



Pat Lambrose

WOMEN PROTECTING wilderness

As a part of the Women Protecting Wilderness Project, SUWA has been collecting stories from women about their experiences with wilderness. If you have a story you would like to share, please send it, with your photo, to deeda@suwa.org Below is Pat Lambrose's story as told to SUWA intern Anna Paul – Pat is a SUWA member and teacher trainer for the Salt Lake City School District.

My life is dedicated to pursuing outdoor adventures. My passion is skiing and being out in the mountains as often as I can. Before I started teaching, I worked for the Forest Service. During my years with the Forest Service, I worked with students and kids in a program called the Y.C.C. (Youth Conservation Corp). We were helping 15 to 18 year olds understand how to appreciate nature and the outdoors. We built bridges, planted trees, built fences, maintained picnic tables, and built trails.

I also was a wildland firefighter and avalanche forecaster for many years with the Forest Service, and my life totally revolved around being in the outdoors. While I worked with the Forest Service, I also worked as an outdoor guide for 12 years at the U of U teaching beginning rock-climbing classes and leading weekend backpack, mountain bike, and road bike trips.

I grew up in Salt Lake. But as a kid, I spent most of my childhood outdoor experiences in the eastern Nevada Mountains. I was seven or eight years old when my aunt and uncle would take us hiking, fishing, and camping every summer in the mountains around McGill, Nevada. We explored the Ruby Mountains, Humboldt Range and Wheeler Peak.

When I go backpacking, I like to be with other people. But I go hiking alone all the time because it's easy. I feel confident. I carry my basic emergency stuff that I need. Being in the outdoors is my therapy. I was raised in a very organized religion but quit practicing when I discovered mountain and desert adventures. My religion is connected to nature and the outdoors. Any day that I'm out in the wild is a special and spiritual day.

I think one of my favorite experiences was in Grand Gulch in Cedar Mesa. We backpacked seven days beginning at Kane Creek and exiting out of Bullet Canyon about 15 years ago. I experienced an incredible connection to the land, dwellings, and rock art of the Ancestral Puebloans while hiking in Grand Gulch. What made that experience so amazing was that we backpacked, explored ruins, and were self-sufficient. As we visited ruins and/or rock art, we tried to interpret what was going on and wondered... What brought them here? ...What made them leave?



Wilderness gives back comfort. By maintaining and keeping wilderness, we have hope that we're not totally over-populating places that are pristine, sacred and special. What are we leaving to our future generations? If we can do our part to protect now, let's hope we can have some wild spot for future generations which is not developed and overcrowded.

Recently while I was in the Bear River Range in the Uinta Mountains I was discouraged in seeing how the OHVs (ATVs) seem to be over-running the dirt roads and trails in that area. We've got to do something about the ATVs. I think they are the challenge of this decade right now for land managers. My next hope is that we don't have all of these counties saying that a little scratchy dirt path is a road. Then it's a done deal that we can't designate wilderness because there are existing roads that really don't qualify. I would like to see more wilderness areas designated in Utah.

My message to other women with regard to wilderness is - be confident. The wilderness is a place for healing. Do not believe that you have to wait on another partner, male or female, to go do things in the outdoors. Seek out groups who share your outdoor interests like Wasatch Mountain Club, Sierra Club, SUWA or Nature Conservancy. In order to gain some life balance and sanity, get out of the urban jungle by taking walks, hikes, meditation retreats, or whatever. Your garden can also be a place of rejuvenation. Stay balanced by staying connected to nature and the outdoors.