

REDROCK

W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 25, Number 2 • Summer 2008

Striving for a Wilderness Bill
Worthy of Utah's Zion-Mojave

Cover Photo: This scenic redrock canyon in the Canaan Mountain proposed wilderness would be stripped of its wilderness study area protection under Senator Bennett's current wilderness proposal for Washington County. Copyright Ray Bloxham/SUWA.



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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This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Justin Allegro, Steve Bloch, Ray Bloxham, Barry Bonifas, Scott Braden, Jackie Feinberg, David Garbett, Scott Groene, Carolyn Hopper, Eve Komosa, Richard Peterson-Cremer, Deeda Seed, and Liz Thomas. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly.

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wilderness notes

Before the Rascals Are Thrown Out

The best hope for endangered species may simply be to cling to life until after January when this president and his cronies, at long last, hit the unemployment line.

~ Rep. Nick Rahall, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 22, 2008)

For the next five months, the media will remain awash with election coverage. And while we are as enthusiastic about the process of choosing a new president as anyone, we are plagued by the certain knowledge that we are far from finished with the old one.

The next eight months will be the most dangerous time yet for our public lands. It's not just the legendary lethality of the dying beast's thrashing tail, though I suppose that's part of it. It's more the lethality of focused, fervid ideologues whose time to cement their dreadful legacy grows short. The Bush administration's political appointees have opened much of the West to the energy industry, but not yet all of it. They are thus in a deadly hurry.

We can't know all the mischief they'll undertake over the coming months. No matter how ugly the administration's bureaus seem to be, remember that like Flip Wilson's Geraldine they're "holdin' a little somethin' back." Still, what we do know and can reasonably anticipate is alarming enough. We know for starters that the Interior Department is rushing to kick out the door final management decisions for 11 million acres of Utah BLM redrock, covering almost the entire proposed wilderness on the Colorado Plateau.

And we already know what the result of those decisions will be: millions of acres of proposed wilderness will be opened to oil and gas leasing and off-road vehicle use—even areas the BLM acknowledges qualify as wilderness after the agency's latest inventories.

No doubt political appointees pushed for precisely this result. Herding bureaucrats smartly along a president's decreed path is, after all, the primary work of political appointees. Absent that, there's no excuse for them. And, as the British say, you can't blame a dog for being a dog. But the politicians found in the professional BLM a fawning accomplice in wholesale looting. And that is fully blameworthy. It's hard not to be deeply angered when I look at what the local BLM office intends to do to the backcountry around my home in Moab, for example. Nearly 85 percent of the land around Moab (that south of I-70 where most visitors travel) will be within a half mile of a designated ORV route. Generations to come will lament the BLM's reprehensible work . . . unless we can stop it.

At SUWA, we've set ourselves just that task. We will challenge, with both political and legal campaigns, decisions to open the redrock landscape to destruction. And we're looking forward to a new administration, regardless of party. After 8 years, it seems pretty clear that any change will necessarily be an improvement. Meanwhile, let's all keep a careful eye on that thrashing tail.

For the Redrock,



Scott Groene
Executive Director

features

Zion-Mojave Wilderness Bill: Better, But Not Yet Good Enough

Sen. Bob Bennett (R-UT) has introduced a new Washington County Growth and Conservation Act, a considerable improvement over earlier versions. The bill, which so far has no companion measure in the House, would designate Bureau of Land Management wilderness for the Zion-Mojave region in the southwest corner of Utah. It includes several other provisions, some good, some not. While SUWA cannot support the measure as it now stands, we are eager to work with the senator and others in the Congress to make this a bill we can support.

Two years ago, thanks to you, we stopped a truly awful Washington County bill. It is important to remember that that effort was not only, not even mostly, about saying “no.” Its principal value was the opportunity to explain to key Members of Congress what Utah wilderness deserves and the sort of bill we will support. By that measure, too, the effort succeeded; improvements in the new Bennett bill attest to that. While the last bill was flawed beyond fixing, the current measure has the potential to bring Utah wilderness within reach. We aren’t there yet, but we are hopeful. (If Senator Bennett doesn’t improve the legislation, we’ll have a fight on our hands, so please visit www.suwa.org to find out the latest and learn how you can help.)

Getting to this point has been slow and difficult. We are grateful to you and grateful, too, to the Sierra Club, our Utah Wilderness Coalition partner, for its exceptional work and to the Natural Resources Defense Council and Earthjustice, organizations that regularly and reliably join us to protect the Redrock.

Zion-Mojave Legislation and America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act

SUWA’s overriding mission is to protect the lands within America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act. We don’t sit prayerfully waiting for a political revolution that will assure passage of the Red Rock bill in a single stroke, though. We work hard to change the political climate for wilderness by building support nationally and within Utah.

Nor do we naively place all our hope for a protected redrock landscape in a single legislative basket. We pursue every promising avenue, including incremen-



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

The Scarecrow Peak proposed wilderness in Utah’s Washington County.

tal legislative, administrative or judicial steps, to advance protection of the lands within the Red Rock bill. That certainly includes smaller pieces of legislation such as the successful Cedar Mountains wilderness bill enacted in 2006. With changes, it could include Sen. Bennett’s Zion-Mojave legislation.

Our goal to protect 9.5 million acres of redrock is bold. Consider that fewer than 7.5 million acres of the approximately 175 million acres of BLM land in the contiguous states have been designated wilderness over the past 40 years. Paltry as those numbers are, this reality is worse: less BLM land now has congressional protection because wilderness designation too often came at the cost of relinquishing millions of acres of wilderness study areas whose protection is real, if imperfect.

America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act would more than double designated wilderness on BLM lands. Our dream, then, is clear enough, but there is no established political road map for achieving it. So we’ve created our own model with these key components:

1. Build the organization. SUWA must remain a strong organization passionately and single-mindedly focused on the Redrock. SUWA’s membership is our life’s blood for political strength and financial support.

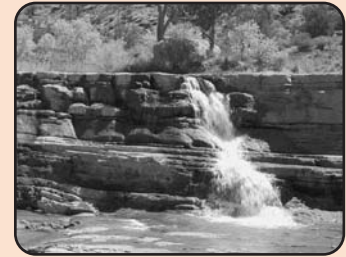
features

Major Provisions in the Washington County Legislation

Sen. Bob Bennett (R-UT) introduced a new version of his Washington County legislation in early April. The Washington County Growth and Conservation Act of 2008 (S. 2834) improves somewhat on the 2006 version which was roundly opposed. However, it is still flawed enough that we can't support it as drafted. We have pledged to work with Sen. Bennett and others in the Congress to make it a bill we can support. Here are its major features.

Wilderness Protection

Sen. Bennett's new bill would designate approximately 138,000 acres of BLM land (plus additional Park Service lands) as wilderness—45,000 acres more than the 2006 bill—including places previously left unprotected such as Dry Creek, Doc's Pass, and Slaughter Creek. Nevertheless, Sen. Bennett's bill omits protection for 160,000 acres of wild lands in Washington County included in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. More of these iconic places deserve to be protected as wilderness.



Black Ridge proposed wilderness.
© Ray Bloxham/SUWA.

Public Land Disposal

The new bill provides for the sale of up to 14 square miles (9,000 acres) of public land under BLM management, far less than the previous version. The earlier bill would have allowed the sale of up to 38 square miles (24,300 acres). However, the BLM has never identified in a public process most of the lands that could be sold under the new bill. Beyond that, the need for selling any public land in Washington County is far from clear. The chamber of commerce estimates that over 200,000 acres of private land in the county are still available for development.

Use of Land Sales Proceeds

The new bill goes further than the earlier version to direct proceeds from public land sales towards land conservation and acquisition as existing law provides. Still, the bill would give an estimated \$96.5 to \$121.5 million in sale proceeds to Washington County, which could use it to fund local development projects such as highways and reservoirs. The money could potentially be spent to support development of the proposed Lake Powell water pipeline.



ORV use endangers the threatened desert tortoise. © Steve Howe.

ORVs

One noteworthy improvement in Sen. Bennett's new bill is the requirement that the BLM complete a comprehensive off-road vehicle (ORV) travel management plan for Washington County within three years. Additionally, Sen. Bennett has agreed to protect the proposed Mojave wilderness areas from ORVs through the establishment of the Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area (NCA). Unfortunately, the bill also mandates a new ORV trail system.

Public Land Rights-of-Way

The 2006 version of this bill included a corridor for the proposed Lake Powell water pipeline, while granting nearly 9,000 acres of public land rights-of-way to the local water conservancy district. Sen. Bennett's new bill would provide no corridor for the pipeline. But it would still allow water developers to obtain rights-of-way across public lands for free and in perpetuity.

features

2. Nationalize the issue. The Utah congressional delegation has repeatedly tried to pass legislation opening the Redrock to development. Without national support for Utah's wild lands it would have long ago succeeded.

We build support in Utah as well, recognizing that there is strong in-state support for wilderness which deserves a voice. This plays a part in building national support, too, and helps persuade the Utah congressional delegation that more wilderness is inevitable.

3. Keep the land wild. We must build and sustain the capacity to defend all 9.5 million wild acres until they are permanently protected, however long that takes.

As recently as 75 years ago, southern Utah bore few scars. Over the next fifty years, 13 million acres of the 23 million acres the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages in Utah fell to mining, drilling, chaining, damming and road construction. By 1983, fewer than 10 million acres remained wild. But this horrendous rate of loss has eased over the last 25 years, during which we've lost less than 1 percent of the remaining wild country. Not coincidentally, SUWA's existence spans the same 25-year period.

4. Increase on-the-ground protection. Though our ultimate goal remains congressional wilderness designation, we work to gain any form of protection possible in the short term. The second effort advances the first. Today, around 5 million acres of Utah BLM land enjoy some form of protection. That status allows us to focus our resources on places where threats are more immediate, to change the politics in aid of a good bill, and to reduce the risk of losing lands to development. The more land we get under some form of protection, the more land we will ultimately set aside as wilderness.

5. Seek and create wilderness legislation opportunities. We are more than willing to work for legislation to protect portions of our proposal when it benefits America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. That is simple pragmatism. Every designation of whatever size allows us to shift our resources to the defense of lands with no protection at all. Small wilderness designations build momentum for more and strengthen grassroots support.

We'll support incremental legislation that meets the following criteria:

- **The legislation in total is good for the affected land.** As we look at proposed legislation, we ask ourselves what an activist a decade hence might wish we had done, not done, or done differently.

- **The legislation is good for the National Wilderness Preservation System.** We're parties to a contract with wilderness activists past, present and future. We will not betray our wilderness legacy, complicate or undercut the work of other activists today, or foreclose options for tomorrow's activists who may treasure wilderness even more than we do and who just may live in a more enlightened world. In short, we won't embrace a deal if it harms land protection efforts elsewhere or in the future just because we've become impatient in our own place and time.

- **The legislation is good for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.** We will accept legislation only if it furthers the effort to protect all the lands in the Act. It would be foolish to accept a Washington County bill that includes dangerous precedents for the larger landscape when the reward is a relatively few wilderness acres. Of our 9.5 million-acre proposal, Washington County accounts for only 300,000 acres—small stakes when set against the sweep of Utah's canyon country.

Timing and the 'what ifs?'

We are on the brink of a national election. If it brings dramatic changes—and many predict it will—we will do all we can to secure passage of the Red Rock bill.

Historically, conservation in the West has occurred in big steps and over parochial local objections. That's certainly Utah's history, seen in the creation of Arches, Canyonlands and Capitol Reef National Parks, and of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. All were protected in a bold stroke and over local resistance. They are now accepted and, but for a few pockets of implacable resentment, widely valued.

Something of the sort could happen again. The wide open spaces of the American West today are less wide, less open. Energy development compromises natural values that brought many here in the

features

first place. Off-road vehicles extend their destructive dominance on public lands. Population growth puts open space at a premium. In the face of all that, western attitudes are changing and the politics of wilderness are likely to change with them. Brant Calkin, a former SUWA executive director, notes that many politicians are simple organisms that respond to a simple stimulus: “There go the people! I must hurry after them, for I am their leader!”

Meanwhile, though, we operate in the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be. SUWA will always accept a good bargain and we know that compromise is often necessary. We’ll work in good faith with Sen. Bennett and others in the Congress to draft an acceptable bill—one consistent with our mission and with the expectations of our members.

—*Scott Groene*

Better, not best: Washington County land bill still can improve

Salt Lake Tribune editorial, originally published on April 23, 2008. Reprinted by permission.

Sen. Bob Bennett and Rep. Jim Matheson are to be commended for producing a much-improved Washington County land bill. Unfortunately, they have not gone far enough in restricting unmanaged growth and keeping public lands public.

The Washington County Growth and Conservation Act of 2008 is decidedly better than the 2006 version, which would have allowed the sale of more than 24,000 acres of public land to private developers. Under the latest iteration, 9,052 acres of public land would be sold. And by our calculation, that is 9,052 acres too many.

There is plenty of private developable property around St. George without auctioning off land that belongs not only to the residents of Washington County and Utah, but to all Americans.

Just as worrisome is a provision to hand over a chunk of the proceeds of the sale to the county to be used for local projects. That means some of the money could end up facilitating construction of the Lake Powell pipeline, a project that is controversial for its environmental impact, expense and impracticality.

Nevada has already set a bad precedent by selling off federal land to bolster the coffers of local government, but there is no reason for Utah to imitate poor public policy.

Both the sale of public lands and the pipeline proposal would encourage even more growth in an arid and fragile part of the state that a range of scientists predict will become even drier and hotter in coming years because of global climate change.

Indeed, some climatologists question whether Lake Powell and the Colorado River will be able to meet even current water demands, if the snowpack that feeds the river diminishes.

The new land bill includes some real benefits for the people of southern Utah, including more than 250,000 acres of wilderness—123,000 more acres than the 2006 version protected. It also eliminates a transportation corridor that would have infringed on desert tortoise habitat.

However, its most positive outcome has been the creation of Vision Dixie, a grass-roots coalition of planners, government and county residents that has gathered opinions and data to determine how Washington County should grow.

This group opposes the sale of public lands and favors the protection of open space.

The Bennett-Matheson land bill should reflect those views.

DC news

Members of Congress Weigh In on Utah's BLM Roadless Areas

Our last *Redrock* newsletter examined the issue of Utah's BLM roadless areas, important places federal land managers have recently determined to have wilderness character. We also detailed the threat to these lands from a new generation of land-use plans the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is developing across the Colorado Plateau.

Now we're pleased to report that 95 U.S. Senators and Representatives have joined the discussion.

Led by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), the members wrote to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne demanding that new Resource Management Plans (RMPs) the BLM is now writing include strong protection for the nearly 3 million acres of wilderness-quality roadless areas, particularly from off-road vehicle intrusion and energy development.

The RMPs, now out in draft form, include a range of management alternatives, one of which the agency describes as "preferred." Its declared and perfectly predictable preference is to open 86 percent of these wilderness-quality lands to oil and gas development and to designate nearly 1,000 miles of off-road vehicle routes. The BLM simultaneously rejected the "conservation alternative" each plan includes, which would provide far more protection for Utah's BLM roadless areas.

It is precisely these conservation alternatives that our congressional leaders urge Secretary Kempthorne to embrace. The congressional request is entirely reasonable. It is also practical and fully possible: the plans are not yet in final form, so there's ample time for the secretary to come to wisdom. Whether he will is another matter; he had not responded to the congressional letter by the time this issue of *Redrock* went to press. Whatever he decides, though, congressional letters are never idle exercises. Strong statements that the Congress is alert to and concerned about agency actions have a cumulative effect and over time can change behavior. There are few permanently deaf ears in Washington's career bureaucra-

cies, only ideologically impaired ones. That condition is curable.

The redrock country's congressional champions are a special breed of elected representative, willing to rise again and again to the challenge of protecting wild lands that need protection. It is important, of course, for citizens to meet with Members of Congress to reinforce their willingness to help. To that end, nearly 30 activists for Utah wilderness came to Washington in March to meet with their officials and to advocate for Utah wilderness—and in particular for this letter about BLM roadless areas. We are so grateful for the commitment of our members!

You can read the House and Senate letters online at www.suwa.org/CongressionalLetters

—Justin Allegro



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Wilderness activists asked members of Congress to help protect Utah's roadless areas at the March 2008 Wilderness Week event in Washington, DC.

DC news

*Activist Perspective***A Wilderness Week to Remember**

by Carolyn Hopper

Fantastic. Fun. Motivating. Shoe Leather. Walking, walking, and more walking. Invigorating. Amazing. Educational. Remember the ASK. These were some of the responses to my question: “How would you describe your experience of Wilderness Week in three words?”

Wilderness Week 2008 was my first experience as a “grassroot” since 1973 when I helped a friend run for Congressman in Connecticut. In fact, he’s still there and one of the few Republican cosponsors of America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act—thank you Congressman Christopher Shays! I traveled to Washington from Montana the first week in March filled with hope and came back still filled with hope. I believe that one person can make a difference in this country when it comes to protecting our public lands.



Utah wilderness activist
Carolyn Hopper.

It helps to dress for the job, take advantage of all the training available from a hard-working and enthusiastic SUWA staff, put a smile on your face, and walk with courage through the doors of buildings lined with statues and marble halls. Maybe it was the yellow buttons, maybe it was the support and encouragement of fellow activists of all ages from all around the country, maybe it was the first faint hint of spring—whatever the “it” really was, I believe we all made it through with flying colors. It helped me to remember that the answer will never be “yes” unless I ask.

Asking became easier with every appointment. Some Representatives or their staff members said “no,” some said “maybe,” some looked at their watches and tapped their pens. But some said “yes” when we asked them to sign a new congressional letter urging the BLM to protect land with wilderness characteristics from the development of new roads until America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act can be passed. It was a nice surprise when I was ushered into one of my Senator’s offices expecting to meet with the Legislative Assistant, and there was the Senator himself. He listened attentively, asked questions that sounded sincere, and nodded in approval when we said we would be following up with his staff the next week.

I’m not sure yet what a seasoned grass-root might be called (perhaps a grass seedhead?), but I look forward to returning another time and building on this year’s experience. I left with visions of gleaming marble, a shining white dome surrounded by snapping flags and blue sky, robins hopping on the lawn in the park around the Capitol, and the reflection of the Jefferson Memorial floating on the Tidal Basin at sunset. Most of all, I left with a sense of what’s possible.

After this experience, “Coda: Wilderness Letter,” by Wallace Stegner is now one more piece of writing that is part of my heartbeat:

We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as idea.

DC news

BLM Draws Heat for ORV Mismanagement

There are upwards of 43 million off-road vehicles (ORVs) in the U.S. (according to the Blue Ribbon Coalition that represents ORV interests). It only seems that they all rampage across public lands in Utah; actually, there are plenty to go around and that's just what they have been doing.

The viral spread of ORVs and their escalating damage have stirred congressional committee interest. Panels have begun to explore ORV management—or, more pointedly, to ask why public lands agencies manage them so poorly if they manage them at all. To this awareness, the Congress is a bit of a latecomer. For years, ORV abuses have been widely considered to be among the most pressing issues in public land management. But here, late is surely better than never.

In Utah, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rushes to lock in place dreadful new land use plans for the Colorado Plateau while the political getting is good. In Washington, the agency's political spokespeople have been called regularly before congressional committees to explain what the agency is doing to protect natural resources, archaeological sites and other recreational uses and users from ORVs.

SUWA and its members are entitled to claim some of the credit for this. Working with groups like

Rangers for Responsible Recreation, which organizes former land managers and law enforcement officers to advocate on ORV issues, SUWA has helped to bring travel planning and enforcement issues to the attention of hundreds of congressional offices. We've reached them through letters from their colleagues, thousands of grassroots contacts, and now oversight hearings. This process of congressional scrutiny will put the BLM's failures and its lame rationales squarely on record. Building such a record is an informational first step that often leads to additional scrutiny or legislation. That simple fact should cause the BLM to think again before issuing sweeping land-use plans such as its Utah Resource Management and Travel Plans. Don't bet on it.

The BLM routinely offers the Congress wildly unconvincing explanations for decisions that negatively impact public lands and their users. More and more Members of Congress are finding these answers less and less satisfactory—and saying so in oversight hearings and through follow-up written questions to which the agency must respond. It's fascinating to anticipate what the BLM will say next as it struggles to excuse the inexcusable: its abject failure to protect public land resources.

Recent national attention to ORV abuses is as welcome as it is overdue. We look forward to working with Members of Congress to rein in the BLM's destructive plans for ORV use in Utah.

—Richard Peterson-Cremer

Ask Your Members of Congress to Support America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

(see next page for a list of current cosponsors)

Write to:

The Honorable [Representative's name]
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable [Senator's name]
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

or Call:

(202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to the appropriate office

To find out who your elected officials are, go to www.congress.org
To learn more about America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, go to www.suwa.org/arrwa

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Dale Kildee, D-05
Sander Levin, D-12
Carolyn Kilpatrick, D-13
John Conyers, D-14

Minnesota

Betty McCollum, D-04
Keith Ellison, D-05
Collin Peterson, D-07

Missouri

William "Lacy" Clay, D-01

Emanuel Cleaver, D-05

Nevada

Shelley Berkley, D-01

New Hampshire

Carol Shea-Porter, D-01
Paul Hodes, D-02

New Jersey

Robert E. Andrews D-01
Frank LoBiondo, R-02
Christopher H. Smith, R-04
Frank Pallone, D-06
Mike Ferguson, R-07
Bill Pascrell, D-08
Steven Rothman, D-09
Donald M. Payne, D-10
Rush D. Holt, D-12
Albio Sires, D-13

New Mexico

Tom Udall, D-03

New York

Tim Bishop, D-01
Steve Israel, D-02
Carolyn McCarthy, D-04
Gary L. Ackerman, D-05
Gregory W. Meeks, D-06
Joseph Crowley, D-07
Jerrold Nadler, D-08
Anthony D. Weiner, D-09
Edolphus Towns, D-10
Carolyn B. Maloney, D-14
Charles B. Rangel, D-15
Jose E. Serrano, D-16
Eliot L. Engel, D-17
Nita Lowey, D-18
John Hall, D-19
Michael R. McNulty, D-21
Maurice Hinchey, D-22
Brian Higgins, D-27
Louise McIntosh Slaughter, D-28

North Carolina

David Price, D-04
Mel Watt, D-12
Brad Miller, D-13

Ohio

Marcy Kaptur, D-09
Dennis J. Kucinich, D-10
Betty Sutton, D-13
Tim Ryan, D-17

Oregon

David Wu, D-01
Earl Blumenauer, D-03
Peter DeFazio, D-04
Darlene Hooley, D-05

Pennsylvania

Robert Brady, D-01
Joe Sestak, D-07
Allyson Schwartz, D-13
Mike Doyle, D-14

Rhode Island

Patrick Kennedy, D-01
James Langevin, D-02

South Carolina

John Spratt, D-05

Tennessee

Stephen Cohen, D-09

Texas

Al Green, D-09
Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-18
Charles A. Gonzalez, D-20
Lloyd Doggett, D-25
Gene Green, D-29
Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-30

Vermont

Peter Welch, D-AL

Virginia

James Moran, D-08

Virgin Islands

Donna Christensen, D-AL

Washington

Jay Inslee, D-01
Brian Baird, D-03
Norm Dicks, D-06
Jim McDermott, D-07
Adam Smith, D-09

Wisconsin

Tammy Baldwin, D-02
Gwen Moore, D-04

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canyon country updates

Good
News!

Federal Court Rules against Kane County's Monument Vigilantism

For 10 abusive years, Kane County challenged at every turn the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) authority to protect key areas of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument from off-road vehicle damage. A federal judge has finally stepped in and enjoined the county from acting as if it owns the monument. By the time you read this, the injunction will have forced the county to take down scores of signs welcoming off-road vehicle use throughout not just the monument, but also the Moquith Mountain Wilderness Study Area, in exactly the places the BLM closed to protect fragile resources.

Ironically, it wasn't the BLM that asked for the court's help when Kane County put the monument at risk. It was SUWA and its partner The Wilderness Society that filed suit and got the court involved.

The decision was unusual in that it relied on the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution to put a stop to Kane County's vigilantism. That clause provides that any local ordinance or law that conflicts with federal law on issues of federal concern (such as public lands) is preempted. Because Kane

County's shenanigans directly—and deliberately—conflicted with and sought to undermine the BLM's authority over federal property, they were illegal.

The court also rejected the county's argument that the BLM couldn't close the contested routes because they were R.S. 2477 highways. (If you read the newsletter regularly you know that R.S. 2477 is a law Congress passed in 1866 giving rights-of-way across federal public lands under certain conditions; it was rescinded in 1976, subject to valid existing rights. Counties like Kane go way too far, claiming that any dry streambed or cattle track amounts to an R.S. 2477 highway.) Taking a common-sense approach explicitly approved by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, the judge simply ruled that if the county thinks it has valid rights which trump BLM authority, it has to prove it.

Naturally.

But true to form, the county is taking an appeal to the Tenth Circuit. Also true to form, it has asked the Governor of Utah for help to continue this foolish-

(Continued on page 16)

The following is excerpted by permission from the *Salt Lake Tribune* editorial, **What part of 'no': Kane County should remove signs as fed court orders**, originally published on May 20, 2008.

... When RS2477 was repealed in 1976, the repeal contained a grandfather clause protecting "existing rights of way." Utah law requires proof of "continuous use and maintenance" for 10 years prior to 1976 on each road claim to prove the county's right of way.

Kane County argued that the BLM must recognize "valid existing rights" without the county presenting proof of those rights in court. Judge Campbell's answer? Once again, for what should be the last time: "No."

The ruling is unequivocal. And, while it did not specifically address the potential damage OHVs can do to scenic but delicate areas, those who enjoy hiking, cycling and horseback riding on public lands should be relieved by this ruling. Wildlife habitat, clean water and quiet recreation are threatened by destructive off-roaders who show no reverence for nature.

Kane County should respect the court's decision, or appeal it on its own dime. These public lands are not the county's to do with as it pleases.

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance 25th Anniversary Auction

SUWA has been protecting the Redrock since 1983, and starting July 18 we'll be celebrating with an online auction of these wonderful items, services and adventures donated by SUWA's Business Members. To bid, go to www.suwa.org and follow the links to our auction page. We'll also be hosting a **birthday party at the Gallivan Center in Salt Lake City on September 3**, so join us if you're in town and you may win a gift from the **Alta Lodge** or Moab photographer **Tom Till**. Hope to see you there!

Fine Art Photographs



20.5" x 32" framed photo print ("The Creation/Utah") donated by **Stephen Trimble** & **Michael Berry Custom Framing**.



16" x 20" framed photo print donated by **Scott Smith**.

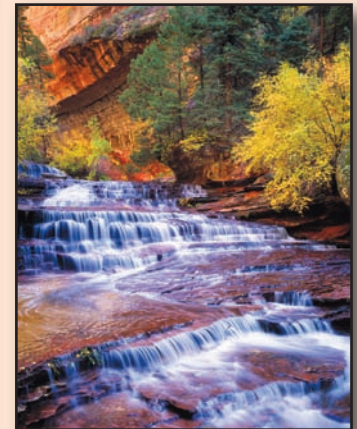


16" x 20" framed photo print (Green River Overlook) donated by **Glenn Randall**.



38" x 60" photo print (Coyote Gulch, Glen Canyon NRA) on Giclee Canvas donated by **Charles Wood**.

30" x 40" framed photo print (Archangel Cascade at Zion National Park) donated by **Tom Till**.



16" x 20" limited edition photo print (Coyote Natural Bridge, Glen Canyon NRA) donated by **Michael E. Gordon**.



20" x 24" framed photo (Buddha Temple and Storm—Grand Canyon), donated by **William Stone**.

Outdoor Gear



HYBRIDLIFE™



Shoe/Bag/Sock package donated by **KEEN Footwear.**



Black Diamond

Lighthouse Tent donated by **Black Diamond Equipment.**



Men's (Aether) or women's (Ariel) backpack donated by **Osprey Packs.**

Experiences/Services



\$250 gift certificate donated by **Mountain Chalet.**



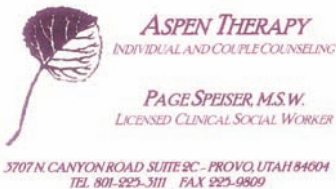
4-6 day trip for one + 15% discount for anyone else donated by **Escalante Canyon Outfitters.**



Massage package donated by **Knead a Massage.**



Uclimb "Weekend with Gear" climbing package donated by **Mountain Gear.**



Three hours of therapy from a licensed clinical social worker donated by **Page Speiser.**



Tour for four from Santa Fe to Bandelier National Monument donated by **Great Southwest Adventures.**

OWN A COMPLETE SET OF EVERETT RUESS PRINTS



As a special 25th Anniversary offer to our members only, we will also be auctioning one of the three remaining sets of 25 block prints by the legendary Everett Ruess, the "Vagabond for Beauty" who disappeared in the Escalante Canyons in 1934 at age 20. SUWA produced 50 sets of these beautiful prints in 1987, and the blocks have been permanently retired, so this may be the last chance to own the entire set!

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(Continued from page 13)

ness. That is a request the Governor should reject if he wants to discourage other counties that are aggressively claiming R.S. 2477 routes from likewise taking the law into their own hands. Reckless teen drivers learn a lot more from paying their own speeding fines than they do from parental bail-outs; the principle applies equally to reckless counties.

Kane County's balance sheets are bleeding red and public services are starved for cash. You gotta wonder how the county commissioners can justify this kind of spending on bizarre and losing lawsuits while the residents worry about increased taxes and shrinking services. (The county also lost its lawsuit challenging the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument plan, as well as a challenge to the willing sale of grazing permits to the Grand Canyon Trust.)

Thanks to our co-counsel Ted Zukoski, Jim Angell and McCrystie Adams at Earthjustice for their work on this case.

—Heidi McIntosh

Good
News!

Appeals Court Rejects Industry Challenge to Leasing Constraints

A three-judge panel of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in May unanimously rejected an effort by two oil companies to overturn an earlier district court decision that constrains BLM oil and gas leasing.

The companies challenged a SUWA-led victory before U.S. District Court Judge Dale Kimball over the Bush administration's push to sell new oil and gas leases in wilderness quality lands across Utah. Judge Kimball's decision held that the BLM had illegally "leased first, thought later" in its rush to lease in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act. This landmark decision has helped keep some of the West's most spectacular public lands free from oil and gas development, at least for now.

The two companies sat on the sidelines for years while our case moved through the district court, acting to intervene only after Judge Kimball's decision. The companies also filed their own appeal of

the decision, even though they were not parties in the district court proceedings.

The Tenth Circuit flatly rejected these outlandish attempts to challenge Judge Kimball's decision. The court also expressed doubt about the companies' truthfulness, saying it was "hard pressed" to accept their story that they were unaware of the district court proceedings until very late in the legal process.

One interesting note: while it initially appealed the Kimball decision, the BLM later dropped its appeal and was aligned with SUWA in urging the court to reject industry's appeals. Though the BLM told the court that the agency is committed to fully implementing Judge Kimball's decision, we haven't found that to always be the case. In particular, we are currently litigating over four other BLM lease sales that sold sixty three parcels in proposed wilderness areas (areas recognized by BLM as being wilderness quality) across the state. That case is currently being briefed before Judge Kimball.

SUWA staff attorney Steve Bloch and legal fellow David Garbett along with the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) Public Land Director and senior attorney Sharon Buccino represented the plaintiffs in this case: SUWA, NRDC and The Wilderness Society.

—Steve Bloch

Fight for White River Moves to Federal Court

Once again the White River is in the crosshairs of oil and gas development. This remarkable river has formed a deep canyon north of the Book Cliffs in what is rapidly becoming a dwindling island of tranquility and naturalness in a rising sea of oil and gas wells.

Now, Enduring Resources, a Denver-based company, is pressing to develop a 60-well natural gas project in this citizen-proposed wilderness. This is certainly not the first threat the White River has faced but it may very well be the most serious.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) agrees that this area has wilderness character. It touts the White River as a special, even unique, venue for

canyon country updates

river recreation. It also notes that members of John Wesley Powell's expedition visited portions of this proposed wilderness. In the end, all that is meaningless—and given today's development-crazed BLM, it may have been meaningless in the beginning, too. The BLM has approved the project. Never mind its insincere lip service to the White River's natural, recreational and historical values. Never mind the fact that it received tens of thousands of comments opposing the development plan. And never mind the fact that its own science predicts the development will produce air pollution that will exceed Clean Air Act standards.

SUWA, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and The Wilderness Society filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court in the District of Columbia to stop the project. As a result, the company and the BLM have agreed to postpone any new surface disturbance until the court rules in this case. Oral arguments are set for October.

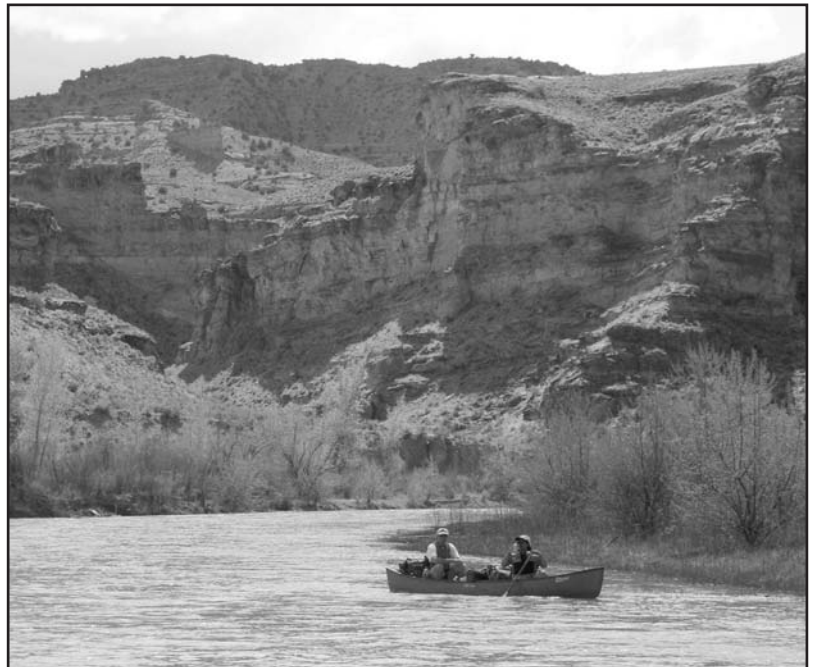
We thank the members of SUWA, NRDC and The Wilderness Society and others—over 50,000 in all—who commented on this project. We owe NRDC attorney Sharon Buccino a particular debt of gratitude for her extensive work in helping to fight this development.

—David Garbett

EPA on Nine Mile Canyon Drilling: "Not So Fast, My Friend!"

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has flunked the BLM's draft environmental impact statement for a massive natural gas project in the Nine Mile Canyon region. EPA's strong message has sent the BLM and the company back to the drawing board to prepare a "supplemental draft environmental impact statement."

Eastern Utah's Nine Mile Canyon is famous around the world for its extensive rock art and other archaeological features and treasured, too, for its remarkable wilderness landscapes. Though its own website notes that Nine Mile Canyon holds "the greatest concentration of rock art sites" in the nation, it's just another natural gas field to the



© Jeremy Christensen

Canoeists enjoying the White River while they still can. This scenic and recreational gem of northeast Utah has become a shrinking island of tranquility in an area increasingly dominated by oil and gas wells.

BLM. The agency avidly backs a proposal by the Denver-based Bill Barrett Corporation for so-called "full field development" of the West Tavaputs area that includes Nine Mile Canyon. What exactly does "full field" mean? Over the next 20 years, the Denver-based company would drill more than 800 new natural gas wells on over 535 drill pads across the 137,000-acre project area, a remote and largely wild corner of east-central Utah.

During the comment period on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) this spring, 53,000 citizens wrote in opposition to the project as currently proposed. Local and regional businesses and conservation groups also have urged its rejection. Others criticizing the scheme include the State of Utah, the Hopi Tribe, SUWA (on behalf of itself, The Wilderness Society and the Natural Resources Defense Council), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the Utah Guides and Outfitters, the Outdoor Industry Association, and the National Outdoor Leadership School. (You can find these comments on our website at www.suwa.org/NineMileComments).

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The EPA was particularly critical of the DEIS's air quality analysis—enough so that it rated the DEIS as “inadequate.” The EPA told the BLM to prepare a supplemental analysis and to give both the EPA and the public a chance to review and comment on it. The environmental agency also criticized the BLM's treatment of cultural resources and water quality. Predictably, Barrett complained that the EPA went too far; the general gist of the company's complaints was that the Clean Air Act shouldn't mean what it so plainly says, pretty much the Bush administration's stock response to date. The EPA's comments, however, confirm that the pace and extent of energy development in the Uintah Basin deserves much closer scrutiny than the BLM intends to give it.

The West Tavaputs project is by far the largest of several Barrett projects that are rapidly changing the face of the Nine Mile Canyon region, an area that the state of Utah describes on its website as an “outdoor museum” that “should be shown the respect due to one of the West's ancient treasures.” More than 1,000 rock art sites have been identified in the area, along with centuries-old standing structures such as cliff dwellings and pit houses.

The West Tavaputs project would not only industrialize an area that has earned global recognition for its cultural resources; it would also permanently alter its unspoiled and wild nature. The proposed drilling would effectively eliminate large swaths of the Jack Canyon and Desolation Canyon BLM

wilderness study areas, as well as two adjacent areas that the BLM recognizes as having wilderness character. Under the BLM's “preferred” alternative 230 wells—more than a quarter of the project's total—would be drilled in these wild areas. The Desolation Canyon portion of the Green River, one of the West's most iconic and remote stretches of river, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1969. Because of that designation, the BLM is required to manage the canyon to retain its remote and natural setting.

Though the West Tavaputs project area has seen some oil and gas drilling over the past 50 years, the level of development Barrett proposes would dwarf earlier drilling activity. The vast majority of the project is located on public lands the BLM is meant to manage on behalf of all Americans.

We're far from out of the woods on this project. There is no doubt that the BLM and Barrett will come back with the supplemental analysis the EPA has insisted upon and press forward with this proposal. In the meantime, a coalition of groups is challenging the BLM's approval of several “categorical exclusions” that would permit the company to continue drilling in the area.

—Steve Bloch

Audubon Magazine Highlights White Wash Dunes

Scientists and SUWA have long believed that the White Wash Sand Dunes, about 15 miles southeast of the town of Green River in the Labyrinth Canyon area, are distinctly special, though the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has routinely treated them as an out-of-sight, out-of-mind, off-road vehicle sacrifice area.

Now, *Audubon* magazine has added its considerable national weight to the discussion of the dunes, their significance and their future in an article in the May-June 2008 issue. Here's an excerpt:

White Wash Sand Dunes is a high-desert conundrum. Instead of the usual cactus sprouting out of its parched, sandy flanks, there are leafy Fremont cottonwood trees and willows, two of the thirstier tree species you'll ever find—along with sprays of



A petroglyph panel in Nine Mile Canyon.

© Dan Miller

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primrose, wispy rice grass, and fragrant purple sage. The cottonwoods are tall, century-old specimens, standing in groups as well as solitary trees. Their thick trunks and spreading limbs, twisted, gnarled, and contorted by winds and time, would seem more at home in an enchanted forest than here in arid sand dunes . . .

Dainty tracks of objects that skittered in the night have been captured in the sand. Delicate sketches, made by ground-scraping vegetation pushed by the breezes, will remain until the next windstorm. . . . More substantial tracks, created by motorized vehicles, last longer. In places they climb to the tops of dunes where the machines were launched into a short free-fall. Some cottonwood roots have been laid bare, crushed, torn, and frayed by knobby tires. Elsewhere, solitary trees have become maypoles around which ORVs circled in play, effectively creating tiny islands in this waterless landscape.

The article quotes Charles Schelz, an ecologist who has studied the dunes. He observes that they are an “anomaly,” and that while “other dune systems contain cottonwoods and other trees, this arrangement is rare, especially so when considering that the cottonwoods and willows grow on top of the dunes. In other systems the trees and shrubs were already established and the dunes formed around them in separate and underlying soil.”

Of course, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is protecting this rare dune system and its unusual stands of cottonwood and willow trees, the scarce desert springs in the dunes and the stream that encircles the dune field, right? The agency is studying this remarkable place to collect as much data and information about the wide variety of plants and associated insect species that colonize the front of the dunes and are scattered throughout them, right? Not even close.

The Moab BLM office is about to finalize a Resource Management Plan that will govern management of nearly 2 million acres of public lands in the Moab area for the next 15 to 20 years. The BLM is poised to squander this perfect opportunity to protect the White Wash Sand Dunes. According to its draft plan, the BLM intends to leave the dunes as an open, cross-country, off-road vehicle play area—an ORV sacrifice zone. That is not management but malign neglect. The agency also intends to allow the White Wash itself to become a



© Liz Thomas/SUWA

Cottonwood stands grow amid waves of coral-colored sand in the White Wash Sand Dunes proposed wilderness.

racetrack, allowing mud-churning all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, and big trucks to roar around the periphery of the dunes, ripping out all the young willow and cottonwood shoots that manage to peek above the surface.

In the *Audubon* article, ecologist Schelz said, “White Wash Sand Dunes is a unique environment. And to me, that’s a reason to protect it.” We agree.

You can read the complete *Audubon* article on SUWA’s website at www.suwa.org/AudubonArticle.

—Liz Thomas

RMP Update: Riding Roughshod over Public Lands . . . and the Public

Recently leaked Bureau of Land Management (BLM) documents confirm the agency’s obsessive drive to force six new resource management plans down the public’s throat with the least possible public participation. A BLM schedule shows what we suspected: the agency means to make the plans final over a two-week period just before the November elections.

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That's precisely the time, of course, when the media will be consumed with electoral politics. The agency clearly hopes its destructive plans will slip into place with little scrutiny. The documents also note a plan to ask the State of Utah to agree to reduce by half the 60-day review period governors are usually given. That, too, will accommodate the BLM's politically driven schedule. We don't know whether the state will agree.

We've reported extensively on these six plans in earlier issues of *Redrock*. To recap, they cover a broad range of activities and decisions across six BLM management districts encompassing over 11 million acres of public land. Three million of those acres are roadless and wild. For the next 15 years, the plans will govern how the agency manages roadless lands, oil and gas development, off-road vehicle route designation, wild and scenic river suitability questions, grazing and the identification of public lands to be sold off or otherwise disposed of. As now written, the plans will significantly undercut America's Red Rock Wilderness Act and open up more and more public land to energy development and off-road vehicle use.

The agency has manipulated this process from the beginning. It dumped all six draft plans on the public essentially simultaneously during the winter holiday season. Each draft is over 1,000 pages long. Activists would have been hard pressed to decipher one plan at a time and to exhume all the mischief buried in it. The BLM engineered it so we had to

wrestle with all six at once and during everyone's busiest time of the year. The agency may or may not have met the letter of the law governing public participation; there is no doubt that it grossly offended its spirit.

The public and Utah's Governor have one more chance to lodge protests this summer before the plans become final. SUWA and its coalition partners are poised to defend America's Red Rock Wilderness Act against bad planning decisions through the rest of this process and into the courts if necessary. We'll keep you posted as we know more.

—Scott Braden

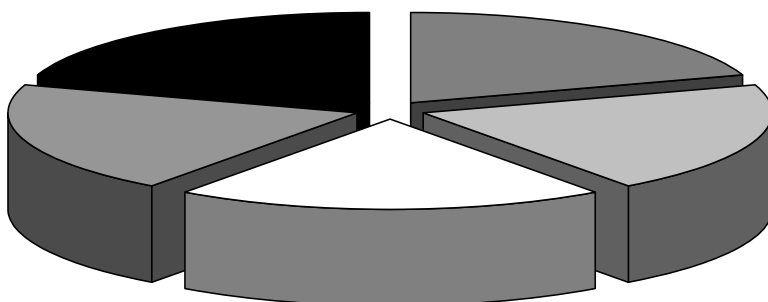
BLM: We Can't Be Bothered With Enforcing the Rules

Ask the Bureau of Land Management for an energy lease, and it moves so fast all you see is a blur. Ask it to protect a natural landmark and you will have to plant a stake in the ground to discern any movement at all.

Factory Butte, famous as a Southern Utah landmark, is fast becoming a monument to bureaucratic sloth and mismanagement. It was almost a quarter century ago that the BLM first documented off-road vehicle (ORV) damage around Factory Butte. Not until two years ago—September 2006—and after a decade of nagging by SUWA and others did it stir itself into action. The agency's Richfield field office finally moved to curb the decades of ORV abuse on this magnificent badland landscape, abuse that impairs soils, destroys wilderness values and tramples two species of cactus listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Let's be clear: the agency didn't act on its own volition or in response to some long-buried sense of duty to protect the natural resources it is charged with protecting; it acted because we boxed it in with our demands that, at long last, it follow the law. Motives notwithstanding, we applauded the BLM's decision and the steps that followed. The agency left a 2,600-acre area open to cross country travel and otherwise restricted travel around Factory Butte to identified, designat-

Bureau of Land Management Planning Matrix



- Dull-Brained Incompetence
- Sleazy Political Influence
- Faint-Hearted Capitulation to ORV Crowd
- Outright Misleading or Obfuscation
- Intentionally Small Maps to Hide Bad Things

c a n y o n c o u n t r y u p d a t e s

ed routes. It also set up a website and published brochures to educate the public about the new regulations and pledged stepped-up patrols to enforce them.

Did any of this work? The sad and perhaps inevitable answer is no. Over the past two riding seasons, dirt bikers have flouted the rules. Illegal ORV use continues and is visible across the landscape, regardless of BLM signing and enforcement attempts. We reckon those illegal riders are some of “the few bad apples” ORV apologists are always talking about. (If they truly are few, they are miraculously mobile and very diligent, pausing in their marauding not even to sleep. Winston Churchill might say that “Never have so few done so much to so many places.” Or he might just weep . . .)

Sadder than all of this is the likely BLM response to its failed effort to impose reasonable regulations on a fragile landscape. The agency is working on six new resource management and travel plans and one of them covers Factory Butte. Sources inside the agency (yes, they are of the usually reliable kind) tell us that the agency, unable or unwilling to enforce the rules, will simply scrap them. Our sources say that the BLM intends to alter its planning documents to reward the lawbreakers with an ORV giveaway. By golly, that’ll teach the rascals a thing or two, eh? The law’s the law and the BLM means business!

It’s hard to argue with the premise: a surefire way to reduce crime is to decriminalize a bunch of stuff. The pander will appease local county commissioners, too, who pitched a fit when the BLM announced the closures in the first place. The locals act like they own public lands; the BLM seems to think so, too. It clearly courts county commissioners’ favor as assiduously as it ignores the rest of us.

The Utah BLM may think a wink and a nod to cronies and other anointed insiders is the very essence of responsible land management. SUWA doesn’t. And we’re ready to challenge any illegal planning decisions the BLM makes.

—Ray Bloxham

You Don’t Wanna Know . . .

The SUWA staff spends a lot of time on the Bureau of Land Management’s website trying to keep track of projects the agency is “reviewing.” It is scarcely pleasant reading, but important. Proposals range from oil and gas leasing to commercial off-road vehicle schemes to vegetation “treatments.” (“Treatment” sounds like a kind, helpful thing, aimed at healing and curing, doesn’t it? Nah. BLM treatments are fatal and meant to be—ripping out sagebrush and cutting trees, replacing them with non-native grasses to feed domestic livestock. It’s the sort of activity that Aldo Leopold generally described as meant to make the West safe for cows . . . though surely not from them.)

If “treatment” is a BLM euphemism, so is “review.” In polite conversation, the word suggests a careful weighing of pros and cons to inform balanced decisions. Mostly, though, BLM “review” is a perfunctory step leading to almost-certain approval of yet another Earth-insulting activity. Anyway, while examining the BLM’s latest batch of project proposals, we came across this sleep-wrecking dandy:

Rick E. Lewis, dba [doing business as] Kanab Creek Tours, proposes to commercially guide clients over the Hog Canyon trail system using open-air, 8-WD amphibious ‘Argo Avengers.’ He proposes to conduct his operations from May through October, running up to 10 trips per week.

There’s lot of grief buried in these few words. “8-WD” means eight churning wheels—power to all of them—twice as many as four-wheelers bring to the exhilarating sport of scarring the countryside. “Amphibious” means that streams will be even less a natural barrier to back-country destruction. These damned things float! That translates into even more rutted stream banks, even more ravaged riparian vegetation, even more muddied desert streams.

These machines come equipped with everything (except maybe a conscience): “25-inch Rawhide III tires with aggressive tread pattern and lug size,” “Excellent approach and departure angles to easily overcome obstacles,” “. . . densely padded foam front bench seat,” and “. . . space for up to six passengers.”

The more witnesses to mayhem, the more fun, huh? The websites don’t say just what the Avenger is trying to get even FOR. Maybe growing public disgust with out-of-control off-road vehicle use and the clamor for reasonable regulation?

The Avenger sounds like an assault vehicle, sure enough, but here’s comfort: the company proudly displays the “Tread Lightly” logo on its website. Of course, so does Jeep of “Jeep Jamboree” infamy . . .

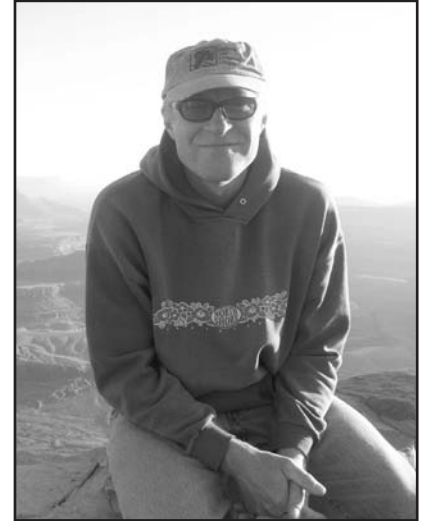
inside SUWA

Happy (and Quiet) Trails to Franklin Seal

SUWA is saddened to announce the departure of Franklin Seal, our Southeast Utah Outreach Coordinator for the past four years. He has labored valiantly at organizing for local political change—a Herculean task considering the attitudes of many rural Utah politicians toward wilderness.

Along with his talent for drawing people into the fold, Franklin brought vision and creativity to his grassroots work as he constantly sought new ways to motivate and engage our activists. His energy and enthusiasm have helped build solid support for Utah wilderness among citizens and businesses in southeast Utah.

Franklin has not moved far from SUWA, literally or vocationally. He has become the National Communications Coordinator for Wildlands CPR, a Missoula-based conservation group that targets off-road vehicle abuse on our public lands. He'll be doing the job from Moab and is, in fact, still in the same office building with SUWA's Moab staff. So we say good luck, Franklin, but maybe not so much goodbye. See you in the coffee shop downstairs!



Franklin now handles communications for Missoula-based Wildlands CPR.



Jeremy and Everett: the dynamic duo on their dory.

Bon Voyage to Jeremy Christensen

SUWA bids a fond farewell to Jeremy Christensen, our Northern Utah Organizer for the past two and a half years. After working hard on a variety of projects, including our successful 2006 campaign to stop Sen. Bennett's awful Washington County wilderness bill, Jeremy will pursue a career as a professional guide. We've had the privilege of sampling his camp kitchen fare, as well as his friendly, helpful demeanor: his guiding clients will be in excellent hands.

During his tenure at SUWA, Jeremy has helped us expand our outreach and organizing efforts to

non-traditional allies, such as hunters and anglers (Jeremy is an experienced hunter and fly fisherman himself, not to mention an impressive boat-builder). As the second youngest member of our staff, he also played a significant role in helping the rest of us learn how to use our new website and email system. Jeremy wrote many of the electronic alerts you've likely received over the last 30 months.

Jeremy was an activist and volunteer with SUWA long before he joined the staff (he even canvassed for us at the tender age of 16). We know his commitment to grassroots advocacy will continue to inform and inspire his work wherever he goes. We'll miss Jeremy's dedication and good humor just as we'll miss his faithful partner, Everett, a big-hearted golden retriever who served admirably as SUWA's good will ambassador these past several years. Best of luck to them both!

Thanks to Lionel James Lewis: Another Terrific SUWA Intern

SUWA has been blessed over the years with one wonderful intern after another. Among the latest in this long line is Lionel James Lewis of Cottonwood Heights, UT.

Lionel has completed the internship he began with us last spring. He quickly became an important member of our energy team, writing comments on the wildlife impacts of many oil and gas projects proposed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He also helped to bolster SUWA's wildlife-related comments on the many resource management plans the BLM is preparing in the state.



Lionel is sure to have a successful future in the field of conservation.

Lionel's education served him well at SUWA. He graduated from the University of Utah this spring with a biology major and a focus on ecology and evolution. Earlier, he earned an Associate Degree from Salt Lake Community College. Amazingly, Lionel also worked two jobs while interning with SUWA. We hope his future, which he hopes will include ecological and conservation work with a government agency or a non-profit group, will be less hectic. We thank him and we wish him the best.

Let's Red Rock Congress! Be Part of Wild Utah Local Action Month

Meeting with your senators or representative does not require a trip to Washington, DC. All Members of Congress have at least one office in their home state or district (and often several) and that's where you will likely find them from the second week in August to the first week of September. That's when the Congress has an in-district work period so members can take a break from the legislative hustle and bustle to spend time with their constituents.

This gives us a fantastic opportunity to educate Members of Congress about Utah Wilderness. To take full advantage of it we've created "Wild Utah Local Action Month" to coincide with the August break. During that month, activists from all over the country will be meeting with Members of Congress in their home districts. If you would like to participate in Wild Utah Local Action Month, the SUWA grassroots and legislative staff can:

- help you schedule an in-district meeting;
- connect you with other SUWA members in your community who might like to help; and,
- provide up-to-date information on the status of legislation regarding Utah's wild lands.

If your representative or senators are not yet cosponsors of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, an in-district meeting is an excellent way to encourage their sponsorship. If your Members of Congress already cosponsor the bill, an in-district meeting is a very good way to thank them, to strengthen their support, and to educate them about current threats to the land.

To get more information about Wild Utah Local Action Month or to sign-up please contact Jackie Feinberg, SUWA's National Grassroots Organizer, at jackie@suwa.org or (202) 266-0474. You can also learn more at www.suwa.org/localaction. Let's Red Rock Congress!

inside SUWA

Grassroots Leader Retreat: Passion and Plans in Moab

SUWA brought 25 exceptional grassroots leaders to Moab in mid-May to connect with one another and the land and to plan advocacy for Utah wilderness.

The gathering, dubbed the Groots Camp, brought citizen activists from Utah, New Jersey, Illinois, Wisconsin, Colorado, Montana, Kentucky, both Washingtons (DC and State) and Minnesota. Joining the activists were six SUWA staffers and two experienced facilitators.

The retreat opened against the backdrop of the November elections and the possibility that they will produce a more wilderness-friendly political world in 2009 than we have known in decades. After two days of discussions both passionate and practical, activists committed to a range of local and national wilderness actions. Plans include meeting with their Members of Congress when they are at home in their districts during the August congressional recess.

There was play along with the hard work, as participants enjoyed time together in the redrock with several spectacular hikes and a camp-out near Onion Creek on the banks of the Colorado River. These aside, most participants would probably agree that the camp's greatest reward was the personal connections they made. Those connections

will continue to energize them even when they are far from the red rock and from each other. They intend to stay in touch electronically.

If you're interested in becoming a SUWA grassroots leader and would like to participate in future events like this one, please fill out our short online survey at www.suwa.org/grootsleaders.

—Eve Komosa

Wild Reverence: an Interfaith Statement about the Value of Utah's Wilderness

Our work to engage faith-based communities in advocacy for Utah wild land protection continues to expand in exciting ways. We are working with a growing number of religious communities to create a strong, interfaith statement of support for the state's wild places.

Such a statement will remind our communities and our elected leaders that people from all walks of life love and value Utah's wild lands and want to see them protected. As a first step in creating the interfaith statement, we are working with religious communities to co-host meetings during which their members explore why, from their faith perspective, the preservation of Utah's wilderness is important, and how their faith tradition calls for careful stewardship of the natural world.

Interest from religious communities in the project has been heartening. We have co-hosted conversations with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), Utah's Jewish Community, the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal community. Over the summer and early fall we will continue our outreach to others interested in participating and we hope to convene an interfaith group to work on the statement in November.

We are also exploring ways to expand this project around the country. If you would like to help or want more information on the Utah project, contact Terri Martin at terri@suwa.org, or go to www.suwa.org/faithbased.

—Deeda Seed



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Grassroots leaders from across the country discuss the value of wilderness and explore strategies for effective grassroots action.

Thank You SUWA Business Members!

Listed here are businesses that support SUWA and Utah wilderness through our business member program (this list 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 Barry Bonifas at (801) 428-3970 or barry@suwa.org.

Our Business Members in Utah...

AltaLodge, Alta
 Avalanche Properties, Park City
 Benstog Construction Corporation, Ogden
 Black Diamond Equipment, SLC
 Boulder Mountain Lodge, Boulder
 Brennan and Shultz Painting, LC, Park City
 BruceHucko Photography, Moab
 Calf Canyon Bed & Breakfast, Bluff
 Canyon Voyages Adventure Company, Moab
 Centered City Yoga, Salt Lake City
 Dabney & Dabney, PC, Saint George
 Dammeron Corporation, Dammeron Valley
 Deanna Rosen, LCSW, SLC
 Desert Highlights, Moab
 Earth & Light Gallery, Ivins
 Faceplant, Heber City
 Far Out Expeditions, Bluff
 Heindselmans Knit & Weaving, Provo
 John O Johnson, SLC
 Lazy Lizard International Hostel, Moab
 Lucky Dog Communications, SLC
 Manning Curtis Bradshaw & Bednar, SLC
 Mazza, SLC
 Nichols Expeditions, Moab
 Page Speiser, LCSW, Provo
 Passage to Utah, SLC
 Red Rock Mortgage, SLC
 Rocking V Cafe, Kanab
 Rocky Collins Construction, Park City
 Schneider Auto Karosserie, Inc, SLC
 Schocker Commercial Properties, SLC
 Scott T Smith Photography, Logan
 Snow County Limousine, Inc, Park City
 Squatters Pub Brewery, SLC
 Spring Lake Publishing, Payson
 Streamline Bodyworks, LLC, SLC
 Tesch Law Offices, PC, Park City
 Tom Till Gallery, Moab
 Treasure Mountain Inn, Park City
 Underwood Environmental, Inc, Park City
 Waterwise Design & Landscapes, LC, SLC
 With Gaia Design, Moab

Words and Photographs by Stephen Trimble, SLC

...and Across the Country

Acupuncture Works, Boulder, CO
 Advanced Media Strategies, Issaquah, WA
 Agave, Henderson, NV
 American Image Photography, Holly, MI
 Andrew Donahue, Norwalk, CT
 Baked In Telluride, Telluride, CO
 Brad M King Associates, Inc, Venice, CA
 Capitola Book Cafe, Santa Cruz, CA
 Cedar Mesa Music, West Hollywood, CA
 Centerline Alfa Romeo, Boulder, CO
 Chaco Sandals, Paonia, CO
 Charles Cramer Photography, Santa Clara, CA
 Community Builders Cooperative, Somerville, MA
 Compact Disc Service, Glendale, CA
 Consulting Psychologists, Flagstaff, AZ
 David Gibans Law Offices, Denver, CO
 Deer Hill Expeditions, Durango, CO
 Dennis Chavez Development Corporation, Albuquerque, NM
 Fuller Therapeutics, Inc, Boulder, CO
 Githens Properties, LLC, Carbondale, CO
 Glenn Randall Writing and Photography, Boulder, CO
 Great Southwest Adventures Inc, Santa Fe, NM
 Haymaker Construction, El Cajon, CA
 HonkyTonkHomeSlice.com, Lafayette, CA
 Horsethief Ranch, Aspen, CO
 HyperEvolution, Newport Beach, CA
 Hyperspod Sports, Moscow, ID
 ID Interiors, Aspen, CO
 Image Trader, Flagstaff, AZ
 Injoy Productions, Longmont, CO
 Institution of Taoist Education and Acupuncture, Inc, Boulder, CO
 J Edward Hansford, DDS, Buena Vista, CO
 J Groene Construction Inc, Lawrence, KS
 John Sexton Photography, Carmel Valley, CA
 Keen Inc, Portland, OR
 Kind Coffee, LLC, Estes Park, CO

Law Office Of Don Lipmanson, Ukiah, CA
 Law Offices of Robert L Miller, Flagstaff, AZ
 Leslie T Gray, Appraisal and Consulting, Basalt, CO
 Maui Mountain Environmentally Friendly Coffee, Makawao, HI
 Michael Gordon Photography, Long Beach, CA
 Michael Kuten, DDS, Saint Louis, MO
 Mountain Chalet, Colorado Springs, CO
 Mountain Gear Inc, Spokane Valley, WA
 Muench Photography Inc, Corrales, NM
 Neiman Wealth Management, LLC, Merrick, NY
 Osprey Packs Inc, Cortez, CO
 Otterness Repairs, Northfield, MN
 Ottertrack Productions, Joseph, OR
 Pack Rat Outdoor Center, Fayetteville, AR
 Pemba Serves, Madison, WI
 Pinnacle Peak Eye Care, Scottsdale, AZ
 Purdy Associates Inc, Seattle, WA
 Purple Dragon Ventures, Greendale, IN
 Pursuit of Beauty, Seattle, WA
 Richard Farrell, CPA, Fort Collins, CO
 Robert Cheyne Photography, Farmington Hills, MI
 Robert Trimble, Architect, Trumbull, CT
 Rupestrian Cyber Services, Flagstaff, AZ
 San Juan Constructors, Flagstaff, AZ
 Select Stone Inc, Bozeman, MT
 Selinda Research Associates, Chicago, IL
 Southwest Planning & Marketing, Santa Fe, NM
 Steve Gilsdorf, CPA, Tucson, AZ
 Steven Lamb, Central City, KY
 Stockbridge Animal Clinic, Stockbridge, MI
 Stone Forest Inc, Santa FE, NM
 University of the Wilderness, Evergreen, CO
 White Water Dental Seminars, Ketchum, ID
 William Stone Photography, Albuquerque, NM
 Williams Tree Farm, Meridian, ID
 Willis Greiner Photography, Conifer, CO
 ZAK Construction (Manzanita, OR)

Make a Difference for Redrock Wilderness: Join or Donate to SUWA Today!

Even the most dedicated desert rats don't always have the time to stay abreast of all of the issues affecting America's redrock wilderness, unique on planet Earth. That's why the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance is here: to work full-time for you on behalf of these remaining wild places. As one of SUWA's 15,000 members, you can rest assured that your 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, phone banking, and our 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 envelope included in the center of this newsletter 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.

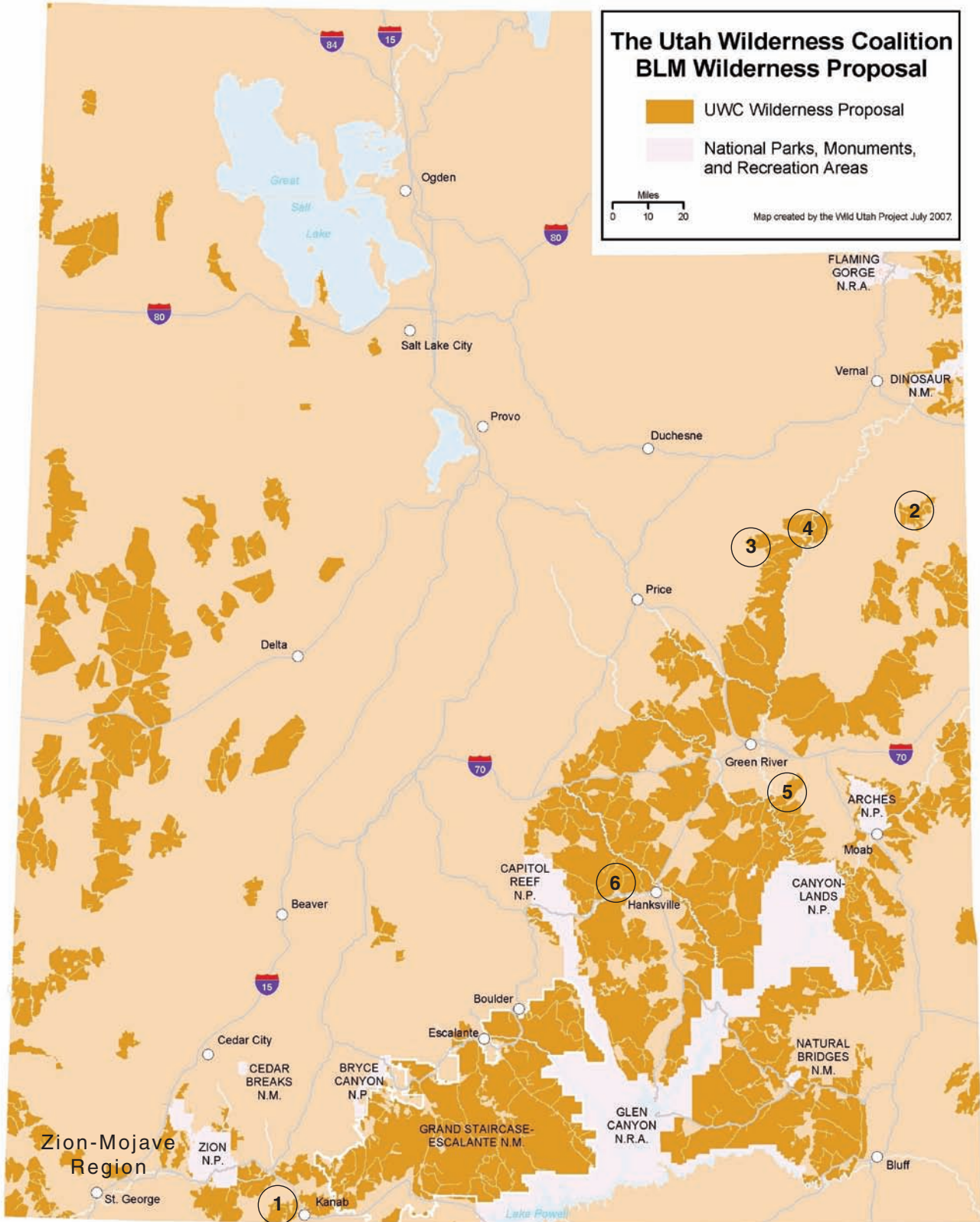
Increase the Impact of Your Contribution to SUWA

Any new or increased contribution you make will help SUWA generate matching funds from

EARTH FRIENDS WILDLIFE FOUNDATION



**southern
utah
wilderness
alliance**



Reference Map for Articles in this Issue

- 1** Moquith Mountain (p. 13)

2 White River (p. 16)

3 Nine Mile Canyon (p. 17)
- 4** Upper Desolation Canyon (p. 18)

5 White Wash Sand Dunes (p. 19)

6 Factory Butte (p. 20)

Join Us for the SUWA Roundup this September

Mark your calendar for SUWA's 2008 membership gathering at Hidden Splendor, September 19-21. After a couple of years of interesting weather, we've scheduled this one a few weeks earlier in the hope of enjoying a calm, clear weekend in canyon country.

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 the SUWA staff will prepare 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/lunch, camping gear, plenty of drinking water (none is available on site), plates/bowls/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 are posted at www.suwa.org/roundup2008.



© Scott Braden

A hiker looks out over the Muddy Creek Wilderness Study Area at last year's Roundup.

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