



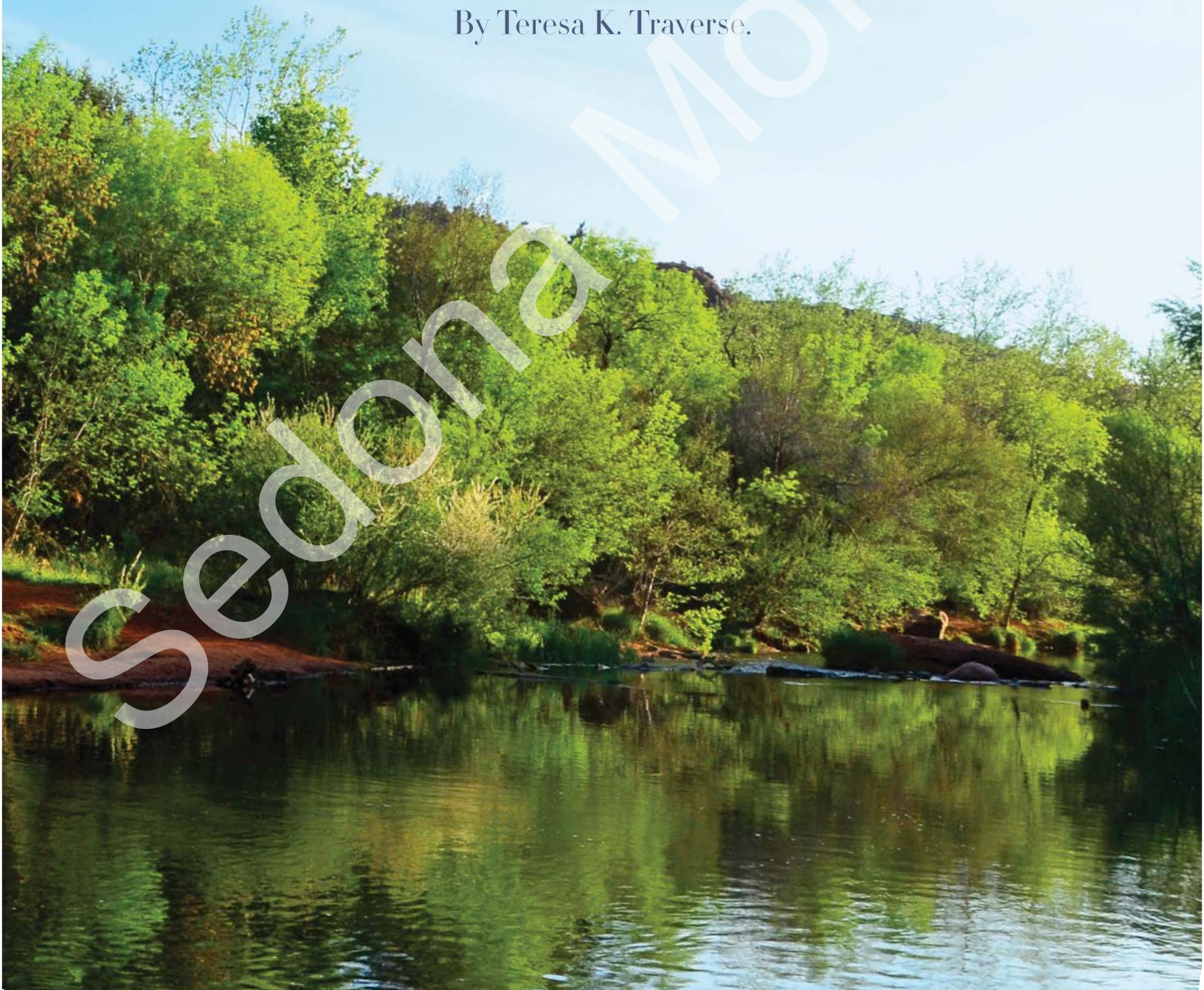
THIS SPREAD:

Oak Creek runs through Crescent Moon Ranch or Red Rock Crossing in West Sedona. A short hike leads to popular swimming hole Buddha Beach.

OUR FAVORITE HIKES WHERE TO SWIM IN SEDONA

Summer's high temps are here to stay. Hike to these popular Sedona swimming holes, and then cool off in the water to beat the heat.

By Teresa K. Traverse.

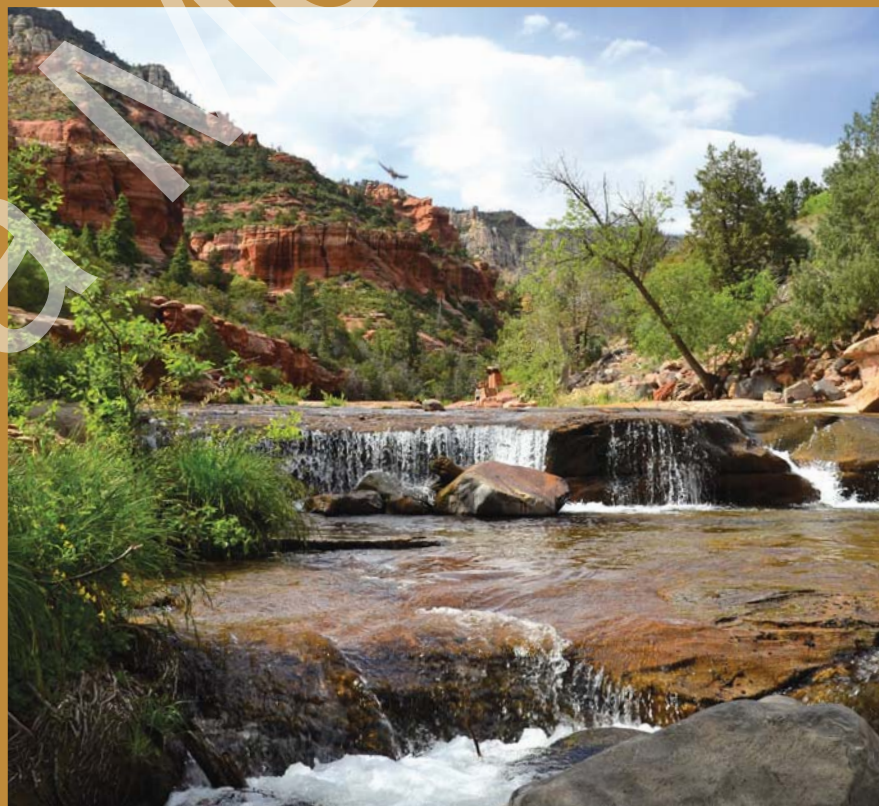




SLIDE ROCK STATE PARK

One of Sedona's most popular attractions in the summer, Slide Rock State Park, is named for the 80-foot long natural rock slide that visitors have been sliding down for years. The setting is downright dreamy. Visitors are surrounded by vibrant red rocks dotted with green trees as Oak Creek rushes by. The state park is also home to three different hiking trails. The longest one is just 0.3 miles, making each one a perfect, short jaunt for even the hottest summer's day. Get a bird's eye view of the Slide Rock State Park swim area below if you hike the 0.25-mile Clifftop Natural Trail. The easy, paved 0.25-mile Pendley Homestead Trail is a stroll that takes you back in time. See the Pendley Homestead house, apple orchards, tourist cabins, an apple packing cabin and stellar views of the walls of Oak Creek Canyon. The 0.3-mile Slide Rock Route is the main route that visitors take to reach the swimming area. The trail starts by the apple packing barn and descends to the creek via a few stairs and then crosses the creek via a small footbridge. From there, head north along some sandstone shelves. You might spot some sunbathers here. As you hike, see if you can see the cabin on the west side of the creek.

DIRECTIONS: From Uptown Sedona, head north on AZ-89A for about 10 miles. AZ-89A will cross into Oak Creek Canyon. The entrance for Slide Rock State Park will be on your left. Daily entrance fees per vehicle cost \$20 from Monday through Thursday and \$30 from Friday through Sunday.

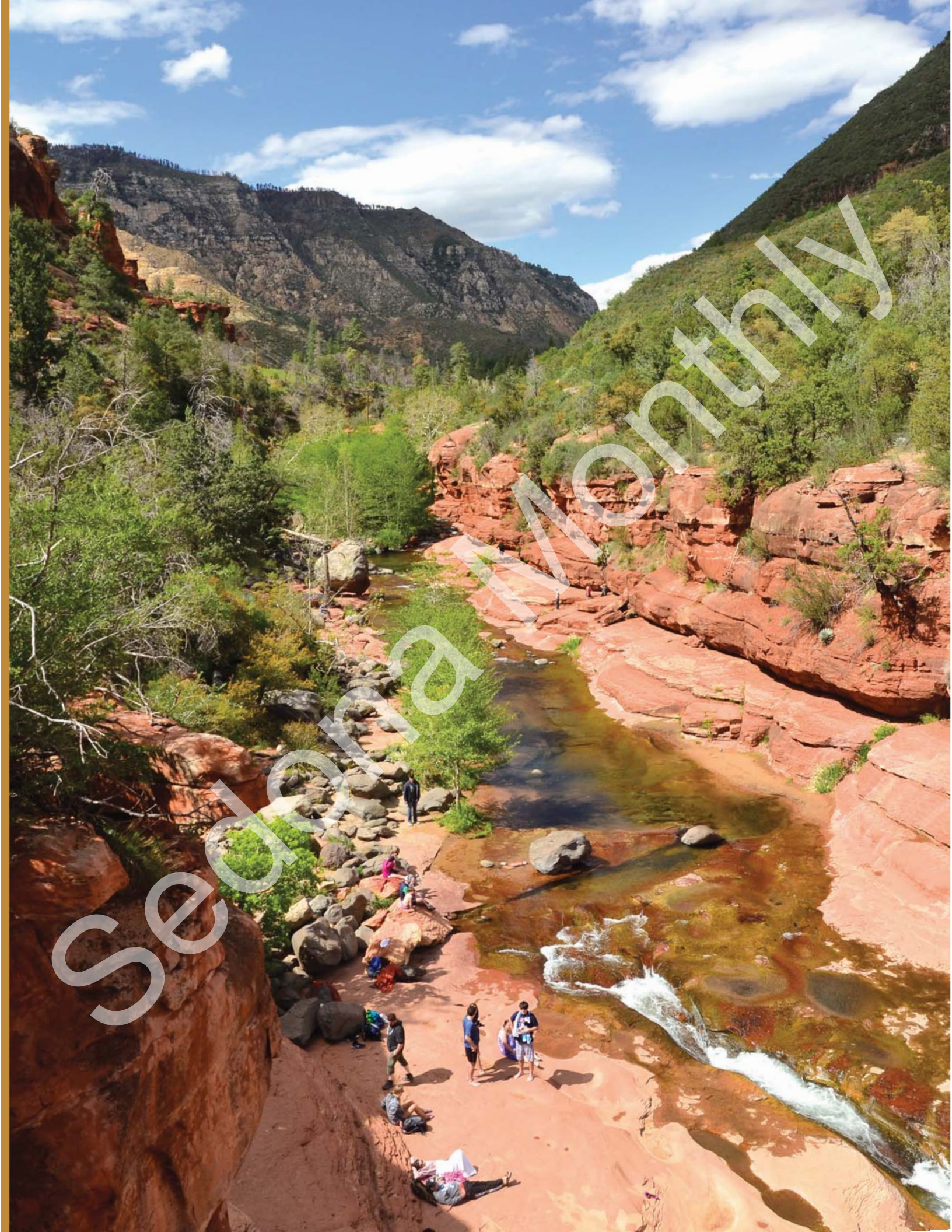


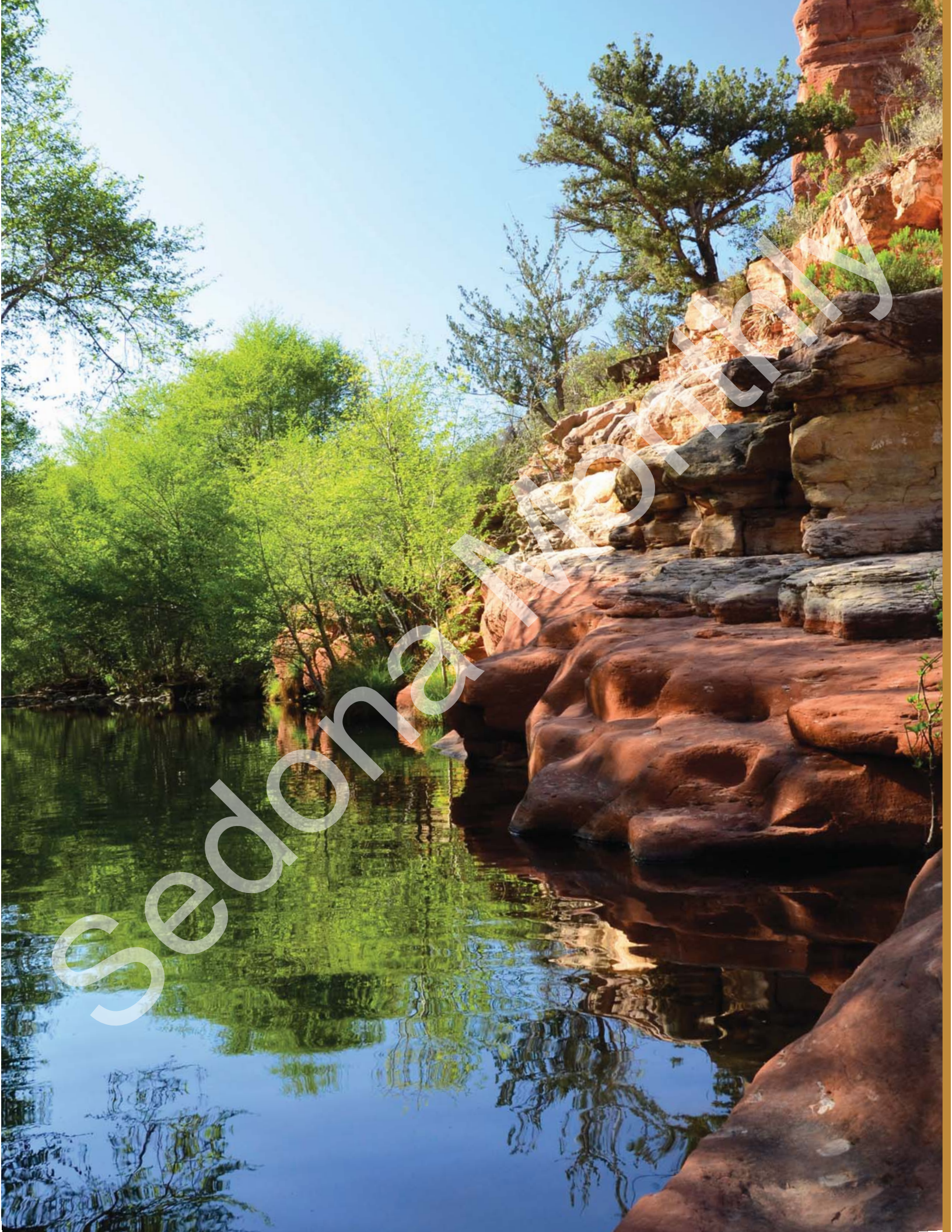
THIS PAGE:

(Top) Slide Rock State Park is named for the 80-foot long natural rock slide that's one of the park's main attractions. The state park is also home to many other swimming areas where visitors can cool off during the summer months. (Bottom) Water from Oak Creek flows through Slide Rock State Park.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

An overhead view of Slide Rock State Park. This park is also home to three different short hiking trails that are perfect jaunts to take on even the hottest summer day.







THIS PAGE:

(Top) If you hike the iconic Bell Trail in Rimrock, you'll enjoy views of Sedona's red rocks can hear Wet Beaver Creek babbling as you hike alongside it. Wet Beaver Creek. (Bottom) Look forward a hike in the woods that also features many watering holes if you tackle the about 7-mile out-and-back Bell Trail.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

The main swimming hole along the Bell Trail is "The Crack" at Wet Beaver Creek. One of our favorite detours is taking the Weir Trail that leads to another more secluded (and often less crowded) swimming hole.

"THE CRACK" AT WET BEAVER CREEK

The swimming hole "The Crack" at Wet Beaver Creek is one that just about every Arizona hiker wants to cross off his or her hiking bucket list. Located in Rimrock just a few miles outside of the Village of Oak Creek, the Bell Trail is how you'll reach this storied spot. The trail is named after Charles Bell, the man who built the trail in 1932 as a cattle trail. The beginning of the trail is wide, flat and dusty. There's no virtually no shade here. Be sure to bring plenty of water, and try to start early to beat the heat. The Bell Trail runs alongside Wet Beaver Creek, and hikers can hear the sound of the rushing water. At 2.5 miles, the trail intersects with the Weir Trail – one of our favorite detours that leads to a more secluded swimming hole. At about 3.5 miles, the Bell Trail crosses Wet Beaver Creek. This area is called The Crack. This spot features red rock sandstone and crystal clear water that's the perfect reprieve after a long, hot summer hike. Turn around the way you came for a hike that's about 7 miles long.

DIRECTIONS: From the Village of Oak Creek, head south on AZ-179. Follow AZ-179 and pass by Interstate 17 until it becomes Forest Service Road 618. Pass Soda Springs Road. The Bell Trailhead will be on your left.



CRESCENT MOON RANCH

Crescent Moon Ranch – also called Red Rock Crossing – is perhaps best known for its fantastic views of Cathedral Rock. But this scenic spot is also a great place to swim or wade into Oak Creek. Take the approximately 1.5-mile Crescent Moon Creek Walk to the popular swimming hole Buddha Beach. Start your journey by strolling beside a grassy meadow featuring a water wheel and shed from the 1930s – remnants from the area’s past as a fruit orchard. The concrete path turns into a dirt trail that follows the banks of Oak Creek. From here, you can take many short paths to the creek. Don’t miss the view of Cathedral Rock and “The Family” red rock formation at the 0.5-mile point. It’s one of our favorites in town. At 0.75 miles, the trail ends at Buddha Beach. Soak up red rock views, bask in the shade of tall trees and enjoy the clear, cool waters of Oak Creek here. Post-dip, return the way you came to complete the hike. •

DIRECTIONS: From West Sedona, head West on AZ-89A. Turn left on Upper Red Rock Look Road. Take a left on Chavez Ranch Road. Take a right on Red Rock Crossing Road. Take a left on Forest Park. Day use parking costs \$11 per vehicle, for up to five people.



THIS PAGE:

(Top) West Sedona’s Crescent Moon Ranch or Red Rock Crossing offers stellar views of Cathedral Rock and Oak Creek. (Bottom) Hike Crescent Moon Creek Walk and take time to check out the banks of Oak Creek.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

One of the most popular swimming holes in Sedona is Buddha Beach, which you can find if you hike Crescent Moon Creek Walk.



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