

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

The National Park Service manages and protects more than 84 million acres in parks, monuments, battlefields, historic sites, preserves, seashores, lakeshores and more all across the United States. Here in Arizona, we have 22 national parks, extending from Coronado National Memorial in the extreme south to Pipe Spring National Monument way up north.

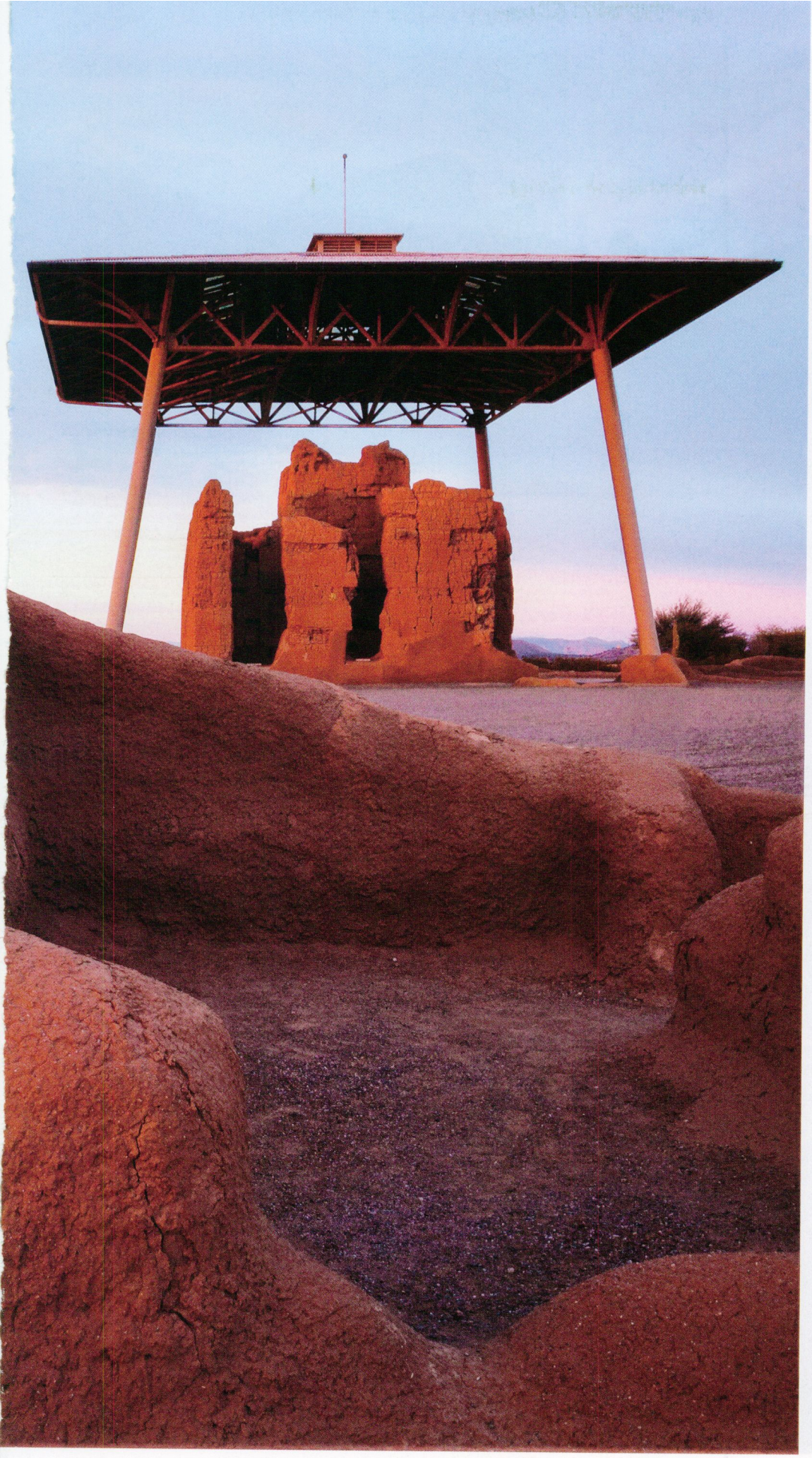
BY KATHY MONTGOMERY

It was artist George Catlin who first imagined a "nation's park" — a place to protect "man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty." It took a while, but, eventually, the National Park Service was established. And this month, it turns 100. To mark that milestone, we interviewed rangers at each of the parks in Arizona. We wanted to hear, from the people on the ground, what makes the parks in our state unique and worthy of protection. Because there is some jurisdictional crossover in the management of the parks, we included only those units managed by the National Park Service. Therefore, you won't see Agua Fria, Ironwood Forest, Sonoran Desert or Vermilion Cliffs national monuments, which are managed by the Bureau of Land Management; or Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, which is managed by a nonprofit group. Also, we left out Hohokam Pima National Monument, a Park Service unit that's closed to the public.

Canyon de Chelly National Monument

"A LOT OF PEOPLE make connections to this place," says Deputy Superintendent Wilson Hunter, who grew up in Canyon de Chelly and still calls it home. Maybe it's the layered canyon walls, monumental rocks and prehistoric pueblos, or maybe it's the place's spiritual history — many Navajo ceremonies originated at the canyon. "The Holy People are here," Hunter says. Navajo people still bring offerings and prayers. Some live in the canyon, tending to farms and livestock. But most visitors never see the best the canyon has to offer — primitive areas, beyond the roads, where motorized tours don't go. Authorized Navajo guides offer walking and horseback tours of these parts. "It's beautiful back there," Hunter says. The canyon walls grow taller, there's more wildlife and it's quiet. There are unique cultural resources there, too, he says — "some great pictographs and petroglyphs a lot of people don't see."

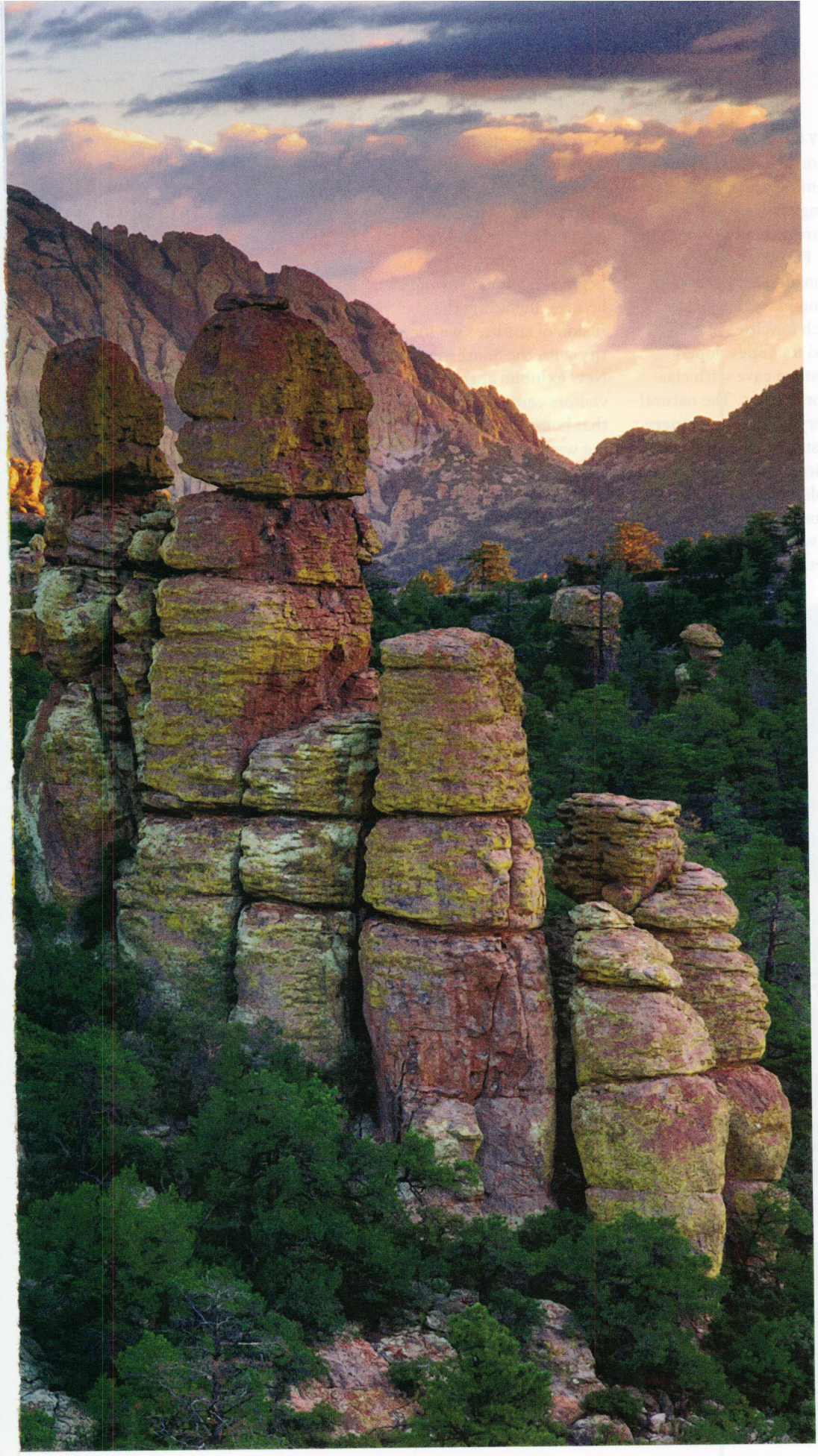
A rainbow forms over Spider Rock at Canyon de Chelly National Monument. "This was as magical a moment as I've ever witnessed," photographer George Stocking says. "I was just standing there in the rain, getting soaked, when the sun broke through. What luck!"



Casa Grande Ruins National Monument

CASA GRANDE REMAINS one of archaeology's biggest cold cases, despite being the nation's oldest archaeological preserve. That's what Diane Garcia, an interpretive ranger, likes about it. "There's a lot of mystery still," she says. "People are always coming up with new ideas." Thought at different times to be a fort, a granary, a temple or a watchtower for the complex canal system that surrounds it, the four-story house stands apart in the context of a large city and surrounding villages. "What we had here is more like Tucson," Garcia says. "It was a city. For all we know, the 'great house' was a hotel for people who were passing through." Formerly one in a series of "great houses," only Casa Grande remains. When you listen, Garcia says, you can hear the owls and bats that nest inside it. "You start thinking you can hear other things — that you can hear the past."

An awning protects the "great house" at Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, which Larry Lindahl photographed at sunset. "The ancient adobe came alive with color," he says. "The heat became tempered, and sweet light began to glow. It was a perfect time to ponder the past."



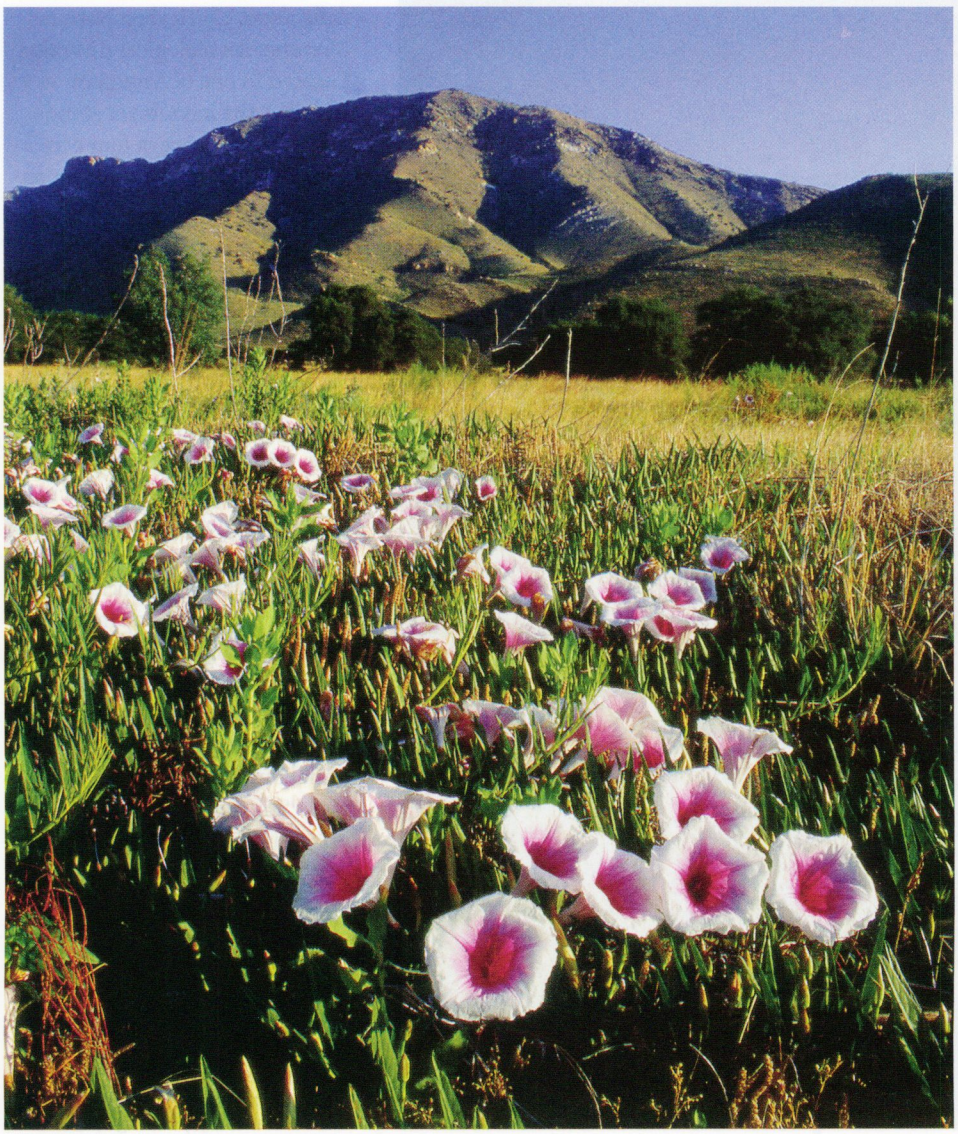
Chiricahua National Monument

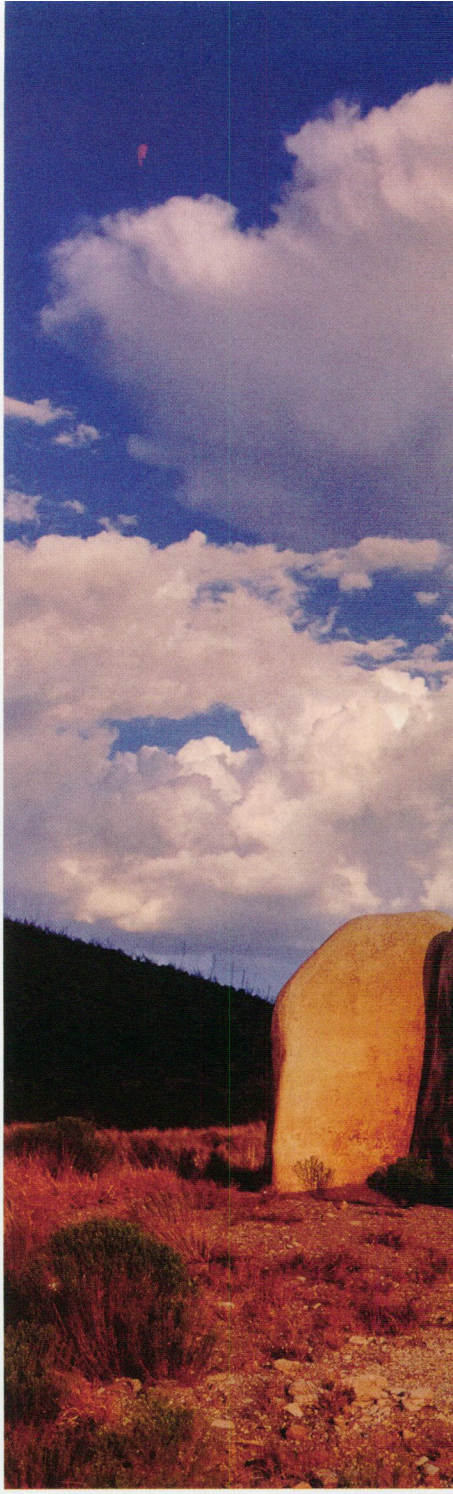
SUZANNE MOODY, a visitors center ranger, talks enthusiastically about Chiricahua National Monument's biological diversity. Located in one of Arizona's "sky islands," the monument stands at the convergence of four ecosystems. "But the national monument is really about the crazy geology," she says. Ice and water carved layers of 27 million-year-old welded volcanic ash into fantastical faces, animal shapes and balancing rocks. Though born of a violent eruption, it's a quiet, peaceful area today, she says, with an "amazingly beautiful landscape and a forest of rock spires." Two of Moody's favorite spots are the Grotto, a cave-like passage through the rocks along the Echo Canyon Loop, and the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain, particularly at sunset. "The silence may feel like a real presence, interrupted by the occasional bird call or breeze," she says. "Chiricahua's many surprises and a spiritual feeling often create a very personal connection to the place."

Chiricahua National Monument's rhyolite hoodoos reach skyward. "Hiking the monument's trails is pure pleasure," photographer Mark Frank says. "A warm sunrise or sunset spotlight is a bonus for those of us who enjoy framing a photo."

Coronado National Memorial

MANY COME TO Coronado National Memorial for its unique ecosystem, its hiking trails — which feature sweeping views of land Francisco Vázquez de Coronado likely crossed during his 16th century search for cities of gold — and its undeveloped limestone cave with classic formations. The natural history is amazing, ranger Christopher Bentley admits. But he also wants people to understand why the memorial exists and why we should remember something that happened so long ago. "It's a bigger story than Vázquez de Coronado," he says. "It's a bigger story than a group of people." Coronado's expedition marked the beginning of many things, he says, including the fusion of cultures we identify with the Southwest. New exhibits at the visitors center help bring that home in an engaging way, with chain mail to try on, a tortilla press to play with and spices, introduced by the Spanish, that became hallmarks of Southwestern cuisine.





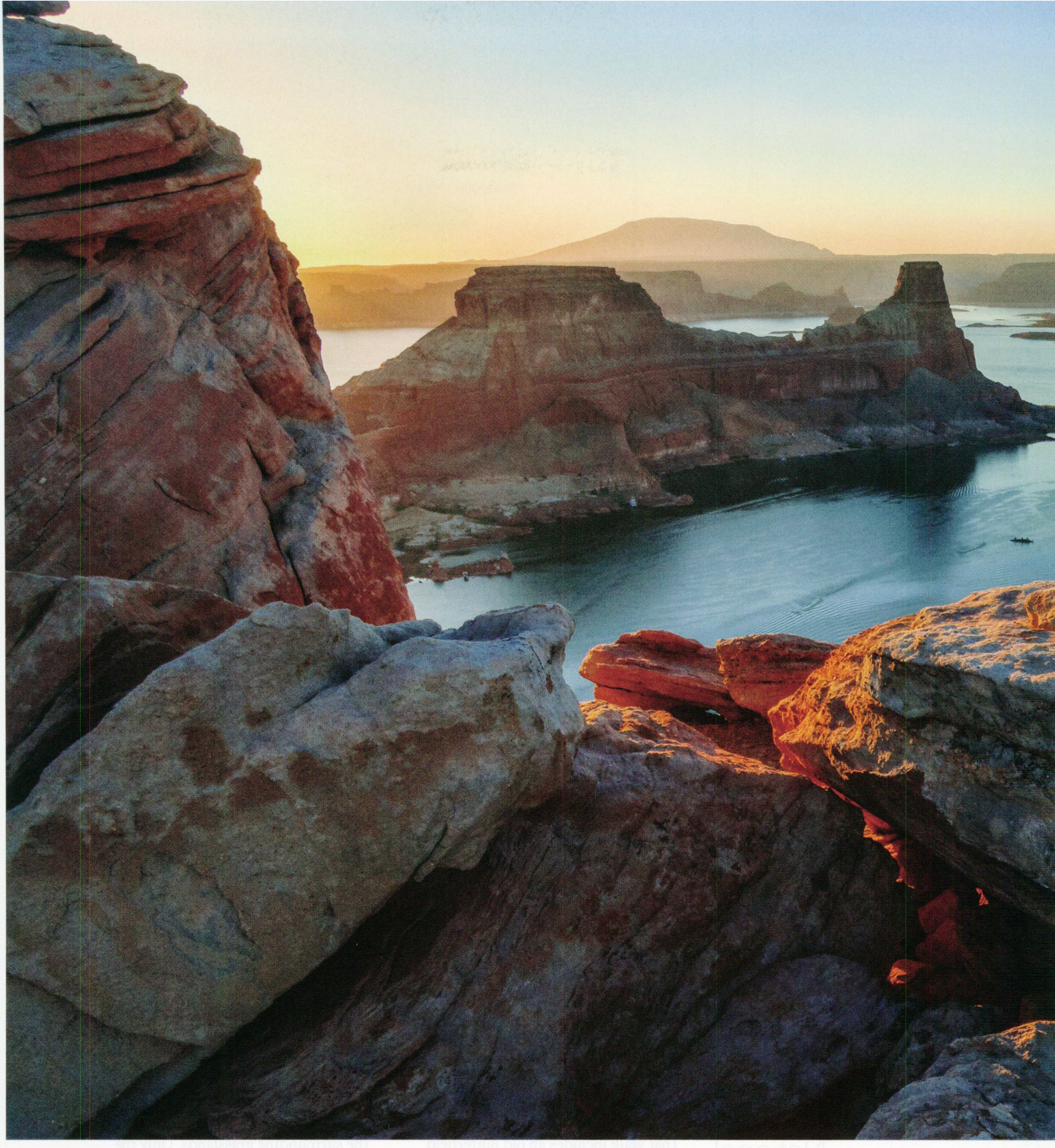
LEFT: Morning glories bloom at Coronado National Memorial beneath the southern end of the Huachuca Mountains. "Coronado is one of the lesser-known national park units, so sometimes I have the whole place to myself," photographer Dave Bly says. "Photographing around sunrise or sunset is so quiet and peaceful."

ABOVE: To make this photo of the weathered adobe walls of Fort Bowie National Historic Site, photographer George Stocking visited during monsoon season — which may have been a bad idea. "At one point, lightning struck about 50 yards behind me and I saw my shadow from the flash in front of me," he says. "At that point, I was pretty sure I was going to die, but I got my images."



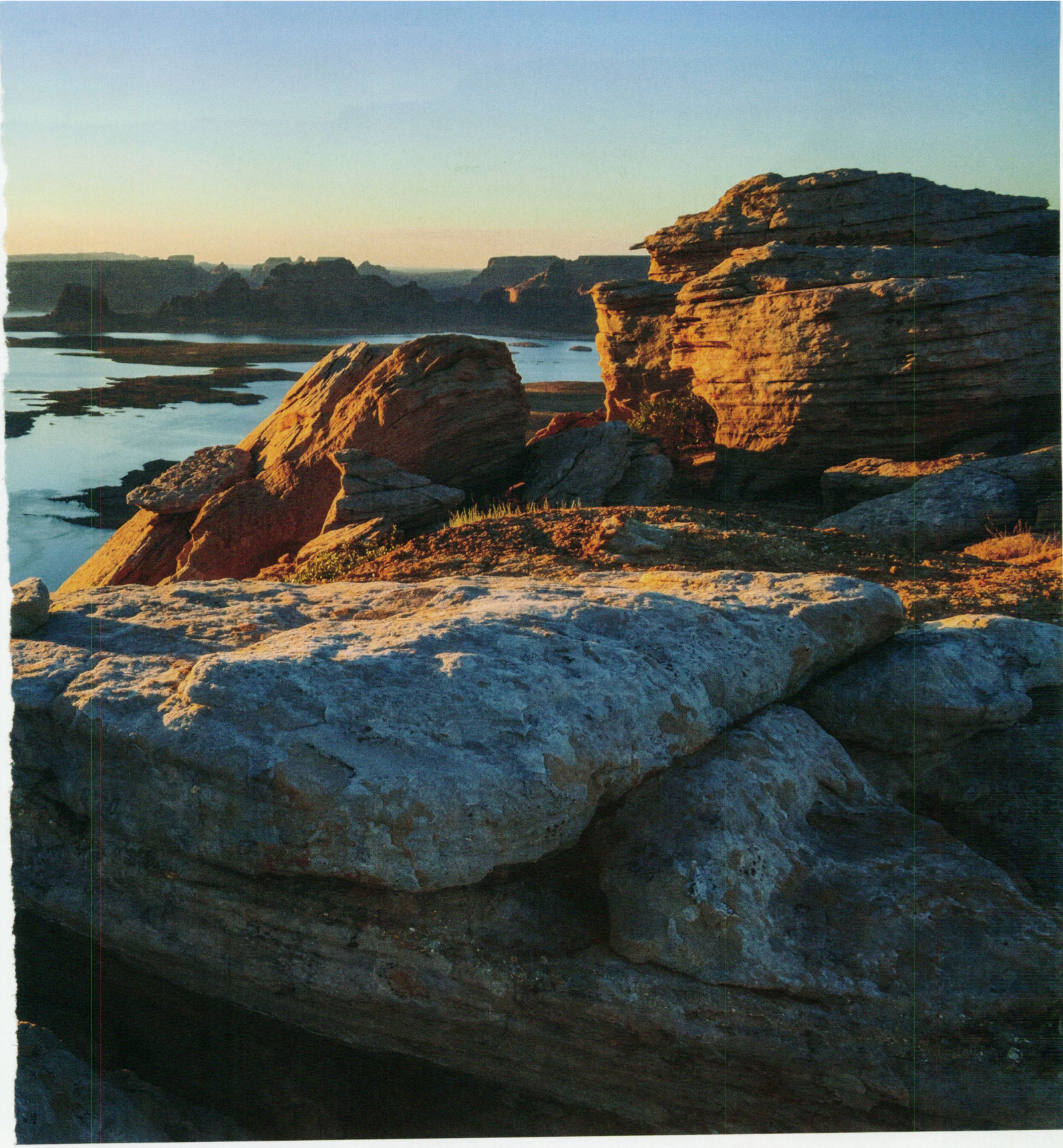
Fort Bowie National Historic Site

"ONE OF THE MOST unique things about this park is that you can't just drive up," says Larry Ludwig, a park historian. "You have that mile-and-a-half walk in. It's kind of a walk through history." That walk includes an old Butterfield stage station, the ruins of two forts and Apache Pass, where young, inexperienced Lieutenant George Bascom ignited the Apache Wars in 1861. In 1862, Apaches ambushed members of California-based infantry and cavalry regiments in the pass. Within weeks, the troops had erected a makeshift fortress they called Fort Bowie; later, they built a more substantial fort. Nature has reclaimed much of the structures, whose adobe walls appear to melt into the surrounding grasslands. Only the graveyard has been partly restored. Grave markers include a Medal of Honor recipient and one of Geronimo's sons. "It's neat how all of this is spread along the trail," Ludwig says. "You couldn't have designed it better."



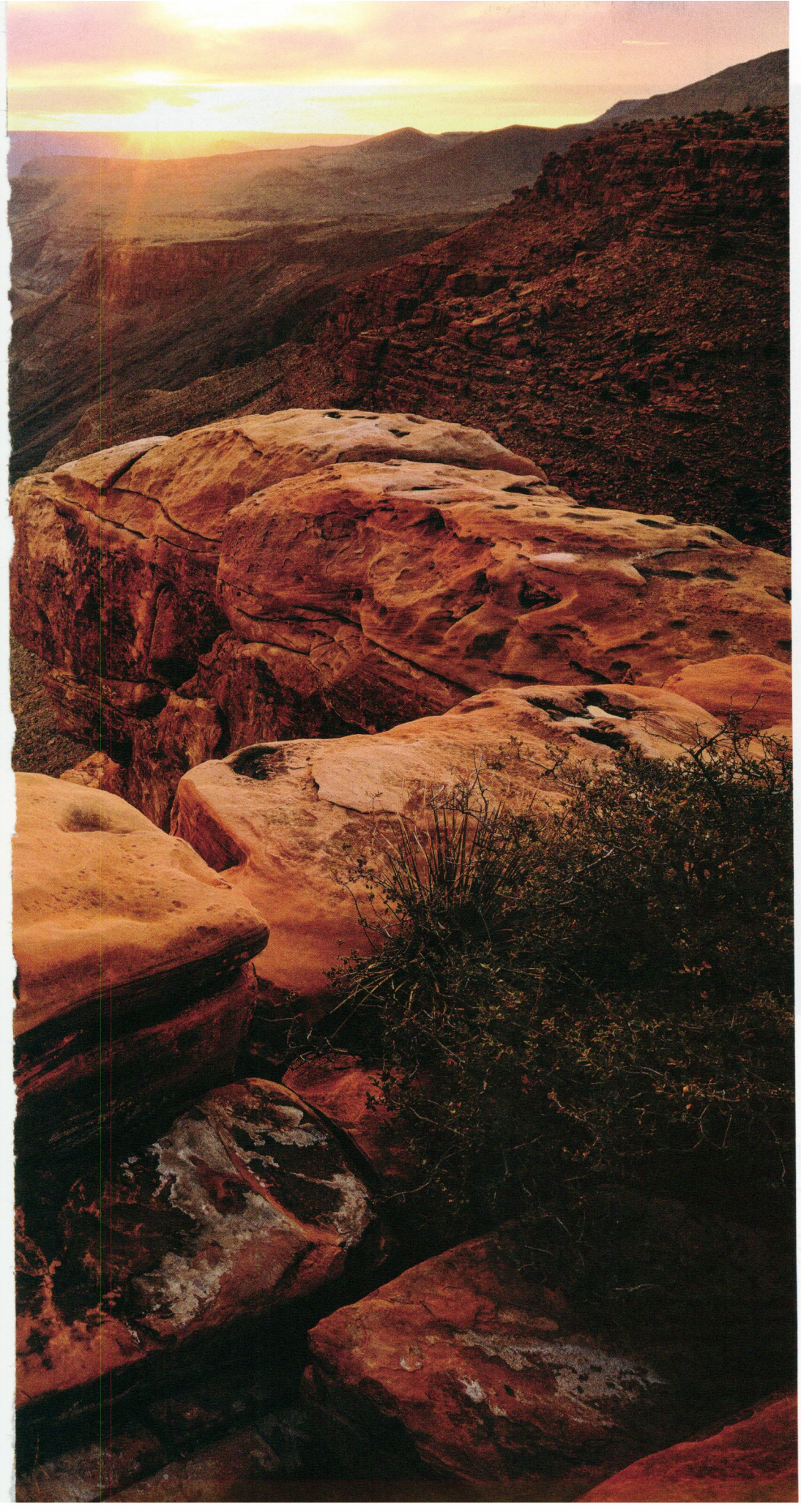
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

GLEN CANYON IS a landscape of stories, says Cynthia Sequanna, an interpretive ranger. There are stories about paleontology and geology that reveal Glen Canyon's past, stories about plants and animals, and stories about 10,000 years of human history. "Once you learn some of these stories, you start developing an intimate relationship with this place," she says. Sequanna grew up at the Grand Canyon, Glen Canyon's downstream neighbor, where she developed



a love for the Colorado River. So it's not surprising that one of her favorite places in this recreation area is the stretch of river between Lees Ferry and Glen Canyon Dam. "It's a peaceful, beautiful place," she says, "a land of extremes, still wild in many ways, with its own rich stories." Sequanna encourages visitors to learn these stories and carry them on. Most importantly, she urges people to create their own stories and find their place in the landscape.

The layered buttes of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area rise from the tranquil Lake Powell. "The lake reflects the moods of the sky," photographer George Stocking says. "I'm drawn by its quiet stillness and the view of Navajo Mountain in the distance."



Grand Canyon National Park

BRIAN GATLIN SPENT a lot of time exploring Colorado's mountains and Utah's deserts before visiting the Grand Canyon, but his first view of the Canyon blew away anything he'd ever seen. After a couple of visits, he knew he needed to figure out a way to be there for more than a week at a time. In 2002, he came back as a seasonal ranger, and now he supervises interpretation on the east side of the park, where visitors often drive past exceptional vistas such as Desert View and Lipan Point without stopping. "It's a little farther away from the main center of visitation, which gives it a little more of a quiet feel," Gatlin says. "I think that gives the Canyon an extra opportunity to speak to you." But people should be careful when they visit, he says. "They might end up like me and find themselves unable to leave."

Toroweap Overlook, on the west side of Grand Canyon National Park, offers a view of the Colorado River 3,000 feet below. "I like shooting at Toroweap because of the exhilaration of heights," photographer David Muench says. "The sandstone rims give it a sense of place. I've enjoyed this point since making my first photograph of it in the 1960s."



Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

"THIS COUNTRY HAS its special charms," says Greg Woodall, an archaeological technician for the monument. "There are no towns out there, there are no cities, there are no power lines. It's just big, wide-open space." Jointly managed by the Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, the monument, north of the Grand Canyon, includes more than a million acres of land so remote that cellphones don't work, roads aren't paved, and informed travelers carry two spare tires. It also offers a pristine night sky. "I camp out lots of nights, and it's spectacular," Woodall says. "Last summer, I got to watch the Milky Way, in all its glory, shifting across the sky." And, while remote, the park protects a peopled landscape. "I have a million stories about the families that have lived there," Woodall says. "Paiute families, ranching families, old miners. Part of what we try to do at the monument is tell those stories."

ABOVE: Sunset lights the ribbons of cliffs below Kelly Point at Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. "Like many Grand Canyon vistas, there's a sense of vastness there that's too grand to comprehend," photographer Jack Dykinga says. "Our minds simplify by seeing it as two-dimensional."

Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site

"WHEN I COME TO WORK, it takes me back in time," Kathy Tabaha says. As a girl, the park ranger came with her mother to sell rugs, just as Tabaha's great-grandmother had. Tabaha's grandparents hauled food for Hubbell sheepherders, and her great-grandfather was a Hubbell freighter; John Lorenzo Hubbell named him Lame Jim after a wagon accident left him with a limp. Tabaha's grandmother had a name for Hubbell: Naakaii Sání, or "Old Mexican." Now, Tabaha cares for the trading post's museum collection, which includes everything from archaeological artifacts and farm implements to artwork and oral histories, which Tabaha collects and transcribes. Trading continues, as it has for more than 100 years. "That makes it so special and so unique," Tabaha says. Only today, the trader is Navajo. Tabaha expects to retire from Hubbell, as her uncle and cousin have. And with nearly 30 years at the trading post, she also has become part of its history.

BELOW: Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site includes the former home of the Hubbell family. "The interior is rich in color and texture, but quite dark," photographer George H.H. Huey says. "My challenge was to light the room without the result appearing artificial."





Lake Mead National Recreation Area

MARK HNAT BELIEVES the diversity at Lake Mead National Recreation Area makes it unique in the Park Service. Katherine Landing offers the stereotypical lake experience, with motorboats and Jet Skis, while those who want to avoid crowds head for Temple Bar. In between lie spots for fishing, hiking, canyoneering and backcountry driving. But Hnat's favorite area is Lake Mohave, between Hoover Dam and Willow Beach. Though technically a lake, the dammed stretch of the Colorado River passing through Black Canyon is river-esque, with narrow passages and high canyon walls. "The thing that's nice



about that is you slow down the pace," says Hnat, the park's deputy chief ranger. Motorized boats are banned two days a week, making it easier to spot bighorn sheep and other wildlife. Side canyons — with thermal pools, warm waterfalls and a cave that glows like a jewel — provide highlights along the way.

Sunset paints the buttes and calm water of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. "The lake is so vast and offers so many areas to explore that it's easy to find perfect solitude there," photographer Nick Berezenko says, "but a storm that grants a beautiful sunset can also quickly whip up some furious waves."



Montezuma Castle National Monument

"NO MATTER HOW many times I have walked down the trail at Montezuma Castle, I am always stunned at the view and in awe of the ingenuity of the people who lived there," says Anne Worthington, a park guide. In 1896, soldiers from Fort Verde discovered the ancient cliff dwellings near Beaver Creek. Assuming Aztecs built them, the soldiers named the ruins for the ancient ruler. Today, we know the ancient culture that archaeologists call the Sinagua built the 20-room "castle," one of the best-preserved cliff dwellings in North America and one of the nation's first national monuments. The site includes a detached section called Montezuma Well, added to the monument in 1947. It's named for a large sinkhole fed by underwater springs, with a pit house, rock shelters, pueblo ruins and a lush, shaded trail. Worthington watched two otters emerge from behind a large sycamore one day at the trail to the well's outlet. They headed down the trail just like any other visitor, then dived into the irrigation ditch and floated away.

ABOVE: In direct sunlight, the white cliffs at Montezuma Castle National Monument can be almost blinding. "I moved far enough to my left to allow branches and leaves to filter out some of the brightest light," photographer George H.H. Huey says. "That allowed the ruin to become the visual center of attention."

RIGHT: "When I first saw Montezuma Castle in person, I was astonished by how high above the ground it sits," photographer Mark Lipczynski says. "It makes me wonder about the people who lived there. In this shot, I tried to emphasize the height by shooting from a low vantage point."



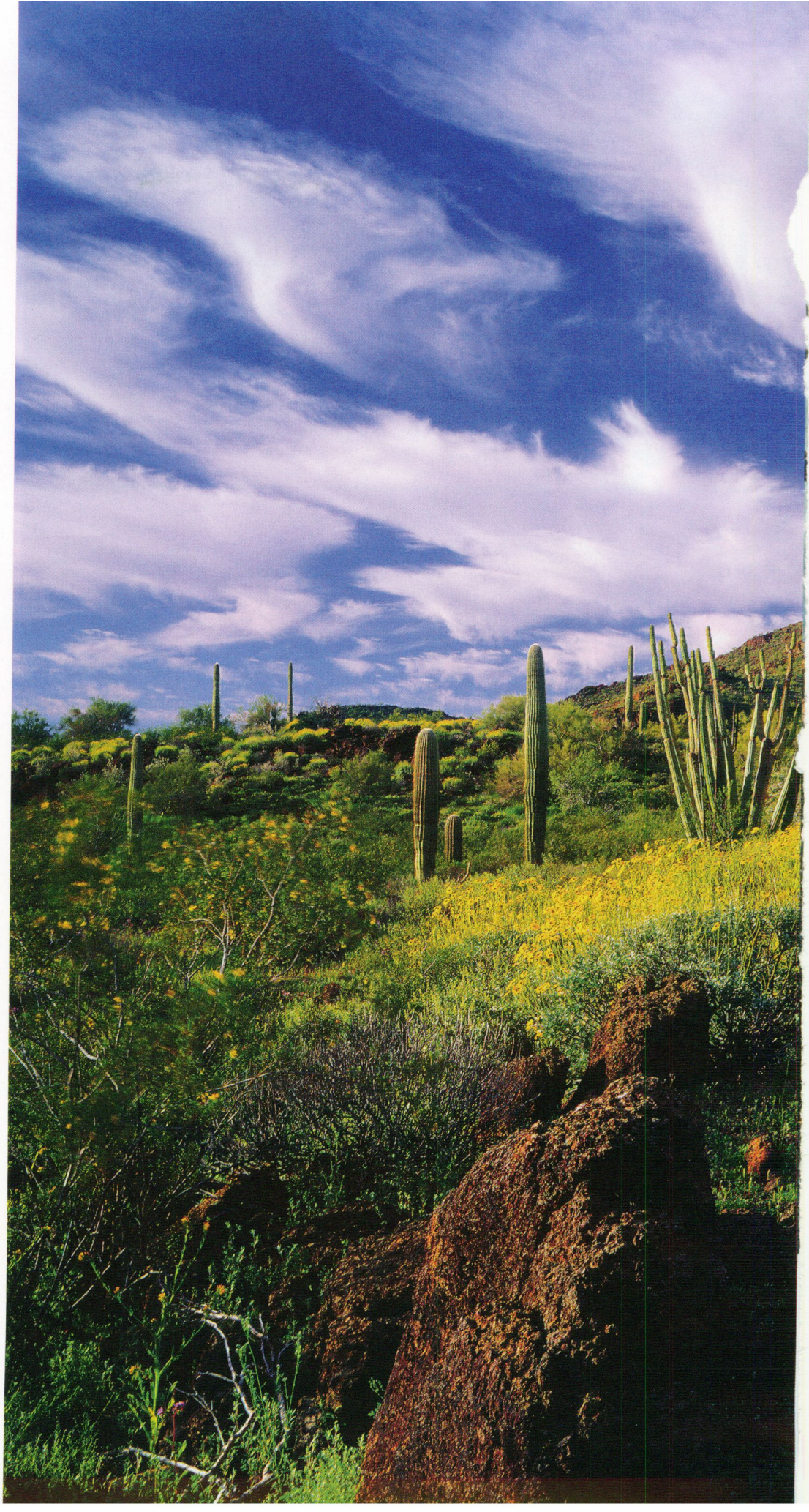
Navajo National Monument

PART OF WHAT makes Navajo National Monument special to lead ranger Curlinda Mitchell is the quiet, pristine canyon that preserves not only the area's cultural history, but also its natural history, including an ancient forest that's a relic of the Ice Age. Douglas firs, birches and aspens normally found at much higher elevations grow in the canyon, where temperatures stay in the mid-70s when it's 90 degrees on the rim. The monument includes three non-contiguous sites on the Navajo Nation, each containing the remains of Ancestral Puebloan villages. "We are unique because we have a whole staff of local Native interpreters," Mitchell says. "We all feel a connection to the site." She notes that after the Puebloan people abandoned these sites, the Navajos occupied the area but left the sites undisturbed for hundreds of years. Anglo explorers found storage areas, sandals and tools just as they were left, Mitchell says. The Navajo people became, in that sense, the sites' first caretakers.

An overlook at Navajo National Monument offers a view of Betatakin Ruin, one of three major cliff dwellings at the monument. "To me, this is the heartland of the Ancestral Puebloans," photographer David Muench says. "As a photographer, the change of seasons has always drawn me here, because it can always surprise me with different moods."

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

ORGAN PIPE took Scott Babinowich by surprise. The supervisory ranger and East Coast native imagined the desert as hot, dry and sandy. What he found at Organ Pipe was lush, full of life and, in a sense, undiscovered. "You could head out into the park and find a cool rock or a bizarre-looking cactus that even the ecologist who had been here for 20 years hadn't seen," he says. Quitobaquito Springs, near the Mexican border, was another surprise. "You're driving for 40 minutes in one of the hottest parts of the park," Babinowich says. "It's kind of sandy. There are [cactuses], but not a lot of trees. And in the middle of that, you find a 2-acre pond" that supports birds such as the caracara, an endangered fish found nowhere else and 11,000 years of human history. To Babinowich, Quitobaquito provides a snapshot of everything unique about the monument. "It just defies your expectations," he says.



Brittlebush blooms surround the namesakes of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. "I love the rugged landscape at Organ Pipe, particularly when it's softened by the flowers and plant life during a good spring," photographer Laurence Parent says. "I had a great sky that morning."



Petrified Forest National Park

IT'S NO SURPRISE that paleontologist Bill Parker loves the past. And Petrified Forest National Park has a lot to love, with one of the richest late-Triassic fossil records in the world. Nearly 90 species of plants and animals were first discovered in the park's fossils, and discoveries continue. "Every time we go out, we pretty much find something new," Parker says. But Petrified Forest has also been a national park for 110 years, which feeds Parker's alter ego of park historian. He's fascinated by how people have experienced the park over time, traveling by wagon over a bumpy Territorial road, in finned cars along Route 66 and by interstate. The park preserves a lot of that history, too, including a stretch of the "Mother Road." "There's just a ton of history here," he says. "History of the park itself. That's one of the things I really enjoy sharing with people."

Last light falls on the Painted Desert behind the ancient trees of Petrified Forest National Park. "The backcountry area of the park is a must-see for visitors," photographer Robert Jasany says. "The combination of petrified wood and a backdrop of blue and purple hills leaves a lasting impression."



Pipe Spring National Monument

PEOPLE COME to Pipe Spring expecting only to learn about the cultures the monument's namesake water source sustained, primarily Ancestral Puebloans, Kaibab Paiutes and Mormon pioneers, who built a fort over the spring. But when visitors ask Paula Ogden-Muse, the chief of interpretation, what the place is about, she says it's about the creatures, too. "We're a pearl in a string of pearls" that includes surrounding tribal and federal lands, she says. And it's the birds, the monarch butterflies, the 18 species of bats and the desert bighorn sheep that string those pearls together. Birds and pollinators flock to the monument's demonstration garden, planted with sunflowers that acknowledge the "old ones"; corn and beans, cultivated by the Paiutes; and sorghum and melons, grown by homesteaders. Orioles, coyotes and foxes feast on grapes from a 100-year-old vine. Visitors nibble peas and beans in summer or take home a pumpkin in the fall.

Photographer Nick Berezenko appreciates Pipe Spring National Monument's immaculately restored buildings and native flower species. "I also like the ranger demonstrations of corn growing, crocheting and quilting, along with local ranchers telling colorful campfire tales," he says.

Saguaro National Park

CAROLYN HARPER LOVES the diversity of Saguaro National Park, which rises from classic Sonoran Desert to forested peaks. But the Phoenix native came to the park particularly for the desert. Harper, a next-generation ranger, enjoys educating people while getting their hands dirty, which is why she loves her work on this year's centennial saguaro survey. Tohono O'odham tribal members consider the famously anthropomorphic cactuses to be their ancestors, and, like people, the cactuses are counted in a census every 10 years to monitor the health of the population. This year's off-schedule census allows citizen scientists, who focus on establishment of young saguaros, to join park staff in research during the Park Service's 100th birthday celebration. The census has taken Harper to some special areas of the park, such as the King Canyon Trail, a quiet place filled with chattering Gambel's quail and early-spring poppies. "It's just a really wonderful place to experience the desert as it is," she says.



Fog shrouds the iconic saguaros of Saguaro National Park. "The park offers a variety of photo opportunities," photographer Michael Jennings says. "The rugged landscape, unique vegetation and dramatic skies provide spectacular and ever-changing views."



Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument

SUNSET CRATER FIGURES prominently in the tales of many Native American tribes, including a Hopi origin story. The monument has its own origin story, one that Hilary Clark, an interpretive ranger, finds compelling. In the late 1920s, film crews scouted the volcano as a possible setting for the movie *Avalanche*, based on a Zane Grey novel. When Museum of Northern Arizona cofounder Harold S. Colton learned the 1,000-foot-tall cinder cone might be dynamited, he galvanized the community in a preservation effort that ended with Sunset Crater's designation as a national monument. Colton discovered Sinaguan-style pit houses buried beneath the cinders in 1930. The archaeologist was able to more accurately date the eruption by analyzing tree rings at these sites, using a technique that also has local origins. "The science of dendrochronology was discovered in Flagstaff, in 1904, by A.E. Douglass," Clark says. "So it seems very fitting."

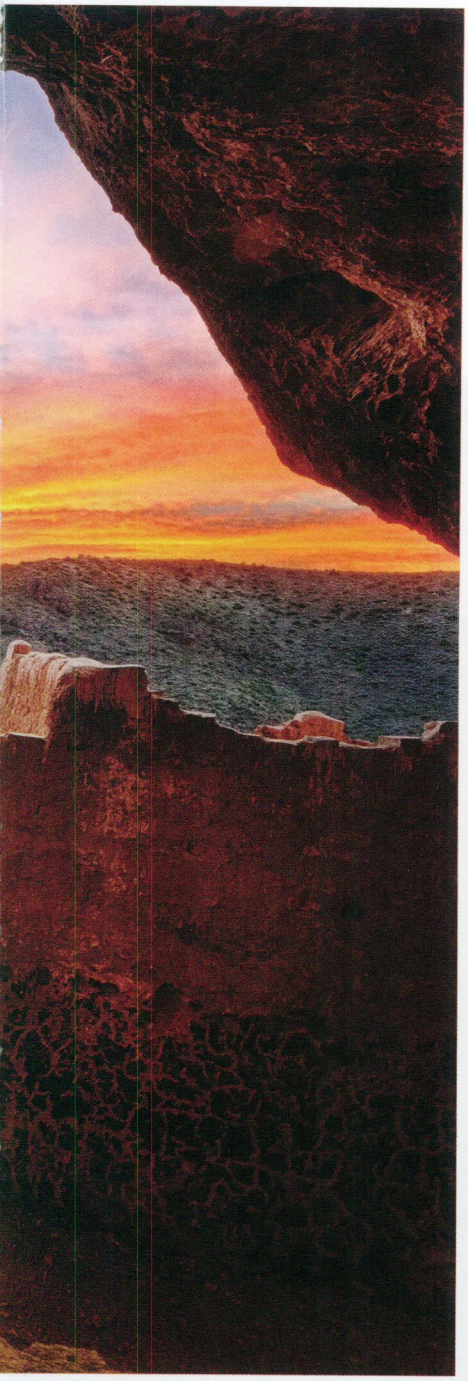
Photographer Tom Danielsen, a longtime *Arizona Highways* contributor, died in 2015. His widow, Barbara, says this shot of Sunset Crater was one of his favorites. "He had to do quite a bit of climbing and scrambling to find the perfect vantage point," she says. "He liked that it illustrates the turbulent history of volcanism in Arizona."



Tonto National Monument

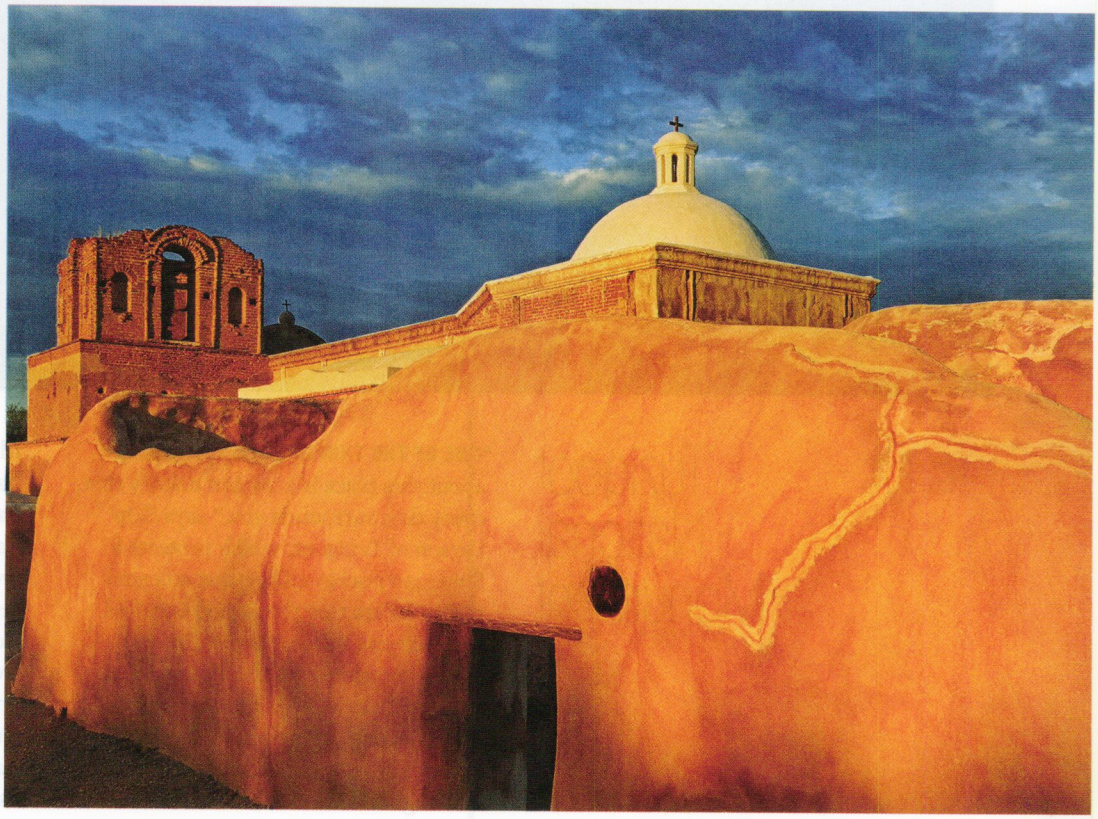
AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST, Duane Hubbard worked on many of the nearly 100 archaeological sites at Tonto, one of the oldest monuments in the Park Service and the only one devoted to the Salado people. So he feels connected to the sites, particularly when he sees the fingerprints of the builders, including children's prints, in the plaster. "I have two kids of my own, and I think that's a personal connection," he says. Most of the sites are closed to protect them, but two well-preserved dwellings remain open.

And unlike at many parks, visitors can still walk into these 700-year-old ruins. "You can have that experience, that feeling, because of how well preserved they are," Hubbard says. "The rooms are intact to actually see how people built these sites." Now, as the monument's superintendent, Hubbard stays connected by regularly hiking to the cliff dwellings that overlook the monument. It reminds him, he says, why he comes to work every day.



Tumacácori National Historical Park

"PEOPLE OFTEN COMMENT on the peacefulness of the site and the feeling of the presence of history," says Anita Badertscher of Tumacácori, one of three missions the park protects. "There's something about seeing the bare bones of the structures that hits people." That history is complicated and layered, and there are elements of it everywhere: an orchard planted with heritage fruit trees, a garden designed in the 1930s, tortilla makers and other cultural demonstrations during the park's peak season. Tumacácori also protects a mile of riparian habitat along the Santa Cruz River. But Badertscher's favorite place is the church at Tumacácori, particularly when she's alone. "The light when it's closing time is beautiful," the chief of interpretation says. "I like to sing in that space. The dome helps create good acoustics, and if you can sing at all, it sounds beautiful."

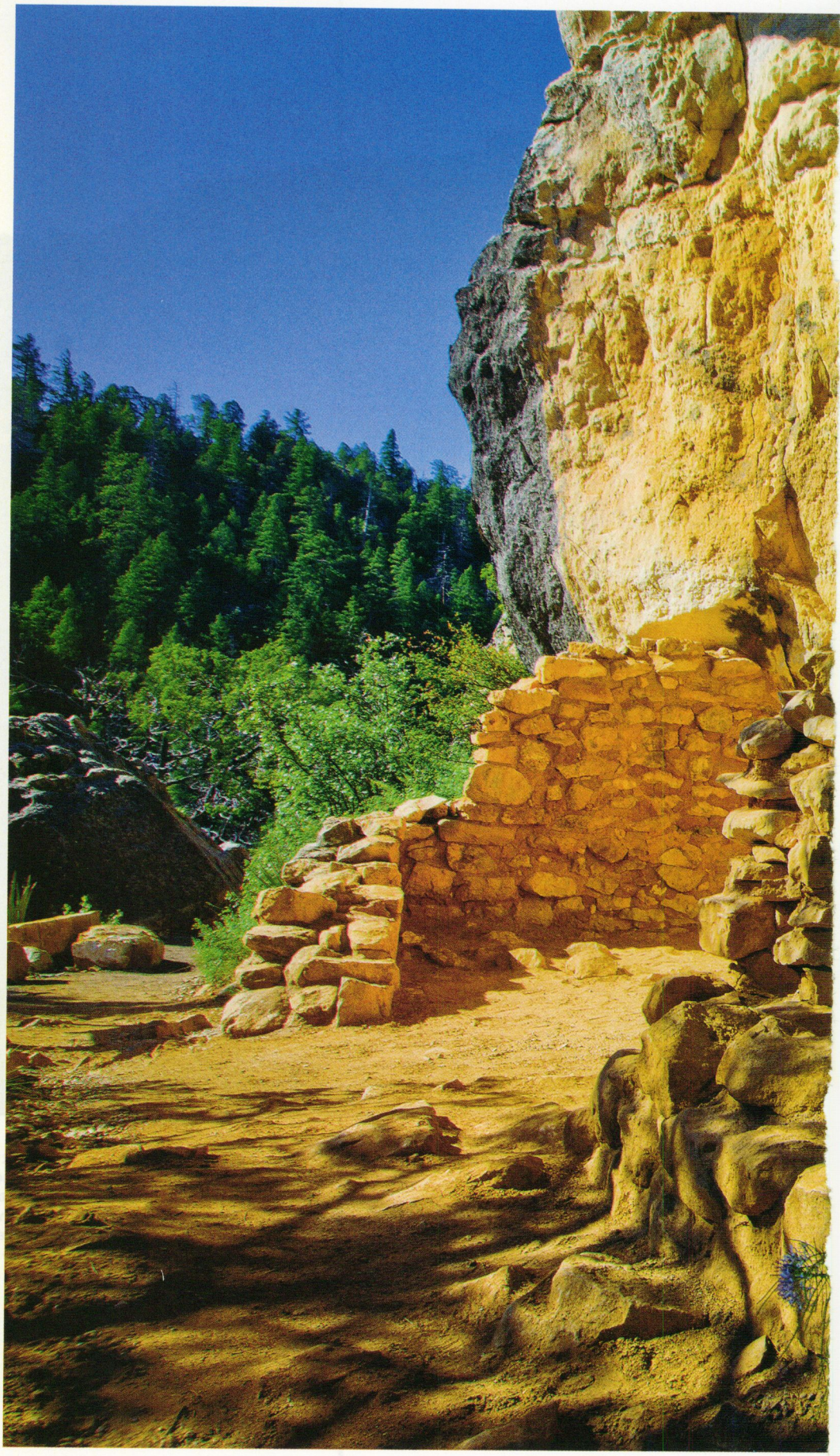


ABOVE: Larry Lindahl got a rare opportunity to photograph this Tonto National Monument cliff dwelling at sunrise. "Our tripods were set up, but the sky didn't look promising," Lindahl says. "Finally, a hint of color began to glow on the belly of the clouds. In that moment, I wondered about the ancient dwellers watching and waiting for sunrise."

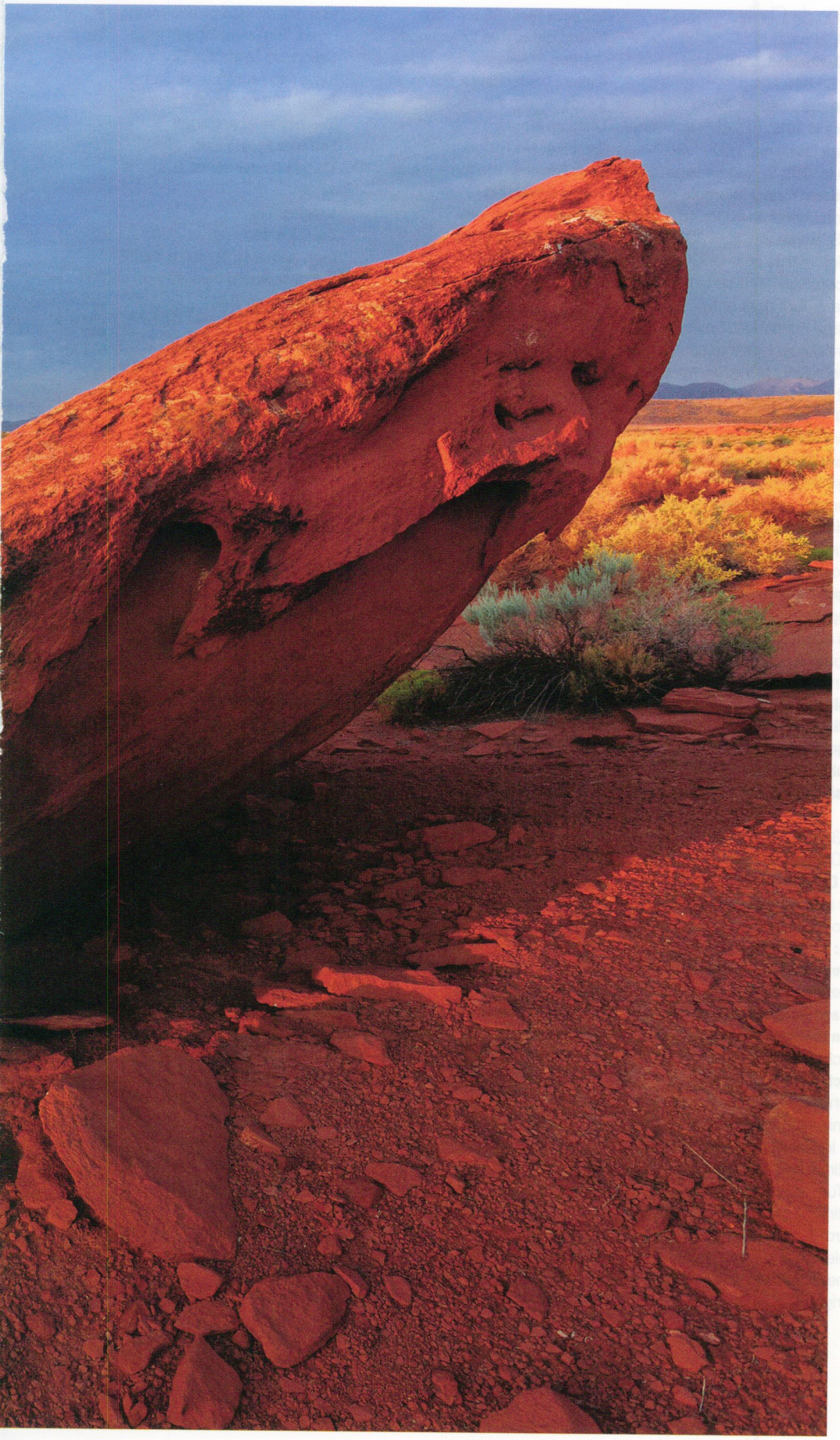
RIGHT: At sunrise, trees cast shadows on the walls of one of the old missions at Tumacácori National Historical Park, where photographer Tom Daniel camped during a special event. "In the evening, an overcast sky and flat light made photography impossible," he says. "The morning brought a dramatic storm and glorious light."

Walnut Canyon National Monument

AS AN INTERN, Steven Rossi lived on the edge of Walnut Canyon in housing the Civilian Conservation Corps built. He and his wife spent a lot of time listening to birdsong echo off the canyon walls and watching the seasons turn. Living there, seeing the dwellings of the ancient people and telling their stories gave him a deep appreciation for the ancients' ability to create a community in the canyon for 200 years. "I really started to feel part of it," says Rossi, the park's education coordinator. He also felt a connection to the young men of the CCC who helped build the park during the Great Depression. Now, as a ranger, he carries that work forward. Rossi still comes to Walnut Canyon when he wants to escape the stresses of modern life. "It's something that is very peaceful to me," he says. "It's like going back in time. It's like walking back into history."



Wildflowers grow near one of the ancient cliff dwellings at Walnut Canyon National Monument. "There's something intimate and revealing about being able to actually walk into the ruins and touch the metates that corn was ground on more than 800 years ago," photographer Nick Berezenko says.



Wupatki National Monument

"WUPATKI FEELS LIKE a wild place," says Robert Wallace, an interpretive park ranger. "The wide-open spaces, distant horizons and variety of rocks — like the bones of the Earth — make the place unique." That allows for spectacular, unobstructed views of sunrise and sunset, especially during guided overnight backcountry hikes. These and other discovery hikes offer a wider view of the park and a greater understanding of the many cultures that lived and gathered at Wupatki over thousands of years. Wallace gets inspiration from these ancient people who lived simply and successfully. They give him hope for himself and for people in general. "The Puebloans obtained everything they needed from the land: their food, their water, their building materials," he says. "Yet they had a much lighter impact on the natural world than we do today. We can learn a lot from them about reducing our impact and getting by with less."

"To me, Wupatki National Monument is kind of like an ancient ghost town," photographer George Stocking says. "Wukoki Pueblo draws my attention more than the others — it's isolated and windswept, like a freighter battling an endless wind. I can't turn my camera away."