



PAUL R. PORTNEY

Arizona Dreamin'

Readers, a confession is in order. Although I have been at Resources for the Future (RFF) for almost all of the past 32 years, and although RFF has always concerned itself in part with the conservation of natural resources, including wilderness areas, I'm not really much of an outdoorsman. To be sure, I make a beeline for the golf course every chance I get and enjoy walking along the Potomac River near my home as often as I can. But that really doesn't count. Rafting, camping, and hiking in this country's scenic wilderness have never been my cup of tea.

A month ago I made a first effort at remedying that and spent nine days rafting down the Colorado River as it meanders through the lower half of the Grand Canyon. It was an experience I won't ever forget, because I was reminded that it's one thing to study a problem from the confines of one's office in Washington, DC, and quite another to get out "into the field," as they say. Thus, it's not surprising that the late John Krutilla spent a good part of his professional lifetime at RFF writing about how one might ascribe value to the preservation of the wild, since he was an avid hiker and outdoorsman. Nor is it surprising that the late Marion Clawson was intensely interested during his professional career in the management of public lands, since he grew up the child of western homesteaders.

Growing up in Detroit as the son and grandson of men who made their living in the auto industry may be why my own research at RFF has centered on the costs and benefits

of air pollution control, especially that from cars. As researchers, our best work may be on those things that interest us personally before they hook us professionally. That said, even a "tenderfoot" like myself couldn't help but marvel at the sheer grandeur of the canyon, the complexity of the water resource issues surrounding the river that runs through it, the commitment to wilderness preservation of the men and women who guide rafters along the river, and the efforts of the National Park Service to safeguard this geological wonder.

As you read about RFF's work in the pages of *Resources*, you should know that in addition to their scholarly pursuits, our researchers are also tromping through forests, talking with fishermen, touring power plants and Superfund sites, visiting coffee farmers, and working with villagers in the developing world. In fact, these very outside interests may well have preceded their scholarly pursuits. Had I been lucky enough to float through the Grand Canyon in my 30th rather than my 60th year, I might be working on the economics of the national parks today!

Thanks for your interest in and support for Resources for the Future, and please enjoy this issue.

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