

## Hiking Philmont



I just got back from 11 days hiking the back country of Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico. The ranch covers 137,000 acres in the rugged mountain wilderness of the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains. There are over 380 miles of trails (although I only experienced 78 of them) that range in elevation from 6,500 to 12,441 feet. I spent two nights camping at over 10,000 feet. I experienced the wonders of the area including thousands of plant

species, deer that would graze within 20 feet of camp, coyotes, buffalo, wild turkey and yes, a black bear.

I don't know if it was the thin air, the long hikes over rugged terrain, the closeness to nature or a combination of all of them that cleared my mind and helped me to regroup and rejuvenate. Sometimes, maybe more often than not, we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of our built environment. It would do us good to get away from the glow of our computer screen or TV sets and the noise of the urban environment we live in and enjoy the natural wonders that are around us. Granted, as I write this the temperature in the valley is over 110 degrees, but Mount Charleston is only minutes away with temperatures in the 70's. I promise that you will be able to think clearer, work harder and feel better if you regularly take time to get back to nature.

### Consultant of the Month

Jeni Panars works for TSK Architects. We have had the opportunity to work with her on several

projects. She is always very organized, prompt and pleasant... even in stressful situations. Congratulations, Jenni. We look forward to working with you more.

“Deep Summer is when laziness finds respectability”  
— Sam Keen

### FAVORITE FLORA:

#### POPULUS FREMONTII- FREMONT COTTONWOOD

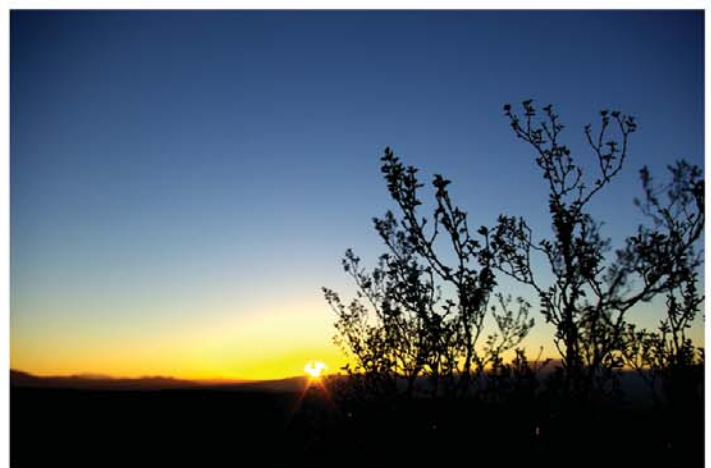


If you have ever seen a really large tree growing around riparian areas in the desert southwest, you have most likely seen a Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*). This deciduous tree can grow up to 100 feet in height and have trunk diameters up to 5 feet. The Fremont Cottonwood has heart shaped leaves that turn a bright yellow in a showy display of fall colors. Cottonwoods, *Populus fremontii* and its eastern U.S. counterpart *Populus deltoides* derive their name from the cotton-like tufts that appear in March and April. These tufts are the fruits of the cottonwood which are then dispersed by wind. The Fremont Cottonwood receives the other half of its name from its discoverer General John C. Fremont (1813-1890). Fremont Cottonwood's are extremely fast

growing which typically leads to weak limbs that easily break in high winds and a short lifespan. They require large amounts of water and are typically found in areas with high water tables or other easily accessible water sources. Native Americans had several uses for this tree that included baskets, drums and tools made from its wood to chewing its bark to treat vitamin C deficiency.

This tree should never be used in typical urban landscapes due to its brittle branches, invasive root systems, and fruit litter. However, the Fremont Cottonwood can be used in riparian restorations providing food and shelter for wildlife. It can also be used for shade and windbreaks in rural areas and large sites with abundant water.

### Photo of the Month



Creosote Sunset  
Henderson, NV  
Matt Durham