

spite his scientific training—was routinely charged with making hugely consequential decisions about public-land use and influencing federal policy. The “nice guy” cast the deciding vote to open part of Moab’s watershed, the Mill Creek Canyon, to development, Hedden says, yet after the meeting asked if the land in question was “up behind the old drive-in movie theater?” It’s far from the only example of locals “not knowing best” that Hedden can reel off after four decades of conservation work.

Hedden does understand scientific data and debates over balancing uses of terrain, especially over the long haul. He went to Harvard wanting to be a marine biologist, then shifted focus as a student of Gund research professor of neurosciences John E. Dowling. But, he says, “At that point all the experiments were mortal and I just decided I couldn’t kill animals anymore.” He’d already taken a few trips out west with Bliss, and decided he’d “go out there and do something else. I figured if that didn’t work out, I could go back to science.”

THREE YEARS into his new political life, Hedden was hired by the Grand Canyon Trust (GCT) as the Utah conservation director, which meant expanding his activism and no longer relying on woodworking to support his family. Then he took the helm in 2002.

The environmental-advocacy organization was founded by a group that included then-Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, LL.B. ’65, in

1985. It seeks to safeguard the greater Grand Canyon region from destructive mining and other development, and is currently involved in the six-year battle against the proposed Grand Canyon Escalade resort and gondola (meant to take up to 10,000 visitors from the East Rim to the canyon floor each day), in support of the Native American campaign against the project, Save the Confluence. (The project is up for a vote by the Navajo Nation Council in October). GCT also joins in the long-running fight that includes Native Americans, against a massive commercial complex on the South Rim—hotels, homes, shops, restaurants—proposed by the Italian-owned Stilo Development Group USA. That would require drilling into the aquifer that supplies seeps, springs, and streams in the Grand Canyon. “They would dry up the things that support wildlife and even make it impossible for people to hike there,” Hedden says. “Water is already such a precious resource.”

GCT encompasses the entire Colorado Plateau. Its roughly 130,000 square miles sprawl across the Four Corners region and include the Colorado River and its tributaries (on which 40 million people depend for water); 55 national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas; and the territory of the Navajo Nation, which covers the lower third of the plateau, south of Moab. Proj-

ects are based primarily in northern Arizona and southern Utah. GCT was instrumental in obtaining protection for Bears Ears, a 1.35-million-acre tract located north of the Navajo Nation, designated a National



Arches National Park, near Moab, Utah

Monument by the Obama administration. Named for two 8,700-foot buttes and, Hedden notes, among the richest archaeological districts in the country, Bears Ears is considered sacred ancestral homelands by many of the area’s Native American tribes. GCT is now in full-on defense mode because Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (also within the plateau) are under threat from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. At press time, a



COURTESY OF THE HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Aloian Scholars

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) has named Aldís Elfarsdóttir ’18, of Eliot House, and Hannah Smati ’18, of Adams House, the 2017 David and Mimi Aloian Memorial Scholars for enriching communal life of the Houses.

As the Resource Efficiency Program (REP) undergraduate representative for her House and a former member of the University’s Climate Change Task Force, Elfarsdóttir, of Belmont, Massachusetts, is committed to sustainability issues. She has created programming for compostables and zero waste at House events. Her project, “Networked Energy-saving Temperature Sensors (NETS),” investigated Eliot’s winter heating system and produced a data-driven model to improve thermal comfort and building-energy maintenance.

Smati, of Houston, is co-chair of the House Committee and has helped the governing body become more inclusive and dynamic. She developed the Student Photography Initiative, and formed a system of liaisons with the tutors for each House team (race relations, LGBTQ, music, wellness, etc.) to encourage open discussions. Smati is also co-president of the Harvard Undergraduate Global Health Forum, a peer counselor for Room 13, and was director of operations for the 2016 Harvard Arab Weekend.