

# Snowbirding... with your goats... the goatpackers dream!



**To New Mexico! ..... And maybe a chance to get warm!**

by Larry Robinson

As I have stated previously, the idea of using goats as packing partners began germinating a very long time ago, long before I was able to actually have any.

This was not simply a result of wanting to shed some of the weight I had been carrying on my back, as I had for a lot of years, but the fact that I was getting 'older than dirt' and suspected that I would be able to keep going on the trail a lot longer if I had a little help with the transport. Since my wife indicated she was unavailable as a pack helper, I subsequently turned to goats as I had observed a demo on goatpacking back in the early 90's.

As a corollary, since I was coming up on retirement as well, I began to ruminate on winters in Idaho. Since we have waaaay more snow than hiking weather, I wondered if snowbirding, with the goats, would be a viable solution to the 'winter problem'. Now, snowbirding is easy. You buy an RV, hook up,

and go! Adding goats to this mix presents a very different dynamic. Most RV parks are not exactly excited for you to pull in, unload your goats, and begin munching on all their trees. Nor are they interested in having 'goatberries' from one end of the park to the other. As a consequence, I contacted a fellow goatpacker in New Mexico, and put out some feelers of where I might come during the winter with my guys and continue to hike. He suggested the Double T Homestead in Glenwood, NM <<http://www.doublethomestead.com/>> which runs what they term 'a horse motel'. The initial contact with Polly Tipton at the Double T was shaky at best, as they had had a bad experience with a local goat that was not only noisy, but ran around jumping on cars and generally making a nuisance of himself. Based upon my assurances that my guys were well-behaved and minimally noisy, she let us come down in 2008 and bring 4 of our packers.

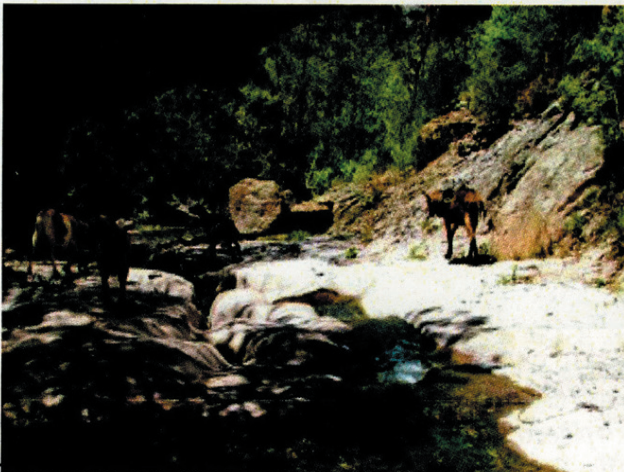


Photo credits Larry & Mary Robinson



Polly was more than

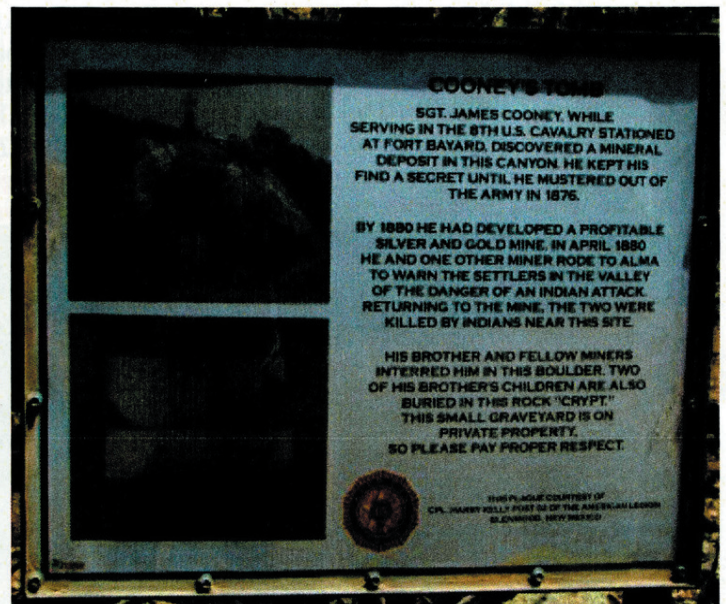
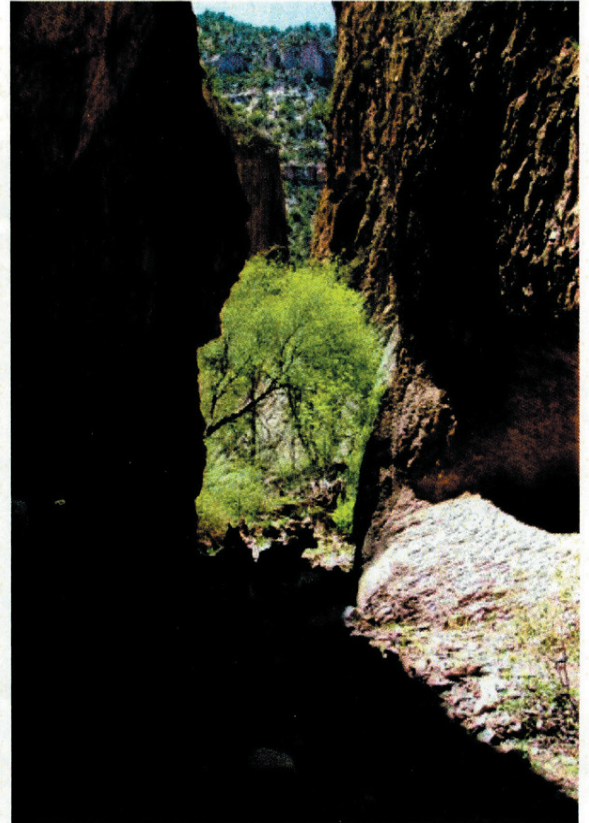
accommodating as she and her helpers lined one of the horse corrals with cattle panels, and did everything they could to make the corral goat-proof, and our stay a friendly one.

This year we spent over a month in Glenwood in May, and got in quite a number of hikes. Now, New Mexico hiking is *NOT* like Idaho hiking, as water is in very scarce supply. The

number of year-round running rivers could be counted on one hand. However, the Mineral Creek slot canyon is very close to Glenwood, is one of the few year-round running streams, and is a breathtaking hike. About 6 miles round trip, this hike takes you back and forth through Mineral Creek, and is a great hike for the goats as it gives them plenty of practice getting their feet wet, which I'm sure you'all are aware, they are loathe to do!

I have seen a lot of pictures of the New Mexico high country, and it is a lot more green and beautiful as most high country is. I have not been able to get out into the high meadows as of yet, as that would require an overnighiter, and it just hasn't materialized. But I am expecting that it will be on next-year's agenda.

Larry Robinson - Idaho City, ID



### COONEY'S TOMB

SGT. JAMES COONEY, WHILE SERVING IN THE 8TH U.S. CAVALRY STATIONED AT FORT BAYARD, DISCOVERED A MINERAL DEPOSIT IN THIS CANYON. HE KEPT HIS FIND A SECRET UNTIL HE MUSTERED OUT OF THE ARMY IN 1876.

BY 1880 HE HAD DEVELOPED A PROFITABLE SILVER AND GOLD MINE. IN APRIL 1880 HE AND ONE OTHER MINER RODE TO ALMA TO WARN THE SETTLERS IN THE VALLEY OF THE DANGER OF AN INDIAN ATTACK. RETURNING TO THE MINE, THE TWO WERE KILLED BY INDIANS NEAR THIS SITE.

HIS BROTHER AND FELLOW MINERS INTERRED HIM IN THIS BOULDER. TWO OF HIS BROTHER'S CHILDREN ARE ALSO BURIED IN THIS ROCK "CRYPT." THIS SMALL GRAVEYARD IS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY. SO PLEASE PAY PROPER RESPECT.

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CPL. HARRY KELLY, PILOT 50 OF THE AMERICAN LEGION  
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