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## Letters

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# Letters

## Wilderness Management Challenges

The interview with Peter Landres by Rebecca Oreskes (“The Ecological Value of Wilderness,” Summer/Fall 2014, LXV no. 2, pages 94–102) was very informative. It revealed many of the problems facing the agencies that try to maintain the difficult balance between use and protection. Whenever discussions come up about wilderness from local, state, or national individuals, or conservationists, I call to mind the comments made in the 1940s by author Wallace Stegner:

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world. . . .

—Mike De Luca, *Mahwah, New Jersey*

*Editor’s note: De Luca quotes the famous 1960 letter from novelist Wallace Stegner to David E. Pesonen of the federal Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission.*

## Founder of AMC’s Mountains and Music Remembers

When I was 10, I was allowed to learn skiing. Our nanny, Frau Ada Aigner, taught me to ski in the deep snow of one of the lower slopes of Austria’s highest mountains. As an adult, I skied Hillman’s Highway, the gash on the left-hand side of Tuckerman Ravine on Mount Washington in New Hampshire. On one occasion, I skied over the lip of the plateau above the ravine, and dropped down a slot with a 55-degree slope into the ravine. Even 60 years later, I can

still see that 10-foot-wide gash from which one can drop down into the ravine from the plateau above it. One absolutely had to turn left, or else fall into the 100-foot crevasse on the right. During my era, one skier did come to grief in that crevasse.

After I joined the Appalachian Mountain Club, I led many cross-country skiing weekends from the headquarters of Pinkham Notch camp. I also vacationed in Utah, where one can ski deep, untracked snow. I used to tell my friends that when I could no longer walk, I would still be able to ski. Now that I am 90, I must admit that I was wrong.

I began kayaking on whitewater when I was 49. For the first five years, I used a Grumman canoe that had a keel. It hung up on rocks instead of gliding over them, each time treating me to a cold swim from which my fellow AMC boaters rescued me. After I switched to a kayak, I swam far less in whitewater and learned to surf on standing waves, which is great fun. When paddling down a whitewater river, one can see thousands of silvery tongues appearing, disappearing, and reappearing again on the surface of the water. They contrast with the green of the shrubs on the banks of the stream, above which are billowing clouds or blue sky.

I have always loved music and learned to play the piano when I was about seven. Years later, I organized the AMC Music Committee and chose my best man, [amateur flute player] Lenny Berman, as its music director. Our committee was renamed Mountains and Music. Many participants are still alive and may wish to contribute reminiscences.

In our youth, my wife and I were counselors at summer camps, where we taught swimming and canoeing. So when we bought a home, we bought one on the shore of a pond. I have now lived in that house nearly 40 years. As I write, the setting sun has tinged the clouds above the pond, and their reflections on the water have a rosy hue. Even in the dim evening light, the trees on the opposite shore glow with a reddish-brown hue, and all is quiet.

—Arnold E. Reif, Wellesley, Massachusetts

*Editor's note: The writer is a retired cancer researcher. He organized the Boston Chapter's first music weekend in 1976. We welcome memories of those who took part in AMC's Mountains and Music. For more, see [amcboston.org/committees/music/our-history](http://amcboston.org/committees/music/our-history).*

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*“I started reading Appalachia for the accident reports, but I kept reading for the great features.”—Mohamed Ellozy, subscriber*

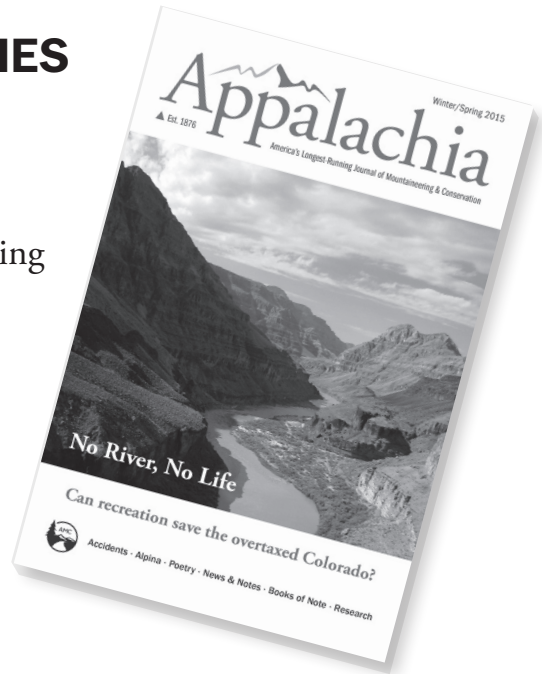
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