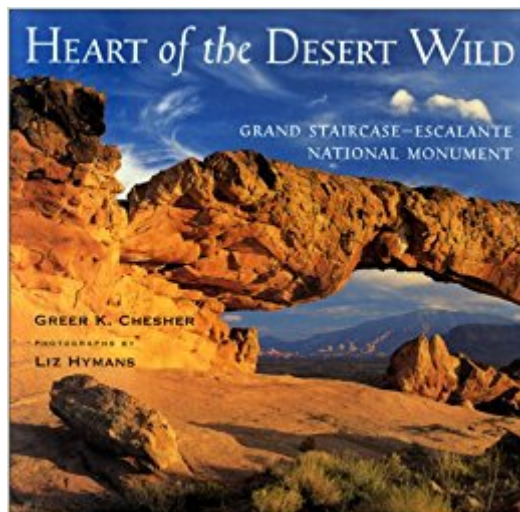


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# Heart Of The Desert Wild



## Synopsis

Heart of the Desert Wild combines naturalist writer Greer K. Chesher's thought provoking prose with photographer Liz Hymans' spectacular panoramic images to evoke the wonder of Grand Staircase-Escalante. Beginning with the land's rocky past and combing through the woven layers of place - native grasses and bighorn sheep, the sound of moving waters and the people drawn to them, strange soils and rare plants - the book provides an intergrated geography of what anthropollogist Clyde Kluckhohn once called the "last Holy Place."

## Book Information

Paperback: 108 pages

Publisher: Bryce Canyon Natural History Assn; 1st ed. edition (September 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1882054075

ISBN-13: 978-1882054077

Package Dimensions: 10.9 x 10.1 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,198,353 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 inÂ Books > Travel > United States > Arizona > Grand Canyon #169 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Architectural > Monuments #1336 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Nature & Wildlife > Plants & Animals

## Customer Reviews

The book is the first overview of the new monument to be published and includes an introductory chapter on the monument's designation history. Additional chapters focus on the monument's amazing geology; the people who throughtout time, have called this place home; the monument's rare and intriguing plants, animals and natural systems, and concludes with a chapter highlighting the artists, writers, poets, and photographers who have found inspiration in this wonderous region.

A 1.9 million-acre blank spot- For almost twelve thousand years people have lived in this desert wilderness that is part of the American Southwest. After European-American settlement throughout the western United States, this place was not only rugged but remote, so much so that it was a blank spot on the map, literally. In this volume, author Greer Chesher and photographer Liz Hymans take us into Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and help us dig deep into its beauty and

meaning. What can the records of evolution and mass extinctions preserved in the monument's rock layers tell us about the survival of our own species? How does a crust of tiny living organisms "hold the world of the monument together"? Who made clay maidens and who left the ghostly figures that gaze at us from high canyon walls? How, and why, did a party of Mormon pioneers lower wives, children, and all their earthly possessions in wagons down a 2000-foot cliff?

Beautiful photos, beautiful words.

Excellent review of geology, history and people of Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument...dedicated in 1996 by Pres. Clinton

Arizona desert views and reviews

I like the mix of first class landscape photography and facts about the history and geology of the Colorado plateau.

This book was okay. I bought it to read in preparation of a three day hike in the Grand Staircase Escalante. The book has sections where it talks about the geology, people of the land, biology, etc. The language is a bit over my head and didn't catch my attention. To give you an idea of my education and intellectual ability, I have a masters in counseling and have taken several geology classes on an undergraduate level. So, the book just didn't cover as much about the formations of the land or the geology. However, if you are looking for a book on the area there really are not that many options (at least I didn't find them).

Still worth a read "and definitely worth a look for the photographs!! I'm not enamored of BLM national monuments. But, GSENM, where I've driven around the edges several times, and driven into and through, with more extensive hiking, once, has mollified my stance somewhat, at least on this one spot. Besides the photos, there's bits of "people's history" sprinkled here, like the mini-bios of explorer in her own Ellen Powell Thompson, sister of John Wesley Powell, and of of rancher Cal Johnson. That, in turn, led me to another thought, one not specifically in the book. J.W. Powell rightly gave Mormons a kudo for (and having learned this from Western Indians) communally managed their farms, and specifically their irrigation. Which leads to a big puzzlement. Overgrazing at what is now GSENM started in the 1870s and continued, well, until the 1930s and the Taylor Grazing Act.

And, the cows and sheep doing the overgrazing ... well, they were Mormon cows, not Gentile ones. The Mormons, had they done any looking around, as they did with irrigation agriculture, could have found communal management ideas near at hand with the Spanish/Mexican ejido system. But, for whatever reason, they didn't do that. I don't know if old Brigham ever gave it a thought, but the author, Chesher, doesn't even ponder that. And, per one other reviewer, other than talking about the various "stairs" of the Grand Staircase in general, there's little geology here. Nothing at all about the massive dinosaur finds here. If it weren't for the quality of, and number of, the pix, and the parts of the people's history it does have, I might move it down another star.

I am a Colorado Plateau freak who probably has better than 50 books on the area, and who has taken at least a dozen vacations to the area. Of all of my own books and some I don't own, but have read on the area, this is one of the very best. The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was created in 1996. It was long overdue. The monument (And it should be a full-fledged National Park, IMHO.), preserves the most single significant block of Cretaceous strata in the world, numerous exquisite arches and slot canyons of exceptional size and beauty, tremendous geological faults, colorful, spectacular rock formations, fossilized animals and plants, and irreplaceable Native American relics and structures. The area is still being explored and more of these and other wonders are being located each year. This excellent book covers all of these matters and more in considerable written detail. Magnificent color photography follows the text and lays open this wonderful country for all to see. The text is carefully drafted, and the photos follow the text very well. If you never have the good fortune to visit this area, this book will give a very fine glimpse into the need for its preservation. If you have visited it, as I have, the book will evoke countless pleasant memories. IF YOU ARE GOING TO VISIT IT, for the first time, or on a repeat basis, read this book thoroughly to make intelligent decision about what to see and do, since you can't possibly see it all in one trip. This book receives the highest recommendation.

I have found that many coffee table type books on National Parks, etc. contain great photography, but are often lacking for interesting or inspiring text. This is not the case for Heart of the Desert Wild. This book certainly does contain great photos, particularly the foldout panoramic shots, but I was most impressed with the highly informative and exceptionally well written text. I found Ms. Chesher's writing style to be both fresh and creative, taking the reader back into time for a look thru the eyes of prehistoric and historic peoples and individuals who played a part in the history of the Escalante region of southern Utah. The book was obviously well researched and presents an accurate and

well balanced view regarding the history and creation of this controversial National Monument. Perhaps most special is that this book is written from the heart. It is obvious that the author is not only very familiar with the area but cares deeply for the effort being made to preserve this remarkable landscape. I feel that she has been very successful in expressing her deeply felt "Sense of Place" for the Escalante region while retaining a high level of objectivity. This was the first book of this type that I could not put down once I cracked the cover. It is truly a remarkable achievement which will remain an enduring classic about a remarkable and enduring place.

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