

REDROCK

W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 30, Number 2 • Summer 2013

Greater Canyonlands: Completing a Vision

Cover Photo: Sun illuminates a redrock butte at Hatch Point in the Greater Canyonlands region. Photo copyright Tom Till (tomtill.com)



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

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

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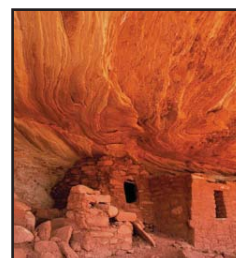
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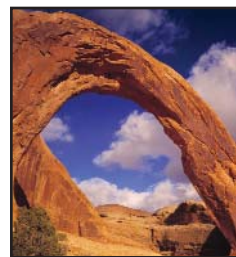
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This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Steve Bloch, Neal Clark, Clayton Daughenbaugh, David Garbett, Scott Groene, Mathew Gross, Darrell Knuffke, Richard Peterson-Cremer, Deeda Seed, Emily Stock, Liz Thomas, Stephen Trimble and Jen Beasley Ujifusa. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly.

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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



Congressman Bishop's "Grand Bargain"

Maybe we're crazy. But we're in discussions with Congressman Rob Bishop's (R-UT) office about wilderness legislation for eastern Utah. And we're not unhappy about it.

At stake are 5.5 million acres of redrock wilderness and another million acres of Forest Service roadless lands. The last wilderness discussion of this magnitude took place over two decades ago with the California Desert Protection Act.

Talks have just started, and there is no clearly defined process as this is written. But we're willing to try to resolve wilderness issues with the congressman—with the help of our redrock champions in DC, of course. We don't turn our noses up at opportunities to pass good wilderness legislation for the redrock, just as we never fear fighting bad legislation.

We probably disagree with just about everything the congressman says from his position as chairman of the subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation. I expect he'd say much the same about us. But we worked well with Mr. Bishop on the Cedar Mountains wilderness legislation which passed in 2006. In terms of how much deserving wilderness in the area under consideration is protected, the Cedar Mountain bill was one of the best ever.

The current effort quickly earned itself the label "the grand bargain." State-owned parcels scattered within proposed wilderness would be exchanged for federal land located elsewhere in the already heavily drilled Uintah Basin. The state owns thousands of one-mile square blocks of land interspersed among federal lands. The pattern appears like a blue rash on maps. And the state will do anything to make a buck off these lands. Each section is a potential menace for rational land management.

If the grand bargain materializes, the state will be able to indulge its drill-baby-drill impulses on the lands it acquires in the Uintah basin. Revenues from energy production would then be directed to the counties where wilderness is designated. The hope is that this would create an incentive for local politicians to accept wilderness. The former state sections would be consolidated in federal ownership allowing consistent wilderness management.

We support this "grand bargain" idea. The lands the state would acquire would likely be drilled regardless. And getting the state out of proposed wilderness would be a major conservation victory.

Some tirelessly—and mistakenly—argue what we need here is a "ground-up, local solution." This ignores Utah's history. We've seen a dozen of these, led by local politicians who frequently know very little about the lands involved. The results have been disasters that all failed in Congress. Success hinges not on Pavlovian responses to the chant of local control. It hinges on the simple recognition that these are national lands that belong to all Americans, including those yet to come.

With your help, we've survived and thrived through good and rough times for three decades. Like you, we're motivated by our love of the canyons. And that is precisely why we're ready to work with Mr. Bishop.

For the wild,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Groene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Scott Groene, Executive Director

features

Greater Canyonlands: Completing a Vision

In just two short years, you've built a movement.

We launched a campaign to encourage President Barack Obama to designate a Greater Canyonlands National Monument; it has spread across the nation. It began with SUWA members but now boasts the support of many other organizations and their members, including the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Grand Canyon Trust, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and more than 100 local and national businesses from the outdoor recreation industry.

We may take some pride in the rapid growth of today's campaign, but the idea of protecting Greater Canyonlands reaches back 80 years and perhaps well beyond.

The National Park Service first proposed a national monument protecting Greater Canyonlands and the surrounding canyons of the Colorado River in 1935. The following year, the first proposal for a 6,000-

square-mile Escalante National Monument recognized the need to preserve the extraordinary character of southern Utah's redrock wilderness—including the area now known as Greater Canyonlands. Pro-development advocates attacked this visionary idea, but President Franklin Roosevelt's Interior Secretary Harold Ickes continued to push for a 4.5 million-acre Escalante National Monument through 1940.

World War II diverted our attention, but Bates Wilson, then superintendent of Arches National Monument, worked tirelessly to introduce decision makers to this remarkable place in the 1950s.

"That's a National Park!"

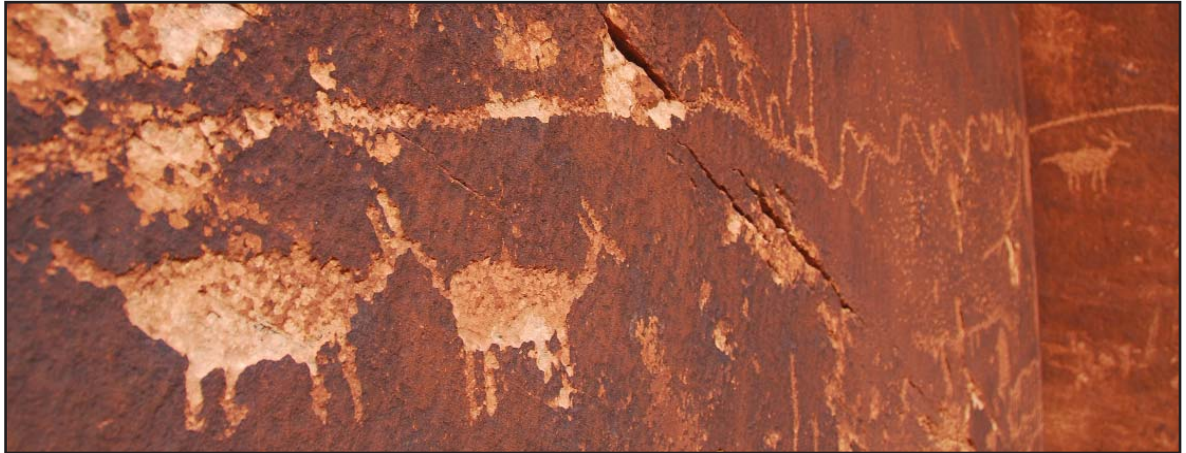
Wilson found an ally in John F. Kennedy's Interior Secretary, Stewart Udall. In 1961, Floyd Dominy, tireless head of the dam-building Bureau of Reclamation, flew Udall in a small plane to show him where he hoped to build his next dam: just below the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers. But Udall didn't see a new dam



© Tom Till (tomtill.com)

The Colorado River runs across Greater Canyonlands from northeast to southwest, winding its way through the Canyonlands Basin before converging with the Green River in Canyonlands National Park.

features



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

The Greater Canyonlands region reveals its rich human history through numerous pictographs and other culturally significant sites.

site. Instead, he famously looked down and exclaimed, “Goodness sake, that’s a national park!”

After that plane flight, Udall directed the Interior Department to begin planning a one million acre Canyonlands National Park. But Congress whittled down the proposal, and when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the public law creating the park in 1964, he preserved just 257,400 acres—about a tenth the acreage of Yellowstone National Park.

Canyonlands was expanded in 1971 to its present 337,570 acres, and a year later the creation of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area added some additional protection to the lands surrounding Lake Powell. Yet even with these additions, the boundaries of Canyonlands National Park were political boundaries that divided the watershed and left most of Greater Canyonlands without an adequate shield against development.

Fifty years after Stewart Udall’s vision of a Canyonlands National Park, Greater Canyonlands remains one of the last untouched frontiers of the West, and one of the largest areas in the lower 48 states wild enough to offer a once-in-a-generation opportunity to proclaim an environmental legacy and protect a beloved landscape. With the stroke of a pen, President Obama could declare the area a national monument through his authority under the Antiquities Act.

The Antiquities Act is a tool that allows the president to move quickly to protect threatened places of

extraordinary scientific and historic value. Greater Canyonlands qualifies lavishly on the values front. Sadly, it confronts an array of threats that are broad, serious, and immediate.

Greater Canyonlands sweeps across a vast network of canyons and mesas filled with scientific, cultural, and historic treasures—precisely the sort of place that the Antiquities Act was designed to protect. Its focal point is the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers in Canyonlands National Park—Dominy’s quintessential dam site, Udall’s national park.

A Mostly Unread Library of Human History

Beginning nearly 12,000 years ago, Paleo-Indians moved through and lived in the Greater Canyonlands region in relatively small numbers. Two of the earliest Paleo-Indian sites in North America lie along the Green River within Greater Canyonlands.

As the Ice Age gave way to warmer climates, the Green River corridor and nearby springs remained a lush refuge for Late Pleistocene mammals: mammoths, mastodons, camels and sloths, and the massive short-faced bears and saber-toothed tigers that preyed on them. Such concentrations made ample, if not easy, prey for Ice Age hunters with their stone weapons.

During the Archaic period, large animals became fewer and humans in Greater Canyonlands adapted to become efficient harvesters of plants and seeds

features

while hunting small mammals like rabbits and deer. As the massive ice sheets melted away, the raging Green and Colorado Rivers emerged as formidable barriers to social and economic exchange.

The Paleo-Indian hunting culture gradually gave way to farming cultures in the Archaic Period. Thousands of dry caves and alcoves in Greater Canyonlands preserve evidence of adaptation of human populations to changing climates over 10,000 years. One site, Cowboy Cave in Horseshoe Canyon, offers a dramatic example. Deposits dating back 15,000 years show dung left by mammoth, bison, horse, camel, and sloth, and run through 10 millennia of human occupation. Excavations at the cave yielded the oldest rock art in Utah with a known date, and unfired clay artifacts dated to between 7,400 and 5000 B.C., the earliest found on the Colorado Plateau.

Growing Populations

About 2,000 years ago, the introduction of agriculture, ceramics, and the bow and arrow from the south enabled people to more successfully adapt to life in the arid canyons. Populations grew rapidly as the Anasazi and Fremont cultures became established and dominated the region. This period produced an unparalleled concentration of archaeological sites in Greater Canyonlands, with an average of 24 sites per square mile in many parts of the region.

Around 900 A.D., the Colorado River suddenly ceased to be a barrier. A massive migration of Ancestral Puebloan farmers swarmed into Utah, reaching hundreds of miles beyond their ancestral homelands. Most of the archaeological evidence in Greater Canyonlands comes from this interval

between A.D. 900 and 1300: scores of cliff dwellings along the Colorado River corridor, “forts” along the Green River (defensive outposts or early warning stations), and diverse rock art styles that signify distinct cultural identities.

The Ancestral Puebloan and Fremont cultures disappeared even more abruptly than they emerged. In the late 13th Century, burgeoning populations encountered drier, hotter conditions that produced inconsistent crop yields, hunger, social strife, general chaos, and rapid abandonment of the farming lifestyle—and abandonment of much of the region. Similar shifts occurred more or less simultaneously throughout North America. That brought broad and deep changes to the Native cultural landscape just prior to the entry of Europeans. Deciphering the details of this great tragedy in the remote canyonlands of Utah may shed light on how this widespread catastrophe devastated the farming cultures of North America and could perhaps yield insight into how modern populations might react to and deal with climate change.

Europeans entered the region in the 1700s, when Spanish explorer-priests rode north from New Mexico. The two branches of the Old Spanish Trail skirted Greater Canyonlands just to the north and south, defining and acknowledging the region’s ruggedness and remoteness by avoiding it.

The remote and undeveloped nature of Greater Canyonlands protects historical sites that span the full history of the boom-and-bust West—beginning with mountain man Denis Julien’s first Anglo-American inscriptions along the Green and Colorado rivers in 1836 and John Wesley Powell’s

Moab Locals Rally for Protection

At the end of March, when Moab was crawling with jeepers drawn by the Annual Easter Jeep Safari, around 60 Moab locals rallied to show their support for creation of a Greater Canyonlands National Monument. The event was organized to counter a nearby rally held by the Sagebrush Coalition, which opposes the protection of Greater Canyonlands—and anyplace else, for that matter.

Residents carried homemade signs with slogans like “Locals for the Monument,” “Camping and Grilling, Not Mining and Drilling,” and “Jeeps? Sure. Tar sands? No!” as they marched to the location of the Sagebrush rally, which drew around 8 people, including organizers. Monument marchers cheered as passing drivers honked their horns in a show of support.

features

epic journeys in 1869 and 1872. Pioneer wagon roads, sawmills, and ranch structures tell the stories of isolated family ranches and early homesteaders. As the nineteenth century turned to the twentieth, Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch used Robbers Roost and nearby canyons along the Dirty Devil as hideouts, a key stop along The Outlaw Trail.

Rivers and Wildlife

A Greater Canyonlands National Monument would preserve a good deal more than science and history. Greater Canyonlands possesses more plant diversity than nearly any other region in Utah. Its 960 species of plants make up fully 57 percent of all plants known on the Colorado Plateau. A 6,500-foot elevation range coupled with diverse rock formations—each eroding to unique geography and soil types—defines Greater Canyonlands. Its ecotypes run from salt desert shrub to lush grassland, from piñon-juniper to alpine coniferous forest. The mosaic of environments created by two-dozen distinct rock layers nourishes nearly a thousand species of desert flora and a rich array of wildlife, from black bears on Elk Ridge, to mountain lions and desert bighorn sheep at Hatch Point, to peregrine falcons in Labyrinth Canyon.

In the heart of the plateau, Greater Canyonlands also protects critical watersheds along the Colorado and Green Rivers, as well as the Dirty Devil and San Rafael Rivers. The central veins of the Green and Colorado Rivers flow southward—defining the Greater Canyonlands' network of drainages. The Green loops for 50 miles through the sinuous bowknot curves of Labyrinth Canyon, which the BLM recommended to Congress as worthy of Wild and Scenic River designation. Significant tributaries—the San Rafael River, oasis-like Tenmile Creek, and Barrier (Horseshoe) Creek—cut deep gashes in the surrounding benchlands before joining the Green in this reach.

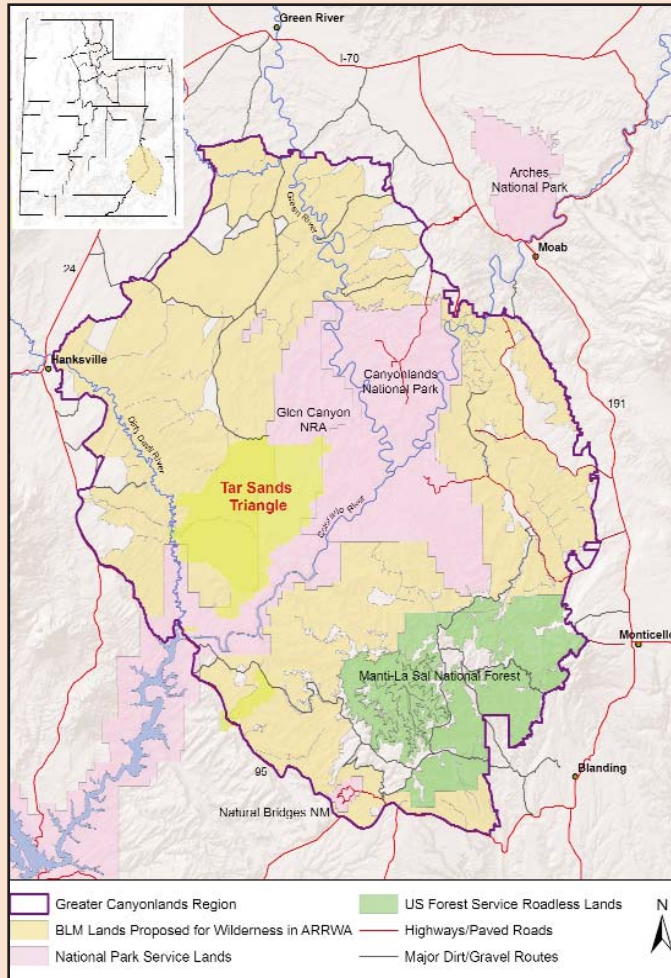
The Colorado runs across Greater Canyonlands from northeast to southwest—from near Moab southward into the Canyonlands basin surrounding Canyonlands National Park and on to its confluence with the Green (and the whitewater of Cataract Canyon). Indian Creek, Salt Creek, and Dark Canyon join the Colorado from headwaters on the flanks of Elk Ridge and the Abajo Mountains. Greater Canyonlands ends near Hite, Utah, where the Colorado meets the Dirty Devil River (flowing through one of the most rugged and remote landscapes in the American West) and



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

Labyrinth Canyon, a canoeist's paradise on the Green River, was recommended by the BLM as worthy of Wild and Scenic River designation.

Greater Canyonlands & the Tar Sands Triangle



The landscape north of the confluence of the Dirty Devil and Colorado Rivers is classic Greater Canyonlands country. Accessible only via nearly 50 miles of washboard roads, it's a stunning and silent wilderness of high mesas and deep canyons, a land so remote that its primary use in the past has been as a place for outlaws to herd stolen cattle.

The "Tar Sands Triangle," as it is known, encompasses nearly 200 square miles of the region. Energy companies hold leases for tar sands strip mining on more than 90,000 acres of it. Developing the tar sands deposits would radically transform the landscape, contaminating the air with benzene, toluene, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and other pollutants. It would also likely degrade the Dirty Devil and Colorado Rivers which provide water to more than 30 million Americans.

SUWA is prepared to challenge any BLM decisions leading to the development of tar sands leases in proposed wilderness.

White Canyon (after its descent from Natural Bridges National Monument).

Unprecedented Threats

This complex of canyons, mesas, mountains, and basins, of natural bridges, arches, rincons, and spires, rivals the Grand Canyon in importance and scale. Yet today, Greater Canyonlands stands unprotected, facing unprecedented threats. Potash mining is exploding in the region (see article on page 15), as is the pressure from oil and gas drilling. Between the Green and Dirty Devil rivers lies an area known as the Tar Sands Triangle, the development of which would permanently transform the region (see sidebar above). And rapidly

increasing off-road vehicle (ORV) use threatens both the landscape and the archaeological resources that are found throughout the area.

For decades, the BLM turned a blind eye to damage from unrestricted vehicle use in the Greater Canyonlands area. The toll includes vandalism of (and irreparable damage to) prehistoric cultural sites, soil erosion, polluted streams and damaged riparian systems, wildlife fragmentation, and a host of other impacts to the area's natural resources. In a belated effort to control the damage, the agency instituted a designated route system in 2008. Although the free-for-all era of cross-country ORV use was over, the Bush administration's BLM

features


© Mathew Gross/SUWA

In April, actress/director Daryl Hannah and rock legend Neil Young stopped by Moab and showed their support for protecting Greater Canyonlands. You can join them by taking part in our Greater Canyonlands photo campaign at facebook.com/greatercanyonlands.

merely adopted the crazy-quilt network of user-created trails, never troubling to examine the routes on the ground to determine whether natural and historic resources were being damaged by the routes. In fact, the BLM designated a sprawling network of over 2,500 miles of routes in the Greater Canyonlands area—nearly three times as many designated routes as are in the comparably-sized Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

If the BLM can't be bothered to examine routes on the ground, SUWA certainly can. We have found that nearly 1,000 miles of the agency's designated routes are inappropriate. Examples include routes that are redundant or non-existent—that is to say, invisible—on the ground. Some lead to nothing in particular or, at best, an old oil well drill site or stock tank. Others are in streams and riparian areas or near known cultural sites.

Greater Canyonlands' remoteness, ruggedness and sheer scale helped it to endure essentially unchanged for millennia. Passers-through, from Native people to explorers and casual wanderers, could do little more than peck at its surface. It is not so much that

they lacked the will to leave a more lasting and visible print but that they lacked the means. That day is gone. Today, the means for transforming entire landscapes are all too ready at hand. And so is the inclination to use them. That makes almost miraculous the fact that not a single power line traverses this still-wild place; few human constructions mar natural horizons. Preserving Greater Canyonlands makes even more sense today than it did decades ago when Interior Secretaries Harold Ickes and Stewart Udall each first imagined preserving millions of acres of the area's redrock country.

The question is whether President Obama and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell share the vision of the FDR and Kennedy administrations. Greater Canyonlands is an unimaginably rugged but achingly vulnerable expanse filled with scientific, cultural, and recreational riches—one of the last intact large landscapes in southern Utah's redrock wilderness or anywhere else. It's a landscape worthy of the president's attention, and with your help, we'll get it. Become involved by visiting GreaterCanyonlands.org.

—Mathew Gross and Stephen Trimble

DC news

House GOP Continues Happy Little War on the Environment

The House Natural Resources Committee is fundamentally a soap opera. You can wander off for months and never miss a thing. The players are either unchanged or interchangeable. The drama, angst and tragedy are all staged and overwrought. But, hey, it's a living!

Led by the Utah delegation, Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee have continued their war on the environment pretty much where they left off in the last Congress. Rob Bishop (R-UT) still sits atop the subcommittee on public lands with a new twist: oversight on environmental regulation—namely, the bedrock National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Bishop's agenda has been and remains driven by industry groups and county commissioners who yearn for the good old Bush days (though it is hard to see what they have to whine about under the Obama administration.)

They've trained their recent fire on the Antiquities Act and the "harm" that national monuments bring to local communities. Bishop's subcommittee recently held a hearing on a number of bills that would gut the Antiquities Act—including bills authored by all three Utah House Republicans that would essentially eliminate this important tool for conservation. In aid of that, they trotted out a trunk-to-tail circus parade of serial witnesses. You can measure the credibility of all of them by considering just one: Carbon County Commissioner John Jones. He was called to testify about how the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has impacted communities located some 200 miles from where he lives.

Fortunately, redrock champs Raul Grijalva and Rush Holt were there to correct the record, pointing out how the Escalante Chamber of Commerce talks constantly about the benefits the Grand Staircase-

Good
News!

Champs Reintroduce America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) introduced America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (S. 769, H.R. 1630) in April, setting the marker in Congress for meaningful wilderness protection on Utah's incredible BLM lands. It was introduced with 11 cosponsors in the Senate and 60 in the House, a solid core of members who recognize that these lands belong to all Americans and are worthy of the highest level of protection.

"The legislation Congressman Holt and I are introducing today will designate as wilderness some of our nation's most remarkable, but unprotected public lands," Durbin said. "This land was chosen based on meticulous research and surveying of thousands of square miles to determine which lands should be protected. 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."

"Development and irresponsible land use threaten one of this country's most spectacular landscapes, Utah's Redrock country," Holt said. "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act would preserve and protect these deep red canyons, windswept mesas, and fantastical sandstone formations for current and future generations."

Thank you, Sen. Durbin and Rep. Holt! We couldn't save the redrock without you.

DC news

Escalante National Monument has brought to their town, even using it in tourism marketing!

Other hearings have flogged the same pathetic old horse: monuments hurt recreation, monuments hurt the health of the land, monuments hurt the school children. You must give them credit: they can stick to a theme, right enough, the only job of a one-trick pony.

But just like last year, our champions are ready to defend the Antiquities Act from these attacks. And we saw with a recent round of national monument designations in places like New Mexico that the best way to defend the Act is to use it.

We still need your help. Please ask your representative to support the Antiquities Act and oppose any attempt to weaken it.

—Richard Peterson-Cremer

The Spoken Herb: Herbert's Hill Outing Sends Us through the Looking Glass

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert performed at what really amounted to an extended press conference before Rep. Rob Bishop's House subcommittee in May. Herbert was the only witness called. And he witnessed to some very peculiar ideas about civics, reason, and the natural world. In Herbert's perspective, for example, his absurd Utah land grab is "complementary" to congressionally approved land use bills. It is a strange analogy that might be useful in an SAT test if nowhere else. Land grab: lawmaking as tantrum: negotiation.

Here is more heretofore unknown stuff:

Herbert on Utah's forests: They are a "ready to burn tinderbox." Sounds scary. Expensive, too. How will Utah pay for fires if it gloms onto federal forests? Oh, yeah: eliminate forests, eliminate forest fires. Clever!

On lawsuits: "Litigation is used as a tool to stop things from happening. If you don't get your way, then just sue . . . [with RS 2477] the delay tactic actually works because some of the evidence is

dying off." Governor, the State of Utah—that would be *you*—brought the RS 2477 lawsuits. You filed 29 of them over bogus road routes, leaving Utah taxpayers with a massive bill. Who, then, is the suer in chief?

On Utah's economy: "We have a surplus in our account, we balance our budget. Our economy is growing at 2.5 times the national average; our unemployment rate is down to 4.7%." Glad to hear everything's great, Governor! So please remind us why you are always in full cry about the yoke of federal lands?

On Utah's growth limitations: Scarce water "is the only limiting factor I have to growth in Utah." What a relief! See, we thought you were always saying public lands would strangle growth in Utah. So water's the only problem and we're cool on federal lands, yes?

On endangered species protection: ". . . (W)e've had the desert tortoise, for example, where it's not even native to Utah. Somebody brought it in years ago and it's proliferated; now it's an endangered species and it's just killed the land." Only in the political mind can a proliferating species be endangered. The Guv's own Division of Wildlife Resources even has a desert tortoise adoption program to protect the species because it is "native to the Southern Utah desert."

On rodents: "Prairie dogs are like furry rabbits and they breed in significant numbers." So they're like furry rabbits, you say? Oh, those wascally pwaiwie dogs!

Still on prairie-rabbit-dogs: "Not only have they ruined a golf course, which just pains me to the quick, but now it's gone into private lands, devastating real estate values, because we're not able to address in a common-sense way the proliferation of prairie dogs." And everybody knows darned well that golf courses ARE native to southern Utah . . .

On the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the land trade it spurred: It "had some economic benefits from the aggregation" of scattered state trust land parcels into larger tracts of real estate. Whoa there, Governor: this one actually makes sense. Probably an oversight.

—Jen Beasley Ujifusa

canyon country updates

RS 2477 Litigation Update: Road Toll Rises

As reported in our last newsletter, litigation over Utah's right-of-way claims to roads across public lands is gathering steam. Relying on a 19th Century law known as Revised Statute (RS) 2477, the state and rural counties are asserting claims covering 36,000 miles across the state.

If Utah and its rural counties succeed in this litigation they will shred wild Utah. Faint two-track routes, present-day cow paths, and impassable desert routes could all become "highways." It could mark the end of the redrock wilderness dream. And never doubt that that is precisely the intent of this multi-million-dollar folly. Win, lose or draw, it will pick the pockets of Utah taxpayers; if it succeeds, it will ravage the American public's pristine lands.

At the end of March, Federal District Court Judge Clark Waddoups issued a decision on 15 claimed RS 2477 rights-of-way in Kane County that illustrate the danger. Judge Waddoups granted title to the state and Kane County for most of the 15 routes, which generally did not threaten proposed wilderness. Unfortunately, he also granted the state and county one particularly egregious route inside both proposed wilderness and the Grand Staircase-

Escalante National Monument (the "North Swag" route pictured below).

To prevent similar calamities, SUWA has assembled a team of prominent attorneys from law firms across the country. Our first challenge is to be allowed to participate in the lawsuits. Much of our legal team appeared in Utah federal district court in May to argue for our participation in the suits involving five counties: Garfield, Sevier, Uintah, Washington, and Wayne. Fortunately, in June, Judge Clark Waddoups granted SUWA intervention.

We are also completing briefing in our efforts to join RS 2477 litigation in other counties, including Kane, Carbon, and Duchesne.

At issue are thousands of miles of claimed routes, many utterly invisible, many others nothing more than dirt trails created by motorized users who can't stand the sight of an untracked landscape. All of them are threats to wilderness—perhaps the most critical the redrock has ever faced. We will continue to update you as things unfold.

—David Garbett



SUWA photo

A federal district court judge granted Kane County and the State of Utah title to this largely impassable route in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

canyon country updates

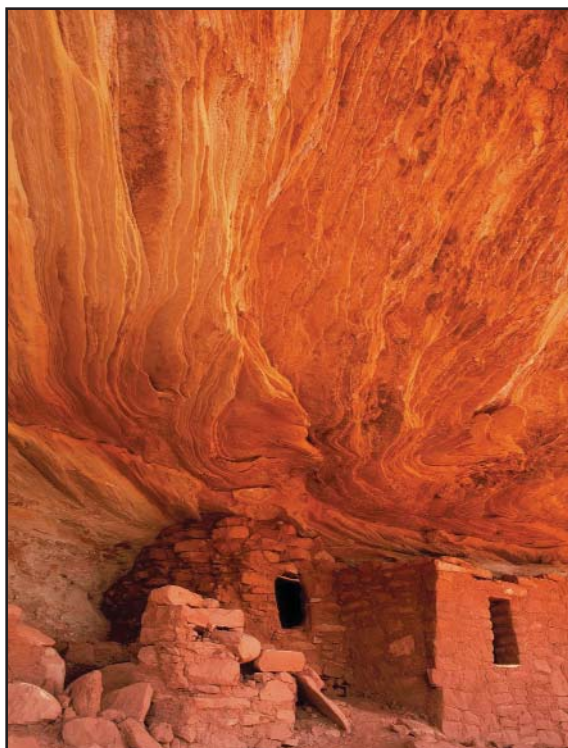
Cedar Mesa Threatened by New ORV Rights-of-Way

Ancient Puebloans left Utah more than 700 years ago, leaving behind ample evidence of their presence and their lives in stunning structures and artifacts. Cedar Mesa in southeastern Utah ranks high among such repositories.

Over time, unrestricted vehicle access has extended the range of pot-hunters bent on vandalizing ancient sites. It has allowed off-road vehicle (ORV) users to damage fragile soil crusts, causing erosion that leads to further damage and displacement of Cedar Mesa's prehistoric artifacts.

In 2008 the BLM designated routes on the mesa and closed it to off-trail driving. Although the travel plan for Cedar Mesa isn't perfect, it was a move in the right direction.

What was too little for conservationists was too much for rabid road cultists in San Juan County.



© James Kay (jameskay.com)

The renowned archaeological sites of Cedar Mesa will face greater risks of looting and vandalism if the BLM grants San Juan County's request for new rights-of-way.

They want to build several new ORV trails on Cedar Mesa and demand official rights-of-way for these new trails that should never be built. San Juan County's current request for rights-of-way on Cedar Mesa is the continuation of its quest for a dense network of ORV routes crisscrossing public lands. The county previously applied for rights-of-way for new ORV trails in the Indian Creek area and in Recapture Canyon (see autumn/winter 2012 and spring 2011 issues). In response to the county's playground bully tactics, the BLM continues to evaluate these right-of-way requests rather than tell the county that enough is enough.

The Indian Creek right-of-way and two of the Cedar Mesa rights-of-way would bisect lands in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, places even the BLM says are of wilderness caliber. Dozens of prehistoric cultural sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are in or near the proposed rights-of-way. And a couple of the rights-of-way are even located in and near streams, which provide valuable habitat for the vast majority of the areas' wild critters. Granting these rights-of-way would surrender management of these new ORV trails to the county.

So here are the pieces: the BLM is legally responsible for protecting archaeology and other resources on our public lands; beyond argument, ORV use results in increased vandalism, degradation, and looting of archaeological sites; and, San Juan County wants to chainsaw old-growth juniper trees to bulldoze new routes through some of the richest archaeology on the planet. Seems like a slam dunk in favor of conservationists, right? Only if you haven't been paying attention. All signs suggest that an obsequious BLM will invite the county to help itself. Again.

Remember this destructive little tribute to local rapacity next time you hear some western governor bleat about throwing off the shackles of oppressive federal control. The counties call the shots on our public lands in Utah, not the BLM and certainly not the American public that owns them.

We intend to protect Cedar Mesa, Indian Creek and Recapture Canyon and will assess our legal options when the BLM issues its final decisions. Stay tuned.

—Liz Thomas

canyon country updates



© James Kay (jameskay.com)

The dramatic promontory of Hatch Point could soon be marred by exploratory potash wells.

BLM Okays Potash Drilling on Hatch Point

The Moab office of the BLM has approved a mining company's proposal to drill four wells to explore potash deposits on Hatch Point, a scenic promontory that draws thousands of visitors every year.

K2O Utah LLC is the creature of a large Australian mining company. Both seem perfectly happy to forfeit natural values when the smell of profit is in the air. And the BLM is perfectly willing to let it happen. Of course, there is already important economic benefit to the region from the tens of thousands of visitors who flock to Hatch Point and the Needles Overlook every year. Will they continue to come when the view is sludge pits, tanker trucks and industrial equipment?

Exploration and Leasing Is Premature

The BLM has acknowledged that its current management plan (rushed out the door in the last hours of the Bush administration) failed to correctly identify areas where oil, gas and potash development should occur. Agency staff at the Moab

office are scurrying around to correct this blunder, scarcely an unusual one. In a sane world, exploration, leasing and drilling decisions would wait for that process to reach a conclusion. It all becomes more bizarre in light of the fact that the Utah BLM director entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to allow K2O to drill exploratory wells on Hatch Point after his agency commenced its new leasing review process. After all, the BLM's new leasing plan can consider, among other things, closing the Hatch Point area to leasing.

Winnowed down, here's what has happened: the BLM failed miserably in its duty to draft a proper mineral leasing plan. It set out to rectify that error, then perverted the new process by approving exploratory drilling in advance of its completion.

The BLM's remedial draft leasing plan is scheduled for release later this summer and the final plan in a year. All of this will be too late to save Hatch Point from the four exploratory wells. However, SUWA will hold the BLM's feet to the fire to complete its new leasing plan before issuing potash leases to K2O for full-scale potash development on Hatch Point.

(Continued next page)

canyon country updates

We try always to heed the old dictum, “Never ascribe to malice what can be explained by incompetence.” But that gets harder with each new, phony mea culpa from the agency. And each one strengthens the case for better protection for the lands in the Greater Canyonlands area.

—Liz Thomas

BLM Releases Study on Land Exchange Act

The Utah BLM recently released an environmental assessment (EA) on the Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act of 2009. The law mandates valuation of the exchange parcels and conferral between the state and BLM before the trade can take place. The EA serves to address these requirements and also determines whether the land exchange complies with environmental laws and serves the public interest.

We believe the land exchange is a big step forward for the protection of Utah’s wild lands. It will place in federal ownership valuable conservation and recreation lands in Uintah, Grand and San Juan Counties that might otherwise be at risk of develop-

ment. It will trade 35,515 acres of federal land for 45,490 acres of mostly state land elsewhere. The BLM will manage all lands it receives for resource protection and recreational use.

Among them will be lands within and contiguous to wilderness study areas, areas of critical environmental concern, and lands and mineral interests near the Colorado River corridor, the Book Cliffs, and Dinosaur National Monument.

Consolidating scattered parcels of state lands that are valuable for conservation and recreational purposes with the surrounding public lands managed by the BLM will contribute to improved efficiency and consistency in the management of these lands. In return, the exchange will place lands with high development potential into state ownership for the benefit of the state’s public schools.

We thank our friends at the Grand Canyon Trust for their tireless work to make this land exchange a reality.

—Liz Thomas

Richfield RMP Litigation Moves Ahead

In a memorable episode of *The Simpsons*, the hit toy of the season was Funzo, a cute, cuddly, and furry talking doll. This being *The Simpsons*, naturally there was a catch. Funzo, it turned out, was programmed only to be cute and cuddly in the store. Once purchased and taken home its real programming imperative kicked in: to destroy other toys!

Funzo is a little like the BLM’s Bush-era resource management plans (RMPs).

To recap a bit, the Bush administration completed six RMPs covering basically all of eastern Utah just as it was leaving office. The agency peddles these plans as fair and balanced. However, their real aim is to ensure that BLM land managers squander our public lands’ natural values.

SUWA promptly filed lawsuits aimed at undoing the damage and the suits are now moving in the courts. The suit challenging the first of the six—the Richfield plan—is now fully briefed. By the time



© Tom Till (tomtill.com)

Thanks to the Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act of 2009, popular Corona Arch will soon be managed by the BLM instead of the State of Utah.

Beef Basin/Dark Canyon Deforestation Begins

The BLM has launched a major deforestation project against pinyon pine, juniper, and sagebrush communities on the Dark Canyon Plateau. The agency describes it as “vegetative management.” (In the same way, we suppose, as coyote poisoning is “animal husbandry.”)

The project involves using a mix of mechanical cutting, prescribed fire and herbicides across 9,200 acres of land.

As reported in the spring of 2013, SUWA filed an appeal with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) challenging the Beef Basin/Dark Canyon Plateau project. We have yet to receive a decision from the IBLA. Because the board did not stay the project pending resolution of the appeal, the work could go forward. Fortunately, it is so far limited to previously disturbed areas.

We’ll report to you when we hear from the IBLA.

you read this SUWA and its conservation partners will have made oral arguments to a Utah federal district court and explained where the BLM broke the law in issuing the plan.

In a related note, the BLM recently announced it will redo the Vernal RMP’s travel plan for off-road vehicles. That’s an implicit acknowledgement that it did not follow the law in preparing this plan the first time. SUWA will do its best to see that the agency complies with the law this time and doesn’t simply rubber stamp another wish list of bogus county road claims and routes for ORV users.

—David Garbett

Good
News!

Utah’s Sagebrush Rebellion Loses Another Round

High school seniors still learn about the United States Constitution in civics class. In particular, they learn about something called the “Supremacy Clause” (Article VI, Clause 2) which provides that “the laws of the United States . . . shall be the supreme law of the land.”

Maybe Utah Governor Gary Herbert and Utah’s legislators missed school that day? That may be the only way to explain how they reasonably thought

that House Bill 155, which the legislature passed during the 2013 session and Herbert promptly signed, would survive a court challenge. Or maybe they didn’t think at all?

H.B. 155, Federal Law Enforcement Amendments, purported to limit the authority of BLM and Forest Service law enforcement agents patrolling on federal lands and would have made these agents guilty of a class B misdemeanor for impersonating a peace officer if they tried to enforce federal laws on federal lands. In other words, a Kane County sheriff’s deputy could cite a BLM ranger for enforcing federal laws on BLM managed lands in the county. Crazy, huh?

In an uncommonly decisive move, the U.S. Justice Department sued the State of Utah the day before the law was set to go into effect and challenged H.B. 155 as violating the U.S. Constitution, including the Supremacy Clause. On the same day, a federal district court judge issued an order blocking implementation of the law. The judge stated that the United States was likely to succeed on the merits of its case. The judge has scheduled a second hearing for the end of June which could result in the law being permanently shelved.

Maybe he should also order the governor and legislators to retake that high school civics class? It could save us all a lot more headache.

—Steve Bloch

canyon country updates



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

Extensive ORV use in the Moquith Mountain Wilderness Study Area (above) and adjacent Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park threatens the existence of the Coral Pink Sand Dunes tiger beetle.

Feds Propose Listing Tiger Beetle as Threatened

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed listing the Coral Pink Sand Dunes (CPSD) tiger beetle as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The beetle occupies the Coral Pink Sand Dunes in Kane County, Utah, and has one of the smallest geographical ranges of all insect species.

Extensive off-road vehicle (ORV) use in the Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park and the BLM's Moquith Mountain Wilderness Study Area has brought the beetle to the brink. ORVs kill beetles and their prey directly and also indirectly by damaging vegetation both rely upon. They also reduce soil moisture. The FWS notes that ORV use has directly caused the extirpation of numerous tiger beetle species around the country in recent years.

FWS science shows a clear connection between declining CPSD tiger beetle populations and ORV use. And it is clear that a conservation agreement between the Utah Department of Natural

Resources, BLM, FWS and Kane County (jointly referred to as the "Conservation Committee") has failed to protect the remaining beetle population (as a historical note, the original conservation agreement was the result of a listing petition filed by SUWA in 1994). We urge the FWS to move forward with a "threatened" listing under the Endangered Species Act and to designate all potential habitat as critical and close it to ORV use.

The committee's major concern is conservation of ORV use in the dunes, not conserving a dwindling beetle population. To head off the listing, the committee revised its agreement. The changes are mostly cosmetic, expanding conservation area boundaries within the state park from 207 to 266 acres and providing for "islands of habitat" between the state park and BLM lands. They do not expand habitat protection within the WSA.

SUWA is reviewing the draft documents and will submit comments to the FWS. We'll keep you posted.

—Neal Clark

inside SUWA

Redrock Grassroots Continue to Shine, and You Can Join In!

It's an old story with new chapters every day: redrock volunteers keep stepping up to the plate all across the country.

First case in point: the Greater Canyonlands postcard campaign. At a recent Utah Wilderness Coalition meeting with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the CEQ staff was handed yet another huge stack of postcards. And there are plenty more where those came from: over 17,000 have been collected by nearly 200 volunteers (to be honest, we've lost count of the number of collectors). You can check it all out at suwa.org/support.

Second case in point: the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act cosponsorship drive. Cosponsorships don't happen without redrock volunteers contacting their senators and representatives. How are we doing? Check out the list on our website at suwa.org/cosponsors. If your senators and representative aren't on the list, please get in touch with them and urge them to sign on.



© Clayton Daughenbaugh/SUWA

Redrock activist Meghan Gauger meets with Rep. Moore of Wisconsin—the first representative to cosponsor America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in 2013.



© Clayton Daughenbaugh/SUWA

Volunteers educate *Canoecopia* attendees and gather postcard signatures in Madison, Wisconsin.

Here's a list of ways you can help out:

- ▶ Collect signatures on Greater Canyonlands postcards.
- ▶ Provide a venue for a showing of the "Wild Utah" DVD. In many states a SUWA staff person can come show it and talk more about protecting the redrock. Otherwise, you can show it yourself. Bring it to a local hiking club, a seniors group, a student organization, a Sierra Club group, an Audubon Society, a group at your church . . . you get the idea.
- ▶ Meet with your senators' or representative's staffs in their local offices.
- ▶ Get your local outdoor recreation store to make free copies of the SUWA newsletter available (these are often great venues for showing the "Wild Utah" DVD, too).
- ▶ Post your photo on the Greater Canyonlands facebook page facebook.com/GreaterCanyonlands.

If any of these possibilities catch your fancy, contact one of SUWA's organizers:

Utah and West – Terri Martin (terri@suwa.org)

Midwest – Clayton Daughenbaugh (clayton@suwa.org)

East – Jackie Feinberg (jackie@suwa.org)

inside SUWA

Moab's Earth Day Bazaar Attracts Hundreds



© Neal Clark/SUWA

The second annual “Moab Earth Day Bazaar: an Ode to Greater Canyonlands,” brought hundreds of people—locals and visitors alike—to Swanny City Park in April.

Organized by Canyon Country Rising Tide and SUWA, this year’s celebration featured live music, arts, crafts and good food along with many children’s activities. Local non-profit organizations shared with the community their visions on topics including wildlife rehabilitation, Utah tar sands mining, uranium mining and milling, oil and gas extraction and, of course, the continuing campaign for a Greater Canyonlands National Monument.

We thank all the people who came and supported the event and look forward to the third annual Bazaar next year!

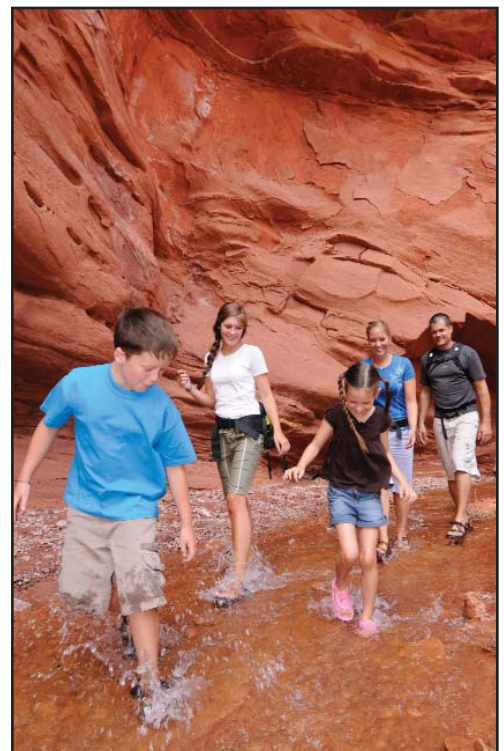
Build a Legacy of Support for the Redrock

Please consider leaving a gift to SUWA in your will or trust. Bequests are a simple, effective way for those of us who love the redrock to ensure that when we’re gone, the work to protect these amazing landscapes continues.

A gift to SUWA from your estate—whatever the amount—is entirely free from federal estate taxes. This means we are able to use the full amount of the bequest to protect the redrock, whereas if it were left to an individual, a significant amount might go to federal estate taxes. Also, bequests generally are not subject to state inheritance or estate taxes. You can also create a bequest so that the needs of your heirs are taken care of first.

A bequest for SUWA (or any other charitable organization) is very simple to establish. Just name the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance in your will, trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy, along with our contact information and tax I.D. number and the dollar amount or percent of your estate you wish to contribute.

If you’d like to make a gift to SUWA or have already included a gift to SUWA in your estate, please contact Deeda Seed at deeda@suwa.org or (801) 428-3971. You can also visit us online at suwa.org/plannedgiving.



© Lin Alder

inside SUWA



© Kathlene Audette/SUWA

SUWA's 2013 canvass team (not all pictured) led by Scott Kolata of Fieldworks, has been knocking on over 26,000 doors along the Wasatch Front, educating Utahns about the threats to redrock wilderness and engaging them in our work to protect wild Utah. Our thanks go out to the Fieldworks crew for their hard work and enthusiasm, and to everyone who has joined, renewed their membership, or signed our petition at the door. Above: Evan Done, Patrick Crowell, Scott Kolata, Emily Minds, and Jamilla Alani.

Give a Gift Membership and Save \$10!

If you share a love of the outdoors with your friends, why not share your activism too? Gift memberships make wonderful gifts for birthdays and holidays. Simply mail in this form with **\$25 for each membership** (a \$10 savings) or order online at suwa.org/goodies.

Gift Membership #1

From: _____

(your name)

To:

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Gift Membership #2

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(your name)

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Salt Lake City, UT 84111**

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 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.

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+)

Bret Webster Images, UT

Kayenta Members

(\$1,000-\$4,999)

A Wanderlust Adventure, CO

Juniper Ridge, CA

Powderhound Marketing, UT

Stone Forest Inc, NM

Treasure Mountain Inn, UT

Wingate Members

(\$500-\$999)

Community Builders Cooperative, MA

Imlay Canyon Gear, UT

Institute of Taoist Education and

Acupuncture, Inc, CO

Medical Plaza Pharmacy, UT

Rocking V Cafe, UT

Ultralight Adventure Equipment, UT

Words and Photographs by Stephen
Trimble, UT

Zion Mountain School, UT

Moenkopi Members

(\$150-\$499)

Advanced Media Strategies, WA

Adventure Safety International, UT

Alta Lodge, UT

American Image Photography, MI

Avenues Yoga, UT

Baked In Telluride, CO

Boulder Mountain Lodge, UT

Brown Bag Farms, CA

Bruce Hucko Photography, UT

Caffe Ibis Coffee Roasting Co, UT

Canyon Voyages Adventure Company,
UT

Canyonlands Field Institute, UT

Capitola Book Cafe, CA

Charles Cramer Photography, CA

Charles Wood Photography, UT

City Cleaners, Inc., UT

Consulting Psychologists, AZ

Dammeron Corporation, UT

Deanna Rosen LCSW, UT

Deer Hill Expeditions, CO

Dennis Chavez Development

Corporation, NM

Desert Highlights, UT

Faceplant, UT

Four Crows Photography, MA

Githens Properties, LLC, CO

Glenn Randall Writing and

Photography, CO

Gospel Flat Farm, CA

High Country Appraisal, CO

Highway 89 Media, UT

Horsethief Ranch, CO

Hyperspod Sports, ID

Injoy Productions, CO

J Groene Construction Inc, KS

James Kay Photography, UT

Law Office 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

Manning Curtis Bradshaw & Bednar,

UT

Matheson Design, OR

Maui Mountain Environmentally

Friendly Coffee, HI

Mesa Farm Market, UT

Moab Cliffs and Canyons, UT

Mountain Chalet, CO

Muench Photography Inc, NM

Mystic Hot Springs, UT

Neiman Wealth Management, LLC, FL

Nichols Expeditions, UT

Ody Brook Enterprises, MI

Pack Rat Outdoor Center, AR

Page Speiser LCSW, UT

Paul Fuller Massage Therapy, CO

Phillips Gallery, UT

Pinnacle Peak Eye Care, AZ

Red Rock Brewing Company, UT

Red Rock Counseling & Education, UT

Richard Farrell CPA, CO

Rocky Collins Construction, UT

Rupestrian CyberServices, AZ

Select Stone, Inc, MT

Selinda Research Associates, IL

Sharp End Publishing, CO

Sol Foods, UT

Spring Lake Publishing, UT

Squatters Pub Brewery, UT

Stephen L. Gilsdorf, CPA, AZ

Steven Lamb Attorney At Law, KY

Streamline Industries Inc., UT

Sun Dog Automotive, CO

Tesch Law Offices PC, UT

Tom Till Gallery, UT

Trio Restaurant Group, UT

Underwood Environmental, Inc, UT

Urban Utah Homes & Estates, UT

Wasatch Touring, UT

Waterwise Design & Landscapes, LC,
UT

William Stone Photography, NM

With Gaia Design, UT

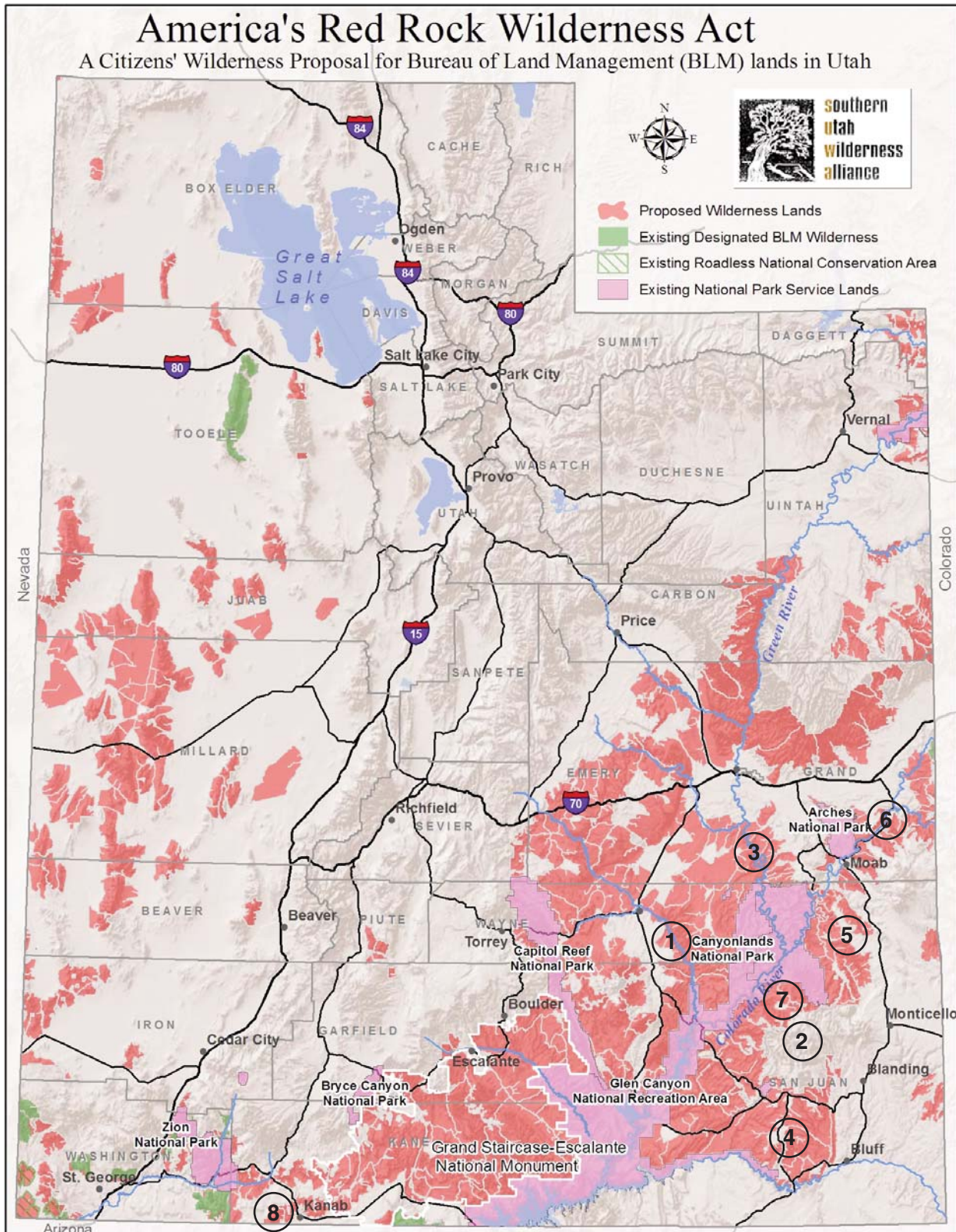
Workspace Installations LLC, CT

ZAK Construction, OR



America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Utah



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Redrock & Pearls

Celebrating the 30th Year of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

GALA CELEBRATION

Enjoy drinks, food, and music by Doug Wintch

When: 7:30 - 10:00 pm on Saturday, November 16, 2013

Where: the Utah Museum of Natural History's Canyon Atrium

301 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, Utah

Tickets \$50 per person *(this includes a complimentary one-year membership)*
or \$25 per person for current SUWA members.



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For tickets go to suwa.org/gala or call Kathlene at 801-236-3763



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