



REDROCK

W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 21, Number 1 • Spring 2004

Resource Management Plans:
Determining the Future of Utah Wilderness

Cover Photo: *Buckskin Gulch, said to be the world's longest slot canyon, is part of the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, one of only two designated BLM wilderness areas in Utah. Photo by James W. Kay (www.jameskay.com)*



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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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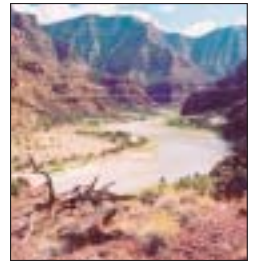
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This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Steve Bloch, Bob Brister, Peter Downing, Greg Gordon, Scott Groene, Margi Hoffmann, Tom Holt, Herb McHarg, Heidi McIntosh, Lindsey Oswald, Dave Pacheco, Sean Saville, Liz Thomas, Tim Wagner, Hansjorg Wyss, and Larry Young. It was laid out and edited by Diane Kelly and proofread by Lindsey Oswald.

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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, 1471 South 1100 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.

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**Moving? Please send your change of address to:
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w i l d e r n e s s n o t e s

Looking Back and Moving Ahead

[Editor's note: This is a revised version of a letter that was sent to the SUWA board and a segment of our membership in late February. Larry Young wanted to share the message with all of you.]

This is my final turn at writing *Wilderness Notes*. After four years as SUWA's executive director (and more than five years on staff), it is time for me to move on to the next phase of my life. I'll be leaving SUWA at the end of April to move to Pullman, Washington, where my wife Christine has accepted a tenured position at Washington State University (with a great lab and other resources in a strong department). Pullman also has excellent public schools and community activities so it will be a great place for our 20 month-old daughter to grow up. As for me, I hope I'll be able to find work that will allow me to remain involved with western public lands issues.

What Pullman doesn't have is America's redrock wilderness, so there is a good chance our paths will cross sometime in the future along a desert trail deep in the heart of canyon country. No place speaks to my soul like Utah's Colorado Plateau; it is a place of refuge that my wife loves too, and a place I want to share with my daughter as she grows older. That there is a fight over the future of this national treasure continues to mystify me. But the knowledge that there are so many willing to step forward in its defense gives me great hope.

One of the great privileges of being SUWA's executive director is that I get to write a farewell article as I reach the end of my tenure. It is a privilege for me because, over the years, I've grown close to the incredible cadre of people who make SUWA's spirited defense of Utah's redrock wilderness possible.

If you are reading this issue of *Wilderness Notes*, then you are most likely among those who have made a difference to SUWA during the years I've served as executive director. For this I owe you my deepest gratitude and thanks. Together we have largely succeeded in protecting our beloved redrock desert even as it has been under assault by extractive industries, their pro-development political allies, irresponsible off-road vehicle users, and other threats in recent years. Our success against such formidable foes is something we can all be proud of.

As I move on, SUWA will be left in more than able hands as our staff attorney, Scott Groene, takes over as executive director this spring. Many of you know Scott—he's been a key player on the Utah wilderness front for a long time—and I'm sure you'll agree that there is no one better prepared to be SUWA's next executive director.

Scott first bumped into SUWA in 1987 while working in Mexican Hat, Utah, population 28, as a lawyer representing indigent residents of the Navajo Nation and San Juan County. While investigating a proposed strip mine on Lime Ridge, he discovered that a young SUWA was already on the issue (the mine was stopped). Scott then served on our board until he was hired as SUWA's first lawyer. Since then he has probably spent more hours than any other person trying to save Utah's redrock wilderness. After a stint as Chief of Staff for former Utah Representative Wayne Owens in Washington, DC, he returned to SUWA to open our Moab office amidst hostility and threats.

When the Republicans took over Congress in 1994, giving the Utah delegation a green light to pass anti-wilderness legislation, Scott traveled to DC to pitch in for a couple of weeks. He ended up staying for a year. In an event that defined SUWA, Scott and the rest of the SUWA staff did what their elders told them couldn't be done: they stopped a united Utah congressional delegation from passing anti-wilderness legislation in a Republican-controlled Congress. The congressional fight nationalized Utah as an issue and eventually led to the establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. While others attended the monument ceremony on the south rim of the Grand Canyon with President Clinton, Scott celebrated the victory in his own way by kayaking through the Grand Canyon below.

wilderness notes

Scott then went on to serve as SUWA's conservation director and, later, the director of the National BLM Wilderness Campaign (a two-year SUWA project). In 2001, he moved to Jackson, Wyoming, where he indulged his love for wild places, roaming the Wyoming backcountry on skis and on foot while working for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

In early 2003, we coaxed Scott out of the Tetons and convinced him to come home to SUWA and his first love, the redrock wilderness. Most recently, Scott has focused on issues ranging from the Bush administration's efforts to hand over bogus RS 2477 road claims to the State of Utah (in an attempt to undermine future wilderness designation) to the revisions of six of Utah's eleven BLM Resource Management Plans (see feature article on p. 7).

Rest assured, SUWA will be in good hands as Scott takes over the reins. He knows Utah wilderness issues from the ground up, he knows environmental law, he knows BLM regulations and administrative procedures, he knows Congress, he knows and values grassroots involvement, and he loves the land passionately.

Again, thank you so much for the wonderful support you have offered SUWA during the years I have served as executive director. Without your help, SUWA would not be the effective voice for wilderness that it is today. And I know that with your ongoing support, SUWA will continue to succeed in its efforts to protect our beloved redrock wilderness.

Thanks for helping us keep it wild!

—Larry Young



Kevin Walker

Scott Groene, SUWA's new executive director, enjoys a stunning view of the San Rafael Swell from high atop Factory Butte.

wilderness 101

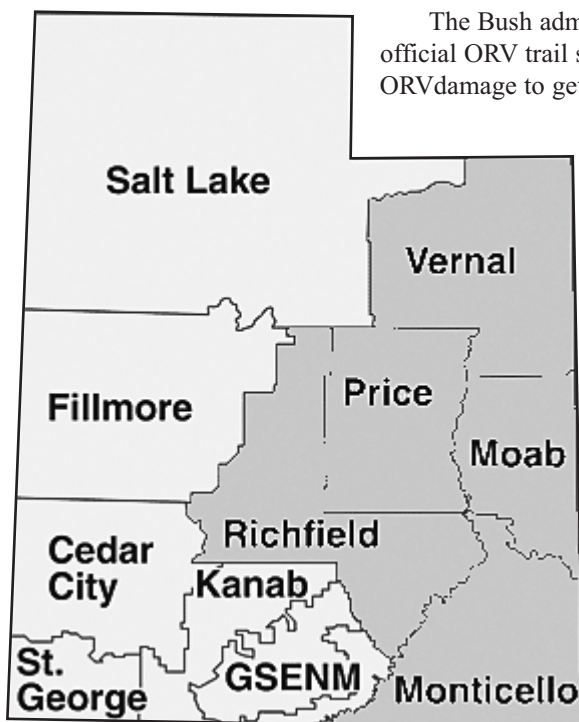
Just What the Heck Is an RMP?

Good question. Right now the Utah Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is revising five separate Resource Management Plans (RMPs) affecting more than 10 million acres of land throughout the state (see feature story, opposite page). If you don't already know what RMPs are and why they're so important, now is the time to learn.

An RMP is a planning document that, by and large, serves as the basis for every land management decision the BLM makes. Among other things, RMPs designate areas that are acceptable for oil and gas leasing and development, establish trail systems for off-road vehicles (ORVs), and identify areas in need of special protection. Any new proposed projects, such as off-road vehicle playgrounds or oil and gas wells, must be within areas the RMP deems acceptable.

Each field office of the BLM is responsible for revising its RMPs every ten to twenty years. These plan revisions are subject by law to an open and public process that provides opportunities for citizens to voice concerns and submit detailed comments to the BLM. Unfortunately, it's not always that simple. Just in time for the current round of RMP revisions, the Bush administration sent a memo to the Utah BLM office directing that oil and gas exploration and development be made the **number one priority** on Utah's public lands. Subsequent to this memo, energy development became the central focus of BLM planning efforts. According to the Utah BLM website:

Current planning efforts have been identified as 'Time Sensitive Resource Management Plans' due to mineral resource studies conducted under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA). . . This data is now being used in expedited RMPs to plan for multiple uses on the public lands, and specifically plan for the responsible development of high potential oil and gas resources in this area.



Shaded areas above indicate BLM districts currently undergoing RMP revisions.

The Bush administration also gave the BLM discretion to put off designating official ORV trail systems for another five years—ample time for widespread ORV damage to get even more out of control. Given the administration's heavy hand in Utah land management, it is even more imperative that all of us take an active role in the RMP revision process by submitting our letters, faxes, and emails urging the BLM to protect all wilderness-quality lands under its jurisdiction.

Here in Utah, the BLM has initiated the RMP revision process for five separate districts: Vernal, Price, Moab, Monticello, and Richfield (see inset map). This is your chance to speak on behalf of special places like Wild Horse Mesa, Muddy Creek, Factory Butte, Bullfrog, Mussentuchit Badlands, Molen Reef, Comb Ridge, Cedar Mesa, Arch Canyon, Bitter Creek, Price River, and White Canyon, just to name a few.

Remember: the fate of over 10 million acres of BLM land—over 5 million of which qualify for federal wilderness designation—will be decided in the upcoming RMP revision process. To find out how you can get involved, contact Margi Hoffmann at (801) 486-7639, ext. 20 or margi@suwa.org. You can also visit www.suwa.org for the latest information or sign up for SUWA's email alert list (the best source for breaking news) at www.suwa.org/alertlist/.

features

Planning Process Offers a Rare Opportunity for Utah Wilderness Activists

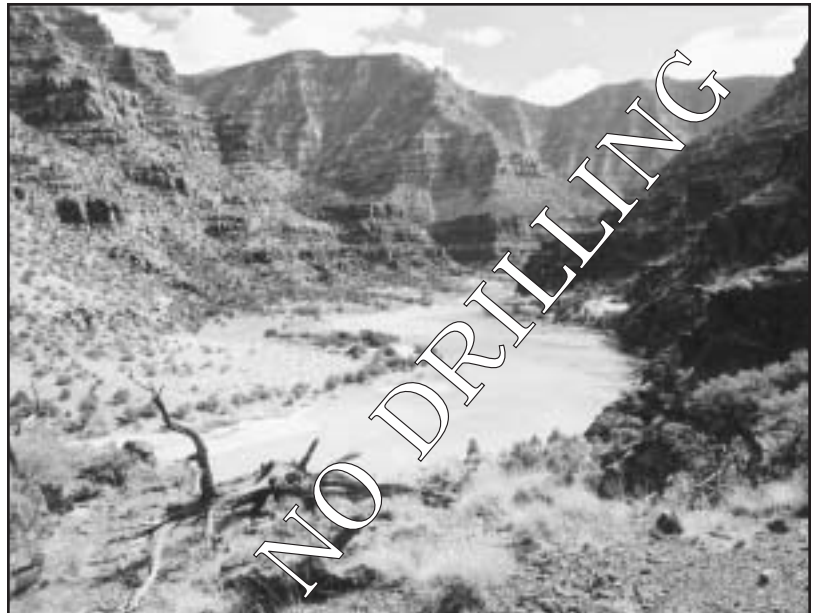
Five Million Acres of Redrock Wilderness Are at Stake

Renowned anthropologist Margaret Meade once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world: indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.” Not only do many Utah wilderness activists know this quote by heart, they also live by it. Motivated by an intense love of the land, redrock advocates have faithfully participated in congressional wilderness hearings, BLM open houses, and wilderness service trips, and have spilled a lot of ink in letters to Congress, the BLM, and local newspaper editors voicing one unified sentiment: “Protect Wild Utah!” Every once in a while we have the unique opportunity to bring about substantial change through this collective wilderness voice. Now is one of those times.

This year, as the BLM updates its Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for 10 million acres of public lands in Utah, it’s time again to sharpen your pencils, boot up your computer, and organize your thoughts. Like a city zoning plan that identifies areas appropriate for industrial use and areas to be set aside for city parks, these RMPs will determine how the BLM manages our public lands—including 5 million acres of America’s redrock wilderness—for decades to come.

The Utah BLM has hired contractors to write five separate RMPs for the Vernal, Price, Richfield, Moab and Monticello planning areas (see map opposite page). Drafts of the Vernal and Price RMP revisions have probably been released for public comment by the time you are reading this. Draft plans for the other areas will be released as the year progresses. These five areas encompass over 10 million acres of BLM land in eastern and southeastern Utah. Approximately half of these lands lie within America’s Redrock Wilderness Act.

The pressure to open Utah’s wild backcountry to motorized routes, oil drilling, and off-road vehicle (ORV) trails has rarely been greater. Already, Interior Secretary Gale Norton has given away much of the store by colluding with former Utah



Ray Bloxham

The BLM’s resource management planning process will determine whether wild places like Desolation Canyon, above, are off-limits to development or “open for business.”

Governor (now EPA Administrator) Mike Leavitt to dissolve existing “look before you leap” policies which gave important protections to lands within America’s Redrock Wilderness Act. Another back-room agreement between Utah and Interior attempts to rewrite a 2002 court decision which held that faint trails in the desert do not qualify as “constructed highways” under RS 2477 (for more on the two Leavitt-Norton deals, see Summer 2003 issue, p. 6).

It seems that wilderness foes are viewing the RMP process as yet another tool for opening our pristine public lands to oil rigs and ORVs. Some of the special places SUWA members have passionately protected over the last 20 years could now be sacrificed, including Desolation Canyon, White River, Labyrinth Canyon, Harts Point, Fisher Towers, Sids Mountain, Wild Horse Mesa, Upper Red Canyon, Duma Point, Dome Plateau, Arch Canyon, Cedar Mesa, and the Book Cliffs. As a

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Utah wilderness lover, your voice in the BLM planning process is tremendously important and could affect land management decisions for decades to come.

THE TERRIBLE TWOSOME: OIL DRILLING AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

In the Utah RMP process we are faced with two major hot-button issues: oil and gas drilling and ORVs. These two topics, more than any others, pervade the debate over the future of Utah wilderness and are common themes in each planning area.

Drilling the Redrock

In 2002, the Interior Department issued an order to the Utah BLM which made its intention crystal clear: oil and gas drilling was to be the agency's "No. 1 priority." With this new mandate from the Washington mothership, the agency is now handing large chunks of wilderness-quality lands over to the oil and gas industry through both quarterly lease sales (see article on p. 17) and the current round of industry-biased RMPs.

The **Vernal** field office RMP was designated a "fast track" project by the Interior Department so

that areas previously closed to industry would be available for drilling as soon as possible. Wild places now at risk include portions of the White River unit in eastern Utah; areas adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument in northeastern Utah; and Cripple Cowboy and Hells Hole near the Colorado border. Most of these areas lie within the larger Book Cliffs/Tavaputs Plateau region of east-central Utah, an area considered by many to be one of the most remote and wildlife-diverse regions in the lower 48 states. This area is so gravely threatened that it was recently featured on the CBS Evening News segment "Eye on America."

The **Price** field office RMP is also a designated "fast track" project where oil and gas development, including coalbed methane, is trumping all other values. Wilderness areas that could soon see oil and gas rigs include the Desolation Canyon unit along the Green River; the Price River area north-east of the San Rafael Swell; the San Rafael Reef area south of Interstate 70; the San Rafael River and Sweetwater Reef area located in the San Rafael Desert east of Highway 24; and one of the country's premier river recreational areas, Labyrinth Canyon north of Canyonlands National Park.

Drilling in Wilderness: A High Stakes Gamble



Public involvement in the current RMP process will help prevent the spread of oil and gas development throughout Utah's wilderness-quality lands.

James W. Kay

❖ Current USGS data indicate that the total amount of undiscovered oil and gas resources expected to be found in Utah (without regard to the economic viability of extracting these resources) is 436 million barrels of oil and 15,668 billion cubic feet of natural gas. This is enough oil to supply the U.S. for about three weeks, and enough gas to supply the country for about 8.5 months.

❖ The oil and gas produced outside of already developed "hot spots" amounts to less than 5% of Utah's historical oil and gas production. **Current USGS data indicate that the undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and natural gas resources within America's Redrock Wilderness Act amount to about 5 days of oil and less than 4 four weeks of natural gas at current consumption levels.** These figures would be even lower if economic feasibility were taken into account since wilderness lands are typically remote and lack infrastructure for development. Non-market costs, including loss of wildlife habitat, water quality, and wilderness values, are also significant factors to consider.

❖ Even in the highly productive areas of Utah, 11% of the wells produce no oil or gas. Outside of these proven areas, 63% of wells produce no oil and gas. Against such unfavorable odds, energy developers are willing to wager some of the most spectacular wild lands in the world.

(Sources of Information: United States Geological Survey, Department of Energy, Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining)

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With a few exceptions, the **Richfield** field office has seen little controversy regarding energy development over the years. That could change as industry is now finding it easier to obtain permits, with minimal environmental review, under the current administration. Areas previously considered to have low potential for energy development are now being classified as “high potential” regardless of data showing otherwise. Some special places which may be at risk from energy development include the stunningly beautiful Flat Tops in the San Rafael Desert, the unique badlands of the Mussentuchit Desert; the Dirty Devil wilderness, where Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch once hid out; and the Henry Mountains—one of the last-surveyed and last-named ranges in the lower 48 states.

The **Moab** field office oversees world famous redrock canyons and gorges, spires, cliffs, and desert vistas. Even here, the oil and gas industry has been seeking inroads. Wilderness areas currently at risk include Goldbar Canyon west of Moab; Dome Plateau; the southern flank of the Book Cliffs, including Floy, Flume, and Coal Canyons; and much of the scenic I-70 corridor. Equal to Moab in terms of redrock wonder and wilderness opportunities, the **Monticello** field office could very likely see renewed oil and gas threats to wild treasures such as Lockhart Basin, Tin Cup Mesa, Cross Canyon, and Hatch Canyon.

Roads to Ruin

It's hard to ignore the severe impacts inflicted upon our public lands by the growing menace of ORV use. And growing it is. With the number of licensed ORVs in Utah increasing from 20,000 in the early 90s to over 150,000 today, the effects on wildlife, water quality, soils, vegetation (not to mention backcountry quiet) have been staggering. How is this happening, you ask? Quite simply, because the BLM has consistently failed to enforce its own regulations. For example, the agency still has not mapped and designated specific ORV trails or completed the environmental impact statements required under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) to support continued ORV use on much of the 23 million acres of land it manages in Utah. In many cases, the agency has not updated ten to twenty year-old ORV route designations to reflect the growing problem of ORV abuse.

To make matters worse, the Interior Department recently told the BLM that it no longer had to

The Redrock Heritage Proposal: A Moab Case Study

When Utah citizens began preparing a sensible motorized route proposal for the Moab Resource Management Plan, their goal was to propose balanced recreational opportunities for all types of recreationists, including hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and off-road vehicle users. But when they reviewed existing maps of the region, what they found was appalling: the overwhelming majority of public lands around Moab are no further than **one mile** from a motorized route. **South of I-70, where the vast majority of recreational activities occur, nearly 99% of public lands are within one mile of a motorized route, and none are more than 2 miles from a motorized route.**

Clearly, this situation does not provide adequate opportunities for non-motorized users to enjoy silence, solitude, and safety while hiking the world-famous slickrock canyons and mesas of southeastern Utah. With support from SUWA, local citizens are proposing a more balanced range of recreational opportunities for the public lands managed by the BLM's Moab and Monticello field offices. The citizens' Redrock Heritage Proposal offers the following improvements to help preserve the remaining wild landscapes within this recreational mecca:

- ❖ Sensitive canyons, river corridors, riparian areas, wildlife habitat, and proposed wilderness areas would be protected.

South of I-70 in the greater Moab area:

- ❖ 0.5% of the public lands (compared to zero currently) would be more than three miles from a motorized route
- ❖ 3% of the public lands (compared to zero currently) would be more than two miles from a motorized route
- ❖ 85% of the public lands (compared to 99% currently) would be within one mile of a motorized route.

The BLM is required to provide a balanced spectrum of recreational opportunities and we believe that the Redrock Heritage Proposal is a reasonable way to do just that. Visit the Redrock Heritage webpage at www.redrockheritage.org for more information, great photos, informative charts, and technical references.



Mike Medberry

Resource damage and conflicts between user groups are common problems in the high-use recreation areas around Moab.

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worry about designating motorized routes as part of the RMP revisions and gave the agency discretion to put off controversial route designations for another five years. Not content to wait that long, SUWA hopes to light a fire under the BLM by working with citizen activists to develop travel plans for the four districts where ORV abuse is a major issue. A citizens' travel plan has already been released for the Moab and Monticello districts and can be viewed on the web at www.redrock-heritage.org (see sidebar on p. 9).

Common sense tells us that the ideal time to update a travel plan and designate routes is during the RMP process, especially in areas where motorized recreation conflicts are increasing. To do otherwise is tantamount to building a new house but delaying the installation of the roof for a later time. For justification of this position, one need only to look at the San Rafael Swell in east-central Utah where the BLM completed its San Rafael Route Designation Plan in 2003, more than eleven years after it was scheduled to be completed as part of the original RMP. In that time span, ORV use in the San Rafael Swell exploded into motorized mayhem. As a result, the BLM ended up accepting and designating approximately 55 miles of user-created routes—routes that weren't there in the early 90s and likely wouldn't have been created had the BLM completed a travel plan on time.

Though oil and gas development is the primary concern in northeastern Utah, the **Vernal** field office oversees portions of the Book Cliffs/Tavaputs Plateau region, where old mining roads and new routes developed for oil and gas development are expanding ORV access near wilderness-quality lands such as Sunday School Canyon, Bitter Creek, and Dragon Canyon.

The **Price** field office took a big step in the right direction when it completed the San Rafael Route Designation Plan in early 2003, but ORV abuse continues to occur in both the Sids Mountain and Muddy Creek WSAs near Temple Wash. The San Rafael Knob and Eagle Canyon areas are also seeing extensive ORV use. The BLM still needs to complete route designations for the Price River side of the planning area, located north and east of the San Rafael Swell, but field office staff recently announced they will not be doing any more travel planning for at least another year so they can meet a final RMP deadline of fall 2004. As a result, several areas proposed for wilderness remain at risk

to further ORV damage, including the Lost Spring Wash area immediately west of Highway 6 and the Price River unit northeast of the San Rafael Reef.

Motorized travel has been and remains the single most important issue for the **Richfield** field office. Indications suggest that this office may complete a travel plan in conjunction with the RMP but, again, controversy or politics may get in the way. Meanwhile, some icons within America's Redrock Wilderness Act are getting hammered by reckless and determined ORV riders. Factory Butte, one of Utah's most famous natural landmarks, and nearby Wild Horse Mesa both lie within the Mancos Shale badlands complex west of Hanksville, Utah, an area unique in form, geology, and scenery. But its uniqueness also makes this location a haven for ORV riders who get their jolies by arcing high on the delicate Mancos slopes, destroying soil crusts and leaving lasting scars. Other areas susceptible to increasing ORV damage include the Muddy Creek proposed wilderness unit north of Factory Butte and Mt. Pennell in the Henry Mountains.

Thanks to the annual Jeep Safari event held each spring, the **Moab** field office area has become synonymous with more than redrock wilderness and slickrock mountain biking. It too has become a mecca for motor-madness. Recent surveys indicate that such longstanding redrock treasures as White Wash and Ten Mile Wash, Labyrinth Canyon, Pritchett Canyon, the Big Triangle, Behind the Rocks, Dome Plateau, and Goldbar Canyon are all suffering from the ORV invasion.

The **Monticello** field office has also seen a dramatic rise in ORV use, so much so that locals are now viewing it as a magic bullet for the area's economy and have proposed an annual San Juan ATV Safari. The incredible lands surrounding and including Comb Ridge, Arch Canyon, Red Rock Plateau, White Canyon, Cedar Mesa, Indian Creek, Bridger Jack Mesa, and Harts Point have all seen a rapid increase in ORV use in recent years.

YOUR CHANCE TO SPEAK OUT!

SUWA staff is monitoring the progress of the Utah RMPs and will be sending information and action alerts to all of our members as the drafts are released. We will also be posting updated information on our website at www.suwa.org as it becomes available and we encourage you to visit the individual BLM websites for each RMP (type

RMP Heroes

Q: How can you tell it's springtime in the desert? **A:** All the license plates turn green. That's right, hordes of people from Colorado change out ski racks for bike racks, ski boots for hiking boots, and flock to the canyon country for some sun and red sand! Super activists Amy Winter and Arnaud Dumont keep all these Colorado desert rats informed about Utah's Resource Management Plan (RMP) revisions, and they're doing quite a bang-up job! Amy and Arnaud did the leg-work for Steve Allen's *Canyoneering Chronicles* slideshow (and SUWA fundraiser) in Colorado this winter. They organized events in Ft. Collins, Colorado Springs, Denver, and Boulder, drawing upwards of 700 people. Our hats off to some great organizing work!

Bill Huggins is new on the scene and has hit the ground running in old Sin City, Nevada (that's Las Vegas, for the uninitiated). Bill grew up in Moab but he's new to SUWA and the fight to protect Utah wilderness. Fired up and rarin' to go, he'll be kicking things off with a series of slideshows in Las Vegas, educating citizens about the RMP revisions and teaching them how to submit persuasive letters to the BLM. With five million acres of wild redrock country at stake, he's determined to ensure that what qualifies as wilderness remains wilderness!

To learn more about what you can do in your own community to protect America's redrock wilderness, contact Margi Hoffmann at (801) 486-7639, ext. 20 or margi@suwa.org today!



Clockwise from top: Amy Winter, Bill Huggins, and Arnaud Dumont.

in the field office name followed by "rmp.com"—for example: www.vernalrmp.com).

In the meantime, please take ten minutes to write a letter asking the BLM to keep oil and gas and ORVs out of areas proposed for wilderness. Specifically, tell the BLM to refrain from offering oil and gas leases in proposed wilderness areas and to designate special protection for those lands in the RMPs. In addition, urge the BLM to complete travel plans in conjunction with its RMP revisions. The travel plans should:

- ❖ Allow for a reasonable balance between motorized and non-motorized travel (including mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, etc.);
- ❖ Include an effective trail enforcement plan;
- ❖ Designate and clearly sign motorized routes, but only where conflicts with other users or resource values do not exist;
- ❖ Implement effective, frequent monitoring of ORV impacts and set clear benchmarks which, if exceeded, trigger immediate closure of an area to ORVs. If monitoring and enforcement cannot be

effectively accomplished due to lack of personnel or resources, the BLM should not allow ORV use;

- ❖ Restrict ORV use from wilderness study areas, BLM-inventoried wilderness lands, and areas proposed for wilderness designation under America's Redrock Wilderness Act;
- ❖ Preclude ORV use from critical wildlife habitat, riparian areas and wetlands, and other fragile ecosystems;
- ❖ Evaluate ORV impacts on all resources and uses in the planning area;
- ❖ Completely prohibit all cross-country motorized travel.

Address all letters to:

Sally Wisely, Director
Bureau of Land Management
Utah State Office
P.O. Box 45155
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0155

DC news

A year after the Bush administration launched its two-pronged assault on Utah's wilderness-quality public lands (see Summer 2003 issue, p. 6), many of Utah's most cherished wild places remain in jeopardy of being overrun by roads, off-road vehicles, and special interests in the oil and gas industry. Because President Bush and Interior Secretary Norton have chosen to turn a deaf ear to the public's call for wilderness protection, many critical decisions about the fate of our wilderness lands rest in the hands of Congress and the courts. In the coming months, this system of checks and balances will be crucial to the protection of Utah's wilderness.

RS 2477 Agreement Judged Illegal by GAO

Last April, Interior Secretary Gale Norton and former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which established a process by which the Interior Department would begin granting RS 2477 claims across Utah's public lands. On February 6, 2004, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) weighed in on the Utah MOU at the request of New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman, ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The GAO's opinion? The MOU is illegal.

In its findings, the GAO (which serves as the investigative arm of Congress) concluded that the Interior Department is barred from carrying out the agreement under a congressional moratorium dating back to the Clinton administration. (In a delicious bit of irony, this is the very same moratorium that the Utah and Alaska congressional delegations cooked up to foil Secretary Babbitt's attempt to finalize RS 2477 regulations in 1994.)

The GAO also zeroed in on one of the key flaws of the MOU by recognizing that it created new and substantially weakened standards for the evaluation of the validity of RS 2477 claims. For example, the MOU would give away public lands to counties and the state based simply on evidence of "use." In stark contrast, RS 2477 clearly requires actual "construction" of a "highway" (an interpretation Federal District Court Judge Tena Campbell affirmed in her recent ruling in *SUWA v. BLM*).

Despite the GAO's findings, the attitude is "damn the torpedos, full steam ahead" in Utah, where state officials like Governor Walker have declared their intention to move forward with processing claims.

A Better Approach: Congressman Mark Udall Introduces RS 2477 Legislation

Congressman Mark Udall (D-CO) has introduced the RS 2477 Rights-of-Way Act (H.R. 1639) to establish a fair and uniform process for settling old road claims, and he cited the GAO report as an additional reason why Congress should pass this legislation. If your representative is not already a cosponsor of H.R. 1639, please urge him/her to cosponsor the R.S. 2477 Rights-of-Way Act.

In contrast to the backroom deals offered up by the State of Utah and Secretary Norton, the Udall bill would provide objective criteria for evaluating RS 2477 claims, including:

- Construction and continuous use of the route by the public "for the passage of four-wheeled highway vehicles carrying people or goods from one inhabited place to another;"
- Routine maintenance of the route by the responsible governmental entity;
- Proof of the highway's existence before 1976, when RS 2477 was repealed.

The debate surrounding RS 2477 continues to evolve in Washington, spurred on in no small part by your calls and letters to members of Congress this past fall. Your efforts have helped educate legislators about the threat of RS 2477 and have raised the profile of Utah wilderness on Capitol Hill. Hats off to our activists and conservation partners for helping make this happen!

Meanwhile, after spending at least \$8 million dollars and who knows how many staff hours, the state has submitted one RS 2477 application so far—for the relatively non-controversial Weiss Highway in Juab County (you can see the application at www.ut.blm.gov/rs2477/claims.htm). Comments on the application process or the Weiss Highway claim can be mailed to the state BLM office (for more information on the RS 2477 appli-

cation process, call Mike DeKeyrel at the BLM State Office in Salt Lake City at (801) 539-4105).

Write to:

Bureau of Land Management
Utah State Office
Attn: RS 2477
PO Box 45155
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0155

Legislators Say No to Leasing in Wilderness

Undeterred by public criticism, the Bush administration continues to fast-track oil and gas leases that threaten Utah's wilderness-quality lands. In November and again in February, the Bureau of Land Management auctioned off oil and gas leases that allow energy exploration and development in lands proposed for wilderness under America's Redrock Wilderness Act (H.R. 1796 / S. 639).

Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), sponsor of America's Redrock Wilderness Act in the House of Representatives, drafted a letter signed by 104 members of Congress urging Interior Secretary Gale Norton not to allow the sale of oil and gas leases on Utah's wilderness-quality lands. In the letter, lawmakers called on Secretary Norton to: "(a) remove the lease tracts delineated by the February 18 Utah oil and gas lease sale that fall within the boundaries of H.R. 1796, and (b) direct the BLM to refrain from offering lease tracts within the boundaries of areas proposed for wilderness designation in H.R. 1796 in the future, pending Congressional action on America's Redrock Wilderness Act."

Senator Durbin (D-IL), sponsor of America's Redrock Wilderness Act in the Senate, drafted a similar letter to Secretary Norton signed by 11 of his colleagues. The senators argued that "By concentrating future oil and gas lease sales in Utah on areas outside those proposed for wilderness, the Administration will be providing the oil and gas industry with opportunities for developing federal oil and gas resources in Utah without irretrievably committing federal resources in areas deserving consideration for wilderness protection. The adoption of such a policy would restore balance to the

BLM's stewardship of our public lands: allowing for utilization of natural resources while protecting sensitive lands."

It is unnecessary as well as uneconomical for the administration to promote drilling in Utah's pristine public lands, yet that is the approach Secretary Norton continues to advocate. Protecting Utah wilderness from oil and gas drilling will remain a centerpiece of SUWA's efforts in Washington, DC, so long as the administration is calling for development of these special places. You can read both letters to Secretary Norton and the BLM's response at www.suwa.org under the heading: *Oil and Gas*.

Congress Needs to Hear from You!

As we work to defend America's redrock wilderness from the threats of off-road vehicle abuse, oil and gas development, and road proliferation, we must continue to seek permanent protection of these vulnerable lands through passage of America's Redrock Wilderness Act in the U.S. Congress. **If your House and Senate legislators are not listed on page 14, please urge them to become cosponsors of this important citizens' proposal to preserve over 9 million acres of BLM wilderness in Utah** (see box below).

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

Write:

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

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

or Call:

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

To find out who your elected officials are, go to www.congress.org

H.R. 1796
Sponsored by
Rep. Maurice Hinchey
(D-NY26)

160 House Cosponsors

Arizona

Raul Grijalva, D-07

California

Mike Thompson, D-01
Robert Matsui, D-05
Lynn Woolsey, D-06
George Miller, D-07
Barbara Lee, D-09
Ellen Tauscher, D-10
Tom Lantos, D-12
Pete Stark, D-13
Anna Eshoo, D-14
Michael Honda, D-15
Zoe Lofgren, D-16
Sam Farr, D-17
Lois Capps, D-23
Brad Sherman, D-27
Howard Berman, D-28
Adam Schiff, D-29
Henry Waxman, D-30
Xavier Becerra, D-31
Hilda Solis, D-32
Diane Watson, D-33
Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-34
Maxine Waters, D-35
Jane Harman, D-36
Juanita Millender-McDonald, D-37
Grace Napolitano, D-38
Linda Sanchez, D-39
Loretta Sanchez, D-47
Bob Filner, D-51
Susan Davis, D-53

Colorado

Diana DeGette, D-01
Mark Udall, D-02

Connecticut

John Larson, D-01
Robert Simmons, R-02
Rosa DeLauro, D-03
Christopher Shays, R-04
Nancy Johnson, R-05

District of Columbia

Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-DC

Florida

Corrine Brown, D-03
Robert Wexler, D-19
Peter Deutsch, D-20
Alcee Hastings, D-23

Georgia

John Lewis, D-05

Hawaii

Ed Case, D-02

Iowa

James Leach, R-02

Illinois

Bobby Rush, D-01
Jesse Jackson Jr., D-02

America's Redrock Wilderness Act Cosponsors in the 108th Congress

(as of April 8, 2004)

William Lipinski, D-03
Luis Gutierrez, D-04
Rahm Emanuel, D-05
Danny Davis, D-07
Janice Schakowsky, D-09
Mark Kirk, R-10
Jerry Costello, D-12
Judy Biggert, R-13
Tim Johnson, R-15
Lane Evans, D-17

Indiana

Julia Carson, D-07
Baron Hill, D-09

Kansas

Dennis Moore, D-03

Louisiana

William Jefferson, D-02

Massachusetts

John Olver, D-01
Richard Neal, D-02
James McGovern, D-03
Barney Frank, D-04
Marty Meehan, D-05
John Tierney, D-06
Edward Markey, D-07
Michael Capuano, D-08
Stephen Lynch, D-09
William Delahunt, D-10

Maryland

Benjamin Cardin, D-03
Albert (Russell) Wynn, D-04
Elijah Cummings, D-07
Chris Van Hollen, D-08

Maine

Thomas Allen, D-01
Michael Michaud, D-02

Michigan

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

Minnesota

Betty McCollum, D-04
Martin Olav Sabo, D-05
Collin Peterson, D-07

Missouri

William "Lacy" Clay, D-01
Karen McCarthy, D-05

Mississippi

Bennie Thompson, D-02

North Carolina

Frank Ballance, D-01
David Price, D-04
Brad Miller, D-13

New Jersey

Robert Andrews, D-01
Frank LoBiondo, R-02
Christopher Smith, R-04
Frank Pallone, D-06
Bill Pascrell, D-08
Steven Rothman, D-09
Donald Payne, D-10
Rush Holt, D-12
Robert Menendez, D-13

New Mexico

Tom Udall, D-03

Nevada

Shelley Berkley, D-01

New York

Tim Bishop, D-01
Steve Israel, D-02
Carolyn McCarthy, D-04
Gary Ackerman, D-05
Gregory Meeks, D-06
Joseph Crowley, D-07
Jerrold Nadler, D-08
Anthony Weiner, D-09
Edolphus Towns, D-10
Major Owens, D-11
Nydia Velazquez, D-12
Carolyn Maloney, D-14
Charles Rangel, D-15
Jose Serrano, D-16
Eliot Engel, D-17
Nita Lowey, D-18
Michael McNulty, D-21
Louise McIntosh Slaughter, D-28

Ohio

Ted Strickland, D-06
Marcy Kaptur, D-09
Dennis Kucinich, D-10
Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-11
Sherrod Brown, D-13
Tim Ryan, D-17

Oregon

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

Pennsylvania

Robert Brady, D-01
Chaka Fattah, D-02
Joseph Hoeffel, D-13
Tim Holden, D-17

Rhode Island

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

South Carolina

John Spratt, D-05

Tennessee

Jim Cooper, D-05
Bart Gordon, D-06
Harold Ford Jr., D-09

Texas

Max Sandlin, D-01
Nicholas Lampson, D-09
Lloyd Doggett, D-10
Silvestre Reyes, D-16
Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-18
Charles Gonzalez, D-20
Martin Frost, D-24
Chris Bell, D-25
Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-30

Virginia

James Moran, D-08
Rick Boucher, D-09

Virgin Islands

Donna Christensen, D-VI

Vermont

Bernie Sanders, I-VT

Washington

Jay Inslee, D-01
Rick Larsen, D-02
Brian Baird, D-03
Norm Dicks, D-06
Jim McDermott, D-07
Adam Smith, D-09

Wisconsin

Tammy Baldwin, D-02
Jerry Kleczka, D-04

S. 639

Sponsored by
Sen. Richard Durbin
(D-IL)

15 Senate Cosponsors

Barbara Boxer, D-CA
Tom Harkin, D-IA
Evan Bayh, D-IN
Edward Kennedy, D-MA
John Kerry, D-MA
Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ
Debbie Stabenow, D-MI
John Corzine, D-NJ
Hillary Clinton, D-NY
Charles Schumer, D-NY
Ron Wyden, D-OR
Jack Reed, D-RI
Patrick Leahy, D-VT
Maria Cantwell, D-WA
Russ Feingold, D-WI

canyon country updates

Good
News!

Court Rejects Bogus “Highway” Claims

On February 23, 2004, the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah issued its final order in *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Bureau of Land Management*, ruling that three Utah counties had not established that they owned fifteen highway rights-of-way under RS 2477 (with respect to a 16th highway claim—the Skutumpah Road—the court held that Kane County had exceeded its right-of-way by widening the route without consulting the BLM and by damaging an adjacent wilderness study area). The Utah Attorney General’s office, which represents the counties under a special agreement, says that it will appeal the ruling to the Tenth Circuit.

The new ruling reaffirms the findings of the court’s June 2001 order which held, among other things, that the RS 2477 claimants must demonstrate that:

- The route was actually constructed (use alone is not enough);
- The route serves the purpose of a public “highway . . . that connects the public with identifiable destinations or places;” and
- Each of the RS 2477 requirements can be proven. (This is a significant aspect of the case because most of the counties have simply staked highway claims wherever they could point to evidence of a track, without information on who created it, when, or for what purpose.)

The disputed highway claims are located in San Juan, Kane, and Garfield Counties and all were graded in the fall of 1996, just after President Clinton designated the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

San Juan County graded tracks in Harts Point (just east of Canyonlands National Park) because the BLM was in the midst of conducting its wilderness reinventory at the time and the claimants “wanted to be sure Secretary Babbitt saw their roads.” County officials acknowledged that the county had never graded these routes before.

Kane County graded routes in the Burning Hills WSA, the Paria-Hackberry WSA, and the Moquith Mountain WSA (the first two are also in the monument).

Garfield County graded routes in Collet Canyon, Devil’s Garden WSA, and Cedar Wash, all of which are in the monument.

Good
News!

IBLA Rules on Arch Canyon

On March 15, 2004, the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) ruled on the Methuselah of all administrative appeals—a now 14 year-old challenge to the BLM’s grant of an RS 2477 “highway” at the bottom of Arch Canyon in San Juan County. SUWA, together with The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club, filed the appeal in 1990 after the



Tom Bean

San Juan County’s RS 2477 claim at the bottom of Arch Canyon (above) was recently ruled invalid by the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

canyon country updates

BLM issued the right-of-way based on little more than simple “use” of the route (SUWA old-timers will recall that the BLM quickly issued the right-of-way to get around a 1989 IBLA decision that the BLM’s approval of the Jeep Jamboree event in Arch Canyon violated the agency’s own management plan). Now, the IBLA has ruled that San Juan County does *not* have a valid RS 2477 claim in Arch Canyon.

The most immediate impact of this decision is that it ends the Jamboree’s virtual immunity from federal authority to stop what has long been a destructive impact on the area’s riparian habitat and ancient archaeological sites. The jeep track crosses the stream a total of 59 times as it winds from the mouth of the canyon for six miles to the Forest Service boundary where it abruptly dead-ends.

For more than a decade, the IBLA held the case in suspended animation pending the Interior Department’s development of an internal RS 2477 policy. The IBLA has now remanded the RS 2477 decision to the BLM for review in light of a new Interior Department “policy” based on last year’s Memorandum of Understanding between former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt and Interior Secretary Gale Norton (see Summer 2003 issue, p. 6 for background on this agreement). Yes, this is the same policy that ignores the RS 2477 criteria spelled out by the U.S. District Court, and it’s the same policy that the General Accounting Office recently found illegal (see article on page 12), but we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Now that the Arch Canyon RS 2477 claim has been judged invalid, please tell the BLM that this fragile desert oasis is no place for earth grinding 4x4s. Specifically, ask the agency to protect this beautiful canyon from destructive ORV events like the Jeep Jamboree, the San Juan ATV Safari, and commercial ATV tours.

Write to:

Scott Berkenfield, Acting Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Monticello Field Office
435 North Main, P.O. Box 7
Monticello, Utah 84535

State Keeps Public Records under Lock and Key

One would think that documents showing evidence of constructed public highways over public lands would be public. But not according to Utah’s Attorney General. When SUWA asked for public records concerning the twenty routes that the State of Utah plans to claim under RS 2477, the State of Utah flatly said “no.” When SUWA appealed this decision, Utah’s Attorney General said “no” again. SUWA based its request on Utah’s Government Records and Access Management Act (GRAMA), which is meant to advance the public’s constitutional right of access to information concerning the conduct of the public’s business.

SUWA made its GRAMA request in response to last year’s secret deal between former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt and Interior Secretary Gale Norton (see Summer 2003 issue, p. 6). The deal, which SUWA is challenging in court, claims to set up a “public” process for resolving Utah’s claims for public rights-of-way over BLM lands. At the time, former Governor Leavitt went so far as to say that “[t]he centerpiece of the agreement is an open administrative process that permits the sharing of information and gives everyone an opportunity to comment before decisions are made.” Instead of living up to this promise, the State of Utah has refused to share relevant information with the public.

One of the selling points for the Leavitt-Norton agreement was that it ostensibly provided an alternative means for resolving the state’s public highway claims. Former Governor Leavitt extolled the virtues of the agreement, saying: “Instead of litigation, which is a closed process decided by the courts, we have opted for an open administrative process. Those who represent otherwise are wrong.” Ironically, the chief reason the state gave for denying SUWA’s records request is that the state may use the documents *in litigation*.

What’s more, the State of Utah is keeping the public in the dark regarding one of the most important aspects of this “open” process by refusing to hand over documents that explain its RS 2477 validity standards. Already, a federal district court in Utah has determined that, at a minimum, any legitimate highway claims must: 1) be public in nature and use, 2)

canyon country updates

lead to an identifiable destination, and 3) be constructed by intentional physical labor (see article on p. 15). The Leavitt-Norton agreement may allow the state to avoid meeting these strict requirements. In any case, the state apparently does not want the public to know just how its “open” process is going to work.

SUWA will next appeal the denial of its GRAMA request to Utah’s State Records Committee. We hope that somewhere up the chain of command our public officials will understand that true democracy demands that our government conduct the public’s business by the light of day.

Joro Walker, Director of the Utah Office of Western Resource Advocates (formerly the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies) is handling this records request for SUWA. For this and her ongoing legal assistance on other cases, we are sincerely grateful.

Lease Sale Includes Lands Near Dinosaur National Monument

On February 18, 2004, the Utah BLM sold 37 oil and gas leases on proposed wilderness lands in the Book Cliffs of eastern Utah and near Dinosaur National Monument, as well as on other sensitive public lands close to the monument. SUWA and a broad coalition of conservation groups asked State BLM Director Sally Wisely to defer leasing these 37 parcels until the BLM analyzes their wilderness character and other sensitive resource values. As we waited to hear from Director Wisely, the sale proceeded as planned. We have yet to receive a response from her office. Meanwhile, the BLM will not issue the challenged leases until it addresses the issues raised in our protest.

Other organizations challenging the sale include the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, the Coalition of Concerned National Park Service Retirees, and the Campaign to Protect America’s Lands. On Capitol Hill, Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) sent separate letters to Interior Secretary Gale Norton (signed by 104 Representatives and 11 Senators, respectively) asking her to defer leasing all the lands identified in America’s Redrock Wilderness Act until Congress has an opportunity to protect these special places (see article on p. 13). The letters pointed out



Ray Bloxham

The White River corridor is one of many scenic areas in northeastern Utah that have been hit hard by oil and gas leasing.

that the BLM could still offer more than three dozen leases in places without wilderness character or other sensitive resource issues. In a written response to Mr. Hinchey (at the request of Secretary Norton), BLM Deputy Director Jim Hughes stated that the BLM would proceed apace and continue to sell leases on these lands (you can read both letters and the BLM’s response at www.suwa.org under the heading: *Oil and Gas*).

The sale of BLM lands previously determined to be “wilderness ready” represents the latest on-the-ground impact of last year’s backroom deal between Secretary Norton and former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt (now EPA administrator) which prohibited the BLM from protecting future wilderness. The February sale included 14 lease parcels in areas which the BLM itself identified as wilderness-quality in its 1996-99 inventory. In addition, the BLM sold 16 leases in areas that have a “reasonable probability” of possessing wilderness character according to the agency.

In a separate sale last November, the Utah BLM sold 16 oil and gas leases in wilderness-quality lands; that sale that is now being challenged in federal district court. The agency has already posted its June 2004 preliminary oil and gas lease sale notice which proposes to sell dozens of leases in wilderness areas in the Book Cliffs and Dirty Devil regions. We’ll keep you posted on our efforts to convince the BLM not to lease in these areas.

canyon country updates

Good
News!

3R Minerals Pulls out of Monument

There's some good news from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument: 3R Minerals recently forfeited its titanium and zirconium leases within the monument by failing to pay the annual lease rental fee. Thus, the company's proposed mine and processing plant in the Carcass Canyon proposed wilderness area south of Escalante is no longer a threat.

You may recall that 3R Minerals owned leases on state lands located within the boundaries of the monument. In 1998, 3R had procured a permit from the State of Utah to conduct mining operations on one of the lease parcels. This permit was issued by the State of Utah prior to the big land exchange in which the state transferred its monument lands to the federal government in return for federal lands elsewhere (and a check for \$50 million). With the mine permit already granted, 3R decided it could save money by locating its processing plant within the monument as well. The BLM agreed to amend the company's plan of operations to include a 10,000 square-foot processing plant (see Autumn 2002 issue, p. 29).

SUWA appealed the BLM's decision to approve the plant and, while our appeal was pending, 3R failed to pay the annual rental fee on its leases within the monument, resulting in termination of the lease under federal law. Since the presidential proclamation designating the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument closed the monument to new mineral leasing, these leases will not be re-issued.

SUWA extends our thanks to Roger Flynn of the Western Mining Action Project for his assistance on SUWA's appeal.

Gas Well Proposed for Wolf Point

Bill Barrett Corporation (the same company seeking to drill the Nine Mile Canyon area) has applied for a permit to construct a gas well within the Wolf Point proposed wilderness in the Book Cliffs region south of Vernal. Wolf Point is located adjacent to the existing Winter Ridge Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and also falls within a proposed

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). To access the well site, which is conspicuously located on the rim of Willow Creek Canyon, Bill Barrett Corp. would "upgrade" over 2.5 miles of an existing route on Winter Ridge, then blaze a new road cross country for over one mile, tearing through a pinyon-juniper forest and open sagebrush lands.

These lands are home to a diversity of wildlife, including deer, elk, black bears, and raptors, and may even shelter the ancient remains of dinosaurs. The BLM is currently conducting a wildlife and paleontological survey for its Environmental Assessment (EA), which we expect to be released in June. Please tell the BLM that the Wolf Point proposed wilderness is not the place for a road and gas well. Write a letter to the agency explaining that:

- A well in this location would harm important wildlife habitat, priceless paleontological resources, spectacular scenery, and wilderness-quality lands;
- Prior to considering the application to drill, the BLM should complete its wilderness review of the area and conduct an intensive field inventory of the area's wilderness character; and
- The agency should consider and analyze the Main Canyon ACEC proposal that contains the lands in question.

*SUWA is also tracking a proposal by Carbon Energy to drill two gas wells, construct access roads, and install a surface pipeline within the Winter Ridge WSA. When writing your letter, please ask the BLM to keep development out of this spectacular wild area as well. **Be sure to request a public comment period on any draft EA.***

Write to:

Bill Stringer, Field Office Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal Field Office
170 South 500 East
Vernal, Utah 84078

Or Fax: (435) 781-4410

(Reference the Proposed Bill Barrett Corp. Well No. Tumbleweed Federal 8-5-15-21)

Litigation Update

Below is an update of ongoing federal court litigation brought by SUWA and others in the conservation community to challenge Bush administration decisions and policies. The best way to stay current on these cases and others is to sign up for SUWA's email alert list at www.suwa.org.

(1) **Norton v. SUWA:** In 1999, SUWA and seven other conservation groups challenged the Utah BLM's failure to, among other things, protect wilderness study areas from damage caused by off-road vehicles. From this humble beginning, this case has wended its way to the United States Supreme Court. Argument was heard on Monday, March 29 (see sidebar), and we expect a decision by the end of June 2004. You can read all the briefs filed on this case in the Supreme Court by visiting www.jenner.com/suwa, a web page created by the law firm of Jenner & Block.

(2) **SUWA v. Norton:** In 2002, SUWA, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), The Wilderness Society (TWS), and the Sierra Club challenged the BLM's approval of the largest seismic exploration project in Utah BLM history. After losing the first round of this case, we have asked the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals to review the district court's decision. We expect to argue this case in either late spring or fall 2004.

(3) **SUWA v. Norton:** In November 2003, SUWA, NRDC, and TWS challenged the Utah BLM's decision to sell 16 oil and gas leases on wilderness-quality lands in the Book Cliffs and Dirty Devil regions. After filing this case in federal district court in Washington, DC, the BLM has moved to transfer the case to Utah. We expect a decision on the BLM's request in the next few months.

(4) **SUWA v. Norton:** In April 2003, the State of Utah and the Interior Department entered into a settlement agreement that prohibited the BLM from creating new wilderness study areas under section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and directed the agency to rescind its Wilderness Inventory Handbook (which it did). SUWA, NRDC, TWS, and seven other western conservation groups challenged this settlement agreement and the case is now being briefed at the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. We don't expect oral argument until late 2004 or the winter of 2005.

(Continued next page)

Pristine Wilderness, in Court

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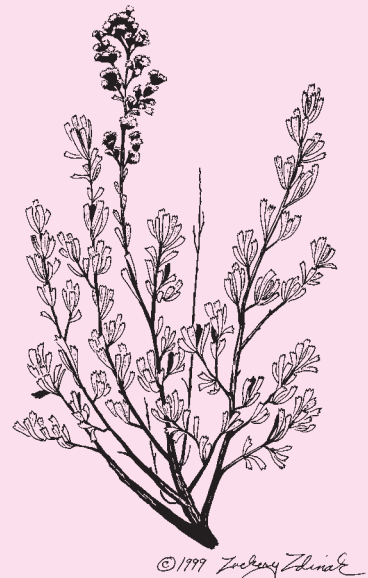
The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments today on one of the most important federal land cases to come before it in years. The legal issue is whether the courts can require a recalcitrant federal agency to enforce a specific Congressional mandate—in this case, a mandate to protect America's wilderness. The larger issue is whether wilderness will be managed in ways that ensure its survival for future generations.

The case involves thousands of acres in Utah set aside as "wilderness study areas" by the Bureau of Land Management. Under law, such areas are to be protected against "impairment" from commercial or recreational activity until Congress decides whether to designate them as permanently protected wilderness.

Over the years, the area has become so infested with off-road vehicles that in 1999, environmental groups, led by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, filed suit, claiming that the bureau had failed to protect the land from impairment as required by the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The suit was based partly on long-established citizens' rights to ask the courts to ensure that federal agencies obey the law.

The government's response was strikingly disingenuous. It argued that the suit infringed upon its discretionary powers, and that as long as the bureau was working on the problem, the courts could not intervene. The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals rightly dismissed this argument as an attempt to carve out a "no-man's land" where the government could behave as it wished, immune from judicial review.

Much is at stake beyond Utah. Only 50 million of the 1.9 billion acres in the lower 48 states have been set aside as wilderness; an additional 17 million acres or so nationwide are study areas, awaiting a final decision by Congress. In the meantime, the law requires bureau protection. The court should make clear that the executive branch cannot go around invoking some imagined discretionary authority to ignore laws it doesn't like.



canyon country updates

(5) **SUWA v. Norton:** In March 2004, the BLM approved the highly controversial Stone Cabin seismic project in the Nine Mile Canyon region east of Price, Utah. This project allows a private Denver-based company to explore for natural gas in two wilderness study areas, two BLM wilderness inventory areas, and in many of Nine Mile Canyon's most archaeologically sensitive side canyons. Just as this issue was going to press, SUWA, NRDC, and TWS challenged the BLM's decision as contrary to a host of federal environmental and historic preservation laws. You can read more about this lawsuit at www.suwa.org.

Vermilion Cliffs: Wilderness or ORV Playground?

Those of you who have spent time in southern Utah can probably close your eyes and visualize the beautiful red Vermilion Cliffs that face south along the Utah-Arizona border between Moquith Mountain and the Cockscomb. Believe it or not, the rugged cliffs and quiet sandstone canyons of this spectacular region are now the focus of an off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation scheme. Recently, a 4x4 club submitted a proposal to the Kanab BLM for a Hog Canyon ORV trail system. If approved, it would designate approximately 30 miles of ORV trails, staging areas, loading ramps, and parking areas north of Kanab in the Vermilion Cliffs proposed wilderness area.

When the Utah Wilderness Coalition inventoried this area a few years ago, no routes existed. The vast majority of these "trails" have been pioneered within the past few years by renegade ORV users who cut trees, ripped through oak brush and manzanita, and made new tracks across cryptobiotic soils. Now the local 4x4 club wants the BLM to officially designate these illegally created trails.



Liz Thomas

A historic Native American sweat lodge in the Vermilion Cliffs proposed wilderness.

Although the BLM has not yet begun its environmental review of the proposal, the proponents are betting that the agency will acquiesce to their demands; the club's web page is already advertising a Spring Jeep Roundup for the Hog Canyon trails scheduled for May of 2004.

The 26,000-acre Vermilion Cliffs proposed wilderness area is located a few miles north and northeast of Kanab. At approximately 6500 feet, the area is characterized by deep Navajo Sandstone canyons, seeps, springs, and boulder-strewn washes. Ancient pinyon-juniper forests and healthy desert shrub communities blanket the mesa tops, which

SW Utah Gets its Own ATV Jamboree

The St. George BLM office recently approved the Tri State OHV Club's 2004 Hurricane Valley ATV Jamboree. The event was held in March and included 160 miles of routes in southern Utah and 65 miles of routes in Arizona. Many of the proposed Jamboree routes were on maintained county roads, but several routes were proposed across public lands. We were successful in working with the BLM to exclude nearly all of the routes that were in proposed wilderness areas, including Dry Creek, Parunuweap, Square Top, and Canaan Mountain.

canyon country updates

provide breathtaking views of Zion and Bryce National Parks, Moquith Mountain, the White Cliffs, and other geographical landmarks. The canyon system provides excellent habitat for deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, bald and golden eagles, and peregrine falcons. In addition, the area is an incredibly rich repository of irreplaceable cultural resources that are scattered throughout the entire area, including some unique petroglyphs.

If you don't want to see the Vermilion Cliffs managed as a motorized playground, please send a letter to the BLM's Kanab field office.

Write to:

Rex Smart, Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Kanab Field Office
318 North First East
Kanab, Utah 84741

Public Money Funds Private Grazing Appeal

Disgruntled Kane County rancher Trevor Stewart filed an appeal several months ago asking the BLM's review board to examine a decision on the Clark Bench allotment in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The BLM had previously awarded the grazing privileges for this allotment to the Grand Canyon Trust which, in turn, had leased the allotment to Brent Robinson, a Kanab rancher. Stewart thought the Clark Bench allotment should have been awarded to him.

Several weeks ago Stewart upped the ante by: 1) arguing that Robinson should not be able to graze his cattle on Clark Bench until the review board had examined the BLM's original decision; and 2) alleging that he could be "substantially harmed from any resource damage" caused by Robinson's cattle. Interestingly, Stewart's arguments are nearly identical to arguments conservationists make in appealing some of the BLM's grazing decisions. Needless to say, we'll be very interested in the outcome of his appeal.

Incidentally, Stewart is the son-in-law of Mike Noel, a state representative from Kanab. Somehow, Rep. Noel was able to secure a grant from the State

of Utah for \$50,000, earmarked to cover, among other things, the attorney fees and other expenses incurred by his son-in-law in his appeal. This money came from tax dollars intended for the construction and maintenance of public facilities, public services, and community planning. As a result, much-needed community infrastructure may go unfunded while a private grazing appeal is being funded with public money.

SITLA Tries Again for Monument Right-of-Way

The Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) is continuing to pursue a right-of-way through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The route would begin at Hwy 12 west of the town of Boulder, traverse Forest Service lands, cross BLM lands within the monument, and eventually access a high mesa top west of the town of Boulder. SITLA wants the right-of-way in order to develop home sites and/or a wilderness lodge on the mesa top.

SITLA initiated this quest in 1998 and renewed its interest in 2000 but, due to insufficient information, the BLM put the application on hold and decided not to issue a right-of-way. Now that the monument has a new manager, the application is once again under review.

According to the monument's management plan, the BLM must provide reasonable access to private lands *only when they are surrounded by public lands*. This SITLA parcel is not surrounded by public lands. Quite to the contrary, it is bordered on two sides by BLM lands and on two sides by private property. Furthermore, there are other existing routes to the SITLA parcel which access areas better suited to development.

If you are concerned about the BLM granting this unnecessary right-of-way to SITLA, please send the agency a letter.

Write to:

Dave Hunsaker, Manager
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
190 East Center Street
Kanab, UT 84741

grassroots network

Canvass Takes on New Turf

Throughout the spring, SUWA's canvass team will be working in the Millcreek area, Murray, and other parts of the Salt Lake Valley that we haven't visited since last year. Many thanks to all of you wonderful supporters in the greater Sugarhouse, Avenues, University, and Emigration areas who welcomed our canvassers this past winter. As we braved the cold and snow, you were our inspiration to "keep on knockin.'" All those kind greetings and offers of warm beverages helped, but what really kept us going were the great citizen letters, renewal donations, and new memberships we brought in each and every night. You are the grassroots from which this movement grows!

Calling All Photographers!

Is a trip to southern Utah's redrock country in your future? If so, you can have fun and support SUWA's efforts all in one trip. The SUWA Photo Documentation Project is once again looking for a few good adventurers to photograph and document the fabulous features of Utah's redrock wilderness.

What is expected of you? Volunteer photographers are asked to take photos in wilderness study areas and other lands proposed for wilderness, mark photo locations on a topographical map, and write up a description of the area. The photos can be of anything that catches your attention: from scenic vistas and wildlife to ORV and grazing impacts.

What will the Photo Documentation Project do to help you complete the assignment? Project

organizers will send you copies of maps (with the proposed wilderness area outlined), instructions, and a log to help you keep track of your photos. They will also try to match your interests to a particular area if you don't already have one in mind.

Why should you participate? Through SUWA's website and printed materials, your photographs will be used to increase awareness of the scenic beauty and ecological importance of Utah's slickrock canyons, high plateaus, and desert mountain ranges. For additional information or to sign up, please send an email to photo@suwa.org.

Spring Outreach Activities

SUWA's acclaimed slideshow, *Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness*, goes on tour to REI stores in Phoenix and Albuquerque this May. For more details, visit our website at www.suwa.org and click on *Events*, then *Slideshows*.

While you're out and about enjoying the spring weather, look for our SUWA outreach tables at the following events:

- Roaring Fork Valley Earth Day/Dandelion Day Festival in Carbondale, CO on May 8
- KRCL Day in the Park at Jordan Park in Salt Lake City on June 12
- Gay Pride Festival in Salt Lake City on June 13

If you know of an event where we might set up a SUWA outreach table this year, please contact Bob Brister at bob@suwa.org or call (801) 486-3161, ext. 12.

Attention SUWA Members in Southern Utah!

We now have two friendly, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic grassroots organizers working out of southern Utah: Jen Jackson in St. George and Franklin Seal in Moab (see introductions on page 27). If you live in the heart of redrock country and would like to know how you can get more involved in protecting the wilderness lands in your own backyard, please get in touch!

Jen Jackson
Utah Grassroots Organizer, Southwest
Phone: (435) 674-2488
Email: jen@suwa.org

Franklin Seal
Utah Grassroots Organizer, Southeast
Phone: (435) 259-4399
Email: franklin@suwa.org

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SUWA Bids a Fond Farewell to Larry Young

Being chairman of the SUWA board is an honor for me. It is also an unalloyed pleasure. The principle reason for this is Larry Young's remarkable leadership. After four years as SUWA's executive director, Larry will leave that post on April 30th. Saying goodbye to him will be difficult, a bitter-sweet mix of sadness at his departure and gladness for the opportunities ahead for him; of gratitude for what he has given us and for what all of us—members, staff, and board—have accomplished together.

But there's something worse than saying goodbye to someone like Larry—a valued friend, insightful leader, and wilderness stalwart. That worse thing would be never having had the chance to know and work with him in the first place.

Anyone who knows him will not be surprised at the choice Larry made. He will follow his wife Christine, a star in her own firmament, to a new and exciting academic opportunity at Washington State University in Pullman. In significant ways, Christine put her own career on temporary hold to support Larry in his passion for SUWA and for Utah wilderness. That is no small thing. Wilderness advocacy is not a job in any ordinary sense; it becomes a sort of minor priesthood to those involved in it. Hours are long, responsibilities heavy, tensions often high, travel frequent and extended. Thanks to Christine, SUWA had four solid years of Larry's leadership and we are a stronger organization for it. SUWA was a major beneficiary of Christine's generosity and we give her our heartfelt thanks. Now, as Larry puts it, "It's her turn."

There's solace, too, in the knowledge that the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance has been blessed with a succession of talented executive directors, each precisely the right person for the time and circumstance. I'm confident that we will be so blessed again, and I think you will be confident too after reading Larry's introduction of our next executive director, Scott Groene, in the *Wilderness Notes* column of this issue (see p. 4).

Our good fortune began with founding director Clive Kincaid, now on the SUWA board. Clive was visionary enough to see the need for a SUWA. With a handful of others, he gave it birth and set its course. Brant Calkin—organizer, strategist, sage veteran of numerous western public lands battles—followed Clive. Brant transformed a still-young conservation outfit into the model of grassroots activism, passion, and principle that it is today. Next came Mike Matz, no one's second in legislative acumen, who was there when we needed just that talent to fend off a series of raids that anti-environmental Utah legislators cooked up to deal away Utah's fabulous redrock country.

Mike also had the wisdom to send Larry Young to Washington to head our DC office in October of 1998. Larry took a year's leave of absence from Brigham Young University to work in SUWA's lonely DC outpost. He was wonderful there, and wonderful as only he could have been.

As Utah wilderness politics evolved (and national environmental politics, too, for that matter), we needed someone there who was a member of the inner circle of the Utah community. And Larry, a fifth generation Utahn, was a perfect fit. We also needed someone who was articulate, who knew the land and loved it. We needed someone both engaged and engaging, someone rock-solid in his wilderness ethic but

(continued next page)



Larry hits the trail with daughter Emma.

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willing to talk and, more importantly still, to listen. We needed someone who emitted as much light as heat. We found that person in Larry Young. If anyone ever mistook Larry's affability and thoroughgoing kindness for softness on the issue of redrock wilderness, they only did so once.

When the time came, it was an easy decision for SUWA's board to ask Larry to succeed Mike Matz as executive director in April of 2000. He accepted, giving up his tenured position at BYU to lead SUWA into the 21st Century. We ask much of our executive directors. They must preside over a fierce and feisty organization in a way that ensures its continued health. And they must be able to lead a growing corps of superb staff professionals to the excellence they uniformly achieve. Larry delivered brilliantly.

Larry has a talent for leaving things better than he found them. So it is for us. We are a stronger, more effective organization thanks to Larry's skillful leadership. On behalf of SUWA's members, its board, and its staff, I offer Christine and Larry our heartfelt thanks for all they have given to SUWA and to Utah wilderness advocacy. We wish them the very, very best.

Hansjorg Wyss
SUWA Board Chair



Gail Hoskisson in the Grand Canyon — the perfect place to unwind after two years on Capitol Hill.



Peter Downing on a whirlwind trip to southern Utah just before settling into the DC office.

Changes at the DC Office

Gail Hoskisson Retires to Moab

Gail Hoskisson, a fifth generation Utahn, grew up in Carbon County on the northern edge of the San Rafael Swell. She and her husband Wayne responded to the Utah delegation's anti-wilderness legislation in 1995 by setting up activist phone banks and traveling to Washington, DC, to talk with legislators. With two nearly grown kids, they then jumped into the debate over RS 2477 by organizing volunteers to ground-truth hundreds of "ghost roads" claimed by Utah counties—a multi-year effort that produced sixty binders of fieldwork documenting a preponderance of bogus claims throughout the state.

As if this project and a full-time job were not enough, Gail also co-chaired the Utah Wilderness Coalition for a number of years (she currently serves as vice-chair). A longtime Edward Abbey fan, she became the proud owner of one of Abbey's trucks after a spirited bidding war at one of SUWA's fundraising events. "Ed's Ride" now makes an annual appearance at the SUWA Roundup each fall.

SUWA recognized Gail's talent, passion and commitment and convinced her in 2000 to leave behind the security of a long career as a medical laboratory technician (it didn't take much convincing) to join SUWA's staff in Salt Lake City. In 2002, she somewhat willingly moved to DC to run our legislative office. At the same time, she and

Wayne bought a place in Moab, where Wayne took the helm of a forest conservation group called Red Rock Forests. For two years, Gail lived in the less-than-glamorous SUWA “flop house” off Pennsylvania Street and maintained a long distance marriage. Her trademark comment about working for SUWA was: “I can’t believe I get paid to do this!” This winter, Gail retired to Moab in the midst of the redrock wilderness she has worked so long and hard to protect.

Gail represents the best of this movement. A volunteer extraordinaire for many years, she responded to the call when we needed her in DC, and she stayed there until we found a replacement, even though she’d rather have been in Moab. She’s done immeasurable good for Utah’s wilderness over the past decade and we will very much miss her smile, her dedication, and her Carbon County charm.

Peter Downing Takes DC Helm

SUWA is delighted to welcome Peter Downing as the new legislative director in our Washington, DC office. Peter comes to us from Senator Olympia Snowe’s office where he worked as legislative assistant on Energy and Environment committee issues. A graduate of Colby College, Peter brings experience and an understanding of the legislative process to this demanding position.

Peter likes to experience firsthand the wilderness he works to protect, and he spent his first week at SUWA in a hasty tour of redrock country, sampling the culinary delights of Wendover, Milford, Cedar City, Kanab, Hanksville, Mexican Hat, and Moab. He proved adept at dislodging a snowbound truck (after it was stranded by an unnamed driver in the shadow of Swasey Mountain) and very agile at climbing up and down the snowy slickrock. For all of these talents and more, we’re thrilled to have him on board.

Comings and Goings in the Membership Team

After more than seven extraordinary years with SUWA, Amy Irvine McHarg will be leaving her position in foundation development to finish her book *Trespass: Living at the Edge of the Promised Land*—to be published by North Point Press. Lindsey Oswald, a five-year SUWA veteran and the current development director, will assume Amy’s

duties. Christy Calvin, also a longtime staff member, will move into the position of membership services director, overseeing SUWA’s membership program and working with major donors. Last but not least, new staff member Susie Roe will serve as membership coordinator, managing SUWA’s new member recruitment and renewal programs.

Welcome Susie Roe

A Pennsylvania native, Susie earned her B.A. in Environmental Studies from the State University of New York at Binghamton. She then went on to work for the Nature Conservancy’s Fire Management & Research Program in Tallahassee, Florida where she assisted with prescribed fire training courses. A job as naturalist for the Riverside County Parks Department at Idyllwild Park Nature Center brought her to the West coast. Most recently she worked as paralegal and office manager for the Center for Biological Diversity in Idyllwild, California.

While working her way West, Susie visited Zion National Park where she says “I first laid eyes on a dramatic new landscape that I’d never before experienced, however, it wasn’t until a few years later when I was dancing a hula on the edge of the north rim of the Grand Canyon during a full moon that I fell in love with the Colorado Plateau.” Recalling her subsequent backpack trip on the east fork of the Virgin River through the Zion Narrows, Susie says, “my understanding of the delicacy of



Susie Roe backpacking in Wyoming’s Wind River Range.

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canyon country began to solidify and I knew I wanted to get involved in the effort to protect the fragile beauty and silence of what remains of Utah wilderness.”

When she isn't recruiting new members or writing renewal letters, Susie spends as much time as possible in the Wasatch Mountains “escaping the trappings of urban life and listening to the sounds of nature while snowshoeing or cross-country skiing.” In addition to being an avid hiker and backpacker, she enjoys her hula, ballet, and Irish dance classes. We welcome Susie to SUWA and are grateful for the passion and experience she brings to the Utah wilderness cause.

Farewell but Never Goodbye to Amy Irvine McHarg

When Amy started working at SUWA at the end of 1996, it was an exciting time for Utah wilderness advocates: the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument had recently been established and the Utah delegation's infamous anti-wilderness bill had finally been stopped for good. Amy became involved in these efforts through her work as activism/event coordinator for the Salt Lake City Patagonia Outlet. She was initially hired to be SUWA's volunteer coordinator; however, after only a couple of days on the job, the task of writing one of SUWA's largest and most complex funding proposals landed in her lap.



After seven years at SUWA, Amy Irvine McHarg is tackling the new challenges of a writing career and first-time motherhood.

Although she had never written a grant proposal in her life, Amy tackled the task with characteristic passion, flare, and enthusiasm. These same qualities have helped Amy to succeed in everything she takes on, from climbing (she was a nationally-ranked competitive rock climber in the mid 90s), to writing grant proposals and planning SUWA events (she conquers these monumental tasks with effortless grace), to becoming a professional writer (she has completed one book and is on her way to publishing a second).

Those of us who have had the pleasure of working with Amy over the years have numerous “Amy stories” to tell. One such legendary tale is of Amy's hare-brained idea to host a SUWA benefit at one of the most upscale, urban restaurants in town—the Metropolitan. Amy's “neck was on the line,” she recalls, after she spent the entire year's fundraising budget on the invitations alone. It took some convincing, but Amy eventually persuaded SUWA staff and donors to trade in their river sandals for high heels, and their t-shirts for ties. In the end, the dinner/silent auction event was a smashing success, bringing in nearly three times as much money as SUWA had ever raised at an event!

When asked how she feels about leaving, Amy says, “Once you are a part of the SUWA family, you are always a part of the SUWA family. We are a tribe, bound by far more than paychecks or job descriptions. I cannot imagine ever being anything but a part of that.”

We bid Amy a fond farewell, but not goodbye. We have no doubt that she will continue to tell stories and inspire people to get involved—touching their hearts and changing their minds. Amy has redrock in her veins, and she will always be a part of the SUWA family.

Fighting for Wilderness on the Home Front

With five BLM field offices currently working to revise their Resource Management Plans (see feature story on p. 7), SUWA has expanded its outreach efforts and on-the-ground vigilance in the heart of redrock country. Thanks to a special grant, we have doubled our presence in southern Utah by hiring two grassroots organizers and a new conservation associate. With this new staff based in Moab and St. George, we can better educate our

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Utah members about the RMP revision process and give our rural Utah supporters a stronger voice in the management of the public lands outside their backdoors.

In January, SUWA hired **Jen Jackson** (St. George) and **Franklin Seal** (Moab) as our southwest and southeast grassroots organizers. Jen, a native Oregonian, comes to us with an extensive background in environmental work and journalism, and many canyon country adventures under her belt. Most recently, Jen worked for the Student Conservation Alliance at Natural Bridges National Monument, where she completed her metamorphosis from tree hugger to desert rat.

Franklin landed in Moab while on a road trip across the southwest. He rolled into Arches looking for the foundation of Ed Abbey's old trailer-home and found the nearly-disintegrated markings of Ed's trailer, the remains of his water supply system (a rusty old pipe), and a landscape beautiful beyond words. Franklin has lived in Moab for the last eleven years and has been an extremely active member of the community, engaging in local politics and grassroots campaigns. Both Jen and Franklin have hit the ground running and are finding a remarkable amount of support for wilderness protection in the more rural areas of our state.

Our new conservation associate, **Scott Thiele**, has lived in Moab for the last five years. During previous trips to the area, he fell in love with southeastern Utah and decided to call it home. He has a background in wildlife and public lands advocacy, and has been a strong addition to our conservation team.

Big Thanks to SUWA's Eastern Organizers

The SUWA staff would like to thank **Bill Raleigh** (Northeast Field Organizer) and **Tom Wheatley** (Southeast Field Organizer) for their tireless effort to organize support for Utah wilderness in the northeastern and southeastern U.S. over the past 15 months. We are also grateful to the Campaign for America's Wilderness for providing the grant that allowed us to employ these two excellent organizers and expand our activist network in key states along the eastern seaboard. Our ability to educate the public and elevate awareness



*Top: Southwest Grassroots Organizer Jen Jackson
Middle: Southeast Grassroots Organizer Franklin Seal
Bottom: Conservation Associate Scott Thiele*

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of Utah public lands issues on a national level has been heightened by the work of Bill and Tom, and for that we are extremely grateful.

Tom's focus in the southeast allowed SUWA to establish a presence in an area where we didn't previously have a base of support. Tom traveled in and around his Tampa, Florida home base and throughout Georgia and South Carolina, giving slideshow presentations, lecturing at universities, and organizing activist trainings. He held a series of Earth Day events last April where he and his volunteers handed out SUWA literature, collected hundreds of postcards in support of protecting Utah wilderness, and educated large numbers of Floridians on the importance of Utah's public lands in the larger conservation framework. Tom was constantly amazed by the amount of public support for Utah wilderness that exists in the southeastern region; thanks to his hard work, that support has been translated into action by a core of new activists who are educating their elected officials in the south. Tom will continue to be a voice for Utah wilderness through his involvement with Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness, a volunteer state activist group in Florida.

Bill's work has been centered largely on educating folks in the great state of Maine, with forays to other states in the New England region. Over

the last year, Bill conducted approximately 30 outreach events in Maine alone, including slideshows, festivals, radio interviews, editorial board visits, and guest lectures. Through this extensive outreach, Bill has created an active base of support in this northeastern-most state, while empowering the existing volunteer group, Mainers for Wild Utah, and increasing our access to decision makers in Maine politics. Bill remains committed to Utah wilderness and will be an integral part of our outreach program through his participation in the volunteer state activist group, New Yorkers for Utah Wilderness.

Video Mix-up

Did you receive a videotape from us that was labeled *America's Redrock Wilderness* but turned out to be a documentary about a bridge over the Hudson River? Due to a mix-up at the production facility that replicates and packages our videos, we may have inadvertently sent you the wrong tape. If you would like a replacement, please contact Susie at (801) 486-7639, ext. 28 or susie@suwa.org and we'll send it out right away. Our sincere apologies for the inconvenience!



Self-portrait block print of Everett Ruess with his mules.

Leave a Lasting Legacy for Utah Wilderness

*Do you have an IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan?
Do you have, or are you planning to write, a will or bequest?
Do you own any appreciated property or stock?
Do you have a life insurance policy?*

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be able to make a special gift to the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance that will have a lasting benefit for Utah wilderness. Many of the giving options available through our Everett Ruess Society can earn you benefits such as guaranteed income for life or savings on income and capital gains taxes (or estate taxes for your heirs), while allowing you to help SUWA protect in perpetuity Utah's incomparable desert wildlands.

To learn more about the Everett Ruess Society, named after the infamous wanderer, artist, and free spirit who roamed the wild places of the Colorado Plateau, please contact Christy Calvin, Membership Services Director, at (801) 486-7639, ext. 17 or christy@suwa.org.

Roundup Scheduled for September 10-12

Mark your calendar for this year's annual membership gathering at Hidden Splendor, scheduled for September 10-12. Set in the heart of the San Rafael Swell, the SUWA Roundup offers our members the opportunity to meet SUWA staff and enjoy the beautiful Indian summer of redrock country with fellow desert rats from Utah and other states. Activities include an interactive discussion of Utah wilderness issues with SUWA staff and board members, a potluck dinner, evening music around the campfire, and—best of all—guided day-hikes in our Muddy Creek proposed wilderness unit. Sunday morning you'll awake to the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, followed by a hearty breakfast prepared by SUWA staff in appreciation for all your support and dedication. Watch for details in our summer issue or contact Margi Hoffmann at margi@suwa.org for more information.



Diane Kelly

Roundup hikers enjoy a birds-eye view of Muddy Creek and the Hidden Splendor campsite.

SUWA's DC Internship: A Lesson in Wilderness Politics

by Tom Holt, SUWA DC Intern



Not long after arriving in Washington to start my internship with SUWA, I was sitting in meetings with senators and representatives during our biannual Utah Wilderness Week. When the week ended, I expected that this truly exciting experience would fade away as I undertook the day-to-day tasks that makes up an intern's life. To my surprise, the daily life of a SUWA intern is as hands-on and instructive as my early experience on Capitol Hill. The SUWA DC office continued to provide an environment that gave me an intimate view into how policy is made in Washington and how defenders of wilderness get the job done in the nation's capitol. I began to realize how lucky I was to be working at SUWA as I talked to other interns from Utah and around the country—while they were giving tours and filing papers, I was working with people on the ground and in

the halls of Congress to save the Utah wilderness I grew up loving.

If you're considering an internship and are looking for something that involves real work with great people, there is no place better than SUWA's DC office. Moreover, it gives anyone who is interested in working on environmental issues as a career a genuine way to get in the door. I am leaving my internship with connections in the environmental community, a nuanced understanding of the issues facing Utah's public lands, and a fire in my belly to fight until Utah's most amazing places receive the protection they deserve. It's been a great experience.

SUWA's Washington, DC internships are typically three months long and are offered year-round. Resumes are currently being accepted for fall of 2004. For more information, contact Sean Saville at SUWA's DC office: (202) 546-2215 or sean@suwa.org.

Thank You SUWA Business Members!

Listed here are businesses that support SUWA through our business member program. We encourage SUWA members around the country to reward these businesses with their patronage. For business member contact information, please visit our website at www.suwa.org, click on *Links*, then *SUWA Business Supporters*. If you own a business and care deeply about protecting Utah's remaining wilderness lands, please consider joining our business member program. For more information, contact Susie at (801) 486-7639 ext. 28 or susie@suwa.org. Thanks for your support!

SUWA Business Members in Utah...

Alpine Medical Group, SLC
 Alta Lodge, Alta
 Alta Ski Area, Alta
 Ark-ology, SLC
 Avalanche Properties, Park City
 Back of Beyond Books, Moab
 Benstog Construction Corp., Ogden
 Black Diamond Equipment, SLC
 Booth Dental, Ogden
 Boulder Mountain Lodge, Boulder
 Brad M. King Associates Inc.,
 Snowbird
 Brennan & Shultz Painting, Park City
 Bruce Hucko Photography, Moab
 Calf Canyon Bed & Breakfast, Bluff
 Canyon Voyages Adventure Company,
 Moab
 Capitol Reef Inn & Café, Torrey
 Carpathia Financial LC, SLC
 Catalyst Magazine, SLC
 Colorado River & Trail, SLC
 Creative WebSounds, SLC
 Dabney & Dabney PC, St. George
 Dammeron Corporation,
 DammeronValley
 David Whitten Photography, Park City
 Desert Highlights, Moab
 Desert Quest, Tooele
 Discriminating Traveler, SLC
 Faceplant, Heber City
 Far Out Expeditions, Bluff
 Fatali Gallery, Springdale
 Fiddlesticks Celtic Folk Band, Orem
 Fix-a-Fax, SLC
 Floorshows Inc., SLC
 Four Corners School of Outdoor
 Education, Monticello
 Gaja Design, Moab
 Great Basin Chiropractic, SLC
 Heindselmans Knit & Weaving, Provo
 Horseshoe Mountain Pottery,
 Spring City
 Ivy Foods Incorporated, SLC
 James Kay Photography, SLC
 JessGilesWallace Design, SLC
 Kappus Landscape, SLC
 Ken Sanders Rare Books, SLC
 Lazy Lizard International Hostel, Moab

Lost River Company, Moab
 Lucky Dog Communications, SLC
 Maaack Art & Frame Inc., SLC
 Mama Lia's Pizza, Vernal
 Marzec & Associates Inc., SLC
 Matis Dermatology, SLC
 Mazza, SLC
 Muley Twist Inn, Teasdale
 New Dough Rising Bakery, Park City
 Nichols Expeditions, Moab
 Scotty Mitchell, Artist, Boulder
 Passage to Utah, SLC
 Patagonia Outlet, SLC
 Petzl America, Clearfield
 Phil Triolo & Associates, SLC
 Pioneer House Inn/Bluff Expeditions,
 Bluff
 REI, SLC
 Rob's Independent Subaru Specialists,
 Provo
 Deanna L. Rosen LCSW, SLC
 S.W. Gadd Construction Inc.,
 Kaysville
 Salt Lake Roasting Co., SLC
 Schneider Auto Karosserie Inc., SLC
 Scott Smith, Photographer, Logan
 Snow County Limousine Inc., Park
 City
 Spring Lake Publishing, Payson
 Sundance Institute, SLC
 Suzanne Storer Ceramic Forms,
 Ogden
 Technical Marketing Services,
 Park City
 Tesch Law Offices P.C., Park City
 Tom Till Gallery Inc., Moab
 Trent Alvey Design, Salt Lake City
 Tuck Landscaping, Murray
 Stephen Trimble, Writer/Photographer,
 SLC
 Underwood Environmental, Inc.,
 Park City
 Utah State Historical Society, SLC
 UtahPhotoWild.com, SLC
 Valley of the Gods B&B, Mexican Hat
 Voilé Equipment Inc., West Valley City
 WabiSabi Inc., Moab
 Walkabout Travel Gear, Moab

Wasatch Frame Shop, SLC
 Wasatch Touring, SLC
 Waterwise Design & Landscapes, L.C.,
 SLC
 Wild Hare Expeditions, Torrey
 Workingman's Data & Graphics, Moab
 WSU Botany Club, Ogden
 Wydah Corporation, Park City
 Your Handyman, Inc., La Verkin

...And Across the Country

Advanced Media Strategies, Issaquah, WA
 Adventure Travel West, Idledale, CO
 Angelo's CDs and More, Aurora, CO
 R.D. Antiel DDS, Alamosa, CO
 Appleton Kennels, Grand Junction, CO
 Arizona Raft Adventures, Flagstaff, AZ
 Baked in Telluride, Telluride, CO
 Basin Hydrology, Steamboat Springs, CO
 Beer Makers of America, San Jose, CA
 Berry & Associates, Boulder, CO
 Biological Photo Service, Moss
 Beach, CA
 Blake Jewelry, Fort Collins, CO
 Boyd Coffee Company, Portland, OR
 Brown Bag Farms, Petaluma, CA
 CC&A Construction, Denver, CO
 CK Originals, Brevard, NC
 CRA Inc., Valley Forge, PA
 Capitola Book Café, Santa Cruz, CA
 Center for Promoting Excellence and
 Inspiration in Education, Pagosa
 Springs, CO
 Centerline Alfa Romeo, Boulder, CO
 Chaco Sandals, Paonia, CO
 City Service Paving, Placencia, CA
 Citysearch, Los Angeles, CA
 Community Builders Cooperative,
 Somerville, MA
 Consulting Psychologists, Flagstaff, AZ
 Charles Cramer Photography, Santa
 Clara, CA
 Deer Hill Expeditions, Durango, CO
 Denis Chavez Development Corp.,
 Albuquerque, NM
 Dick Seeley Gardening, La Crescenta, CA

Earth 'N Light, Portola, CA
 Edward Riggs Investment Council,
 Waterville, ME
 Entrance Mountain Naturopathic Clinic,
 Olga, WA
 Equilink, CA & WA
 Essential Massage Therapy,
 Culver City, CA
 Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO
 Dottie Fox, Artist, Snowmass, CO
 Fuller Therapeutics Inc., Boulder, CO
 Steve Gilsdorf CPA, Tucson, AZ
 Githens Properties, LLC,
 Carbondale, CO
 Randall Glenn, Writer/Photographer,
 Boulder, CO
 Gordon Anderson Photography,
 Colorado Springs, CO
 Gospel Flat Farm, Bolinas, CA
 Graft Inc. Marketing Service,
 Orlando, FL
 Thomas L. Grams DDS, Durango, CO
 Bruce Grubbs, Writer/Photographer,
 Flagstaff, AZ
 J. Edward Hansford DDS, Buena
 Vista, CO
 Harvey Halpern Wilderness
 Photography, Cambridge, MA
 Haymaker Construction, El Cajon, CA
 High Country Appraisal, Carbondale, CO
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 Hohum Conco, Sebastopol, CA
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 Injoy Productions, Boulder, CO
 Institution of Taoist Education and
 Acupuncture Inc., Boulder, CO
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 Janitorial Geniuses, Beaverton, OR
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 Johnson String Instrument, Newton
 Center, MA
 Joseph Kayne Photography,
 Deerfield, IL
 Kachemak Bay Wild Lodge,
 Homer, AK
 Michael Kuten DMD, St. Louis, MO
 Dr. Richard Lane, Prescott, AZ
 Law Office of David Gibans,
 Denver, CO
 Law Office of Don Lipmanson,
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 Flagstaff, AZ
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Maui Mountain Environmentally
 Friendly Coffee, Makawao, HI
 Michael Gordon Photography, Long
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 Mountain Earth Technologies,
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 Mountain Hardware, Richmond, CA
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wilderness spotlight

Joy on the San Rafael Reef

After lunch, Banjo, my golden retriever, and I continue up to the highest point on the San Rafael Reef, a bald, pink Navajo dome. Nothing higher than this point, we cling to the wind. The view opens to 360 degrees. Immediately to the north rise the Wingate cliffs, the Hidden Splendor mine, and beyond these a vast labyrinth of Moenkopi canyons. Directly below us, an anonymous squiggly line on the map is really a thousand-foot precipice giving way to a crazy jumble of canyons, slots, domes, and fins of Navajo sandstone. A country known to only a few bighorn, Seager's Hole is so broken and precipitous that it appears nearly impossible to traverse without a trapeze artist's set of ropes, slings, and carabineers—a hell of a place to lose a horse, as they say.

Banjo perches on the ledge next to me, her face into the breeze. White-throated swifts zip about on the wind, in and out of cracks in the sand-



Dale and Frandee Johnson

The serrated escarpment of the San Rafael Reef

stone. They zip by inches from my face. I can even see the long whiskers on the sides of their beaks that they use to detect insects on the wind. Now, however, they aren't nabbing insects but reveling in the sheer joy of flight. All creatures seek joy and exuberance. Even Banjo will tolerate heat, thirst, exhaustion, and sore feet just to get to the top of this reef—where she can feel what? The exhilaration of being alive, perhaps? It's not for the view; cataracts cloud her eyes. At thirteen, she usually stays in camp sleeping, and I'm surprised that she insisted on tagging along today. Often she will stop and wait in the shade when she gets tired, but today she kept plodding up the loose sandstone scree just so she could get to the top.

Watching these swifts—these twisting, spinning boomerangs of flight playing on the wind—I wonder if we might not learn something from them. It seems that we might be jealous of the joy other animals are capable of experiencing, something that our bulbous brain often gets in the way of. We equate intelligence with evolution, but what about joy? We seem inordinately preoccupied with the intelligence of animals, pitting them against each other and rating how they measure up to the human standard. Can joy not also drive natural selection? Would not the most joyous be the best at successfully producing offspring?

Picking my way back down the loose slabs of rock I spy a dark pool below, welcome relief for a thirsty Banjo. By the time I reach it, I'm surprised to see that the pool has dried up completely. What I thought was the dark surface of water turns out to be dark mud, pine and juniper needles, and other bits of organic matter left by the evaporating water. Undiscouraged, Banjo finds a small pothole nearby. She wades right in and attempts to drink it dry.

I take off my boots, plunge my bare feet into the soft sand, and look up at the cottonwood and ash trees. I think I should be heading back soon. My watch broke last week and I have only a vague inkling of what time it is. Not that it really matters. Date and day are even less relevant. Although I'm tired, the canyon beckons. Leaving my pack, water bottle, walkie-talkie, boots, and clothes behind, I follow my instinct up the canyon. I slowly walk up the fluted slickrock, up the sandy wash, and through a small section of narrows. The runoff has created a series of pools and drops in the sandstone not unlike the sacred Inca baths near Machu Picchu.

wilderness spotlight

I'm enjoying my unencumbered state, although I must walk slowly and carefully, paying close attention to where I place my bare feet. You walk different barefoot; you just can't plod wherever you desire. You must pick your way, carefully placing your feet. It forces you to go slow, notice things, small things underfoot. You walk quietly, centered like a cat, and sneak up on lizards. The soles of my feet have become thick and pachyderm. My toenails grow crenellated like the Wingate cliffs. My skin is becoming dry and leathery and turning the color of sandstone, deepening to a dark orange.

This is an inverse wilderness; instead of mountains, the land recedes. Instead of scaling peaks, we descend into the earth. This vast sky doesn't fill me with anything, but rather empties me so that my mind matches the landscape. My thoughts, like the plants, become sparse and simple. I focus not on the grandiose but the simple: a single primrose wilting in the day's heat. Shade and water become essential; nothing else matters. All matter is reduced to its mineral essence: water, sulphur, gypsum. Consciousness is reduced to its essence. I am alive right here, right now. All else is irrelevant. I begin fantasizing about not returning. Just

keep walking, leave everything behind. Just disappear into the desert naked and alone, surviving off paintbrush and ricegass, lizards and rabbits, growing lean and tough.

Was this the final temptation of young Everett Ruess when he disappeared into the canyon country in 1934? Most likely he was killed by cattle rustlers and dumped into the Colorado River. But maybe he just simply walked off. This is what we want to believe: that he disappeared himself into the desert, that he finally merged with beauty, that he dropped out completely.

What a strange notion to hold in our hearts, this desire to disappear into the unknown, to simply meld into the rock. The draw is nearly irresistible, and yet we always return to civilization, wistfully looking over our shoulder to what might have been—our wild, shadow selves.

*Greg Gordon lives in Montana and teaches university field courses in both Montana and Utah. The above essay is an excerpt from his book, *Landscape of Desire: Identity and Nature in Utah's Canyon Country*, Utah State University Press.*

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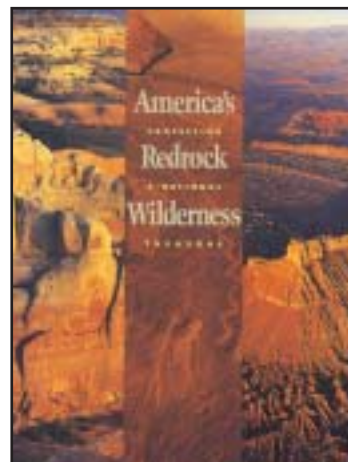
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Wild Utah! SUWA's Travelling Slideshow on Videotape

If you've been jonesing for a redrock fix but can't pull off a trip to southern Utah this year, SUWA can offer you the next best thing. Our travelling slideshow, **Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness**, is available in videotape format for home viewing. Produced by Moab photographer Bruce Hucko and narrated by former Salt Lake City Mayor, Ted Wilson, **Wild Utah** features stunning images by noted wilderness photographers, including Tom Till, Jack Dykinga, Jeff Garton, and James Kay. Whether you use it as a grassroots organizing tool, give it as a gift, or simply enjoy it in your own living room—it's the next best thing to being there.

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Cedar Mesa

These 24" x 36" posters feature full-color images of southern Utah by world-renowned wilderness photographer David Muench. The White Canyon poster (on black) features Edward Abbey's words, "The idea of wilderness needs no defense, only more defenders." The Cedar Mesa poster (on natural fiber ivory) includes a quote by late SUWA board member Wallace Stegner: "...the spiritual can be saved ..."

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"Tree Guardians," watercolor by Pat Priebe.

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"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value."

~Theodore Roosevelt

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