



SIERRA
CLUB

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Utah Sierran

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Utah Chapter Sierra Club

Newsletter Editor, Mark Clemens

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Cover Photo: Mill D North in the Wasatch. Photo by James Hoggard

Statement of Purpose

“To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth, to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.”

Make a gesture that lasts a lifetime.



A Sierra Club Life Membership is a gesture on behalf of all life—from our oceans to our forests, and from the tiniest insect to the largest sequoia. As a Sierra Club Life Member, you’ll be helping to support programs and campaigns that protect endangered species and preserve threatened wilderness areas (and all the life that they support)—not only for today, but for decades to come.

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Life Member Program

55 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

www.sierraclub.org

Farewell To a Friend: Wayne Owens

by Lawson LeGate, Senior
Southwest Regional Representative

We join Sierra Club members in Utah and throughout the land in mourning the passing of our good friend, former Congressman Wayne Owens. Wayne was the original champion of Utah wilderness legislation aimed at protecting the nation's incomparable desert wildlands in his home state.

A native of the small town of Panguitch in southern Utah, Wayne loved the land he had dedicated himself to protect. He often reminisced about tending sheep as a young boy in the beautiful Escalante Canyon country. He understood that he came from somewhere very special. These origins fired his zeal to preserve the wildness of Original America.

Another of Wayne's passions, and one that he also promoted as a member of congress, was the reintroduction of the Gray Wolf into the Yellowstone country. Wayne not only lived to see this done, but shortly before his passing last December he knew that the progeny of the original Yellowstone packs had wandered south into Utah. He no doubt guessed that more will follow and that Utah's mountains and forests will once again reverberate with lobo's voice.

Sierra Club members who worked with Wayne will remember his self-deprecating humor and sense of playfulness.



L to R: Ruth Frear, William Penn Mott, Gibbs Smith, Wayne Owens, Sarah Owens, Jim Catlin

Some of the best-remembered jokes are the one's Wayne told around the campfire.

Wayne appreciated his association with the Sierra Club. He enjoyed the Club's support in his electoral campaigns. In 1992 he attended the Club's annual dinner to help present the John Muir Award to Utah activist and current Sierra Club Director Jim Catlin.

Wayne's championship of Utah wilderness has passed, perhaps fittingly, to members of congress from other states. This is, after all, America's Redrock Wilderness. Every time a representative or senator decides to co-sponsor this legislation, they are paying tribute to the congressman who first introduced the idea that America acknowledges natural treasures in Utah.

We will miss our friend Wayne Owens. 🌿

Editors Note

by Mark Clemens

An editor is a bit of a drudge. He should usually stay out of sight. But I intrude myself into this issue to tell my own experience of Wayne Owens. I was a volunteer on Wayne's 1992 campaign for United States Senate. It was a tough campaign, and Wayne did not win. (My family has been bad luck for Wayne. My oldest brother volunteered on Wayne's 1974 campaign; he lost then too.) But Wayne impressed me throughout the campaign with his good sense, grit, humor-sometimes sardonic humor-and honesty.

Some of his eulogists have noted how many young politicians found an inspiration in Wayne. I know of none who has measured up to the standard Wayne set. In my unhappiness after the election in 1992, I vowed (broken several times since) not to sully myself in a political system that didn't value Wayne's goodness and guts as highly as I. Wayne himself took the defeat better than I did.

Wayne had the foresight to fight to protect the integrity and beauty of Utah's wild lands. Although he was born in Panguitch, he lived in Salt Lake City for many years and represented Salt Lake Valley in congress. Even he would be surprised that the Wasatch Range-and in designated wilderness areas at that-could again come under threat. And the

bitterness is tintured with irony that it's our own Salt Lake County Commissioners who sprang this terrible surprise. Please see the article Wilderness RIP on page 14

Wayne never allowed opponents to set the terms of debate over wilderness. He didn't propose it sheepishly or apologetically as though it were some bad medicine that Utah needed to take for the good of the nation as a whole. He advanced it joyfully as the birthright most Utahns, but not most Utah politicians, take it for. Let's put on this mantle Wayne left us as we fight for wilderness in the Wasatch Range. 🌿

Mike Morrison In His Own Words

I haven't much history as an activist of any kind and normally prefer to remain in the background, but will be happy to share those parts of my history that may be of interest to all of you. I'll do the best I can to fill you in on how I came into environmentalism and do my best to waste a page of the Sierran (mea culpa).

My formative years were spent in a government housing project in South Boston, Mass. I was extremely lucky here, in that I get to brag a little about having been raised in "Southie", but escaped the worst of it. A few months before we moved to Watertown, Mass, I was told that I'd been designated a junior member of a gang, but never had to serve! There were some tough times there (Mom had it far worse than I), but there were some good ones too. Much of my environment as a kid involved asphalt and concrete, the best times that come to mind involve nature. There was a really nice park nearby with some marvelously tall trees in which I spent many wonderful summer days. On the far side of the park was the old Boston Harbor with Carson Beach. Although we had next to no money, Mom got me into the Boys Club which had a powerful influence on me in many ways, but especially, by getting me into the woods for a couple weeks of several summers. Goodwill Industries also exposed me to nature a bit

through the Cub Scouts. The color, the smells, the coolness of the trees...it was instant love.

Watertown was a bust as far as nature is concerned, but then we moved to Burlington, Mass., where many wonderful things happened to me: woods; backwoods skiing (yes!!!) one winter; my conversion from a mediocre jock to an aspiring scholar.

Next, with a couple of scholarships under my arm I started college at Northeastern University as a mechanical engineering student, heading for a BS in physics—no luck. I wanted it too badly; clutched; couldn't even do simple physics; quit and joined the US Marine Corps to get away from scholastics and think—what to do about college? (I've always been a bit slow and many people would say this proves it.) After training and working for a while as an aviation electronics technician, I was selected for the Navy Enlisted Scientific Education Program: a full scholarship to a four-year college with a commission in the USMC as a regular, line officer. To my chagrin, I discovered after graduation that the most technical job I could get as a 2nd lieutenant was as a pilot. I wasn't a good enough pilot to become a jet jock and wanted helicopters, anyway, so that's where I wound up. Still no environmentalism. Sorry. The best I can do for you on that is that I loved



Mike Morrison photo by Dan Schroeder

the forests of Panama, Puerto Rico, Vietnam, Okinawa, Thailand and the Philippines. I'm somewhat chagrined but proud to say that, in Vietnam, I refused to let my crews machine gun the simians of Monkey Island: a favorite, unapproved target practice of helicopter crews there.

During all these years, I had no idea that it was legal for adults to just go onto public property and enjoy them. But on the way from duty station to duty station, we hit virtually every nature tourist trap we came across. I also took my two older sons canoeing and hiking whenever and wherever signs said I could.

We joined the Sierra Club around 1984, when living in Maryland, but, as far as I know, there was no outings program there. Maybe I just didn't read that part of their junk mail.

Yup. Until Utah, that's about it. Impressed with my environmentalist credentials yet? Then, one day I leafed through the Utah Sierran. I noticed that there would be a hike in the Western Desert and that there would be cheap skiing lessons. I tried them and enjoyed them so much that I became a regular. From there, I felt a responsibility to payback, so I volunteered to help out. You know what they military says about volunteers: that's how I learned what an outings chair is.

[Editor's Note: Mike has been active as the Ogden Outings Chair for about three years. He has also spearheaded some special outings such as a service trip to help document unauthorized vehicle routes in the Public Grove roadless area and an outing for inner-city Ogden kids.]

What Does an Outings Chair Do?

by Mike Morrison, Outings Chair, Ogden Group

An outings chair is responsible for putting together quarterly outings schedules for the club. That requires recruiting and training new outings leaders, soliciting and coordinating outings from the various leaders in the group and transmitting that quarterly outings schedule to the newsletter editor and the webmaster.

The outings program is very important in terms of the Sierra Club's objectives. It gets people out, exercising and enjoying nature. Many of our leaders are educators. All are top-notch. Some will teach us about nature; some about conservation or environmentalism; and some will just

help us enjoy the experience. Outings take us to all sorts of events and places, such as, endangered areas, areas of natural beauty, areas of historical significance, great viewpoints, areas where we work on service projects to improve the environment and wildlife viewing areas.

The Ogden Group is the only organization in the Ogden area with a regular schedule of muscle-powered outdoor trips. We do our best to leave only one kind of trace: a cleaner, more natural environment. Sometimes, outings even encourage people to become more active environmentally.

Coming Soon to an Ecosystem Near you

by Jean Binyon, Utah Chapter Vice-chair

Southwestern Utah faces environmental challenges as great as any in Utah. Growth is gobbling up much of Washington County and parts of Iron County without any evidence of planning. This growth threatens water supplies, important animal and plant habitat, air quality and quality of life. Anyone who's lived in Utah more than five years has read about these problems many times, but now Sierra Club members in southwestern Utah are organizing to attack these problems.

"We recently held a wonderful organizing meeting," said Mariam Arthur, a Cedar City resident worried about environmental degradation, "and folks had a chance to talk about the issues they're worried about and how to solve them." Close to fifty people attended the meeting on February 9th, and participants agreed it was time to take steps to organize a

Sierra Club committee for Southwestern Utah. The Southwestern Utah Conservation Committee, if approved, will function as a sub-committee of the Chapter's Conservation Committee, and will encompass Washington, Iron and Beaver Counties and portions of western Piute, Garfield and Kane Counties.

Every county in the area to be served by the proposed committee has significant environmental concerns. "Beaver and Iron Counties have air-quality and environmental health problems caused by the Circle Four pig factory," Ken Anderson said. Anderson, a former city planner and long-time Sierra Club member, is also worried about his own backyard, "The new airport and the pipeline proposed from Lake Powell to Washington County are being planned to serve a community of half a million people. We believe it's time for a dialogue in

southwestern Utah about whether we want to replicate Las Vegas here."

According to Midge Henline, Acting Secretary-Treasurer of the committee, "Our proposal for formation of the committee will include development of a web page with a link to the Utah Chapter web site. A newsletter is also in the planning stages to be sent to members living within the area. We are organizing field trips and hope that members from all over Utah will consider joining us." The committee has scheduled outings to the Red Cliffs Tortoise Reserve and to view rock art (See page 9). Additional trips are being planned to the Virgin River Canyon Rim Trail in Hurricane and Limestone Caves in southwest Utah. Ken Anderson welcomes calls about the outings and issues in southwest Utah. You can reach him at 435-635-2353 or e-mail him at pahtempe@infowest.com.

Thumper Trucks Banished From Arches Backyard

by Kevin Walker and Steve Bloch

The Sierra Club and its allies (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society) have won the latest, and perhaps final, round of the Dome Plateau seismic appeal. This decision was heralded by the New York Times as one of the two most important environmental victories of 2002.

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall that the Dome Plateau (also known as Yellow Cat) Seismic project was located just east of Arches National Park and overlapped the Dome Plateau proposed wilderness area. The project involved huge thumper trucks driving off-road, criss-crossing sensitive desert soils.

In February 2002 (when work on the project was 50% complete but it had not yet entered proposed wilderness areas), the aforementioned environmental groups won a temporary stay of the BLM's decision, stopping the thumper trucks in their paths. A divided panel of the Interior Board of Land Appeals upheld BLM's decision in late August 2002, meaning work could proceed. After learning that the seismic contractor



Thumper trucks photo by Kevin Walker

was planning to return and finish the project in September, the environmental groups filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Washington, D.C., to stop any further damage.

In late October, the court issued a preliminary injunction temporarily blocking the WesternGeco project so that it could consider the environmental groups' claims. On December 20, 2002, the court agreed with the environmental groups that BLM, by approving the exploration activity, violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The court ruled that BLM relied on an inadequate Environmental Assessment that failed to demonstrate there would be "no significant impact" on the human environment. To the contrary, they noted that the project would involve 60,000-pound "thumper trucks" crisscrossing sensitive desert soils, vibrating the ground at regular intervals to record seismic information about oil deposits. Thumper trucks ravage soil, causing such ecological damage that it could take as many as 300 years for the desert to recover. The court was also persuaded that BLM violated NEPA when it failed to consider any alternatives to the proposed seismic project.

This is the first time a federal court has had the opportunity to review a Bush administration-sponsored oil exploration project. We are hopeful that this decision will begin to put the brakes on the administration's rush to open up sensitive Utah public lands to energy development. As this newsletter went to press, it remained to be seen whether the BLM will appeal the latest decision.

UTAH CHAPTER OUTTINGS

Spring 2003

Note To Participants:

All members and nonmembers are welcome on any of the chapter or group activities listed. Radios, firearms and dogs are not welcome on Sierra Club outings. Unless otherwise noted in the description, outings are not suitable for children. Interested participants are strongly encouraged to contact the outing leader in advance and inquire as to updates, degree of difficulty, and other outing details. Participants should be prepared for various seasonal weather conditions, temperature changes that occur due to rapid increases/decreases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone who appears unprepared for scheduled outings. Please note that all participants, or their legal guardians, must sign a waiver, recognizing the possibility of injury, to participate in each outing. Call the Sierra Club office (801) 467-9297 for a recorded message on forthcoming activities.

Also, it must be noted that, although a very effective way of reducing air pollution and fossil fuel consumption, the Sierra Club cannot recommend carpooling as a safe means of transportation. If you choose to carpool, fees charged by the US Forest Service are expected to be shared by participants carpooling to trailheads. For the most current outings listings, please visit the website <http://utah.sierraclub.org> and look at the outings under the Salt Lake and Ogden Groups and the new Southwestern Utah Conservation Committee!.



May 14, 2002, Tuesday nite outing on Parley's Canyon Railroad Grade Trail. Be the first (before April 15, 2003) to list the first name of ten of these trekkers and receive a Back-Country Guide Book of the High Uintas. Send list to Ron Younger at 920 E. 1500 South, Bountiful, UT 84010-2138

Salt Lake Group

APRIL

April 3rd, 4th, and 5th Canyonlands Car Camp

To anyone interested in exploring the Needles area of Canyonland National Park in southern Utah. The outing will include day hikes to Big Spring Canyon and a hike to a point overlooking the gorge where the Colorado and Green Rivers merge. Expect a moderate level pace and a round trip hiking distance of 11 miles. The Wooden Shoe Camp ground has been reserved. Bring camping supplies and all the essentials needed for an extended weekend of camping and hiking. The number of participants will be limited.

Call Margaret (292-7602) for meeting place, time, and other details about the outing.

Saturday, April 5th, 2003 X-Country Hike

A moderate all day trek up Left Fork Muskrat Canyon in the northern Stansbury Mountains. Mostly on an old trail but expect some off-trail trekking. To car-pool from Salt Lake call Ron at 292-4040

Saturday-Sunday, April 12-13 Service/Fun: Eastern San Rafael Swell I

This trip will include a service day for the Price River BLM office. Please bring work gloves. We will be inventorying and replacing Carsonite signs along the Mexican Mountain WSA (Wilderness Study Area) southeastern boundary on Saturday. On Sunday we will enjoy a day hike up Cottonwood Wash and inventory the condition of the petroglyphs in the area. We will car camp near Smith's

Cabin. This time of year is fabulous in the desert. Call Will McCarvill (942-2921) for details regarding the outing. Co-listed with the Wasatch Mountain Club

MAY

**Saturday, May 3rd
West Canyon Wildflower Outing**

An all-day moderate level trek in the Stansbury Mountains. Bring wildflower I.D. books, lunch, water, and spring weather gear. To car pool, meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Wildlife Resources Building southwest parking area (1594 West North Temple). For more information regarding the hike, contact Ron Younger at 292-4040

**Sunday, May 4th
Stansbury Island Hike**

This hike will follow the lake-level trail on Stansbury Island. It should be a fairly easy hike, lasting 3-4 hours. Meet at the Division of Natural Resources Building at 1590 West North Temple at 9:00 am. Call Dick (531-7830) for more information about the hike.

**Tuesday Night Hike
May 6th
Bonneville Shoreline Hike**

This interesting hike will be lead up Dry Creek Canyon to Lime Kiln Gulch. Along the way, hikers will pass the restored Historic Lime Kiln, built in the mid-1800's. Come see a great view of the city. This is an intermediate level hike however there are some moderately steep sections. Meet at Merrill Engineering Parking Lot (U of U campus) at 6:30 pm. Call Bill (582-9223) for more information.

**Saturday-Sunday May 10-11
Service/Fun
Eastern San Rafael Swell II**

This trip will focus on the southwestern side of the Mexican Mountain WSA. The outing will include a service day for the Price River BLM office. Please bring work gloves and a can do attitude as we will be inventorying and replacing Carsonite signs on Saturday. On Sunday we will enjoy a day hike up Spring and

Nates Canyon and enjoy the petroglyphs at the mouth of the complex. We will car camp near Mexican Mountain. Call Will McCarvill (942-2921) for more information about the outing. Co-listed with the Wasatch Mountain Club

**Tuesday Night Hike
May 13th
Parleys Canyon Hike**

An easy trail on the old (historical) railroad grade in upper Parleys Canyon. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Parley's K-Mart parking lot on Foothill Drive (2100 South) to carpool or at Exit 137 on East bound I-80 in Parleys Canyon. Call Ron Younger (292-4040) for more details about the hike.

**Tuesday Night Hike
May 20th
Porters Fork Hike**

This will be a moderately easy hike that begins at the gate of Porter Fork in Millcreek Canyon. The first mile or so is on a paved road that winds through private cabin sites. A dirt trail begins at the end of the pavement and we will hike as far as participants would like beyond the paved section of the trail. Meeting place will be the Skyline High School parking lot at 6:30 p.m. Hikers will then carpool to the trail head. Call Ken (484-3112) for more information about the hike

**Memorial Day Weekend
May 24th and 25th
Bull Grass Knoll Car Camp**

Bull Grass Knoll is located in the Confusion Mountain Range about 50 miles west of Delta, Utah. Bull Grass Knoll is one of the citizens proposed wilderness sites in the West Desert. The site is just west of the Notch Peak and just north of the King Top wilderness study areas. The outing will consist of mountain biking, hiking, and exploring one of the most remote desert areas in Utah. This outing will offer a true wilderness experience in a harsh yet beautiful desert environment. Helmets are required if bringing a mountain bike and packing lots of water is highly recommended for there are no water sources in this area. Outing may continue into Monday depending on the desire of participants. Please RSVP to Ken (484-

3112). Meeting place, time, and other details regarding the hike will be determined based on level of interest in the outing.

**Tuesday Night Hike
May 27th
Emigration Canyon**

This will be a nice hike up Freeze Canyon that may soon be lost to private development. Time permitting, hikers will travel up to the Emigration / Red Butte Canyon divide. The hike will be intermediate, and will meet at the Park, just East of Hogle Zoo at 6:30 pm. Call Bill (582-9223) for further information.

JUNE

**Saturday-Sunday May 31-June 1
Service/Fun
Eastern San Rafael Swell III**

This last spring Trip will be focused on inventorying and replacing Carsonite signs along the northern Mexican Mountain WSA (Wilderness Study Area) boundary on Saturday. On Sunday we will hike up Cow and Calf Canyons. We will car camp at the Wedge Overlook. Call Will McCarvill (942-2921) for details about the outing. Co-listed with the Wasatch Mountain Club

**Tuesday Night Hike
June 3rd
Salt Lake Overlook Hike**

Enjoy a nice early season hike, lasting 2 - 3 hours. This will be an intermediate level hike with the overlook as the destination. Meeting place is the Skyline High School parking lot at 6:30 pm. Participants will then car pool to the trail-head. Call Dick (531-7830) for more information.

**Saturday, June 7th
Deseret Peak Wilderness Hike**

An all-day intermediate level trek to North Willow Lake in the Stansbury Mountains. Call Ron (292-4040) for car pool information and other details regarding the outing.

**Tuesday Night Hike
June 10th
City Creek Canyon Area**

This moderately easy hike will begin at the gate of City Creek Canyon. There are several hiking options and the decision as to which trail to hike will be decided at the trail head. Meeting place is a park at the northwest intersection of Virginia Street and 11th Avenue, just north of the Shriners Hospital. Meeting time is 6:30 p.m. Hikers will then car pool to the gate at City Creek Canyon.

**Tuesday Night Hike
June 17th
Historic Mormon Trail**

This hike will take place along the Historic Mormon Trail that continues on to Nebraska. However tempting it may be, we won't go that far! This is an intermediate level hike. Meeting place is the Park just East of Hogle Zoo at 6:30 pm. Call Bill (582-9223) for more information about the hike.

**Sunday, June 22nd
Broads Fork Trail
Cottonwood Canyon**

A moderately paced intermediate level hike to Broads Fork Meadow on a shaded trail in Big Cottonwood Canyon. The meadow is framed by Twin Sunrise and Dromedary peaks. The distance is about 4.5 miles round trip so bring water, lunch, and all the essentials for a day hike. Meeting place is the Park and Ride at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon at 10:30 a.m. Call Margerate (292-7602) for information about the hike.

**Tuesday Night Hike
June 24th
Brighton Lake Loop**

This hike is an opportunity to possibly see some moose and various other wildlife! Meet at the Park 'N Ride at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon at 6:30 pm. Call Dick (531-7830) for more information.

**Sunday, June 29th
Bicycle Ride Into Millcreek Canyon**

This outing is intended to be a moderate cycling excursion up Millcreek Canyon. Cyclists will meet at the Skyline High School parking lot and ride as far up Millcreek Canyon as road conditions allow. Because the gate is closed half

way up the canyon, this will be a great opportunity to enjoy cycling in an alpine setting void of car traffic, at least for half the ride. Meeting place is the Skyline High School parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Mountain or road bikes are appropriate for this ride. Helmets are mandatory. Call Ken (484-3112) for more details regarding the ride.

JULY

**Tuesday Night Hike
July 1st
Ferguson Canyon Hike**

This hike is a traditional favorite for Tuesday night hikers. The hike will explore the foothill area just south of the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Bring a flashlight along with water and hiking gear. Meeting place is the Park and Ride at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon at 6:30 p.m. Call Larry Schoeff (944-0945) for details about the outing. Refreshments will be served after the hike at the Schoeff residence.

**Saturday, July 5th
Thurston Peak Hike**

This will be the fourth annual trek on the Great Western Trail from Francis Peak (9547i) To car pool from Francis Peak, meet at 9:00 a.m. at the north east parking area at the Davis County Office Building on State Highway 106 in Farmington City. Call trail leader Ron Younger (292-4040) or Mike Morrison (475-4845) for additional information regarding the outing. Co-listed with the Ogden Group

**Tuesday Night Hike
July 8th
Twin Lakes Hike**

Take a break from the city heat and enjoy an intermediate level hike on the Twin Lakes trail near the Brighton Ski Resort in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Destination will be Dog Lake and the wildflowers should still be in bloom. Meeting place is the Park and Ride at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon at 6:30 p.m. Hikers will then carpool to the trailhead. Call Bill (582-9223) for more information about the hike. 🍷

Ogden Group

The public is welcome on all outings. Participants are requested to call the leaders in advance for outing details. For information related to outings in general, contact Mike Morrison, 475-4845, <ex46driver@networld.com>. For membership information, contact Suzanne Storer, 479-5035, or Ogden Group, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 1821, Ogden UT 84402. <http://utah.sierraclub.org/ogden/>

Ratings: 1-easy; 2-moderate, 3-good fitness required; 4- demanding

APRIL

Saturday, 12 Elephant Head on Antelope Isle, 2-3

Get a 5-star view of Split Rock Bay. Praised by Dave Thomas & Doug Miller. 3-4 hours 9:00. Leaders, Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701

Saturday-Sunday, 26-27 Little Wild Horse Canyon, San Rafael Swell WSA, 3

We'll meet Saturday PM in Goblin Valley State Park and car camp that night. Sunday AM, well hike 8 miles through a slot canyon. Leaders, Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701. Call for details.

Saturday, 26 Antelope Island Service Project, 2 Al and Mary Herring will lead what has become the annual Ogden Group service project on Antelope Island. If we work hard there will be time for exploring and hiking in the afternoon. Meet at 9:30, in Syracuse, at the parking lot at the mainland end of the causeway. Bring gloves and lunch. 444-9574.

MAY

Saturday, 3 County Land Reclaimed Hike, 2-3

A scenic two mile hike to view 160 acres that the county illicitly sold and that Ogden Valley activists legally reclaimed. The hike passes over an abandoned road into a seldom visited canyon west of the Powder Mountain road. We will keep a sharp eye out for first signs of spring. Bring lunch. Meet OHS, 9AM. Leader,

Jock Glidden, 394-0457

Sunday, 11 Hike the Wellsvilles Wilderness, 2-3

We'll hike a canyon in the vicinity of Deweyville. The initial part of the hike will be steep. After that, it should be fairly easy. Meet, 10AM. Leader, Mike Morrison, 475-4845.

Saturday, 17, Repair a Mountain Trail, 2

We'll perform maintenance on a trail in the vicinity of Ogden Canyon. Bring a shovel or similar landscaping tool. Meet, 8AM. Leader, Al Stockland, 479-9597. Call for details.

Saturday, 24 Brigham Wildlife Refuge, 2-3.

Starting just outside Brigham City, we'll explore this scenic area that is managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Although the DWR says the area is closed to motorized use, the closure has not been enforced. We'll examine damage by ATV's and motorcycles, and consider what effect the proposed Shoshone Trail system would have if it includes a segment through the refuge as proposed. Although our pace will be leisurely, some of the hiking will be steep and rough. We'll start the hike at 10AM, or meet in Ogden for carpooling at 9:15. Call leader Dan Schroeder, 393-4603, for details.

Saturday, 31, Lewis Peak, 3

We'll hike 10.6 mi. from the North Ogden Divide to Lewis Peak and back. 5hrs. Expect a great view of Ogden and Lake, SMOG permitting. Meet 7AM at Smith's in North Ogden. Leaders, Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701.

JUNE

Saturday, 14, Tour the New Nature Conservancy Visitor Center and Preserve, 2

The Nature Conservancy has graciously agreed to introduce us to one of their nature preserves and a newly completed Visitors' Center. We'll meet early enough to be at the preserve at 9am. Sierra Club leader, Mike Morrison, 475-4845

JULY

Saturday, 5, Thurston Peak

Call trail leader Ron Younger (292-4040) or Mike Morrison (475-4845) for additional information regarding the outing. Co-listed with the Salt Lake Group.

Sunday, 13, Willard Basin, Willard Peak, 2

We'll drive to Black Mountain from Mantua, then hike the ridge line and, also, observe/photograph ATV damage. Expect many wild flowers. Bring lunch. Meet 10AM. Leader, Mike Morrison, 475-4845.

Saturday 19, Mount Naomi Wilderness, 3-4

Another old favorite. Expect great views, with lots of wild flowers. Bring lunch for this 4-5 hour hike. Meet, 7AM, at the Smith's in North Ogden. Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701. ☺

*Join the new
SWUCC on their
First Outings*

APRIL

**Wednesday, April 9, 2003
Red Cliffs Tortoise Reserve**

The outing, from 9 to 11 am, will be led by staff of the reserve. We'll learn about the natural values of this magnificent reserve and some of the threats facing it. You are welcome to bring a lunch and linger at the reserve after 11AM. Call Midge Henline at (435) 635-3610 for meeting place and suggestions.

**Saturday, April 26, 2003
Native American Sites Including
Petroglyphs**

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—John Muir, Sierra Club Founder

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Capital Day at Capitol Reef

by Mike Collett

50-degree hiking weather, a Dutch oven dinner by a master, big stone fireplace for brisk evenings, and tales of the Anasazi...all rolled into a thoroughly delightful President's Day weekend getaway.

Blame it all on Kurt Alloway, father of this immaculate conception. In what must have been a momentary epiphany of good company, stately accommodations, and scenic vistas he 'pack-aged' a long weekend fit for the most discerning of red rock country aficionados.

The weekend began with a beautiful drive from the Salt Lake Valley that departed the great divided highway at Scipio and eventually curled up and around Boulder Mountain and down again into the sleepy town of Boulder. Following a leisurely Saturday afternoon at Anasazi State Park & Museum, the only real gathering place in Boulder, Utah—aside from listening to the locals ask about news from the 'Holy Land' (Salt Lake) at the Boulder Grill—the group of twenty was treated to a sumptuous Dutch oven dinner by Larry Davis, 30-year veteran and recently-retired chief ranger at Anasazi State Park.

As Larry's cherry-topped chocolate cake was fast disappearing, this serious student of ancient American cultures spent the next two hours describing a most intelligent people that had become not only his vocation, but avocation. Where they lived and slept, where they farmed, how tall they were, and why they probably left around 1300 A.D. He passed around replicas of an adle-adle, flint arrowheads, a stone axe, and a thousand-year-old version of Tevas, the most fashionable thing in native Utah footwear at the time.

Following dinner, the group took a short journey up the Hells' Backbone road Northwest of town to the Boulder



Capitol Reef Hikers Photo by Mike Collett

Mountain Ranch. The bunkhouse for the weekend was a stately log home on 40+ acres of P-J forest recently converted to a bed and breakfast. We lost count of the number of bedrooms, and re-grouped around the massive stone fireplace where hosts Gary and Sherri kept the juniper logs glowing till the wee hours.

Sunday morning it was Kurt's turn to spoil one and all with a short junket down the Burr Trail into a delectable red rock alcove that detoured off a sandy wash of cottonwoods, Oregon grape and willows. Out came the flutes, and a mid-morning serenade focused four of the senses into savoring the delights of the high desert: the sound of wind instruments in the light morning breeze, the touch of cool red rock in winter, the fragrance of moist sand and decaying leaves, and the sight and synergy of the natural desert colors in February: rich red rock, green pinyon and juniper, blue sky with occasional white puffs of clouds or contrails of high-flying jets, and streaks of melting snow.

Then it was off to the Muley Canyon trailhead, with a short pause enroute to spy on two bald eagles perched in Juniper on the near ridge to the North—plus a third on the wing overhead. A short shuffle across slick-rock brought us to a breathtaking overlook of Waterpocket Fold and Oyster Shell Reef looking SouthEast.

The Henry Mountains were directly east,

showing the only real signs of snow from this overly-mild winter. Individual hikes followed for the next couple of hours, Upper Muley Twist and environs. Having forgotten about lunch altogether, the now-hungry crew migrated to a hospitable Cafe located where the Burr Trail reaches the Boulder Town limit.

After another late-night gabfest around the fireplace at the ranch, Monday morning

allowed for area exploration and a day hike into Phipps Wash, reached from the Boulder-Escalante road. (The road was completed only as recently as the 1940s due to the rugged nature of the landscape: rapid thousand-foot descents on both sides of the road into the slickrock drainages below.) Phipps Wash led though some of the most colorful red rock, and deepest slick rock potholes of the canyon country of Utah. Phipps Arch was the destination of the day—just out of reach as it turned out (for the occasional scrambler) beyond a steep and somewhat-exposed pitch of slick rock.

One delightful weekend. Three more red rock canyons and sandy washes visited. One thousand, four hundred and seventy-three (give or take) to go! 🍌

In Memoriam Jack A. Wright

We note with sadness the passing in January 2003 of a friend of the Sierra Club, Jack Wright. He loved the Wasatch and Uinta Mountains—about which he wrote several books. The beauty of these ranges drew him to their trails and meadows summer and winter. We acknowledge with gratitude contributions made in Jack's memory by Boone Newson and by Roma Wilde on behalf of the Wilde Family.

At The Table over the Legacy Highway: What Really Happened

by Nina Dougherty

Contrary to what you may have heard, the Sierra Club has NOT recently committed to binding arbitration, nor has it agreed to give up its right to sue based on the Legacy Highway SEIS (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) that was required by the court decision.

What hasn't been reported in the media, either correctly or incorrectly, was that the major focus of our talks with Representative Stuart Adams and other Davis County politicians was to seek ways to minimize the possibility of future litigation on the SEIS. This is what brought us to and kept us at the table. The SEIS had just begun. This was the time to establish procedures with the federal and state agencies for formal involvement of the Sierra Club, Utahns for Better Transportation (UBET) and our experts in the SEIS process.

BACKGROUND

Mayor Rocky Anderson was told by Rep. Adams during the 2003 Legislative session that he (Adams) would hold up Rep. David Ure's bill to give Salt Lake City the \$2.6 million the state owed the City—unless Rocky would promise not to sue on the results of the forthcoming Legacy Highway SEIS. Rocky assured Rep. Adams that he hadn't intended to sue.

Rep. Adams then wanted Rocky to get the Sierra Club and UBET also to commit to not suing. We all assured Rep. Adams that citizens should not be asked to give up their right to hold agencies to the law. We all also assured Rep. Adams, however, that we were serious in wanting to prevent litigation, and that meaningful early and continuous formal involvement in the SEIS could go a long way to decrease the possibility of litigation at the end. So, we sat down and talked.

DISCUSSIONS BEGIN

First we agreed to a set of common goals. The 13 goals included broad "quality of life" goals as well as more specific ones: reduce automobile dependency through increased choices; coordinate transportation systems and land-use planning; increase dedicated funding for transit; prevent litigation,

and other important goals. Rep. Adams easily agreed to transit goals since he has been an ardent supporter of transit, as well as of building the Legacy Highway. He led efforts to get the sales tax for transit passed in Davis, Salt Lake and Weber Counties. The group at the table now included other politicians from Davis County and a representative of UDOT. The draft stipulation that served as the basis for further discussion was one presented by UBET and the Sierra Club.

THE DRAFT STIPULATION

The draft stipulation from UBET and the Sierra Club includes a detailed preamble describing the congruent interests of the participating parties. But it is in Agreement Three that one finds the heart of the draft stipulation: "UBT and the federal agencies agree to seek and to participate in good faith in a public participation and dispute prevention process" that is based on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) from the beginning of the SEIS process. It includes hiring an ADR organization (selected by all of us) to conduct a conflict assessment at the beginning of the SEIS process and then to implement a process in which all parties, including the federal agencies, work cooperatively toward development of the SEIS and ensuing decisions.

This public participation and dispute prevention process is to include negotiation of a detailed scope of work to ensure full compliance with the applicable federal laws, among other things. There would be an interim ADR effort to avoid disputes regarding sufficiency and legality of the final SEIS and related decisions. The draft stipulation also states the parties signing the document agreed to commit to participate in a binding arbitration process, so long as such process and the other provisions of the stipulation are agreed to and implemented to by the federal agencies.

AFTERMATH

The Sierra Club did not agree to sign the stipulation. Binding arbitration is a very serious matter that requires approval by the Utah Chapter

Executive Committee and by the Sierra Club's national litigation committee. This has not happened pending a commitment by the Federal Highways Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers to agree to binding arbitration. Regarding the clause on binding arbitration, one of the other interested parties has said that a successful ADR process from the outset is a prerequisite for his agreeing to binding arbitration.

However, the Sierra Club is very interested in setting up a formal process for public involvement

In the SEIS process and is certainly interested in avoiding litigation. As we say, "if things are done right, there's no need to sue".

The federal agencies in charge of the SEIS have yet to weigh in if they would accept the provisions of the stipulation. If they don't, no one signs the stipulation. It requires full federal agency agreement. 🙏

More Thanks to Our Members

by Mark Clemens,
Utah Chapter Co-ordinator

Special thanks to the members listed below for their contributions to our 2002 annual fundraising drive. These contributions make possible our conservation programs to protect clean air and clean water in Utah, our crusade to protect Utah wild lands and our abilities to reach out to you and other Utahns.

Kenneth N and Karen F Buchi
David Johnston
Judith B Pechmann
Donald E Sanderson
Henry O Whiteside

To protect our members' privacy, if no publishing preference is specified, we do not publish contributors' names. If you don't see your name listed and would like for it to be published, please call Mark at (801) 467-9297. We try hard to spell people's names correctly; please accept our apologies if we misspelled your name! 🙏

More Low Flying Aircraft Buzz Skiers

by Laura McIndoe
Executive Director, Friends of Alta

Establishment of additional routes for commercial aircraft threatens portions of Utah's beloved Wasatch Mountains and foothills. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed a "four-corner post" airspace redesign for aircraft arriving and departing Salt Lake City International Airport (SLCIA). According to the FAA, the proposed airspace redesign, now referred to as the Northern Utah Airspace Initiative (NUAI), was designed to address safety and efficiency for both current air traffic, as well as the FAA's projected air traffic growth rate for SLCIA of 25 to 34 percent between 2000 and 2010.

As part of the NUA I, some arriving aircraft will be routed along the East Bench area (referred to as the East Downwind path). Aircraft approaching from the south and east will merge into the East Downwind path via routes over the Wasatch Mountains. Aircraft over the Wasatch will, at the very least, be routed over Twin Peaks and Lone Peak Wilderness Area, and may also be routed over Mt. Olympus and Timpanogos Wilderness Areas. These flight routes will also introduce aircraft over the Town of Alta, Alta Ski Area, Snowbird, Brighton, and Solitude. (See graphic.)

The large arrow on the right is the proposed East Downwind path. The thinner connecting paths on the right indicate how pilots, depending on conditions, will likely shortcut the official route. The large arrow on the left and the smaller shortcut arrows show how current arrival traffic uses the West Downwind path.

Aircraft will begin descending to SLCIA at about 23,000 feet above sea level at Deer Creek Reservoir, and must be at 13,000 feet above sea level when they reach the East Bench area and merge with the East Downwind path. FAA officials have stated that, based on models, aircraft will average approximately 15,000 feet above sea level over the Wasatch Mountains. The high peaks are 11,000 to 12,000 feet above sea level in these areas. Aircraft may be as low as 2,000 feet above ground level over wilderness and ski areas.

Noise levels and frequency of aircraft over the Wasatch Mountains, including wilderness areas, and along the East Bench, have not been estimated by the FAA. Simplistic calculations of an aircraft descending over Alta at 3,000 to 5,000 feet above ground level indicated a ground-level noise exposure of 70

decibels, which is loud enough to drown out conversation.

The FAA has begun an environmental process to evaluate the impacts of the NUA I. The Environmental Process is conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and FAA Order 1050.1. Based on public input to date, the FAA opted to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS. A Notice of Intent was published February 11, 2003. The scoping process, in which public involvement and comment is integral, begins now, with the deadline for the public to submit comments in May 2003 (See below for the schedule of public meetings and contact information). It is anticipated that the final EIS will be released Fall 2004. The FAA has posted information online about its environmental process at http://www2.faa.gov/ats/nar/nw_mt/slc/.

The FAA and the Utah public should contemplate the short and long-term costs of this proposal. The wilderness areas and other open, public land that would be affected by this proposal are Utah's treasure and heritage. Many people in the Salt Lake Valley choose to live and work in proximity Wasatch Mountains and enjoy the easy access to solitude and recreation. Many people visit Utah's Wasatch Mountains for the excellent recreational opportunities and their natural beauty. The FAA and members of the public should weigh the potential consequences of this proposal, and seriously consider other alternatives.

The following are just some considerations that must be thoroughly evaluated during the EIS process:

Wilderness Areas: The EIS should study the impacts to wilderness areas, and take into consideration current cases addressing aircraft over natural areas. The introduction of low-flying commercial jets over wilderness areas will add significant noise and the sight of commercial aircraft to federally designated wilderness environments. Routing low-flying aircraft over these Wilderness Areas, and the introduction of significant noise to wilderness areas sets precedence that could put other wilderness and natural areas in the public trust in jeopardy.

Other Open Space Areas: As with wilderness areas, noise will be added to other open

space areas, including U.S. Forest Service land, ski areas, and the foothills.

Habitat Areas/Endangered or Threatened Species: The effect of low-flying aircraft on animals, including any listed endangered or threatened species, should be evaluated. Disruption of raptor nesting sites is an example of potential negative effects to habitats.

Public Safety: The risks of descending aircraft over a mountainous region that is known to have extreme weather should be evaluated. In addition, the presence of low-flying aircraft over avalanche prone areas should be evaluated. For example, Little Cottonwood Canyon Road (State Route 210), which winds beneath several large avalanche paths, receives protection by employing avalanche control methods. These methods include the use of artillery. In these times of heightened national security, it is not known whether FAA will require notification prior to conducting avalanche control in areas beneath the aircraft routes. Delays in employing these avalanche control measures would pose a deadly threat to those traveling the road, as well as residents in the vicinity.

Socio-Economics: The implementation of this proposal may come at the expense of Utah's ski industry. Given that there are so many choices for destination skiers, the presence of noisy planes over these ski areas could become a deciding factor between visiting Utah or another state for a ski vacation. The Town of Alta and Salt Lake County, dependent on revenue from skier visits, could be heavily impacted. The additional, recurrent noise could decrease property values along the East Bench.

Contact:

Mr. George Wetherell
Northern Utah Airspace Initiative
P.O. Box 22867 AMF
SLC, UT 84122
Phone: (801) 325-9624
Email: 9-anm-nar556-flt@faa.gov

Public participation is the most important part of the EIS process. Without it, the FAA will not find it necessary to address and thoroughly consider other alternatives. The deadline for the public to submit comments is May 16, 2003 🗓️

Map of Proposed Flight Paths for Arriving Aircraft (North Flow)

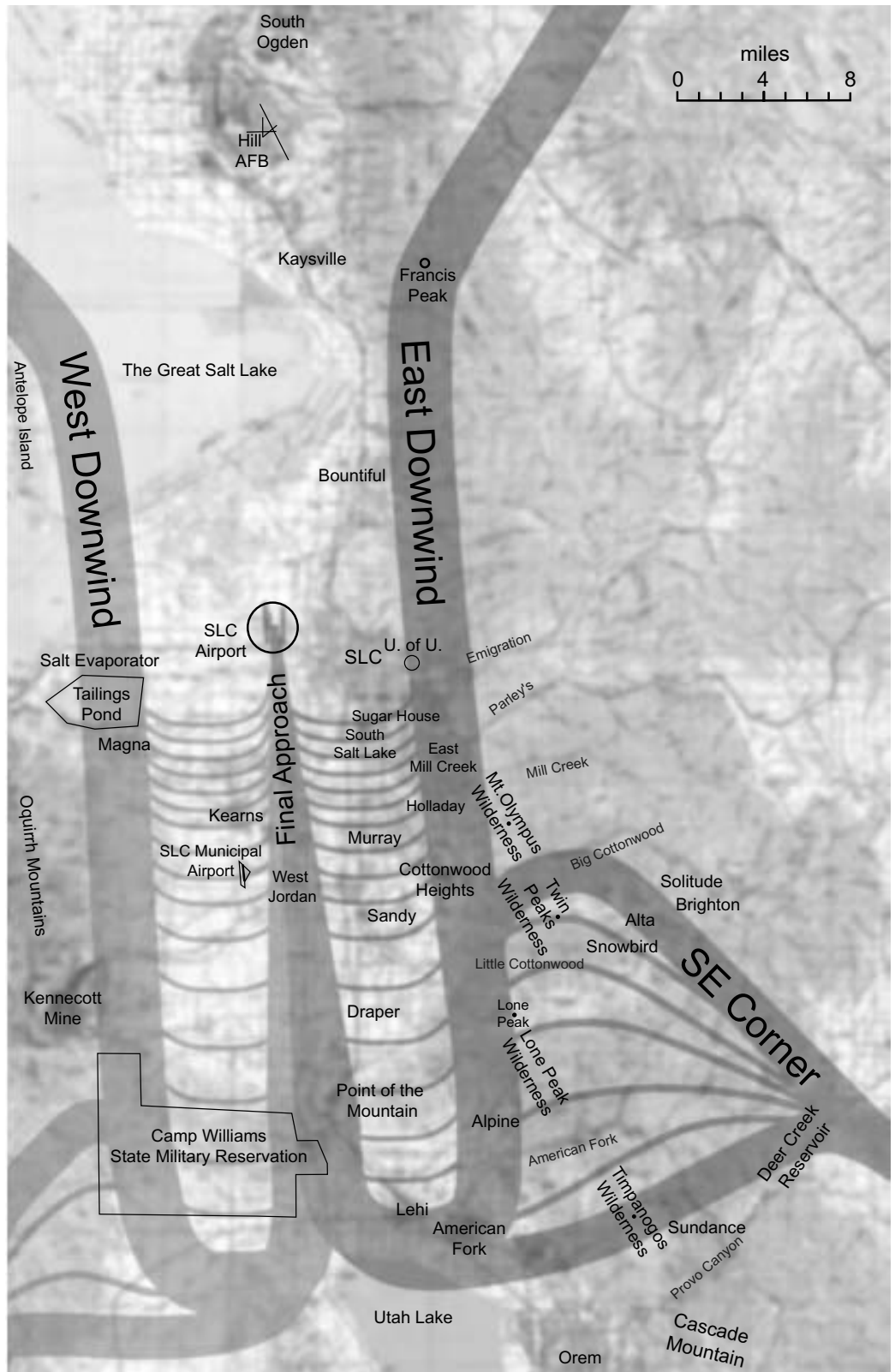
The FAA proposes to implement the East Downwind and Southeast Corner Post arrival flight paths. The West Downwind and the paths feeding it from the southwest are also shown. The West Downwind, where all downwind arrivals now fly, would not change.

All paths are shown as they would be flown when the wind is from the North. When the wind is from the south, the paths are flipped north-south around the airport, so that aircraft always land into the wind.

The paths would be 2-3 miles wide in practice. Aircraft would fly between 12,000 and 16,000 feet above sea level.

Aircraft from the southeast would fan out over the Wasatch Wildernesses and ski resorts between Mt. Olympus and Mt. Timpanogos (thin lines). Currently, aircraft approach over the I-15 corridor.

Under normal conditions (good visibility and non-peak traffic), pilots generally do not fly the full length of the Downwinds. Instead, they turn over populated areas into the final approach (thin lines).



Redrock Institute Notice

The people of the United States are struggling to protect their vision of what the American West should be. Political conflicts over parks and public lands, water rights, American Indian lands, and wildlife have become increasingly intense as the stakes grow higher.

A new program at the University of Utah offers an opportunity to enhance our understanding of these complex environmental issues. The Red Rock Institute offers classes that delve into numerous environmental and social issues in the American West. These classes are open to students, faculty, and environmental professionals. The goal is to provide each participant with a university-level learning experience while also traveling to one of the most scenic landscapes on the planet. Classes are taught by university professors who are recognized experts in environmental and western issues. The deadline for admissions is April 15, 2003. 🌍

Summer 2003 June 30 - July 20.

Week One: "The Politics of Public Lands", taught by Prof. Dan McCool will focus on the continued political conflicts over wilderness designation, new national monuments and parks, public lands grazing, timber leases, mining, and recreation on public lands.

Week Two: "American Indian Policy" taught by Prof. Greg Smoak will provide an understanding of the history and development of American Indian reservations, tribal sovereignty, and conflicts over fishing, hunting and water rights, gaming, reservation land-use, and Indian political rights.

Week Three: Field trip to southern Utah, where students meet with individuals directly involved in environmental issues.

If you have any questions, please email or call Jennifer Robinson:
robinson@amwest.utah.edu
(801) 587-9577

www.redrockinstitute.utah.edu

Wilderness Rest In Peace

by Ann Wechsler, Salt Lake Group Conservation Chair

During the last month, the secret highway claims the State of Utah has made in Salt Lake County have become public. These claims to secure state ownership of rights of way over highways were lodged under the authority of Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477), passed in 1866. If accepted by the US Department of the Interior and the federal courts, these claims collectively have the potential to invalidate existing statutory wilderness areas, carve up national parks and wildlife refuges, and destroy the last bastions of wildlife habitat in the United States.

As you can see from the map, some of the highway claims penetrate all three existing wilderness areas in Salt Lake County. They also penetrate roadless areas proposed for wilderness and might open up sensitive watershed lands to motorized access. The validation of these highway claims also holds the potential of re-opening lands currently off limits to heliskiing and allowing canyon trails to be widened into roads.

RS 2477, repealed in 1976, states simply, "The right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted." New legislation passed in 1976 provided a process under which state and county governments could request to build roads across federal land. Despite the revocation of RS 2477, states retained the right to file right-of-way claims on highways the construction of which could be proved to have occurred before 1976. In the past five to ten years, Utah and Alaska in particular have filed thousands of RS 2477 claims-most of them bogus-to prevent or overthrow the protection of lands in wilderness, national parks and national wildlife refuges.

Some of the claims in southern Utah run over the sides of cliffs or in slot canyons barely wide enough to allow the passage of a horse. Check out the photo gallery of some of the funniest RS 2477 claims at <http://members.aol.com/gshiker999/index.html>.

These claims have been considered outlandish by most observers and legal experts. The claims in the Wasatch Mountains are especially preposterous. These lands were reserved for the special public use of protection within the US National Forest system in 1906 and 1907 so the State of Utah would have to prove that the construction of these highways occurred between 1866 when the law was passed and 1906 when the land was reserved.

Unfortunately outlandish things might come to pass. ORV enthusiasts, motorcross organizations and mining and oil companies have pressed their RS 2477 agenda with any county or state official willing to listen. The Utah Legislature appropriated millions of dollars to assist counties to compile RS 2477 claims but even with lavish funding, no critical standards appear to have been applied. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, determined to open every acre of public land to oil and gas drilling if she can, has worked closely and covertly with the State of Utah on its RS 2477 claims. It's believed she's laying the groundwork to relinquish the federal interest in the claims to the states without requiring the states to provide any evidence of the construction or establishment of these highways.

Salt Lake County submitted the claims shown on the map in June 2000. At this point it has not been possible to establish if these claims were reviewed by the commissioners or if they were simply sent to the attorney general's office by an unelected county official.

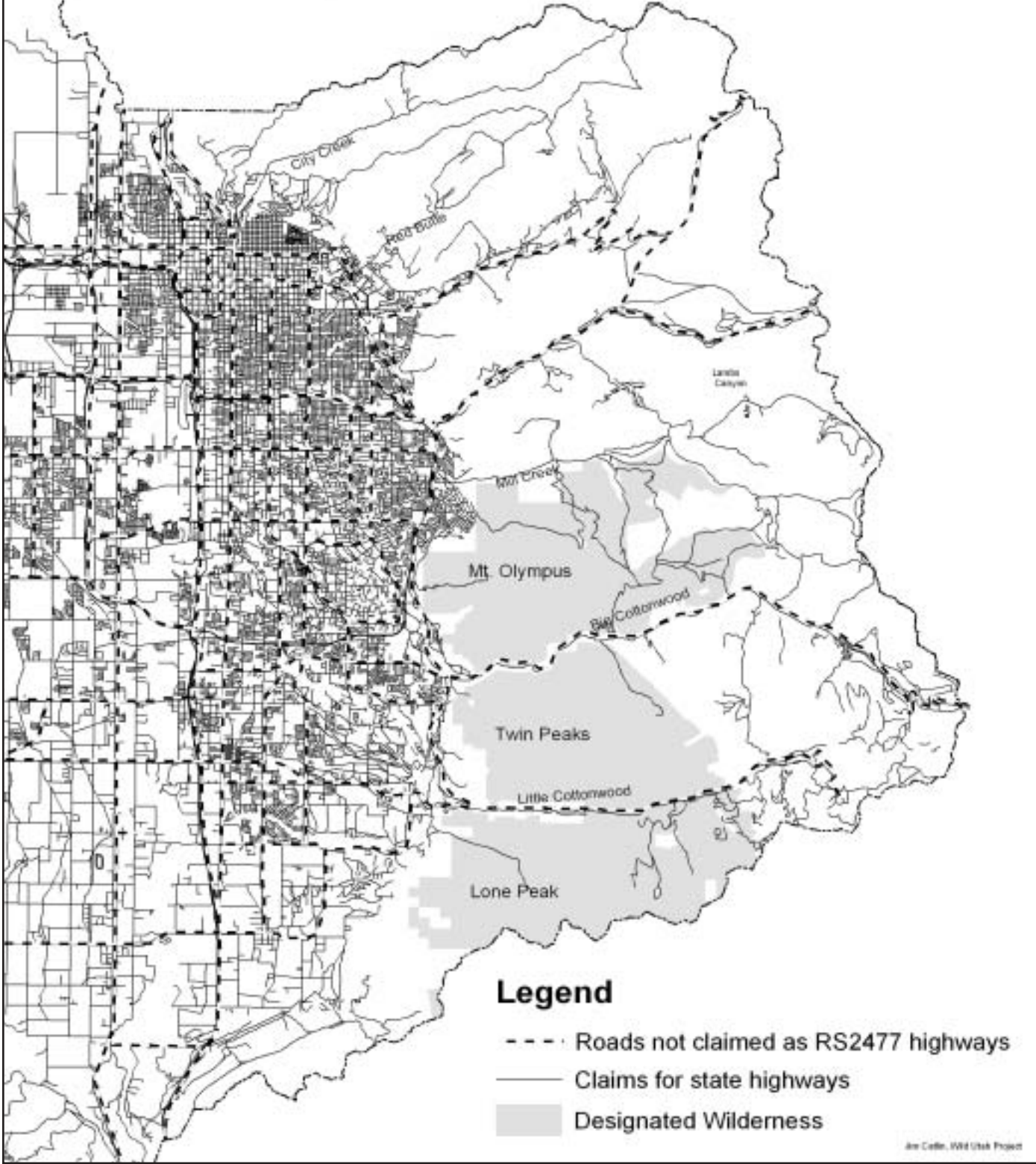
The current mayor/council system had not yet been implemented in Salt Lake County when these claims were made, but it will be up to them to undo the damage. Because these claims could undo years of conservation progress, this issue is an environmental crisis. Please help by contacting the mayor and the council to let them know these claims must be abandoned. Remember that courtesy will get you further than curses.

Mayor Nancy Workman's e-mail address is mayorNancy@co.sl.c.ut.us. Her phone number is (801) 468-2500. Her address is

Office of the Mayor
2001 S State St, Ste N2100
Salt Lake City UT 84190.

Three of the county council members serve on an at-large basis and represent the entire county. They are Jim Bradley (jbradley@co.sl.c.ut.us), Steve Harmsen (sharmsen@co.sl.c.ut.us) and Randy Horiuchi (rhoriuchi@co.sl.c.ut.us). The other six council members represent specific geographical districts. One can look at a map of county council districts and a list of county council members at <http://www.co.sl.c.ut.us/co/html/distmap.html>. Phone numbers, e-mail and US Mail addresses are available there too. 🌍

Highway Claims in Wasatch Mountains
RS2477 Rights of Way Claims filed by
the Utah Attorney General in June 2000
for Salt Lake County



Jim Collier, Wild Utah Project

More Coal Equals More Mercury

by Mark Clemens and Nina Dougherty

Over the past twenty-five to thirty years, we've worked hard to abate air quality problems in our nation's cities. There has been measurable improvement in the levels of sulfur dioxide, lead, small particles or soot, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds or smog precursors in the United States, although we need to do much more as we learn more about

Keeping the Score at the Intermountain Power Project

by Nina Dougherty and Mark Clemens

Intermountain Power Project (IPP) is one of six coal-fired, electricity generating plants in Utah. Its two original units, built in the 1980s, had until recently been producing 875 megawatts (MW) of electricity. These units are being expanded to produce 950 MW. At this higher level of production, mercury emissions to the air will increase from 162 pounds per year to 210 pounds per year. [UDAQ, Modified Source Plan Review, Notice of Intent submitted April 5, 2001, IPP DAQE-749-01, Modification to Increase Power Generating Capacity] These figures are actual estimates and were developed by IPP.

If the third unit, as currently planned, is built, it will add another 950 MW of generating capacity and another 140 pounds of mercury. [Notice of Intent, IPP, Proposed Unit 3, Dec. 2002] This figure is an engineering calculation also produced by IPP. The total emissions of mercury to the air from all units at IPP after the completion of the third unit would be 350 pounds per year. At that point, IPP would be the largest power-plant emitter of mercury in Utah. To see mercury emissions from power plants by state, have a look at <http://www.ewg.org/reports/mercury-falling/mercurystates.html>.

the very serious health effects of lower levels of these pollutants. Nitrogen oxides have not declined but are beginning to be addressed more aggressively.

Mercury, however, is the unseen poison that has increased virtually everywhere over this same period. A recent United Nations report estimated that human activities have trebled mercury in the atmosphere above the natural background levels. [Global Mercury Assessment, United Nations Environment Programme, December 2002, p. vi] What is much more important than overall levels in the atmosphere is how much mercury vulnerable populations are exposed to, and in this category too, the situation is not good.

A REPORT COVERED UP?

The EPA produced a report detailing the level of threat to vulnerable populations-fetuses, pregnant and nursing women-in May of 2002 but refused to release it until late February 2003 when increasing pressure from congress and the public compelled them. The EPA offered a variety of ridiculous excuses for this nine-month delay. Senator Barbara Boxer asked for the report in October 2002. She said, "They have been sitting on this thing for months. We're wasting precious days during which we could be strategizing on how to improve the health of our children." [Wall Street Journal, Mercury Threat to Kids Rising, Unreleased EPA Report Warns, 20 February 2003]

What's in this report? "The draft report notes that children born to women with blood concentrations of mercury above 5.8 parts per billion have a 'higher risk of adverse health effects.' About 8% of women of child-bearing age tested had 'at least' that level of mercury in their blood during the years 1999 and 2000, it states." [Mercury Threat to Kids Rising, Unreleased EPA Report Warns, op. cit.] Some of the adverse health effects cited in the study include mental retardation, neural impairment

and developmental delays. Given the fact that the administration recently moved to relax the timetable for reducing mercury pollution, it's understandable they didn't want this worrisome news about mercury to reach a wide audience. The EPA estimates that enforcement of existing toxic air pollution protections in the Clean Air Act will limit mercury pollution to 5 tons per year by 2008. The Bush Administration's plan weakens the limit to 26 tons per year by 2010-allowing 520 percent more mercury pollution.

MERCURY RISING

By far the largest source of mercury in the atmosphere is the burning of coal, mostly for electricity generation. "Coal-burning power plants are the single largest source of mercury pollution, and the only major source the government does not regulate." [Mercury Falling, Environmental Working Group, 1999, p. 1] Not only does coal-fired electricity in the US pollute the air with mercury directly-an estimated 49 tons per year-but it also results in 40 tons per year disposed of in solid wastes, such as the solids disposed of from so-called scrubbers designed to reduce emissions of sulfur and other pollutants. It won't surprise you that EPA is poised to exempt these coal combustion wastes from any regulation as a hazardous material.

The 49 tons of elemental mercury pumped into the air every year float downwind where much of it winds up deposited or carried into the nation's waters. From there microorganisms take up substantial quantities of the metal and convert it into methylmercury. Methylmercury is easily taken up by marine life, and it concentrates as it makes its way up the food chain. Fish at the top of the food chain concentrate mercury so efficiently from their environment that mercury levels in their muscles may be one million times greater than in the water where they live. [Mercury Falling, op. cit., p. 21]

The intelligent reader will by this point

have realized that some fish might not be safe to eat. Fish advisories are listed by state on the website, <http://map1.epa.gov/>. Utah has a fish advisory for selenium contamination in certain waters but not for mercury contamination.

COMING BACK HOME

Utah's coal-fired power plants currently emit just over 400 pounds of mercury per year-less than one percent of the nation's total mercury emissions-but that number will be rising soon. You can thank the Utah Legislature for this one. The 2003 legislature passed, almost unanimously, Senate Bill 21. Only one legislator, Representative Ralph Becker, voted against it. This trickily worded bill loosens contract restrictions on the Intermountain Power Project (IPP) in Delta, Utah, with the intention of making it more possible to find out-of-state customers needed for a major expansion of IPP.

The 2003 Utah legislature ended up not doing anything to promote alternative energy sources such as wind power, solar or biomass. Representative Jim Gowans from Tooele introduced legislation that would have required 10% of electricity sold in Utah be generated by clean, renewable sources in 2010 or 2013. This legislation faced so much opposition that Gowans had to water it down repeatedly, with the final bill giving tax incentives for renewables rather than targets. Opponents argued that wind-generated electricity might cost \$.01 more or maybe even just one-half cent more than coal-generated electricity and that additional expense would represent an undue burden.

It might be many years or it might never be possible for us to establish if any particular case of mental retardation or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder can be blamed on high levels of mercury. It might still be some years down the road before we can say that the 20% increase in carbon dioxide emissions statewide caused by expansion of IPP contributed to the global warming that finally killed Utah's skiing industry. But it behooves Utah's leaders to begin thinking about the how much coal really costs us now. ☹



May 21, 2000, View from West Canyon Peak (8382') looking south to Deseret Peak (11,031') Stansbury Mtns. Photo by Ron Yonger



**YOU
CAN
CHANGE
YOUR
WORLD**

In March we mailed each of our members an appeal for funds. These contributions really do make a difference to us and are an important part of our Chapter's budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own back yard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Solution to Traffic Congestion on I-15, Lack of Transportation Choices & Tailpipe Emissions = Commuter Rail

Since UTA officially launched the current commuter rail project last November, the project team has been working with a group of volunteer residents from the communities along the corridor. UTA established the Commuter Rail Integration Team (CRIT) as part of its goal to make commuter rail a community rail project.

The CRIT is a group of community-minded citizens from Salt Lake, Davis and Weber Counties who expressed an interest in the commuter rail project and a willingness to participate in public outreach efforts by representing their community's perspectives and facilitating communication between UTA and the public. UTA initially spoke with more than 50 people, and narrowed the candidates down to a group of 12 individuals who represent both residential and business interests along the corridor. The 12 CRIT members are

- Robert Bales,
Weber State University student, Ogden
- Roberta Glidden,
Artist, Ogden
- Mark Bottema,
Real Estate Broker, Clearfield
- Kay Chandler,
Economic Development, Clearfield
- Linda Kelley, Layton Hills
Mall General Manager, Layton
- Jan Browning,
Accountant, Woods Cross
- Charles Payne,
Retired, Woods Cross
- Dave Galvan,
Real Estate Broker, Salt Lake City
- Tracy James, Gateway Mall
General Manager, Salt Lake City
- Linda Hoffman,
Educator, Farmington
- Cory Ritz,
Sales Manager, Farmington

- Sheldon Killpack, Lagoon Vice
President of Marketing, Farmington.

CRIT members meet with the commuter rail project team regularly, providing community input on project planning and operations and helping UTA identify who the potential commuter rail riders might be, and the reasons they would choose to ride commuter rail.

The CRIT members serve as a voice for their communities and an information source about commuter rail. After receiving updates from the project team, CRIT members act as commuter rail "liaisons" by sharing the information with their respective communities. They also take the ideas, questions and comments they receive from their community back to the project team.

The CRIT is just one of many ways UTA is reaching out to the public with information about the commuter rail project. The project team is actively engaged in providing updates and information to residents, the business community and elected officials throughout the corridor. Commuter rail information is also available on UTA's web site, www.rideuta.com, where people can send questions or comments by email to the project team. In addition, a commuter rail speakers bureau is available to make presentations to groups or organizations along the corridor.

Work on commuter rail is in full swing, with the preliminary Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the first phase between Salt Lake City and Weber County scheduled for completion this fall. The 38-mile phase of the commuter rail project is scheduled to open in late 2007. 🗺️



Scholarship Recipient Flourishes at College

by Jean Binyon,
Utah Chapter Vice-chair

Last spring, in its first year of the Colorado Plateau Scholarship Program, the Sierra Club selected ten seniors from southern Utah high schools to receive college scholarships. As the 2003 program is under way, I interviewed the mother of one of the 2002 winners about her daughter's accomplishments and plans.

Darice Dinsmore, a graduate of Grand County High School, is finishing her freshman year at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville. She is doing well academically and is in the top 40% of the class in grade point average. While she hasn't declared her major yet, Darice has long had her eye on political office, maybe even Congress. Darice's mother Susan says, "Even when she was in elementary school, she wanted to go to law school. She wants to fight for the public—you know, everyman issues."

Darice is involved in extra curricular activities too. She made the drill team that performs at the girls' basketball games; is taking ballroom dancing in the evenings; joined the Young Democrats; and was chosen for membership in Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority. She has been living in the dorm this year but will join four or five other girls in renting an apartment off campus next year. Darice's mother and older sister Jami, a junior at the U of U, will drive east in May to help in the move. Darice plans to concentrate on learning German during the summer session. She is already bilingual, having taken five years of Spanish.

"The Sierra Club scholarship was definitely a help." Susan concludes, "While Darice had other scholarships for the freshman year, the Sierra Club scholarship is the only one she has so far for her sophomore year." 🗺️

Water Facts

by Ann Wechsler,
Salt Lake Group, Conservation Chair

Water funding in Utah comes from four sources: water rates (59%), federal and other (23%), property tax (14%) and sales tax (4%). Governor Leavitt does not support subsidizing water development with sales tax, and recently proposed the elimination of the 1/16 cent of sales tax. Currently, \$20 million annually is diverted from the general fund.

Utah water officials have identified \$5.3 billion worth of infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. The \$20 million of sales tax places water development needs in competition with all other state funding priorities which have no other funding source.

Growth in sales tax collections for this subsidy has decreased dramatically, from 4.5% in 2001 to 0.5% in 2003. Governor Leavitt believes that government services should be paid for with user fees, particularly with a scarce resource like water. He has recently stated that shifting to a more market-oriented approach to water development will improve efficiency and encourage conservation. However, he does not support removal of the property tax subsidy.

Utah has the second highest per residential water use in the country. Two thirds of the culinary water in the state is used for outdoor watering. According to Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities, green yards can be achieved through lower water usage. To promote a "water lean" yard, call (877) 728-3420 for a FREE water check or visit www.slcsaveh2o.com. From now to April 30th, water only once very six days; once every 4 days in May, and in June, July, and August, once every 3 days. Return to once very 6 days in September. ♻️

Enjoy a healthy yard and a safe summer!



Oct 13, 2001, Saturday Middle Fork Ogden River four miles from trail head lookin up stream. Photo by Ron Yonger

Thank You

For Remembering the Sierra Club!



Your financial contribution means a lot to us. By supporting this Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own back yard. This makes you an important part of our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Thank you.

Utah Chapter Sierra Club

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