

REDROCK

W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 26, Number 1 • Spring 2009

Utah's Zion-Mojave Wilderness Protected?

Cover Photo: *The dramatic cliffs of The Watchman proposed wilderness, soon to be protected under Senator Bennett's much improved Washington County Growth and Conservation Act (see page 5). Copyright David Pettit (davidpettitphotography.com).*



The mission of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) is the preservation of the outstanding wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau, and the management of these lands in their natural state for the benefit of all Americans.

SUWA promotes local and national recognition of the region's unique character through research and public education; supports both administrative and legislative initiatives to permanently protect Colorado Plateau wild places within the National Park and National Wilderness Preservation Systems or by other protective designations where appropriate; builds support for such initiatives on both the local and national level; and provides leadership within the conservation movement through uncompromising advocacy for wilderness preservation.

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In this issue:

Wilderness Notes.....4

Features:

 Utah’s Zion-Mojave Wilderness Protected?5

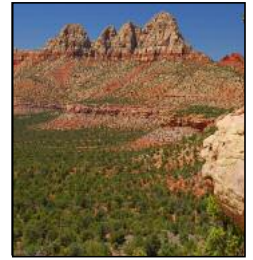
 Map of Lands Protected in Sen. Bennett’s 2009 Washington County Bill.....7

DC News8

Canyon Country Updates.....10

Inside SUWA.....14

America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act Reference Map19



page 5



page 10



page 14

Redrock Wilderness • Volume 26, Number 1 • Spring 2009

This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Justin Allegro, Victoria Allen, Tiffany Bartz, Steve Bloch, Jackie Feinberg, David Garbett, Scott Groene, Diane Kelly, Terri Martin, Richard Peterson-Cremer, and Deeda Seed. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly.

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wilderness notes

Good News, and a Sagebrush Rebellion Rehash

There's good news to report in this issue of *Redrock Wilderness*.

We've worked hard to transform Sen. Bob Bennett's legislation into a bill that genuinely protects the Zion-Mojave wilderness and we've succeeded. By the time you read this the Washington County bill may have become the second good wilderness bill for the Redrock in three years. (See our lead article for details.)

Next, a federal judge granted a temporary restraining order in our suit against the BLM's first oil and gas lease sale under its rushed-through management plans. Then, just days later, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar withdrew leases we'd challenged on over 100,000 acres. That's a huge step in undoing Bush-era mismanagement and a boost for our goal of extending protective wilderness study area status to additional lands.

Moments after Salazar's announcement, though, industry and its minions were in full cry, denouncing the decision in what is surely only the first salvo in a fierce campaign of intimidation against the fledgling administration. Industry apologists seek to sanctify their message by casting it as an economic matter. But their deepest fear is that Salazar's scrubbing the leases is just the first signal that he will bring long-absent balance to public land management.

There's little new in the mutterings of the old sagebrush rebels. Here's one of them, Utah State Rep. Mike Noel, at his thoughtful, responsible best: "We ought to declare open warfare."

None of this has much to do with economic growth, even less with "easing our dependence on foreign oil," another gauzy patriotic claim. The industry clique would rather you didn't know a couple of things. Tumbling petroleum prices have slowed drilling in Utah's biggest gas field, the Uinta Basin, to the lowest level in four years. The number of operating drilling rigs statewide is less than half the record number working last August. And even at record high prices, industry had already stockpiled far more Utah leases than it could drill: for every leased acre being worked, five lay idle.

Economic concerns? When Salazar yanks Bush-era leases, he's delivering a cruel kick in tough economic times. When the energy industry lays workers off, well, that's the market at work...or an act of God, pretty much the same thing. Energy market forces have pushed the west to the brink of another bust.

Selling leases in such economic times is foolish. Even the state land board recognized that, delaying its planned oil and gas lease sale on state lands (though the agency's director eagerly joined the assault on Salazar).

Access to drill isn't the issue. Industry wants a long-term lock on the land to use when and if it damned well feels like it. Noel and others want to thwart wilderness protection.

As the Obama administration moves to clean up the mess it inherited, attacks from the tattered remnants of the sagebrush rebellion will increase, not diminish. Salazar must steel himself; we must ensure he has the public support he needs to protect wild lands instead of filling greedy hands.

For the Redrock,



Scott Groene
Executive Director

features

Utah's Zion-Mojave Wilderness Protected?

By the time you read this, the Congress may have already designated spectacular wilderness areas adjacent to Zion National Park: Canaan Mountain, Red Butte, Deep Creek, and Black Ridge. And it may also have ensured the solitude of the remote Bull Valley Mountains, including Doc's Pass, Slaughter Creek, and Cougar Canyon, and made Utah's low-lying Mojave Desert, including Beaver Dam Wash and Scarecrow Peak, safe from off-road vehicle abuse and gravel mining.

The House of Representatives is poised to vote on a package of bills that includes Sen. Bob Bennett's legislation for the Zion-Mojave wilderness in southwestern Utah's Washington County (The Senate approved the measure on Jan. 15). If that happens, we'll celebrate the second good wilderness bill for the Redrock in three years, building on the Cedar Mountains Wilderness bill of 2006. The bill is good because you responded when we asked for your help to make it so.

The bill will designate 130,000 acres of the Utah Wilderness Coalition's proposal as wilderness, along with a small amount of new contiguous National Forest wilderness. It will protect another 50,000 acres of our proposal as a National Conservation Area with careful language barring off-road vehicles, drilling and mining.

Utah will get 165 miles of wild and scenic rivers (the first such designation in the state, nearly all in Zion National Park) and an additional 125,000 acres of park wilderness. Given the overlap with the park, these two steps don't match the conservation gains of the new Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness, but are still appreciated.

Certainly, the final Washington County bill is most significant for its wilderness designations. Nearly as significant is the fact that its much-improved language will stand as a model in protection of other Redrock regions.

Previous versions proposed to sell tens of thousands of acres of public land and to earmark proceeds in the millions of dollars to fund controversial local development projects. The final version turns this



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

These wild lands of Canaan Mountain are protected in Senator Bennett's much improved bill for Washington County.

on its head to achieve a conservation gain. Scattered parcels of public lands may still be sold, but only those the BLM has already identified for disposal in its existing management plan. And 95 percent of sales proceeds are directed to acquiring private and state inholdings in new wilderness and conservation areas. The remaining 5 percent goes to public education.

Nor can public land sales be used, as previous iterations proposed, for water development projects such as the idiotic pipeline from Lake Powell to St. George. Wilderness management language, too, is much improved from earlier versions, and new ORV management controls are required county-wide.

The Washington County bill doesn't include everything conservationists wanted. Most troubling is that the bill will release some currently protected wilderness study area (WSA) land at the base of Canaan Mountain. And places such as Dry Creek still deserve protection. But the overall amount of land protected goes far beyond the existing WSA acreage in the county.

features


© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

When the Washington County bill passes, Beaver Dam Wash will be protected through a National Conservation Area designation.

Big Thanks to Members of Congress Who Helped Improve the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act!

We owe many thanks to Senator Bob Bennett and his staff for their hard work on this bill. They showed strong leadership in continuing the conversation when disagreements arose, and recognizing the need for concessions by all parties involved. Senator Bennett is a skilled politician and that was necessary as he moved his legislation towards fruition.

Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and his staff also deserve our gratitude for holding firm and getting us on the right track in Utah with a wilderness bill that is just that: about wilderness, not federal land giveaways.

We also need to thank those Redrock champions who worked to derail and improve previous versions of the legislation over the past three years. In the House, Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) led the fight in 2006. On the Senate side, Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL), Russ Feingold (D-WI), and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) worked hard to ensure the bill was improved.

Getting this far wasn't easy. We faced a dangerous 2006 bill that enjoyed not only the support of the entire Utah congressional delegation but, as Sen. Bennett said publicly, the backing of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. We stopped that bill, thanks to our congressional champions and your hard work.

Sen. Bennett introduced another bill in 2008, much improved but still deeply flawed. Perhaps because it was better than the bill it followed, some conservation groups were willing to endorse it. But SUWA and the Sierra Club held out, confident that our dedicated activists would help us improve it. You did. Even so, it might not have happened but for Sen. Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Sen. Bingaman shares our distaste for buying wilderness by dealing off public lands to fund local development and he refused to accept such language.

SUWA's goal remains enacting America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. Many say it can't be done. Just as they once told us we could not stop a united Utah delegation. We've done that a dozen times now and for one simple reason: Utah wild lands are not a parochial issue; they are an American issue.

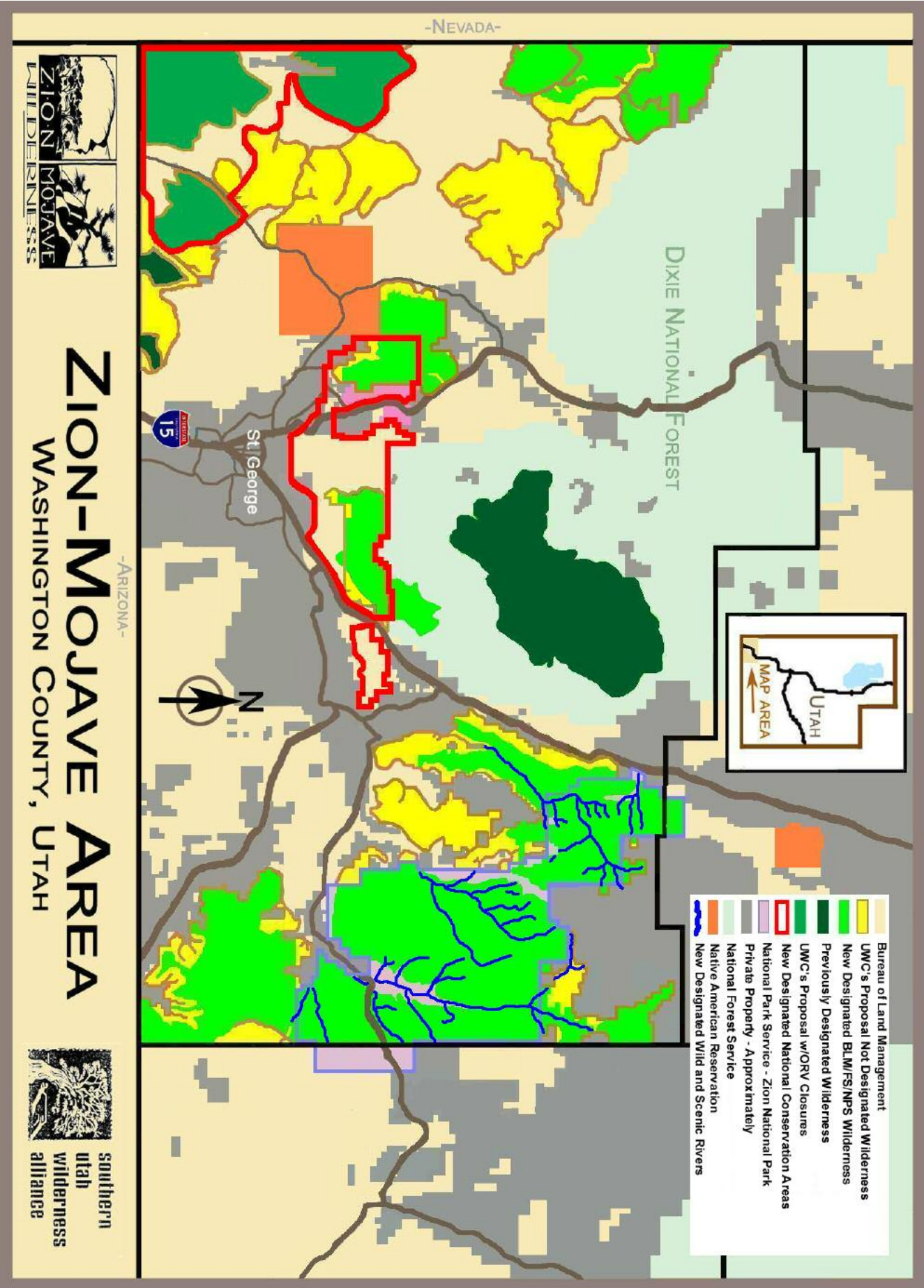
The history of successful western land conservation, Utah's canyon country included, is marked by bold yet strategic fights. We're entering a time of exceptional opportunities: legislative momentum on the Redrock bill; regional legislation where it makes sense; new administrative protection for BLM roadless areas; reversal of the Bush resource management plans; and, possibly, national monument proclamations.

We believe in the power of a united citizenry dedicated to leaving the world a better place. And there are no better grassroots activists than those defending the Redrock. Throughout the country, and in Utah, regular citizens did what was necessary to improve this important bill.

This legislation will cross the finish line. Those who follow us will be grateful for all you have done as they splash through narrows in Doc's Pass, watch a desert tortoise in Beaver Dam Wash, or gaze open-mouthed at the view from Canaan Mountain. **From all of the SUWA staff: thank you!**

—Scott Groene and Justin Allegro

Lands Protected in Sen. Bennett's 2009 Washington County Bill



ZION-MOJAVE AREA WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH



DC news

Changes in House and Senate Committees Bode Well for the Redrock

For the 111th Congress, the two committees primarily responsible for wilderness legislation and oversight of the Bureau of Land Management will reflect the increased majorities Democrats gained in the November election.

On the House Natural Resources Committee, which Nick Rahall (D-WV) chairs, Democrats hold a nine-seat edge. Senate Democrats have a three-seat advantage on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) under Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM).

The committee makeup may be good news for Utah wilderness, not because of party affiliation but because of the individual members' positions on wild land protection. The House committee includes 14 returning cosponsors of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, along with several new members we think may be supportive. Six Red Rock cosponsors will sit on the Senate ENRC.

We are confident that the House committee will hear the Red Rock bill, thanks chiefly to Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Raul Grijalva (D-

AZ), our two strongest champions. At the same time, the committee's departing members vocally opposed wilderness.

New committee members from western public lands states are also of interest. They include Reps. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Diana DeGette (D-CO), as well as Mark Udall (D-CO), who moves from the House to the Senate. Sen. Bob Bennett (R-UT), who invested considerable personal energy in passage of the much-improved Washington County wilderness bill in the last Congress, joins the Senate ENRC. Conservative Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) joins the House committee.

Nothing is ever certain in the Congress, but we are optimistic that we will get a hearing on America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in the new Congress. (to learn more, visit www.suwa.org/arrwa).

—Victoria Allen

Wilderness Week Kicks Off DC Legislative Push

In February, the 111th Congress got its introduction to dedicated redrock wilderness enthusiasts from across the country. The Utah Wilderness Coalition's annual Wilderness Week drew 50 activists from 23 states (nearly half from Utah) to Washington for five

House Natural Resources Committee

Noteworthy Departing Representatives

Chris Cannon (R-UT)
 Thomas G. Tancredo (R-CO)
 Rick Renzi (R-AZ)
 Steve Pearce (R-NM)
 Dean Heller (R-NV)
 William T. Sali (R-ID)

Noteworthy Incoming Representatives

Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
 *Diana DeGette (D-CO)
 *Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)
 Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)

*Cosponsored in the 110th Congress

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Noteworthy Departing Senators

Ken Salazar (D-CO), Appointed Sec. of Interior
 Pete V. Domenici (R-NM)
 Larry E. Craig (R-ID)
 Gordon Smith (R-OR)

Noteworthy Incoming Senators

*Evan Bayh (D-IN)
 *Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
 *Mark Udall (D-CO)
 Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
 James E. Risch (R-ID)
 John McCain (R-AZ)
 Robert Bennett (R-UT)

DC news

hectic days of learning, lobbying, and connecting with other wilderness lovers. The event aims at enlisting House and Senate cosponsors for the March introduction of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (see www.suwa.org/arrwa).

The opening weekend focused on advocacy training. SUWA staff and volunteers reviewed the long campaign to protect Utah wild lands and the details of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. Volunteers also heard expert advice on making congressional visits effective.

Activist teams visited over 200 congressional offices. Most talked to staff people but some were able to speak to their elected representatives. The Utah Wilderness Coalition hosted a special congressional staff briefing in the House of Representatives on Monday to further educate select Hill staffers on Utah's comprehensive wilderness legislation. Capping the week was a reception with several of our congressional friends to celebrate recent Utah wilderness victories.

The SUWA Washington and grassroots staff immensely enjoys having activists in town for Wilderness Week. You advance our legislative goal of protecting wild Utah. Your enthusiasm energizes us to work even harder. Big thanks to this year's Wilderness Week volunteers—we look forward to working with you throughout the new Congress.

—Jackie Feinberg

Ken Salazar: A Fresh Breeze Sweeps Interior

The Bush administration left the new administration a vast and reeking Augean stable. There's no shortage of contenders for "worst of the worst," but the Interior Department's legacy after the last eight years surely stands as one of the foulest for rank mismanagement and sleaze. Conservationists were more than mildly eager to see who President Obama would summon to clean up the mess. In the end, the Obama transition team decided on a bit of a dark horse, Sen. Ken Salazar (D-CO).

During his four years in the Senate, and earlier as Colorado attorney general, Salazar built a reputation as a centrist: compromiser, mediator, more interest-



Public domain photo

New Interior Secretary Ken Salazar is off to a good start.

ed in results than in ideology. A rancher from Colorado's historic San Luis Valley, he is steeped in western values and well-educated in such important western issues as water rights and oil shale development.

While Secretary Salazar can be said to have something of a mixed record on conservation and energy issues, he now works for all of us—Americans who own public lands and public resources—and that may shape his perspective. He has both the duty the opportunity in his first few months to reset the course of public land management.

Last minute Bureau of Land Management plans in Utah surrendered unspoiled redrock landscapes to oil and gas drilling and off-road vehicle abuse. Secretary Salazar has begun to undo those last-minute outrages. We hope he will continue. We also urge him to remove proposed wilderness lands from future lease sales, close motorized routes on areas with wilderness character and revive the process of designating new wilderness study areas.

Those steps alone would signal the 180-degree difference between this administration and its predecessor—the "change" that is on everyone's lips.

—Richard Peterson-Cremer

canyon country updates

Good
News!

Court, Interior Secretary Put Brakes on Utah Lease Sale

The headline in the Feb. 5th edition of the *Los Angeles Times* pretty much tells the story: “Salazar cancels Bush-era energy leases in Utah.”

Here’s how it unfolded. In our last newsletter we reported the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) plans to hold a last-minute “Christmas oil and gas lease fire sale” (see autumn/winter 2008 issue, p.17). The sale put on the auction block remarkable wilderness-quality lands—places like Desolation Canyon, White River, and Bourdette Draw. We promised to fight what the *Washington Post* described in a November editorial as one of the administration’s “last gifts to the oil and gas industry.”

We not only fought, we won. SUWA and a coalition of six other conservation and historic preservation groups filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Washington, DC, in December. We quickly reached a temporary “stand down” agreement with the BLM. The agreement allowed the BLM to hold the lease sale, but prevented it from cashing the high bidders’ checks on the 77 challenged leases

until U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina issued a decision on our motion for a temporary restraining order (TRO) or until Jan. 19th (Martin Luther King Day), whichever came first. That’s right: the BLM would only agree to stand down until the day before the Inauguration of President Obama, the very last day the Bush administration would still be in power.

We hit a home run. On Jan. 17th, Judge Urbina issued a five-page decision granting our motion for a TRO and finding that we are likely to succeed on the merits of our claims (that BLM violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act), that we would suffer irreparable harm if the leases were issued, and that the balance of harms and public interest tipped heavily in our favor.

It gets better. On Feb. 4th, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar directed the BLM not to accept the high bids for the 77 lease parcels at issue in our case. Secretary Salazar explained that his actions were necessary because “[i]n its last weeks in office, the Bush Administration rushed ahead to sell oil and



canyon country updates

gas leases at the doorstep of some of our nation's most treasured landscapes in Utah." It took our breath away to hear this from an Interior Secretary. Elections really do matter.

We're just getting started. A few days before Mr. Salazar announced his decision directing the BLM to back down, we filed a revised version of our lawsuit, this time challenging the most significant decisions the BLM made—just before the Bush administration left office—in the wildly unbalanced Moab, Price and Vernal resource management plans (RMPs). It was these plans that provided the shaky underpinnings for the scandalous lease sale in the first place. And we added four new plaintiffs to the case.

The issues in the mix now include critical decisions such as the BLM's off-road vehicle travel plans, the designation of wild and scenic rivers, the designation of areas of critical environmental concern, and the agency's refusal to take seriously the threats that climate change poses. Stay tuned, this could take a while.

A team of attorneys represents the conservation and historic preservation groups that brought the suit: David Garbett, Heidi McIntosh, and Steve Bloch of SUWA; Robin Cooley of Earthjustice; and Sharon Buccino of NRDC. Plaintiffs include SUWA, NRDC, The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, National Parks Conservation Association, Grand Canyon Trust, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Center for Native Ecosystems, Red Rock Forests, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and Utah Rivers Council.

—Steve Bloch

Congress Pounds BLM for Eleventh Hour Outrages

SUWA's were not the only watchful eyes on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) shenanigans during the Bush administration's waning days. The Congress was watching, too.

There was much to see and much to fault—particularly the agency's rush to ram through land-use plans on millions of acres in Utah and to immediately announce a "Christmas sale" for oil and gas leases on wilderness-quality lands. That put the

Lease Sale Draws National Attention

The following editorials (and others) can be read in their entirety at www.suwa.org/Dec08LeaseSale. See also the *Akron Beacon Journal* editorial on page 12 of this issue.

In blocking immediate approvals of oil and gas leases on 77 parcels of federal land Wednesday, new Interior Secretary Ken Salazar displayed respect for some of the West's most prized landscapes.

... These are areas that by all means should be carefully preserved. Salazar's order was meant to assure that. He left open the option to allow drilling on some of the 77 parcels—but only if studies prove it would not threaten the air quality or other aspects of the nearby protected areas, the [Washington] Post reported.

This early decision by Salazar is encouraging. We hope he continues to show this level of respect for America's precious places.

—“Preserving precious places.” Editorial, *Las Vegas Sun*, 2/8/09

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's first major decision—to cancel oil and gas leases on 77 parcels of public land in Utah—could not have sent a clearer signal that his department is under new management. It also was a strong indication that the Obama administration intends to take a more measured approach to energy exploration on the public lands and that its predecessor's drill-now, drill-anywhere policies are a thing of the past.

—“Ken Salazar's New Deal.” Editorial, *New York Times*, 2/6/09

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's decision to cancel the sale of oil and gas leases on 77 parcels of land—redrock vistas with real and symbolic value for Utah's image and its tourism industry—is a clear victory for the state. A timely one, too, owing to the hasty efforts of the departing Bush administration to open up millions of acres of public land in Utah to oil and gas drilling.

Still, the significance of Salazar's decision hinges on whether it proves, as it should, to be the opening salvo in a determined battle to restore balance to the federal government's management of public lands in Utah and elsewhere.

—“Undoing damage: Salazar right to cancel lease sale.” *Salt Lake Tribune* editorial, 2/4/09

canyon country updates

Utah BLM squarely in the crosshairs of a Congress more than mildly fed up with eight years of environmental disregard.

Thanks in part to SUWA's constant attention to these issues and years of dedicated activism from supporters like you, nearly 70 members of the House and Senate quickly fired off letters to both the outgoing and incoming administrations. They expressed their specific concern with the leasing plans and their more general fears for the legacy that Bush's BLM was leaving for Utah's public lands. We owe particular thanks to Reps. Maurice Hinchey, Rush Holt and Brian Baird and Sen. Maria Cantwell for their leadership.

In the first few weeks of the new Obama administration, Members of Congress are already trying to uproot the worst of the Bush BLM's actions and are so far pleased with the new Interior Secretary's response. Given the level of support America's Red Rock Wilderness Act enjoys in the Congress, we do not expect this effort to fade anytime soon.

—Richard Peterson-Cremer

Good
News!

BLM Suspends Earlier Oil and Gas Leases

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has agreed to suspend 58 leases sold between 2004 and 2006 pending another round of environmental analysis. The leases were in such places as Cross Canyon in far southeastern Utah, Bitter Creek in the Book Cliffs, and Sweetwater Reef in the San Rafael Desert.

The leases are the sad residue of the Bush administration—you remember: the folks who made oil and gas leasing and development the “Number One” priority for the Utah BLM? While we've said goodbye to George, Dick, and Gale, their legacy lingers. (Makes you wish you'd paid more attention when your physics professor explained “half-life.”)

The BLM sold leases between February 2004 and May 2006 in some of the state's most spectacular wilderness-quality lands. Those were the years just after former Interior Secretary Gale Norton and former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt struck their infa-

Balance in the wilderness

The new interior secretary moves quickly to preserve pristine lands

Akron Beacon Journal editorial, originally published on February 6, 2009. Reprinted by permission.

One of the final decisions of the Bush White House involved opening 130,000 acres of public lands in Utah to leases for oil and gas drilling. The sorry choice reflected a blind determination to promote such drilling in the Mountain West, Alaska and off the east and west coasts, the Bush team becoming more aggressive after oil prices soared.

On Wednesday, thankfully, the Obama administration shifted course. Ken Salazar, the interior secretary, canceled 77 leases. The department will conduct a full review of the proposals, especially in light of the pristine areas in the vicinity, including Arches National Park and Dinosaur National Monument. The Bush decision put such natural treasures in jeopardy, paying too little heed to the potential for air pollution and other disruptions.

Salazar rightly talked about restoring balance to department decision-making about oil and gas drilling on public lands. In the Utah matter, the Bureau of Land Management barely consulted the National Park Service. The criteria shouldn't stem from a mere thirst for fuel. Science should play a prominent role. What would be the environmental impact? More, care must be taken to preserve the legacy of national parks, Teddy Roosevelt highlighting the responsibility of one generation to another.

Many Ohioans have made the trip West and admired the majestic terrain, the desolate, beautiful patches of wilderness. They have been able to do so because of past stewardship. Now it is the duty of this generation, which is precisely the balance that the decision of Ken Salazar seeks to strike.

canyon country updates

mous “no more wilderness” settlement, a time when the Utah BLM was selling oil and gas leases in wilderness-quality areas at a breakneck pace. And it was before SUWA won a landmark lawsuit in August 2006 putting the brakes on this illegal practice.

SUWA and our partners at the Natural Resources Defense Council and The Wilderness Society challenged the BLM’s 2004-2006 leasing decisions immediately. After several years of on-again-off-again appeals and litigation the BLM agreed to suspend the leases.

Relax: the BLM is not doing this out of the goodness of its heart. Despite the BLM’s argument that the case should be dismissed on technical grounds, a federal district court judge ruled in December that our lawsuit challenging these lease sales could go forward. Shortly thereafter, the BLM agreed to the suspensions. A courtroom epiphany, you might say.

—Steve Bloch

Western Utah Update

While oil and gas development in eastern Utah gets most of the attention, it threatens wild lands in western Utah, too.

The BLM’s Fillmore field office is preparing an environmental assessment for parcels it hopes to lease in its March 2009 lease sale, two of which overlap the Deep Creek Mountains proposed wilderness unit. The BLM hoped to sell leases in the Fillmore office at its controversial December 2008 oil and gas lease sale, relying on the environmental assessment (EA). But after receiving critical comments from hunters and anglers, as well as SUWA, the agency withdrew the EA and all of the Fillmore parcels from the sale. We are now reviewing BLM’s revised EA.

Also last year, the BLM’s Cedar City field office completed an EA covering parcels offered in its August 2008 oil and gas lease sale. SUWA commented on the EA, protested the lease sale, and is now taking the issue to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, the administrative forum for the appeal of Interior agencies’ actions. Our appeal focuses on the BLM’s failure to adequately consider air quality and climate change issues in its analysis.

—Tiffany Bartz

Air Pollution Comes to Southern Utah

As a general operating principle, visible air is not our best friend. Thus the old rule: “If you can see it, don’t breathe it.” But strict adherence to the rule would have meant not breathing at all on far too many days this winter along Utah’s Wasatch Front. Residents found themselves trapped again and again in ugly, polluted muck.

Long assumed to be strictly a peril of crowded urban living, the problem is moving to southern Utah. The Uintah Basin is known for Dinosaur National Monument and splendid wild country along the White River. Now, it includes ozone and particulate pollution, too. The levels approach Clean Air Act standards—and even exceed them in some cases. The culprit most likely is oil-and-gas-related development. Zion and Canyonlands National Parks have also experienced ground-level ozone pollution at or above Clean Air Act standards.

Ground-level ozone pollution is caused primarily by a mixture of various pollutants and sunlight. It can cause respiratory problems in humans and damage plants. Particulate matter pollution consists of small particles that can lodge in human lungs and create respiratory problems and heart problems for certain at-risk populations. Particulate matter is a major cause of haze that mars scenic vistas.

Unfortunately, if predictably, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has not made air quality protection a priority. The agency has frequently approved oil and gas projects that it knows will lead to significant deterioration of air quality or has remained willfully ignorant of such impacts by relying on only cursory air quality analyses.

SUWA has begun to raise air quality issues with the BLM. The agency is obligated to ensure that the projects it approves will not violate federal air quality standards. Our early efforts have shown some success: already two courts have agreed with at least some of our air quality-related arguments. We will continue to raise those arguments. As the American Lung Association famously reminded us, “It’s a matter of life and breath.”

—David Garbett

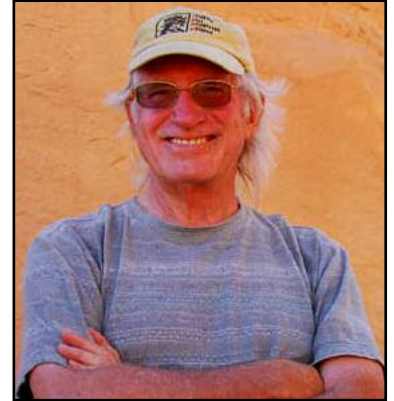
inside SUWA

Farewell and Thanks to Barry Bonifas

In the fall of 2006, SUWA was lucky enough to entice Barry Bonifas out of recent retirement to guide the development team at a time when several experienced staff members were moving on. Barry brought a background in non-profit management, a passion for western public lands, infectious enthusiasm and a wealth of new ideas to his job as associate director.

Overseeing SUWA's fundraising efforts during an economic downturn was not easy, but Barry never shrank from the task. He stayed in touch with loyal donors, engaged in every aspect of our membership program, embraced new projects as they came his way, and always maintained his sense of humor.

Though Barry has moved on from SUWA, he remains involved in wilderness activism—participating most recently in our peaceful protest against the BLM's December oil and gas lease sale. A native Californian, he plans to settle in Salt Lake City for a while, splitting his time between local arts events, travel, outdoor pursuits, and part-time employment (he's still too restless for retirement). We thank him for his commitment to wild places and wish him the very best!



Barry Bonifas: now one step closer to a well-earned retirement.

Wilderness Quilt Debuts

The Wilderness Quilt, a project of Women Protecting Wilderness, made its public debut in November 2008 in an atrium exhibit at the Salt Lake City Main Library.

The quilt is comprised of “testimonials,” short reflections people have submitted about why wilderness is important, along with their photo in a favorite natural landscape. The quilt now contains 160 testimonials, printed on pieces of fabric and sewn onto silk panels. It is designed to grow as people who see it respond to the invitation to add their own testimonial to the project.



© Terri Martin

Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon reads some of the quilt testimonials at the Salt Lake County Government Center.

Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon warmly welcomed the Wilderness Quilt for a January exhibit in the Salt Lake County Government Center. And in March, the quilt will be the featured art exhibit for “Women’s Week 2009” at the University of Utah where it will be displayed in the Student Union’s main foyer. Mayor Ralph Becker has also invited the quilt to the Salt Lake City Hall.

If you would like to contribute your testimonial to the Wilderness Quilt project go to www.womenprotectingwilderness.org.

Faith Groups to Craft Statement on Wilderness

Wild places exert a spiritual, and mostly private, pull on us. We may speak of it only rarely, dwell on it only briefly. But when we're asked to think and talk about wild places—and their place in our hearts—a strong connection seems barely beneath the surface. In recognition of this, SUWA has been working with communities of faith through our "Faith and the Land Project."

Our goal is to create an interfaith statement about the spiritual importance of wilderness and to establish a network of people from many different faiths who will share that statement at a public event and other forums this spring. So far we've held "Faith and the Land" discussions with members of the LDS, Jewish, Catholic, Quaker, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Islamic communities. We plan more in the coming months.

People have enthusiastically and articulately shared their personal stories and reflections about how wilderness is important to them spiritually, and how the teachings and traditions of their faith call them to care for the natural world, including wild places. SUWA produces a "harvest" report after each discussion summarizing the exchange within that faith community. Despite the diversity of faiths we've worked with, common themes are already clearly visible. Perhaps that is not surprising: wilderness has a universal, deep and enduring importance in people's spirituality. From it flows quite naturally a sense of our responsibility to serve as protective stewards.

In March, SUWA will bring together people from many different faiths to craft an interfaith statement. We will release it at a public event in April. If you would like to learn more about this project please go to www.suwa.org/interfaithstatement.

Join Us for the SUWA Roundup this September

Mark your calendar for SUWA's 2009 membership gathering at Hidden Splendor, September 18-20. Last year's attendees enjoyed perfect fall hiking weather and we're hoping for more of the same this year.



Hikers start up "Wayne's Wiggle" at the 2008 Roundup.

© Daniel Darger

Held in the heart of the San Rafael Swell, the SUWA Roundup offers our members and SUWA staff the opportunity to meet one another and to enjoy the beautiful Indian summer of redrock country with fellow desert rats from Utah and other states. Activities include a discussion of Utah wilderness issues with SUWA staff and board members, a potluck dinner, evening music around the campfire, and—best of all—guided day-hikes in our Muddy Creek proposed wilderness area. Sunday morning you'll awake to freshly brewed coffee followed by a deluxe continental breakfast prepared by the SUWA staff in thanks for all your support and dedication.

If you plan to attend this year's Roundup, here's what you should bring: a potluck dish serving five people for Saturday evening (if you plan to eat with the group), your own food for Friday evening and Saturday breakfast and lunch, camping gear, plenty of drinking water (none is available on site), utensils, folding chairs, and, if you have them, lanterns and tables to share with the crowd. Feel free to bring your own musical instruments and favorite libations, too. For more information or to RSVP, contact Deeda Seed at (801) 428-3971 or deeda@suwa.org. Information and driving instructions will be posted at www.suwa.org/roundup2009.

i n s i d e S U W A

Thank You SUWA Business Members!

Listed here are businesses that support SUWA and Utah wilderness through our business member program (this list, including cities and web links, is also available at www.suwa.org/BusinessMembers). We encourage SUWA members around the country to reward these businesses with their patronage. If you own a business and care deeply about protecting Utah's remaining wilderness lands, please consider joining our business member program. For more information, contact Thomas Burke at (801) 236-3763 or thomas@suwa.org.

Platinum Business Members

Backcountry.com, UT

Gold Business Members

Black Diamond Equipment, UT
 Chaco Sandals, CO
 Charles Cramer Photography, CA
 Llama, LLC, UT
 Squatters Pub Brewery, UT
 Stone Forest Inc, NM
 Tom Till Gallery, UT
 Treasure Mountain Inn, UT

Silver Business Members

Blue House Ski Company, UT
 Charles Wood Photography, UT
 Gregory Mountain Products, CA
 Injoy Productions, CO
 John O Johnson, UT
 Schocker Commercial Properties, UT

Business Members

Acupuncture Works, CO
 Advanced Media Strategies, WA
 Alta Lodge, UT
 American Image Photography, MI
 Andrew Donahue, CT
 Avalanche Properties, UT
 Baked In Telluride, CO
 Benstog Construction Corporation, UT
 Boulder Mountain Lodge, UT
 Brad M. King Associates, Inc, CA
 Brennan and Shultz Painting LC, UT
 Brown Bag Farms, CA
 Bruce Hucko Photography, UT
 Canyon Voyages Adventure Company, UT
 Capitola Book Cafe, CA
 Cedar Mesa Music, CA
 Centered City Yoga, UT
 Community Builders Cooperative, MA
 Compact Disc Service, CA
 Consulting Psychologists, AZ
 Dabney & Dabney PC, UT
 Dammeron Corporation, UT
 David Gibans Law Offices, CO

Deanna Rosen LCSW, UT
 Deer Hill Expeditions, CO
 Dennis Chavez Development Corporation, NM
 Desert Highlights, UT
 Faceplant, UT
 Fuller Therapeutics, Inc, CO
 Githens Properties, LLC, CO
 Glenn Randall Writing and Photography, CO
 Great Southwest Adventures Inc, NM
 Haymaker Construction, CA
 High Country Appraisal, CO
 Hyperspud Sports, ID
 ID Interiors, CO
 Image Trader, AZ
 Imlay Canyon Gear, UT
 Inkling Design, CO
 Institution of Taoist Education and Acupuncture, Inc, CO
 J Edward Hansford DDS, CO
 John Sexton Photography, CA
 Keen Inc, OR
 Kind Coffee, LLC, CO
 Knead a Massage, UT
 Kuru Footwear, UT
 Law Office Of Don Lipmanson, CA
 Law Offices of Robert L Miller, AZ
 Lazy Lizard International Hostel, UT
 Leslie T Gray, Appraisal and Consulting, CO
 Lucky Dog Communications, UT
 Manning Curtis Bradshaw & Bednar, UT
 Matheson Design, OR
 Maui Mountain Environmentally Friendly Coffee, HI
 Mazza, UT
 Michael Gordon Photography, CA
 Michael Kuten DMD, MO
 Momentum, LLC, UT
 Mountain Chalet, CO
 Mountain Gear, Inc, WA
 Muench Photography Inc, NM
 Neiman Wealth Management, LLC, NY
 Nichols Expeditions, UT

Ody Brook Enterprises, MI
 Osprey Packs, Inc, CO
 Otterness Repairs, MN
 Ottertrack Productions, OR
 Pack Rat Outdoor Center, AR
 Page Speiser LCSW, UT
 Passage to Utah, UT
 Petzl America, UT
 Phillips Gallery, UT
 Pinnacle Peak Eye Care, AZ
 Powderwhore Productions, UT
 Purple Dragon Ventures, NM
 Red Rock Mortgage, UT
 Richard Farrell CPA, CO
 Robert Cheyne Photography, MI
 Robert Trimble, Architect, CT
 Rocking V Cafe, UT
 Rocky Collins Construction, UT
 Rupestrian Cyber Services, AZ
 Schneider Auto Karosserie, Inc, UT
 Scott T Smith Photography, UT
 Select Stone, Inc, MT
 Selinda Research Associates, IL
 Skull Candy, UT
 Snow County Limousine, Inc, UT
 Southwest Planning & Marketing, NM
 Steve Gilsdorf CPA, AZ
 Steven Lamb, KY
 Stockbridge Animal Clinic, MI
 Streamline Bodyworks, LLC, UT
 Tesch Law Offices PC, UT
 Underwood Environmental, Inc, UT
 Vortex Outdoors, UT
 Waterwise Design & Landscapes, LC, UT
 White Water Dental Seminars, ID
 William Stone Photography, NM
 Williams Tree Farm, ID
 Willis Greiner Photography, CO
 Words and Photographs by Stephen Trimble, UT
 Wydah Corporation, UT
 ZAK Construction, OR

Make a Difference: Join or Donate to SUWA Today!

As one of SUWA's 15,000+ members, you can rest assured that our exceptional staff is closely following the issues that threaten these lands and doing whatever it takes to protect them. At the same time, we also work hard to keep you current on the latest threats—through our website, email alerts, action bulletins, and newsletter—so that you can stay informed and involved.

Over 80% of SUWA's funding comes from memberships and donations from individuals like you.

SUWA's members are truly its lifeblood. Concerned citizens from every state in the nation, and even other countries, have joined SUWA. This strong financial support gives us the freedom and flexibility to protect the land every day, and to work for permanent preservation through wilderness designation. These public lands belong to all of us, and it is our right and responsibility to speak out for them.

Protecting America's redrock wilderness through SUWA is easy.

If you are already a member of SUWA, thank you for your support! If you are not yet a member, please join today. Annual dues are just \$30, and, of course, additional donations are appreciated and needed. SUWA is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization—so all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

There are three easy ways to join or donate:

- **By Mail:** fill out and return the form below with your check or credit card information.
- **Online:** with your credit card through our secure website at www.suwa.org/donate.
- **By Phone:** call us at (801) 486-3161 with your credit card, or with any questions you may have.

Yes! I want to join SUWA

Please Check One: New Member ___ Renewal ___

Individual Membership: ___ \$30 Basic Membership ___ \$15 Student Membership
Other \$ _____

Business Membership: ___ Standard (\$150) ___ Silver (\$500) ___ Gold (\$1,000)
___ Platinum (\$5,000) Other \$ _____

Please check here if you DO NOT want to be listed as a business member in our newsletter or on our website.

Contributions to SUWA are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please make your check payable to SUWA or include credit card information (VISA, MC, AMEX).

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Amount \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail form with payment to: SUWA, 425 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

inside SUWA

Planned Giving: A Legacy of Support for America's Redrock Wilderness



Many of us are unable to make major donations to the causes we love during our lifetimes. A planned gift gives us an additional opportunity to make a difference. It is not necessary to make a huge gift. Even a modest percentage of an estate can have a major impact on protecting the redrock. What is important is to make a gift that reflects the values you cherish. Your legacy gift to SUWA will enable us to accomplish your goal of permanent preservation and protection for these lands.

If you are interested in making a planned gift to SUWA, or have already included SUWA in your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy, or other estate gift, please contact Thomas Burke at thomas@suwa.org or (801) 236-3763, or learn more at www.suwa.org/plannedgiving. We would love to recognize your deep commitment by welcoming you to SUWA's Redrock Society as a legacy donor, joining the 150 individuals and couples who have taken that important step.

Get a Copy of SUWA's *Wild Utah* Video on DVD

SUWA's popular multi-media slideshow, *Wild Utah! America's Redrock Wilderness* has been updated with new interviews, stunning photos and video clips, and compelling narration by longtime wilderness activist Robert Redford. These DVDs make great gifts and educational tools!

Please send _____ copies of the *Wild Utah* DVD at \$10 each (includes shipping).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

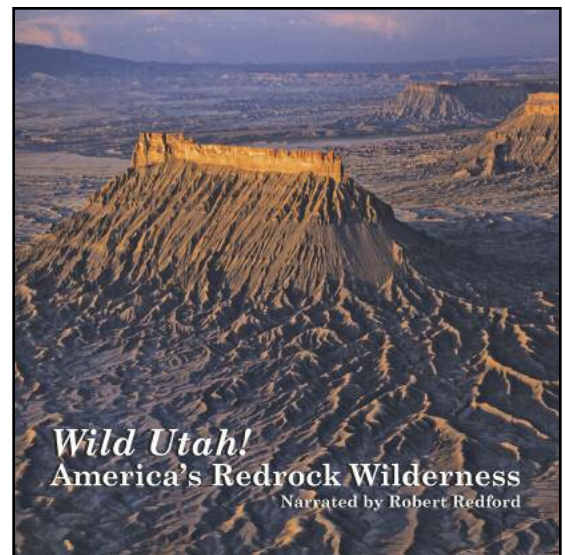
Please make your check payable to SUWA or include credit card information (VISA, MC, or AMEX):

CC#: _____

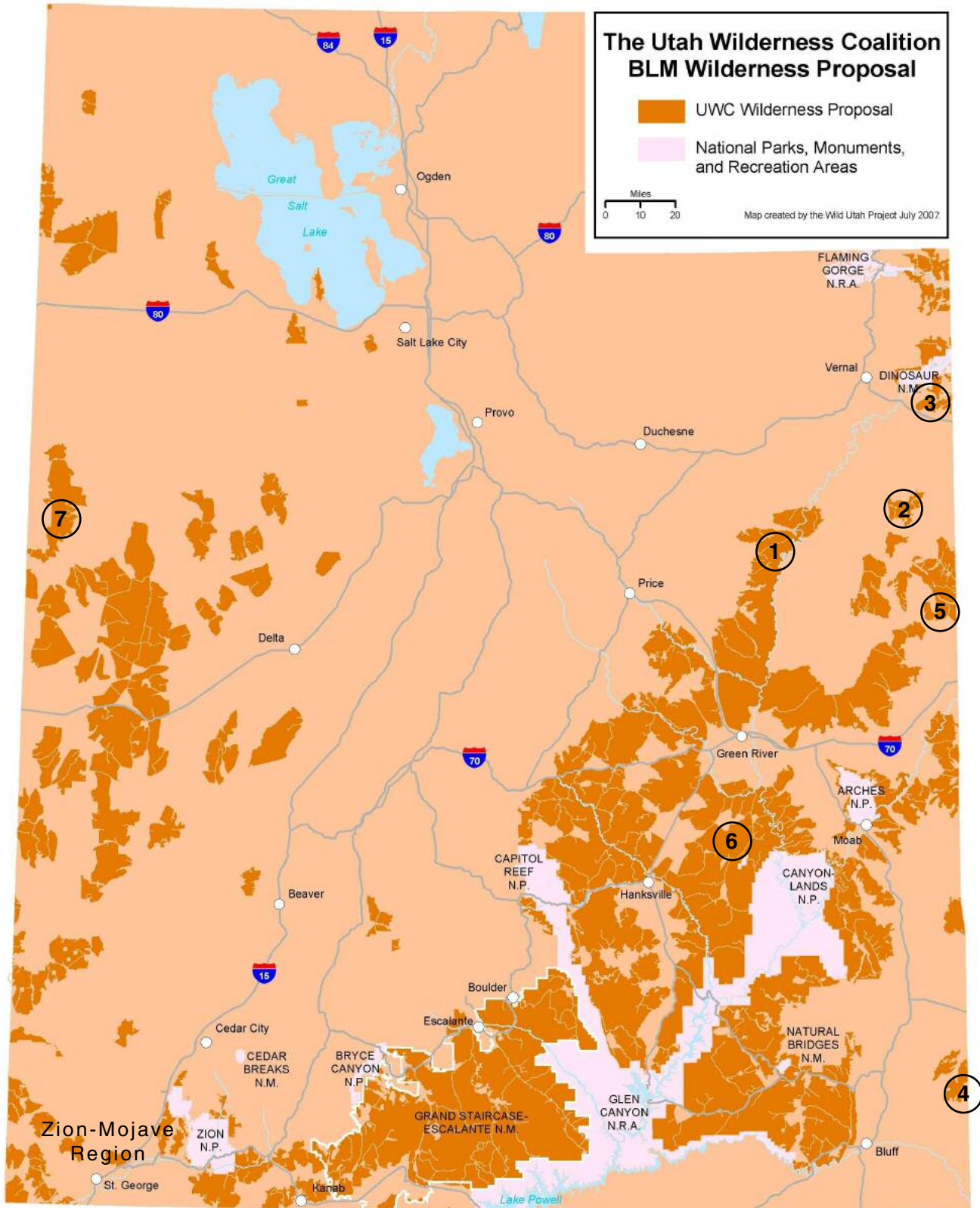
Exp. date: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Mail form with payment to:

SUWA, 425 E. 100 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111



Wild Utah DVDs can also be ordered online at www.suwa.org/goodies.




Reference Map for Articles in this Issue

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ① Desolation Canyon (p. 10) | ④ Cross Canyon (p. 12) | ⑦ Deep Creek Mtns (p. 13) |
| ② White River (p. 10) | ⑤ Bitter Creek (p. 12) | |
| ③ Bourdette Draw (p. 10) | ⑥ Sweetwater Reef (p. 12) | |



The SUWA staff at our December 2008 retreat in Brighton, UT. **Top row:** Steve Bloch, David Garbett, Tiffany Bartz, Terri Martin, Jackie Feinberg, Liz Thomas, Scott Braden, Justin Allegro, Anne Williams. **Bottom row:** Thomas Burke, Clayton Daughenbaugh, Ray Bloxham, Heidi McIntosh, Scott Groene, Terra Cronshey, Richard Peterson-Cremer, Deeda Seed, Diane Kelly, Barbara Eubanks. **Kneeling:** Gina Riggs, Morgan Wyenn.

Thank you to everyone who helped us meet our \$100,000 matching grant in 2008!

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