

## Pikes Peak River Runners

### Grand Canyon Log Sept 1998



*By Dave Sample*

4 September - 19 September 1998

*Synopsis:* Big water, awesome scenery, unseasonably cool (6 nights of rain), great hikes almost daily, perfect trip planning, great food and great people.

Rafting the Grand Canyon: It ain't about big rapids, It is about:

*The Good:*

- No phone
- A peaceful place to think
- Camping by a noisy rapid
- Camping under the stars
- Going to bed early exhausted
- Getting up early and absorbing more of the canyon
- Making new friends
- Well planned/prepared meals
- Nature - bats and lizards were my favorite
- Fine sand that will stay with us for 2 more weeks
- Challenging, beautiful hikes
- Warm side springs

*Bad:*

- No showers
- Relieving oneself in less than private setting
- Not enough time off to do it more often
- Grit in everything (food, water, clothes, sleep, personal orifices)

*Ugly:*

- Bathing in the cold muddy water
- Little nicks don't heal
- Dry skin
- The drive to get to and from the river

The people from Colorado and Utah arrived at Lee's Ferry 9/3 before 8:00 per plan. Unloaded everything and 2 people started the shuttle to Flag. The rest of us started rigging boats. We borrowed a blower from the private group leaving 9/3 to blow up the 2 boats. The group from Flag started arriving at 1:15 to unload everything else. We worked until about 4:00 getting things in order. The ranger graciously checked most of the gear which allowed us to get started sooner the next day. As we found out on the trip the planning was perfect and everything worked like a well oiled machine. Our meal that night was superb as we came to expect throughout the trip. After dinner during cleanup we scared a rattlesnake that came through the camp. The snake grew from about 3 feet that night to well over 6 feet the next morning as the story got told over and over. The scenery was unbelievable throughout the trip.

#### Day 1 (9/4)

We were on the river by 10:00. Long day few no hikes. Lots of evening rain.

#### Day 2 (9/5)

Like most days we were on the river by about 8:30. With the rain we lost our last clear Colorado water. The larger side canyons are feeding lots of mud into the river. Superb swordfish, cabbage salad and carrot cake for dinner. I quit listing the meals because they were all so good. Lots of variety and excellent recipes.

North Canyon could not be hiked because it was in flash flood stage. Very interesting to watch though.

One of the commercial guys said he had never seen it like that. We camped at Silver Grotto. I soon found out that Bob M knows the best places to camp and hike and is an excellent tour guide. The thunder started while the sun was still shining and we marveled at the noise from the thunder. The wind and rain got very heavy and we had to catch and hold the dining canopy before it blew away. Heavily loaded tents were being blown across the beach until they got better anchored with people or heavy stuff. The canyon walls were covered with lots of HUGE red waterfalls (a sight no one will forget). Several were over tents including the dining canopy. We were getting pelted with water and stones. I think 4 tents got holes ripped in them from the stones. The Canadian kayakers put their helmets on to rescue their tent from one of the larger waterfalls. The storm stopped as quickly as it had started and we started assessing the damages and take pictures. The people with hair and some without, decided to wash it in the Silver Grotto runoff. This was our first warm water and was welcome even though it was muddy. 2 hours later things are drying out and people's spirits are rising. This is shaping into a very memorable trip.

#### Day 3 (9/6)

Lunch at Nautiloid Canyon. We saw fossils from 3' long nautiloids. The Canadians had an encounter with a ringtail cat. We got clear water for drinking from a poison-ivy infested Vasey's Paradise. Went through the "roaring 20's" where there are several fun rapids. We had a rock slide last night that woke us up but caused no damage.

#### Day 4 (9/7)

We visited Redwall Canyon today. Powell said it would hold 50,000 people. I suspect that he was trying to get a government grant because I think it would only hold about 5,000 people. Played frisbee and other games under the overhang. Saddle Canyon was a fun hike to a clear water waterfall. At camp that night some decided

to hike up to Nankoweap in the heat of the day. This was a 2-ibuprofen night. This was the hottest day so far and we finally got most everything dried out. We have so many options for fun that everyone can find something fun to do at camp.

Day 5 (9/8)

Short river day. Clear stream and hot. Looks like a laundry day. Camped at Lava Canyon. Another rattle snake at the river.

Day 6 (9/9) Nice shaded campsite.

Day 8 (9/11)

Hermit and Granite were big rapids with big waves.

Day 9 (9/12)

Hiked and played in Elves Chasm

Day 10 (9/13)

Camped at Tapeat's Spring - Fun river hike until we couldn't fight the river anymore. The thunder sounds really cool in the canyon. This was the day that 3 of us swam Deubendorf rapid. The next morning we hiked to Thunder River across Surprise Valley to the "Queen's Throne Room" above Deer Creek. This was a "Marley Mile" hike - lots farther than most expected.

Day 11 (9/14)

Camped at Pancho's kitchen. Lots of beach to play on.

Day 12 (9/15)

Camped at National Canyon. We couldn't get into Matkatamiba because the baloney (motor rigs) boats had it occupied. I think this is the only place we wanted to stop that was unavailable. We spent lots of time at Havasu swimming and playing. This was the first encounter with the "mud people". People are noticeably concerned with Lava tomorrow.

Day 13 (9/16)

Scouted Lava and decided to wait for the flow to rise. Waiting was good - we saw OARS go through and followed their line with good results. Camped at mile 181 I think.

Day 14 (9/17)

Camped at mile 204 I think. Missed Fern hike because of those baloney people but did a nice hike over the lava flows. VERY HOT. Everyone is starting to think about the end of the trip and dreading leaving all of the friends they have made.

Day 15 (9/18)

Camped at 220. Some of us swam mile 217 rapid. Our first relatively major injury - needed 4 stitches to close.

Day 16 (9/19)

Last day - loaded everything and drove for hours to Flag. Said our good-byes and headed home.