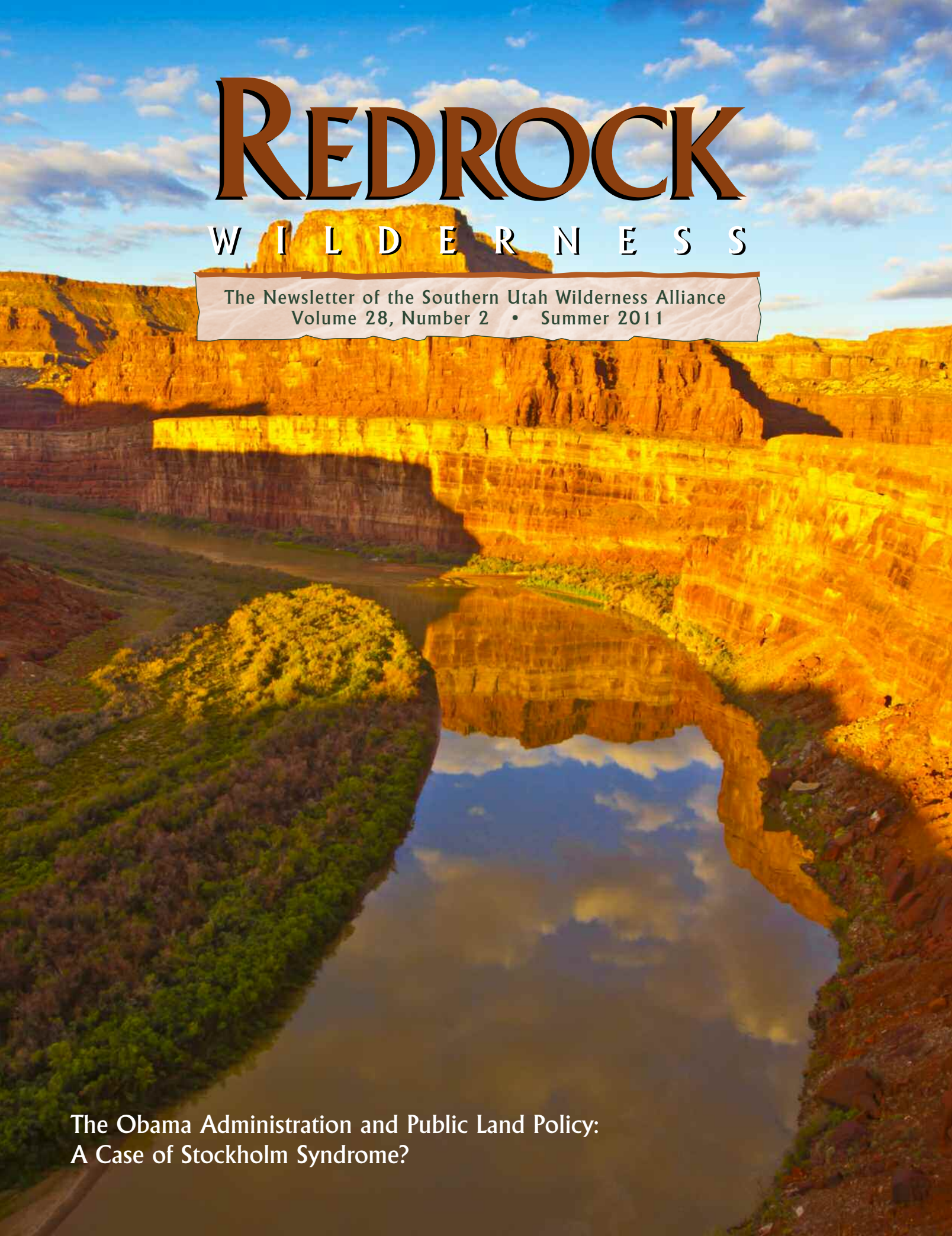


REDROCK WILDERNESS

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 28, Number 2 • Summer 2011

The Obama Administration and Public Land Policy: A Case of Stockholm Syndrome?

Cover Photo: *The mighty Colorado River winds its way through the heart of the Greater Canyonlands region. See page 14 to learn how you can help protect this magnificent landscape. Photo copyright Tom Till (www.tomtill.com).*

southern utah wilderness alliance

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.

SUWA is qualified as a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. Therefore, all contributions to SUWA are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Offices

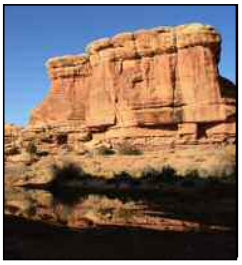
Main Office
425 East 100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 486-3161

Washington, DC
122 C Street NW
Suite 240
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 546-2215

Moab
P.O. Box 968
Moab, UT 84532
(435) 259-5440

Email: info@suwa.org
Website: www.suwa.org

In this issue:



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This issue of ***Redrock Wilderness*** was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Jen Beasley, Steve Bloch, Scott Braden, Neal Clark, Jackie Feinberg, David Garbett, Scott Groene, Diane Kelly, Darrell Knuffke, Heidi McIntosh, Richard Peterson-Cremer, Deeda Seed, and Liz Thomas. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly.

Newsletter design by Leslie Scopes Garcia.

Contributions of photographs (especially of areas within the citizens' proposal for Utah wilderness) and original art (such as pen-and-ink sketches) are greatly appreciated! Please send with SASE to Editor, SUWA, 425 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

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wilderness notes

The Utah Political Pendulum Swings from Merely Goofy to Full-Tilt Crazy

Two years ago, with Gov. Jon Huntsman in office and two wilderness bills freshly under our belts, it appeared Utah was moving towards a more progressive approach to balancing human material needs against the ecological and spiritual importance of protecting Utah's redrock wilderness.

How things have changed.

The tea baggers have since brought Utah to a boil, scalding some elected officials and making others very nervous, indeed. Calls for yet another sagebrush rebellion have thrown our elected officials into paroxysms of pandering to this handful of rabidly anti-federal constituents.

Despite polls showing that Utahns care about our public lands, Utah's top political leaders now express a stunted and dangerous vision for Utah's Redrock. They have calculated that even real interest on one side is no electoral match for the hysteria on the other.

Trumpeting the falsehood that conservation is the enemy of Utah's economy, Utah's pols first propose to eliminate the tools necessary for each branch of government to protect public land. Jointly or individually they seek to terminate the President's authority under the Antiquities Act, defund the Department of Interior's new wild lands guidance, tie Congress's hands by requiring Utah's anti-wilderness legislature to endorse any wilderness bill, and raise the bar for citizens to challenge bad agency decisions in court (Rep. Jim Matheson deserves exception from the broad brush here, as he's stood strong for a process that includes wilderness advocates).

These putative leaders also want to roll back existing protections. This includes uprooting nearly 10 million acres of Bureau of Land Management wilderness study areas and defunding the National Landscape Conservation System, which covers 28 million acres of some of the BLM's most significant natural lands.

When the fever is really on them, they advocate getting rid of public lands altogether. Sen. Mike Lee introduced legislation to do just that, in response to which Gov. Gary Herbert chorused that "we could privatize this public land, develop it commercially, and in many ways protect it better." (I didn't make that up.)

As the TV pitchman says, "But wait! There's more!" Utah's politicians seem determined to chain our economy to filthy fuels . . . assuming the price is right, and it nearly always is. Herbert's campaign deposited a $10,000 donation from a coal company the very day he met with company officials who dropped in to whine about delays in getting mining permits. Very shortly thereafter, state regulators produced permits for the company's strip mine near Bryce Canyon.

Sens. Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee want to restrict the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Bureau of Land Management to enforce policies that limit oil and gas drilling in any way, and force taxpayers to continue subsidizing drilling for oil and gas.

And the State of Utah has just announced it will waste more tax dollars on a court challenge for RS 2477 claims inside the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

What Utah's politicians propose, if they can get away with it, would deeply harm the Redrock wilderness. It would also damage the quality of life for those of us blessed to live near these public lands, and under-

mine the economies of many rural towns. As the *Salt Lake Tribune* editorialized about Lee's proposal: "The state's natural wonders are a treasure trove of stable revenue. Selling off this birthright for short-term gain would be a mistake of biblical proportions."

Just a few years ago we thought it possible to protect Utah wilderness landscapes through discussions with local county commissioners and our delegation. In today's cacophony of shrieking, that is unlikely to happen. So instead we'll focus on making gains through the Obama administration (challenging as that is—see our lead story, p. 6) and by relying on plain language of the law. Our recent victory in protecting Salt Creek Canyon in Canyonlands National Park was 20 years coming, but it is both instructive and heartening (see article, p. 12).

At the moment, the poor bastards seem to have us surrounded. But the movement to protect the Redrock will outlast myopic politicians whose first concern is self-preservation. It will survive the most insane swings of the political pendulum. Thanks to you, we'll be here when it swings back.

For the wild,

Scott Groene
Executive Director

Aqueduct Arch in the Greater Canyonlands region.

© Tom Till

features

Change Under the Obama Administration? Not so fast . . .

Change. It was the ubiquitous watchword of White House contender Barack Obama in 2008. Chanted by crowds, plastered on posters and lawn signs, liberally salted in every speech, that one word became so closely associated with his candidacy that you'd think he'd copyrighted it. Ultimately, President Obama rode that promise of change straight to Pennsylvania Avenue.

Has he delivered? So far, on the wilderness issues closest to our hearts, the answer has to be no. Or more accurately, not even close.

To be fair, there were a few encouraging signs early on. One of the first Obama cabinet members the Senate confirmed was Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar as Interior Secretary. He quickly withdrew 77 controversial oil and gas leases the Bush administration had issued a month earlier, some on the threshold of Utah's famed national parks and wild canyons. (A federal judge in Washington had already enjoined those leases after SUWA and a number of conservation groups sued to overturn them and the 2008 land management plans on which they were based. That litigation continues to this day.) And the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is doing much better at avoiding areas with wilderness character in their oil and gas leasing program. We're grateful for that.

Climate Change: Studies, Then What?

On another positive note, nine months later, Salazar issued Secretarial Order 3289, which confirmed the obligation of agencies in the Interior Department to consider climate change in both their long-range planning and short-term approvals for specific activities on public lands. This order expanded on earlier orders issued by two of his predecessors, Secretaries Bruce Babbitt and Dirk Kempthorne, which also required agencies to analyze the impacts of climate change. (The White House Council on Environmental Quality has also begun a process to establish internal rules to ensure that land managers take climate into account in their decisions.) On the ground, though, the BLM has not altered any management activities based on climate considerations and there is no firm direction to the agency on how, exactly, to carry out the order.

The department also began to look at the future of what it called "Treasured Landscapes"—scenic and valuable BLM lands that deserve special management attention to maintain their unique qualities. The Treasured Landscapes initiative ultimately became part of the President's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative, which began in the summer of 2010. AGO wrapped up with a report released earlier this year based on dozens of public meetings across the country and thousands of public comments and letters. In the end, AGO led to a number of management recommendations and may form much of the blueprint for future protection of public lands.

And the president declared September 2010 to be "Wilderness Month," although no action to protect deserving wilderness lands actually occurred.

So at this point little real change is evident. AGO resulted in a broad report with no specific proposals for protection, much less real action. Climate studies continue. Wilderness Month came and went. Meanwhile, a handful of very loud congressional wilderness foes regroup and launch ill-informed attacks at the least whisper of conservation.

After initial surges of cautious hope and a suitable honeymoon, the optimism index has fallen off a cliff as the administration releases generalized reports, then retreats from its own policies that would have actually protected the last remaining wild lands in the West. Worse, this administration has left in place a welter of highly damaging policies left over from the Bush administration.

Disquiet on the Western Front: Administration Pulls Plug on Wild Lands

There's nothing wrong with initiatives such as America's Great Outdoors, to be sure. But wilderness advocates were really waiting for the administration to eliminate the biggest obstacle to land protection throughout the West: the infamous backroom deal the Bush administration struck with the State of Utah in 2003 in which the Interior Department renounced its authority to protect deserving lands as wilderness study areas, something every administration had done since Congress

provided the authority in the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Two years had gone by, with no action. The "no more wilderness" policy had to be revoked.

On December 23, 2010, Secretary Salazar stood before a crowd of conservationists and outdoor industry representatives to announce his Wild Lands policy. Designed to overturn the controversial "no more wilderness" policy of the Bush administration, the new policy emphatically restored wilderness to its rightful place among the range of resources the BLM was to manage and protect. The announcement was important, both symbolically and practically. It sent a clear message that wilderness was a high priority and it laid out a specific pathway for the BLM to identify, then protect, deserving wilderness character lands that had been too long overlooked.

Conservationists and their congressional allies welcomed the news. They had worked long and hard to reverse the legally-flawed and environmentally destructive "no more wilderness" policy; getting rid of it was a high priority. So when a few Republicans in the House, notably Utah's Rob Bishop, frothed at the mouth in reaction to the prospect of interim wilderness protection, the entire public lands community rose to the challenge and spent countless hours defending the policy. It was a bitter disappointment, then, when the White House traded it away in late-night negotiations with Republicans on the continuing budget resolution in April. That deal meant that the BLM could not spend any funds to designate wild lands during fiscal year 2011, which ends in September. That was just the beginning.

'They're Mad as Hell: We Better Run For It!'

Appeasement rarely works and it didn't work then. Republicans smelled blood and predictably vowed to cripple the Wild Lands policy by extending the funding ban through fiscal year 2012. Conservationists in turn vowed to fight that extension. Then the administration blinked.

On the very day the White House picked June to be "Great Outdoors Month" and urged Americans to "uphold our Nation's legacy of conserving our lands for future generations," Secretary Salazar deep-sixed the wild lands policy which, ironically, was his hallmark tool for protecting that crucial legacy. He acquiesced to the very wilderness foes who have bitterly fought meaningful wilderness bills every step of the way—some of the same politicians who have this year introduced wide-ranging legislation to roll back years of environmental protection. (Our report on the 112th Congress, page 10, details that sorry record.)

The administration seems to be suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, placating and validating tormentors instead of standing up to them and fighting for a real conservation vision that would make our grandchildren proud.

The retreat is an enormous disappointment and raises legitimate and pressing questions about this administration's commitment to wilderness ideals and real protection for the redrock canyons of southern Utah and the remote Basin and Range country of western Utah. Will the administration continue to issue reports and announce pleasing but ultimately meaningless monthly honorifics or will it get down to the hard work of ensuring that actual places are protected? That is the right question, and we don't pretend to have the answer.

The administration seems to be suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, placating and validating tormentors instead of standing up to them and fighting for a real conservation vision that would make our grandchildren proud.

Only the Latest Betrayal

Sadly, the retreat on the Wild Lands policy is just the latest disappointment from an administration that still hasn't completed—indeed, has barely started—cleaning up the environmental disasters the Bush administration left behind. Two and a half years in, we are still living with—and litigating—the half-baked and uniformly dreadful Utah BLM land use plans released in the last days of the Bush administration. These plans, which the Obama

features

The budget bill passed by Congress and signed by Obama in April contained appalling riders inserted by House Republicans, stripping protection from wolves in five Western states—the first time Congress has ever removed a species from the endangered list—and undoing an initiative from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to identify and inventory public lands eligible for designation as "wilderness," providing them a higher level of protection. Obama could have sent a strong signal about such riders by vetoing the bill, or threatening to veto it if the riders were included. He did neither.

—6/11/11 *Los Angeles Times* editorial

Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt declared in a speech last week that President Obama's failure to mount a persuasive counterattack to the Republicans' "radical" assault on the country's environmental safeguards amounts to a "form of appeasement." It is rare for someone of Mr. Babbitt's stature to use such caustic language about a sitting president from his own party. But he was reflecting growing concern—which we share—that the president and his top aides have decided for political reasons to back away from the fight.

—6/12/11 *New York Times* editorial

The growth in activities such as hiking, paddling, hunting, fishing and wildlife watching contributes $730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, drives $289 billion in retail sales and supports 6.5 million jobs. However, the announcement today by Secretary Salazar to reverse his December 2010 decision to allow the Bureau of Land Management to inventory and manage BLM lands as "wild lands" is a step backwards for the nation.

—6/1/11 Outdoor Industry Association press release

If I could make my case to President Obama, I would say that wilderness is the one debt ceiling we should never raise. We have already spent too much of our children's inheritance to justify spending more. Most of the wilderness land in the West cannot be borrowed for oil, gas, and mining projects and returned because desert (mountain or lowland), once disturbed, cannot repair itself.

—6/11/11 *Salt Lake Tribune* Op-Ed by Karen Shepherd, former Utah Congresswoman

Unless there's a change in his policies, [Obama] will likely face very damp enthusiasm from young voters and a significant portion of the base that want him to stand up to polluters. I definitely think there are many progressive donors in general and environmental donors in particular whose enthusiasm won't be what it was in 2008.

—Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club, as quoted in the *Chicago Tribune,* 6/8/11

administration now vigorously defends in court, designated 20,000 miles of ORV trails with no real analysis of their unavoidable consequences—soil erosion, water pollution, lost native plant and animal life. Over 1,500 of these miles are in areas the BLM itself found to have wilderness character.

The picture is scarcely encouraging. It's hard, in the face of that record, to see big changes on the horizon, the kind that will survive future administrations that may be openly antagonistic to wilderness. Not a single ORV trail from the excessive spider web of trails in Utah has been closed; about 80 percent of BLM lands in Utah remain open for oil and gas leasing pursuant to the Bush resource management plans; climate change analysis has not been completed, and there is no clear direction from Washington on how these climate studies, if and when they are done, will be incorporated into management strategies; former Interior Secretary Gale Norton's weak RS 2477 policies are still in effect.

And the ghost of "no more wilderness" still walks the land.

Editorial Counts the Ways

On May 20, 2011, the *Los Angeles Times* predicted that under President Obama, "the environment and public health will be thrown under a bus for the sake of his reelection in 2012." The editorial then cites a sad litany of environmental measures on which the administration's resolve has withered in the face of Republican opposition. Among them are a proposed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule to limit emissions from industrial boilers (which power oil refineries, chemical plants and other factories); new rules on storing toxic coal ash; and an EPA guideline on mountaintop-removal mining. In frustration, the editorial concludes, "[h]ere's an argument Obama and his political advisors might grasp: It's possible for a president to so alienate his base that it fails to show up on election day. Something to keep in mind before November 2012 rolls around."

There are about 18 months remaining in this administration's first term. We urge President Obama not to squander them. If there is a vision for ensuring a lasting wilderness legacy for future generations, Americans need to hear it. Now.

—Heidi McIntosh

DC news

Good News!

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act Reintroduced in Congress

Two of our strongest supporters in the Congress have reintroduced America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, legislation that would permanently protect over 9 million acres of the outstanding wilderness-quality land at the heart of the Colorado Plateau.

In May, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) introduced the Senate bill, S. 979, and Rep. Maurice Hinchey ((D-NY) the House bill, H.R. 1916. Joining them were 4 Senate and 68 House cosponsors. They represent 27 states, from Hawaii to Maine. Since introduction, support for the bill has grown steadily.

Sen. Durbin and Rep. Hinchey have been tireless champions of the redrock country over the years, recognizing the national significance of this unique landscape.

"This land was chosen based on meticulous research and surveying of thousands of square miles to determine which lands should be protected," Sen. Durbin said. "America's Red Rock Wilderness is a lasting gift to the American public that will give future generations the opportunity to enjoy a landscape that so many now cherish." Sen. Durbin termed the places that the Red Rock bill would preserve "some of our nation's most remarkable, but currently unprotected, public lands."

Rep. Hinchey, reaffirming his long-standing commitment to the redrock, said:

> America's red rock wilderness is a national treasure that must be preserved in its natural state for future generations to enjoy and cherish. Since former Utah Congressman Wayne Owens introduced this bill 20 years ago, support has continued to grow as more and more Americans have learned of the need to protect this region's natural beauty. Conservation groups from throughout the country and in Utah support this effort, and I am hopeful that this legislation will one day become law.

So are we. To help with the effort to pass America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, please contact your representatives to ask them to cosponsor the bill (see box below). And please thank them if they already have.

—Jen Beasley

Help Us Build Congressional Support for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act!

Write Your Legislators at:

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 your legislators at (202) 224-3121 (ask to be connected to the appropriate office)

Learn more at **www.suwa.org/ARRWA**
Look up your members of Congress at **www.suwa.org/findrep**

DC news

112th Congress: A New Low in Anti-Conservation Legacies

After last year's elections, we knew the mood in the 112th Congress would be very different. We prepared ourselves accordingly. Even so, we've been stunned by the feral ferocity of the anti-wilderness forces in Congress. Advocates who have endured other grim times say that, for sheer volume and slash-and-burn intensity, this assault on wilderness is the worst ever. And the Utah delegation is up to its eyeballs in it.

The House of Representatives took a number of shots at the environment right out of the gate during consideration of the overdue budget bill for 2011. The bill constituted a wish-list for the polluting and extractive industries. Among its most egregious proposals were those to:

- block the President's century-old authority to proclaim national monuments;
- eliminate the National Landscape Conservation System, which includes Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument;
- eliminate all funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and,
- make it more difficult for citizens to challenge agency decisions in court.

Only a provision to eliminate funding for Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's Wild Lands policy made it into the final bill.

Utah Representative Rob Bishop is the leading preacher of anti-wilderness theology in the House from his pulpit as chair of the Natural Resources Public Lands Subcommittee through which any wilderness bill must travel. So far, Bishop has held a grand total of zero hearings on wilderness bills. He has busied himself instead with raising bogus claims that poor jobs numbers and high gas prices are the result of the Obama administration's public lands policies (which in our view are excessively moderate, not to say deeply disappointing).

The primary target of Bishop's fulminations has been Salazar's now-scuttled Wild Lands policy, which was nothing more than a mild set of reforms to reassert the Bureau of Land Management's obligation to inventory and protect wilderness-quality lands. Bishop summoned Utah Gov. Gary Herbert to a March hearing on the policy. The governor dutifully claimed that the policy threatened to cost his state some $2 billion in lost revenue. He provided no facts to support the claim, of course (Trust me: I'm a governor!). In contrast, Black Diamond chief Peter Metcalf documented the impressive economic benefits that flow from Utah's protected public lands. Care to guess which testimony the panel found most persuasive?

To be sure, the Wild Lands policy did not lack for champions in the House. Led by Rep. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22), Rep. Gerry Connolly (VA-11), Rep. Martin Heinrich (NM-1) and Rep. Diana Degette (CO-1), 44 House members wrote to the President in support of the policy. The White House brushed aside the plea and Salazar ditched the policy on June 1.

It is now more than ten years since I left public office. I am returning to the public stage today because I believe that this Congress, in its assaults on our environment, has embarked on the most radical course in our history. Congress, led by the House of Representatives, has declared war on our land, water and natural resources. And it is time for those of us who support our conservation tradition to raise our voices on behalf of the American people.

It is clear to me that the House of Representatives will not only block progress, but will continue to sustain an assault on our public lands and water. Therefore, it is imperative that President Obama take up the mantle of land and water conservation—something that he has not yet done in a significant way. President Obama and the Executive Branch are the best, and likely only, hope for meaningful progress on this critical issue.

—6/8/11 speech by former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt at the National Press Club

Eager to display his own anti-wilderness rabidity, Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch has joined Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso in offering a measure to strip protections from around 10 million acres of BLM lands now designated as wilderness study areas (WSAs) across the West (Bishop and Rep. Kevin McCarthy (CA-22), third-ranking House Republican, have introduced the bill in their chamber). Predictably, the oil and gas and off-road vehicle lobbies are pushing the scheme. It would open to development places integral to the Greater Canyonlands region, such as Cheesebox Canyon and the Dirty Devil, that now enjoy WSA status.

Introduced around the same time are bills from Hatch, Barrasso and Bishop to roll back Interior's important onshore oil and gas leasing reforms, reinstate the controversial 77 Utah leases offered in the 2008 fire sale, encourage dirty and unproven oil shale development and gut environmental review of grazing permits.

The proper response to all this is determination, not despair. The American public will rally behind our treasured landscapes when they come under threat; it always does. And the public is likely to exact a penalty for the 112th Congress's overreaching attacks on the environment. The challenge for us in the meantime is to minimize the damage.

—Richard Peterson-Cremer and Jen Beasley

Heinrich Leads Congressional Push for Protections

At a time when wilderness is under unprecedented congressional attack, Rep. Martin Heinrich (NM-1) stands as one of our staunchest supporters. Heinrich recently began his second term in the House, where he serves on the Natural Resources Committee and has established himself as one of the committee's leading wilderness experts. His background as a river guide and his previous involvement with conservation organizations make him a natural ally for redrock wilderness.

In October 2009, Heinrich chaired much of the hearing on America's Red Rock Wilderness Act and forcefully challenged county commissioners from Utah who were long on polemics but woefully short of anything remotely truthful to say about

Rep. Martin Heinrich (public domain photo).

such subjects such as livestock grazing in wilderness.

More recently, the congressman has been a strong proponent of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's Wild Lands policy. Heinrich's command of wilderness law and precedent and his on-the-ground knowledge of the wild places subject to the Salazar policy have made him an indispensable ally in its defense. He recently organized, along with Reps. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22), Gerry Connolly (VA-11) and Diana Degette (CO-1) a letter from House members to the President supporting the policy. These are important stands for Heinrich to take, and they are courageous ones, too: strong support for public lands protection is far from universally popular in the rural West. Heinrich proudly runs on it, not from it.

It is our great good fortune to have hundreds of supporters in Congress, but few can match Martin Heinrich's knowledge of the specific places we seek to protect in the redrock and of the policies that affect their management. We look forward to working with him to promote a sensible wild lands policy and to protect the Greater Canyonlands region. Please thank Rep. Martin Heinrich for his staunch support of the redrock country (see box, p. 9).

—Richard Peterson-Cremer

canyon country updates

Good News!

Federal Judge Rejects Salt Creek RS 2477 Claim in Canyonlands National Park

For purposes of R.S. 2477, at least absent proof of continuous public use as a public thoroughfare for the requisite amount of time, a jeep trail on a creek bed with its shifting sands and intermittent floods is a by-way, but not a highway. Order, U.S. District Court, May 27, 2011.

Shortly before this newsletter went to press, federal judge Bruce Jenkins ruled against San Juan County and the State of Utah in their bid to turn Salt Creek in Canyonlands National Park into a county highway. The long-awaited decision came after a two-week trial in September 2009. We're all breathing a sigh of relief.

The story of Salt Creek is the story of countless RS 2477 claims across Utah. In decades past, cowboys trailed cows through Salt Creek canyon, and long-forgotten prospectors came in a vain search for uranium and other minerals. In the years after World War II, desert wanderers in old army jeeps began to prowl around in the canyon. Some told their friends about the place. Some even organized tours there. There was once a broken down trailer and a deteriorating cabin in the higher country, history unknown. Had the court found that this kind of sporadic use created an RS 2477 highway it would have opened the door to a deluge of claims on similar, remote and primitive routes across the state—in other national parks, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, and on lands proposed for wilderness protection in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.

There's an old catchphrase many conservationists have taped to their office walls: "Endless pressure, endlessly applied." In retrospect, that turned out to be our guiding philosophy in Salt Creek. SUWA's involvement in this issue began in 1989 when the Park Service began work on a backcountry management plan which would, among other things, determine whether jeep use—which by that time had gotten out of control—could continue in Salt Creek. After the Park Service's final plan allowed hundreds of jeeps to drive in the canyon every month, despite the agency's own recognition of water pollution,

© Kathlene Audette

Thanks to a recent federal court decision, Salt Creek Canyon will remain free of off-road vehicles, at least for now.

soil erosion, and damage to native plant and animal life, SUWA went to court in 1995 and ultimately got an injunction against jeep access in Salt Creek.

Natural Healing

The court enjoined jeep use in 1998. Plants grew back, the water was clean, bears returned to the upper reaches of the canyon, peace and quiet prevailed.

But outside the canyon the courtroom drama continued with appeals brought by off-roaders who remain unmoved by the evidence of their damage. After the appellate court ordered trial court to reconsider its decision based on a new standard, the Park Service fortunately changed its position and closed Salt Creek to vehicle use. That's when San Juan County, with the State of Utah in tow, filed its lawsuit to gain title to Salt Creek and to reinstate jeep use.

Congress repealed RS 2477 in 1976 subject to valid existing rights. As we have written here many times, that law provides that "the right of way for the construction of highways across public land, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted." Counties have for years used that language to claim that wash bottoms like Salt Creek and faint two-tracks and trails were actually highways and that the BLM or other federal land managers could not close or regulate them. Counties also argue that such trails, because they are county highways, disqualify lands from wilderness designation.

The Salt Creek case is enormously important. There are by some counts 15,000 to 20,000 RS 2477 route claims on federal public lands in the State of Utah. The court's decision means that those routes with a sparse history of occasional use by cowboys, prospectors, or joy riders are not county roads and are fully subject to federal control. Where there is damage, or where wilderness protection is needed, managers can close routes and redirect use to places where it can be better managed.

If past practice is any indication, the county and the state will likely appeal the case. They haven't announced their plans, but it is still early. For now, though, we can all savor this opinion and the measure of safety it provides for some of our most vulnerable places.

To read the full text of the federal district court's opinion, go to **www.suwa.org/saltcreekruling**.

—Heidi McIntosh

Good News!

Settlement Protects Important Part of White River Proposed Wilderness

SUWA and our conservation partners, the Bureau of Land Management, and a privately held oil and gas company recently reached an agreement involving natural gas development in the White River proposed wilderness area. The agreement affords some protection to the area, ends five years of contentious litigation, and offers the company some certainty in its development plans.

The White River runs east to west. It originates in Colorado and eventually joins the Green River near Ouray, Utah. Midway between the Utah-Colorado border and the Green River, it has carved a particularly deep and spectacular canyon. This area is the centerpiece of the proposed White River wilderness area. It stands in stark contrast to the gently undulating hills of the Uinta Basin to the north as well as to the sea of oil and gas wells that nearly encircle it. A BLM brochure describing this section of the river explains that "[t]his is one of the quiet places, where solitude and a sense of adventure are still very much a part of the outdoor experience."

The southwestern portion of the White River proposed wilderness has been in the crosshairs of proposed natural gas development for some time. After another company drilled an initial beachhead well in 2004, Enduring Resources, LLC, drilled a slew of wells on state land. The battle escalated when Enduring Resources proposed a large development on some 4,800 acres comprising the "Rock House" project. Between 2005 and 2007 SUWA fought back various iterations of the project that would have resulted in the loss of substantial portions of the potential White River wilderness. However, at the end of 2007 the BLM's Vernal Field Office approved the third version of the project.

(Continued on page 15)

canyon country updates


© Tom Till

Postcards for Protection: Help Us Protect the Greater Canyonlands

The 1.5 million acres of wild land known as "Greater Canyonlands" is unquestionably a treasured American landscape worthy of protection (see **www.suwa.org/greatercanyonlands**). Our challenge is getting the Obama administration to use its considerable authority to protect this magnificent area.

There is much it can do administratively: closing off-road vehicle routes that conflict with wild lands; preventing energy and mineral development in these areas; and, possibly establishing a Greater Canyonlands National Monument.

We've developed a postcard campaign as one tool to help focus the Obama administration's attention on the need to protect Greater Canyonlands. Our goal is to send President Obama over 10,000 postcards, from Utahns as well as people across the country, asking that he take action to protect the area. If you would like to help, here are some simple things you can do.

1) Fill out and mail in one of the postcards at the center of this newsletter. Ask your friends to do the same!

2) Send an email request to **gina@suwa.org** and we will send you 25 postcards (more if you request them) for your friends, family, and associates to fill out. When they are completed, send them back to us (we'll include a self-addressed envelope) and we'll add them to the growing stack we are delivering to the Obama administration.

3) If you'd like to do more to educate people about the Greater Canyonlands—such as by hosting a slideshow about the region—we can help. Just contact your regional SUWA organizer from the list below.

Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona: Terri Martin, terri@suwa.org

Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming: Brooke Williams, brooke@suwa.org

Eastern states: Jackie Feinberg, jackie@suwa.org

Midwestern states: Clayton Daughenbaugh, clayton@suwa.org

Utah and Nevada: Deeda Seed, deeda@suwa.org

Calling All Artists and Photographers!

The landscape of the Greater Canyonlands has long been a source of stunning photographs and inspired paintings, prints, and drawings. As part of our campaign to protect the region, we are assembling a list of artists and photographers who want to help defend this amazing redrock landscape. We plan to use art in the coming months to illustrate the importance of protecting the wild places in the Greater Canyonlands region.

To add your name to the list of "Artists and Photographers for Greater Canyonlands" please contact SUWA's national grassroots organizer, Jackie Feinberg, at **jackie@suwa.org**.

Visit **www.suwa.org/artists** to see images from artists and photographers who have already signed on in support of protecting Greater Canyonlands.

© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

An agreement between SUWA and our conservation partners, the BLM, and Enduring Resources, LLC will substantially reduce impacts to the White River corridor in northeastern Utah.

(Continued from page 13)

The conflict culminated in federal court. In 2008, SUWA, along with the Natural Resources Defense Council and The Wilderness Society, brought a lawsuit to stop the Rock House project. We eked out a win. The court agreed that the BLM had not done its homework in approving the Rock House project (because of inadequate air quality analysis).

But, given the company's determination and financial resources, we had little confidence that the BLM would finally do the right thing. So we opted to negotiate an agreement with the agency and the company to substantially reduce the footprint of the Rock House project, to protect, as best we could, the White River corridor, and to prevent disturbance altogether in certain areas.

The agreement came at a cost: the loss of wilderness-quality lands on the southwestern portion of the proposed White River wilderness. But the company was armed with pre-existing state and federal leases. In the face of that, and with the prospect of protecting thousands of acres of the proposed White River wilderness which we might otherwise have lost, we concluded that the deal made sense.

—Steve Bloch and David Garbett

More Gasco-Intestinal Distress in Upper Desolation Canyon

Gasco Energy, Inc. continues to push what is by far the largest oil and gas development threat to proposed wilderness in Utah today: a massive 1,500-well project in the upper Desolation Canyon area. In our last issue we told you about the proposal and the "Gasco Uinta Basin Natural Gas Development Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement" (DEIS). In that document, as unwieldy as its title, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) purports to analyze the consequences of this project.

The public comment period on the DEIS closed in December. Since then, there have been some developments that portend further problems.

First, we learned that for the second year in row the wintertime ozone pollution levels in the Uinta Basin rival those in the most polluted cities in the United States. These pollution levels confirm that the pace and extent of oil and gas development in the Basin have created serious air quality problems. The Gasco project would be more, much more, of the same and would worsen air pollution.

canyon country updates

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pointed this out in its scathing comments on the DEIS. The EPA strongly urged the BLM to select a development alternative that would drastically reduce air quality impacts and protect proposed wilderness. Importantly, the EPA also called for the BLM to prepare a completely new DEIS or, at a minimum, a supplemental DEIS. The BLM is openly loathe to do either and, along with Gasco's lobbyists, is pressuring the EPA to back down. We hope that the EPA will remain strong and remember that its duty is to protect our nation's air and water, not to facilitate Gasco's project.

Second, the BLM has released a new development alternative for the project that it has entitled "Alternative F." No joke. In this case, the "F" can stand either for "fail" or "flunk," take your pick. To produce this new "preferred" alternative, the BLM merely took Gasco's original project proposal and smeared on a bit of lipstick. It's gussied up some but remains a pig in every discernable way, though the BLM declares it a new, "better" proposal. Alternative F would still result in the elimination of most of the wilderness characteristics of the proposed Desolation Canyon unit north of Nine Mile Canyon and the proposed Desbrough unit, including the incomparable and remote Wrinkle Bench and Badlands Cliffs area.

The coming months will provide new opportunities for our members and supporters to combat this ill-advised project. Your comments and participation make a difference and we look forward to your help.

—David Garbett

Oil Shale and Tar Sands: Back to the Drawing Board

With every hiccup in global energy supplies and every spike in gasoline prices at the pump, industry renews its clamor for access to tar sands and oil shale deposits on America's public lands. This year is no exception.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced that it would begin work again on a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) to analyze a potential leasing program for oil shale and tar sands development on public lands in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. This PEIS is a deadly

© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

SUWA attorneys Steve Bloch and David Garbett survey the site of Gasco Inc's massive natural gas development project in the upper Desolation Canyon proposed wilderness.

BLM Writing Red Mountain-Cottonwood Canyon Wilderness Management Plan

The Bureau of Land Management's St. George Field Office is developing a wilderness management plan for the Red Mountain and Cottonwood Canyon Wilderness Areas, designated in the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009. The two areas, near St. George, UT, offer exceptional wilderness experiences within easy reach of a bustling urban environment.

© *Jeremy Franchow*

Cottonwood Canyon Wilderness.

The Cottonwood Canyon Wilderness, consisting of 11,667 acres located within the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, contains stunning sandstone domes and intimate winding canyons. The 18,689-acre Red Mountain Wilderness, bounded in part by the Santa Clara River, Snow Canyon State Park, and lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians, contains expanses of red sand and slickrock and affords scenic vistas of the Beaver Dam Mountains and island mountain ranges in Nevada.

Even with formal wilderness protection, the wilderness character of Cottonwood Canyon and Red Mountain could be degraded through poorly regulated commercial use, scientifically unsound restoration projects, and misguided wildfire management. SUWA's comments on the wilderness management plan address these issues. We will update you as the process moves forward.

first step toward placing some of Utah's most spectacular wild lands at risk of large-scale industrial destruction. Both oil shale and tar sands deposits are found in eastern Utah.

Oil shale and tar sands are substances that through significant processing can be made into oil. And that is precisely the problem. They require heavy industrial processes to extract, prepare, and refine them into usable products. These processes result in more pollution, more greenhouse gasses, and more water usage than conventional oil development. They leave a wake of destruction and devastation (think of the landscape-scale annihilation of Alberta, Canada, by tar sands production.) To compound the insult, oil shale and tar sands proponents seek subsidies and incentives to deliver this calamity to the public, asking, among other things, for royalty rates less than half of what companies pay to develop oil or gas on public lands.

During the Bush administration the BLM released a PEIS for oil shale and tar sands that proposed making available for leasing over 2.4 million acres of land in Utah, including some of the state's most spectacular landscapes. These were places like Fiddler Butte/Happy Canyon and Fortknocker Canyon/White Canyon, as well as the San Rafael Swell and the Book Cliffs. SUWA joined a lawsuit with 12 other environmental groups challenging the PEIS. The suit resulted in a settlement in February of this year requiring that the BLM go back and do its analysis again.

Although that means these precious lands are once again placed at risk, it also gives the public an opportunity to achieve a better result. Hearings the BLM held in Utah were well attended, with most people speaking against tar sands and oil shale development on public lands. The BLM also sought scoping comments, which many SUWA members provided. The next opportunity for public participation will be the release of a draft environmental impact statement.

—David Garbett

canyon country updates

Garfield County Lawsuit Alleges 75 'Highways' in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert likes to say that he favors sit-down resolutions of environmental issues and chides others for endless litigation. That lofty view of the world as it ought to be appears not to operate when the state itself heads to the courthouse. Worried about the statute of limitations, the state is teaming with Garfield County to prepare a jumbo-sized case in federal court to wrest from the U.S. ownership of 75 routes in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The county and the state filed a formal notice of intent to sue with the Interior Department on May 12.

Were stakeholders called together for attempts at respectful negotiation? Nope. Instead, this latest suit (and the others that will follow) will likely lead to at least five years or more of litigation and perhaps millions of taxpayer dollars spent in attorneys' fees.

What does the public get for its outlay of tax dollars? That is difficult to say. Some of the routes have been graded for years and no one has tried to close them or objected to their use. They are uncontroversial. (So why the expensive lawsuit? Good question.) As for the others, we'll keep you posted as soon as we get the map.

On the upside, if Garfield County is any indication, it looks as though the counties may be abandoning past efforts to take the law into their own hands by illegally grading primitive routes across America's public lands.

A Monument, Yes, but to What?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering increasing the organized group size in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument from the present 25 to a whopping 395 people, and allowing up to 79 vehicles per group. The change would apply to both day use and group camping sites along the Hole in the Rock road. It would jeopardize the monument's wild character and degrade the experience of those who come to enjoy it.

The proposal would defeat the promise of the monument's creation in 1996. The proclamation plainly directed the BLM to protect the historic and scientific resources of the monument and to protect its "primitive, frontier state . . . and safeguard the remote and undeveloped character . . ."

The current monument plan aims at that, restricting development to minor facilities, such as interpretive kiosks and pullouts, and to the periphery of the monument. Visitors' centers and other developments are to be located in nearby towns. The BLM realized that the restriction "will allow visitors to better understand the monument's national treasures *without jeopardizing the resources or the remote character of this special place*." (Our emphasis.)

Area communities agreed with that element of the plan. Towns would benefit economically if visitors obtained goods and services there. Limiting development inside the monument would protect its rugged nature.

The proposed increase in group size limits and associated developments fly in the face of such sensible reasoning. The Hole in the Rock road is in the very heart of the monument, not along its edges. It takes little imagination to envision the impacts on both visitors and the monument itself from the noise, lights, and large campsites that will attend a 15-fold increase in group sizes.

The BLM's environmental review highlights the remarkable 1879 Mormon pioneer expedition that followed the Hole in the Rock route, noting that the group size increase is important to members of the

LDS church as it would allow them the opportunity to have a cultural experience within the monument (that opportunity exists now, of course, within reasonable numerical limits.) Such sensitivity to historic roots is laudable. But SUWA opposes expanding the group size for any large group, whether pioneer re-enactors, the Rainbow Family, the Hell's Angels or anyone else. It risks turning a great national monument into a theme park.

SUWA is urging the BLM to step back and carefully consider the impacts of this proposal. We will let you know when your voice can help!

—Liz Thomas

Litigation Update

Resource management plans

SUWA and its conservation partners have been in negotiations with the Interior Department trying to settle the lawsuits we brought challenging six Bush-era resource management plans (RMPs) and off-road vehicle travel management plans. This spring, after nearly two years of on-again, off-again talks, we notified the federal district court judge overseeing our litigation that the talks have ended and that we are eager to move ahead and to have these cases briefed, argued, and decided.

This is a disappointing result and somewhat unexpected: Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Deputy Secretary David Hayes and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Bob Abbey have all said strongly and publicly that the RMPs have serious shortcomings and need to be "fixed."

Ironically, and notwithstanding that talk, the Obama administration will be defending the same plans that prioritize oil and gas development and off-road vehicle use over all other uses of the public lands. We had every reason to expect and demand better. Utah's remarkable redrock wilderness is worse off because of this lack of leadership.

Not all the news is gloomy, though. We have a strong case against the department that these Bush-era plans violate federal environmental and historic preservation laws in a number of significant ways. Recall that we won a temporary restraining order in January 2009 from the same judge that will eventually decide this case. In that written decision, Judge Ricardo Urbina indicated that we were likely to succeed on the merits of some of our claims that the BLM broke the law. We will pursue these claims and others as we work to undo these unbalanced plans.

Wild Lands policy

In our last newsletter we told you about our work to help defend Salazar's Wild Lands policy from a lawsuit filed by Uintah County. (see Spring 2011 issue, p.17). Since then, the county—now joined by the Utah Association of Counties—revised its lawsuit to more squarely challenge a slew of Salazar priorities, including the Wild Lands policy, master leasing plans, and even the meager protections afforded a handful of places in the Bush-era RMPs by designating them "natural areas." Thus, notwithstanding Secretary Salazar's disappointing June 1 decision to walk away, at least for now, from much of his Wild Lands policy, there is still much at stake in this case.

Recently, the state of Utah filed a similar lawsuit and moved to consolidate that case before the same judge. We successfully intervened in the county's suit and will be moving to do so in the state's case as well—all with goal of having these cases largely dismissed. We expect the Interior Department to work towards the same goal.

Book Cliffs Highway (Seep Ridge Road)

They say some bad ideas never go away. Perhaps nothing embodies this idea more than the ill-conceived plan to pave a high-speed highway right down the middle of Utah's wild Book Cliffs, leading eventually to Interstate 70 north of Moab. We last saw this proposal nearly come to fruition in the late 1980s, before it was scuttled.

In the latest iteration, the Utah BLM approved a Uintah County proposal for a 55 mile-per-hour paved highway from the townsite of Ouray to the Uintah/Grand County line. Why stop at the Grand County line on the top of the Book Cliffs? Because that's all Uintah County says it wants, today, at least. But many of the letters submitted by oil shale and tar sands operators, the Utah trust lands administration, and others in support of the county's proposal are clear that the real goal is to pave the road all the way to the interstate highway. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized

as much and in its comments to the BLM urged that the full project be considered in a single environmental analysis. We echoed the same concerns, all to no avail. The BLM never analyzed the full and logical scope of what is at stake but approved the county's proposal in early April.

SUWA and the Center for Native Ecosystems have appealed the BLM's decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. We'll keep you posted.

Tar sands leasing

Speaking of bad ideas that won't go away: SUWA and its partners are continuing to challenge a series of BLM and Interior Board of Land Appeals decisions regarding tar sands leasing in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and several wilderness study areas. The decisions basically tried to breathe new life into long expired oil and gas leases in these spectacular places.

Unfortunately, our lawsuit never made it past the starting gate as a federal district court judge in Salt Lake City concluded that we lacked "standing" to challenge the decisions. Standing is a procedural prerequisite that has to be met for federal courts to have jurisdiction over a particular case. This is rarely a problem for us because our members spend so much time exploring and appreciating Utah's remarkable redrock wilderness. The places at issue in this suit—Fiddler Butte, Happy Canyon, and Colt Mesa—are some of the most revered scenic landscapes in the state, if not the nation. We tried to make clear to the judge that our members have been to lands where these leases are located, have been harmed by the BLM's decisions, and intend to come back. We'll now make this case to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Fortunately, nothing is happening on the ground so there is no need to seek an emergency stay.

—Steve Bloch

Power Line Threatens Granite Peak Proposed Wilderness

PacifiCorp, a large electric utility operating across the western United States, has requested a permit from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to construct a power line that would weave in and out of the southern boundary of the Granite Peak proposed wilderness area. The company wants to cut an environmentally destructive new corridor, from 60 to 100 feet wide and 15.3 miles long, even though it has an existing corridor just a few miles south of the proposed new route.

The Granite Peak proposed wilderness area, which the BLM agrees has wilderness characteristics, is located in the Mineral Mountains west of Beaver, Utah. Granite Peak rises to 9,770 feet and is easily recognizable to drivers on I-15. Dramatic granite slabs and enormous standing rocks characterize its west side. The panoramic views to the east and west

Beavers Set Up House in Arch Canyon

Earlier this year, a pair of beavers packed up such belongings as beavers accumulate, left the San Juan River, and headed for higher ground. The pair trekked cross-country over 20 miles of sand, rocks, and other obstacles to establish a new home in Arch Canyon. Once there, the pair got busy and built a couple of dams and a nice cozy lodge near the mouth of Arch Canyon.

Research indicates that beavers, besides being remarkable engineers, can improve the health of wetland and riparian areas, and improve big game, fish, bird, insect and amphibian habitats.

We extend a warm welcome to the Arch Canyon beavers! They survived an amazing march to get there. Now, if they can just survive the off-road vehicles that rampage through Arch . . .

© Liz Thomas

Beaver Dam in Arch Canyon.

are spectacular. If the BLM permits it, this project will create a clear-cut swath of barren land crossing directly through this magnificent area, including lands along the southern boundary of the Granite Peak proposed wilderness area.

SUWA has commented in opposition to this proposal. We will continue to work to keep yet another ill-advised energy transmission project from permanently scarring southern Utah's wilderness landscape.

—Neal Clark

That Cows May Safely Graze

There is no sign of satiation in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) voracious appetite for heavy-handed manipulation of the desert landscape. It continues to chop down and tear out native trees and shrubs and replace them with predominantly non-native "forage" species.

The practices continue to plague the West's native ecosystems. Never mind that they ignore current and relevant scientific studies that advise against them. Never mind, either, that such vegetative manipulation has not produced sustainable ecological systems.

Several such projects are afoot in southern Utah. The BLM has released its final environmental assessment (EA) and decision authorizing the Upper Kanab Creek Watershed Vegetation Management Project (see Spring 2010 issue, p. 14) It calls for the systematic clear-cutting of all native pinyon and juniper trees on over 51,000 acres of public land north of Kanab, UT. In addition, the BLM authorizes the use of chemical treatments and re-seeding with non-native plants. The plan calls for the project to run for 15 years; destruction on this scale takes time.

At the urging of SUWA and other conservationists, the BLM removed from the deforestation project all lands within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. That is helpful. But the project still includes the Upper Kanab Creek proposed wilderness area, a part of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. So our fight is far from over.

The Upper Kanab Creek project was proposed, in part, to "re-treat" areas the BLM manipulated years ago (translation: the original treatments failed, a measure of the futility of the approach). Vegetation projects that significantly modify natural ecosystems require an endless flow of time and money to suppress native species and natural fluctuations in vegetation. What drives this desire to manipulate natural processes on our public lands? Among the obvious culprits are the availability of project funding and the agency's refusal to address the underlying causes of degraded ecosystems, notably existing livestock grazing practices.

SUWA recently filed a notice of appeal with the Interior Board of Land Appeals challenging the legality of the BLM's Upper Kanab Creek decision.

The BLM is proposing another clear cut of native pinyon and juniper trees about 10 miles north of Kanab. The Yellowjacket Vegetative Enhancement project, which includes portions of the Parunuweap Canyon proposed wilderness, would remove up to 95 percent of the live pinyon and juniper trees and apply other mechanical and chemical treatments across 8,500 acres of public lands. In the bureau's curious lexicon, "enhancement" is a euphemism for propagating cattle feed. The agency's proposal notes that there are several domestic livestock grazing allotments in the project area and goes on to say that native sagebrush, grasses, and wildflowers are no longer found in portions of the area. (Honk if you think this is coincidental.)

SUWA has raised concerns that the proposed clear cuts, chemical applications, and seedings will not be sustainable and will not produce healthy ecosystems unless the BLM significantly modifies the domestic livestock grazing regime in the area. We have also asked the agency to consider the emerging scientific research indicating that clear cuts and other vegetation manipulations that result in surface disturbances increase the likelihood of soil erosion, dust storms, and invasive weed spread on the arid Colorado Plateau. Climate change and predicted deepening aridity are likely to compound these impacts.

The BLM is expected to issue its environmental analysis of the Yellowjacket project this summer. Here, on Upper Kanab Creek, and elsewhere, SUWA will continue to defend candidate wilderness areas and advocate for sustainable approaches for improving ecosystem health. We'll let you know how you can help.

—Neal Clark and Liz Thomas

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SUWA Staff Remembers Gail Hoskisson Loper

Gail on the hood of Ed Abbey's old Ford pickup.

Benedicto: May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds. May your rivers flow without end, meandering through pastoral valleys tinkling with bells, past temples and castles and poets' towers into a dark primeval forest where tigers belch and monkeys howl, through miasmal and mysterious swamps and down into a desert of red rock, blue mesas, domes and pinnacles and grottos of endless stone, and down again into a deep vast ancient unknown chasm where bars of sunlight blaze on profiled cliffs, where deer walk across the white sand beaches, where storms come and go as lightning clangs upon the high crags, where something strange and more beautiful and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for you—beyond that next turning of the canyon walls. —Ed Abbey

Our dear friend and former colleague Gail Hoskisson Loper passed away on April 15 after a valiant battle with cancer. A fifth generation Utahn from Carbon County, Gail grew up a spirited redhead with a passion for Utah's redrock country. She and her husband Wayne moonlighted as wilderness activists while raising teenagers and working as medical technicians for the Salt Lake Regional Medical Center.

Beyond phonebanking and stuffing envelopes at the SUWA office (which she gladly did), Gail lobbied for wilderness protection in Washington, DC, and helped spearhead the RS 2477 project—a Herculean effort to photo-document and map hundreds of right-of-way claims across proposed wilderness in Utah. On trips to Washington, Gail would lug the massive binders of fieldwork all over Capitol Hill, educating members of Congress.

Many words have been used to describe Gail; meek and mild are not among them. Warm and welcoming by nature, she was also a feisty and outspoken defender of Utah's wild places. A devoted Edward Abbey fan, Gail attended a SUWA benefit auction in 1998 and left the proud owner of Abbey's battered 1973 Ford pickup, affectionately dubbing it "Ed's Ride." The bidding was at times fierce, and Gail shelled out more than she'd originally intended, but as she explained, "It was my once-in-a-lifetime chance to be as generous as the millionaires for a cause I really believe in." Gail made lifelong friends through an online Abbey fan site and would surely have charmed old Cactus Ed himself with her impassioned defense of all things wild.

After serving as co-chair and vice-chair of the Utah Wilderness Coalition for several years, Gail joined the SUWA staff in 2000 as a special projects coordinator focusing on grassroots organizing, outreach, and event planning. In 2002, she moved to Washington to run our legislative office. Over the years, she often remarked "I can't believe I get paid to do this job." After leaving SUWA, Gail retired to Moab, in the heart of her beloved redrock country. She later moved to western Colorado (still close to the redrock) with her second husband, Roger Loper, running rivers and living the good life on a 35-acre homestead. When she reunited with friends and former colleagues at the 2009 SUWA Roundup, she camped with a box of newly hatched chicks and their mother hen, unwilling to leave them behind unattended.

Many of our activists remember Gail as the person who first educated them about Utah wilderness issues and made them feel like a valued member of the cause. Her loss will be felt throughout the wilderness community, in Utah and beyond, but her passion for the redrock will live on in our work. We promise you that, Gail!

Neal Clark Joins SUWA as Field Attorney in Moab

We are delighted to welcome Neal Clark to SUWA's Moab staff. Before joining SUWA as a field attorney, Neal lived in Portland, OR, and clerked at the Clackamas County State Circuit Court in Oregon City after his graduation from Lewis and Clark Law School.

Even while living in Oregon, and long before we had a job opening, Neal was a true redrock supporter. He participated in one of SUWA's Wilderness Weeks in Washington, DC, several years ago, visiting congressional offices to help secure co-sponsors for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.

Since arriving in March, Neal has been getting further acquainted with wild lands in southern Utah and meeting with BLM specialists in the field to discuss a range of project proposals, including vegetation manipulation projects, off-road vehicle route designations, and power line corridors.

When Neal's not reading environmental assessments or drafting comments and appeals, he and Porter, his very large and friendly malamute-Labrador retriever, are out enjoying the slickrock and sun, climbing the famous cracks near Moab, playing his mandolin and generally savoring the small-town atmosphere of life in southern Utah. Neal says one of his favorite things about living in Moab is the quick and easy access to the public lands. He's also mentioned that he doesn't really miss the rain of Portland. Neal holds the distinction of being the first glass blower on the SUWA staff.

Neal Clark, the latest addition to SUWA's legal team.

Drop by and say hello to Neal when you're in Moab this summer.

Mark Your Calendar for SUWA's 2011 Roundup!

WHAT: Legendary annual gathering of Utah wilderness lovers in the San Rafael Swell

WHEN: Starts at 7 PM September 23 through morning of Sept 25

WHERE: Hidden Splendor Mine area (map available at **www.suwa.org/roundup2011**)

Enjoy a weekend of fun, guided hikes, service projects, and informational wilderness talks. The Roundup offers wilderness lovers, SUWA members and staff the opportunity to get to know each other while relaxing in the beautiful San Rafael Swell. Activities include a discussion of Utah wilderness issues with SUWA staff, a potluck dinner, evening music around the campfire, and—best of all—guided day-hikes in the Muddy Creek proposed wilderness. Sunday morning you'll awake to freshly brewed coffee and 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, lunch, and snacks, camping gear, plenty of drinking water (1-2 gallons person/day), eating utensils, folding chairs and whatever else you like. Feel free to bring your own musical instruments and favorite libations, too. To RSVP or for more information please visit **www.suwa.org/roundup2011** or contact Kathlene Audette at kathlene@suwa.org, (801) 236-3763.

inside SUWA

Thank You SUWA Business Members!

SUWA's Business Membership Program is a great way for your small business or company to support the protection of Utah's redrock country. If you own a business and care deeply about protecting Utah's magnificent wilderness lands for future generations, please consider joining today. For a donation of $150 or more, we'll send you a business member window decal and print your company's name in our newsletter (once a year) and on our website (with a link) at **www.suwa.org/businessmembers**. At higher levels of support we offer additional benefits, such as a featured spot in our monthly e-newsletter. For more information, please contact Kathlene Audette at (801) 236-3763 or kathlene@suwa.org.

Cliffrose, ©1999-2011 Zackery Zdinak

Listed below are businesses from Utah and across the country that currently support Utah wilderness through SUWA's business member program.

Entrada Members
($5,000+)

Treasure Mountain Inn, UT

Kayenta Members
($1,000-$4,999)

Black Diamond Equipment, UT
People's Press, CO
Powderhound Marketing, UT
Stone Forest Inc, NM

Wingate Members
($500-$999)

A Wanderlust Adventure, CO
Dammeron Corporation, UT
Glenn Randall Writing and Photography, CO
Gospel Flat Farm, CA
Injoy Productions, CO
Underwood Environmental, Inc, UT
With Gaia Design, UT

Moenkopi Members
($150-$499)

Alta Lodge, UT
Avenues Yoga, UT
Booth Dental, UT
Boulder Mountain Lodge, UT
Brown Bag Farms, CA
Canyon Voyages Adventure Company, UT
Canyonlands Field Institute, UT
Capitol Reef Inn & Cafe, UT
Capitola Book Cafe, CA
Charles Cramer Photography, CA
Charles Wood Photography, UT
Community Builders Cooperative, MA
Consulting Psychologists, AZ
Cucina Deli, UT
Deanna Rosen LCSW, UT
Deer Hill Expeditions, CO
Dennis Chavez Development Corporation, NM
Desert Highlights, UT
Earth Goods General Store, UT
Faceplant, UT
Githens Properties, LLC, CO
Haymaker Construction, CA
High Country Appraisal, CO
Hyperspud Sports, ID
Imlay Canyon Gear, UT
Institute of Taoist Education and Acupuncture, Inc, UT
JC Financial Inc., UT
Keen Inc, OR
Law Offices of Robert L Miller, AZ
Lazy Lizard International Hostel, UT
Leslie T Gray, Appraisal and Consulting, CO
Lizard Head Cycling Guides, CO
Lucky Dog Communications, UT
Matheson Design, OR
Maui Mountain Environmentally Friendly Coffee, HI
Mazza, UT
Mesa Farm Market, UT
Mountain Chalet, CO
Muench Photography Inc, NM
Mystic Hot Springs, UT
Nichols Expeditions, UT
Ody Brook Enterprises, MI
Pack Rat Outdoor Center, AR
Page Speiser LCSW, UT
Pinnacle Peak Eye Care, AZ
Polar Equipment, CA
Red Rock Counseling & Education, UT
Red Rock 'n Llamas, UT
Rocking V Cafe, UT
Rocky Collins Construction, UT
Rupestrian CyberServices, AZ
Scott T Smith Photography, UT
Select Stone, Inc, MT
Selinda Research Associates, IL
Sol Foods, UT
Stephen L. Gilsdorf, CPA, AZ
Streamline Industries Inc., UT
The Naked Binder, IA
Tom Till Gallery, UT
Trio Restaurant Group, UT
Uinta Brewing Company, UT
Ultralight Adventure Equipment, UT
Urban Utah Homes & Estates, UT
Waterwise Design & Landscapes, LC, UT
William Stone Photography, NM
Williams Tree Farm, ID
Words and Photographs by Stephen Trimble, UT
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Join or Donate to SUWA Today – It Is Crucial to Our Work

If you are already a member of SUWA, thank you for your support and please consider an additional contribution. If you are not already a member, please indulge a brief pitch on why membership matters.

Our critical work advocating for and protecting the wild lands of southern Utah is primarily funded by individual contributions. If you are not yet a member, please join us today. Annual dues are just $35. You can easily join or make an additional gift online at **www.suwa.org/donate** or use the form below. We need *your* help!

Monthly Giving

If you're looking for a convenient and painless way to support SUWA, then consider monthly giving. Monthly giving is easy and secure, and provides SUWA with reliable, year-round funding to fight for Utah wilderness. Best of all, you're off the hook for annual membership renewals! To sign up, go to **www.suwa.org/donate** or send in the form below.

Other Ways to Support SUWA's Work

▶ Online: donate with a credit card (VISA, MasterCard, AMEX or Discover) through our secure website at **www.suwa.org/donate**.

▶ By Mail: return the form below with check or credit card information to: SUWA, 425 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

▶ By Phone: call us at (801) 486-3161 with any questions or to make a credit card donation.

Many employers will match your donation to SUWA, doubling the amount of support you give to Utah wilderness. If your company or firm has a matching gift program, simply enclose the form along with your donation.

Thank you for your support of SUWA and Utah wilderness!

Yes! I want to be a member of SUWA

Check one: New member:_____ Renewal:_____

I have enclosed: $35 Annual dues_____Other $_____

Contributions to SUWA are tax-deductible. Please make your check payable to SUWA or include credit card information (VISA, MC, AMEX, DISC):

Credit Card #_____ Exp. date:_____ CVC#_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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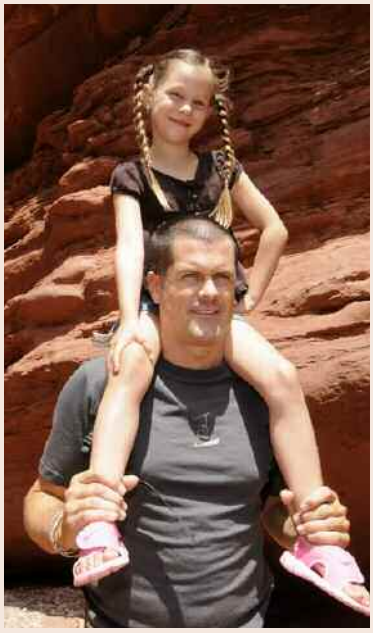
Mail form with payment to: **SUWA, 425 E. 100 S., Salt Lake City, UT 84111**

inside SUWA



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Planned Giving: A Legacy of Support for the Redrock

SUWA has always valued the strength and dedication of our greatest asset: our members. The majority of our funding comes from individual supporters, many of whom have been with us since SUWA was founded in 1983. Year after year, SUWA members—people like you—have continued to put their hearts and financial resources into the effort to permanently protect America's redrock wilderness.

A number of our supporters have made an enduring commitment to SUWA by including SUWA in their estate plans. This type of commitment, known as "planned giving," refers to the designation of assets given upon death to a charitable organization of one's choice. Planned giving is an important part of SUWA's long-term financial picture. Legacy gifts from our members help to ensure sound financial footing and stability as our work moves forward from one generation to the next.

For more information on planned giving, please visit our website at **www.suwa.org/plannedgiving**. If you'd like to make a planned gift to SUWA or have already named SUWA in your will or other estate gift, please contact Scott Braden at braden@suwa.org or (801) 428-3970.

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

SUWA's popular multi-media slideshow, *Wild Utah! America's Redrock Wilderness* includes video interviews, stunning photos, 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:_____

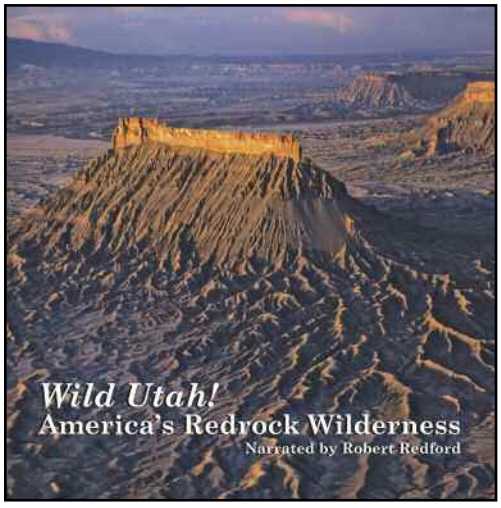
Please make your check payable to SUWA or include credit card information (VISA, MC, AMEX, DISC):

CC#:_____CVC#_____

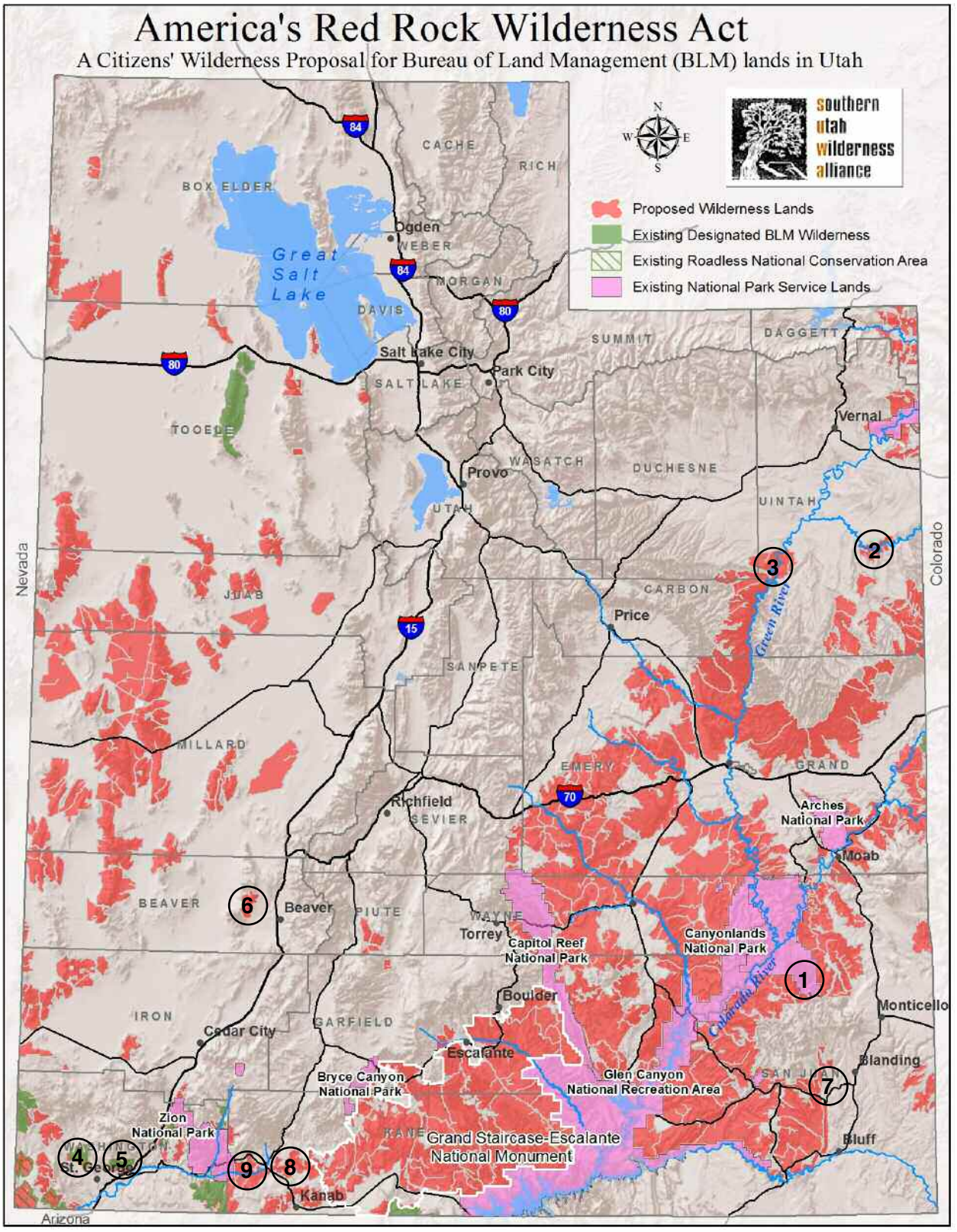
Exp. date:_____ Amount: $_____

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**.



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Want to get the inside scoop and all the latest news on Utah wilderness issues? Check out **Redrock Headlines**, a blog with commentary from SUWA staff and guests, videos from the field, the latest media on Utah wilderness, and ways to take action to help protect the redrock: **www.suwa.org/blog**.

Also, be sure to connect with SUWA on:

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"Water Trail, Harris Wash." Watercolor by Bessann Swanson (bessannswansonart@hotmail.com)

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