

## A Call for Wilderness Stewardship from Chavurah B'Yachad



I have hiked the arches at midnight with a full moon lighting the way, both in April and October. It is one of my most cherished memories. Utah is a beautiful space. It is my hope that we work to keep it natural.

*Betsy Smith*

From where does my strength come?

Esa eynay:

I lift my eyes up to the hills:

From where does my help come?

My help is from the Unseen One,

The maker of the heavens and the earth.

*Joyce Dolcourt*

Coming upon water in the desert is always a blessing. Where did it come from, how long has it been there, who lives inside? On dry hot days, when rain has not been in sight, I am reminded of not only how fragile we all are but how fragile the planet on which we live is. Without water, nothing will survive. The little pools collected within the rock are reminders of the miracle that is life on this planet.

*Jacqueline Fogel*

Part of being Jewish means we are stewards of the earth, that we must preserve its beauty and make it an even better place for our children and grandchildren. I pray for them, that I may live such a life that they may find in nature that shelter of peace.

When our kids were in elementary school, every spring we took a family camping trip right after Passover – often to a favorite campsite on the Hole in the Rock road in Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument. These were magical days – the first camping trip of each year, glorious side canyons, cold nights, fried matzo for breakfast, crystalline stars, lots of laughter – pure joy. Memories of these red rock canyons mix with defining moments of closeness in our family. Wilderness, in short, means love.

*Stephen Trimble*

My life has been blessed by wonderful spiritual experiences in the wilderness areas and national parks of the U.S. I have passed this appreciation onto my children. The U.S. was the first country in the world to create national parks for people to enjoy. Please continue to let our future generations enjoy our treasures.

*Harry Rische*

Eli, Eli - My God, my God, I pray that these things never end. The sand and the sea, the rush of the waters, the crash of the heavens, the prayer of the heart.

*Hannah Szenes and Jack Dolcourt*

If I don't have time in the wilderness on a regular basis, I lose the most basic connection with my spirituality. Only in nature am I guaranteed to remember who I am and the larger universe to which I am deeply connected.

*Sharon Rische*

Every year we do a camping trip with other Jewish families where we get to celebrate Shabbat in the wonder of God's creation. We always say a blessing acknowledging God's gifts from the earth, and I always return feeling rejuvenated, restored and renewed.

In the beginning, humankind is charged to be stewards of the earth and all God's creatures – not to abuse, plunder or destroy all that has been provided. We are a part of nature. It is through my connection to the earth in some of the most incredible landscapes in the world that I truly connect with myself as part of the exquisite whole. In the desert, I appreciate the bones, the structure, the frame onto which all of us live, breathe and die.

*Jacqueline Fogel*

As a Jew, I retreat to the red rock of southern Utah, my "Zion" where I find reflections of God, B'tzelem Elohim, in God's image, everywhere. I find the peace in nature greater than any peace in a synagogue.