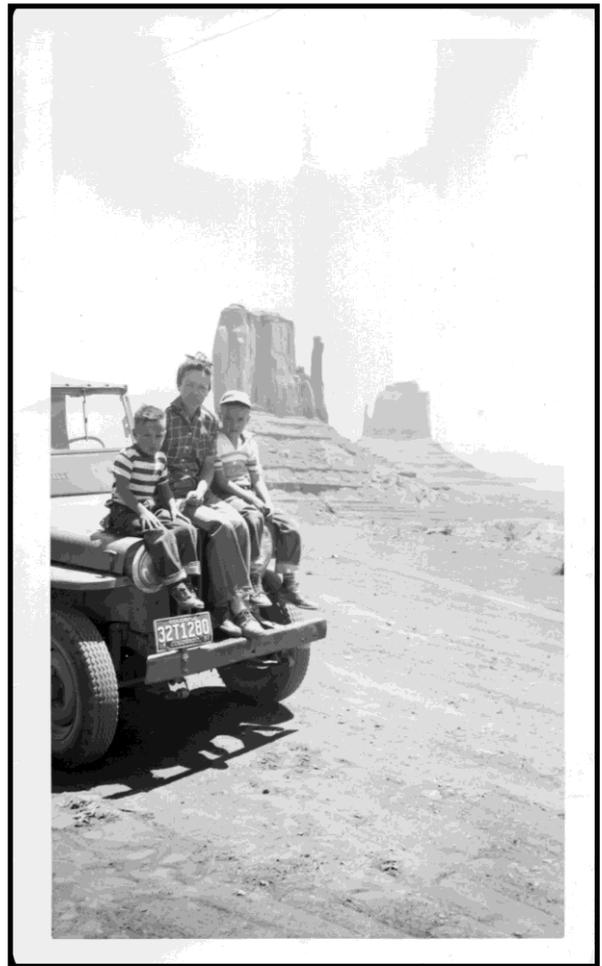


Kenny Ross & Wild Rivers Expeditions

Wild Rivers Expeditions was founded by Kenny Ross, a legendary character and one of early pioneers of western river running. Ross began exploring the canyons of southern Utah in the 1930s. His passion was remote corners of the Colorado Plateau with characteristically tremendous examples of archaeology and geology. Kenny's first San Juan River trip was in 1933 as a boatman for the Monument Valley Rainbow Bridge Expedition. The expedition included river, overland and air-based portions, was headed by Ansel Hall and financed by the Ford Motor Company. It was the first of several such expeditions into the canyons of the San Juan River and Glen Canyon (before Lake Powell) documenting the region's natural and cultural history. As a result of this trip, Kenny's newfound love of river running would prove fateful.

By all accounts Kenny was an astute field geologist and archaeologist. His enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge made guiding trips into the region's canyons and rivers natural. In 1947, after several years working for the National Park Service at Mesa Verde National Park, Kenny took the reigns of Southwest Explorations, which Ansel Hall had established a decade or so earlier. Southwest Explorations' guided trips focused on learning about the southern Colorado Plateau's archaeology, geology and natural history. Among their many students was William R. Dickinson, (deceased) a preeminent Colorado Plateau geologist, professor emeritus of geoscience at University of Arizona and who is known as the father of plate tectonics. Over the coming decade Kenny would learn that the best way to see this rugged country was to travel by river, so in 1957 Wild Rivers Expeditions was born.

Kenny's early years included many river trips before Navajo and Glen Canyon Dams, affording exciting rides on the unimpounded snow melts from the Colorado Rockies. Between 1957 and 1963 Wild Rivers Expeditions ran several San Juan River trips to the confluence of the Colorado and then through Glen Canyon prior to Lake Powell. Many of these began as far upstream as Shiprock, New Mexico, or at Hite near the mouth of Glen Canyon. Wild Rivers also ran many early trips on the Colorado River through Cataract Canyon before Lake Powell, where Kenny named the infamous rapid "Satan's Gut." At 15 years old, Kenny's son Don was probably the youngest commercial boatman ever to run Cataract Canyon.



Doug, Mildred & Don 1951 - Monument Valley

From the beginning, Wild Rivers trips had a special slant: Kenny believed in learning and he was intensely focused on customer experience. The educational orientation and quality outfitting combined with the fun and adventure inherent to river running attracted a diverse and loyal following, from the National Geographic Society to Bluff elementary school children. Soon museums, universities, families and friends had come from all over the world to travel down the river with Wild Rivers Expeditions. Under Kenny's leadership, Wild Rivers Expeditions, located in the tiny southern Utah hamlet of Bluff, along the banks of the San Juan River, had established itself as a leader and pioneer in the burgeoning river outfitting industry.



Bill & Kenny - 1983

In 1985 two of Kenny's most employees bought Wild Rivers Expeditions. With a truck and a few boats, Charlie and Susan DeLorme would oversee Wild Rivers Expeditions' until 2005. Under their leadership archaeological learning programs were expanded to distant reaches of the globe, including Siberia, Mexico, and Guatemala. The quality of guide and interpretive staff reached new highs with the likes of geologists Gene Stevenson and Don Baars and archaeologists like Polly Schaasfma and Sally Cole. Under the DeLormes' tenure Wild Rivers grew into its new headquarters in Bluff, a four acre facility complete with warehouse, boat barn, repair garage, retail store, gathering hogan, commercial kitchen, organic gardens, multiple residences, artesian wells and wonderful shade trees.

In 2005 the DeLormes, as Kenny once did, transitioned the operation to former employees and long time family friends Jay and Kelly Carson and Taylor and Kristen McKinnon. The Carsons and McKinnons had a reverence for Wild Rivers' history, the river and the company's quality-oriented approach to river outfitting. As with their predecessors, they share a deep love and fascination for this place and believe sharing it with people in a way that deepens both their knowledge of and intimacy with it ultimately benefits people and the river.

In 2013 the stewardship of Wild Rivers Expeditions merged with Four Corners Adventures. Owners Jared and Spring Berrett had dreamed of adding San Juan River journeys to their existing San Juan County based land operations and they acquired the legacy of Wild Rivers Expeditions with its rich heritage and history of excellence.

Today, in the truest spirit of the late Kenny Ross, Wild Rivers Expeditions remains a small, quality-oriented company--now one of the oldest river outfitters in the United States--intensely focused on customer experience and deeply committed to providing the finest river journeys available anywhere.



Don, Mildred, Kenny & Doug - 1970s