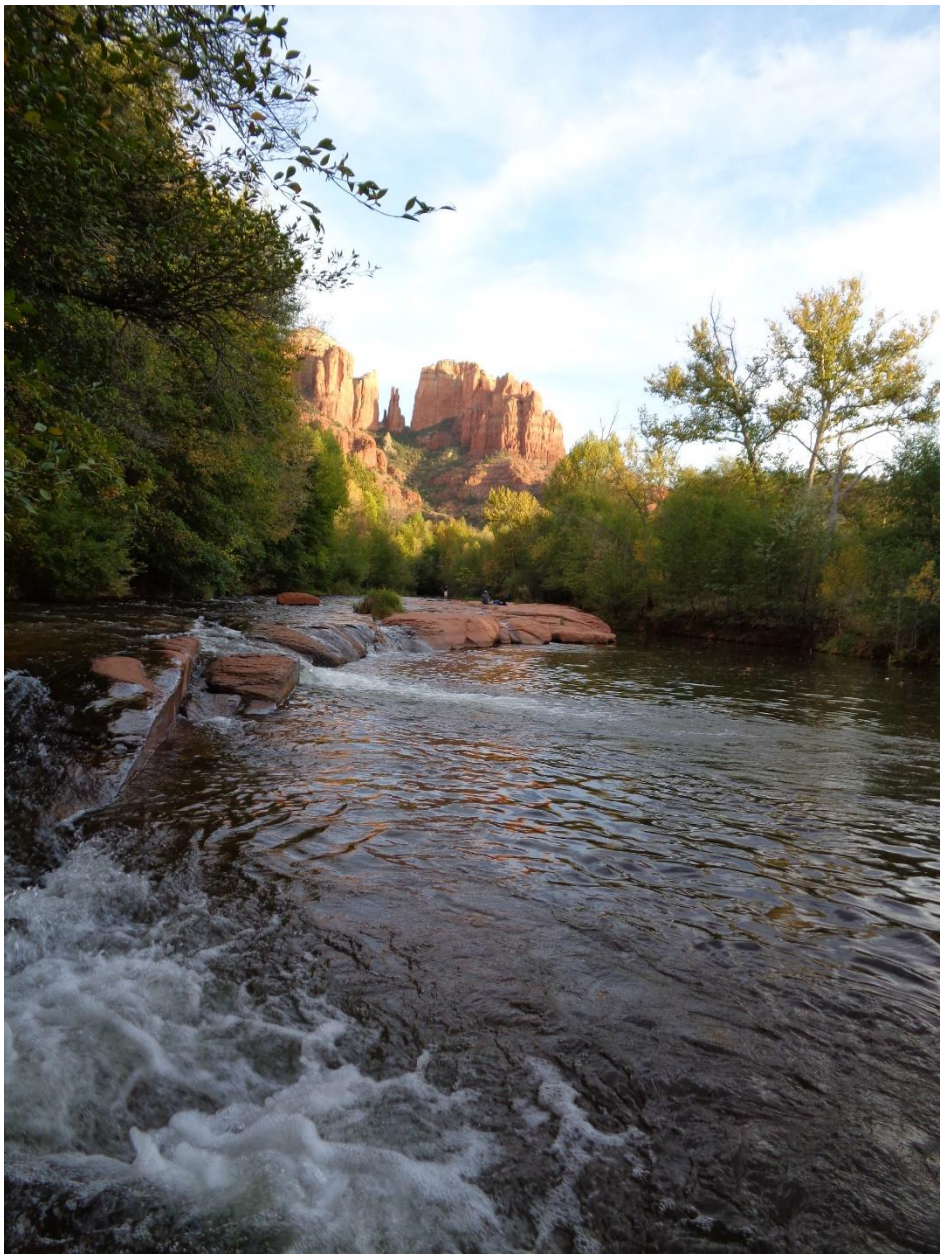
Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

I have little use for Sedona—the endless purveyors of mystical crystals, the unnaturally high proportion of people who lack critical thinking skills to the extent that they believe in and seek out invisible and undetectable vortices, and people who are so inept in their own native language as to claim that 'vortex' should be pluralized as 'vortexes' in Sedona, even though the most correct form is 'vortices.' It makes me crazy: so much idiocy that it's impossible to decide what to be sarcastic about first.

Photo credit: James! Bower

Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

But it is a beautiful place, and the tragedy is that such a magnificent place can be taken over by those who believe that their minds have nothing positive to contribute to their lives; they're probably right. Nevertheless, I took dad there in the fall of 2016 for the 'blue hour.' To date, Sedona is my favorite place on the planet to experience the blue hour. I need to travel more. In order to appreciate the blue hour, one needs to arrive in the afternoon, when the sun is high and hot, and the red rocks are at their reddest. It doesn't hurt to seek out a shady creek from which to view the red rocks.



Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Whenever I mention the ‘blue hour’, my interlocutors give me a glassy stare and say, “Huh?” It’s almost the same response I get when I talk about linguistics with non-linguists, minus the slack jaw and drooling. I don’t miss the drooling, so I keep trying with the blue hour. The blue hour is the name for the time of day when the sun is at such an angle that the warmer frequencies of the light spectrum are filtered by the atmosphere, the effect of which is to give everything a bluish tinge. In a world in which blue is a major factor already, such as places that are not deserts, the blue hour is less dramatic, which is why the red rocks of Sedona are such a great place to observe the effect.

Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

We wandered around in the Cathedral Rock area for a while. Dad is interested in geology, so it was fun to explore this leftover of the Permian Schnebly Hill formation, formed by a large and no-longer-in-Arizona lake or sea. The red rocks are layers of sandstone, deposits of sand that have petrified. There are even ripple marks in places.

Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

On the way to the blue hour, we walked around the formations, had a look at a couple of places where some of the more famous vortices are said to be, neglected to shop at any of the stores, and asked a state park person about a good vantage point from which to experience the blue hour. He had no idea what I was talking about, of course, and he also had no interest in keeping the park open long enough to get to the blue hour. We decided to take our chances on the open road as the red rocks started to move toward purple.

Color Drift, Sedona, 2016, Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

We decided to start back toward Prescott and have the blue hour from a higher altitude. We pulled off the road at almost the peak moment and waited a few minutes for a real blue. During the blue hour, the red rocks are less red, and the air around the rocks is thick and blue, almost gelatinous in appearance, making the darker areas of the formation almost a navy blue. The blue hour, in pictures. I don't want any more cataleptic stares.