



BETH M. HOWARD

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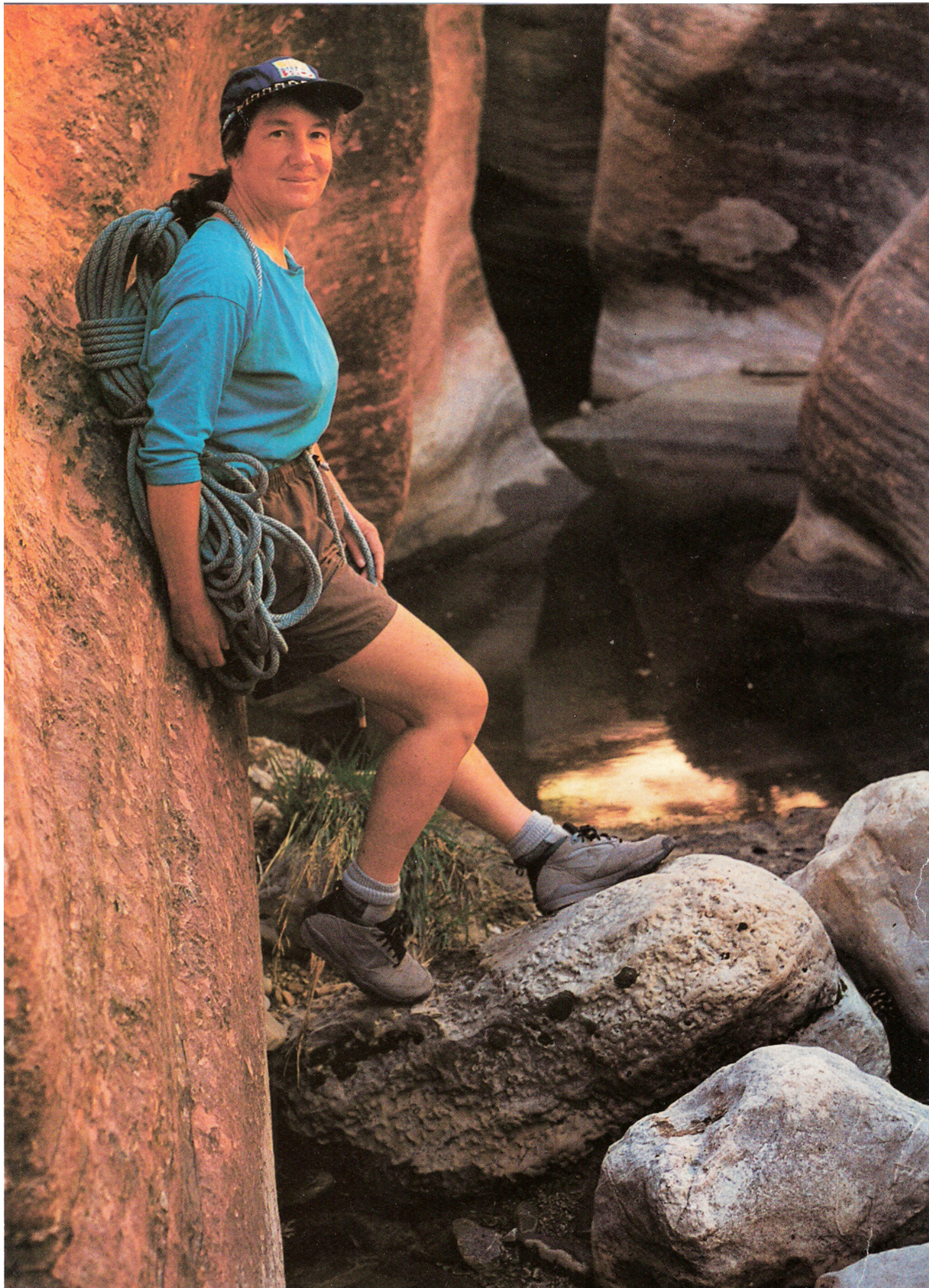
## How 6 meals a day can keep the fat away

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# Del Smith

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stablishing intimacy with the natural world is one of the more important ways in which people find out about themselves," says adventurer Del Smith. And whenever this 40-year-old goes hiking, it's no ordinary stroll in the park. Last summer she completed a 45-day traverse of the Alaskan Range on foot. Soon after, she tackled

a 30-day sea kayaking venture on Prince William Sound. These days she usually can be found canyoneering near Zion National Park, rappelling down sheer cliffs into pools of water with the exuberance of a first-timer.

Smith, however, is no newcomer to the outdoors. From her childhood backpacking vacations with her family, she became an expert on wilderness areas, particularly her favorite place—the Utah desert. "When I went there for the first time, I knew the landscape would mold me," she says.

For the past 16 years, Smith has been instilling her passion for nature and her desire to preserve it in students at the National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander,

to protecting Southern Utah canyon country. "There aren't enough lands set aside to remain free of development." The bill has been pending in Congress since 1989 but hasn't yet been introduced to the Senate. However, that doesn't stop Smith from speaking out now.

Her vast knowledge of the Utah wilderness enabled Smith to testify before Congress in 1985 on behalf of the National Parks and Conservation Association. "I simply described the beauty and inspiration of the area," she says.

To help maintain that beauty, Smith teaches low-impact camping to outdoors enthusiasts. As part of a national campaign called Leave No Trace, she conducts courses on how to bury human waste and how to build campfires that won't scar the land. "I teach campers to ask themselves two questions: How is my presence going to alter nature? and What can I do to make my presence unnoticeable?"

After last spring's controversial Eco-Challenge held in Utah, where environmentalists protested the ruination of land, Smith became involved in the Council for Ethical Sponsorship in the Outdoors. As a consultant to corporations who wish to sponsor outdoors events, Smith reviews

## champions the great outdoors.

Wyoming, where she teaches backpacking and outdoor skills. When not in the field, she can be found in Washington, D.C., where she lobbies Congress to designate more Utah land as protected wilderness.

Smith's present mission is to promote the passage of HR 1500, a bill that would protect 5.7 million acres of Bureau of Land Management territory, including Anasazi Indian ruins and free-flowing rivers, from the effects of coal mining, oil drilling and dam construction by designating it a wilderness area. "These lands are managed by the federal government, but the public owns them," says Smith, a founding member of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated

strategies to determine if plans are environmentally responsible.

Even in her personal business, an adventure-travel company called Eagle Crag Ventures, in Rockville, Utah, Smith incorporates her love of nature. Her rock climbing, canyoneering and river kayaking expeditions go beyond teaching technical skills and low-impact camping. "There's a need for a kinder and gentler education for the soul and the body," she says. "Sleeping on the ground, filtering your own drinking water, and taking care of your most basic needs changes how you think about your place on this earth. In the wilderness, you realize that your problems aren't as big as you think."

—Beth Howard