Hundreds of volunteers from Utah and around the US have worked for years on protecting Utah’s spectacular wild lands as Wilderness. Two of those volunteers, Vi and Bill Corkle, have logged many miles for Utah’s wilderness. They’ve traveled twice to Washington, DC, to lobby members of congress from all over the country, and many miles on Utah’s back roads to work on service trips to protect those landscapes.

On the evening of Friday, December 9, however, they and other chapter volunteers were stationary in the Utah Chapter office phoning Sierra Club members in Virginia and Michigan urging them to call their senators to support more Wilderness in Utah. Senators Levin (D-MI) and Warner (R-VA) have strong influence on legislation passing through the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the volunteers must have succeeded in influencing those influencers because the provision creating a new wilderness in the Cedar Mountains stayed in the Defense Authorization Bill.

When Vi learned that the new Wilderness had survived the conference committee she said, “It just makes you feel great. You do a lot of things, and it seems like it’s never going to come to fruition. And then it just bombs in, and it makes you feel like you want to do even more.”

NEW STRENGTH FROM NEW ALLIANCES

Representative Rob Bishop (R-UT) has promoted this proposal tirelessly. Not only will the new wilderness protect crucial habitat for mule deer, raptors and the occasional cougar, but it will also make it much more difficult for Private Fuel Storage (PFS), a consortium of Midwest electricity producers, to build a railroad spur to carry high-level nuclear waste for storage at the Goshute Indian Reservation.

In Wilderness at the Edge, Mike Medberry described some of the characteristics of the range.

Blonde grasslands at lower elevations in the Cedars are broken by many interesting outcroppings of limestone. The limestone occurs in colorful layers, an iron-gray stone alternating with rusty brown hues. An eagle-nesting site was recently identified on one of these outcrops, and many raptors are known to winter in the area. At higher elevations the mountainsides are steep and peppered with junipers, which, because they resemble cedar trees, gave this range its name. Tabby’s Peak is a colorful volcanic peak at the southern end of the unit.

With the signing of the bill, Bureau of Land Management Wilderness in Utah increased by approximately 100,000 acres or more than 440%. Because the Cedar Mountains are contiguous to a US Air Force training site, the Utah Test and Training Range, the wilderness provision was included in the Defense Authorization Act. This must-pass legislation cleared the US House of Representatives by 374-41. And just before this issue went to press, President Bush signed the bill.

If one considers the overall statutory-protected Wilderness (both that managed by BLM and US Forest Service) in Utah, the new Cedar Mountains Wilderness still increases total acreage by a respectable 13% from 767,000 to 867,000 acres.

Victory!

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.
M embers of the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club should take pride in what was achieved during 2005. In this column I will reflect on some key accomplishments.

The Legacy Parkway settlement, although bitter-sweet, was a milestone for the club and its partners. As a result of our efforts (Mark Heilson and Lawon LeGate plus volunteer activists) over most of the last decade, the Wasatch Front is going to have a true parkway next to a true nature preserve. And perhaps more importantly, I think that those who care deeply about the environment and smart growth are going to be taken more seriously as future transportation plans are being developed. Although we did point out many flaws in the original Legacy plan, we stayed focused on developing and promoting better options. And finally, we demonstrated that we can negotiate and compromise. Many years ago we started campaigning for Transit First and, instead, transit is going to be first. It is exciting to watch work proceeding on the new rail bed for commuter rail whenever I drive south on I-15 from my home in Layton. I look forward to the day when I will be able to take the train down to Salt Lake City and then transfer to TRAX to get to my destination. (As you can tell, I prefer trains over buses.)

As I write this it appears certain that the Defense Authorization Bill will pass, and in the process protect nearly 100,000 acres in the Cedar Mountains as wilderness, protect Utah residents from more nuclear waste storage, and preserve the Utah Test and Training Range. This bill was originally written and introduced by my very own congressman, Rep. Jim Matheson. I thank him and the rest of the Utah delegation for making it happen. Additionally, I thank him and his staff for listening to the Sierra Club and others in the Utah Wilderness Coalition and heeding advice provided on language and details of the bill. Designation of the first new wilderness area in Utah in 21 years is certainly reason to celebrate. Another reason to celebrate is that the Cedar Mountains will become the first wilderness area in Utah on public lands managed by the BLM in Utah. I can only hope that many more will follow.

Another bright spot was the chapter’s Utah Smart Energy Campaign. 2005 was our first full year for the campaign and, under the able direction of Tim Wagner, the club made great progress in educating the general public and elected officials on the advantages of clean, renewable energy and the problems, especially of mercury contamination, haze, and greenhouse gas releases associated with coal-fired plants. Tim has become the go-to guy for the media when they need information concerning clean energy, and seldom a week goes by that I don’t see him quoted on our behalf.

2005 was also the first year that Mark Clemens, Chapter Coordinator, served as our Utah State government lobbyist. (We previously contracted this work.) Mark did an excellent job and is continuing to become a powerful advocate. This change made our lobbying efforts more effective and measures were passed which, as Mark put it, would make John Muir smile, such as banning the disposal of Class B and C radioactive wastes in Utah, and putting more teeth in State water laws. In addition, the legislature thankfully met our goal of doing no harm to the environment.

Speaking of nuclear issues, the Glen Canyon Group proposed and the chapter approved a preferred alternative for dealing with the Atlas Mill rail ties located along the bank of the Colorado River just outside Moab. We can take considerable satisfaction that the club’s recommendation (remove the material and transfer it by rail to the Crescent Junction disposal site) was the one selected by the Department of Energy.

Road issues other than Legacy also demanded chapter time, effort, and funds. Thanks primarily to the efforts of Nina Dougherty and Mark Clemens, chapter raised numerous important concerns regarding the Southern Corridor FEIS. In addition, the State of Utah and some counties continued to make right-of-way claims under Revised Statute 2477 (or RS 2477) and, we joined the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and The Wilderness Society in contesting the legality of these claims. In fact, during 2005 the Chapter Executive Committee approved participation as an intervenor in three RS 2477 cases.

Water is another worthy aspect of concern. Chapter volunteers played a key role in forming the new Southwest Waters Coalition and in voicing our concerns regarding an ill-conceived proposal by the Southern Nevada Water Authority to pump massive quantities of groundwater from western Utah and eastern Nevada.

Finally, we also had a good year administratively. The Utah Chapter continued to run with basically a balanced budget, membership numbers continued strong, we upgraded layout of the Utah Sierran, we sent free delegates and one staff member to the Sierra Summit in San Francisco, and we created a new Southwest Group covering Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington Counties.

There is much to celebrate. However, at the same time we know that the challenges will just keep coming. Through the good work of our dedicated volunteers and staff, I am looking forward to having 2006 as another year to celebrate.

2005, A Year to Celebrate for the Utah Chapter by Al Herring, Chapter Chair

I n the timeline that runs along the bottom of this issue of the Utah Sierran, you’ll find a digest of actions the Bush Administration has taken administratively on environmental matters. The selection is arbitrary, it’s true, but tried to include a selection that runs right through both George W. Bush’s, and that cover a number of environmental fields.

For someone not familiar with the Administration’s record, it might appear that the ratio of negative actions (23) in our timeline versus actions that benefit the environment (1) reflects a bias on our part. It does. We’ve probably overstated the positive part of this administration’s record. It was necessary to omit dozens of changes and new regulations that harm the environment.

The Bush Administration has suppressed or re-written the science on issues from global warming to air quality in Manhattan following the September 11 terrorist attacks in ways that harm public health or diminish public welfare. This administration has invited industry lobbyists into sessions closed to all other groups to write legislation or re-write regulations to reduce or eliminate controls on pollution. The administration has also substantially reduced fines and enforcement actions issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.

...
Cedar Mountains Wilderness

Legend
- Human
- Vegetation
- Water
- City
- Road
- Air
- Weather
- Transportation
- Zone
- State
- US

March 13, 2004

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Salt Lake Field Office

This map was made by BLM standards for accuracy and content. Different data services and input sources may cause measurement of data layers.

UtahSierran  Spring 2006

A Different Kind of Rural Road
by Michaelann Nelson

W henever I come up to visit my family in Lay- ton from wherever I happen to be living at the time, I enter the entanglement of Other People’s lives—home projects run amok, teenage dating angst, new babies, and family politics. To escape the crazy house (as I affectionately call it), I like to go for a run. I have found a network of old farming roads, connected by subdivision streets, to run on. They keep me from being splashed by cars and sucking in exhaust fumes, but they also keep me safe. I have been running on these roads for 15 years, and my favorite road has always been what I call Muddy Lane, a ½ mile dirt road bordering some of the last remaining farmland in East Layton. I love to look over the rolling hills of fields, watching cattle in the pasture. Stands of trees and tall grasses insulate the road from the sounds of traffic nearby. I can hear my feet crunch the gravel as they hit the ground and listen to my rhythmic breathing. If I’m lucky, I’ll get to see a flock of Canadian Geese in the fields, honking and pawing at the ground for food, as they rest their wings from their migration. Many of my life’s problems have been worked out over this stretch of land, and I feel connected to my agricultural heritage and the land that sustains us all. Running on this land has brought me appreciation for the hard work of farming and respect for the people—the families—that farm this land.

Several years ago, a corner of land bordering Muddy Lane was sold, and a subdivision built in its place. Muddy Lane now runs between two houses, ending on a subdivision street. About a year ago, a police officer moved into one of the homes and put up a fence, essentially blocking access. Not only has Muddy Lane been my respite, but countless numbers of neighbors and community members use Muddy Lane for their own enjoyment as well. Kids ride their bikes to buy candy at a nearby grocery store, families use the road for Sunday afternoon strolls, and countless numbers of walkers and joggers use it, no doubt, for the same reasons I do. Occasionally, teenage kids will try to drive on it for adventure and trouble-making.

Blocking access to Muddy Lane—and its associated network of other farming roads—robs all of us of the safety, quiet, and nurturing of the farmlands around it.

In our rush to subdivide every scrap of land, we have done little to preserve real, sustained open space. The connections to our agricultural heritage are being stripped away. When Henry David Thoreau, one of the patron saints of environmentalism, walked out of his home and started a journey, he didn’t go but a few miles from his home. He walked on a subdivision street. About a year ago, a police officer moved into one of the homes and put up a fence, essentially blocking access. Not only has Muddy Lane been my respite, but countless numbers of neighbors and community members use Muddy Lane for their own enjoyment as well. Kids ride their bikes to buy candy at a nearby grocery store, families use the road for Sunday afternoon strolls, and countless numbers of walkers and joggers use it, no doubt, for the same reasons I do. Occasionally, teenage kids will try to drive on it for adventure and trouble-making.

Blocking access to Muddy Lane—and its associated network of other farming roads—robs all of us of the safety, quiet, and nurturing of the farmlands around it. Exposure to any type of open space and more natural space (including farm land and ranches) can foster a connection to and love of the natural world, as well as a greater understanding of the life processes that sustain all of us.

In our rush to subdivide every scrap of land, we have done little to preserve real, sustained open space. The connections to our agricultural heritage are being stripped away. When Henry David Thoreau, one of the patron saints of environmentalism, walked out of his home and started a journey, he didn’t go but a few miles from his home. He walked in the pastures and fields of his neighbors and fellow Concordians. I think Thoreau would have stood up for the right of every American to access open space within a few minutes of walking out their front doors, and so should we.

Michaelann Nelson has been a club member for ten years and now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Selling the Parks
by Al Herring

Time to act! Feb. 18, 2006, is the deadline for public comment on proposed revisions to the National Park Service Management Policy. Early in 2005, Paul Hoffman, deputy assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of the Interior, covertly attempted to implement a new management policy giving recreation and commercial development in National Parks priority over preservation. His radical proposals were leaked by an anonymous employee and shelved shortly afterward amid a storm of protest. An Interior spokesman said that Hoffman’s rewrite, “was only crafted to spark a dialogue within the Park Service.” Sure.

Now the administration is back for another try, but not in the same manner. The position of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition that this rewrite “abandons this revision. We encourage Utah Chapter members to comment on the Draft NPS Management Policy, and we agree with the position of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition that this revision should be abandoned. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
Our Water

When Wells Run Dry

by Richard Nielson

Rapid population growth in the Salt Lake Valley and South Valley Sewer District’s (SVSD) efforts to gain approval for construction of another wastewater treatment facility in the Jordan River Valley has awakened public awareness to the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity. Unfortunately, current and anticipated growth has so far failed to awaken public awareness to the enormous increase in demand for culinary water supply that will be necessary for the needs of the added population. Housing densities of four single-family units per acre, on historically un-irrigated land, creates a 400% increase in demand for culinary water compared to previous usage on the same acreage. Kennecott Land alone intends to develop over 70,000 acres of previously un-irrigated land along the west side of the Salt Lake Valley.

South Valley Sewer District’s request to continue traditional methods of disposing of wastewater, also referred to as return water, is being supported by Kennecott Land and Jordan Valley Water Conservation District (JWVCD). These two organizations have developed a plan to provide culinary water to satisfy their own growth needs. Placing at least one, and likely several more, return water treatment facilities in the valley would help to create a new element in their long-range culinary water supply plan. This long-range plan is, however, seriously flawed in that it will result in perpetual consumption of groundwater storage reserves. Placing another wastewater treatment facility at any location in the valley will only serve to perpetuate a century old groundwater management policy that has been complacently maintained despite 60 years of scientific urging that the policy is necessary. (See A. Sophocleous web site: Sophocleous, M.A. 1998. Concluding comments on managing water resources systems: Why “Safe Yield” is not sustainable. In: Sophocleous, M. A. ed. Perspectives on Sustainable Development of Water Resources in Kansas.


JWVCD wants to preserve the traditional method of placing return water in the Jordan River because it will provide them with an increasing and continuous water supply for their hundreds of approved culinary water supply river-bank filtration wells. Kennecott Utah Copper wants to preserve the traditional method in support of their JWVCD who has assumed responsibility for the removal of mining operation contaminants the copper company introduced into the southwest Salt Lake Valley aquifer. Assuming responsibility for removal of contaminated groundwater is a means of controlling additional culinary water supply.

Our current groundwater management policy places absolutely no financial value on the storage capacity of the aquifer. Construction costs in today’s dollars, for creation of surface storage capacity equivalent to the underground aquifer storage capacity contaminated by Kennecott mining operations, would be approximately $6 billion dollars. Unless plans are changed, Kennecott is expected to pay damages for only treatment of the contaminated water over a period of 40 years to make it usable for culinary supply. At the limited rate contaminated water will be utilized, it will require more than 400 years to process the total volume of aquifer water resource that has been contaminated. If the current groundwater management policy remains in place, aquifer storage capacity will continue to be neglected and undervalued.

We must begin to manage the aquifer as a valuable storage reserve and water distribution system rather than simply a container for the annual pass-through of precipitation resources. Allowing continual withdrawal of groundwater from aquifer storage, as a result of “safe-yield” management, implicates living generations of Salt Lake Valley adults in the unfortunate process of irresponsibly consuming historic groundwater storage reserves to which all generations are entitled as part of the public trust. If continued, our present management policy will lead to impoverishment of our own posterity. Consuming aquifer storage reserves is a process that is ecologically unsound and morally unethical. Both scientific papers and recorded physical damage to other aquifer systems over the past 60 years support this assertion. Continually diminishing aquifer storage reserves with the subsequent result that oxygen infiltrates into aquifer storage areas originally occupied by water is an unnecessary, potentially hazardous and uncontrolled experiment being conducted with the aquifer. (See Scientific American, August 2004, Article on Groundwater in Bangladesh)

These participating in the wastewater public hearings are arguing the pros and cons of the so-called alternatives being proposed. Both special interest groups and all members of the public must comprehend that all the options they are debating involve the same solution. The only discussion allowed in the hearings involves just the choice of location. These same limiting tactics were employed in all public hearings dealing with the environmental damage settlement between the State of Utah and Kennecott Copper Corporation resulting from contamination of groundwater resources.

There is one realistic and preferable alternative that the public should have an opportunity to consider. That alternative involves dedication of all return water recharging the aquifer. This is an alternative that will require decades to fully implement. It is the only alternative that does not perpetuate total consumption of groundwater storage reserves. Initiation of aquifer recharge is an alternative that will require retention of return water from Kennecott Land development on their own property where there are numerous strategic locations for aquifer recharge. It is an alternative that can utilize neighborhood and other new technologies for return water treatment that will produce both jobs and marketable products. Initiating aquifer recharge will require Kennecott Land to sacrifice some of their own developable land.
in exchange for preservation of the natural environment of the river valley to replace partially treated wastewater flow levels in the Jordan River with clean aquifer discharge. It would provide Kennecott a profitable means of mitigating a portion of the aquifer environmental damage resulting from past mining operations. Kennecott Land could accomplish their real estate development plans without additional environmental damage to either the Jordan River Valley or the aquifer. Return water is currently our only year-round unallocated water resource. That total resource must be dedicated to year-round recharge of the aquifer. Return water can be temporarily utilized for secondary water resources over the coming decades. Portions of the distribution system initially constructed for delivery of secondary water resources can be ultimately converted to convey secondary water resources from existing wastewater facilities to new facilities strategically located for additional purification and injection back into the aquifer.

With creative financing, all generations benefiting from a healthy aquifer can share the financial burden of recharging the aquifer. Current generations must, however, make the decisions necessary to provide opportunity for that process to begin. Continual postponement of aquifer recharge is not an alternative. Our current plight with groundwater resources is not the result of lack of understanding on the part of our water management officials. After a century of following the perniciously ill-named safe yield groundwater management theory we have diminished our aquifer storage reserve by a volume of water sufficient to supply our current municipal and industrial water resource needs for approximately 10 years. In the face of anticipated rapid population growth, dedicated and properly treated return water for aquifer recharge would re-store and maintain necessary groundwater storage reserves, and prevent further ecological damage from development and continued mining of aquifer resources.

OurAir
My Personal Call to Repentance
by Mark Clemens

When I wandered down to the intersection of 480 South and State Street in Salt Lake City, on the afternoon of Monday, December 19th, Andy Eisenberg had been demonstrating there for six days. He’s been there from 8 to 10 am and in the afternoon from 3 to 5. His crusade is pretty obvious from the sign in the photo. It does get him noticed as he walks the unending square of the crosswalks surrounding this intersection. While we’re there, a woman alone in a Ford Excursion rolls down her window to explain, quite politely, that she needs all 4.6 tons of that vehicle for convenience. Other shouted comments are less polite, but the most common reaction is curious and quizzical.

The other placard Andy has been showing most of the day is more informative and reads, “Today AQI 106—unhealthy to breathe.” Andy concedes that the issue involves too much technical detail to get across easily on a placard. The AQI or Air Quality Index is a numerical rating that converts a physical measurement—in Salt Lake City’s case the offending pollutant is usually fine particulates measured in micrograms per cubic meter of air—into a standard rating on a scale of 1 to 500.

A score of between 0 to 50 is considered good, 51 to 100 moderate; 101 to 199 is unhealthy; 200 to 299 very unhealthy; and the worst score, anything between 300 to 500, is considered hazardous. You can find much more about the Air Quality Index and other air pollution issues at www.airmonitoring.utah.gov.

Eisenberg is a sophomore at the University of Utah studying urban planning, and he understands the link between his discipline and air quality, “To solve it [air pollution] permanently, you have to look at the design of our cities.” Andy has traveled in Europe and found that narrower streets, urban design favoring pedestrians and bikes, and above all, superb public transportation, improve the quality of life and air quality in places like Geneva, Switzerland, and Amsterdam.

Imagination is the word Andy conjures as the key to individuals acting to improve air quality. “If we think the future will look at all like it does today, then we must stop thinking and start imagining, before nothing changes. This problem cannot be fixed by continuing to engage in the practice that causes it. The future is now; it is in our [currently] primitive version of public transit.”

Design inspired by imagination will make public spaces more accommodating for pedestrians and bicyclists and make public transportation faster, more convenient and more inviting, according to Eisenberg.

Eisenberg realizes that his demonstration can only have a limited effect, but he heard from a friend who works at Wild Oats that a customer insisted on a plastic bag for his few purchases. He needed the bag he said, “because I’m on foot today since I saw a guy protesting about air pollution over on State Street.” Andy’s placard is also a call to repentance for me. I commute to Sugarhouse most days by car. My commitment for 2006 is to use public transportation at least once a week to get to work.
Nothing But Blue Skies from Now On
from a 29 December, 2005 press release

T
de owners of the Mohave Generating Station, led by Southern California Edison, agreed not to operate the plant after December 31, 2005 without installing modern air pollution controls according to a court-approved consent decree signed in 1999 with the Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club and the National Parks Conservation Association. Edison, which operates the plant, has not invested in pollution controls called for in the decree, choosing instead to close the plant after the deadline. The plant is owned by Edison, Salt River Project, Sierra Pacific’s Nevada Power, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Mohave Generating Station has been operating without significant pollution controls since it opened in 1971. Local protests and legal actions over emissions began soon thereafter. However, operations continued unchanged until the end of the 1990s when the conservation groups sued the plant’s owners for violating air quality and health standards under the federal Clean Air Act.

The conservation groups showed that the plant violated its pollution limits over 400,000 times between 1993-1998. Because the maximum fine for each violation is $27,500, the maximum potential penalty was $10 billion. After intensive negotiations, the owners and the conservation groups signed a consent decree in 1999, that provided six years for the plant to install pollution controls or shut down, allowing sufficient time to not only install the controls but also to negotiate new coal and water contracts with the Navajo and Hopi tribes and with Peabody Coal Company.

Since 1999 the owners have failed to negotiate new contracts for coal and water, and have made no attempt to install the required pollution control equipment, which could have been done in less than three years. There are also expensive repairs and upgrades which have not been made for the coal slurry pipeline used to transport the coal from the Black Mesa Mine in northern Arizona to the power plant in Laughlin, Nevada.

Over the last six years since the consent decree was signed the power plant has spewed 240,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, 120,000 tons of nitrogen oxide and 60,000 tons of particulate matter into the region’s air, putting the respiratory health of area residents at risk and obscuring visibility at Grand Canyon National Park.

“As of the New Year, Mohave Valley residents and Grand Canyon visitors can breathe easier because Mohave’s owners chose to shut down their old polluting plant,” said Rob Smith, Southwestern representative for the Sierra Club.

“Pollution from the Mohave plant fouls some of the most scenic vistas on the planet,” said Mark Wenzler, Clean Air Program Director at the National Parks Conservation Association.

This news is almost unalloyed good news for the state of Utah both from the perspective of diminished haze and a reduced health threat. However, could the loss of that generating capacity create a market opportunity for other coal-fired power plants? Four such plants have been proposed in Utah, and the chapter has appealed the permit recently granted by the Utah Air Quality Board to one of them, Intermountain Power Project (IPP), near Delta. Utah Chapter Clean Air Activist Nina Dougherty observed, “I do fear, however, that IPP management is eagerly waiting to take up any Mohave slack for the IPP add-on.”

Recent restrictions by California’s Energy Commission and Public Utilities Commission put a brake on additional carbon emissions from electricity destined for the California market—even if produced outside the state. “[They] would likely have to prove that they can meet California’s new greenhouse gas restrictions,” reassures Smart Energy Campaign Co-ordinator Tim Wagner, “and we know that the proposed IPP#3 will not meet that standard under its current permit.”

ENERGY ATLAS

Western Resource Advocates has developed an atlas at www.energyatlas.org that uses GIS technology to inventory the renewable resources in eleven Western states, mapping the high-potential areas for wind, solar, geothermal, etc., in color. In Utah, the atlas identifies wind resources totaling 23 million megawatt-hours per year, solar resources totaling 69 million megawatt-hours per year, and geothermal resources of 9 million megawatt-hours per year. Utah’s solar resources are over 300 percent of the state’s current energy consumption; these three sources together have the potential to generate over five times the state’s current energy consumption needs.

The advocates point to the economic benefits of renewable energy development: “The revenues from renewable power generation stay close to home,” says Heather Rhoads-Weaver. “They’re a powerful force for economic revitalization, particularly in rural areas.” Since producing the atlas, Western Resource Advocates has also written “A Balanced Energy Plan for the Interior West” available through their website, westernresourceadvocates.org.
Snap Up Those Renewable Energy Incentives

by Tim Wagner, Utah Smart Energy Campaign Co-ordinator

So you’ve replaced those old windows and installed more insulation in your attic, replaced that antiquated furnace with a highly efficient model, purchased an Energy Star rated refrigerator, and replaced those old-fashioned light bulbs with new, high-efficient compact fluorescents. But you want to do more as a responsible citizen in order to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels and perhaps reduce the emissions of global warming-causing CO₂ gases into the atmosphere.

What can you do? How about installing an electricity-generating solar system on that sun-soaking roof of yours? Expensive? Yes, a photovoltaic panel system adequate to provide a major portion of electricity used by an average home can easily cost between $15,000 and $20,000 installed. But with available tax credits and other incentives, the cost can be reduced significantly.

First is the Renewable Energy Tax Credit, a Utah program that allows tax credits for residential-installed renewable energy systems including solar electric, solar thermal, passive solar, wind, and hydropower. The credit is 25% of the total equipment and installation cost of the project up to a maximum of $2,000. In addition, you can take a federal tax credit that was part of the 2005 energy bill. Credits are available for 30 percent of the cost—up to $2,000—on a qualified solar water heating and photovoltaic system that are “placed in service” in 2006 and 2007.

Utah’s regulated utilities such as Utah Power and Light participate in what’s known as net metering, or sometimes referred to as reverse metering. This program allows you to sell back to the utility the excess power produced by your renewable system, whether wind or solar. As required by the state, the utility in this situation is required buy from you, at market rates, the power that your system produces but you don’t use. And yes, your meter actually records the power that your system produces but required buy from you, at market rates, the power supplied by your system, whether wind or solar. As required by the state, the utility is required to purchase from you, at market rates, the power produced by your system, whether wind or solar.

The Solar and Geothermal Business Tax Credit allows a 10 percent corporate tax credit, up to a maximum of $25,000 per year, plus 25 percent of the total tax remaining after the credit is taken, for commercial or industrial facilities using solar water heat, solar space heat, solar thermal electric, solar thermal process heat, photovoltaics, or geothermal electric technologies.

The IRS program enacted in 1978, allows a 10 percent corporate tax credit, up to a maximum of $25,000 per year, plus 25 percent of the total tax remaining after the credit is taken, for commercial or industrial facilities using solar water heat, solar space heat, solar thermal electric, solar thermal process heat, photovoltaics, or geothermal electric technologies. Commercial applications are also eligible for the Renewable Energy Tax Credit similar to residential installations, with slightly different terms. Business owners can claim a credit of 10% of the cost of equipment and installation up to $50,000. Again, this would apply to solar electric, solar thermal, passive solar, wind, hydropower, and biomass systems.

Other online sources for financial assistance or incentives regarding renewable energy development, whether a homeowner or entrepreneur, include the Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE) at www.dsireusa.org, or the Stepp Foundation, a national organization that puts renewable energy or energy efficiency projects in touch with funding sources, located at www.steppfoundation.org.
Thank You to Our Volunteers
by Al Herring

Publicly thanking people is always done at the risk of offending someone through oversight, but we feel moved to take that chance. We thank the following people, in no particular order, for their contributions during the past year.

Angélica Davis, our treasurer, for getting trained and successfully managing our transition to a new and more rational accounting system. January is the month that, like Janus, faces backward and forward so in addition to thanking Angélica for helping us get the chapter finances in order for 2006, we should also thank a volunteer, now departing, who has been helping us keep our website looking good for more than three years now. Thanks to Gregg Frohman for that help and good luck with version 1.0 of the next generation of Frohmans.

Jean Binyon, Ann Wechsler, Jim Case, Brad Yates, Gordon Lind, Lois Mansfield, and Wayne Hoskisson (regular members); and Mike Binyon, Ken Evans, Judy Allison, and Larry Wooley (group delegates) for their effective service on the Utah Chapter Executive Committee.

Dan Schroeder, Mike Binyon, Ken Evans (chair), and Jim Case (interim chair) for effectively leading their respective Sierra Club groups. We especially appreciate that they led involvement on local issues and kept their outings programs strong.

The Wechsler cover the waterfront. Jim Wechsler for taking the lead in organizing the Southwest Waters Committee and then serving as chair. Ann Wechsler for serving as chair of the Conservation Committee, for representing the chapter in the Council of Club Leaders, and for organizing our participation in the Sierra Summit.

Nina Dougherty for her many years as a chapter officer and activist. Our battle cry, Transit First and the Legacy Parkway settlement are both monuments to her leadership and involvement. She also led club efforts to make our air more breathable and to reduce haze in our parks and wild areas.

Sarah Fields for serving as chair of the Nuclear and Hazardous Waste Committee of the Glen Canyon Group for the past several years. It is largely through her efforts that the club has had a voice in these matters.

Gibbs and Catherine Smith for establishing the Utah Chapter Endowment Fund and then becoming regular contributors. Tony Musset has supported the chapter for several years now because he loves the places that the Utah Chapter is fighting to protect. It is worth noting that Tony lives in Europe. Liz Kinne has put her considerable fundraising skills at the service of the Smart Energy Campaign to tap into foundation funding.

Wayne Hoskisson for serving as our Public Lands Chair and for all the work he does on National Sierra Club committees. Jim Catlin for investing the time and energy to stay involved in Utah Chapter issues even though he is on the National Board of Directors. Jim Case for leading formation of the SW Group and for being a tireless representative at land-use and other hearings in the region.

Joey Caputo is the volunteer who never turns us down and has collaborated both with the Building Environmental Community campaign to fight sprawl, and to make the Smart Energy Campaign a success along with other Smart Energy volunteers including Susan Bueller, Jack Greene, Jed Jackman, Harold Jones, Bob and Kathleen Jones (not related to Harold), Jim Kennon, Kim Korinek, Greg Lilbeci, Katherine Logan, Insa Riepen, Cindy Roberts, Nick Stuckelberg, and Kate Stevens.

Everyone else who wrote a letter-to-the-editor, commented on a government proposal, contacted an elected official, attended a hearing, talked to a friend or neighbor, made a financial contribution to the club, volunteered on a specific issue of interest, etc. Your support and involvement has been essential to our success.

9/15/04: A non-partisan public policy group issued a study showing that the criminal enforcement of environmental laws has declined during the Bush Administration. The Transactional Record Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) report concludes that prosecutions declined by 23 percent, convictions declined by 18 percent, and prison sentences declined by 28 percent.

1/22/05: The Washington Post reports that the Department of Energy has illegally delayed issuing energy efficiency standards for many household and commercial appliances.

2/3/05: the EPA’s Inspector General issued a report admonishing the Bush Administration for ignoring scientific data to support a predetermined outcome on the mercury pollution rule. The EPA’s proposed mercury rule regulates mercury emissions from power plants. The report says the EPA did not analyze the full costs and benefits of regulatory alternatives or the effects of the rule on children’s health.

2/7/05: The Administration proposed to cut funding for environmental programs by 10 percent, including a $373 million cut to clean water and safe drinking water programs.
2005 Contributions

Special thanks to the members listed below for their contributions to the chapter’s 2005 fundraising drive. Thanks also to other members who contributed anonymously. These contributions make possible our conservation programs to protect air and water quality in Utah, our crusade to protect Utah wild lands, the Smart Energy Campaign and our ability to reach out to you and other Utahns.

Fred Adler        Wayne J Peay
Al Campbell       Lotetta D Petrie
John D & Constance J Clemens Debra A Roberts
Ronald Dunn       Dan Schroeder
Richard Jerk      Jim Sinclair
Ann M Johnson     Gary A Thorne
Ross Lovey        Lennox Tierney

To protect our members’ privacy, if no publishing preference is specified, we do not publish contributors’ names. If you don’t see your name listed and would like for it to be published, please call Mark at (801) 467-9297. We try hard to spell people’s names correctly; please accept our apologies if we misspelled your name!

IN MEMORIAM

The chapter gratefully acknowledges a generous gift made in loving memory of Leo Słowiński by his family. Leo was an avid marathoner whose inspiration came from Utah’s pristine landscapes. It was Leo’s hope that Utah should remain as beautiful as when he experienced it.

The following contributors donated to the Utah Chapter in memory of Dan Eden. Eden, who died on October 4, 2004, loved nature and particularly enjoyed boating on San Francisco Bay.

Jeannette E Eden
Mr & Mrs Arthur Mazzochi
Lotetta D Petrie
Jode Yablonsky

1% FOR THE PLANET

Treasure Mountain Inn and Conference Center in Park City has been a major supporter of the Utah Chapter during 2005. As a member of 1% for the Planet, Treasure Mountain Inn donates one percent of sales to benefit the natural environment. For more information about 1% for the Planet, check out www.onepercentfortheplanet.org/ourmembers.htm.

BEYOND OUR BORDERS

by Ann Wechsler

An important ecological wetland has been preserved in eastern Canada, thanks to Jocelyn (Jock) Glidden and his family. Jock has been a long-time activist with the Ogden Group. What is Jock’s connection with that neck of the continent? The Glidden family has owned property and vacationed for decades in Tabusintac, New Brunswick, on the Atlantic Shore south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Their rustic 65-year-old summer place, the Grey Goose Lodge, overlooks the Tabusintac estuary, a sanctuary for thousands of migrating birds and wildlife.

Jock and his three sisters donated four properties at Jacko’s Point and on the barrier beach within the Tabusintac Lagoon and Estuary. In addition to its importance as a nesting area for the endangered piping plover, it was designated an important ecological wetland by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1993 (Telegraph-Journal, n.b., June 25, 2005). The Gliddens donated fifty-three acres of private land to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) which will safeguard it for wildlife. Their twenty-one hectares augment the already protected 355 hectares in the estuary.

As part of a campaign called Gifts to Canadians 2005, this generous gift was announced by the NCC on Canada Day. According to The Miramichi Weekend, each year the NCC highlights the protection of one key property from each Canadian province and presents them to Canadians in celebration of the country’s birthday.

As a former Canadian, with family ties to New Brunswick, and a visitor to Grey Goose Lodge during one of my trips home, I salute Jock and his family for their conservation ethic and their vital contribution to the region. Birds have no borders, and neither should we.

The Tabusintac Estuary

The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club thanks the George B. and Oma E. Wilcox and Gibbs M. and 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 2005.

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3/29/05: The EPA issued new guidelines to determine whether a chemical causes cancer. The new guidelines require more evidence of the link to cancer and would generally allow higher exposure to toxic substances.

March  April  May  June  July  August

3/5/05: The Bush Administration repealed the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, replacing it with a rule requiring state governors to go through a two-stage petition process to protect pristine national forests. In January 2001, the Clinton Administration issued an administrative rule protecting 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest lands with a ban on new roads.

March  April  May  June  July  August
February
OG Sat 2/4 George Schroeder memorial Waterfall Canyon Hike. If you’ve never seen the waterfall in winter, this is your chance. If you have, you already know what a great you’re for. The late George Schroeder, a long-time Ogden Group volunteer, used to lead this outing every February to celebrate his birthday. This year we’ll discuss what deluges the future may bring to this privately owned canyon. Poles will be essential for traction; snowshoes are optional unless there’s a snow storm and packin’ doesn’t packed down yet. Call leader Dan Schroeder (393-4603) for meeting time & place. [C]

SLG Sun 2/5 Snowshoe North Fork Provo River. Scenic views, plenty of snow, quiet ambiance of the forest, & relatively easy terrain. The trail begins just off the Mirror Lake Highway about 11 miles east of Kamas. Part of this roadless area has been proposed by the US Forest Service for Wilderness. Come see what makes this trail so special. Call Rob (485-3262) for meeting time, place, & other details. [C]

Ogden Group (OG) P.O. Box 1821, Ogden, UT 84402 utah.sierraclub.org/ogden

The public is welcome on all outings. Participants are requested to call the leaders in advance for outing details. For information related to outings in general, contact John Besbes, 801-985-6854. Salt Lake Group (SLG) Call the trip leaders for meeting times, places, & other details regarding the outings.

Utah Chapter Directory

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Glen Canyon Group (GCG) Participants are requested to call leaders in advance for outing details & to give the leader an idea of group size.

Participants may be prepared for various seasons: summer, early spring is relatively mild with temperatures increasing/decreases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for the given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn anyone away who appears unprepared for scheduled outings.

The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability. If you choose to carpool to the trailhead, it is only fair for fees charged by the U.S. Forest Service to be shared by all participants. For the most current and updated outings listings pages, please visit the website utah.sierraclub.org and look at the outings under the Salt Lake, Ogden and Glen Canyon Groups.

Utah Chapter Outings

A 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 seasons: summer, early spring is relatively mild with temperatures increasing/decreases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for the given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn anyone away who appears unprepared for scheduled outings.

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Glen Canyon Group (GCG) Participants are requested to call leaders in advance for outing details & to give the leader an idea of group size.
April

SLG 4/1-3 Yellowstone Country Bike Ride. From April 1 through 20, Yellowstone Park is closed to public motorized vehicles. During this period the Park Service plows the roads & welcomes bikes into the park, offering an excellent opportunity for cycling enthusiasts to tour the park almost free of vehicle traffic. No entrance fees. Lodging in West Yellowstone is reasonable, thus a unique alternative to viewing wildlife & explore Yellowstone in relative solitude before the park opens to summertime crowds. Ride to Madison Junction from West Yellowstone, then to Norris. High Springs & beyond depending on the will of participants. Optional cycling in areas outside the park with scenic Yellowstone ambulance. If extra cold or snowy weather is forecast, the outing may move to one of two following weekends. Road bikes preferred, mountain bikes welcome. Ken, 484-3112.

SLG Sat-Sun 4/8-16 Escalante River Kayak. The Escalante is a shallow, rocky river canopied with lush cottonwoods & flows through sheer red-orange cathedral-like canyon walls. Launch boats from Utah Hwy 12 & spend 7 days exploring, by boat & on foot, numerous side canyons that merge with the river. The boating ends at the Coyote Canyon/Hole In The Wall Trail. Takeout requires a strenuous 4-6 mile hike to the shuttle vehicles. This is a self-supported, 10 river miles/day adventure. Participants provide their kayaks—a sturdy, inflatable craft is highly recommended. Previous kayaking experience is recommended, not required. The trip is dependent on water levels & weather. Robert Jennings, 801-949-3597.

SLG 4/14-16 Canyonlands Car Camp. Take advantage of an outstanding opportunity to explore the Needles area of Canyonlands National Park in Southern Utah. Abundant hiking opportunities include Big Spring & several overlooks along the Mitchell & Slickrock canyons & scenic points overlooking a gorge where the Colorado & Green Rivers meet. Expect moderate level hiking pace & ditches of up to 11 miles round trip. A camp group will be reserved, bring camping supplies & essentials needed for an extended weekend of hiking & camping. The number of participants is limited & dates may change, so contact the trip leader ASAP to reserve a space & to be notified of relevant information regarding the trip. Margaret, 292-7602.

GGG Sat 4/22 Upper Mineral Canyon Hike. This is a repeat of the December 10 hike, hoping for greater attendance in warmer weather. The three of us liked it a lot, & we think you will too. This trip drops over 35 kilometers of gently rolling, beautiful canyon & scenic views of the Western side of the island & the Towers of the Virgin. Larry Woolsey, 731-3701. [E]

Meet at Star Hall at 9am. Tom Messenger, 484-4271. We’ll stop there for an extended lunch break. ½ mile before the dry fall or folks can choose to navigate the slick rock that can be navigated over about 300ft loss as we hike gradually down the canyon. We hope to see spring foliage. Meet 8am at Star Hall. Trailhead is about 90 minutes from Moab. Bring lunch & plenty of water. Mike Binyon, 435-259-1633. [C]


SLG Sun 5/7 City Creek Bike Ride. A leisurely mid-spring ride up one of Utah’s most scenic canyons, void of motorized traffic. The ride is about 3½ miles long with about a 1500’ elevation gain. The ride begins in SLC a few miles from the canyon. Tim, 484-4334.

SLG Sun 5/14 Leader’s Choice Hike. The destination for this hike will depend on weather & trail conditions at the time. The outing will probably take place at a lower to mid elevation level. Ken, 484-3112.
Thanksgiving in Harris Wash
by Al Herring

Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club activist par excellence, and Bill Wolverton, Russian olive exterminator par excellence, led another of their exercises in invasive plant removal, camaraderie, and masochism last Thanksgiving weekend in Harris Wash. Many and I were rash enough to join them. Harris Wash flows into the Escalante River and, like every other waterway in the area, Russian olive and tamarisk, also known as salt cedar, are trying to take over. The result is that native willows and other plants are being crowded out, and back-packers like us find it challenging going. Did I mention that Russian olives have large, sharp spines?

We joined Vicky and Bill and the other participants, our own Jim Carlin and Ken Evans, Kathy Glatz from Denver, and John Michels from Oakland, late on Thanksgiving Day, set up camp next to our vehicles, and then enjoyed a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings prepared by Vicky. That evening we got to know each other better with the aid of liquid refreshments, warming fires, and Ken’s guitar serenade.

After a brisk night—the temperature dropped to 16 degrees—we carried gear in about four miles to our work site and camping area. Long story short: we got a lot of work done during the next two days; we had lovely, and warmer, camping in a spectacular rock amphitheater; and we got to enjoy more of Vicky’s delicious meals. I got stabbed by Russian olive thorns only about 40 times.

I also enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with Bill. He works seasonally for the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, lives in Escalante, and is on a crusade to rid the Escalante canyons of Russian olive and tamarisk. He is also an ardent conservationist and knows the area like the back of his hand. Through Bill’s individual effort and with periodic help from volunteers, work along almost thirty miles of the Escalante has been completed. (Only twenty-two more miles to go!) Harris Wash is the last Escalante side canyon in the National Recreation Area with any Russian olive remaining. (Only six more miles to go!)

One of the many things I learned from Bill was that a bill has been introduced in the US Congress, H. R. 2720, to establish a Russian olive and tamarisk control demonstration program. It is aimed at developing long-term solutions for control of the invasive species, together with re-introduction of native vegetation. Tamarisk and Russian olive have also been much in the news these days because it is estimated they drink more water from the Colorado River and, like every other waterway in the area, Russian olive and tamarisk, also known as salt cedar, are trying to take over. The result is that native willows and other plants are being crowded out, and back-packers like us find it challenging going. Did I mention that Russian olives have large, sharp spines?

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Want to help Bill finish his work in the Escalante canyons? You can sign up through www.wildernessvolunteers.org or keep an eye open for announcements in this publication or Utah Chapter web postings or email announcements.

I got stabbed by Russian olive thorns only about 40 times.

It’s not all hard work—volunteers soak up a little autumn sun. Right: Ken Evans gives an invading plant species forty whacks. Below: Vicky Hoover with the Thanksgiving turkey.

SIGNATURES NEEDED TO FIGHT WAL-MART IN CENTERVILLE
by David Putnam

We are gathering 1,200 signatures for a referendum petition. We need help! We will be working steadily to gather these until July. The purpose of the referendum is to require the Centerville City Council to do additional environmental impact studies concerning the proposed Wal-Mart super store in Centerville.

If the referendum gets on the ballot in November, and the citizens vote yes to stop the development agreement with Wal-Mart, then Centerville will need to do additional impact studies on (1) widening Main Street including the harm caused to pioneer homes and local businesses, (2) air pollution, and (3) flood plain and storm water drainage.

Can you take a few hours on a Saturday to help us? Please call Ralph or Grace Webb in Centerville, at 801/298-7135. Thank you so much!