

Sowats Revisted, a Cactus Journey in Kanab Creek Wilderness

This program will take you on a visual journey into a remote and intriguing corner of Arizona, the area collectively known as the Grand Canyon. This is an ancient and rugged landscape of high contrasts and extremes, broken and arid lands sculpted over millennia by the elements. An open portal into the geological, biological, and cultural past, it is a landscape seldom visited by humans but one that is also considered a sacred homeland by others. Highly refined survivors thrive here; reptiles, mammals, birds, insects, and plants that have developed protections and strategies to enable generations of life to continue. Symbiotic adaptations for plants and insects insure both pollen and pollination for the continuation of each species. Several genus of cacti and succulents can be found living in these rocky habitats . These plant ancestors provided survival sustenance for the human ancestors of today's Hopi and Pai people. Come along and meet these high achievers, plants that have adapted to the extreme environments of these harsh canyons.

My daughter Jessica and I have been backpacking and exploring the Kanab Creek Wilderness and environs for over almost two decades, noting constancy and change over time and always delighted in the discovery of something new.

I have enjoyed a career as an archaeologist for the Cibola National Forest, as an interpretive coordinator for New Mexico State Parks, as a museum curator at Edge of the Cedars, and currently as a coordinator of Navajo language curriculum for the San Juan School District. I am a mother of three and grandmother of five. My husband, Ernie Washee and I, live with our horses, cats, rabbits, a dove, a box turtle, and hundreds of cacti in Blanding, Utah. Like many of us, I became enchanted with cacti as a child. My introduction about age four was via my father's View Master reels that he brought back from Palm Springs when he was stationed there during the war. The reels were visual candy of the incredible California cacti. I understood them not but the attraction has never let me go.



Agave utahensis kaibabensis pups

Echinocactus xeranthemoides shaded by Yucca bacata along the Sowats Canyon rim



Might agave stalk





Getting my vanilla fix along the North Rim, Grand Canyon