to face that my efforts alone would be swallowed whole, and maybe no one would know I had ever existed. But I am learning that a team, many of us, with the same goal and expertise in many different areas, can make a regional difference for the land that I know, love, and live on. And regional change can affect a lot of lives. This change to my mindset would turn out to be the right decision for my future. I have found that the “Red Road”—the struggle by Indigenous peoples to protect our sacred lands—never ends.

I have held onto one thing when it feels like I am drowning: if I can gain just one inch of success in fending off new uranium mines, it is one more inch I have gained for my ancestors who were in this same position and





gained ground for me to be here and fight the good fight. Just one inch of success is one more inch my daughter and her generation will have when they take the reins and keep pushing this fight forward. Something gained is better than nothing gained and being present is more powerful than cowering away. We must continue to push forward and gain as much ground as possible. We owe it to our ancestors, and we owe it to the future of our people, all of our people.

You, the people who live on the homelands of the Havasupai people, in Tusayan, Flagstaff, Williams, Ash Fork, Seligman, and all the homesteads in-between. You, the people who visit Grand Canyon National Park, land that was taken away from the Havasupai to create the park. You, the people who gaze down at Indian Garden (soon to have its name changed to “Havasupai Garden” and its traditional name, Ha’a Gyoh, restored in the coming future), farmed by Billy Burro, whose descendants are the family members of the great Rex Tilousi of the Havasupai. Alongside us, the villagers, it is you, the people, who must reach out and request that our senators push for a hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. You must join the fight to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act into law, for the future of all people, and to protect the Havasupai people and the only home we have left.

Ophelia Watahomigie-Corliss is a former member of the Havasupai Tribal Council. She holds two bachelor's degrees from the school of communications at Northern Arizona University and is expecting her first child, a daughter, at the end of 2021.

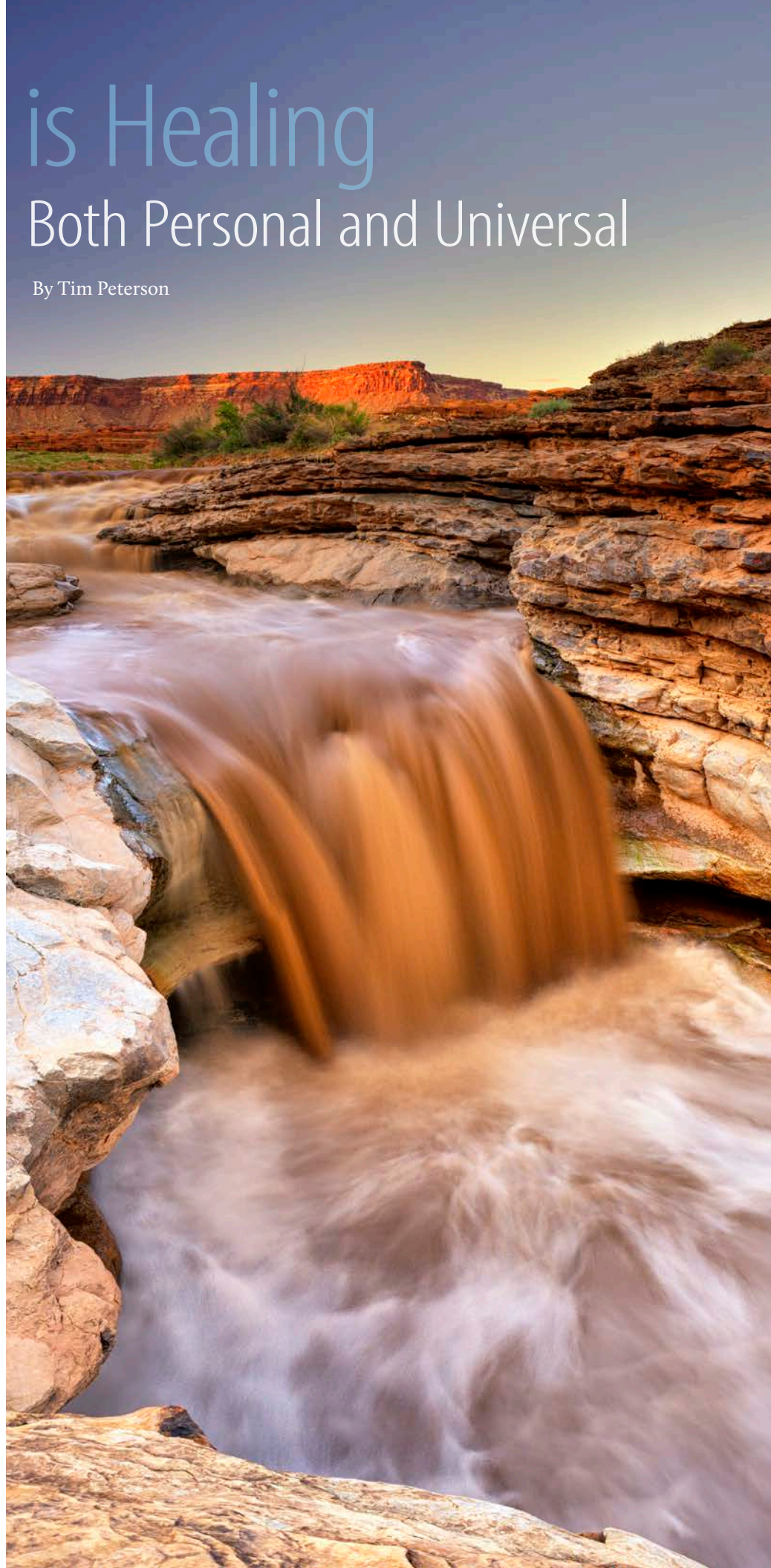
Bears Ears is Healing

Both Personal and Universal

By Tim Peterson

Bears Ears National Monument is about so much more than just protection of what we now call “public lands.” From the very beginning, the Bears Ears movement has been built around healing. Healing and unity among tribes with histories of conflict, healing between settlers and Indigenous peoples, and healing for a cultural landscape beset by more than 100 years of careless resource exploitation, looting, and grave robbing.

From cleaning up the toxic legacy of Cold War uranium mining to dealing with the effects of overgrazing and irresponsible off-roading, there is plenty of work to be done healing the land at Bears Ears. We must also teach a new ethic of visitation, one that instills respect and reverence for place. These things will take a long time, so the healing I would like to touch on here is more personal, but also universal. The ideas here are centered on how the Earth can heal us.



WHY DO I SEEK HEALING AT BEARS EARS?

Part of it may be because of either the cruelty or complicity of my ancestors in their actions toward Indigenous people. Springing from both Mayflower and Latter-day Saint lineage, I know my ancestors' names and their history; I have the receipts. The healing I seek is a desire for accountability, and it's a recognition of the intergenerational trauma that my ancestors wrought and that I have benefited from.

Perhaps I also seek healing because of the disconnection I have been trained to feel between myself and nature. To heal I must erase that duality. Many of us with a Western mindset have even tried to commodify the benefits of healing through nature, but there is so much more happening at Bears Ears than just getting outdoors for physical fitness.

Healing for me in Bears Ears has been about recovery from my own Western mindset—how I view conservation work, how I view “wilderness” (“where man is a visitor and does not remain,” as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964), and how I view my own relationship with the land. The modes of ownership and domination present in my thinking have colored my perspective on everything, from how we destroy to how we begin to heal.

HEALING COMES IN MANY FORMS AND ENDURES IN MANY WAYS OF KNOWING.

Healing to me might mean something very different than what it means to a Hopi person, a Zuni person, a Diné (Navajo), or a Ute person. What might healing mean in a larger context, as reflected by the Bears Ears movement?

How we relate to the land can shape how we heal. Part of how I relate to Bears Ears is through language—English, in my case. Tiokasin Ghosthorse (Cheyenne River Lakota),



host of First Voices Radio, gives us insight into how something as fundamental as language might help with understanding healing at places like Bears Ears.

Tiokasin says that in environmentalism “...a language of relationship with nature is missing—a language of abundance, gratitude.” Contrasting with the languages used by European descendants like me, Indigenous languages often include no possessives, no ownership, and no human domination over plants, animals, waters, or other elements of the natural world, of which humans are a part. Ghosthorse says that “...we always have faith in the Earth, with the Earth, because that's where our language comes from. The Earth doesn't lie, so therefore our languages do not lie.”

The Grand Canyon Trust's board chair, Zuni farmer, and all-around polymath, Jim Enote, localizes this idea saying, “We are of this place. Our language sounds like the way a rock tumbles down a mesa, and our language sounds like the way a rock sounds when you drop it in mud.”

HEALING FOR THE LAND AND HEALING OURSELVES FROM THE LAND

might become more meaningful if we work to untrain ourselves from Western concepts of duality and domination. Once we do that, we can listen to and learn from the Earth in different ways. In fact, we might recognize that the Earth is listening to us, and her responses to what we've done might just be the ultimate reflection on what we should do next.

“Human Beings do not make sacred places, they acknowledge them, recognize them, and sustain them without developing them. We honor them with languages taught to us by the Earth herself. The Original Nations of the Western Hemisphere understand sacred places...” says Ghosthorse.

Scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Lakota) echoed this idea in his influential work, “God is Red,” saying that “Unless the sacred places are discovered and protected and used as religious places, there is no possibility of a nation ever coming to grips with the land itself.”

I will never know how to speak and think in an Indigenous language, but opening myself up to understanding the differences in how a place is perceived is a step toward a greater awareness of the healing power of Bears Ears.

ANOTHER WAY TO UNDERSTAND BEARS EARS IS AS PART OF A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.

This means that the place is not just a collection of isolated rock art panels, cliff dwellings, and village sites, but that all those sites work together with the landforms and water sources to form a whole much greater than the sum of its parts.

“There are many things that archaeologists and others see as a big mystery. What I feel is kind of a sense of enlightenment really, it isn't a mystery,” says Jim Enote. “I look at some things and I see that's why I am the way I am, because of these things that my ancestors left on the walls, that they left in places near springs, along the rivers. Those were left for me and future generations.”

The 2018 book, “Footprints of Hopi History,” discusses how cultural knowledge keepers can identify relationships between contemporary and ancestral habitation sites by scanning

RESTORATION OF BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT



the horizon for landforms and pooling their knowledge of mental maps. These maps are not space-based, but place-based in a network of relationships among landforms. A place is seen as a “living theater” that “draws the powers of life into the center from the periphery,” and the center shifts with migration. These relational places are present all over Bears Ears, and that is why protecting just a village site here and a petroglyph panel there (or cutting a monument down to 15 percent of its original size) is so disrespectful to the descendants of the people who made them. This kind of knowledge of interrelated places has not yet been fully explored, and restoring and expanding Bears Ears creates the space necessary for those who know how to examine those places together. That kind of relationship with Bears Ears, for some, is healing.

Another relational view of Bears Ears comes from the Diné perspective of Utah Diné Bikéyah spiritual advisor Jonah Yellowman. Yellowman shares that the east and west Bears Ears Buttes are the dividing line between the female Colorado River and the male San Juan River. This distinction genders plants found there too, and particular plants must be gathered for specific ceremonies. Certain ceremonies mention landforms in Bears Ears. That’s direct and discrete healing. “That’s going to cure us. That’s going to cure everybody,” says Yellowman.

BEARS EARS CONTAINS MULTITUDES. These are just a few examples; there are many more. Some are private; some can be shared. One promise of healing at Bears Ears is learning through intercultural sharing across many different traditions and cosmologies broadly referred to as “Indigenous traditional knowledge.” This expertise

was recognized in President Obama’s 2016 proclamation establishing Bears Ears National Monument.

“Such knowledge is, itself, a resource to be protected and used in understanding and managing this landscape sustainably for generations to come,” reads President Obama’s proclamation. He also recognized that Bears Ears is more than just an outdoor museum or dusty history. “The area’s cultural importance to Native American tribes continues to this day. As they have for generations, these tribes and their members come here for ceremonies and to visit sacred sites. Throughout the region, many landscape features, such as Comb Ridge, the San Juan River, and Cedar Mesa, are closely tied to Native stories of creation, danger, protection, and healing,” the proclamation explains.

Again, Jim Enote says it well: “All tribes in the region have a relationship with this place. We’ve been there and we’re still here, we’re still part of shaping the future of the Colorado Plateau... But it’s also part of the history of the peoples of the United States and the world; it is part of the human experience. It belongs to all of us. I believe that tribal peoples of this region shouldn’t be the only ones to take responsibility for protecting the cultural resources.”

Bears Ears is a way to knit new relationships across cultures. Bears Ears is also part of a larger global movement toward restorative justice. In some ways, it starts here, but it cannot end here.

Non-Native people like me should assess how we might fit into this movement. How might we pay long-overdue respect to Indigenous traditional knowledge systems that cannot be contained within Western science? How might we use whatever tools we have to break down institutional



Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, former head councilwoman of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and former co-chair of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, addresses Bears Ears supporters during the Red Road to DC Totem Pole Journey for the Protection of Sacred Lands stop near Bears Ears on July 17, 2021. TIM PETERSON

barriers to equity and justice? We must return authority for management of ancestral lands to those whose cultures have been shaped on what are now called “public lands” beyond Bears Ears. We can take the structure built for the collaborative management of Bears Ears between tribes and the federal land managers, make it stronger, and apply it wherever Native nations desire to do so. If done correctly, the healing potential sparked at Bears Ears is limitless.

Tim Peterson serves as Cultural Landscapes director for the Grand Canyon Trust.

LeaderShift

Training a new generation of advocates

By Amber Benally

Close your eyes and imagine a world where environmental justice has been achieved. What does it look like?

It's a world where communities are food secure and have access to wholesome food. A society that respects the dignity of all living beings and natural systems. A place where water and housing are equitably distributed and accessible.

These are three of the hundreds of dreams that young people (ages 15-30) hope to see in the future. Each summer, the Grand Canyon Trust's Rising Leaders Program selects a cohort of young environmental advocates for LeaderShift—an immersive 12-day environmental advocacy training course.

For the last two years, the LeaderShift curriculum has focused on identifying and training young people on the principles and strategies Navajo and Hopi communities are employing to shape a “just transition” from climate-polluting forms of energy to a more regenerative economy that aligns with their cultural values. LeaderShift participants commit to learning action-based strategies to create social and environmental change in their own communities. Since its creation in 2019, LeaderShift has attracted a wide range of young advocates, including seasoned activists as well as those who are taking their first steps into environmental advocacy.

Meet the Rising Leaders of 2021



The front page of a newspaper Danielle created for her final LeaderShift project.

**DANIELLE
VERMEER**

Danielle is one of 44 young leaders who have completed LeaderShift since 2019. She also sits on the current Rising Leaders Advisory Council—a youth advisory group created to inform and provide program feedback to Rising Leaders staff.

“Environmental justice is the foundational step towards building a society and economy that respects the value of the environment and nurtures the inherent value of all people.”

–Danielle Vermeer



LANCE TUBINAGHTEWA

More often than not, each LeaderShift participant is working with numerous organizations to gain further experience in the environmental movement. Lance Tubinaghtewa is one example of a new generation of environmental leaders who are chasing a better tomorrow.

Lance is Hopi from the village of Sichomovi on First Mesa. He belongs to Alwungwa (the Deer Clan). In the summer of 2021, he interned in Austin, Texas with the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program within the National Park Service. Before joining LeaderShift, Lance worked with the Grand Canyon Trust as an intern in our Grand Canyon Program.

When working with Lance, one thing he constantly brings to the table is the importance of resilience. “Resiliency is in our blood and its presence has not been forgotten,” he shared with me. As an up-and-coming conservationist, Lance’s goal is to garner attention around Indigenous stewardship of public lands in the Southwest. This wish stems not only from his Hopi ancestry, but from his work as a practicing caretaker of the lands he calls home.

“What are your visions for a just transition in the future?” I asked him.

“Personally, just transition for me means the implementation of proper measures to clean, build, and sustain the water sources for Indigenous communities on the Colorado Plateau. Out home, on Hopitutskwa, I hope to contribute to just transition by providing opportunities for my community members to participate in ecological and watershed restoration projects. I think of a quote made by an old Civilian Conservation Corps member when thinking of the potential here, it goes: ‘Heal the land, heal the man.’”

When she is not working with us, Danielle is a graduate student at the University of Michigan working toward a master’s degree in environment and sustainability. Her studies focus on the roles that behavior, education, and communication play in promoting a more equitable and livable world.

During LeaderShift, Danielle always dared to dream big when it came to imagining a better future. Her visions included things like transforming academic curricula to include the histories of all people and environmental quality self-assessments.

“LeaderShift showed me that we cannot have sustainability without a deep commitment to environmental justice and equity,” Danielle reflected when I caught up with her recently about her experience.

I asked Danielle why this mattered and she explained: “One blanket solution developed by people of similar backgrounds and mindsets cannot solve our community’s complex environmental challenges. To create a world where everyone can live happy and healthy lives, we must consider the unique circumstances and experiences of all those impacted. Bringing more diverse voices into leadership positions and education spaces can help us better manifest a just transition.”



TARYN O'NEILL

Young people teach us that in order to achieve a better future, the environmental movement needs to be inclusive of all identities and diverse in its tactics. One person who has shown us that is Taryn O'Neill. Taryn joined us from the mountains, valleys, and glaciers of western Canada. She is currently working toward an undergraduate degree in environmental sustainability with a minor in applied Indigenous studies at Northern Arizona University (NAU). She is also a student athlete at NAU, running on the cross-country and track and field teams.

During my time with Taryn, she always struck me as a person who enters a room with empathy and ears for listening. She is someone who leaned into ambiguity with a desire to learn. Throughout LeaderShift, Taryn sought to act as an active ally to Indigenous peoples. She shared with me, "As a white woman, doing that historical learning and unlearning on my own was important and beneficial, but through LS [LeaderShift], I learned how to move my frame of mind toward the future, which is really what I think LeaderShift is all about—not only teaching awareness of social and environmental injustice, but forming realistic and tangible steps for a just future".

To educate other young people about a just transition, Taryn created a mock version of Monopoly to serve as an analogy for current issues affecting tribal communities. Her mock game points out that, "if Monopoly is [an] analogy for the current economic system, then the land is the board and the properties we buy are the people. Achieving a just transition means changing the board, the rules, and the entire definition of 'winning.'"

When was the last time you asked young people what their dreams are for a healthy future? Have you asked them what a better world looks like?

LeaderShift was developed to host a space where young people are both the teachers and the students. A new generation of environmental leaders is rising and with them they bring three things needed in the pursuit of a just future:

1 URGENCY

Young people have grown up during a time of rapid environmental transformation. They have witnessed changes on the Colorado Plateau like wildfires becoming more frequent and destructive. Or they have grown up in communities like Black Mesa, on the Navajo Nation, communities that are living the realities of climate change and a depleted aquifer.

2 COMPASSION

Young people show up for each other. Young people are entering their careers and educations at a time when justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings are becoming the norm.

3 CREATIVITY AND VOICE

Today, we have the ability to share our opinions with the world using social media. Young people are able to express themselves, and they do so creatively through dance, visual art, poetry, stories, and even funny 15-second videos on TikTok.

The truth is young people today are already building their visions for a better tomorrow. They are preparing for a world that includes many voices and many visions.

Amber Benally manages the Grand Canyon Trust's Rising Leaders Program.



LeaderShift gives young people a space to own their narrative, connect with other young advocates, and create accountability for their generation to nurture the environment for those to come.

Learn more and support this work at grandcanyontrust.org/rising-leaders

Leave a LEGACY

Leaving a gift to the Grand Canyon Trust in your will or estate will help to protect the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau's remarkable landscapes for future generations.

If you have named the Trust in your will, or as a beneficiary of an IRA or retirement plan, please let us know. We'd like to thank you and welcome you to our Legacy Circle.

For additional information on these or other planned gift opportunities, please contact **Libby Ellis** at lellis@grandcanyontrust.org or **928-286-3387**.



THIS IS WHAT INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES

A just transition for Indigenous communities is about more than just clean energy

By Jessica Stago

As a little girl, one of my favorite things to do was to stop on the side of the road to eat fresh watermelon. On trips between the rez and Winslow, Arizona, roadside vendors would be parked selling produce. My family would buy corn and different types of squash, and a watermelon that my cheii would cut open for us to eat.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Farmer Jeff Manygoats examines melons in his field at Kerley Valley Community Farm. DEIDRA PEACHES Business owners and entrepreneurs weigh in on what an ideal coworking space on the Navajo Nation should look like. RAYMOND CHEE Sushi prepared by Carlos Deal of AlterNativEats whose healthy fusion food truck is a fixture in Tuba City, on the Navajo Nation. CARLOS DEAL

I'm not sure when we stopped doing this, but there are no roadside vendors selling produce anymore. Someone told me that's because it was a safety hazard with people pulling on and off the highway. Sounds reasonable.

Many years later, those roadside watermelon stops with my grandpa came back to me when trying to figure out why there were so few farmers on the Navajo Nation, and why we, as a people, are almost completely dependent on Bashas', a non-Native grocery store chain, and on border towns off the reservation, for food. The Navajo Nation Reservation is 27,000 square miles, roughly the size of West Virginia, yet it has only 13 grocery stores. Many families travel hours to buy simple necessities.

For generations Navajo people grew our own healthy foods, especially the three sisters—corn, beans, and squash—along with those melons I'd

loved as a kid. So why didn't our leaders build a safe place for Native farmers to sell their produce? One practical answer is that our self-sufficient networks of Native food producers had to be abolished for a federal policy of capitalist assimilation to work. We Indians had to be forced into total dependency and our traditional economies, which had sustained our people and powered thriving societies for centuries, destroyed. There was no room for Native people to feed ourselves in the grand vision of a capitalistic economy.

As our traditional self-reliant economies—in which someone might offer to split a load of firewood in exchange for a crate of fresh-grown produce—were stamped out, we shifted to a cash-based economy. That capitalist model disincentivized people from investing their time and resources in farming, a situation made worse by drought and growing water shortages. But this shift

LOOK LIKE



LEFT: Heather Fleming, executive director of Change Labs, facilitates a brainstorming session with Native business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. RAYMOND CHEE RIGHT: A customer buys groceries at Rocky Ridge Gas + Market, a convenience store and community hub in Hardrock, on the Navajo Nation, founded by Navajo entrepreneur Germaine Simonson. RAYMOND CHEE



also affected our social fabric and culture, as the time spent in the fields was also time spent learning from elders and learning about our land.

Instead of farming, many of us left our communities to get educated so we could earn money to feed ourselves. We turned our backs on life-giving nourishment because we believed this new system would provide. But today there's not enough cash to feed everyone and—let's be real—there never was. The cash economy never worked for us. Our children are growing up with food insecurity because the same types of policies that shut down roadside farmers markets created political barriers to growing our own food and building strong local economies. In many cases, our tribal governments often favor the interests of large corporations over the long-term well-being of their own people.

And in this way, it's not that far a leap from the disappearing watermelon vendors of my youth to the decades of strip mining on Black Mesa as Peabody dug rich seams of coal from the Kayenta Mine in order to power Navajo Generating Station. The mine and the plant hired many Navajo and Hopi workers, representing a major shift from subsistence living to a wage economy and significant revenue streams for the tribes. If you had a family member employed in the coal industry, you no longer needed to grow your own food because you had money to go buy it. Many families thrived. They sent their kids to school in nice clothes and bought vehicles to make sure their kids got to class on unpaved roads even if there was mud and snow. And those kids eventually went to college.

But the benefits of this shift did not last for those communities. The

extractive economy is closing, those jobs are leaving, and royalties from the coal industry to tribal governments are gone. So how do Indigenous communities survive from here? By building an economy that's not dependent on forces outside of our control. First, we have to make sure our communities have food sovereignty and access to clean water, which form the foundation of an asset base. With these assets, communities can build a baseline economy of self-sustaining businesses where the exchange of goods and services rewards people for traditional skills, labor, and years of work experience. With the right investments, they can then grow those businesses, create jobs, and pay local taxes that communities can invest in the kinds of services and infrastructure—roads, running water, electricity, internet—that support a healthy economy.



Rather than building material wealth, Indigenous economies prioritize supporting ourselves in a sustainable way while also conserving for those who come after us.



LEFT: A happy customer at Germaine Simonson's Rocky Ridge Gas + Market. RAYMOND CHEE RIGHT: Native entrepreneurs in Tuba City have a vision of what a healthy economy looks like. RAYMOND CHEE

The term “just transition” gets thrown around a lot as shorthand for moving away from coal and other forms of climate-polluting energy toward a cleaner, greener economy. But a real just transition is so much more than that. A truly just and equitable transition represents an opportunity for Indigenous communities to create economies that not only work for them by providing basic necessities that every human should have access to, but also repair the damage that’s been done in the past and align our economic activity with our cultural values and traditions.

Our economies are currently built on principles that are foreign to our ways of thinking and the lives that we want to live. We need to build our economies based on our own ways of knowing our world. This translates into how we utilize resources and how we conserve those resources for future

generations of not just five-fingered beings but other species as well—the forests, the plants, the elk, the fish. These living beings are not assets on a balance sheet, nor are they only spiritual relatives; they are also key stakeholders and contributors to truly Indigenous economies. Rather than building material wealth, Indigenous economies prioritize supporting ourselves in a sustainable way while also conserving for those who come after us.

Our grandparents demonstrated for us sustainable, subsistence-based economies and many young, educated people have launched community-led initiatives and businesses based on that knowledge. The question is: How can we provide the resources needed so that these initiatives and businesses can expand their positive impact utilizing our skilled workers, technology, and innovation

to navigate the challenges to entrepreneurship?

At Change Labs, a Native-led entrepreneurship hub, we commissioned a report to figure out why it is so difficult to start a business on the rez. According to indicators developed by the World Bank, the Navajo Nation ranked in the bottom 15 percent of 190 nations around the globe on three of the most important indicators to doing business: getting land, getting electricity, and enforcing contracts. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy because they provide jobs but they also provide the best opportunity for the dollars that are generated to cycle through the economy several times, benefitting more people in the community. The study supports the idea that the systems that have been created for the benefit of large industries on reservation land have locked out entrepreneurs



LEFT: Traditional hogan accommodations at Mystical Antelope Canyon Tours + Arrowhead Campground. JAKE HOYUNGOWA RIGHT: Roseanne and Lester Littleman gaze up in the slot canyon at Mystical Antelope Canyon Tours + Arrowhead Campground, the cultural tourism destination the couple founded at their home on the Navajo Nation near Page, Arizona. JAKE HOYUNGOWA

from accessing land needed to house businesses. These systems also increase the cost of development and construction, and make it difficult or impossible for entrepreneurs to protect their investments. Tribal leaders continue to follow this framework in search of jobs for community members, but large developments like casinos will never be able to generate the number of jobs needed. For economic development to occur, people need to have the agency to offer their products and services to the market. The value that only entrepreneurs can generate has not been fully realized within Indigenous communities.

When it comes down to it, a just transition is really about a power shift. It's about shifting agency to the community, so that Navajo and Hopi people can create an economic vision for the future together: what do healthy Indigenous economies look

like? What are our priorities and needs? They include housing, education, food systems, infrastructure needs. That way, when outside investments come in, the community already has established priorities in terms of where that investment should go. That's why, for over a year, we've been helping to facilitate community conversations where community members answer these questions and line out their priorities.

Everybody has a role in the just transition. No matter where you live, no matter who you are, there is a role for you. We're talking about a generational shift in how we use natural resources. Indigenous communities have a lot to say. We have a lot of knowledge we can offer. But that doesn't mean that it's all on our shoulders.

Everybody can pay attention to policies around power generation, water use, and climate change. Everybody

can support policies that put power over land and water back into the hands of Indigenous people and strengthen Indigenous entrepreneurship, from the roadside watermelon stands of my youth to the tech entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Because a just transition isn't as simple as replacing coal power plants with solar farms. It's about innovations in transportation. It's about building infrastructure. It's about equitable access to clean water, food, and capital. And it's about creating space for local Indigenous communities to chart their own paths and be the heroes of their own stories.

Jessica Stago (MBA) serves as the Native American economic initiatives director for the Grand Canyon Trust and the director of business incubation for Change Labs. Learn more at nativestartup.org.



AMY S. MARTIN

Big Win: Developer Surrenders Dam Permits

With the proposed Big Canyon dam still looming, it's time for long-term safeguards for the Little Colorado River

By Amanda Podmore

Two down, one to go.

On July 26, 2021, the would-be Little Colorado River dam developer asked to surrender two preliminary permits for proposed hydroelectric dam projects on Navajo Nation land near the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers in the Grand Canyon. The developer asked to cancel the permits for the proposed Little Colorado River and Salt Trail Canyon dams after being notified by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that it was already out of compliance with permit requirements.

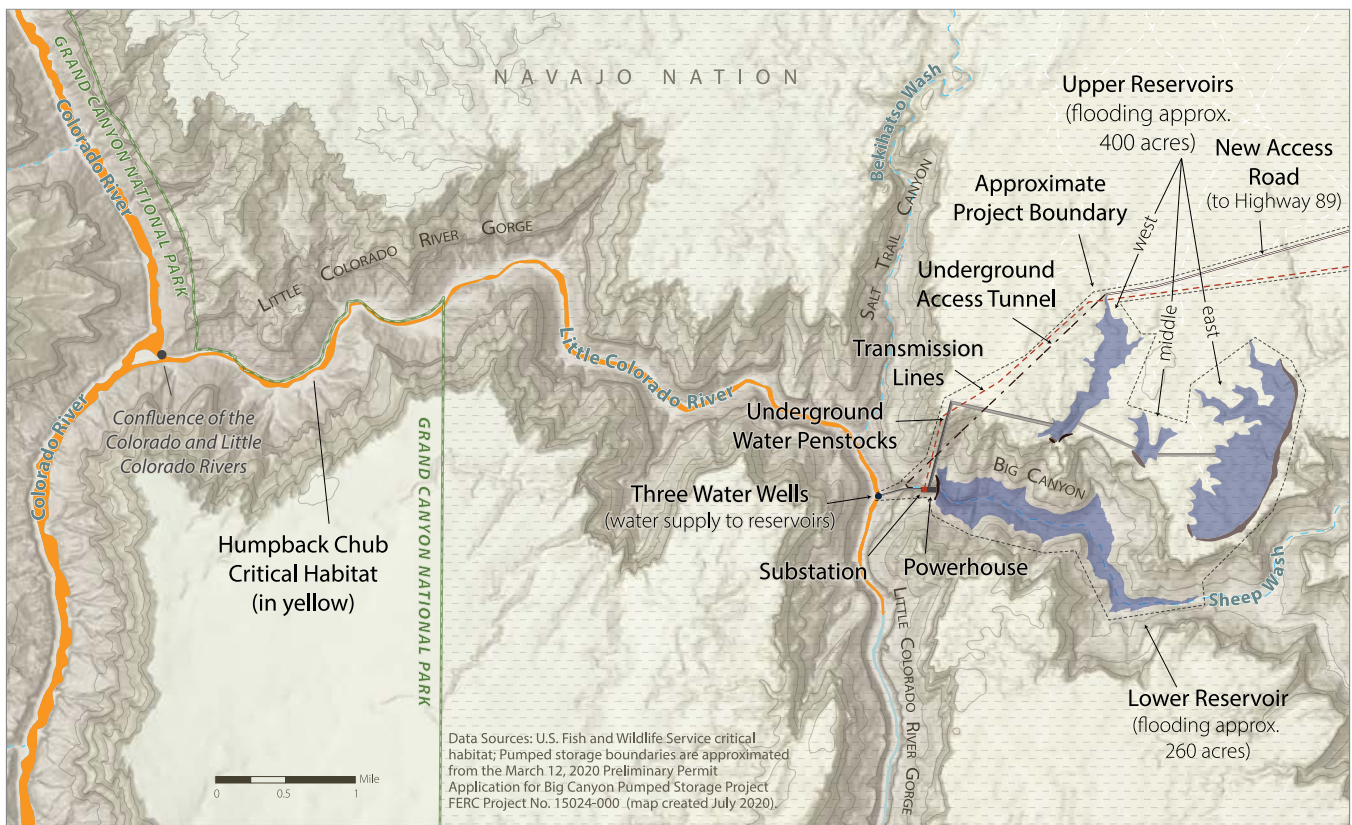
There's no question here: We're counting this as a big win. Since 2019, the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, the families of the Navajo grassroots organization Save the Confluence, and others have worked to oppose these unwanted proposals by Phoenix-based developer, Pumped Hydro Storage LLC. In its requests, the company cited strong opposition from the Navajo Nation, environmentalists, and others, as

well as high costs as the rationale for surrendering the permits. No one can deny that this victory belongs to many strong advocates across the country. The decision to surrender the permits for these two projects is a testament to the hard work of tribes, community organizers, and concerned citizens like you who took action and submitted comments.

These dam proposals surfaced just two years after the defeat of the Escalade tram proposal at the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers that left community members drained and looking for a path to healing. Save the Confluence members who worked tirelessly to defeat the tram proposal were hoping to pivot from being reactionary to planning for long-term safeguards for the lower Little Colorado River. Instead, they learned that threats to the confluence had changed from trams to dams. The 2019 Little Colorado River and Salt Trail Canyon dam proposals, followed

by the proposal to dam Big Canyon in 2020, all fall on Navajo Nation land in a natural landscape of deep cultural importance to many Grand Canyon-affiliated tribes. FERC awarded the first two preliminary permits in 2020 despite interventions and objections from the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, and conservation organizations including the Grand Canyon Trust.

It was deeply problematic that the developer was able to obtain permits without getting consent from the Navajo Nation, underscoring deep flaws in the FERC permitting process. Had these two dam proposals advanced, it would have been a direct affront to tribal sovereignty and the right to free, prior, and informed consent as recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Unfortunately, the developer's requests to surrender these two permits are a reminder that we have only cleared some of the hurdles.



The Proposed Big Canyon Pumped Storage Project

The Big Canyon dam remains the developer’s priority—and our biggest concern.

Upstream of the other two proposals, the Big Canyon project would require four storage reservoirs in and above a tributary canyon to the Little Colorado River Gorge. The impacts would be severe. Filling the reservoirs associated with the dam would require pumping billions of gallons of precious groundwater from the aquifer. The depletion of this aquifer could alter Blue Spring, which feeds the turquoise waters of the Little Colorado River. The lower Little Colorado River flows perennially into the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, and its warm waters shelter the endangered humpback chub.

The developer is proposing to pump 14 billion gallons of groundwater to fill the four Big Canyon reservoirs, plus an additional 3.2 to 4.8 billion gallons per year to make up for evaporation loss. These numbers are alarming in a desert landscape,

especially considering the current potable water restrictions in place across the Navajo Nation. Nonetheless, the developer is continuing to push a proposal to pump additional groundwater in order to produce electricity for distant city centers in the middle of this megadrought.

It is unknown when FERC will decide on the Big Canyon preliminary permit application that the developer submitted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. If granted, the permit will initiate a 3-year period for a feasibility study. As of now, the Navajo Nation has indicated that the developer is not welcome on Navajo Nation land. After the Escalade tramway proposal and the 43-year development ban in the region known as the Bennett Freeze, the continued extraction of Native resources to benefit outside corporations is a far cry from the culturally appropriate economic solutions sought by local communities and tribal governments.

The Trust will continue to stand in support of tribes and communities opposing this unwanted proposal. There are solutions we can support at the tribal level, like a Navajo Nation sacred site designation and just transition work. But without a doubt, we will need to turn our attention to supporting policy and legislative solutions, at the direction of tribes, that prevent commercial developers from proposing dams on Indigenous waterways without tribal consent.

The lower Little Colorado River and confluence are spiritual places best left untouched by development, as grassroots community members and tribes have requested. Upstream dams could alter this place of reverence and beauty. After years of fending off the Escalade proposal, this landscape needs a reprieve for healing. By supporting local communities, we intend to give it that.

Amanda Podmore directs the Grand Canyon Trust’s Grand Canyon Program.



Wild Garden Songs

Cultivating joy
and purpose
in your backyard

By Kate Watters

Last year when the coronavirus pandemic brought the world to a screeching halt,

I had just purchased a 1-acre farmstead in Rimrock, Arizona. Situated between the lush riparian belt of Beaver Creek and an expanse of creosote desert scrub, the land is a shady sanctuary of towering ash trees lining a limestone cliff. The earth felt familiar right away, like home. I dug in, ready to discover what the land wanted to become.

Finding ground to cultivate beauty, biodiversity, and a sense of place has been a dream. It was probably planted in me as a child growing up in rural Vermont with a big garden and wild areas to explore. I was yearning for a place to synthesize the lessons I'd learned from ecology, farming, and horticulture. As a human resident of planet Earth, I feel an urgency to grow more habitat and heal myself

and others in the process. Throughout my life, both gardens and wild places have shown me the resilience of plants, and the transformative effect they have on the human spirit. I named the place Wild Heart Farm to honor both wild and cultivated flowers, and because I believe humans need to connect to the untidy, chaotic, magical places found in nature and nurture them in our hearts.

The coronavirus took a toll on our spirits, our economy, and our sense of safety. It seemed to illustrate the impermanence of life. And yet it also illuminated that we are part of an intricate web. Our interconnected world allowed the virus to travel. As humans stayed home, the non-human residents of the planet took advantage of the space. With a reduction in noise pollution, one study in San Francisco found that birds were actually singing softer, “sexier” songs to one another without competition from the urban din.

The pandemic inspired record numbers of people to garden. Those who previously lacked time were able to dig in and find fulfillment. With supply chains impacted, it motivated many to become more self-sufficient. Seed companies reported the largest volume of orders they had ever seen. Gardening grounds us, offers a natural dose of vitamin D in the form of sunshine, and its simple delights relieve stress, depression, and anxiety.

I’d planned to grow my cut flower and floral design business, but the pandemic cancelled that along with everything else. With weddings postponed, I focused my energy on building soil and habitat. I received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a pollinator garden, in particular for the monarch butterfly, which feeds on milkweed. We hired veterans returning from combat to do the heavy lifting of rocks and soil.

We ended each work session with a lovingkindness meditation, to focus loving energy inward and outward. Together we transformed a barren slope into rock terraces teeming with pollinator plants. This garden became the foundation of the farm.

Involving our family and friends in gardening can be wholesome and healing. The magic alchemy of soil, seeds, and sowing our collective hopes together is powerful fodder. Another upside of the pandemic was that my sister, Kelly, decided to live on the farm when shelter-in-place orders cancelled her summer vacation plans. Kelly dug in alongside me and my partner, Mike, as we cultivated and grew the dream for the farm—growing, cooking, and healing together.

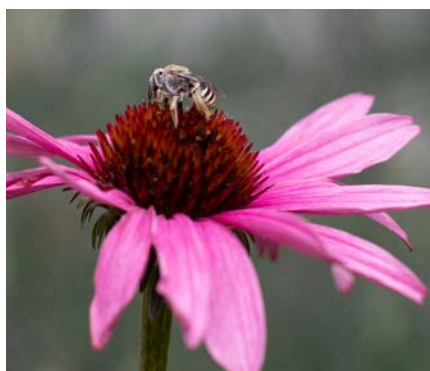
Feeding ourselves and our loved ones healthy, homegrown food and herbs is empowering and gratifying. Mike is a naturopathic doctor, dedicated to supporting the body’s innate healing ability. He grew up in the sterile, suburban landscape of Des Moines, Iowa without a garden or wild places to play. Before our farm life, he knew herbs from books and supplements or amber tincture bottles—not as living plants. We planted a medicinal garden with regional native plants as well as plants from the worldwide apothecary. Many, like purple coneflower (echinacea) and sage (artemisia) also attract pollinators. Now Mike delights in harvesting herbs from this garden and around the farm to create fresh teas and preserve herbal extracts for our daily life. Like our food, many of our medicinal herbs and teas are grown in other countries. By the time we sip our tea, months have passed since the dried herbs were harvested. We can feel that our bodies and spirits are more vital when we ingest herbs that are grown lovingly, in healthy soil, and harvested fresh.



If American landowners restored just half of their lawns with native plants, we could collectively create 20 million acres of ecologically functional habitat.

Our gardens can also help heal fractured ecosystems and provide critical refuge for species. In order to sustain human life and plant diversity we need abundant pollinators. Yet pollinators are in decline. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the long list of contributing factors include: invasive pests and diseases, exposure to pesticides and other chemicals, loss of habitat, loss of species and genetic diversity, and a changing climate. Although it feels altruistic to plant a pollinator garden, it is truly an act of human survival, as over one third of the food we eat requires pollination.

Planting pollinator habitat is one of the regenerative practices on our farm, as it fosters biodiversity—the backbone of a healthy ecosystem.



PHOTOS BY AMY S. MARTIN

Plants that attract a diversity of insects are natural pest control and increase fruit yields in our orchard. Best of all, witnessing the daily drama unfold as the garden grows feeds my soul. Hummingbirds sip the nectar from the firecracker penstemon on an early spring day. The Palmer's penstemon has curved, gangly stalks bearing giant, fragrant flowers with open throats—a chorus singing songs of glory. The carpenter bees can hear the music. These formative native bees clumsily hover around the flowers, squeezing themselves into a blossom while the entire stalk sways. Carpenter bees were not present pre-penstemon. If you plant it, they will come!

As a floral designer I hunger for beauty, and as a gardener I struggle with the industry ideal of a garden teaming with well-loved horticultural flowers like peonies and zinnias. While many of these varieties provide forage for honeybees, I chose native plants to attract native bees for the pollinator garden. Pollinators and plant diversity are inextricably linked. There are 20,000 bee species in the world, and 1,700 reside in Arizona. Arizona is home to over 3,500 plant species—the fourth highest plant diversity in the U.S. Wherever you live, there are native bees who forage on native plants, and pollen transfer ensures future generations of both.

As members of the Grand Canyon Trust, we love the wilds of the natural world. We find peace when we leave behind the chaos of modern life. We want to experience the wonder of land untouched by humans. Our backyards can also be a sanctuary for us and provide refuge for other species. The reality of climate change is becoming more and more profound each year with record-breaking temperatures, raging wildfires, and

drought. When we plant ecologically resilient landscapes with native plants, our backyards transform into critical habitat for declining pollinators and wildlife in need of shelter and food.

Plants are foundational to our gardens, therefore the ones we choose can make a difference. In my garden menagerie, sacred datura mingles with hollyhocks, dwarfing a young peach tree. Plants are complex characters living out their stories with personalities and needs like us. They offer sustenance to our body and soul. They can summon memories from ancestral realms. They are medicinal allies. They call in beneficial insects and pollinators from thousands of miles away. They awaken microbes and nutrients, and sequester carbon in the soil. If we pay attention, they also sing us songs of place. They are the backbone of any ecosystem, which is the reason we must befriend native plants and welcome them into our gardens. These plants are not available in big box stores, so you must find local nurseries and growers. To get to know the flora in your area, join a regional chapter of the Native Plant Society or botanical garden.

Restricting our conservation efforts to national parks will not preserve species. These areas are too small and fragmented, and surrounded by populated and depauperate landscapes lacking in both numbers and varieties of species. In his book, "Nature's Best Hope," entomologist Douglas Tallamy makes a compelling case for a Home-grown National Park. If American landowners restored just half of their lawns with native plants, we could collectively create 20 million acres of ecologically functional habitat. Inspired by this idea, we gathered our friends and together we danced the seeds of native yarrow, clover, and

grasses into the soil. This diverse mix of perennial plants will offer pollen, nectar, and habitat to bees. Planting seeds of change can be a joyous communal activity.

Gardens connect us deeply to plants, to the seasons, and to the animals also trying to survive. This daily reminder that we are part of a whole is what heals us from the inside. I watch my farm family grow each day. A normally bold squirrel recently stood frozen in fear with her baby in tow. Without hesitation, she gathered it into her mouth and sprinted up a nearby ash tree. Because of our proximity to Beaver Creek, our farm is a bird sanctuary with tanagers, robins, and hummingbirds nesting in our trees. I cried with joy and relief this spring when the

black phoebe who fed on insect pests in the covered growing area returned to the farm. Birds need appropriate food throughout the season—caterpillars in the spring when they are raising their young, and berries high in fat in the fall to fuel their migration. Not all berries are created equal. Native plants like hackberry produce berries with higher levels of fat in the fall, while Eurasian horticultural varieties are high in sugar.

If we tend our gardens, we will find that the wonder we seek in the backcountry is present as we sit in our backyards sipping coffee.

Growing a garden teaches us about ourselves and our place in the world, and it brings a sense of awe and purpose to our daily lives. Humans are

part of the problem, but we can also be part of the solution. Imagine if we converted our lawns, school grounds, and churches into native habitat islands full of nectar, larvae, pollen, fruit, and seed food sources. Together it is possible to transform these spaces into ecologically vibrant gardens and stitch them together into a beautiful, functional quilt so that migrating species can make their journeys with ample nourishment.

A former director of the Grand Canyon Trust's Volunteer Program, Kate Watters now tends her gardens and creates unique floral designs at Wild Heart Farm in Rimrock, Arizona. Find her online at wildheartfarmaz.com and katewattersart.com.

Find more info about pollinator gardens and a Flagstaff plant list at wildheartfarmaz.com/pollinator-gardens



NAME

From iconic vistas to secluded canyons, the Colorado Plateau is full of jaw-dropping places. Test your knowledge of its natural wonders.

THAT

Where can you find this feature sculpted by water?

Hint: It's in Utah's first national monument

PLACE

Find the trail description at:
grandcanyontrust.org/hikes/sipapu-kachina-bridges

Save on Taxes and Protect the Landscapes you Love

If you're contemplating a gift to the Grand Canyon Trust and have appreciated securities, have you considered the benefits of gifting those securities?

When you make a gift of appreciated securities that you've held for more than one year, you may deduct their full value as a charitable donation AND avoid capital gains tax on the appreciation. **This dual benefit allows you to leverage a larger donation than you may have believed possible.**

Details about making a gift of stock are available at grandcanyontrust.org/securities or by contacting **Libby Ellis** at **928-286-3387** or lellis@grandcanyontrust.org

2020 FINANCIALS

Our work is generously supported by our members.
Thank you.

The Grand Canyon Trust and North Rim Ranch, LLC

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

as of December 31, 2020

ASSETS	2020
Current Assets:	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$5,150,834
Contributions receivable	913,861
Accounts receivable	47,125
Livestock inventory	29,587
Prepaid expenses	188,723
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	6,330,130
Non-Current Assets:	
Breeding herd	70,999
Property and equipment	1,378,639
Investments	
Sustaining Fund	8,242,684
Grand Canyon Trust Endowment	9,369,422
Alice Wyss Fund	1,328,755
Conservation easement	2,295,000
Beneficial interest in remainder trust	40,307
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	22,725,806
TOTAL ASSETS	\$29,055,936
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities:	
Accounts payable	\$35,337
Contributions payable	272,976
Accrued expenses	331,162
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	639,475
Net Assets:	
Without donor restrictions	24,018,566
With donor restrictions	4,397,895
TOTAL NET ASSETS	28,416,461
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$29,055,936

Consolidated Statement of Activities

for the year ended December 31, 2020

Support and Revenue:

Grants and contributions	\$5,859,807
Membership income	378,134
In-kind contributions	34,969
Investment income	2,081,148
Cattle revenue	(32,292)
Change in value of beneficial interest in remainder trust	41
Other income	7,820

TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE 8,329,627

Expenses:

Program services	3,097,730
Education	313,322
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	3,411,052
Development and membership	777,847
General and administrative	445,767
TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES	1,223,614

TOTAL EXPENSES 4,634,666

Changes in net assets before non-controlling interest 3,694,961

Less: change in net assets attributable to non-controlling interest 18,697

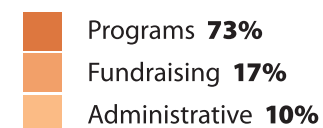
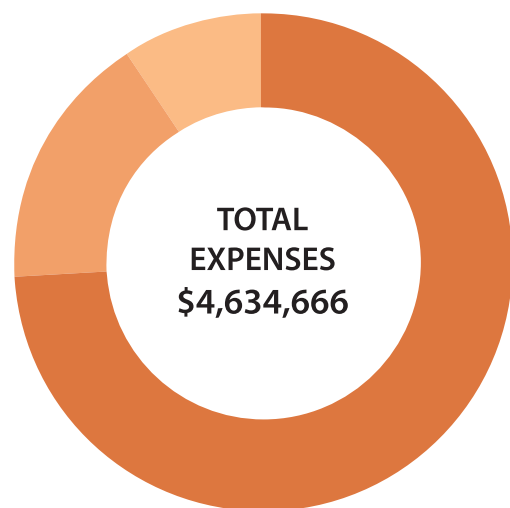
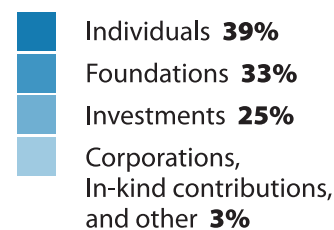
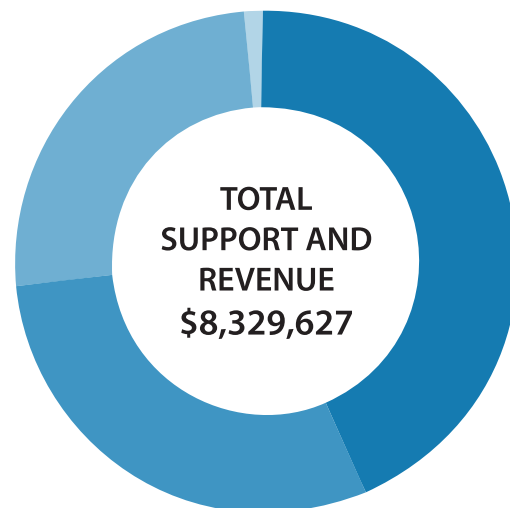
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR CONTROLLING ENTITIES \$3,713,658

BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2019 \$24,750,650

Changes in net assets 3,694,961

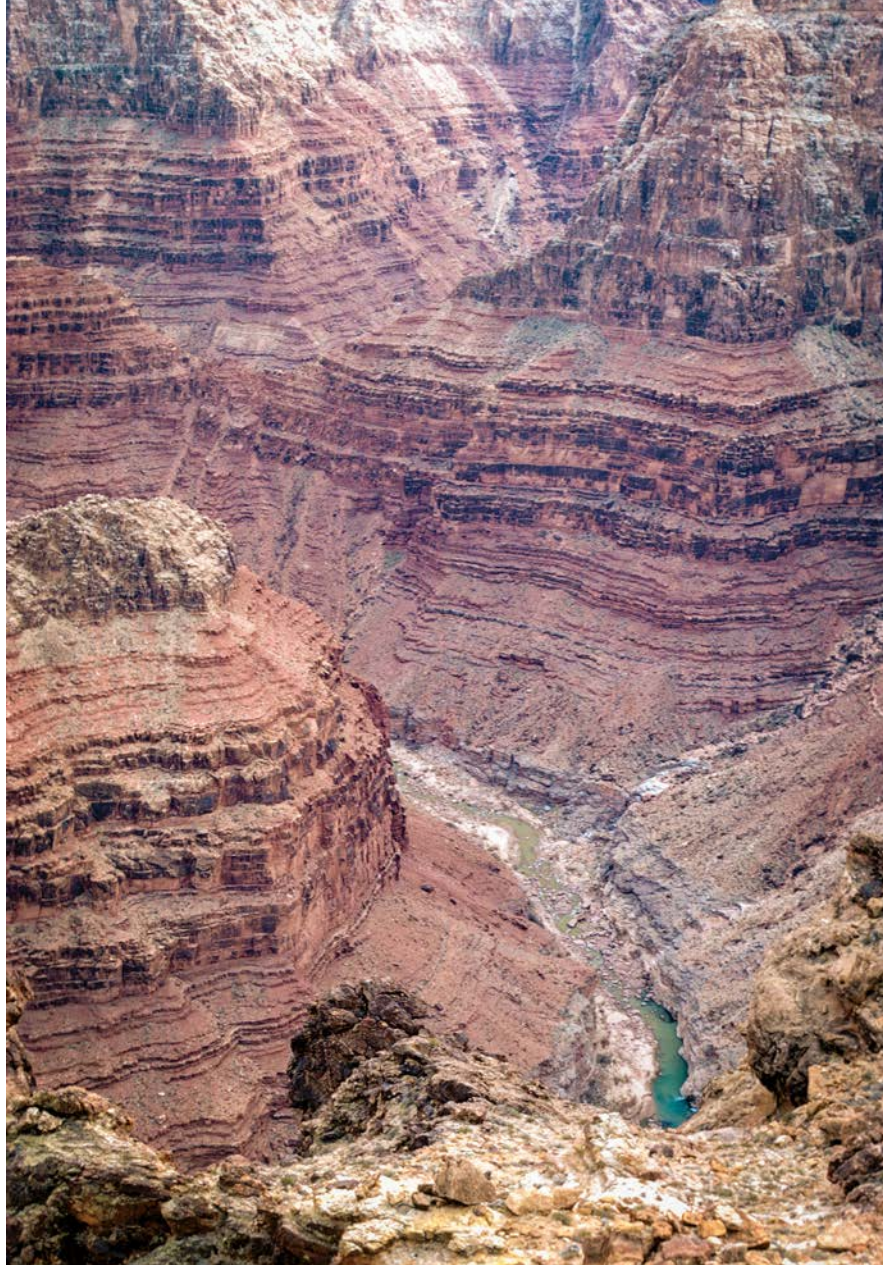
Net distributions (29,150)

BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2020 \$28,416,461



The Little Colorado River

A Sometimes River



LEFT: Lyle Balenquah. DEIDRA PEACHES RIGHT: Blue Spring, Little Colorado River Gorge. STEWART AITCHISON

For thousands of years, the Little Colorado River has sustained life on the Colorado Plateau. Its waters irrigate farmers' crops, provide refuge for endangered fish, and support a diverse array of plant life and wildlife. To this day, the Little Colorado River remains an important physical, spiritual, and cultural lifeway for Native peoples. This past year, we've been talking to Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, Hualapai, and White Mountain Apache individuals about their personal and cultural connections to the Little Colorado River. Here's a sneak peek of our conversation with Lyle Balenquah, Hopi archaeologist from the village of Paaqavi (Reed Springs Village) on Third Mesa and member of the Greesewood Clan.

What does water mean to you?

Water is of course really important to us here in the Southwest. For a lot of Indigenous cultures, there is the phrase, "Water is life." We recognize that as water being essential to our survival. As Hopi people, we're known to be dry farmers. What that means is that as we farm our crops—corn, beans, squash, and other crops—we're predominantly relying on the moisture that's already contained in the soil. We don't irrigate in any large scale. So water is really important in that regard, because we rely on the winter snowpack and the later monsoon rains to help germinate our crops.

What cultural values are associated with the Little Colorado River?

Back in our ancestral history, the Little Colorado River was an important area for us to live and farm. It's associated with our ability to grow crops and maintain ourselves. When you get down to the confluence area of the Little Colorado River and Colorado River, that's where you really enter an area of increased significance. It's along the Hopi Salt Trail, so there's various shrines that are dedicated to different deities. Down in the confluence area, there is also the Sipapuni, which is the cultural origin point for Hopi ancestors. That whole geographic area has religious and spiritual significance for us, but also we recognize it as being a really important part of the natural landscape down in the Grand Canyon area.

Growing up, what were you taught about the Little Colorado River?

I knew it was a "sometimes river." Sometimes we would see it flowing, sometimes it was completely dry. It wasn't until much later, probably my late teens and early 20s, that I really started to get an understanding of the Little Colorado River in terms of Hopi history and how it's connected to our ancestral lands. Even though it's now outside the borders of the Hopi Reservation, the cultural knowledge and traditional knowledge that's associated with it brings that back home, so to speak. Nowadays, we do recognize it as an important cultural landmark within Hopi history and that our ancestors were utilizing and living along the river.

What are your concerns about the future of the Little Colorado River?

The overuse of it. The Little Colorado River is really heavily populated by invasive species—tamarisk and Russian olive. Those are pretty noticeable along the drainage. How are those plants impacting the overall watershed? How are we utilizing the river? Are we over-pumping it? I know it's dammed further upstream, so what is that doing to the ecosystem of the lower stretches of the Little Colorado River? Are there pollutants being introduced into the system? And the ancestral sites located along the Little Colorado River, how are those being impacted by uses along the river?

How do you maintain your cultural connections to the Little Colorado River today?

All Hopi individuals have their own understandings of what that river means to them from a cultural standpoint. I can't speak for all of them about how they are connected to it. But for myself, it's an important part of who we are. To go and look at it and try and remember some of the cultural history that's associated with it—those are ways that I maintain some of those connections.

What do you want people to know about the Little Colorado River?

Yes, it's a beautiful area to go into when the turquoise-blue waters are flowing—that's one reason why people want to see that. But also, I would like for them to recognize that it does still have that continued cultural significance for modern-day living Indigenous people. That it's not something that is just rooted in the past. And that as modern Natives, we still maintain that connection, so it's not forgotten.

Hear more from Lyle and other Native voices in our forthcoming Little Colorado River stories collection, hitting screens in October 2021.

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JOIN THE DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE

The Director's Circle is a group of individuals committed to providing an "opportunity fund" that offers Ethan Aumack, the executive director, the agility to invest in priority opportunities that enhance and expedite our mission.



Director's Circle members join an inner circle of engagement with the executive director and Grand Canyon Trust senior staff, and serve as informed advocates for conservation efforts at the Grand Canyon and across the Colorado Plateau.

Benefits include:

- An annual meeting with senior staff and board members to exchange ideas and learn how your funds were invested
- Customized field trips with scientists and conservation experts
- The joy of knowing your investment has provided a consequential legacy

To join the Director's Circle, please contribute at grandcanyontrust.org/directors-circle or contact Libby Ellis at lellis@grandcanyontrust.org