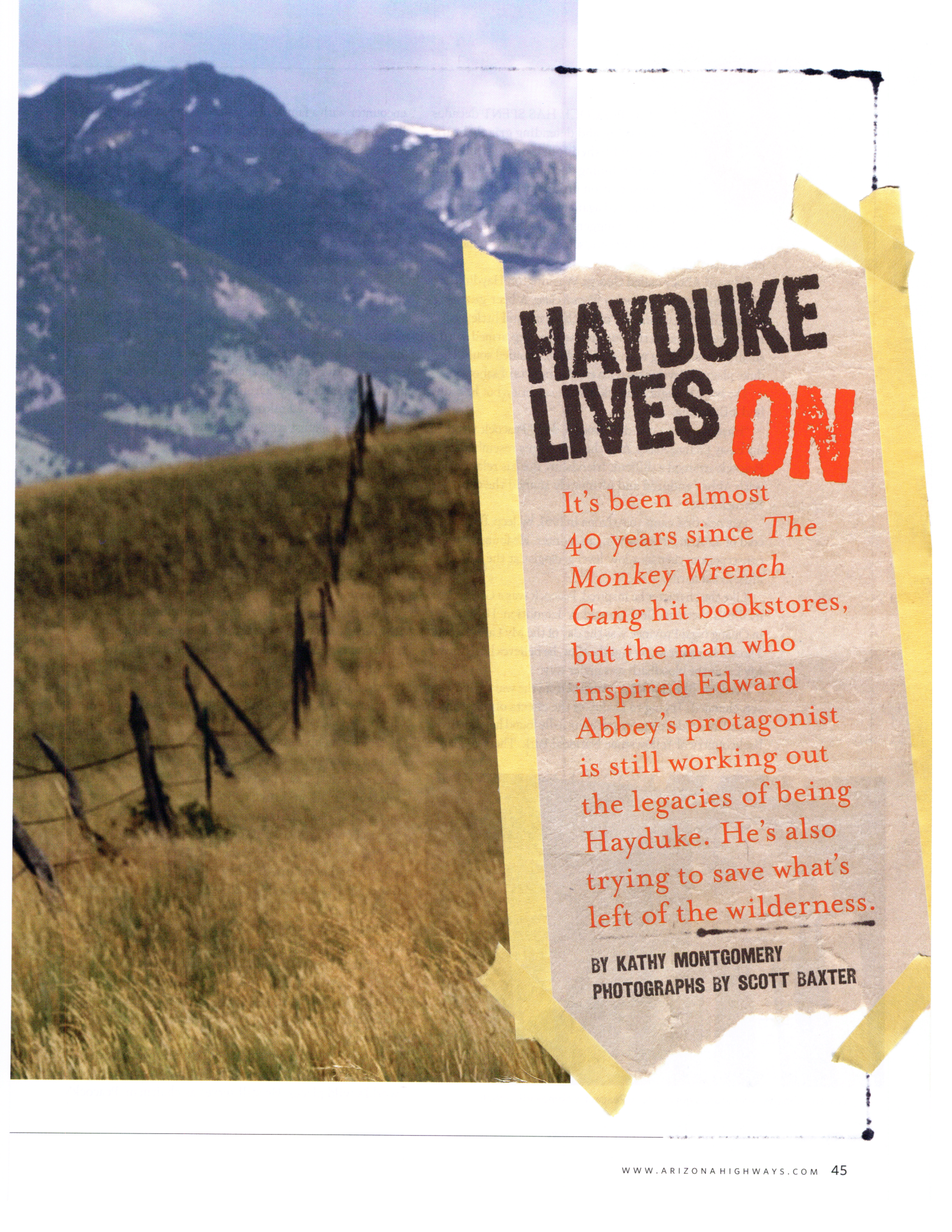




Doug Peacock, who helped bury his friend Edward Abbey in the Arizona desert in 1989, surveys his Montana property, with the Absaroka Range and Yellowstone River (not visible) in the background.



HAYDUKE LIVES **ON**

It's been almost 40 years since *The Monkey Wrench Gang* hit bookstores, but the man who inspired Edward Abbey's protagonist is still working out the legacies of being Hayduke. He's also trying to save what's left of the wilderness.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT BAXTER

DOUG PEACOCK HAS SPENT decades observing and defending grizzly bears. He's published four books, filmed an award-winning documentary, co-founded a conservation group, married, divorced and married again, raised two children and landed a Guggenheim Fellowship. Yet, in spite of all his accomplishments, some will always remember him as Hayduke.

Edward Abbey called George Washington Hayduke the hero of his novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. A beer-guzzling, former Green Beret medic "of much wrath and little brain," Hayduke wandered the Southwest in a Jeep armed with a small arsenal. Along with a band of like-minded souls, Hayduke plagued developers with escalating acts of sabotage.

The book brought Peacock instant celebrity, but he didn't find it flattering.

"Hayduke was a one-dimensional dolt," Peacock wrote in his essay *Chasing Abbey*. And the character's resemblance to Peacock strained a difficult friendship. But his relationship with Abbey endured and ultimately shaped the course of Peacock's life.

Peacock first came to Arizona in 1963, by Jeep, fleeing the cold of an Ann Arbor, Michigan, winter. He found work in construction, then as a low-level geologist at the ASARCO mine in Sahuarita.

Like the character he inspired, Peacock was a Green Beret medic in Vietnam, field-trained in demolition. His last day in Quang Ngai Province was the day of the My Lai massacre. Though he didn't know it at the time, he believes he flew over My Lai as the bloodbath was under way.

Peacock, like Hayduke, returned from the war to find Tucson changed. Trying to shake off the effects of the war, he headed for wilder country and eventually found his way to the backcountry of Yellowstone National Park. There, a chance

encounter with a family of bears proved a tonic and ignited a lifelong obsession with grizzlies. He returned to Tucson that winter, beginning a seasonal migration between Montana and Arizona that he's made ever since.

Not long after Peacock returned to Arizona, he met Abbey at a friend's house. It was a cold night and he arrived to the gathering by motorcycle.

"I smoked cigarettes and had a little baggie of Bugler tobacco," Peacock recalls. "I tried to roll a cigarette, but my hands were shaking from the cold. This guy reached over and gave me a light. It was Ed Abbey."

Abbey was working as a seasonal ranger at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and invited Peacock to visit. He did, and so began a friendship that lasted 20 years.

Peacock writes about those days in his book *Walking It Off*. In a chapter titled "Origins," a nod to Abbey's book, he writes: "We started taking out billboards and bulldozers, and plotting against strip mines, dams, copper smelters and logging operations."

At the time he thought it was "simply something to do; a raised fist against the blind greed of technology."

Later, he realized it was research for the book Abbey was writing.

By the time *The Monkey Wrench Gang* came out in 1975, Peacock was immersed in a documentary film project about grizzlies. But the book deeply affected his relationship with Abbey.

"You don't just lift the physical aspects of someone else's life and tuck them into a novel without talking to them about it," Peacock says. "On the other hand, it was OK with me. And I had plenty to do. So the book didn't really change my life at all. My friendship with Abbey certainly did, and the book was part of that."

A letter that the book's publisher urged Abbey to write didn't help.

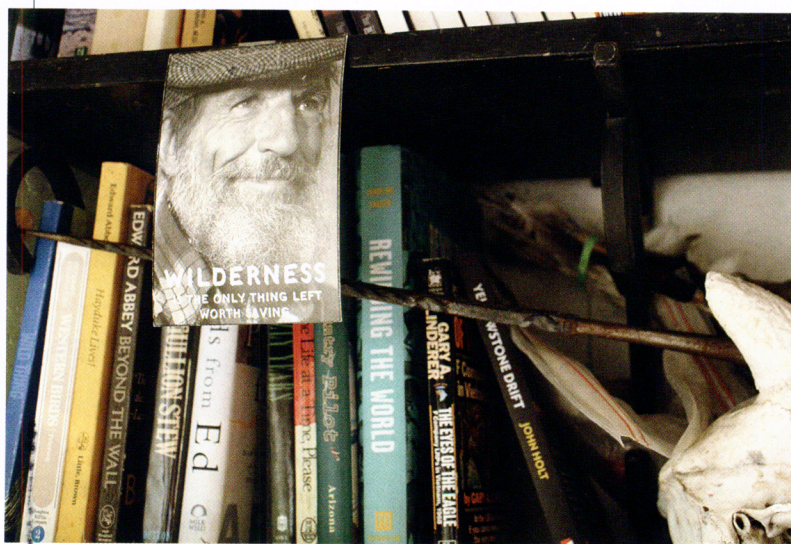
"You know, about how I should only take the good parts of Duke and forget the dolt-like bad things and stuff like that," Peacock says. "Ed and I were both living in Moab at the time. We took a walk up Mill Creek, stopped at a big rock with petroglyphs on it, and burned the letter. Neither one of us ever spoke about Hayduke or his origins ever again."

Peacock was with Abbey when he died in 1989. Along with a few friends, he buried Abbey (illegally, of course) in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge on the anniversary of My Lai.

Peacock's first book, *The Grizzly Years*, was released the following year.

"I just had a story to tell and it was pretty easy for me to do," he says. "I actually finished it in 1982. It was the same publisher Ed had. [The publisher] just kind of sat on it. Ed read the book. He read the manuscript and was wonderfully generous and encouraging."

In 1991, Peacock founded Round River Conservation Studies with Dennis Sizemore with the goal of conserving the world's wild places. He still serves as chairman. Peacock's



Edward Abbey's smile stands out on Doug Peacock's home-office shelf.



HAYDUKE LIVES

EARTH FIRST!



POB 5871 Tucson, AZ 85703

A variety of mementos from nature and a Hayduke bumper sticker are part of the clutter in Peacock's office.

son Colin, a conservation biologist, leads student trips for Round River. His daughter Laurel works for a sustainability consulting company.

Thanks to a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, Peacock is now working on his fifth book.

"I was looking at an employment application for a janitor at Walmart on one [hand], and at a ski mask and a plastic pistol and a garbage bag on the other [hand]," Peacock says. "And this guy calls me up and says how'd you like all this money for nothing? It was like Christmas. Or Halloween, even better. That was the freedom I needed. It's allowed me to do what I'm doing now."

Peacock is still working through his experience of Vietnam, a theme that runs through much of his writing. At the time of our interview, he was planning a trip to his former duty station overseas.

"We betrayed those people," he says. "It was a collective betrayal, but I feel it personally and I've got to go back and face that."

"I never quite look at my life as healing from that kind of experience," he adds. "And it's all right because it has empowered me to live the warrior's life as per Edward Abbey. I still struggle with my ghosts. But I would not change a thing about

Peacock was with Abbey when he died in 1989. Along with a few friends, he buried Abbey (illegally, of course) in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

that part of my life."

In *Walking It Off*, Peacock tries to come to terms with the twin forces of Abbey and Vietnam, which seemed to become intertwined.

"From the skeleton of this man, Ed created the fictional Hayduke," he wrote. "The trouble was that, unlike Hayduke, the real man was not content to stay out in the cold; he wanted to cross back over into the human realm."

Now, as all the elements of his life come together, Peacock says it all basically comes back to Abbey.

"I was a difficult friend and he could be a real grouch," Peacock says. "But the glue of our friendship was our love for the wild. If anything, the friendship has deepened because I realize how important he was and still is. I'm right there with Ed Abbey after all these years. Still fighting for the same thing." ■