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In 1869 the intrepid one-armed John Wesley Powell and nine expedition members left what is now Green River, Wyoming on May 24th to venture down the Colorado River. Nearly three months later they reached the confluence of the Colorado and Virgin Rivers in present-day Nevada. While on this voyage they passed through the Grand Canyon. It is certain they were not the first to see the canyon nor, more than likely, the first to travel through it by boat. No doubt the Native Americans living in this area knew the canyon well and had explored it extensively. What Powell and his men did was travel through this spectacular landscape and record it giving all Americans their first understanding of the topography, geology, and biology along the length of the river. Fifty years later, in 1919, after years of effort the Grand Canyon became a national park. Arizona State University commemorated these two events by hosting the [Mapping Grand Canyon Conference](#) February 28th through March 1, 2019.

The conference was the brainchild of WAML member, Matthew Toro. Matthew's vision was to pull together the best of the best – the people who were instrumental in mapping the park not only in the past but those deeply engaged in understanding the canyon's science and its potential to teach people about geology, climate change, the environment, and appreciation of one of the greatest natural wonders of the world. Tom Patterson presented the keynote speech on Thursday, "[Mapping Grand Canyon National Park](#)." Mr. Patterson's name may not be familiar to you, but if you've been to the park you know his work. He created the map used in the official park brochure. His talk focused on how he thought about making maps that would be the most effective and useful for those visiting the park for a few hours and those going over the rim for a more direct experience with the landscape.

The first day of the conference focused heavily on the history of the mapping of the canyon. [Ed Oetting](#) showed us "the sausage-making" that changed and codified the legal boundaries of the Park between 1919 and 1925. [Jonathan Upchurch](#) discussed the history of the Matthes-Evans United States Geological Survey topographic map of the canyon. This work, held in so many of our libraries, was not easy to make due to the extreme field conditions presented by the terrain and the weather. WAML member, [Michael Fry](#) from National Geographic, presented the history of perhaps the most famous maps of the canyon created by Brad Washburn and his wife, The Heart of the Grand Canyon. This map was published in 1969 and was



included as an insert with the magazine. [Karl Karlstrom](#) told the story of the geologic mapping of the canyon including [the map](#) he created with Bradley Ilg in 2012 at 1:24,000 scale. It's one of my favorite maps of the canyon and I'll bet it's one of your favorites, too.

The first day was rounded out by talks on [Butchart's](#) and [Powell's](#) expeditions and well as a discussion of the depictions of the [Native American communities](#) in the "New World" on maps. During the breaks the participants visited booths (including WAML's), made buttons, explored 3D printing, and ate delicious plentiful snacks.

Friday started off with an exceptionally entertaining discussion by Dori Griffin from Ohio University detailing the [cartoon maps of Canyonland](#). She discussed the history of cartoon mapping and explained how these pieces work as "cultural narratives" shaping our views of what to expect upon seeing the park. She then showed the history of the park through these maps to the audience's delight raising our awareness to the ubiquity of these maps as well as their cultural stereotyping.

Mark Manone taught us about the [1923 Birdseye Expedition](#), which ran the river for 74 days creating an unbroken level survey for 251 miles. He noted that this expedition's maps were used "to aid in the creation of multiple dams and water diversion projects." Kenneth Field discussed one of the gruesome and yet fascinating talks of the conference, [Mapping Death in the Canyon](#). Kenneth is a cartographer at Esri and has a new book out called *Cartography*. He talked about the choices he made to make the map readable and engaging to the viewer. He included 3D slides in his presentation and came equipped with enough 3D glasses for the whole crowd. Personal side note, my brother-in-law, James Brockway, attended the conference and won Kenneth's book that was given away at the end of the talk!

[Steven Semken](#) explained the process behind creating place-based teaching and learning environments for those visiting the canyon in person and virtually. At the rim, one may follow the [Trail of Time](#) exhibit. For those visiting from home, they have created [Virtual Field Trips](#) that take you to the most physically inaccessible places in the park. Two talks by [Matt Kaplinski](#) and [Stephanie Smith](#) focused on the environment. Matt discussed ecosystem monitoring using aerial overflights and multibeam bathymetry. Stephanie discussed the efforts of the [Grand Canyon Trust](#) to defend "the natural integrity" of the canyon. Finally, archivist [Rob Spindler](#) described the making of the [100 Years of Grand](#) collaborative digital archive. All of the talks were recorded and are on the conference website available



through the links provided throughout this recap.

WAML members past and present attended the conference, staffed the booth, and enjoyed telling others about our organization. Sierra Laddusaw was our official WAML ambassador spreading the word of WAML far and wide to the over 200 participants in the conference. Matthew Toro, suffering from walking pneumonia, was valiant in his efforts to stay upright and to participate as fully as he could. He seemed to still have so much energy that one presenter noted that he couldn't imagine Matthew's normal state! The weather was perfect, the venue well-suited for the event, and the hospitality of ASU boundless. It was a great conference!

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