



Trail Cams can take pictures when you are not there, even in low light conditions, and the clarity is improving. (Mark Rackay/Special to the MDP)

## A love of rivers gives them life

### Outdoors

By Paul Zaenger

Long ago, rangers hauled fingerling trout in barrels belted to burros to the high country, planning to introduce them to mountain streams. Ranger Lemuel (Lon) Garrison, a strapping young man in the 1930s, was one such ranger. His son Lars shared some insight about his dad at Black Canyon's South Rim Visitor Center a few years before I retired.

I reflect on this, gazing into pools on the Gunnison River just upstream from the confluence of the North and Main forks. I cast a fly out on the surface. The water is as clear as crystal, and ice cold. If trout are present, I think I would see them. Lars told me he grew up fishing in national parks during World War II. Much of the food supply was channeled to the war effort. If he didn't catch fish, they didn't have food to eat.

Lars was an avid angler. From the conversation, it appeared that he loved rivers. We agreed that rivers are alive, and that living rivers need to be cared for. The notion that rivers are living entities is a long-accepted and somewhat mundane concept.

We know that there are living beings in the Gunnison. Insects are supported in the water column, attached to the river bed, but might only use the river for part of their life cycle. From microscopic creatures to crawdads, native fish, river otters and others, the Gunnison's waters sustain bounteous life.

But these are life forms that depend on the river to survive. The river itself thrives.

The Gunnison has a temperature range that usually fluctuates around 44 degrees Fahrenheit. Your temperature is usually around 98 degrees. Like us, the chemicals within a healthy river are in balance. Water comprises some 70% of the human body, plus chemicals worth a handful of dollars (depending on inflation).

Oxygen is roiled into its waters throughout the many rapids along its flow; other gasses are exchanged in the turbulence. The Gunnison River breathes. Even as we are invigorated by fresh air, the river's waters are also revived, especially as floods race down from the mountains.

I cast another fly upon the waters. The river is made up of all of those things — but like people, it is more than the sum of its parts. It reshapes the landscape, it creates an environment for many plants and animals to find a home, and it provides delight in the human heart.

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### Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Seems that technology is taking over every aspect of our lives. Recently, I bought a new truck. My old one was a dozen years old and had more miles on it than a trip to the moon and back. The technology in the new truck is completely beyond my simple comprehension.

For example, it no longer has a key to place in the key slot in the ignition. In fact, there is no key slot. I just push a button to start it.

Speaking of buttons, there is no pedal for the park brake, it too is a button. When I pull up to a stoplight, the engine shuts off, but it starts up again automatically when I take my foot off the brake. I can just imagine what my grandfather would have to say about all this technology.

It stands to reason that this technology craze would invade our outdoor world, thereby relieving us of all the things we had to do for ourselves. Let's take trail cams as a "for instance."

There was a time that you had to park your carcass in a tree stand and wait, sometimes from dawn to dusk, to see if a buck deer was using a particular game trail.

It stands to reason, that if you did not see a buck deer

while you were sitting in that particular tree stand, that he probably used a different trail to get to his feeding area.

Next day, you sit in a tree stand on a different trail, and once again are eluded by the buck deer. You rationalize that he must have used the other trail, the one you sat on yesterday.

And so, it goes, on and on. Every stand hunter understands what I am talking about.

All of this came to an end with the invention of the trail cameras. Although not a new idea as the first trail cameras were invented by George Shiras III, way back in the 1880s. A lawyer and politician by trade, Shiras came up with the idea because cameras of the day were very heavy and cumbersome. Carrying one of those bulky cameras of the day into the woods, seeking pictures of elusive wildlife, was less than a popular idea amongst outdoor folks.

Shiras also tried baiting a site and using a series of trip wires to trigger an automatic flash bulb (remember those?) and capture pictures of animals at night. Many of Shiras' picture appeared in National Geographic Magazine, and some 2,000 pictures remain in the archives today.

Fast forward a hundred years, and camera technology has evolved considerably. By the 1980s, trail cameras were mostly being used by deer hunters, but wildlife researchers and biologists soon learned their value.

The cameras of the 1980s used an infrared beam that, when broken, opened the shutter on a 35mm camera, and snapped a picture. The 35mm film of the time

gave you a crisp and sharply contrasted image, but the film and development were quite costly, and had to be replaced often. This was the time of Foto-Huts, if I recall correctly.

Today's digital cameras show just how far technology has brought us. The trail cams of today are light, self-triggering, portable, and use a digital card that can hold thousands of images.

Operating on batteries, the modern trail cam can snap a picture in less than a quarter of a second.

Now we have advanced to cellular trail cams, that combine the technology of cellular phones and trail cameras.

Once the trail cam takes a picture, the unit uses cellular transmission from a wireless provider, to send you the thumbnails of the captured images to your cell phone. You then have the ability to view the images and download them directly to your device. Many of these trail cams deliver images, and sometimes video, in real-time.

I was hunting whitetails in Kansas a couple years ago. Trail cams had shown there were several bucks frequenting a trail where we had a ground blind set up, and one of those bucks was a real dandy. We sat 12-hour days in that blind, for three days, without the big boy ever happening by.

On the afternoon of the fourth day, we took a short break to head to camp and get some lunch. During lunch, you guessed it. My buddy got an alert for a picture of the big buck casually strolling past our empty ground blind. We never saw that deer again.

Some states, like Montana and New Hampshire have already implemented restric-

tions on cellular trail cameras, as to where, when, and how they can be used. Arizona, however, became the first state to ban their use completely, statewide and year-round. This has caused quite a rift between government and the public, who openly oppose the ban.

Trail cameras have use outside of the wildlife world as well. People can use them at points of their property they wish to secure. A camera at a gate can let you know, in real-time, who comes and goes to your property. They are also used to monitor cabins, RVs, and storage building in remote locations, often times catching bad guys in the act of committing a crime.

I don't use trail cams in my hunting, although many of my friends do. If I am chasing a deer, and having trouble deciding which trail he is going to use, I would rather not know that he is where I am not. It seems to take away the excitement I feel when he walks out in front of me. Besides, I doubt I could ever figure out how one of the digital cellular trail cameras works. I am still trying to figure out the automatic headlight dimmer on my truck.

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