

A Deep Map of Place

The San Juan River, a rare perennial stream on the high, dry Colorado Plateau, has always attracted, nurtured, and swept away life, creating both oases and tough country to settle. Bluff, Utah, a hamlet at the confluence of the river and Cottonwood Wash, has never had more than a few hundred inhabitants, but the site of the town has been a cultural nexus for thousands of years. The curious remnants of this rich history, scattered across a spare albeit striking landscape, invite the writer to poke about, ponder and begin to piece together a deep map of place.

Day /Date

1. (10/6) Miles from nowhere / Finding our place

Stratigraphy / Lime Ridge with geologist, naturalist
and long-time community leader Gene Foushee/

Evening conversation

2. (10/7) Field Journals

‘The world is a continuous story’
Story as a map of place.

Evening. A slide show on Ancestral Puebloan artifacts and
Iconography by Joe Pachak, artist, philosopher and avid
student of prehistoric lifeways and rockart

3. (10/8) Ascending the reed. Exploring local prehistory with Joe Pachak
(writing interludes)

4. (10/9) The Poet’s Eye
Lots of writing in place

Later. Migrations
A trip to the Mormon Meeting House

Evening readings

5. (10/10) The Lessons of Water / The personal essay
Hiking the Honaker Trail (a prehistoric route and miner’s ‘road’
into the San Juan River canyon)
Writing at the river and back at camp.

Evening readings

6. (10/11) Completing the maps. Writing time on 750 word essay or story or a poem cycle/ small group feedback/ conferences /afternoon readings

Bearing Witness/ A late afternoon walk and talk.

Evening readings and farewells