



UtahSierran

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Equity, Inclusion, and Justice @ the Sierra Club

by Stan Holmes

On February 9, 2019, white nationalists posted anti-immigrant slogans at the University of Utah and other sites in Salt Lake City. "Make America Beautiful Again" read a banner at Ensign Peak. The underlying message: Make America White Again. In response, Utah Sierra Club's Director, Ashley Soltysiak, proceeded to join 25 other local green group leaders in issuing a public statement condemning racism and welcoming immigrants to our state. In the joint press statement, Ashley said "The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club stands firmly in solidarity with immigrant communities and against the hate-mongering message of white supremacy."

Coincidentally, the white racist events occurred nine days after renowned environmental justice expert

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The Yellowstone grizzly bear is an irreplaceable part of America's natural heritage, a symbol of the independence that defines the American character and an icon of all that is wild and free. The Bush administration set forth a proposal that would remove federal protection for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Since it was first listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, the grizzly bear has made a strong recovery, but there is still more work to be done. Help Sierra Club protect our forest friends; they prefer the woods than being on display.

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Our Mission

The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club is a grassroots volunteer organization dedicated to:

Protect and promote Utah's outdoors and natural landscapes;

Educate and advocate for the responsible preservation of clean air, water and habitats; &

Support the development of sustainable renewable energy;

For the benefit of present and future generations.

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Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

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Robert D. Bullard addressed a packed auditorium at the University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College of Law. The topic of Bullard's presentation: Environmental Racism. Perhaps the Virginia-based Identity Evropa racist group saw Bullard's visit as an opportunity to respond with its supremacist hate speech. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that hate groups are on the rise in the U.S. and that the number of hate groups in Utah has tripled since 2015. The Utah Legislature, in its recently concluded session, saw the need to enhance penalties for hate crimes.

Some may wonder what business an environmental group has in taking public stands on racism. When Sierra Club ran a membership survey in 1972, they found the majority opposed to addressing "conservation problems of such special groups as the urban poor and ethnic minorities." And on the national Sierra Club's current Equity FAQ web page, the first question is: "Why doesn't Sierra Club just stick to the mission of advocating for the environment [not social issues]?"

The Utah Chapter's director gave the short answer in her press statement: "Environmental justice is inherently a social justice issue." But we'll get to national Sierra Club's answer later in this article. First, let's take a look at the evolving history of the Sierra Club's development of a social justice ethic.

In 1971, SC's San Francisco Chapter established the Inner City Outings (ICO) program as a community outreach effort to provide nature outings for urban youth and adults with limited access to the outdoors. SC founder John Muir had said that "there is a love of wild nature in everybody," but Club members recognized that low-income and minority citizens rarely enjoy opportunities to explore, enjoy, and protect the environment. In 1976, ICO was adopted by chapters nationwide and later renamed Inspiring Connections Outdoors. Today, ICO programs annually conduct more than 900 outings for some 14,000 participants. ICO supports Muir's assertion that people who experience wilderness firsthand are much more likely to preserve it for future generations. All people.

The next major step came two decades later, in 1991, with the founding of the Sierra Student Coalition. The SSC offers training programs and leadership opportunities for high school and college students "working for just, sustainable communities and the protection of the environment." Every year, the coalition conducts a one-week leadership training Summer Program (SPROG) and a 10-week intensive Climate Justice League program for young community organizers. The Utah Chapter has provided financial assistance for young Utahns participating in SPROG.

In 1993, SC initiated its Environmental Justice Program (EJP), recognizing that, "to achieve our mission of environmental protection and a sustainable future for the planet, we must attain social justice and human rights at home and around the globe. The EJP concluded that this goal must promote "dialogue, increased understanding and appropriate action." Undergirding "the right to a clean and healthful environment for all people," EJP advocates for the rights to: democracy, participation in decision-making, equal

protection, information, sustainable conditions, current and generational equity, and indigenous culture.

Shortly after EJP was formed, Sierra Club Books published Robert D. Bullard's *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice & Communities of Color*. That year, 1994, also saw a U.S. presidential order (#12898) authorizing an inquiry into "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations." In 2019, the disparities at home and abroad have arguably worsened.

Two decades after *Unequal Protection*, the NAACP's 2014 "Just Energy Policies" report reminded Americans that "low-income neighborhoods and communities of color suffer more of the direct health, educational, and economic consequences" from energy production facilities, especially coal. NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program Director Jacqui Patterson later noted that "zip code is the number one predictor of environmental health." Patterson concluded by noting that, "the most significant determinant of which zip codes will host toxic facilities is race." On the occasion of the 2019 State of the Union address, NAACP National Board Chair Leon W. Russell declared that "Taking on the climate crisis and attacking economic injustice go hand in hand."

Returning to a brief history of the Sierra Club's social justice initiatives: The Club held its first "Dismantling Racism Training" in 2002, followed by creation of a Diversity Council in 2006. Diversity became a key component of SC's environmental justice policies, plans, and programs for the next ten years. Soon after, the Sierra Club added two new principles, Equity and Inclusion to form the tripartite credo: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

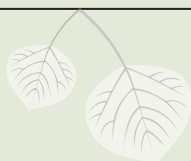
According to the DEI framework, Diversity embodies a wide variety of social and cultural characteristics: race, gender expression and identity, (dis)ability, sexuality, immigration status, class background, religious affiliation, age, and more. Equity means guaranteeing "fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups." Inclusion involves "creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate."

In 2014, SC leadership adopted the Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing to inform the organization's DEI mission implementation. First drafted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice in 1996, the six Jemez Principles chart a transformative process for individuals, the organization, and the nature of community engagement. In short form, they are:

1. be inclusive [the "big tent" metaphor];
2. emphasize bottom-up organizing;
3. let people speak for themselves;
4. work together in solidarity and mutuality;
5. build just relationships among ourselves;
6. commit to self-transformation.

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OurLand

Two Critical Canyon Planning Processes Need Your Input

by Will McCarvill

Two Wasatch Front planning processes are currently underway. The first study specifically addresses Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) summer and winter transportation, parking and other, major access issues. This study is called “The Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS: Finding Solutions For Today.” The second study looks beyond LCC and begins to incorporate transportation solutions for Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC), and perhaps even as far as Summit County. It is called the “Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Action Plan (CCTAP): Solutions For The Future.” Both will forever alter our canyons and, unless we weigh in now, will likely result in a much more highly developed Wasatch.

LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON EIS

The state government allocated \$65 million dollars to solve transportation issues in LCC. The current NEPA process kicked off with a draft Notice of Intent (NOI) open for public comment from March 5 to May 3, 2019, which has since been indefinitely extended. This will be followed by additional steps and opportunities for public comments. The project area is SR 210 from the intersection with SR 190 (Big Cottonwood Canyon Road) through Cottonwood Heights (Wasatch Boulevard) to its end at Alta, and includes the bypass road through Snowbird. The road can be divided into two parts: first is the urban segment used by Cottonwood Heights residents, recreation traffic and commuters. The second is the primarily rural segment used by recreation users heading up Canyon. Recreation activities include resort and backcountry skiing, hiking, cycling, rock climbing, and fishing. LCC, which receives some 2.1 million annual visitors, is also an important watershed area for the Salt Lake Valley. Parking is located at resorts, some trail heads, park and ride lots, and along the road itself. Keep in mind the Forest Service current management plan holds parking

areas to levels established in 2000. UTA provides winter ski bus service, though no summer bus service is available.

The overall objective is to enhance safety, improve mobility of vehicles up the canyon, improve the operation of key intersections and parking at trailheads, and improve mobility of vehicles in Cottonwood Heights on Wasatch Boulevard. This will all be done, presumably while addressing environmental requirements and protecting our watershed. Some modifications have already been installed, like the traffic calming structures at the parking lot intersection by Alta and Snowbird. So what should you think about when making comments? Here are a few ideas:

The visitor carrying capacity for LCC needs to be determined as part of the EIS. We simply cannot move forward allowing transportation to increase unless and until we know the impacts of visitation on the canyon’s environment.

The end game should be the elimination of private cars with a conversion to reliance on mass transportation, summer and winter. Such a scenario would require minimal parking in the canyon. So any parking lot modifications need to be temporary as the trailhead will be serviced by mass transportation. This also means that large parking facilities will eventually be required at key locations to interface between cars and the transportation travelling up the Canyon. These must be located in spots removed from the mouth of the canyon; areas with excellent traffic circulation, and with an eye toward eventual connections to the mass transportation system developing in the center of the valley.

Mass transportation can ultimately be a useful tool to control visitor use, much like the shuttles in Zion that have so effectively limited visitor pressure. Just because we can get more people up Canyon does not mean

we should ignore impacts and degradation of the watershed and canyon environment.

COTTONWOOD CANYONS TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

The CCTAP envisions broader transportation solutions for both Cottonwood canyons as well as over to Park City. The current plan considers gondolas up both canyons, and connection between Alta and Brighton. Another link will connect Brighton with Park City. A proposed rail line could go up LCC and pass through a tunnel to the top of BCC. Greatly enhanced bus service is another option. You can see the plans at CCTAP Plans and comment at cottonwoodcanyonstap@utah.gov. As you can imagine, these options, as presently envisioned, would substantially alter our mountains. Here is our take.

Just as the visitor carrying capacity of LCC needs to be determined, so should that of BCC. Perhaps the studies should be conducted simultaneously. This would provide a fact-based approach, a carefully considered alternative to what has become a constant search to see how many more people we can squeeze into the canyons. As with Little Cottonwood Canyon, the goal in BCC should be to eliminate private vehicles in BCC (apart from those owned by Canyon homeowners.)

Gondola ski interconnects between LCC and BCC and Park City are unacceptable as transportation solutions. For example: How would a gondola service the hiking and biking trails along the canyon? How would a train up LCC solve BCC trailhead-related transportation problems? Any mass transportation solution has to service recreation trail heads all along the Canyon. No additional transportation corridors for gondolas and trains should be built up LCC nor BCC. The current roads will always be needed for servicing the resorts and private



JEFF CLAY | CLAYHAUS PHOTOGRAPHY.COM

landowners. No, we fought the battle against Ski Link several years ago, and we do not support ski area interconnects going forward.

Any transportation option should preserve viewsheds, lower impacts on the environment and protect the integrity of our wilderness areas. Transportation solutions such as tolling for private cars need to provide access to the canyon for all communities.

The canyons are used for all four seasons; ski area use should not dominate transportation solutions.

So these are a few ideas for you to ponder as we go through these processes. Please provide your comments, because we believe the future of our Wasatch Mountains is at a critical point. Once we adopt future solutions, there will be no turning back.

Great Water Conditions in SW Utah. What About the Future?

By Lisa Rutherford

Water conditions in Southwestern Utah are great for the moment. But what’s in our future?

Attending the Utah Water Users Workshop held annually in March in St. George, when northern Utah residents are eager for some sun and fun, provides interesting insights on many aspects of water. Water leaders from across the state, along with many other interested parties such as me, attend to learn about what’s happening with water in our state and what the future holds.

One highlight every year is Brian McInerney’s update on Utah’s water situation and what we should expect in the future. Brian, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service, is usually greeted with sad faces due to the ongoing, nineteen-year drought. This year, however, he was greeted with smiles and joy as Brian reported the great situation nearly all of Utah is experiencing.

Last year was the lowest water year on record, but this February, a warm, wet subtropical Hawaiian “atmospheric river” met cold Aleutian air flow and much-needed

snow was produced. So far, we are not melting early either. Last year’s high-level rains wrecked the 2018 snowpack; that has not happened this year so far. But cooler temps this year are an anomaly and higher temps are forecast for our future. One season does not determine our future.

So, Utah’s water supply across the board is doing well and most reservoirs should fill. Drought is going away in Utah but we are still abnormally dry. If we have a warm/dry April, that could drop the good numbers.

Also, Colorado’s precipitation has been helping Lake Powell in spite of the fact that the lake’s level is still down 43 feet from a year ago. With all the snow, it remains to be seen where the lake’s level will be in April through June when snow melt occurs.

This brings to mind the recently agreed-upon Upper Colorado Drought Contingency Plan (DCP), which was addressed in a workshop presentation by state water director, Eric Millis. The DCP’s focus is maintaining Lake Powell’s level to provide energy and assure Colorado River Compact

compliance. 3525’ is the level that must be maintained. The plan is to manage other reservoirs to prop up Lake Powell. However, with climate change predictions, will these other reservoirs be able to do that or will they too struggle?

The Water Users Workshop included the signing of the Green River water contract between the State of Utah and the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR). The state and BoR emphasized that this contract provides operating flexibility and helps shore up protection for Utah’s water supply. The BoR noted that this agreement finalizes reassignment of water rights. The United States has a huge investment in Flaming Gorge and will get money from the contract. However, at \$19 per acre foot, far below the average \$80 per acre foot for other contracts, one must ask, ‘who won in this negotiation?’

There was much hoopla and celebrating by state and BoR representatives at the signing but opponents were also there. Duane Moss who serves as director of the Ute Indian Tribe’s Water Resources Department

was present. He was quoted in a local paper saying, “The water rights they’re using were set aside under the Central Utah Project to benefit the Uintah Basin and specifically the Ute Indian Tribe.” Also present was Sarah Stock with Living Rivers, one of several groups suing over the agreement. The groups believe environmental study leading up to the agreement was not sufficiently thorough. This is just one block of water that’s part of a larger block that was originally planned for the Central Utah Project’s “Ultimate Phase.” The second block, the Lake Powell Block, has yet to be contracted and will require further study. Groups feel that both blocks should have been studied together—not separately—to ensure an adequately coordinated environmental review.

The two-day event provided many other interesting workshops – too numerous to describe here. The good news is that many of the workshop sessions focused on water conservation—though perhaps not enough conservation for the likes of me and others. But at least we seem headed in the right direction.

OurLand

Sierra Club Supports Children's Climate Lawsuit

by Stan Holmes

“The Sierra Club is proud to support these brave kids who are showing the world what true climate leadership is by speaking truth to power, seeking their day in court, and holding the U.S. government accountable for protecting their lives and their future.”

On March 15, 2019, young people across the U.S. and around the world walked out of their classrooms to protest decades of negligence by elder generations who have shown to be unwilling to seriously tackle climate change. In Salt Lake City, the Youth Climate Strike rally at Utah's State Capitol drew more than 400 students. West High School senior and rally organizer Mishka Banuri said, “If our leaders fail to take climate action now, the burden of climate change will be on my generation.” Ms. Banuri

underscored student solidarity against such practices as leasing for new oil and gas development on federal lands when she said, “Compromise is not an option.”

The Sierra Club is listening to Banuri and her peers across the country. In addition to an array of community organizing and legislative programs aimed directly at mitigating climate change, the Sierra Club remains a formidable youth ally on the legal front. Joining organizations as diverse as the U.S. League of Women Voters and Our Children's Trust, national Sierra Club has filed friend-of-the-court (amicus curiae) motions supporting youth plaintiffs in the Juliana vs. United States case. State chapters are also taking action in supporting these youth programs.

Juliana vs. U.S., first filed in 2015, pits 21 young Oregonians against the federal executive branch. Kelsey Juliana and friends argue that presidential administrations going back to the 20th century have perpetuated a fossil fuel economy despite knowledge of the dire climate consequences. They contend the U.S. government has been violating their Constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property.

Sierra Club agrees, charging that “the United States

government has contributed to climate change by authorizing, encouraging, and sponsoring activities resulting in the combustion of greenhouse gases. The government has advanced these policies fully aware of the harm that fossil fuel combustion poses to the climate.” In its most recent filing, March 1, 2019, the Sierra Club argues that Juliana youth plaintiffs have “a due process right to a sustainable climate and a due process right to be protected against a state-created climate danger.”

According to Executive Director Michael Brune, “The Sierra Club is proud to support these brave kids who are showing the world what true climate leadership is by speaking truth to power, seeking their day in court, and holding the U.S. government accountable for protecting their lives and their future.”

In Utah, young climate activists recently experienced a setback when the BLM leased 135,000 acres for oil and gas development. But at the same time, judicial decisions blocking Trump administration attempts to drill in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, and in Wyoming and Colorado, offer rays of hope as Generation Z tries to gain control of its future.

Small Modular Reactor Project

by Sarah Fields

The Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) is planning to site a NuScale-design Small Modular Nuclear Reactor (SMR) at the Department of Energy (DOE) Idaho National Lab (INL). NuScale Power LLC, of Portland, Oregon, has submitted a Design Certification Application (DCA) to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for review and approval. UAMPS is a group of over 40 municipal electrical utilities, located primarily in Utah, but also in California, Oregon, New Mexico, Idaho, and a few other states. Thirty of the municipalities voted in 2018 to participate in Part 1 of Phase 1 of the project. There will be a vote on Part 2 of Phase 1, the license application phase, with greater financial commitment within the next few months. This first-of-kind reactor will be funded by UAMPS member ratepayers, the DOE, NuScale, and other possible utilities, government entities, and investors. UAMPS estimates the cost of construction to be the total costs for licensing, construction, operation, and decommissioning.

UAMPS must submit a Combined Construction and Operation License Application (COLA) to the NRC in order to site the reactor. The 12-unit SMR will produce 600 Megawatts of gross energy. NuScale and UAMPS have stated that the reactor will produce an additional 120 MW, with no clear path to that 20% power uprate. The SMR will produce more high-level reactor waste per MW than conventional, larger light water reactors. There is still no permanent solution for the disposal of irradiated fuel rods in the US, which is the responsibility of the DOE. Monthly and yearly costs to the municipal utility ratepayers are unknown.

The NRC approval of the DCA involves a Rulemaking, which will take at least a year after the NRC approves the Final Safety Evaluation Report in late 2020 or early 2021. UAMPS has stated that they will submit a COLA in 2020, with operation of the 12-module reactor commencing in 2027. The UAMPS schedule is unrealistic. There are a number of

technical, regulatory, financial, and other issues that must be resolved before the reactor is constructed and commences operation.

If any Club member lives in, or has contacts with citizens in, a UAMPS-member community and wishes additional information or can submit written or oral comments at UAMPS-member meetings, please contact Sarah Fields, sarah@uraniumwatch.org or 435-260-8384.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- UAMPS members: <https://www.uamps.com/Members>
- NuScale Design Certification: <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/design-cert/nuscale.html>
- Small Modular Reactor and Non-Light Water Reactor Technical and Policy Issues: <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/smr.html>

URANIUM MINE AND MILL NEWS

By Sarah Fields

SAVE THE DATE — MAY 18 WHITE MESA MILL SPIRITUAL WALK AND MARCH

Please Join the third annual White Mesa Spiritual Walk and Protest March on Saturday, May 18. Gather between 10 and 11 am at the White Mesa Ute Community Center, Willow Street, San Juan County. The March to the White Mesa Uranium Mill is about 4 miles.

The Community Center is off of Hwy. 191, between Blanding and Bluff. Turn west at the White Mesa Mobil Gas Station, then left on Willow Street. Look for a large red building with “White Mesa Community Center” written in white letters on the side. Wear comfortable shoes, sun hat, and bring plenty of water! For more information, call White Mesa Concerned Community (435) 485-0265.

WHITE MESA MILL (LOCATED IN BLANDING, UT)

According to Energy Fuels Resources (USA) Inc., the White Mesa Uranium Mill, the only operating conventional uranium mill in the United States, will continue to reprocess stored liquid effluents for their vanadium content in 2019 and 2020. Much of the uranium ore processed by the mill contains vanadium. Due to the increased demand for vanadium, it is now profitable to reprocess the effluents to remove the vanadium. Legally, Energy Fuels must process ore first for uranium and then for any other mineral content.

LA SAL MINES COMPLEX (LOCATED IN LA SAL, UT)

Energy Fuels is refurbishing the La Sal Mines Complex, at the base of the La Sal Mountains in northern San Juan County. The company is sampling ore to determine the economic feasibility of reopening the Complex for the production of uranium/vanadium ore.

In 2018, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service approved the expansion of the Pandora Mine, part of the Complex. Energy Fuels has plans to expand the Complex underground to the west and north, with additional exploratory drilling and installation of ventilation shafts.

OTHER ENERGY FUELS' MINES

Canyon Mine - The Canyon Mine, on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, is only partially developed. Energy Fuels suspended further development underground. The mine has problems related to the removal of water from the mine during development and future operation. Although the ore contains both uranium and copper, Energy Fuels does not yet have the capability to also remove copper at the White Mesa Mill.

Daneros Mine - The Daneros Mine, near Natural Bridges National Monument, is on standby. The BLM has approved the expansion of the Mine to 65 acres, which has been appealed by The Grand Canyon Trust. The Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining has yet to approve the expansion to a large mining operation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Division of Oil, Gas & Mining Files: <http://ogm.utah.gov/minerals/MineralsPDO/angularmineralsfilesbypermtiinfo.php>
- Utah Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control: <https://deq.utah.gov/legacy/programs/waste-management-radiation-control/radiation/uranium-mills/index.htm>
- Energy Fuels Inc. Securities Filings: <https://www.sedar.com/DisplayProfile.do?lang=EN&issuerType=03&issuerNo=00004321>

Also, contact Sarah Fields, Glen Canyon Group, sarah@uraniumwatch.org, 435-260-8384.

OurLand

Green New Deal and the Sierra Club

by Stan Holmes

On February 7, 2019, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced a resolution, “Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal.” H.Res.109 begins with the charge that “human activity is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century” and cites a vast array of related damages to the natural and human environments. The resolution issues a call-to-action whose proposed initiatives range from reducing and removing greenhouse gases to establishing universal health care, respecting indigenous peoples’ and organized labor rights, clean energy programs and much more.

The Sierra Club’s ‘take’ on the Green New Deal legislation is a bit more sophisticated than Mike Lee’s ‘Reagan-on-a-Dinosaur’ science denial parody on the U.S. Senate floor and significantly less embarrassing for Utahns.

Ben Beachy, of Sierra Club’s Living Economy Program, weaves many elements of H.Res.109 into the SC prescription for a successful Green New Deal (GND) that must include: tackling the climate crisis and pollution;

creating good, living wage jobs; and countering racial and economic inequity. With sustainable climate, jobs and equity goals in mind, Beachy suggests five potential building blocks for a Green New Deal. They are:

1. **Infrastructure Improvements:** A “renaissance” in public infrastructure upgrades to neglected water, transportation, and energy systems. This includes not only repairs, but a transition to a cleaner, more efficient infrastructure with lead-free pipes, expanded public rapid transit, and a renewable energy-based “smart grid.”
2. **Building Efficiency:** Initiatives to make commercial, government, and residential buildings more efficient and energy-saving, such as LED lighting and insulation retrofits. National commitments to “weatherize America” and set new efficiency standards for buildings and appliances would create climate-friendly jobs and lower utility bills.
3. **Clean Manufacturing:** Jobs Local / Buy Local federal incentives
4. **A Green Brigade:** Patterned on the original New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps, a GND green jobs program would employ thousands of people to restore essential ecosystems nationwide. Program priorities would be forest growth and fire safety near urban-wild interface areas, wetlands restoration, and hazardous waste cleanup projects to ensure clean air and water for all.
5. **Climate-Friendly Farming:** Offering family farmers training and funds to expand sustainable agricultural practices such as new composting techniques, the use of seasonal cover crops, reduced tilling, and addi-

tional methods to better withstand droughts. A key aim is empowering small farms to help offset the negative environmental impacts of industrial agribusinesses.

In a press statement applauding H.Res.109, SC Director Michael Brune said that the GND proposals “offer a bold plan to tackle the climate crisis and inequality -- two of the defining crises of our time -- at the speed and scale that science and justice demand. A Green New Deal presents the opportunity to help transition from an economy of low wages and toxic pollution to one driven by dignified work and 100 percent clean energy.”

As a post-script: While Sen. Lee’s announced ‘supply side’ solution prescribes having more babies to power us past climate change, a study cited by Yale Climate Connections directly contradicts Utah’s senior senator. Looking at a range of 148 lifestyle choice scenarios that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries, researchers at Sweden’s Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies concluded that “having one fewer child was the lifestyle choice with the greatest potential to reduce annual personal emissions” of CO₂.

Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The Club’s next Strategic Plan (2015), citing the severity of the climate crisis, embraced the motto of the People’s Climate March that “to change everything, we need everyone” and added the Jemez Principles to SC’s official Movement Organizing Manual. The Strategic Plan set goals “intended to enlist every possible ally to our cause, to reinvest our historical conservation and outings programs, and to work toward building a Sierra Club that reflects the true diversity of America.”

In 2016-17, however, with the election of Donald J. Trump and increased frequency of hate crimes, the Sierra Club replaced “diversity” with “justice” and formed a new Department of Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (EIJ). According to EIJ director Nellis Kennedy-Howard, a key element of the department’s mission is “to demonstrate our unequivocal solidarity with justice movements in and outside the environmental movement.” One might be reminded of Martin Luther King’s 1963 Birmingham Jail declaration that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Seeking justice means seeking fairness and balance for individual and societal actions past, present, and future.

Sierra Club’s switch from DEI to EIJ resulted not only from Trump’s entering the White House, but also from the realization that a too-narrow focus on achieving diversity can result in tokenism. Members and leaders recruited for their racial and ethnic identities can find themselves alienated from an organization that has inadequately embraced equity principles and programs. An internal study confirmed that the Club did have a problem with retaining people of color on staff. This was one of several issues identified in Green 2.0’s 2014 report that found ‘Big Green’ organizations like the Sierra Club

overwhelmingly white and middle- to upper-class.

Taking a step beyond seeking diversity, SC’s new EIJ [or simply Equity] Department embraced a new concept: intersectionality, which acknowledges that individuals and groups are comprised of multiple social categorizations, such as race, class, and gender that can create “overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” Recognition of intersectionality helps inform the justice and equity goal that every Sierra Club staff member has in their individual work-plan.

National SC’s Equity Department has an EIJ Support Team that “supports and coaches the organization’s 64 chapters across the U.S. and Puerto Rico in their development of local work furthering intersectional justice.” Last September, the Support Team conducted a training for Utah Chapter Ex.Com. and staff members in conjunction with our annual Jamboree. Carly Ferro is the Chapter staff person leading Utah’s EIJ Task Force, with support from national SC staffer Lindsay Beebe. On the Ex.Com., Stan Holmes is responsible for overseeing EIJ activities.

The Utah Chapter’s Equity Task Force began in October 2017, with Carly leading a group that included representatives from BYU, the U of U, UVU, and Westminster College environment groups along with Sierra Club public lands advocates. Among the group’s first set of agreements were adherence to the Jemez Principles and promotion of equity and justice values Chapter-wide. They set out to, “Broaden the scope of the Chapter’s outreach audiences through events, actions, and partnerships.”

To identify potential partners, the Task Force began a process called “community mapping” or “community needs assessment” which, as described in the Sierra Club’s Movement Organizing Manual, helps frame the outreach vision by

identifying community-specific challenges, potential impacts, and existing leadership. The Task Force has been building a bank of Partnership Profiles across the broader Utah community. Successful partnership activities since 2017 have included coordinated environmental justice presentations with the NAACP’s Salt Lake Chapter, clean-up events with Jordan River Community Initiative groups, and voter registration efforts with Comunidades Unidas, League of Women Voters, Elders Rising, and other civic empowerment activists.

In January 2018, the Equity Task Force helped create an inter-group Environmental Justice Alliance, now referred to as Equity Partners. Representatives from Utah Sierra Club, SUWA, Racially Just Utah, Ute PAC, HEAL Utah, NAACP, Comunidades Unidas, and other social justice advocacy groups meet monthly to share equity-justice news, ideas, and opportunities for collaboration. Partners see the need to strengthen relationships with individuals, families, and groups that have traditionally been marginalized not only from the mainstream political power processes but also from meaningful inclusion with environmental groups.

One important tenet of Equity Partners is the belief that relationship building should be transformational, not transactional. No individual agenda is paramount, nor are relationships to be viewed as merely quid pro quo. All parties have unique needs and resources to share toward achieving greater social justice that is to everyone’s benefit. As one founding member of Equity Partners acknowledged, this will sometimes mean taking stands outside the traditional issues area of an environmental group.

Thanks to Equity Partners’ interactions, Utah Sierra Club members have gained knowledge of the Rural Utah Project’s voter registration campaign in the Navajo communities of San Juan County and the

community health initiatives in Latinx neighborhoods along the Wasatch Front. Our allied groups know more about the Chapter’s outreach efforts, such as Ready For 100 municipal clean energy resolutions and the work we do to support the Utah Youth Environmental Solutions coalition. Carly Ferro can provide a much longer list of accomplishments the Utah Sierra Club has realized through the Equity Task Force and Equity Partners. <carly.ferro@sierraclub.org>

This brings us back to the FAQ page of the national Sierra Club’s equity website, which asks:

Q: Why doesn’t Sierra Club just stick to the mission of advocating for the environment?

A: “Our mission statement says the Sierra Club will “enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.” It would be easy to retreat, keep our heads down and focus narrowly on what are traditionally known as “our issues.” But justice, equity, and inclusion are our issues. We have a duty to stand with those who are face persecution on the basis of their race, religion, gender, sexuality or other marginalized identity. Solidarity is our only hope of creating the world we want to live in.”

Perhaps Chapter Ex.Com. Chair Will McCarvill said it best when he introduced last September’s equity training to fellow board members and staff. “The Sierra Club is undergoing a transformation from an organization that is overwhelming white and male-dominated, to one that incorporates diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. This reflects the ongoing changes to America’s demographics, and it also recognizes we are all on this earth together. So we must all work together to protect our planet.”

‘Nuff said. Except for the question, “What role would you like to play?”

OurLand

Groundhog Day is Not Just in February

by Lisa Rutherford

When the groundhog emerged in early February to conduct his annual ritual – either warning us of more winter or delighting us with the coming of spring – I thought about the ‘groundhog’ universe in our area of Southern Utah. Day after day the same issues emerge: The Lake Powell Pipeline and the Northern Corridor.

My last Sierra article reviewed results from the most recent Lake Powell Pipeline public comment period conducted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This month’s water news has to do with Utah’s Division of Water Resources (UDWRe) and their water conservation goals plan for the state. A public online survey was conducted last fall, and public meetings were held. But by early 2019 there was still no word of an actual plan. Finally, in mid-February word came that the plan would not be available for public comment until March. What was the holdup? It seems the 2019 legislative session offered UDWRe an opportunity to use the plan to some advantage. HB143 (Water Conservation Plan Amendments) would have encouraged conservation by having cities “evaluate” what it would take to reach 175 gallons per capita per day (gpcd). Apparently, it did not suit the UDWRe, so they convinced legislators to hold the bill in committee.

This tactic did not sit well with one draft plan stakeholder: Utah Rivers Council. URC, one of just a handful of conservation stakeholders, did not care for these backroom shenanigans. They put out a press release and published the

entire plan, undercutting the UDWRe’s process. In URC’s defense, UDWRe knew the legislature’s schedule and should have worked harder to ensure transparency by getting the plan out publicly prior to the legislature’s convening. However, the plan’s stakeholder group was heavily biased toward the water district community. Perhaps UDWRe actually had a plan earlier and the water district stakeholders didn’t like it thereby slowing the process?

Nevertheless, review of the plan clearly shows why 175 gpcd was a problem for the UDWRe and water district stakeholders. The draft plan’s future goals for 2065 average 219 gpcd with only the Provo River, Salt Lake and Weber River regions achieving better than 175 gpcd. The remaining six regions identified by the state have an average goal of 261, which includes Washington County (Lower Colorado River South region) at 259 gpcd. That’s down from Washington County’s current 303 gpcd, but really, can’t we do better in the next forty-six years? Other desert communities have already achieved that objective.

Then there is the Northern Corridor, a highway proposed to run through and disrupt our Red Cliffs NCA/Reserve (aka desert tortoise reserve), pushed vigorously by leaders. Fortunately, two bills in Congress that would have forced the highway by eliminating environmental requirements failed to move through the process. Now, we’re faced with the county and UDOT working in concert during



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the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) renewal process to push through their agenda. Contractors (Jacobs and SWCA) are working the renewal process using the county’s own traffic models, which may have questionable data and assumptions. SWCA’s representative reports that new policies came into existence after the 1995 HCP and those will be incorporated, including plans to accommodate the Northern Corridor. A full HCP revision is planned for March and NEPA NOI (Notice

of Intent) planned in summer 2019.

Viable options are not being considered fairly by planners and leaders, who are primarily considering cost issues rather than important environmental ones. At least opposition to a gas line through the area has seemed to prevail at this point. Perhaps highway opposition will, too.

Will these matters be settled by Groundhog Day 2020? Stay tuned!

The Keep Public Lands in Public Hands Campaign in 2019

by Lawson LeGate



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Thanks to the Sierra Club’s Grassroots Network, the Utah Chapter’s Keep Public Lands in Public Hands (KPLPH) campaign is up and running in 2019. Our campaign stems from the Utah Legislature’s attempt to turn over all of the Bureau of Land Management lands, like national forests and wildlife refuges, to the state of Utah. Proposed wilderness and wilderness study areas would pass into state control.

If the state successfully manages to secure possession of these lands, they would not be bound by protective laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Loss of these protections would give the state flexibility

to potentially streamline dirty fuel development that would tarnish the cultural, archaeological, sacred, and ecological values of our treasured landscapes. Given the pro-development and anti-environmental bias of many Utah

politicians, the ability of citizens to secure long-term protection of Utah’s treasured landscapes would surely come to an end.

Beyond the environmental argument, economic analyses indicate the state would not be able to afford managing such lands, so that their passage into private hands would be an ever-present risk.

The KPLPH campaign strives to demonstrate Utahns’ desire to safeguard public lands. Utahns share concerns about a variety of issues and actions related to these lands. For example, Congress just passed a bill that includes wilderness and other protections for the wild San

Rafael Swell. Likewise, the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments protect beloved red rock canyons and lands sacred to Native American people. Many Utahns are fighting to prevent destructive dirty fuels drilling and coal mining. Citizens of Utah, like all Americans, have a common interest in the responsible stewardship of these unique natural resources. In a very real sense, our right to participate in decisions about the fate of the wild places we love derives from our common ownership of public lands.

KPLPH team members are in touch with others in Utah who would like their communities to take a stand in favor of America’s public lands. A few years ago, the Salt Lake City Council and mayor adopted a resolution in support of the ownership of public lands by all Americans. The resolution noted the importance of the recreational opportunities of public lands to residents of the city and urged Utah’s governor and legislature to end their land grab effort. The southern Utah town of Castle Valley soon followed suit. Then, thanks to the work of KPLPH volunteers, both Summit County and Park City adopted similar resolutions.

To help local citizens to achieve their objectives the KPLPH team is engaged in a number of activities in 2019.

This year’s Utah Chapter budget will allow the KPLPH team to inaugurate an

internship program. The intern will help to identify new campaign volunteers to expand the effectiveness of our grassroots activities.

Kelsey Carlston, one of our newer campaign team members, has launched an effort to convince the Associated Students at the University of Utah (ASUU) to take a stand in favor of America’s public lands. Kelsey is also spearheading the formation of a University of Utah student public lands organization. You can reach her at kelseycarlston@gmail.com.

We have new campaign buttons. Contact Lawson LeGate at lawson.legate@gmail.com if you would like one.

Allied Businesses and Organizations

As a demonstration of support for keeping Public Lands in Public Hands, we are inviting Utah businesses and non-governmental organizations to adopt pro-public lands resolutions. Contact Becky Yih at bnbyih@gmail.com if you would like to suggest a business or organization that might be a candidate.

Volunteer for the Keep Public Lands in Public Hands Campaign

If you’re someone who treasures our public lands heritage, join the Keep Public Lands in Public Hands campaign team. Contact Lawson LeGate at lawson.legate@gmail.com to learn how you can help.

OurLand

UNCE Team Advances *Ready for 100*

by Chuck Brainard & Stan Holmes, UNCE Team volunteers

In another win for the environment, Cottonwood Heights is now the 102nd city in the US to sign on to the Sierra Club's *Ready for 100* campaign. On January 8, the Cottonwood Heights City Council voted unanimously to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for municipal buildings by 2022 and citywide by 2032. This milestone was achieved in large part through the involvement of the Utah Chapter's Utah Needs Clean Energy (UNCE) team. Cottonwood Heights joins four other Utah local governments that have committed to *Ready for 100*: Salt Lake City, Park City, Moab, and Summit County.

Ready for 100 is a Sierra Club campaign to get local governments throughout the country to commit to 100% renewable energy by 2032. You can get more information at the Sierra Club website, www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100.

UNCE is a subcommittee of the Utah Sierra Club's

Conservation Committee. Beyond Coal Organizer Lindsay Beebe and Utah Chapter Executive Committee Member Stan Holmes are key members of that group. UNCE organizes solar workshops, film screenings, educational webinars, strategic planning, and other activities. UNCE spearheads the task of encouraging government entities to commit to *Ready for 100*.

UNCE members, Cottonwood Heights City residents, and Cottonwood Heights City Council members, Tali Bruce and Christine Mikell teamed up to drive the successful initiative. UNCE members attended citizen meetings, City Council meetings, supported letter writing campaigns, ran phone banks, and contacted local businesses for support. Those efforts were sufficient to swing all five Council members to vote in favor of the designation.

Cottonwood Heights will now designate resources to achieve its clean energy goals. A likely first step will be to add solar panels to the new city hall, making it a "net zero" facility. This means the facility will generate the same amount of power that it consumes. The city is also studying the possibility of converting the city fleet to electric vehicles, and purchasing green power from the local utility, Rocky Mountain Power.

Moving forward, the UNCE team is focusing on encouraging more local cities to adopt their own *Ready for 100 plans*. If you are interested in getting involved with this dynamic clean energy team, the meetings take place on alternate Mondays at 5:30 pm at the Sierra Club offices in Salt Lake City. Email Lindsay for more details, at lindsay.beebe@sierraclub.org

Rising Against Oil and Gas

by Carly Ferro



CARLY FERRO

Utah's public lands continue to face unprecedented threats and mounting industry pressure for dirty fuel development. This is facilitated by the administration's dirty energy-dominated agenda that prioritizes fossil fuel extraction over environmental and public health. Every quarter, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offers oil and gas leases to the highest bidder. Their most recent sale continued the agency's recent trends in placing sensitive cultural, archeological, and ecological lands up for grabs to dirty fuel developers.

The March offering sold 90 parcels amounting to 135,123 acres, 39,069 acres of which (25 parcels) sold for the minimum bid of \$2/acre. While the original sale planned to auction 156 parcels, 45 received deferrals, citing sage-grouse habitat and the need for further environmental review. While seemingly positive, the deferral follows a recently finalized sage-grouse plan that weakens protections for the species. It is theorized that deferring the sage-grouse parcels allowed for the weakened plan to be implemented and ease developers permitting processes.

Since the Trump administration took office, they have leased 3.1 million acres of public lands to industry and, of that, 647,000 acres went for the minimum bid of \$2/acre.

While the lease sale results and continued pressures on our lands can be daunting, the glimmer of hope resides in the growing youth movement in Utah that is leveraging House Concurrent Resolution 7 to change minds through logical requests and support to push for a reevaluation of political priorities. On the heels of the Global Climate Strike, and in opposition to the March lease sale, students collected over 1,500 signatures on a petition asking the Governor to take action on climate change by opposing such sales. About 50 people delivered the petition to the Governor's Deputy Chief of staff and participated in a sit-in at the Capitol singing, chanting and giving testimony about the importance of taking steps to mitigate climate change. The continued thread of student-led actions coupled with an ever expanding inclusive environmental movement in Utah is creating a climate ripe for political change.

With another oil and gas lease sale in June set to jeopardize lands adjacent to the Great Salt Lake and critical to migratory birds, we know that the actions will continue. As more and more people become engaged and take action we allow the movement to evolve and continue to fortify the grassroots strength in forging change. We hope you will join us and continue to support student efforts to build a better future for Utah.

You can view a parcel map of proposed leased lands for the June sale and all future sales at our partner's website, which hosts an interactive map developed in collaboration with The Wilderness Society. https://rockymountainwild.org/oil_and_gas/utah. You can also learn more and participate in future actions and receive updates by emailing us at utah.chapter@sierraclub.org and include "rise against oil and gas," in the subject line! Together, we can help push and succeed in seeing the protections for our public lands!

The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club extends a very special thanks to the **George B. and Oma E. Wilcox and Gibbs M. & Catherine W. Smith Charitable Foundation** for its continuing generous support of the Chapter's programs.

The Foundation challenges you to increase your support for the Utah Chapter in 2019.



OurLand

Duck Creek, Update Citizen Science, and Sage Grouse

By Jim Catlin

Duck Creek is a small stream east of Bear Lake and north of Randolph, Utah. Long gone now, ducks swam in ponds created by beavers using willow branches and boughs. Only the name remains today. The BLM grazing allotment with this stream includes rolling open sagebrush hills with several streams and numerous springs. For the past twenty years, this area has been the focus of management innovation, monitoring, and controversy. Used in discussions with the county, ranchers, Utah State University scientists, and agencies, the field data on wildlife habitat conditions gathered by the conservation community, including Utah Sierra Club Chapter volunteers, have played a key role in this controversy.

This story takes some interesting twists with Trump's team stepping in to essentially cancel science whenever scientific data conflict with agency decisions. But be patient, I am ahead of myself.

These sagebrush lands are home to sage grouse which is one of the few species that can live as they always have in the winter, just on eating sagebrush. These "greater sage-grouse" (*Centrocercus urophasianusphaiois*) are ecologically important as an indicator of general ecological health of the habitat and their population has been in decline in Utah and elsewhere throughout its range. More than 350 native species range-wide are also at risk due to loss or degradation of sagebrush habitat, which has been occurring since the west was settled. Sage grouse population is monitored by counting males in leks in March and April. When counting in Utah began in 1959, the average number of males per lek, averaged statewide, was over 30 males per lek. In 2017, the average males per lek is 12 and continuing to decline. If you want to view sage grouse, join the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources at a lek near Price on the 8th of April.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a finding on a petition to list the greater sage grouse as an endangered species. This agency found that listing was "warranted, but precluded by higher priority listing actions". On an issue that has enormous political backlash over a wide area, this response was expected. If used, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 is one of the most effective conservation laws we have. When a species approaches extinction, the federal government must act to prevent the loss of a species. Other federal and state laws are often vague and, under pressure from land users, wildlife protection can be circumvented. If listed, sage grouse protection would affect nearly 100 million acres in the west and possibly have an enormous impact on fossil fuel extraction, mining, habitat modification, and livestock grazing. States like Utah have invested tens of millions of dollars to fight the listing of sage grouse. The Salt Lake Tribune reported the scare story the state is circulating, "the resulting restrictions (from the listing of sage grouse) on grazing and energy development would deal a \$20 billion blow to the state's economy and prevent the creation of up to 250,000 jobs." Utah agricultural industry of which public lands grazing is a small part has 23,000 jobs and sold roughly 450,000 cattle in 2017. The total oil and gas production sold in 2015 was \$2.5 billion and BLM has eliminated current and most future well sites from sage grouse conservation. Sage grouse conservation, under BLM's leadership, is unlikely to make even a minor dent in grazing and mineral use of BLM lands. Our Governor and his staff have a history of choosing their own economic numbers to undercut wildlife protection.

Back in Duck Creek, we were interested in how habitat conditions were affecting sage grouse numbers. It was obvious that the sage brush was abundant and doing well. What about an equally important factor, riparian areas and the herbaceous plants that grow between sagebrush shrubs? Was there enough grass and forbs in the breeding season to generate cover, insects and feed for young birds? If not, were cattle or sheep the primary problem for the loss of these critical grasses and forbs? Beginning in 2005, we designed a citizen science monitoring program in cooperation with the agency, Utah State University, and the Rich County collaborative management process. We placed wire cages in a number of sites near and away from streams, sites chosen to correlate our data we collected with agency data.

In an organized way, our study gathered factual, easily observable, measurable data. For example, we measured the remaining height of a sedge along the edge of streams at the end of the cattle grazing season. This is the same measure that BLM also recommends. We also measured by clipping the amount of grass and forbs in a 1 meter square placed on the ground. We used our cages to measure ungrazed herbaceous plant production and also additional measurements from sample squares in grazed areas. We wanted to compare our data with that BLM reported in their annual monitoring. BLM's methods were subjective, relying on expert interpretation to reach conclusions. For measuring grazing use, BLM would walk a transect and, two foot intervals, examine a key grass species plant and guess the percent of the plant that cows and others had eaten.

In two of our published studies, the years of data we collected showed that riparian areas were heavily grazed well beyond BLM's allowed standard. Five5 years of our data show that BLM utilization measurements away from riparian areas was 31% less that utilization we measured.

It is a challenge to convince people that something important is missing in today's sagebrush steppe. I remember growing up seeing extensive sagebrush lands thinking that this is now as it always was. However that isn't the case. Traditional grazing use has reduced the total quality and cover of native grasses. In the case of the Duck Creek today we see roughly one half of the grass growing that should be there. When growing up, I had no idea of what it looked like 200 years ago. For most of us, the media, agency staff, and the rancher; we just don't know what is missing. The wildlife do know this and you can see the impacts to sage grouse in their declining numbers.

In 2009, BLM issued a grazing allotment permit decision for Duck Creek. As with almost all grazing permits, this renewal kept grazing at the same number of livestock. A new management plan was adopted, one that divided the allotment into four pastures and permitted grazing each with cattle for one month; in effect, a rotational grazing system. Western Watersheds Project and the Wild Utah Project appealed this decision arguing that sage grouse needs were not met. We argued that BLM's rotational grazing with high numbers of livestock would continue excessive grazing use especially in riparian areas.

Appeals of decisions are heard before the Department of Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals. The 55 day hearing before a judge in the Office of Hearings and Appeals was the longest of any grazing case up to that point. The hearing transcript was 15,000 pages. The burden of proof rested with us, the appellants. The agency's opinions are accepted without need of proof. Our years of data on the field meet this burden of proof requirement. In contrast, the Judge found that BLM's testimony "was at various times notably uninformed, inconsistent, and contradictory." In 2013, the judge ruled in our favor argued that our citizen science was credible and BLM had failed to consider sage grouse needs when making their grazing decision. This ruling sent the Duck Creek Allotment decision back to BLM for them to begin again on designing a remedy for the problems the judge highlighted. This ruling had a far-reaching effect. It found that BLM's standard methods for assessing conditions in allotments and renewing permits did not consider sage grouse. This ruling found that BLM's monitoring methods also appeared to have serious problems in accurately reporting habitat problems. There was a likelihood this decision applied to thousands of allotments in Utah and elsewhere.

BLM immediately appealed this ruling to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The Obama Administration did nothing about this, letting it sit until President Trump took office. In September of 2017, IBLA ruled reversing the ruling we had in the Office of Hearings and Appeals. The IBLA judge found that Dr. Carter and I lack the credentials that qualified us to be able to evaluate conditions in this area. The 2013 ruling described in detail our qualifications, which the Interior Board of Land Appeals ignored. We both have a PhD in this field and have taken numerous BLM training courses used by that agency to train their own staffs.

BLM admitted they rejected our Duck Creek data where it disagreed with their monitoring results. The IBLA judge concurred and ruled BLM is right to dismiss scientific data where it diverges from the results that BLM arrives at. This has far-reaching effects on wildlife management where BLM direction favors use rather than habitat recovery. Megan Backsen with Advocates for the West noted, "The Duck Creek decision sets a dangerous precedent that effectively bars conservationists from ever being successful before IBLA, and it needs to be overturned." In January of this year Advocates for the West filed a lawsuit in federal court to challenge this IBLA ruling. More will be heard about this in the future. The Sierra Club is not a party to this case.

Spring Breakfast



Utah Sierra Club's 2nd Annual Roots for Resistance breakfast hosted more than 225 people. We believe in the power of people and are grateful for the opportunity to bring our community together to hear from powerful change-makers like Commissioner Grayeyes and Mishka Banuri. As Mishka said, "We must all work together to protect the communities we belong to, and your support is building a better future for all Utahns." We hope you will join us throughout the year to support protecting lands, air, water, and wildlife; acting for justice; and getting people outdoors.

OurLand

Duck Creek

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Hot off the press, BLM recently announced a redo of land use plans that were supposed to conserve sage grouse. In Utah, ten BLM and Forest Service plans were amended in order to “improve alignment with State management strategies and plans for Greater Sage Grouse, while continuing to conserve, enhance, and restore Greater Sage Grouse and its habitat.” It would be generous to say that in dozens of places, conservation measures in these plans were waived, weakened, or reversed. It would be less generous to say that these plans lied about sage grouse population changes, letting the state and BLM falsely claim things are good and sage grouse conservation can be relaxed.

These land use plans call for increased protective actions if sage grouse numbers decline. BLM uses the slope of a graph of sage grouse monitoring data to determine if change is needed. If the slope of the graph is upward which indicates that the population is increasing then current management is considered working. If the slope is downward, then management should change in order to reverse this slope. Unfortunately, BLM in cooperation with the state has gamed the system. As a result, most sage grouse management regions in Utah are reported by the state to have a positive sage grouse population slope.

Because it is too expensive to count every animal, sampling of different sites is needed to monitor most wildlife species. The results from counts at each site are then normalized (averaged in this case) and the result becomes an indicator of population across the species range. Instead of this method, the state has

been adding new sites in long term monitoring the past two decades and then used the total of all males counted as a population estimate. The result is that the graph shows an uphill slope not because the population is increasing but, rather, more sites are being looked at every few years. The real data show that the population is still continuing to decline in most locations. This false accounting further reduces needed sage grouse conservation in Utah.

Hot the off the press! On the 27th of March, Advocates for the West has filed legal action against Secretary Interior David Bernhardt. The filing contesting BLM and Forest Service land use plan amendments described as rescinding or weakening sage-grouse protection, citing the administration’s “energy dominance” agenda. The Sierra Club is not one of the plaintiffs but our wildlife work will benefit from this case. The Trump Administration rescinded the requirement for mitigation of sage grouse habitat impacts. The new plans remove most conservation standards and provided changes to “enhance state involvement.” This administration removed mineral withdrawals in millions of acres of sage-grouse focal areas. The filing notes that the administration blew off our extensive scientific comments to draft plans. Lek protective buffers are reduced by miles. In Utah general habitat management areas for sage grouse are now exempt from conservation requirements.

In 2018, BLM again issued new grazing permits for Duck Creek Allotment. No environmental analysis, no public input, no notice of any decision was provided to interested public. We are in a new political world.

Duck Creek serves as a model for problems and perhaps remedies for most of our public lands. If you are interested in joining me in the field for some citizen science, drop me a line at jim@wildutahproject.org.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Naresh Kumar



There’s more in you than you know.

(Kurt Hahn- Outward Bound)

Naresh Kumar describes himself as a man with two sides: practical and idealist. On the practical side, he likes to get things done, but as an idealist he never fails to see the good in things and the possibilities for the future. On a practical side, Naresh has taken his many experiences and opportunities to make himself a more understanding, better person, one who reaches for the idealist in himself. He cites his parents as role models and important supports for him, as are his older (and only) sister, her husband and his niece. A homegrown Utahn who graduated from the University of Utah and then received his Master’s of Public Health, Naresh spent a few years moving from third world countries to outdoor meccas, all of which have built on the attitudes of his family helped shape, and which have given him a much wider global perspective, aware of his footprint and impact.

While working in Uganda, he was the program director for GEC (Global Emergency Care), an emergency medical training program for non-physician clinicians, in collaboration with local and national institutions. It teaches symptoms-based emergency medicine, which the qualified graduates go on to teach others, extending the capabilities to provide medical service to others. As he worked with future health care professionals, Naresh realized there was a lot of crossover in training and education, and saw in those from developed and underdeveloped countries a unique ability to learn from one another. “In resource-limited settings,” explains Naresh, “people have to be more creative and learn to work with very little.” Though Naresh didn’t always work directly with people suffering from malnutrition or other diseases, he did see them. “You can’t UNSEE water shortages, black outs, people who die just because of where they live.” These things are still with him, as are the additional experiences gained traveling to India, Laos, and Vietnam. Naresh’s idealist side wanted things to be better for people and to gain insights.

When he returned to the states, it was to Alaska as a bicycle tour guide, to Minnesota and Baltimore to work for Outward Bound, then to Arizona where working for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), he was able to compare experiential outdoor programs. Finally, he landed back in Utah, and soon found himself working for Intermountain Healthcare.

Naresh believes these experiences have aided his practical side while pushing his idealism, a combination that’s begun to merge in his current work. Under the umbrella of the University of Utah, through Intermountain Healthcare, Naresh is working on a unique public health project for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of the United Nations antibiotic stewardship to reduce the amount of antibiotics needlessly prescribed to patients. Reducing antibiotic use just by ten percent would have enormous benefits in stemming the rising problem of antibiotic resistance. In addition to the benefits to individual patients and public health in general, Naresh explains that the opportunity to work with a variety of people from different departments develops relationships in a very powerful way. He believes such relationships offer a practical application. People accomplish more, are more efficient, and benefit one another. “Building relationships opens doors and makes progress.” Central to maintaining the health of ourselves... requires stewardship and balance,” much like the work of the Sierra Club.

Volunteering with the Sierra Club the past few years, Naresh finds himself helping in many areas. He wants people to make informed choices, and thus is a constant contributor to the Utah Sierra Club’s writing group. He has worked with the political action committee, the equity task force, attended the ExCom meetings, worked on the oil and gas task force and is currently working with a frequent partner of the Utah Sierra Club, Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) as a liaison to Senator Mike Lee. “Because I don’t have kids or a lot of real commitments, I have the ability to do these things,” Naresh explains. “I don’t think I’m as productive as some other members, but I try to offer insights and help where I can. There is a place for all, the more the better.”

More young people is the ideal. With his work at a youth summer camp in New Jersey and other interactions, Naresh sees the ability of young people to have the most impact. “Youth have such great value. They have energy, interest and an ability to get things done.” But he stresses, “We are all needed to increase the efficiency and productivity of the Sierra Club’s work.”

While Naresh’s practicality keeps working on getting things done, his idealist side would prefer to see people be more honest with one another, and discuss issues based on accurate information. He wants to gain insights and help make life better for people. Naresh brings both sides of himself to the work of the Utah Sierra Club.

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Utah Chapter Outings

MAY/JUNE 2019

Abbreviations in capital letters signify the group planning the outing. [E] = educational content, [C] = conservation focus, [S] = service activities. All members and nonmembers are welcome on any of the chapter or group activities listed. Radios, firearms and dogs are not welcome on Sierra Club outings. Interested participants are strongly encouraged to contact the outing leader in advance and inquire as to updates, degree of difficulty, and other outing details. Participants should be prepared for various seasonal weather conditions, temperature changes that occur due to rapid increases/decreases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for the given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone who appears unprepared for scheduled outings.

Glen Canyon Group

GCG Sat 5/18 Buckhorn Wash.

Buckhorn Wash is a famous rock art site in the San Rafael Swell about two hours northwest of Moab. We will drive through the Wash, taking several short hikes - each less than a mile - to four Barrier Canyon-style rock art panels, a dinosaur track site, and an arch with a ruin under it. Total hiking distance in the Wash will be less than three miles, and is rated as easy, except for the last hike to the arch which will barely nudge into the moderate category. If time and interest permits, we will stop for a three mile hike to 50' Obscure Arch on the way out to the interstate. This optional hike is rated moderate. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas Messenger (435) 259-1756 messengert35@gmail.com.

GCG Sat 6/8 Leprechaun Leprechaun Canyon and Hog Springs ñ North Wash. From Hanksville, we will head south on Highway 95 towards Hite. At about milepost 28, we will park to begin the hike. This is the trailhead for Leprechaun. For this non-technical hike, we will hike up the Leprechaun Canyons bottom to visit some astounding narrow and slot sections. There is one small fall to circumvent (Class 4), but it is otherwise easy going to the junction of the right and middle forks. Once up the minor obstacle, the canyon deepens and narrows dramatically. Just beyond where the Right Fork comes in, the canyon narrows tight enough most will have to turn sideways to fit. This is the turnaround for most hikers, though some may want to continue up with increasingly difficult obstacles. At some point, we will be forced to return to the cars, where we will continue south on 95 to milepost 33, the Hog Spring Rest area and the trail head. The Hog Springs hike follows a well-traveled trail up along the stream. It passes a couple of small pools before reaching a dryfall and deep pool 30 or so minutes from the trailhead. In almost all conditions, you can keep your feet dry. There are pictographs and petroglyphs in the area. Side trip planned to the Moki Queen - a large pictograph 1-2 minutes south of the Hog Spring rest area. Leprechaun Canyon, moderate hiking due to scrambling and negotiating narrow slots, 1-3 hours. Some of the slots are VERY narrow wear clothes you don't mind sacrificing to the canyon! A headlamp may be helpful, depending

on how far you go in. If you are claustrophobic, this may not be the hike for you! Hog Springs, easy hiking, 1-2 hours. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Tammy Berrie (435) 260-0462 southeasternutahammyb@yahoo.com.

GCG Sat 6/22 The Very End. Trailhead requires a fair amount of driving with an off road vehicle, North on Dubinky Well road and then west on Spring canyon point road after about 7.8 miles a right turn on the Oil Well trail. A possible first or last short hike from a wash goes into an enormous cave with a hole in the roof that looks like a golf tee. It is possible to get on top and see the hole from the top also. Driving further down the road, one can park and explore to the left rim to see some spectacular overlooks into the Green River, side canyons and even the Green River, 10 mile canyon confluence on the right. There also some interesting arches in the area. It might be possible to see some desert bighorn sheep also. A considerable amount of the hiking would be scrambling with some moderate exposure. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas Messenger (435) 259-1756 messengert35@gmail.com.

Ogden Group

Saturday, May 11: Indian Trail. This moderately strenuous hike is 4 miles long with an elevation gain of 1450 feet. It is a popular trail that follows a route once used by Native Americans. The trail begins in Ogden Canyon and ends at 22nd St. Trailhead. We will reach a lookout point at 6100 feet where views into Nevada are possible on a clear day. A car shuttle will be necessary. Please call Doug Johnson (801-888-4183) or Amy Alvord (801-920-4315) for meeting place and time.

Sunday, May 19: Ogden Foothills Weed Eradication. Help us keep our adopted area in Ogden's foothills weed-free, while enjoying some exercise among the spring wildflowers. We'll start at 9 am and finish by noon. Call Dan Schroeder at 801-393-4603 for location and other details.

Thursday, July 4: Mollen's Hollow Overlook Hike. Join us for our 17th annual hike atop this scenic plateau in the Monte Cristo Range. Expansive vistas and spectacular wildflowers

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.



ONLINE OUTINGS TOOL!

All the outings, and socials for the chapter are now found in one place, <https://utah.sierraclub.org/content/calendar.asp>. You can sort by event type or use a built-in mapping function.

are guaranteed; and at only five miles round trip, it's a great hike for families. The Sierra Club successfully fought a decade-long battle to keep this trail closed to motorized use, but we now face a new challenge: the state of Utah's petition to suspend protections for this and many other National Forest roadless areas across the state. Call Dan Schroeder at 801-393-4603 for meeting time and place.

Salt Lake Group

SLG Tues 5/14 Mt. Olympus to the Creek. Level: Moderate. This foothill hike up the Mt. Olympus trail offers a good 2 hour workout and wonderful views of the valley as we make our way through the spring flowers to the creek. It's a 1300 foot climb so be prepared for some exercise! Meet at 6:30 pm. Meet at the Skyline High School parking lot, 3251 E. Upland Drive (3760 S.), next to the athletic field on the northwest area of the lot. No dogs please. Leader: Rebecca Wallace 801-557-5261; rebeccawallace38@msn.com.

SLG Tues 5/21 The Living Room. Level: Moderate. Yes, there is an actual Red Butte, a 6600-foot prominence which overlooks the canyon of the same name to the north. We'll start on the popular Living Room trail in upper Research Park, but continue up Georges Hollow on a moderately steep trail to the summit. Expect about a four-mile round trip with 1600 feet of overall elevation gain. Meet at 6:30 pm on Colorow Rd. in the University of Utah Research Park, south of Tabby Lane where Colorow goes uphill. This is about ¼ mile south of the entrance to Red Butte Gardens and north of the entrance to Huntsman Chemical. No dogs please. Leader: Colleen (801) 554-7153, email colleen.mahaffey@gmail.com.

SLG Thurs 5/23 Affleck Park Nature Walk. Sample the avian life and floral displays on this leafy walk which starts at Affleck Park campground in Little Dell Canyon. We'll stroll through the campground looking for birds and flowers, then if conditions permit, continue on up the trail toward the ridge between Little Dell and Killyons Canyon. Bring footwear with good traction, water, lunch, raingear and sun protection. Also bring binoculars and field guides if you have them.

Expect a leisurely pace and about three miles of hiking overall. Meet promptly at 9:00 am at Rotary Glen Park on the south side of Sunnyside Ave., just east of Hogle Zoo. This is at the intersection of Sunnyside Ave. and Crestview Drive, by the stone monument with an eagle on top. Leaders: Fred and Bessann Swanson, (801) 588-0361; fbswan32@msn.com

SLG Tues 5/28 Little Mountain.

Level: Easy. We'll follow the ridgeline trail above Emigration and Little Dell canyons to the 7000' crest of Little Mountain. Great views highlight this three-mile round trip hike, which is mostly rolling terrain through open meadows. There is a short, steep climb at the beginning and another, longer one to the summit. Total elevation change is about 800 feet. Bring water, a jacket, and a headlamp. Meet promptly at 6:30 pm at the parking lot on the south side of Sunnyside Ave. at the intersection of Crestview Drive, east of the Hogle Zoo lot. A stone monument with an eagle on top marks the spot. Leader: Fred and Bessann Swanson 801-588-0361; fbswan32@msn.com

SLG Tues 6/4 Jack's Mtn. Level: Moderate. Jack's Mountain rises above Salt Lake's East Bench and offers great city views. We'll climb a fairly steep ridgeline trail above the "H" Rock to one or more high points on the ridge. Sturdy footwear and a headlamp are recommended. Meet at the new Parley's Way Walmart parking lot, 2705 Parleys Way, west of the Bombay House Restaurant in SLC at 6:30 pm. No dogs please. Leader: Rebecca Wallace 801-557-5261; rebeccawallace38@msn.com

SLG Sat 6/8 Adopt-a-Trail project, Terraces-Elbow Fork trail, Millcreek Canyon Time TBA; Registration Required. Here's an opportunity to "give something back" to the fabulous system of trails we enjoy in our local national forest! The Salt Lake Group is adopting the Terraces-Elbow Fork trail in Millcreek Canyon and will be working with the Forest Service this summer to maintain the trail for hikers. We will have up to four work sessions which will involve clearing brush, removing litter and debris, inspecting signage, monitoring problems such as switchback cutting, and widening and repairing trail tread. Want to join us? Then come to our initial training session on Saturday, June 8. We'll

meet at the Terraces picnic area just below the winter gate. Participants should bring work gloves and eye protection, also hand trimmers/loppers and a hard hat if you have them. Registration is required and the group size limit is 15. For more details and to register, contact Fred Swanson, fbswan32@msn.com, (801) 588-0361 by June 1. Further work sessions are scheduled throughout the summer, with priority given to those attending this training session. Come help us take care of one of our favorite trails!

SLG Tues 6/11 Greens Basin.

Level: Easy+. A favorite evening beat-the-heat hike, the Greens Basin trail leads up through lush aspen and conifer stands, ending in a shady meadow away from the bustle of Big Cottonwood Canyon. The hike is 4 miles round trip with 800 feet elevation gain, and parts of the trail are steep. Headlamps recommended. Meet at 6:30 pm at the 6200 South Park and Ride lot, 6450 South Wasatch Blvd. (1 mi north of the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon). Leader: Scott Svatos 310-873-7316; scottsvatos@gmail.com

SLG Sat 6/15-Sun 6/16 Service Trip.

Book Cliffs in Desolation Canyon WSA. Desolation Wilderness Area (the bill was just signed March 12 turning it from WSA to wilderness) Service Trip June 15/16. The BLM is months behind so they cannot support any service outings in April nor May. So we will be high in the Book Cliffs just as it is getting hot in the desert. Specific details need to be worked out with the BLM. Expect a dry camp. We will work on Saturday and explore our new wilderness on Sunday. High clearance vehicles are required. Leader will help facilitate carpooling. Contact Will McCarvill at 801-694-6958 or will@commercialchemistries.com to register.

SLG Tues 6/18 Terraces to Elbow Fork Loop.

Level: Easy. A favorite early summer evening hike, our trail begins at the Terraces picnic area near the winter gate in Mill Creek

Canyon, climbs to a ridgeline above Bowman Fork, then descends steeply to the canyon road opposite Elbow Fork. We finish with a saunter down the main Millcreek canyon road, which is closed to car traffic. The trail section covers about 3 miles through a quiet forest which shelters hikers from the heat of the sun. Meet at 6:30 pm at the Skyline High School east parking lot, 3251 E. Upland Drive (3760 S.). No dogs please. Leader: Colleen: (801) 554-7153, colleen.mahaffey@gmail.com

SLG Tues 6/25 Brighton Lakes.

Level: Easy+. Mary, Martha and Catherine are sapphire beauties in a chain of lakes above the Brighton ski area. A moderate five-mile round trip will take us past each of these gems to the flower fields below Catherine Pass. Meet at 6:30 pm at the 6200 South Park and Ride lot, 6450 South Wasatch Blvd. (1 mi north of the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon). Leader: Kandace 801-831-6933; kcsteadman@hotmail.com

SLG Thurs 6/27 Mount Aire saddle.

Level: Moderate. We'll climb a steep but nicely shaded trail to a high saddle with views down Parley's Canyon. Expect about 1200 feet in a mile of climbing to the saddle, another 800 to the summit. Bring lunch/snacks and at least 2 liters of water, Leashed dogs are welcome; please follow all applicable Millcreek Canyon rules regarding dogs. Meet at 8:30 am at the East side Skyline High School parking lot 3251 E. Upland Drive (3760 S). Leader: Jim Paull 801-580-9079; paull.james.f@gmail.com

The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ridesharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. If you choose to carpool to the trailhead, it is only fair for fees charged by the US Forest Service to be shared by all participants. Text of the outings liability waiver may be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/signinwaiver.PDF>. CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.



The pen is mightier than the sword. Cliché, perhaps. Nevertheless, it still rings true. Letters to the Editor (LTE) are the most widely read parts of a newspaper. Not only do they keep issues at the forefront of people's minds; legislators and their staff often peruse them to get a measure of public sentiment. They can also sway legislators, and change opinions.

Writing letters to the editor is an effective way to join a conversation you see unfolding in the media, or as a method for introducing a new topic into a community conversation. In 2017, the Utah Sierra Club began hosting writing workshops, which swiftly evolved into writing circles. These writing circles are a community space for folks to discuss issues, ask questions, and become more comfortable with writing and the process for publishing letters and opinion pieces.

Led by volunteer, Patty Becnel, the writer's circles tackles tough issues while offering a space without agenda to write and enjoy snacks. With over a dozen LTEs and OpEds published and over thirty written in 2018, we hope to continue to grow that number and the number of authors in 2019. The breadth of issues covered includes public lands, air, water, energy, and public health. You can join us; there is no judgment, just facts, and a safe space to write, speak and enjoy the community!

JOIN US

Our writing circles happen monthly. We host them at the Utah office or someone's home. Contact us if you are interested in hosting an event at your house, and make sure to add the following dates to your calendar!

COMMUNITY WINE & WRITING - SALT LAKE AREA
6:00 - 8:00 pm at Sierra Club Volunteer's Home -- Sue Corth
For more information and RSVP contact: Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org **MAY 13**

WRITING CIRCLE SOCIAL
JUNE 12 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the Utah Sierra Club | 423 W 800 S Ste. A103 SLC, UT 84101
Email Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org for more information

COMMUNITY WINE & WRITING - PARK CITY AREA
6:00 - 8:00 pm at Sierra Club Volunteer's Home
For more information and RSVP contact: Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org **AUG 14**

WRITING CIRCLE SOCIAL
SEP 11 6 - 8 pm at the Utah Sierra Club | 423 W 800 S Ste. A103 SLC, UT 84101
Email Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org for more information

WRITING CIRCLE SOCIAL
6 - 8 pm at the Utah Sierra Club | 423 W 800 S Ste. A103 SLC, UT 84101
Email Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org for more information **OCT 9**

WRITING CIRCLE SOCIAL
NOV 13 6- 8 pm at the Utah Sierra Club | 423 W 800 S Ste. A103 SLC, UT 84101
Email Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org for more information

WRITING CIRCLE SOCIAL
6 - 8 pm at the Utah Sierra Club | 423 W 800 S Ste. A103 SLC, UT 84101
Email Carly.Ferro@sierraclub.org for more information **DEC 11**



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SummerServiceOuting

BOOK CLIFFS IN DESOLATION CANYON WSA

SATURDAY 6/15 – SUNDAY 6/16

Desolation Wilderness Area (the bill was just signed March 12 turning it from WSA to wilderness) Service Trip June 15/16. The BLM is months behind so they cannot support any service outings in April nor May. So we will be high in the Book Cliffs just as it is getting hot in the desert. Specific details need to be worked out with the BLM. Expect a dry camp. We will work on Saturday and explore our new wilderness on Sunday. High clearance vehicles are required. Leader will help facilitate car pooling. Contact Will McCarvill 801-694-6958 will@commercialchemistries.com to register.

LocalNews

Legislative Lowdown

by Ashley Soltysiak

The clock struck eleven on March 14th and both chambers of the Utah State Legislature finished early with the chimes triumphantly declaring the end of the 2019 legislative session. And what a session it was. From a Mexican coal port, to an attempted ban on plastic bag regulation, to a dramatic and troubling shift in nuclear waste policy, the 2019 session was anything but dull. It kept our lobby team fighting until sine die but Utah Sierra Clubbers didn't leave empty handed.

Here's a rundown of the top 20 bills for which we slugged it during the last 45 days.

First, have a look at the worst of the worst, which passed despite the valiant efforts of the Utah Sierra Club, our allies, and supporters!

SB248 - Throughput Infrastructure Amendments from Sen. Okerlund (R-Monroe) grossly misuses nearly \$55 million in Community Impact Board funds to pay for a coal port in Mexico. (Yes, you read that right.) These funds are intended to pay for public infrastructure projects to help communities cope with the boom and bust cycles that come with fossil fuel economies, but instead they're being leveraged to further tie these communities to an unstable future. This bill is sadly the last gasp of a dying industry, intent on ignoring the declining economics of coal and the very real threat of global climate change.

HB220 - Radioactive Waste Amendments from Rep. Carl Abrecht (R-Richfield) facilitates a diametric shift in radioactive waste policy by allowing for blended nuclear waste, opening the door to Class B & C level waste, and reinforcing EnergySolutions's bid to bring over 750,000 tons of Depleted Uranium. This incredibly long-lived nuclear waste byproduct will persist in the environment for millennia, growing hot enough to eventually exceed Class C standards.

HB433 - Inland Port Amendments from Rep. Francis Gibson (R-Mapleton) passed amid consternation from advocates and Salt Lake City Mayor, Jackie Biskupski. This bill allows the central SLC port to now connect with other nodes in rural communities, dubbed the "hub and spoke" model. A clear move to increase fossil fuel extraction on public lands, this is a step backward for progressive climate action, air quality, and public lands conservation.

HB288 - Critical Infrastructure Materials from Rep. Logan Wilde (R-Croyden) passed in the wee hours of the final night. Incredibly, the bill initially failed on concurrence in the House, but in an unholy show of power, it was swiftly resurrected by their lobby team and passed. This still bad bill has been improved thanks to an enormous public outcry, but still poses a threat to any city who passes one of the so-called "protection areas" for gravel pits to be able to act on a nuisance in the future.

HB78 - Federal Designations from Rep. Carl Albrecht (R-Richfield) now requires that any political subdivision advocating for a federal designation must report to the Natural Resources Interim Committee before introducing any legislation. To give a practical example, this would mean that the Central Wasatch Commission would have

to present their proposal to the Natural Resources Committee before introducing the Central Wasatch Conservation and Recreation Act, despite unanimous support by local leadership. It's still paternalistic, but thankfully the bill has been seriously weakened since the first version.

SCR6 - Concurrent Resolution in Support of Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technology by Sen. Bramble (R-Provo) ignores our nation's unresolved high level nuclear waste storage problem and Utah's emergency state of drought, in support of the development and integration of advanced nuclear reactor technology.

Now, here's a look at the bad bills that we helped to stop in their tracks:

HB320 - Container Act Regulation from Rep. Mike McKell (R-Spanish Fork) was an ALEC bill that the Utah Sierra Club hammered from the onset of the session. This bad bill would have removed the plastic bag bans in Moab and Park City and would have stopped any city from regulating any plastic waste in the future. In an amazing twist, when the sponsor tried to bring the bill back up by "un-circling" it his colleagues in the House refused to even consider it! Truly, an epic victory.

SB266 - Waste Modification Amendments by Sen. Hemmert (R-Orem) thankfully never saw the light of day in a committee. This bad bill would have lowered the regulations for Class V Hazardous Waste Landfills by allowing for a Class I landfill to upgrade to a Class V by simply getting legislative approval. This awful bill was clearly aimed at one thing and one thing only, finding a way around regulations to pave the way for the Promontory Point coal ash landfill proposed near the shore of the Great Salt Lake. We've defeated it for now, but keep your ear to the ground folks, because we doubt this one is gone for good...

SB152 - Mineral Lease Fund Amendments from Sen. Ron Winterton (R-Roosevelt) would have also sent much needed Community Impact Board funds to fund oil and gas infrastructure projects in the Uintah basin. Sierra Club supporters sent over 500 messages about this bill and SB248 to legislators and the Governor in under 24 hours which helped to keep at least this bad bill at bay. It passed the Senate but died circled on the House Floor.

Now, onto the good bills which sadly failed this time around:

SCR10 - Concurrent Resolution Urging Solutions for the Central Wasatch Mountains was a forward thinking piece of legislation from Sen. Kirk Cullimore (R-Draper) which sadly died in a very close full House vote last evening (35-38). The bill urged the federal government to update forest plans and would have been a positive signal of support to the Central Wasatch Conservation and Recreation Act.

SB111 - Energy Storage Innovation, Research, and Grant Program Act from Sen. Lincoln Fillmore (R-South Jordan) would have allocated \$6.5 million to incentivize battery storage here in Utah. Sadly, this bill never made it to a full House vote.

HB314 - Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Vehicles from Rep. Ward (R-Bountiful) aimed to re-up the electric vehicle tax credit to the tune of \$1000 per qualifying vehicle. Unfortunately, this positive bill was held in the House Tax and Revenue Committee.

HB304 - Fossil Fuel Tax Amendments from Rep. Joel Briscoe (D-SLC) aimed to impose a tax on carbon. It was held in the House Rev and Tax Committee, though was able to succeed in a historic hearing.

SB119 and HB339 - Legacy Parkway Truck Ban Amendments and Legacy Parkway Truck Ban Modifications, were from Sen. Todd Weiler (R-Woods Cross) and Rep. Melissa Ballard (R-North Salt Lake), respectively. Both aimed to extend the ban on heavy trucks and increased speed limits for the Legacy Parkway. Sadly, both failed to pass their respective committees.

HB143 - Water Conservation Plan Amendments from Rep. Suzanne Harrison (D-Draper) would have helped the state start to take action to reduce water consumption by requiring basic water use planning. Unfortunately, this bill stalled in Committee, but will hopefully be brought back to interim.

And finally, the positive bills that passed the 2019 session and will now help to transform Utah!

And finally, the positive bills that passed the 2019 session and will now help to transform Utah!

SB52 - Secondary Water Requirements from Rep. Jake Anderegg (R-Lehi) is arguably the best water bill of the year. Though it was watered down in the Senate (pun intended) this is still a good bill to begin to curb our per capita water use. It makes it so that many cities will have to begin metering their secondary water systems to track use. We're still laughing at what Rep. Gibson had to say on the House floor in support of the bill, comparing it to his use of a fitness pal to curb food consumption.

HB218 - Construction Code Amendments from Rep. Mike Schultz (R-Hooper) is a mostly good bill which increases the stringency of the commercial energy code. The full update translates to an 8% reduction in energy costs for these buildings.

HB411 - Community Renewable Energy Act from Rep. Handy (R-Layton) is a unique piece of legislation which allows a city that has passed a renewable resolution to offset 100% of the city's energy use with new renewable energy. This bill is a step in the right direction for a city looking to become totally carbon free. We do have some lingering concerns about whether the utility, Rocky Mountain Power, will actually implement the legislation in a cost effective way for the cities.

HB139 - Motor Vehicle Emissions Amendments from Rep. Angela Romero (D-Salt Lake City) passed this year and now increases penalties for vehicles that violate the Clean Air Act. Coal rollers beware, it'll now cost you \$100 for the first violation and \$500 for any subsequent violations.

HB353 - Reduction of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Pilot Program by Rep. Briscoe (D-Salt Lake City) saw a big budget cut, but still offers a half a million in funding for free fare days for public transit over the next 3 years. It also encourages private/public partnerships to increase funding for this program over the long term. This positive air quality bill will help reduce emissions from vehicles, which currently comprise nearly half of our total emissions along the Wasatch Front.

SB144 - Environmental Quality Monitoring Amendments from Sen. Luz Escamilla (D-Salt Lake City) creates a requirement for baseline environmental monitoring in the area near the proposed inland port. This monitoring is critical to ensuring that these communities are not treated as an environmental sacrifice zone, as increasing rail and truck traffic threaten the surrounding air and watershed.

Air quality appropriations were significantly higher than we've seen in previous sessions, coming in at about \$28 million, but falling significantly shy of the proposed \$100 million in the Governor's budget. These funds will provide for a much needed wood stove conversion program, telecommuting programs, and air quality monitoring.

All in all, it was a tough session, but we're proud of the progress we made in this very red state. We want to sincerely thank our allies with whom we fought arm in arm over the length of the session to protect Utah's life outside - Utah Rivers Council, the Audubon Society, Utah Dine Bikeyah, Breathe Utah, HEAL Utah, Utah Clean Energy, Save Our Canyons, Alliance for a Better Utah, Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment, the League of Cities and Towns, Friends of the Great Salt Lake, the Center for Biological Diversity, and countless others.

Together we are making strides to improve Utah's quality of life, protect our pristine wild places, and fight for environmental justice!



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Your financial contribution means a lot to us. By supporting our Chapter, you support Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. This makes you an essential part of our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. **Thank you.**