

TRASH TRACKERS

TRIP 7, MAY 19 - 23

By Sue Hughes

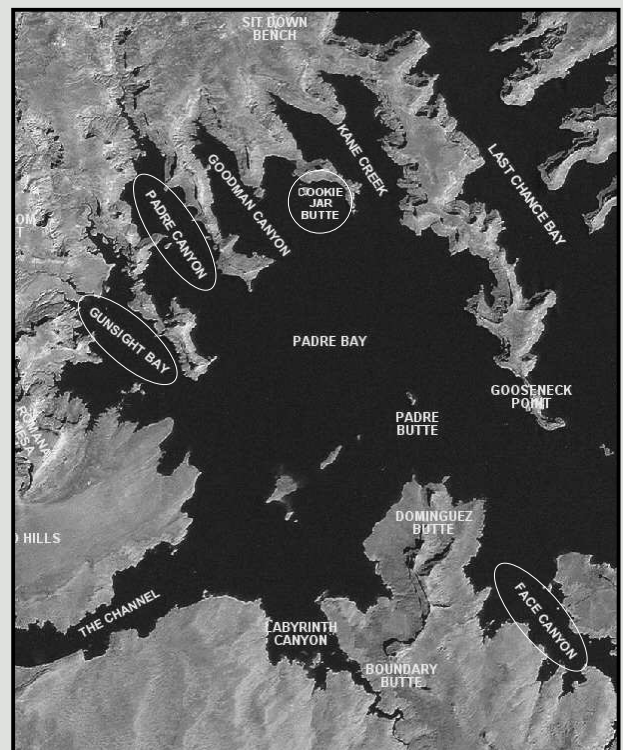
The Trash Tracker program is a joint effort between the National Park Service and Lake Powell Resorts and Marinas to clean up the 1,960 miles of the lake's shoreline. People participating in Trash Trackers become members of the NPS's Volunteer-In-Parks Program and spend five to seven days aboard a houseboat that has been donated by Aramark. Working most of each day, volunteers for the program pick up anything left behind along the shore.

I joined Trip Seven, out of the Stateline Marina just north of Wahweap near Page, Arizona. We cruised through the dredged channel to Gunsight Bay, on the west end of Padre Bay. The next days we worked the shores of Gunsight, Padre Canyon and over to the area around Cookie Jar Butte. The last day we were in Face Canyon.

I've been on three RMSKC houseboat trips and a couple of self-supported kayaking camping trips on Lake Powell. I keep coming back because I love paddling in the narrow canyons.

Most of this area is much bigger water than the places I've enjoyed; only Face Canyon would have been good for exploring by kayak. But I walked in a delightful meadow the first day and saw lots of vegetation (and some bighorn sheep poop) that I wouldn't have seen from the water. I'm happy being out-of-doors in red rocks country even without my boat.

We discovered there is a funny catch to picking up litter: if there wasn't any we were disappointed and when there was, we were proud of our efforts but mad that it was there. Oh well, we had a good time anyway.



Over the five days we filled 36 large heavy-duty bags with trash. We also collected two dozen golf balls and a huge pile of discarded wood, sun shelters, floating toys, garbage can lids, etc. Only one site was truly disgusting; most of the rest of what we found seemed left behind more from carelessness than blatant disregard.



Towing *The Eliminator* loaded with our week's collection back to the marina



Part of the pile of trash that didn't fit in the bags



A Park Service ranger drove a dumpster down to the scow and helped us unload it

If you're interested, there are trips from both Wahweap and Bullfrog. Opportunities for this season are full, but applications for next year will be accepted on the Trash Tracker website at 7:00AM on February 1, 2018.



The Trash Tracker houseboat: older but the same model as the ones RMSKC rents

Find all the details on their site: <https://www.nps.gov/glca/getinvolved/supportyourpark/trashtracker.htm>.

Also check their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=lake%20powell%20trash%20trackers>

Most photos by Chris Troncoso