



From the Mountain to the River

By Monique Beeley

It was July. I was heading for adventure into the La Sal Mountains, towering just south of Moab. This majestic mountain range, with twelve peaks over 12,000 feet, is a cool respite from the summer heat of the desert. The adventure began in Green River, where I would meet up with my long-time friend, Michelle Clonts, who has joined me several times on outdoor excursions. I was excited to spend some quality to reconnect with a close bud. She greeted me with her warm, familiar smile. The conversation flowed into the late hours of the evening until we were both so tired that we agreed to pick up where we left off in the morning.

Holiday River Expeditions was just a quick hop across the street from the River Terrace Inn, our cozy retreat for the pre-trip night. We listened intently as Brin, our trip leader, gave the details for the 4-day bike/raft trip. We had a two-hour van ride which gave us a chance to chat and learn the names, hometowns and occupations of our trip mates. The group was quite diverse; a family from Washington DC, who had surprised their two boys with an adventure trip out west, two ladies from Philadelphia, a mother and her twenty-something son from North Carolina and a young man with his father from Colorado. The drive quickly changed from desert red rock to lush green and alpine almost within minutes.

The first day on the bike was 26 miles of rolling, alpine mountain biking. The temperature topped out at 75, maybe 80 degrees, which was...perfect - a Utah bluebird day! The group rolled into camp at different times, but we shared the same facial expression...grins of relief and enjoyment for making it to camp. We grabbed our bags, found a spot for tents

and set up our homes for the evening. Dinner was delicious; Dutch oven lasagna, greens, garlic bread and brownies. We had worked up a big appetite from miles on the bike and retired early with full tummies.

The next morning Michelle and I grabbed two mugs of piping hot camp coffee and took off for a morning walk to the overlook near camp. We sat on the rocks taking in the wondrous sights and sounds. Hawks were swooping above us, playing with the currents of the mountain breeze that chilled the morning, searching for their breakfast. In all directions we could see only alpine forests, mountains and the glowing morning sky with no signs of civilization, taking in the remoteness surrounding us.

Back at camp Carol, one of our group, was leading a ladies yoga session. Guides Brin and Dan were making breakfast while entertaining the young boys with some stories of past trips, perhaps some of them true.

Biking that day started with some tough climbs in the mountains. Later we hooked up with the famed Kokopelli Trail and the remainder of the day was all downhill, which made for some happy riders. From the Kokopelli, the ride ended on the long, screamin' decent down to Onion Creek.

Our day had begun at over 8,100 feet in elevation, naturally a bit chilly. We ended on the banks on the Colorado River at around 4100 feet and considerably warmer, mid-summer hot. To cool off, the three boys in the group ran down to the river and jumped in, followed shortly by the rest of the group. It felt so refreshing after another full day on the bike. Following diner we sat together, reminiscing about the past two days, as a mid-summer lightening storm lit up the sky off the distant peaks of the La Sal's. Mesmerized by the kaleidoscopic lightening storm, we failed to notice the full moon rising over the high cliffs behind us until someone shouted to turn and witness the last bits of the moon peering over the cliff walls. The night was suddenly very bright with nature's lamps -



Hang on tight! Here comes Skull!

a full moon and a gazillion stars.

The next two days were spent on beautiful Westwater Canyon section of the Colorado River. The first day we paddled through a section the guides call the "swimmer's rapids" and we all jumped in and floated through, the highlight of the day for many. We arrived at camp early and had time to hike and explore or just sit and relax on the rocky shore. River muscle soreness differs substantially from bike muscle soreness, but both come from rewarding activities.

The next morning our guides prepared us for "Skull Rapid" and warned us about the "Room of Doom" and "The Rock of Shock." There was a feeling of anxious anticipation. And the day did not disappoint, full of cool river action.

Skull Rapid is formed as the river makes a tight, hard turn to river left. The rapid has a narrow entrance with powerful hydraulics that funnels everything, including your raft, over the top of Skull rock and down into the monstrous hole at the bottom. Getting channeled into the hole is problem one. Trying to climb out is yet another! Dead ahead of Skull is The Rock of Shock, a solid wall flanked on the right by a powerful back eddy that flushes everything into The Room of Doom, a large cavern scoured out of the rock wall. Exciting? Way, way cool. Our successful run through Skull Rapid took some precise maneuvering and left even our seasoned Holiday river guides exhilarated! Still downriver were three more major rapids before exiting the canyon — Cross Bones, Sock-it-to-Me and Last Chance.

Reflecting on the journey, I would say it was the perfect combo of many things, but most importantly; old friends-new friends and, of course, the mountains and the river.

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The Healing Power of Outdoor Recreation

By Dr. John Librett

When Olympic skiing Medalist Jimmie Heuga was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in 1970, his doctors told him not to exercise, believing exercise would be detrimental to his health. After six years, frustrated with his sedentary lifestyle, Heuga borrowed a friend's bike and started exercising.

Ahead of his time, Heuga's evidence now shows that exercise improves health for MS survivors through cardiovascular fitness, range of motion, flexibility, increased energy, improved balance, and decreased muscle atrophy. Indeed, vast improvements in medicine and technology have led to a large and rapidly growing population of chronically ill individuals who can achieve high levels of activity.

Commensurate with improvements in medicine and technology, reviewing the evidence on the importance of exercise is like drinking from a fire hose. Active outdoor recreation can benefit those with chronic disease and disability including cancer, depression, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, multiple sclerosis, autism, traumatic brain injury, and spinal cord injury.

Unfortunately, less than 5% of individuals with a disability exercise. This lack of activity leads to a spiraling decline in health which significantly diminishes quality of life through increased diagnoses of diseases such as osteoporosis, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Alarming, the same trend of inactivity exists among children. According to a study released by the Kaiser Family Foundation the average American child now spends 7 hours 38 minutes a day watching TV and playing video games. This bleak reality has created a new phenomenon known as "the indoor child"; a trend that has led to a dramatic increase in the number of children diagnosed with a chronic disease (e.g. obesity, asthma, diabetes).

Today, over one-fourth (27%) of our children are diagnosed with a chronic disease and 14% with a disability (e.g. autism, acquired brain injury, hearing or sight impairment). Additionally, the American Heart Association recently reported that strokes have risen dramatically among the young (a 51% increase in 10 years) while dropping in older people. Sadly, we are creating a new generation at an alarming rate; one that lacks the health, experience, or interest in active outdoor recreation pursuits.

For all individuals, participation in active outdoor recreation represents an opportunity for a healthy lifestyle, forms friendships, develops social skills and creates meaning in life. Outdoor recreation also optimizes well-being

by reducing the risk of chronic disease. To help address this need Utah is home to seven world-class adaptive recreation organizations listed below. These organizations offer year-round activities including alpine skiing, camping, canoeing, cycling, horseback riding, rock climbing, kayaking, Nordic skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and white water rafting.

Utah's adaptive recreation outfitters are equipped to book agencies or groups, individuals, families, and clubs; all with a customized focus that would be expected from any professional outfitter. Providing the foundation to these opportunities and outcomes are Utah's world-class national parks, recreation areas, and renowned sport and recreation venues representing a vital community resource.

Regardless of the disease or disability Utah's outdoor playground and adaptive recreation organizations can help anyone achieve a new level of health and wellness. Whether breathing in the crisp air of the Wasatch Mountains, hiking among towering "hoodoos" in Bryce or rafting lazily down the Colorado River, you too can experience "Life Elevated."

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