

REDROCK

W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Volume 31, Number 1 • Spring 2014

Shaping the Future of Utah Wilderness

Cover Photo: Death Hollow proposed wilderness near Escalante, Utah. Photo copyright Robert Heil (see more images at www.robertheil.com).



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

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

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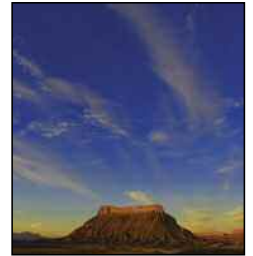
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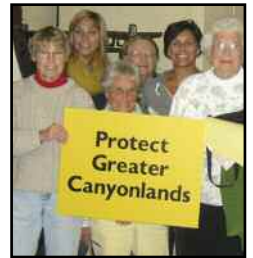
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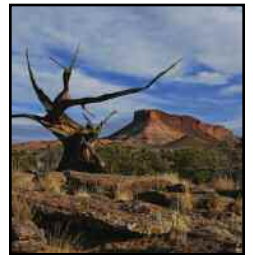
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This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Steve Bloch, Ray Bloxham, Neal Clark, Clayton Daughenbaugh, David Garbett, Scott Groene, Darrell Knuffke, Deeda Seed, Liz Thomas, and Jen Ujifusa. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly.

Newsletter design by Leslie Scopes Garcia.

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

Redrock Wilderness is published three times a year. Articles may be reprinted with credit given both to the author(s) and to the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

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wilderness notes



The Redrock Nation

We're building the movement of Redrock supporters.

There are 9.5 million reasons why, each an acre of pristine canyon country we propose for permanent protection in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. But today the obvious routes to protecting public land are blocked.

It's a rare day when we aren't reminded a dozen times that "the Congress is broken," a monumental understatement. The Congress has passed only one small wilderness bill in the past five years—and it was just as this newsletter went to press. House Republican leaders have opposed wilderness so savagely that they set a new record for the longest stretch without a bill since 1964 when the Wilderness Act established the National Wilderness Preservation System. And let's tell the truth: the Obama administration has been close to worthless when it comes to protecting wilderness.

The times do not favor us—another huge understatement. How do we respond? Do we shrink our thinking or expand it? We favor the latter. Accepting far less than the land deserves in order "to get something" is a betrayal. And in the face of climate change, dropping our goals towards saving small amounts of land is a one way ticket to irrelevance. (An aside: we understand the need for compromise; no wilderness bill ever passed without it, none ever will. But compromise must not mean abandonment of principle.)

So we're in for the long haul. That sets us on a route that is slow and surely messy. But we know these two things: we will save the Redrock, and we will do it only through the united actions of Americans everywhere. And that is why we are building a Redrock Nation.

As we undertake that effort, we'll use the traditional tools of knocking on doors and talking to community groups wherever we can find them (read about SUWA organizer Clayton Daughenbaugh's work in Minnesota, pages 9-10). We're also trying promising ideas of electronic outreach based on modeling similar to what some electoral campaigns adopted in 2012.

For SUWA, an organization whose goal is protecting 9.5 million acres of public land, official Utah is a singularly inhospitable place. Our congressional delegation, our governor, almost every county commissioner and state legislator are against us. Their positions are wrong and contrary to the views of many—some polls say *most*—Utahns. Perhaps someday these politicians will realize that protecting wilderness is good for the state in every way. Until they do, what levels the field is the passion of thousands of Redrock activists. That passion has helped us provide some form of protection for over 5 million acres of the Redrock despite official antipathy.

We now have 13,000 members, 36,000 electronic activists and 45,000 people following the issues on Facebook. These numbers are good. But we can and must do better. As Ed Abbey said, "wilderness needs no defense, only more defenders." We agree.

You can help. Ask a friend to sign up for alerts. Give your brother-in-law a gift membership. No matter what happens next, the Redrock needs a whole bunch of dedicated friends. Thanks for being one of them.

For the wild,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Scott Groene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Scott Groene
Executive Director

features

Chaos Theory

Threats and Opportunities that Could Shape the Future of Utah Wilderness

The redrock wilderness today confronts an extraordinary face-off between threats and opportunities. Like drunken vectors, they careen around the Utah public lands arena, threatening every interest there. One man's threat is another's opportunity. But order might be made of the chaos. First, let's describe the assorted threats and opportunities.

Threats

Utah's land grab: The State of Utah set a deadline of Dec. 31, 2014 for the United States to hand over 30 million acres of federal land. Midnight is more likely to produce a pumpkin coach than any mad scramble by the feds to satisfy Utah's ridiculous ultimatum. This is the weakest player among the threats owing to its astronomical asininity.

RS 2477 litigation: Utah Governor Gary Herbert launched over 20 lawsuits against the United States, seeking control of more than 36,000 miles of "roads" crossing public lands. If the suits succeed, they would rip apart southern Utah, a tragedy akin to Lake Powell's drowning of the exquisite Glen Canyon.

Energy: Oil and natural gas production have surged under Obama's "all of the above" energy plan. Although industry holds millions of acres of surplus leases in Utah, this administration continues to lease and allow development on more public land. The threat is controlled more by energy prices than by the land management agencies.

Off-road vehicles: Play machines (ORVs) have exploded in numbers and capability in the past two decades. Even as the science shows that the damage is worse than we once thought, these machines are ever more capable of clambering over natural obstacles.

Each of the above threats will exacerbate the damage we can expect from climate change, which is already bringing southern Utah more heat, less water, more dust, more exotic species and more overall disruption.



Factory Butte proposed wilderness.

© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

Opportunities

BLM Resource Management Plans: These plans (RMPs), made final in the last days of the Bush administration, allow leasing, drilling and ORV use on millions of acres of Utah public lands. SUWA and some coalition partners challenged all six plans that control a total of nearly 5.4 million acres of proposed redrock wilderness. All ignored wilderness protection in favor of ORVs and oil and gas drilling. A Utah federal district court recently considered our first challenge and struck down the RMP for over 2 million acres of spectacular public lands around Factory Butte, the Dirty Devil and the Henry Mountains (see article, page 11). We are now in the remedy phase of the litigation and will move on to the other cases in order. There is the potential for protecting vast areas from energy development and ORV use.

Greater Canyonlands National Monument: President Obama could protect this extraordinary area as a national monument, bypassing a dysfunctional Congress. It would be controversial, but

features

Obama has little to lose with such a move in right-wing Utah and much to gain politically elsewhere. The monument we envision would protect 1.4 million acres.

Master Leasing Plans: Utah’s State BLM Director recognized the deep flaws in the RMPs and started a new planning process to reconsider whether or not to lease certain areas (“master leasing plans”). Taking advantage of better information, the agency should remedy past mistakes by protecting more areas from leasing.

America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA): This bill to designate over 9 million acres as wilderness could gain more Senate champions this year than ever. It’s allowed us to build deep national support for southern Utah with leadership from our champions, Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Rush Holt. This support has enabled us to block 13 bad bills introduced by the Utah congressional delegation. It forced former Sen. Bob Bennett to transform his Washington County legislation into a bill that was

good for wilderness. ARRWA is our backup whenever there is the threat of bad legislation.

The Future: The Whole Enchilada?

It’s possible to imagine a scenario where all of these threats and opportunities are resolved for the eastern side of Utah through wilderness discussions led by Utah Rep. Rob Bishop. A year ago, Congressman Bishop announced his intention to create legislation affecting over six million acres of BLM and National Forest proposed wilderness. Not much has changed since then.

SUWA is the only organization that works on all of the threats and opportunities, and we’re far ahead of other interests in terms of on-the-ground knowledge. Success in Mr. Bishop’s process seemed a wild long shot a year ago; it remains so today.

But we’re still willing to participate to ensure that any legislation that emerges from the process protects the Redrock. We believe such a deal is possible, if not terribly likely. As we’ve explained to the

Poll: Western Voters (Still) Care about Public Lands

The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project released its 4th annual Conservation in the West poll in February, revealing that conservation still ranks high among the concerns of Western voters—so high, in fact, that it could sway their opinion on a candidate.

Utahns, in particular, demonstrated a strong connection to public lands—something consistently ignored by many of their elected officials. Key findings include the following:

- Utahns are the most likely to say that the closure of public lands during the federal shutdown hurt small businesses and the economy of communities near public lands (89% agree, only 8% disagree).
- One-in-three (33%) say the closures of public lands left them “annoyed” and another quarter (24%) were outright “angry.”
- Two-thirds (67%) register their support for BLM Master Leasing Plans after hearing that these plans would “map out specific areas appropriate for oil and gas drilling, and create protections where needed for wildlife, water and historic sites.”
- 96% report having visited public lands in the last year.
- Two-thirds (66%) say they are more likely to vote for a congressional candidate who supports protection of public lands.
- 63% say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who proposes the sale of federal lands.

Presidential Monument Designations

George W. Bush	214 million acres (mainly marine monuments)
Jimmy Carter	53.8 million acres
Bill Clinton	6.2 million acres
Barack Obama	0.276 million acres (to date)

A golden opportunity: we think a 1.4 million-acre Greater Canyonlands National Monument would be a positive step towards correcting President Obama's current national monument deficit.

state and counties, we think an agreement is possible in which they could get:

- ▶ An end to wilderness fights for 15 years or so. History shows that when a comprehensive wilderness bill passes with the support of the entire wilderness community, it kills political momentum for another bill (on the affected area) for over a decade.
- ▶ An end to the national monument "threat." If we can protect the Greater Canyonlands region as wilderness, there will be little reason to designate the area as a national monument.
- ▶ Ownership of a rational transportation system across the federal lands in Utah. The state's RS 2477 litigation will cost hundreds of millions of dollars and take decades to resolve. Even then, the result will be a hodge-podge of validated claims. Instead, we could see the state receiving title to its real roads, with appropriate conditions, and in return closing those that conflict with wilderness.
- ▶ A useful pattern of state owned lands and a revenue stream for the counties. The state owns hundreds of thousands of acres of nearly worthless, scattered state lands that could be blocked up into a coherent pattern in locations better suited for development. These would generate funding for Utah's education system, as intended. And a cut of the revenue could be directed back to the counties from which the state sections are traded out. The BLM would acquire the currently scattered state sections and could manage them consistently with adjacent federal lands, a benefit to conservation.
- ▶ An end to RMP litigation. If we can protect wilderness through legislation, it would end the

need for this litigation. At SUWA, we're amenable to resolving the litigation as part of an agreement.

This Is America's Public Land. What Do We Get Out of It?

In exchange, we get a lot of wilderness—far, far more than the existing wilderness study areas that have been in place for decades and are already managed much like wilderness. The real gain for wilderness is the acreage designated beyond the WSAs.

Will we get all six million acres at issue protected? No. We'll have to make concessions. With your help, we have worked to protect these lands for 30 years. We are stronger than ever and ready to fight if necessary. But we are also committed to seizing any opportunity to protect more of the redrock. The agreement has a chance only if the State of Utah—especially the state legislature—gives up its ideological fantasies of seizing federal land, exchanging the juvenile joys of saber-rattling in favor of obtaining genuine benefits for constituents and communities.

Such an agreement is there to be crafted—one good for rural communities, the State of Utah, and the United States. It would be good as well for wilderness and generations to come. Some believe such a deal is impossible; they may be right. But if long odds, even prohibitive odds, were enough to smother two generations of wilderness advocacy, we would not have a National Wilderness Preservation System today that tops 100 million acres. And long odds or no, given the stakes for Utah wilderness it would be irresponsible of us not to try.

And we will try.

—Scott Groene

DC news

Keeping Up with the Congressionals: Big Changes in DC

OK, bad news first: Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) is retiring. Yes, *that* Rush Holt—our Rush Holt. The nuclear physicist, Jeopardy master, environmental champion and most importantly, sponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) announced he will not seek re-election to the New Jersey congressional seat he's held since 1999. Suddenly, a place that was already bleak looks positively dismal as environmentalists of all stripes lose one of their most eloquent, principled and informed allies. The silver lining: we have almost a year to regroup, and our friend and champion has one more year to make a difference.

It's common for members to hit the exits in midterm election years. Sadly, Holt's announcement wasn't the only one that aggrieved us.

Reps. Henry Waxman (D-CA), George Miller (D-CA) and Jim Moran (D-VA), a triad of stalwart fighters for environmental causes, are also hanging it up. These men have been fierce and loyal champions of ARRWA, each in his own way staking out ground to defend wilderness—as cosponsors, committee members, and public lands advocates. We shall miss them terribly.



File photo

Rep. Rush Holt receives a Utah wilderness award from SUWA's Justin Allegro in 2008. His retirement from Congress will leave very big shoes to fill.

The Curious China Syndrome

Whenever President Obama appoints a new ambassador to China, something goes pear-shaped for Utah wilderness. It's a strange-but-true butterfly effect: In 2009 Obama appointed Jon Huntsman, then Utah governor, to the post, clearing the way for Gary Herbert's ignominious ascension. That spawned the land grab and Utah's dozens of lawsuits over ghost tracks across public lands.

Now, history repeats itself. Obama just appointed Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) to Beijing, triggering a chain reaction in the world of Senate chairmanships. When the dust settled, Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), a loyal pal to oil and gas interests, had taken over the Energy and Environment Committee. This means that committee will be more likely to take up legislation favoring industry, and that is potentially harmful to the redrock. Thanks, China.

Okay, that's out of the way. Ready for the good news?

First, there's a lot of new leadership in the administration. Neil Kornze, a former staffer of Sen. Harry Reid and the de facto BLM director since last year, was finally formally tapped for the agency post and should be confirmed in early 2014. Kornze is a public lands-savvy Nevadan, and taking over officially should let him finally backfill positions that have been empty for months. This can only help the BLM make better decisions about special places in Utah.

A Monument Friend in the White House?

Also new to the executive camp is John Podesta, a former Clinton confidante who galvanized Oval Office interest in the many national monuments designated during that administration. Podesta now serves a similar advisory role in the Obama White House, and we're hopeful he'll again speak out about the importance of protecting threatened places like Greater Canyonlands.

Also in monuments news: Nancy Sutley, the head of the president's Council on Environmental Quality, is stepping down. CEQ has historically

played a large role in national monument designations, so whoever takes over that post will be a key contact for us.

Meanwhile, Rep. Doc Hastings (R-OR), who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee and wields a particularly anti-wilderness gavel, is also retiring. Unless Democrats take the House, that will probably set up Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) to become chairman, but don't worry—that was likely to happen whether or not Hastings left. We'll still count Hastings's departure as a win for wilderness.

Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) is also retiring, and though he was never a supporter of the redrock bill, Matheson always rose to our defense when we were being unfairly shut out of a conversation about Utah's public lands. We admire his sense of process and fair play, and wager we may see him again someday in a bid for statewide office.

Finally, we say farewell to the retiring Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), whose habit of obstructing any and all public lands bills lost its charm years ago. We promise not to put a silent hold on that decision, and wish the Senator happy trails.

—Jen Ujjifusa

Senator Franken Follows Long Tradition of Minnesota Redrock Champions

Minnesota has a proud tradition of wilderness support reaching all the way back to Sen. Hubert Humphrey's sponsorship of the Wilderness Act a half century ago. Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) advances that record of wilderness advocacy, becoming the 22nd Senate cosponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA).

Past North Star State cosponsors of ARRWA in the Senate include the legendary Sen. Paul Wellstone and now-Governor Mark Dayton when he served in the Congress. Current House cosponsors from Minnesota include Reps. Keith Ellison, Betty McCollum, Colin Peterson, and Tim Walz. Sen. Franken's decision to join this club is especially significant because he is a member of the Energy



Thanks to the hard work of Minnesota activists, Sen. Al Franken has become the 22nd Senate cosponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act this Congress (public domain photo).

and Natural Resources Committee through which all wilderness legislation is funneled.

The leadership of elected officials typically grows from the leadership of grassroots volunteers who work to energize a constituency for wilderness. In Minnesota, hundreds of activists and a talented crew of leaders who formed Minnesota Friends for Utah Wilderness have led the charge. From a foundation of SUWA members, the coalition grew to include the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League. It benefited as well from the substantial support of Minnesota State University students and local faith congregations ranging from Roman Catholics to Unitarians. (See sidebar, page 10.)

But in the end, it's the wilderness itself that provides the essential inspiration. Sen. Franken found his through hiking and camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of northern Minnesota. Thanks, Sen. Franken!

—Clayton Daughenbaugh

DC news

A Tip from Minnesota Activists: Persistence Pays Off

It is thanks to the passion and persistence of our Minnesota activists that we can welcome Sen. Franken as a cosponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (see article, page 9). Their five years of hard work not only helped to bring the senator on board, but also connected volunteers to one another through shared love of a priceless landscape. How can you do what Minnesotans have done? Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Get a group together. Numbers count and so does coordination. Margaret Mead urged us never to doubt that a small group of people can change the world because it's the only thing that ever has. That's as true as it ever was.
- ▶ Letters and phone calls. Let elected officials know how you feel! Write a quick note, a long letter, or phone their offices. These things add up, especially when you get others to complement your good work.
- ▶ Schedule a meeting. When your members of Congress return home, take the opportunity to bring your group in and meet with them in person. Meetings with congressional staff can also be effective. Schedule meetings or attend events with them in Washington if you are in the area. The relationships you build through face-to-face conversation are essential to long-term success.
- ▶ Be politely persistent. Elected officials and their staffs are incredibly busy, grappling with a daunting range of issues and requests. Sustained interest on our part is the key to sustaining interest on their part. Always be polite and respectful of people's time, but be persistent, don't go away.

The more of us there are speaking up for wilderness, the stronger we'll be—so talk to your friends and family and get them involved as well. The SUWA organizers are always available to help you in your efforts. Reach out to Dave Pacheco (dave@suwa.org) if you live in Utah, Terri Martin (terri@suwa.org) if you live in the Southwest, Clayton Daughenbaugh (clayton@suwa.org) if you live in the Midwest, or Rachel Briggs (rachel@suwa.org) if you live in the East.



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Members of the Field Ecology Club at Minnesota State University.



File photo

A delegation from MN Friends for Utah Wilderness at a meeting with Sen. Franken's staff in St. Paul, MN.



© Clayton Daughenbaugh/SUWA

Members of the Minnehaha Chapter of the Izaak Walton League in Minneapolis, MN.

canyon country updates

Good
News!

Victory! Court Strikes Down Richfield Land Use Plan

In November, a federal judge in Utah struck down significant parts of the BLM's land use plan for the Richfield field office—a plan that prioritized off-road vehicle (ORV) use above all else. This victory for wilderness represents years of hard work by SUWA staff, members and supporters.

Here are the details. In 2008 the BLM released a land use and ORV plan for the lands under the purview of the Richfield field office (in BLM parlance as we use it here, "office" is an administrative district). The area includes well-known redrock landscapes such as Factory Butte, the Henry Mountains and the Dirty Devil. This plan designated 4,277 miles of dirt trails, tracks, and ghost-routes for ORV travel and relegated wilderness-quality lands to the scrap heap. The Richfield plan also gave short shrift to cultural resources, wildlife, and other special values.

SUWA led a coalition of conservation groups in challenging the Richfield plan in court, seeking to bring balance to the BLM's management of this area. Senior Federal District Court Judge Dale Kimball's November ruling rejected several aspects of the Richfield plan. Specifically, Judge Kimball:

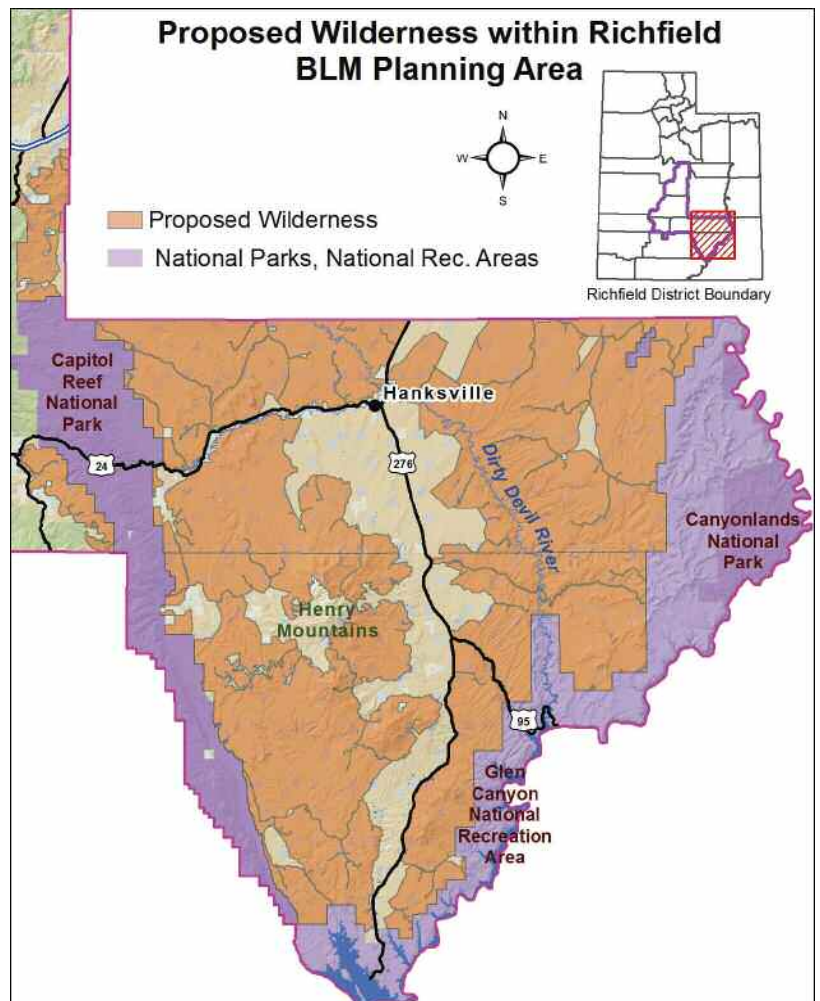
- Reversed the BLM's ORV route designations because the agency failed to minimize the destructive impacts of ORV use on streams, native plants, wildlife, and irreplaceable cultural sites and artifacts, among other things, as required by law;
- Directed the BLM to complete detailed, on-the-ground surveys for historic and cultural resources before authorizing ORV use on designated routes;
- Held that the BLM's failure to designate the Henry Mountains as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern—which would have given heightened protection to this special place—violated federal law; and,
- Ordered the BLM to re-evaluate information supporting the designation of Happy Canyon and the spring areas of Buck and Pasture Canyons for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Ramifications Beyond Richfield

This ruling is remarkable. It should mean the BLM will make significant changes to its management of the public lands that fall within the Richfield office's jurisdiction.

And this decision should have implications far beyond this single BLM planning area. The Richfield plan is just one of six Bush-era land use plans that were released as that administration ran out the door. Like this one, the other five were all heavily weighted in favor of ORVs and energy development to the detriment of protecting wilderness landscapes.

(Continued next page)



canyon country updates



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

A recent court victory could spur significant changes to the BLM's resource management plan for the Richfield planning area, which includes the Dirty Devil proposed wilderness, above.

The other five plans suffer from many of the same flaws identified by Judge Kimball. SUWA's lawsuit challenges all six plans; the Richfield Plan was simply the first to come before the court. The BLM should expect a similar outcome for the other plans as the case moves forward.

SUWA and its conservation partners are represented in this litigation by Stephen Bloch and David Garbett of SUWA; Heidi McIntosh, Robin Cooley, and Alison Flint of Earthjustice; and Robert Wiygul of Waltzer, Wiygul and Garside. We offer our sincere gratitude to our friends at Earthjustice and to Robert Wiygul for their work in this matter. Big thanks also go to the following friends and colleagues who toiled on these plans for years—today's success would not be possible without them: Liz Thomas and Ray Bloxham (SUWA), Scott Braden, Tim Wagner, and Herb McHarg (former SUWA staff), and Nada Culver (The Wilderness Society).

Most of all, we thank SUWA's members and supporters for their confidence in us and for their generosity. You are SUWA. Without you we would not have the resources a legal case such as this requires.

—Steve Bloch

Good
News!

San Rafael Swell Spared from Leasing for Now

Once again, we are happy to report that a crisis from an ill-advised oil and gas leasing proposal has been averted. Thanks to the valiant efforts of thousands of SUWA members and other concerned citizens, the BLM withdrew a plan that would have sacrificed tens of thousands of acres of wilderness-quality lands to speculative oil and gas development.

Last fall, the BLM proposed to lease approximately 80,000 acres of proposed wilderness lands in the San Rafael Swell region for energy. The specter of oil and gas wells, roads, pipelines, industrial processing facilities, and pollution that could flow from development of these leases raised substantial opposition from the public.

More than 5,000 people wrote comments to the BLM asking it to spare the Swell. In September, a vocal crowd of 200 rallied outside the BLM's state office to express its displeasure with this lease offering (see autumn/winter 2013 issue, page 12).

canyon country updates

SUWA filed a formal protest to the action and many of our conservation partners joined us.

In mid-November, the BLM thought better of the proposal and withdrew the offending leases. BLM State Director Juan Palma made the right decision here and should be commended for taking this courageous action.

As if to prove that no good deed goes unpunished, an oil and gas industry trade group has challenged the BLM's withdrawal of these offensive parcels. SUWA is now working to defend the BLM from this meritless challenge.

—David Garbett

Legalized Off-Road Vehicle Use in Glen Canyon NRA? Bad Idea.

The Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) encompasses 1.25 million acres and includes some of southern Utah's most remote and exceptional landscapes. It is a splendid place ringed by splendor: Canyonlands and Capitol Reef National Parks, the Vermilion Cliffs and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments, BLM-managed wilderness-quality lands, and the Navajo Nation.

Although Lake Powell is the most visited feature of the GCNRA, the remaining 87 percent of this area is largely undeveloped, containing pre-historic cultural sites, wildlife habitat, and outstanding opportunities for a pure wilderness experience. In fact, the National Park Service has recommended nearly half the lands within the GCNRA for wilderness designation.

This makes it all the more surprising that the NPS is proposing to legitimize and expand existing, unauthorized off-road vehicle (ORV) use within the GCNRA in its draft ORV plan. The proposal includes the use of street-legal ATVs on all paved routes, all types of ORVs on all dirt routes in the GCNRA (except in the Orange Cliffs), and ORV use on several additional designated routes. In contrast, adjacent Canyonlands and Capitol Reef National Parks prohibit the use of ORVs (including

street-legal ATVs) precisely to protect these areas' natural and cultural resources.

We understand that Glen Canyon is a recreation area and not a park, but "recreation" is not a synonym for "free-for-all." Rules apply to recreation areas, too. Congress designated the GCNRA not only for "public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment" but also to ". . . preserve the scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of the area . . ."

Protect Resources, Minimize Conflicts

Before authorizing ORV use on routes or in "open play areas" within the GCNRA, the Park Service must comply with the requirements of President Richard Nixon's 1972 Executive Order 11644. That order charges federal land managers with protecting natural resources from ORV impacts and minimizing conflicts among the various uses of the lands. Yet the Park Service's draft environmental impact statement acknowledges that authorizing street-legal ATV and ORV use in the GCNRA will have direct and indirect impacts on its sensitive resources, including soils, vegetation, wildlife and cultural resources. The near-certainty of conflicts with quiet recreationists is obvious.

There is simply no compelling need to authorize ORV use in an area as magnificent as the GCNRA. There are thousands of miles of ORV routes on near-



© Ray Bloxham/SUWA

The National Park Service is considering authorizing off-road vehicle use in the scenic Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

canyon country updates

by public lands managed by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service in southern Utah that provide ample motorized recreational opportunities.

The Park Service should preserve Glen Canyon's scenic landscape and cultural history rather than authorize ORV use that it will never be able to manage. SUWA and our partners are submitting comments on the proposed ORV plan. We'll keep you posted.

—Liz Thomas

Uranium Mining in Southern Utah . . . Again

Scarred landscapes, contaminated water, and deadly gases are enduring reminders of the historic uranium mining and milling operations in southeastern Utah. Now a Canadian mining corporation, Energy Fuels, wants to significantly expand operations at its Daneros uranium mine in the heart of the Colorado Plateau.

The Daneros mine sits on public land five miles west of Natural Bridges National Monument. Other nearby and spectacular wildlands include Cedar Mesa's Grand Gulch, the Dark Canyon Wilderness Area, and Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Energy Fuels now operates on 4.5 acres; it wants 10 times that much. The expansion would entail new mining facilities at a pair of nearby abandoned mine sites, installation of ventilation holes, and the construction of new access roads.

Ironies, Scandals Aplenty

There are ironies here. Though it is clamoring for a bigger operation, Energy Fuels closed the existing Daneros operation in 2012 because the Fukushima plant disaster in Japan pretty much soured the world on nukes. The company can scarcely claim demand as justification for a bigger operation. And the clichéd jobs argument doesn't wash either; the mine's closed, isn't it? This is an economic lockup similar to the oil and gas industries' endless demand for more leases, though they sit idly on thousands of acres of them. Craps shooters would call this bettin' on the come; scandal is another word for it.

The other scandal is the Mining Law of 1872, under which this Canadian company can dig uranium from America's public lands and never pay U.S. taxpayers a cent for either the privilege or the consequences of it. Neat, eh?

Historic Uranium Mining in Utah

Uranium's evil half-life in the region includes thousands of abandoned mine sites that contaminate air and water, posing health, safety, and environmental risks to residents, visitors, and wildlife. Affected families all over the region testify to dangers from uranium production and remind us of the federal government's shameful failure to warn uranium workers and the general public of the risks of uranium production.

All this underscores the need for the BLM to conduct a comprehensive environmental analysis of the proposed Daneros expansion. And because uranium's dangers don't stop at the mine site, the BLM must also disclose the impacts associated with transporting ore and processing it at the White Mesa mill near Blanding, Utah. But the agency apparently has no intention of conducting a full-blown environmental impact statement. It will rely on a less-detailed—not to say cursory—environmental assessment.

SUWA and our partners are submitting comments on the proposed expansion and will report on the process as it continues.

—Liz Thomas

Will BLM Make the Right Decision on Recapture?

“Recapture” plainly suggests loss and recovery, or escape and seizure afresh. Neither image is out of place in the story unfolding over Recapture Canyon near Blanding, Utah. A quiet little beauty with a perennial stream, a wealth of archaeology, and a big dose of wildness, the canyon's future is very much at issue in a pending BLM decision.

The agency could acknowledge and defend the fragility, beauty and singularity of the canyon and keep it closed to motorized travel. Or it could turn over the canyon to those who illegally invaded it on off-road vehicles (ORVs) eight years ago.

canyon country updates

The BLM's Monticello field office is reviewing a proposal to grant a right-of-way to San Juan County for a network of ORV trails in Recapture Canyon. This proposed network includes the route that four-wheelers illegally constructed in Recapture Canyon in 2005.

The BLM conducted a cultural resource survey along the unauthorized trail and identified nearly 300 cultural sites in or near the trail. The agency eventually issued an official closure order for the canyon to protect cultural resources from ORV use on the illegal route. It is significant that the closure order states specifically that ORV use in the area is causing, or will cause, considerable adverse effects to cultural resources.

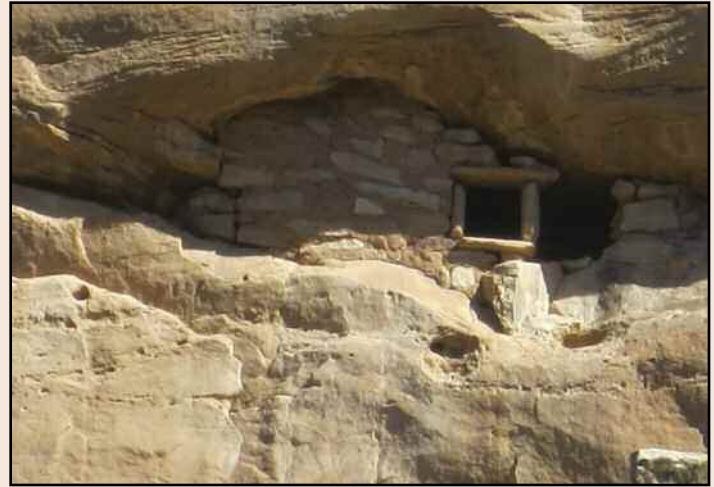
The Place, The Solution

Recapture Canyon's reliable stream provides lush habitat for wildlife and is almost certainly the reason why Ancestral Puebloans settled in the canyon nearly 2,000 years ago. Remarkable remnants from these agrarian communities, many eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, have been preserved through the centuries here. Not surprisingly, the Hopi Tribe has requested that the BLM continue its closure order because of sensitive cultural resources in the canyon (the dangers here are real: canyon walls are defaced with graffiti, some as recent as 2013 according to dates carved alongside initials).

If it grants to the county an illegal ORV route, the BLM would expose these unique, nationally-significant and, in some cases, sacred resources to damage and vandalism. There is no shortage of ORV trails in San Juan County. Enthusiasts there can enjoy over 4,000 miles of trails on public lands. No one will be deprived of ample motorized recreational opportunities if the BLM fulfills its legal duty to protect Recapture Canyon's stream, wildlife habitat and Ancestral Puebloan sites. These are our shared birthright.

The agency seems on the verge of telling the off-road community, "If you want a trail, go ahead and create one. When the fuss dies down, we'll make it official." SUWA is working with our partners to make sure that doesn't happen and that the BLM's closure order remains in place.

—Liz Thomas



© Liz Thomas/SUWA

One of many Ancestral Puebloan sites in Recapture Canyon.

Renegade Route in Media Spotlight

The destructive trail into Recapture Canyon has drawn considerable attention from the beginning. Outrage has grown as the Bureau of Land Management nears a decision on whether to make the illegal route official.

“Making this trail that leads to ancient Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings and relics a federally accepted trail would do irreversible damage to the environment in two ways. It would allow ATV users easy access to these particular ruins and put the artifacts at risk. And it would send an unmistakable message to other renegade ATVers: Hack an illegal trail on public land and there's a good chance that trail will get the blessing of the BLM.”

—*Salt Lake Tribune* editorial, Feb. 15, 2011

“The scenario has unfolded with almost laughable BLM bungling and a surprising indifference to federal statutes protecting cultural and natural resources.”

—*Durango Herald* column (by Andrew Gulliford), Jan. 30, 2014

“Protection of American Indian sites is a sensitive issue in the Four Corners, where federal authorities estimate 90 percent of sacred sites have been plundered. In San Juan [County], where until the 1920s Blanding residents were paid by the University of Utah to hunt for ancient pots, experts estimate looters have raided most of the county's 28,000 archaeological sites.”

—*Environment and Energy Daily*, Feb. 4, 2014

canyon country updates

The Legislature Is in Session and Sanity's in Short Supply

Utah's mercifully short—but not short enough—45-day legislative session was in full swing as this newsletter went to press and two bills caught our eye. You can't make this stuff up!

HB 120 is Rep. Ken Ivory's latest brainchild and would mandate that all state judges and attorneys representing state and local governments take a class on "the sovereignty, supremacy, and jurisdiction of the individual states." As he told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the purpose of this legislation is "to make sure our lawyers know what the rights, powers and authorities of a state are." Huh? Rep. Ivory also brought us Utah's widely panned "Public Lands Transfer Act" which calls on the federal government to hand over to the state the vast majority of Americans' lands in Utah, or else. HB 120 sailed through committee on a 7-1 vote.

HB 229, introduced by Rep. Jerry Anderson, would limit the state's ability to regulate emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Specifically, the bill would prohibit the state from regulating carbon emissions below 500 parts per million which is significantly higher than current levels and close to the amount of carbon in the atmosphere when dinosaurs walked the earth. Not that this bothers Rep. Anderson, who explained to the *Salt Lake Tribune* that "[c]oncentrations [of carbon] reached 600 parts per million at the time of the dinosaurs and they did quite well. I think we could double the carbon dioxide and not have any adverse effects." Despite receiving a "warm" reception, at last check HB 229 had been "held" and not voted out of committee.

Native Plant Destruction: Even WSAs Aren't Safe

As we've reported in past issues of *Redrock Wilderness*, the Utah BLM continues following the money down the path of landscape-level gardening projects. The most recent example comes courtesy of the BLM's Price field office, which has proposed a new vegetation manipulation project in Range Creek, a wilderness-quality area known for its abundance of priceless cultural resources.

Encompassing 60,184 acres of land, the project area includes 49,730 acres of land proposed for wilderness designation under America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. But that's not even the worst of it: approximately 85% of those lands (42,431 acres) are already protected as the Desolation Canyon and Turtle Canyon Wilderness Study Areas.

Par for the course, the project proposes to reduce fire risk and increase ecosystem health through removal of pinyon-juniper and sagebrush stands. As if the BLM's scientifically unsupported practice of removing vast stands of pinyon, juniper, and

sagebrush in the name of "ecosystem health" wasn't bad enough, the agency is actually proposing to allow cattle grazing in the recently treated areas as a "biological control" of invasive species. Given Range Creek's unbelievable cultural resources and the widely accepted knowledge that cattle trample and damage cultural sites, it's baffling that the BLM would even consider allowing this practice within the project area.

All in all, this project is but another terrible landscape-level manipulation project in a long line of terrible projects from the BLM. Instead of using funds for pressing issues such as invasive species removal, the agency continues down the path of masticating native vegetation followed by a heavy dose of herbicides. Oh, did we mention that, according to the BLM's calculation, these projects only have an effective life of 10-15 years. Cut, douse, and repeat indefinitely (assuming the money's still there).

We've submitted preliminary comments on the project and will keep you posted if this project continues to move forward.

—Neal Clark

inside SUWA

SUWA Welcomes New Eastern Grassroots Organizer

We're pleased to welcome Rachel Briggs as our new eastern grassroots organizer. Maybe it's because she hails from Hawaii, but Rachel brings a sunny optimism to all her work and always knows just how to cheer up her DC colleagues after ugly House Natural Resources Committee hearings—and any other kind is rare these days.

Rachel graduated from the College of the Atlantic in Maine. She's made quick work of getting to know our passionate Eastern activists. She even got her first driver's license so she could continue to take the redrock show on the road with slideshows and presentations.

We know she's a great fit for SUWA because she's been tested in the redrock. On her first work trip to Utah, Rachel survived a night at the base of Fisher Towers at the mercy of a bruising summer thunder-

storm she would later name Thor. Crashing thunderclaps split the night, the Fisher formations shuddered into tumbling rock slides, and the washes in camp ran high and strong. But the next morning, despite fears her little tent might blow away, Rachel emerged cheerful and smiling, as always.

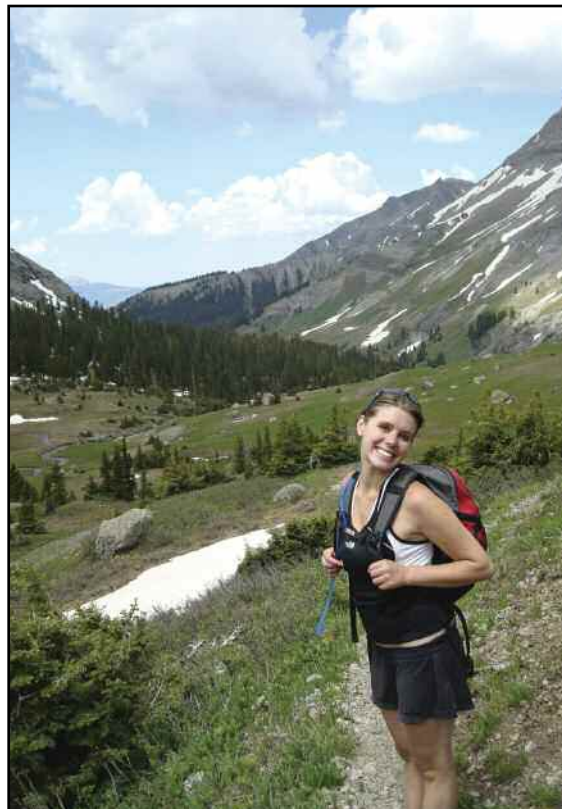
Minnesota Native Defends Utah Wilderness in DC

Laura Peterson, an American University law school grad, joined our DC office in November. As legislative advocate, she provides additional capacity in our work with the Congress—building support for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act and warding off bad legislation.

Laura is a former Telluride ski bum, who'd frequently escape Colorado's "mud season" to go hiking and camping in Moab and Escalante and, like so many Colorado visitors, fell in love with the place. On a recent bus commute, Laura learned that the



Rachel Briggs is SUWA's new ambassador in the East.



Laura Peterson fights the good fight in our DC office.

inside SUWA

first Senate cosponsor in her tenure was her home state's Sen. Al Franken. She squealed loudly, impressing all her fellow passengers. We are still beta testing "Squeal if you love Utah Wilderness" bumper stickers, but we think they have potential.

Laura's laid back attitude and a vinegar wit come in handy when she applies her legal training to unearthing the evil goodies our opponents so often bury in legislation. A lover of documentary films, Laura knows truth is often stranger than fiction, and nowhere is that more evident than in the U.S. Congress.

Bittersweet Changes in SUWA's Membership Team

One of the hardest things about working with bright, young, ardent wilderness advocates is having to say goodbye to them as their lives unfold. Kathlene Audette-Luebke, our membership coordinator for the last three years, fell in love with a fellow from Minnesota, married him, and moved to Minneapolis.

There is much to miss about Kathlene (and we already do). Her enthusiasm for protecting the



Kathlene is off to new adventures in Minnesota.



Utah native Michelle Farnsworth gets her dream job.

redrock may top that list. She showed that advocacy proudly, even wearing a yellow and black scarf she knitted herself that reads "Protect Wild Utah." She is willing to try anything (at least once) and is a wonderful photographer. Lucky for us, she put that talent to good use for the cause, and she's already sent us amazing photographs of the frozen caves in Lake Superior's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. We wish Kathlene and her husband Chris great happiness in their new life together!

On the other hand, one of the best things about working with bright, young, ardent wilderness advocates is getting to discover and know them in the first place. And Michelle Farnsworth, our new membership coordinator, is one of them.

Michelle was born and raised in Utah. She's an avid outdoors person who enjoys snowboarding, running, hiking and backpacking. Michelle says that she's always had a passion for protecting the redrock, and since graduating from the University of Utah, it's been her "dream" to work for SUWA. We're happy we can make dreams come true . . . though Michelle might have thought she'd wandered into a bad dream when a huge pile of donations from our thousands of wonderful new and returning members landed on her desk. Welcome to SUWA, Michelle!

SUWA Hires First Full-Time GIS Analyst

We're pleased to announce that Creed Murdock will join SUWA as a full-time geographic information systems (GIS) analyst to work alongside our staff of issues experts.

Creed is a life-long Utahn who received his undergraduate degree and a GIS certificate from the University of Utah and a Master's degree from Utah State University. Creed enjoys rafting with his family, backcountry skiing in the Wasatch Mountains, and wandering the canyons of southern Utah. He's passionate about protecting Utah's redrock wilderness and we're thrilled to have him on staff. Creed will work from our Salt Lake City office.



Creed rowing the Green River through Lodore Canyon.

Thanks for Being Part of Our 30-Year History!

SUWA's 30th anniversary "Redrock & Pearls" gala on November 16th was an evening to remember. Roughly 400 attendees packed the Canyon Atrium of the Natural History Museum of Utah, which was enchantingly lit to simulate the colors and textures of a starlit night in Utah's canyon country. Members, activists, supporters, staff, and board (both current and former) talked, laughed, reminisced, and celebrated 30 successful years of protecting Utah's magnificent redrock wilderness.

We could never have reached this remarkable milestone if it weren't for all of our fantastic members and activists who stand up for the cause again and again, writing letters to elected officials, showing up at rallies, speaking out at hearings, sending in their annual donations, and so much more. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank each and every one of you!



© Kathlene Audette-Luebke/SUWA

inside SUWA

© James Kay

Building the Redrock Nation in Utah

If you live in Utah, please take a moment to fill out this brief survey as we update the data set we use for contacting you when action opportunities arise. Although you may have answered similar questions in years past, information and availability do change over time. As we make headway in the ongoing campaigns to protect Utah's wild places, identifying your interests now allows for more streamlined and effective actions when we put the call out. You can also fill out the survey online at suwa.org/utahsurvey.

Name: _____ Email: _____

City/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Let us know what you're interested in:

- Helping to organize or joining a group of citizens in Utah to meet with an elected official about wilderness.
- Attending or organizing an occasional rally in your area against a project or action that may harm wilderness.
- Having a "Protect Wild Utah" lawn sign delivered to your home (currently for folks in Salt Lake, Davis & Weber counties only).
- Attending occasional "issue outings" to observe first-hand the dangers wild lands face in Utah.
- Helping to staff a table at an Earth Day event or other festival/fair in your area.
- Participating in Wilderness Week in Washington, DC (a few days of training, then lobbying elected officials in support of protecting redrock wilderness).
- Writing an occasional Letter-to-the-Editor (to appear in print edition of area newspapers) in response to articles about wilderness issues.

Use enclosed envelope or mail form to:

SUWA, Attn: Dave Pacheco, 425 E. 100 S., Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Make a Difference: Join or Donate to SUWA Today!

SUWA's critical work advocating for and protecting the wild lands of southern Utah is primarily funded by individual contributions. If you are not yet a member, please join us today. Annual dues are just \$35. You can easily join or renew at www.suwa.org/donate or by using the envelope at the center of this newsletter. SUWA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, so contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Three Easy Ways to Make Your Contribution:

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

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

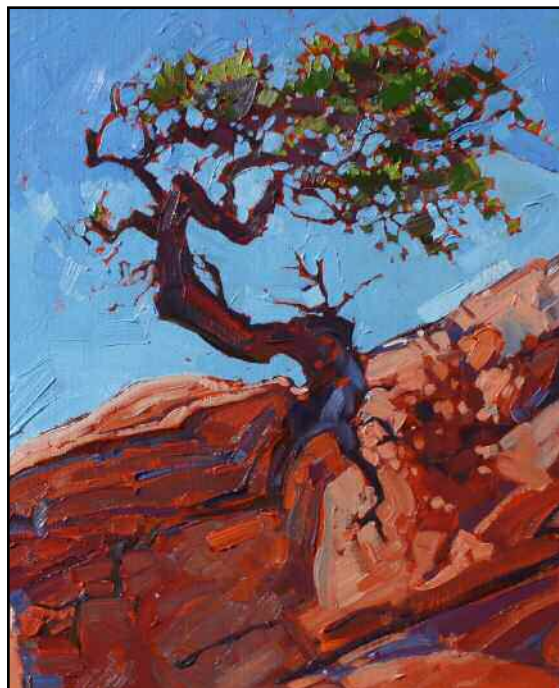
Thank you for your support of SUWA and Utah wilderness!

Leave a Legacy of Support for the Redrock

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

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

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



Artwork by Erin Hanson

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

inside SUWA**Give a Gift Membership and Save \$10!**

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

Gift Membership #1

From: _____
(your name)

To:
Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Gift Membership #2

From: _____
(your name)

To:
Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

Credit Card #: _____ CVC# _____

Exp. date: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Mail form with payment to:

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

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

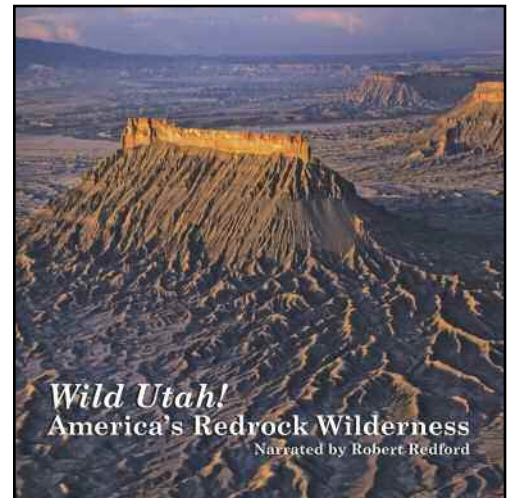
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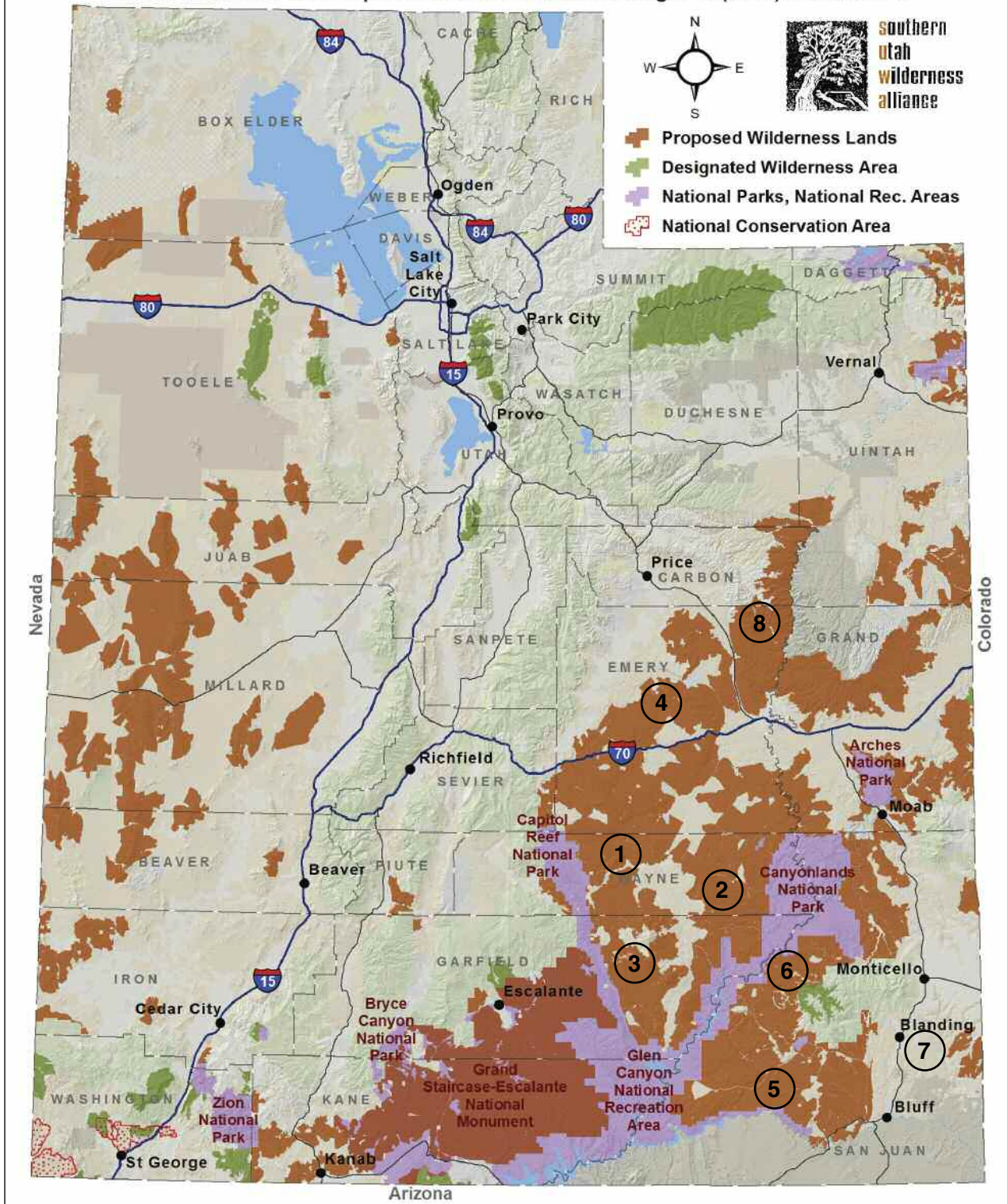
SUWA, 425 E. 100 S. Salt Lake City, UT 84111



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

America's RedRockWilderness Act

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



Reference Map for Articles in this Issue

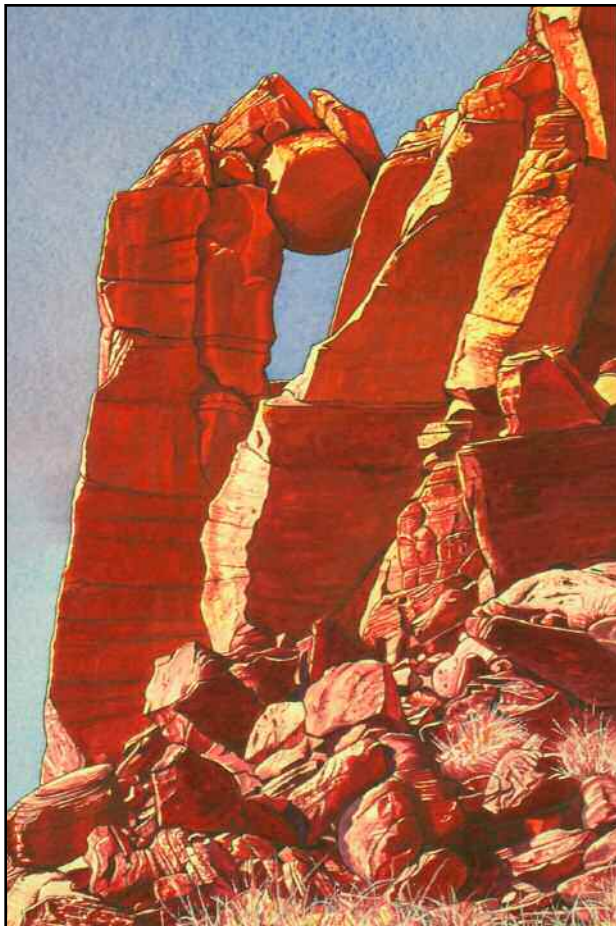
- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
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| ② Dirty Devil (p. 11) | ⑤ Grand Gulch (p. 14) | ⑧ Range Creek (p. 16) |
| ③ Henry Mountains (p. 11) | ⑥ Dark Canyon (p. 14) | |



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Artwork by Pat Priebe Swanson.

Upcoming Events

An Evening with Chris Noble

Tuesday, April 8 in Salt Lake City

Join us for an inspiring slideshow presentation of redrock wilderness photographs by internationally renowned photographer Chris Noble. SUWA's executive director, Scott Groene, will give a brief update on the effort to protect Utah's canyon country. Learn more or RSVP at suwa.org/Noble.

Annual SUWA Roundup (it's back!)

September 19-21 in the San Rafael Swell

The Roundup offers SUWA members, activists and staff the opportunity to get to know each other while relaxing in the beautiful San Rafael Swell. Activities include a discussion of Utah wilderness issues with SUWA staff, a potluck dinner, evening music around the campfire, and—best of all—guided day-hikes in the Muddy Creek proposed wilderness. Sunday morning you'll awake to freshly brewed coffee and breakfast prepared by the SUWA staff in thanks for all your support and dedication.

If you plan to attend this year's Roundup, here's what you should bring: a potluck dish serving five people for Saturday evening (if you plan to eat with the group); your own food for Friday evening and Saturday breakfast, lunch and snacks; camping gear; plenty of drinking water (1-2 gallons person/day); eating utensils; folding chairs and whatever else you like. To RSVP or for more information please visit suwa.org/roundup2014 or contact Michelle Farnsworth at michelle@suwa.org, (801) 236-3763.