Nuclear Power, Climate Change, and the Sierra Club

by Stan Holmes

2030. A pivotal year in the Anthropocene Age, according to a 2018 report of the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). We have until then to drastically change humanity’s consumptive, polluting behaviors that are warming Earth’s atmosphere toward the tipping point of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above the pre-industrial average temperature. The planet has already warmed 1.0 degree Celsius since the Industrial Age began, sparking more extreme weather, wildfires, rising sea levels, diminishing Arctic sea ice, and other changes.

“Warming of 1.5ºC or higher increases the risk associated with long-lasting or irreversible changes, such as the loss of some ecosystems,” says IPCC administrator Hans-Otto Pörtner. To avoid exceeding the 1.5ºC target benchmark, “rapid and far-reaching and unprecedented changes across all sectors” are needed. This requires a global energy transformation from fossil fuels to renewable sources by 2050.

For more information, visit: http://www.ipcc.ch

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reaching” transitions are required to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions below 2010 levels by 2030.

**NUCLEAR OPTIONS**

*How do we clean up the world’s CO2-mired energy sector?* The IPCC report proposes four CO2 mitigation models that include reliance on nuclear power from 59% to 106% over 2010 levels in order for us to survive 2030 and move on to achieve “net-zero” CO2 pollution by 2050. All models assume that coal is gone by the scene by 2050, but that nuclear is still going strong.

Even the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), long wary of nuclear energy, claims that the dire climate situation requires drastic measures—even more reliance on nuclear. According to UCS president Ken Kimmell, “Nuclear power plants are controversial, for legitimate reasons. But the IPCC report reminds us that we are running out of time and will have to make hard choices.”

Is that what a sustainable future looks like? Have we forgotten Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima?

**NUCLEAR PROVENTIONS**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) youth nuclear power plants as a clean, safe, and secure energy source that can make “a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, while at the same time fulfilling the increasing energy demands of a growing world population and supporting global sustainable development.” IAEA is organizing a conference titled “Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power” for October 7-11, 2019 in Vienna, Austria.

Nuclear power proponents are seizing the moment in the U.S. as well, from the White House to the halls of Congress to state houses and even municipal utility meetings in Utah.

The Trump administration’s fiscal 2020 Energy Department budget proposal boosts funding for nuclear- and coal-fired power plants while cutting 70% from renewable energy programs. Priorities include extending the lifespan of existing nuclear reactors while streamlining the regulatory process to develop “advanced” reactors. In a separate subsidy agreement, Energy Secretary Rick Perry defended federal loan guarantees reaching $12 billion for two over-budget nuclear reactors in Georgia, telling workers at the site, “This is the real new green deal.” The 2020 energy budget request includes $116 million to resurrect Yucca Mountain, Nevada as a nuclear waste storage site. Over half of the Energy Department’s $31.7 billion budget would go to nuclear weapons development and maintenance. In Congress, a bipartisan group is promoting S. 903, the Nuclear Energy Leadership Act, which directs the Secretary of Energy to establish and support “advanced” nuclear reactor programs. The bill, supported by Democratic presidential hopeful Cory Booker, would also allow 60- year power purchase agreements for newly constructed commercial reactors. S.903 defines an advanced nuclear reactor as using either nuclear fission or fusion. Compared with existing reactors, an advanced fusion reactor would have to show “significant improvements” in safety features, waste output, and “proliferation resistance.”

Smaller, “modular” reactor sizing would count as an “advanced” characteristic.

Booher isn’t the only expanded-nuclear supporter running for president. Andrew Yang promises to spend $50 billion on research into thorium and fusion reactors and to “Engage in a public relations campaign to update the reputation of nuclear reactors.” On the other hand, Elizabeth Warren would shutter all nuclear plants by 2035, while Bernie Sanders would ban new plant construction and license extensions for existing reactors. Democratic candidates’ leader Joe Biden embraces nuclear power and advocates development of small modular nuclear reactors. At the state level, Ohio lawmakers recently pushed the tutorial toward increased subsidies for nuclear, authorizing $150 million annually to keep two nuclear power plants operational. To do so, they shifted money away from alternative energy and efficiency programs. H.B.6, curiously titled “Creates Ohio Clean Air Program,” will also boost greenhouse gas emissions by codifying subsidies to two algal coal-fired power plants. The natural gas industry and environmental groups have launched a referendum drive to overturn H.B.6.

**DEBUT OF SMRS FOR UTAH**

That brings us back to the Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) endorsed by Joe Biden and currently being marketed by NuScale Power to member cities of the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS). An SMR is a smaller type of uranium-fueled, nuclear fusion reactor that can be used independently or, as is the case with NuScale’s UAMPS proposal, together with multiple similar reactors. The UAMPS system would include twelve 65-foot high cylindrical reactors generating 30- 60 megawatts each, for or up 700 a total of 720 MW total. That would provide electricity to over 500,000 homes, according to NuScale. Having, using UACY average U.S. home consumption. Having received nearly $300 million from the federal government, NuScale hopes to build its first SMR in 2026 at the Department site at Idaho Falls, Idaho. UAMPS has 23 Utah cities and towns invested in the SMR nuclear portion of its Carbon Free Power Project. Thus far, the city of Logan has committed $200,000.

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Implementing Land Acknowledgements Across Sierra Club

By Sergio Avila, Local Outdoors Coordinator, Sierra Club

The following is a modified version of a Land Acknowledgement Norm established by the Sierra Club’s Our Wild America Campaign in April, 2018. As the Sierra Club strives to center our work around equity and justice, it is important to acknowledge the past from which we are emerging. We can help lead the way in forming a more just society by acknowledging our own movement’s problematic roots, as well as the colonizer history of the United States. The Sierra Club’s Our Wild America Campaign is establishing a norm to begin all gatherings and planning meetings with a Land Acknowledgement.

A land acknowledgement is a recognition of the original inhabitants of an area. It is designed to show respect for Native peoples and to surface often-suppressed colonial history of our country. It is a way to recognize that Native societies spanned the entire continent, and that we now reside on occupied and often stolen native territories. Countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada commonly practice the use of land acknowledgements, opening government functions, sporting events, and even school days with such acknowledgements - but the United States has yet to widely adopt this norm.

Nuclear Power

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

But are SMRs a sound, carbon-free clean energy investment? Is any current or realistically attainable nuclear energy technology a truly carbon-free alternative to fossil fuels?

No, according to Beyond Nuclear’s “Climate Change and Why Nuclear Power Can’t Fix It” report. “There are plenty of carbon emissions involved in making a nuclear power plant a reality. Lifecycle emissions along the nuclear fuel chain occur through uranium mining and milling, transportation, plant construction, operation, reactor site decommissioning, and nuclear waste management.”

So, the only carbon-free segment of the nuclear energy cycle is the direct link between a reactor’s nuclear fuel rods and the steam they generate. Everything else about nuclear energy has a carbon footprint. The report details several weaknesses in nuclear proponents’ claims. It warns, “The pursuit of nuclear energy as a climate change solution inhibits the necessary rapid development of solutions that are available, less expensive, safer and more environmentally effective.”

Beyond Nuclear (BN) also challenges the IAEA claim that countries using nuclear energy “already have solutions in place for storing and managing spent fuel…They can either use existing infrastructure or adjust it for the new radioactive waste streams.” To the contrary, BN maintains that “The nuclear waste problem, still unsolved, would mount dramatically.” As a side note, nuclear waste from conventional and SMR reactors contain radioactive U-235, which has a half-life of 763 million years: a pretty slow loss of toxicity.

SIERRA CLUB POSITIONS

So, where does the Sierra Club stand on nuclear energy? Their position is without an easy answer.

The Club’s Grassroots Network has a Nuclear Free Campaign (NFC) involving volunteers in chapters across the country. The national Sierra Club’s Nuclear Free Future website states that “The Sierra Club remains unequivocally opposed to nuclear energy…Nuclear is no solution to Climate Change and every dollar spent on nuclear is one less dollar spent on truly safe, affordable and renewable energy sources.” However, the Club currently has no staff person dedicated to the Nuclear Free effort.

Volunteers of the Nuclear Free Campaign “envision an energy efficient world, powered by clean, renewable technologies, free from dirty, dangerous, costly nuclear power and its legacy of radioactive waste. The campaign’s mission includes stopping new nuclear plants and license extensions of old plants, addressing the mounting problems of radioactive waste, promoting renewable energy, and supporting the U.N. Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.” On the last item, national Sierra Club has just strengthened its policy opposing nuclear weapons. For the Utah Sierra Club, Sarah Fields, based in Moab, is our lead person on nuclear issues: <sarah@uraniumwatch.org>.

But is the Sierra Club’s opposition to nuclear power absolute? Well…

Former Sierra Club director Carl Pope, now the senior climate advisor to Club donor Michael Bloomberg, recently said that “I am not opposed to keeping nuclear plants open as long as they are maintained safely.” That’s in sync with the Bloomberg Editorial Board’s view that “A Warming World Needs Nuclear Power.” Pope was interviewed on the occasion of Bloomberg’s launch of the Beyond Carbon campaign. Bloomberg previously donated over $100 million to the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign. Bloomberg’s $500 million Beyond Carbon initiative is billed as the “Largest-Ever Coordinated Campaign Against Climate Change in the United States.” Its objectives include employing advocacy, legal and electoral strategies to accelerate coal plant retirements, stop the rush to extract natural gas, achieve state and local policy changes, and help elect “Climate Champions.” Although nuclear energy’s role is not specifically mentioned, the Beyond Carbon campaign’s emphasis on vastly expanded electrification could mean more nuclear development if reactors meet Bloomberg’s definition of “zero carbon” electricity.

UTAH’S ROLE IN NUCLEAR AMERICA

The nuclear industry—civilian and military—touches every state in the Union, including Utah. We are among the 29 states that have commercial nuclear reactors—yet. But uranium/mining activities in Bears Ears National Monument, “low-level” depleted uranium storage in Tooele County, and suspected transportation of higher-level nuclear materials through the state remain on the Utah Sierra Club’s radar. It’s also reasonable to assume Hill Air Force Base at least occasionally hosts nuclear-armed aircraft; and construction began this summer, near Hill, on facilities to support a next-generation Intercontinental ballistic Missile (ICBM) program.

The Utah Sierra Club works closely with allied groups, including HEAL Utah, that track nuclear waste, SMR, and other nuclear developments. We recently requested that the national Sierra Club create a full-time nuclear issues staff position to support activities of the Nuclear Free Campaign, citing pro-nuclear energy and weapons policies of the Trump administration that undermine support for the advancement of renewable energy, efficiency, and other sustainable alternatives to reliance on fossil fuels. Utah Sierra Club members who may be interested in getting involved with nuclear issues are invited to contact our lead nuclear issues specialist, Sarah Fields, or the Utah Needs Clean Energy team, via Lindsay Beebe, lindsay.beebe@sierraclub.org or Stan Holmes, sholmes3@xmission.com.
The latest draft of the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act was released August 19. Overall, the Sierra Club is very supportive in concept but we still have some outstanding concerns. Here is a quick overview of the good and bad.

WILDERNESS

The Act establishes the new Grandeur Peak/Mt Aire Wilderness Area and adds to the Lone Peak Wilderness Area. Small parts of the Twin Peak, Mt Olympus and Lone Peak Wilderness Areas will be trimmed to allow for a bikeable Bonneville Shoreline Trail. The total net will yield over 8,000 acres of new wilderness.

WHITE PINE WATERSHED PROTECTION AREA

Due to pre-existing water development rights this beautiful canyon cannot be protected as wilderness. However, as a watershed protection area it will receive strong additional protections to preserve its natural beauty.

GENERAL FOREST SERVICE PROTECTION

The Forest Service recently weakened our ability to participate in Forest Planning through the NEPA process. Creating this National Conservation Area will provide additional safeguards to our beloved Wasatch.

SKI AREA EXPANSION

Ski areas will not be allowed to expand their current boundaries on Forest Service Lands. Unfortunately, the future of Alta’s use of its private lands for ski area expansion remains murky. The effects of the incorporation of Solitude and Brighton ski areas into the new town of Brighton also remain unclear.

Central Wasatch NCRA Act

by Will McCarville

RESOURCES

The Forest Service will be permitted to charge fees for use of the area but the funds generated will remain locally. Provisions in the bill allow for trail and trailhead improvements as well as other amenities.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

This section has troublesome aspects. In general, it allows for the Little Cottonwood Canyon Transportation EIS to move forward allocating funding for improving traffic flow and safety from the start of SR 210 to its end at the east side of Alta. The Transportation Section now states explicitly that the designation does not prohibit "transportation improvements and associated public amenities, including roadway improvements, public transportation, mountain transportation systems, transit stops, stations, trailheads, bike lanes, restrooms, and pedestrian infrastructure." Mountain transportation systems according to the Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Action Plan which is referenced in the Act could include gondolas and trains not only up the canyons but also connecting base areas. This implies interconnecting the ski areas on the Wasatch Front and Back. The Sierra Club and our allies are working to make amendments to this section.

Overall, this bill is a boon for the Wasatch. Our members should contact the Central Wasatch Commission and endorse the good actions but express grave concerns about a ski area interconnect.

Mayoral Debate Recap

by Bekah Ashley, Climate Action Campaign Intern

For the first time in the 50 year history of our chapter, Utah Sierra Club hosted a Mayoral Primary Debate centered on the most pressing environmental issues facing Salt Lake City.

The two hour event, which marked the first time that an environmentally focused debate has been held in SLC, was a tremendous success and drew in over 230 attendees. The audience was given an opportunity to hear differing arguments from all eight candidates on their environmental ethics, and learn what differentiates each candidate in this very crowded field.

The evening was opened by Ashley Soltysiak, Director of the Utah Sierra Club, and moderated by Natalie Goshnour, Director of the Kent C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah, who set the tone as formative and fair. The goal of the evening was to increase voter participation and bolster the campaign of the candidate with the strongest environmental ethic.

“Though we have not made an endorsement in the Mayor’s race at this time, our team will strongly consider making an endorsement after the Mayoral Primary on August 13th,” said Soltysiak. The Chapter’s Political Committee plans announce an endorsement in the Mayor’s race at this time, with the strongest environmental ethic.

The two hour debate underscored the need for respectful negotiation in local government regarding air quality, public transportation, renewable energy, environmental justice, and more.

“With a rapidly growing population, mounting ecological and public health threats like the inland port, and wilderness areas in close proximity to our city - we need to ensure that the person in our capital city mayor’s office is a credible and serious environmental and social justice defender,” said Soltysiak. Listen to each candidate’s response at KCPW.org.

CORRECTION

In the summer issue we mistakenly included the same photo twice in Stan’s Africa solar power article. The second photo should have been of schoolkids in Swaziland. Our apologies to Stan.
Chapter News

REGISTER TODAY!

UTES
Utah Youth Environmental Solutions

Utah Youth Environmental Summit
Join Utah Youth Environmental Solutions and partners for a weekend to learn and grow together. We will engage ongoing environmental initiatives, and learn skills to become the new leaders Utah needs. Don’t miss your chance to participate in the Third Annual Utah Youth Environmental Summit in beautiful Big Cottonwood Canyon, Utah!

RSVP: UtahYES.org/2019Registration

WHO     High Schoolers, University Students, and peers from across Utah!
DATE    October 11-13th, 2019
LOCATION Wasatch Mountain Lodge, Brighton, UT

Questions? Visit UtahYES.org
or contact: UTYouthEnvironmentalSolutions@gmail.com

The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club thanks 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.
Welcome to Margarita Santini, Organizing Rep; Farewell to Our Incredible Summer Interns

by Chuck Brainard & Stan Holmes, UNEC Team volunteers

Our Team Utah is growing! Please meet our newest team member, Margarita Santini. We could not be more excited to welcome Margarita Santini to our Sierra Club family.

Margarita Santini is a community leader. She chairs the Utah Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Coalition and is known for her community work advocating for social justice; she is a passionate advocate for her Pacific Islander Community and works towards bolstering civic engagement participation within her community. Also, Margarita has years of experience working in underrepresented, underserved communities.

Margarita is a California transplant, and now a long-time resident of Utah having moved here from California in 1980. She is the mother of four adult children, three sons, one daughter, and the grandmother of four spirited grandkids, three boys, one girl. Margarita thoroughly enjoys the relationships she gets to create in her work as an Organizing Representative with the Sierra Club.

Thank you to our Stellar Interns!

This summer, we could not have asked for a better cohort of interns. Three amazing women joined our team to work in three campaign areas, Climate Action, Public Lands, and Youth Engagement. Together, Leigh, Bekah, and Heather were instrumental in the growth and successes of our Chapter’s work. For that, we thank them.

Heather a recent transplant to Utah and its incredible public lands, interned with the Sierra Club on its Keep Public Lands in Public Hands campaign, where she researched oil and gas policies on public lands while growing outreach assets for the campaign. She recently received her MA in Environmental Humanities from the University of Utah, where she studied the role of the humanities in understanding and communicating environmental issues such as climate change. Originally from New England, she received her BA from Middlebury College. In her free time, Heather loves to hike, ski, and knit. She left us this fall for Germany where she will be embarking on a Fulbright Fellowship.

Bekah Ashley is an outdoor writer and editor based out of Salt Lake City, UT. Originally from the Adirondack Mountains, she grew up in a remote town without internet or cable and had much time to spend outside as a kid. This connection to nature leads to a passion for ecology and environmental reporting. Bekah worked with our Climate Campaign researching federal climate action, meeting with congressional leaders, and crafting communications materials and metacritical events and meetings recap. Bekah remains a Sierra Club volunteer, and we are excited for our future with Bekah and the Sierra Club.

Leigh Cottle is an outdoor enthusiast who joined our Utah Youth Environmental Solutions internship after volunteering with the Utah Chapter’s Equity Task Force for over a year. During Leigh’s summer, she helped to organize and orchestrate the creation of a new website for the UYES team while assisting them in the organization of their third annual UYES Summit. Leigh was instrumental in keeping our organization on task and visible in the community by tabling and helping to organize our participation in this year’s Pride Parade. This fall, Leigh left us to finish up her MBA at the University of Utah.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES?

We are hiring for three interns for the Spring 2020 Semester. We are looking for interns that can receive an orientation before the December break and join us in January! Contact: Carly.Ferres@sierrclub.org for more information.

Utah Sierra Club Completes Member Survey

by Kiko Sweeney

This spring, Utah Sierra Club conducted a membership survey on the issues you care about most and actions our members are most likely to support. A huge “thanks” to everyone who participated in the survey. We are excited to share the results here so that you can see how fellow members responded. Input from our environmental activist community is tremendously valuable and we very much appreciate it.

The survey received an impressive 164 submissions. Folks across Utah responded: from as far south as Kanab then north to Logan. About half of the participants call the Salt Lake Valley home. Other sizeable hubs of response were Moab, Saint George, and Park City. It’s therefore no surprise that many people expressed a desire to see the Utah Chapter get more active beyond Salt Lake Country.

Participants were asked to rank Air Quality, Public Lands, Water Issues, Clean Energy and Justice and Equity on a scale of one to five, one being the most pressing issues and five being the least. Air Quality rose to the top of the list, ranked most critical by folks throughout the state. Public Lands ranked a close second, followed by Water Issues and Clean Energy.

Equity and Justice lagged well behind, though within the Chapter and national Sierra Club, we are working hard to integrate Equity and Justice principles into the environmental movement. Through collaborative events and relationship building across the community, we hope to make substantial progress in this piece of the Chapter’s work.

This survey provided useful insights into how our members like to take action within the Sierra Club and with the broader environmental movement. Most participants either have or would reach out to their governmental representatives about the priority issues mentioned above. Similarly, almost two-thirds of members responding would make a public comment, which the Utah Chapter regularly asks folks to do.

Our membership loves to show up to rallies. Again, almost two-thirds of survey respondents noted this as a top way to participate in Chapter activities. Only a third expressed interest in lobbying, though Chapter staff offer training and make volunteer lobbyists feel well supported and highly valued.

An impressive ninety-five members expressed interest in penning a Letter to the Editor. The regularly scheduled Writing Circle meetings provide fantastic opportunities for anyone looking to take the next step with this media action.

Some members learned for the first time that the Utah Chapter hosts Outings. The Chapter website details many exciting hikes, trail service, and other outings opportunities. Anyone looking for ways to join Sierra Club environmental stewardship activities should check the Outings section of our Chapter website.

Finally, there were responses from members willing to host focus groups and fundraising parties. Neighborhood focus groups are a critical component of our efforts to gain local perspectives on the most pressing issues and what the Chapter should be doing about them. Fundraising parties provide resources needed to strengthen our staff- and volunteer-led community education, outreach, and legislative advocacy programs.

Thanks again to all of you who provided feedback through the membership survey. Look for updates on implementation of survey feedback in the next Chapter newsletter. And if you’d like to play an active role in the process, please contact our Chapter staff or any Executive Committee member. There’s definitely an active role for you in the Utah Sierra Club.

utahsierran.org Fall 2019
This year’s event, “Coal Country Conversations,” will feature Carl Shoupe and his son. The Shoupes are 4th and 5th generation coal miners dedicated to helping their small coal-mining town in Kentucky transition to a clean energy economy. Guests will be inspired as our speakers trace their personal stories of reinvention and revelation, confronting the past, and building a better future.

Your ticket will include a vegetarian and vegan-friendly meal, fall spirits, and live music, so make sure to reserve your spot today!

RSVP
utah.sierraclub.org/FallHarvest -or- (801) 467-9294
Like the rest of the country, Utah has spent the past thirty years gradually becoming hooked on recycling by tossing our trash into big blue bins and waving bye bye from the curb as a truck hauled it away. Early on, we may have dutifully sorted it into its constituent materials: aluminum, paper, plastic, then hauled it ourselves to a recycling facility. That sort of thing was embraced only by the most committed of us. As time went on, we sorted our trash and placed the materials in separate barrels to be picked up at the curb by our local hauler. Eventually we were told not to bother sorting at all; just toss everything into a large blue bin and make the whole mess somebody else’s problem. That problem, unfortunately, became ours. Unable to obtain native raw materials such as steel, aluminum, and the paper and plastic for packaging, these countries looked to recycled materials for a substitute. The monumental issue has become not the recyclable material they needed, but all the crap that came with it.

Domestic, residential recycling programs are defined as “single stream,” where tons of materials are loaded onto a conveyor and automatically “sorted” into the component materials. (Industrial recycling is known as a “commercial waste stream,” where the materials are typically high quality, in high demand, and always pre-sorted prior to shipment.) Single stream’s reliance on automated efficiency only encouraged more and more recycling of more and more items. But as it did, very little attention was paid money because we know that the environmental costs are dirty and therefore unusable, such as food containers and greasy pizza boxes.

In 2016, China notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of its intent to forbid 24 kinds of solid wastes by the end of 2017 and to lower contamination thresholds. This action sparked an immediate response from all the major U.S. waste and recycling organizations. Despite the outcry, China’s waste import ban went into effect in early 2018 and the proposed contamination standard of 0.5 percent was finalized by China’s Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP). The ripple effects of that action were immediate and dramatic. Recyclables began going as they had in the past; it just didn’t want to face up to the changes,” says Farrell. “What really ended up changing was the value of what they were selling [to the Chinese].” Make no mistake, China still wants our materials such as tolls of paper and plastic pellets because they are still manufacturing so many of the world’s goods. They just wouldn’t stand for receiving all the trash that was coming with it.

The bottom line result is that when China pulled the plug on crudely recyclables, it forced a complete turnabout in the business model that had driven U.S. recycling for three decades. According to Farrell, “Prior to 2018, Salt Lake City received money for the recyclable materials we sent to our contracted MRF [materials recovery facility.] We used to receive a kickback from the sorting facilities. Since 2018 we pay money because we know that the environmental costs of not recycling are much greater than the cost of recycling right now. We also know that the global recycling market is still adjusting to the drastic changes that have occurred and that, in the future, we may again receive money for the recyclable materials we collect and haul.”

According to the website deepdive.com, “Many service providers have taken [China’s action] as an opportunity to reset pricing conditions and local governments are struggling to adapt to this new reality. While portrayals of all residential recycling programs being in free-fall are an exaggeration, it’s clear that the system is going through a significant transformative period. Small and mid-sized municipalities are particularly vulnerable to price increases and program changes. Many stakeholders are working to help stabilize and improve this system, and results are shining through, but a clear path forward has yet to materialize. Ongoing turbulence is expected in 2019.” Deepdive publishes a state-by-state rundown of recycling conditions in selected communities. It includes a valuable overview of where some of Utah’s towns and cities stand.

North Ogden decides that a rate increase is worthwhile to continue the service, as reported by The Standard-Examiner. The paper later reports that new measures such as pulling service for repeat contamination offenders has been successful, and only necessary for a small fraction of overall households. (May-July 2018) Mobj cuts down the list of items at its drop-off center. Multiple types of plastic, as well as mixed paper, will no longer be accepted, according to the Mobj Sun News. (June 2018)

ACE Recycling and Disposal isn’t taking any plastic food containers and is closely inspecting carts in areas such as West Valley City, according to Fox 13. (July 2018)

The Weber County School District will remove most recycling bins due to rising costs. Though KSL reports that some schools will continue recycling fiber through private contracts. (Aug. 2018)

Roy has agreed to a bimonthly rate increase with Waste Management of $2.46, according to the Standard-Examiner. Residents will now be able to opt out of recycling service when this takes effect in Nov. 2018, though if too many do and landfill space begins to fill up more quickly that could eventually be reflected in further rate increases. (Sept. 2018)

In Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake Tribune profiles efforts by the city’s waste and recycling division to manually check carts and communicate with residents for corrective education. The city has withheld any rate increases for now in favor of more behavioral education. (Nov. 2018)

Ogden has temporarily suspended its recycling program due to a 47% increase in tip fees from local processor Recycled Earth. The Standard-Examiner and KSL report this is due to market conditions, and negotiations are proceeding amicably. The Draper Journal reports that about half of Draper’s recyclables have been landfilled in recent months due to weather and market conditions. (March 2019)

One month later... Ogden announces that recycling is back on as negotiations continue with Recycled Earth, as reported by The Standard-Examiner. A broader regional discussion about the cost of recycling, and whether residents will pay more, is covered by KJZZ. South Ogden is reportedly also in the midst of a similar conversation about the future of its program. (April 2019)

Cache County residents can no longer recycle recyclables #3-7, due to market conditions, according to the Cache Valley Daily. (May 2019)

For a more indepth look, visit: https://www.wastedive.com/news/what-chinese-import-policies-mean-for-all-50-states/510751/ Despite the gloomy assessment, Salt Lake City’s Farrell is cautiously optimistic. She notes, “Large communities are pushing educational campaigns to clean up single stream recycling. That’s one of the biggest focuses of my job, but it’s really hard to go back on behavior. If that doesn’t
The state of Utah continually shows they are not interested in the welfare of its citizens. Recently, attorneys for Utah and the Inland Port Authority Board requested a judge reject a restraining order sought by Salt Lake City regarding the inland port project, arguing the project has been planned for over 40 years and the state is in negotiations “with a number of very prominent companies.”

As a Salt Lake City resident in my early 40s, I see the inland port as outdated and dangerous. We are in a climate catastrophe and there is no reason to bring this dirty project into our backyard.

The inland port is estimated to add from 800 to 1,643 new diesel trucks per day to our roads. This is only one of many terrible additions it will bring to our city and state. Study after study confirm the ill-effects of environmental pollution. Utah has an estimated 1,000-2,000 deaths per year related to air pollution. Air pollution causes harmful multigenerational effects due to particulates becoming embedded in the placenta and in our brains, showing a strong correlation to Alzheimer’s, dementia and risks for chronic diseases.

Utah must protect the health of its citizens.

Garbage
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

work, I think it’s going to be efforts we know need to take place, and then seeing where the industry goes. Salt Lake City contracts with Waste Management. They’re said to be coming out with top-of-the-line equipment that will allow better sorting, and can diversely according to sorting, based on demand. It will be able to give live readings of materials coming through. We know the industry is working hard to bounce back, so it’s keeping on because we know the reasons we recycle remain the same.”

What can we all do during this period of transition and beyond? First, educate ourselves. Go to your city and/or county website for information on what can still be locally recycled. Here’s a list of recycling do’s and don’ts:

DO RECYCLE:
- Newspaper and newspaper inserts
- Cardboard boxes, shoe boxes, cereal boxes, paper tubes
- Magazines and phone books
- Aluminum cans
- Steel (tin) food cans
- CLEAN plastic containers
- Plastic-coated cartons
- Junk mail, office paper, envelopes
- Aerosol cans

DON’T RECYCLE:
- Plastic bags, films, or wraps of any kind in the blue container. Use reusable bags.
- Drop off clean plastic bags, wraps and films at many local retailers and grocery stores.
- Recyclables in plastic bags or kitchen bin liners, i.e. do not “bag your recyclables.” This prevents your items from being recycled.
- Expanded polystyrene (“Styrofoam”)
- Shredded paper

Second, assume a greater degree of individual responsibility. Our lawmakers need to know this is extremely important for us. We live in a world where it’s cheaper to extract raw resources from the earth, rather than re-process secondary materials. If we really want to make an impact, those with the power to make big decisions have to know how important this is to us.

Finally, remember the axiom, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, and keep in mind that recycling is in third place for a reason. There is now a fourth member of that group: Refuse. That means refuse to purchase items that contain unnecessary amounts of packaging when there is a suitable alternative. Finally, in the interest of sustaining proper recycling keep in mind the final tenet, ‘when in doubt, throw it out’.

By Maurena Grossman | The Public Forum; August 11

Letter: Inland Port Threatens the Health of Utahns

Keeping critical conservation issues in the news is important. One way to do that is to write letters to the editor. The following letter appeared in a recent issue of the Salt Lake Tribune. Join the Utah Sierra Club Writing Circle for community, treats, discussion, and writing as we review the details for some of the most pressing issues.

The pen is mightier than the sword. Circulate, perhaps. Nevertheless, it still rings true. Letters to the Editor (LTEs) 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 pressure them to get a measure of public sentiment. They can also sway negotiations, 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 in a community conversation. In 2017, the Utah Sierra Club began hosting writing workshops, which 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 op-ed pieces.

Led by volunteers, Patty Bernard, the writer’s circles tackle tough issues while offering a space without agenda to write and edit by needs. With over a dozen LTEs and OpEds published and review thirty written in 2018, we hope to continue to grow that number and the number of writers in 2019. The broadsheet facility includes public lands, air, water, energy, and public health. You can leave, there is no judgment, just facts, and a safe space to write, speak, and enjoy the community!

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!

JOIN US

UtahSierran  Fall 2019
Glen Canyon Group
Peakaboo Trail, Needles, Sat, Sep 28, 2019 7:00 AM (Local Time) From the Squaw Flat Campground. Easy hike on the trail to Peakaboo Spring. Continue up Salt Creek another 3 miles round trip. Return down Salt Creek to the gate. Car shuttle between start and end. Peakaboo Trail 5 miles, 3 miles excursion from Peakaboo. 3.5 miles down Salt Creek.

Salt Lake Group
SLG Sat 10/5 Big Cottonwood Color Circuit. Level: Moderate+. Enjoy the autumn splendor of the Wasatch on this seven-mile loop hike in the Butler Fork drainage. Come prepared for a 1600-foot climb via Circle All ridge separating City Creek Canyon and Red Butte Canyon, offering amazing scenery along the route. It is a 10 mile (RT) hike with 3100 feet of elevation gain. There will be an option to stop at 4.5 miles before the 900 foot scramble to the summit. Bring lunch/snacks, at least 2 liters of water, hiking boots, sunglasses, first aid kit, and optional trekking poles. Well behaved dogs are welcome; please follow all canyon rules. Check calendar for updates as cancellation/modifications may be necessary due to seasonal weather/trail conditions. Meet 9:00 am at the upper end of Terrace Hills Drive (890 East), which is accessed from 11th Avenue. Leaders: Sven and Sally 360-774-1534; svenasally@gmail.com

SLG Sun 10/13 Millcreek Loop: Terraces to Elbow Fork and Pipeline. Level: Moderate. Well behaved dogs are welcome; please follow all canyon rules. Check calendar for updates as cancellation/modifications may be necessary due to seasonal weather/trail conditions. Meet 9:00 am at the upper end of Terrace Hills Drive (890 East), which is accessed from 11th Avenue. Leaders: Doug and Bessann Swanson, fbswan32@msn.com, (801) 588-0361

SLG Sun 11/10 Frary Peak Antelope Island. Level: Moderate. Frary Peak is the highest mountain on Antelope Island and offers the island’s most spectacular views. Well hike 6.6 miles roundtrip with 2,100 feet elevation gain. Microspikes recommended in case snow is on the upper part of the trail. Near the top, there is a short section of trail with a bit of exposure. Bring lunch, layers of clothing, 2 liters of water minimum. Participants should plan to share lunch and eliminate fee expenses. Admission to Island: $10.00/vehicle, $5.00/vehicle 62+ years, or State Park pass. No dogs please. Check calendar for updates as cancellation/modifications may be necessary due to seasonal weather/trail conditions. Hikers who prefer to meet at the park entrance should call or text the leader: Catherine Sharpsteen 801-643-0496

SLG Sun 11/17 Elkader Business Circuit. Level: Easy+. Enjoy the lush fall foliage and the promise of wildlife sightings. Meet 8:00 am at the north end of the Wasatch Office of Tourism (300 North State Street, Salt Lake City) for the drive to the state park entrance in Syracuse. Participants should plan to share lunch and eliminate fee expenses. Admission to Island: $10.00/vehicle, $5.00/vehicle 62+ years, or State Park pass. No dogs please. Meet at 9:00 AM in Salt Lake City at ICIC Parkway. 2300 South at 300 West (NW corner of I-15). If weather or cold threatens, leaders will decide to lead an easier Sentry Loop, half the elevation gain and about 2 miles shorter. If you plan to go on this hike, please RSVP to Jim so you can be notified of any weather-related changes. Leaders: Doug Johnson and Paul Sullivan. 801-580-9079; pauljames.fs@gmail.com

Ogden Group
Saturday, October 12 at 9:00. Wheatgrass Canyon, Ogden group. This hike starts in the Causey Reservoir area. We’ll pass the Boy Scout camp to continue up the canyon about 3 miles before returning back to the trailhead. It is a moderate to easy hike after dropping down to this broad valley. Elevation gain is 600 feet. Please contact leaders for meeting place and possible carpooling. Bring a snack and plenty of water. Amy Alvord (801) 920-4315 or Doug Johnson (801) 889-4183.

Saturday, November 2nd at 9:00. Mueller Park, Bountiful. Ogden Group. We will hike this beautiful, shady trail to Elephant Rock. Gaining about 950 feet on this 6.8 round trip trail, we will have views of the valley below. The trail is moderate and will mostly be among the autumn foliage. Bring water and lunch. Call leaders Doug Johnson (801) 888-4183 or Amy Alvord (801) 920-4315 to confirm meeting place and also possible carpooling, as well as for possible cancellation.
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
I’m from Chicago. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, went to college in Chicago at DePaul University, and then lived in Chicago after college (except for one year where I worked abroad in Honduras after graduating).

PROFESSION/TRAINING
I studied English literature at DePaul University. After graduating, I have worked in communications and marketing for social service agencies and currently work as a proposal writer for education technology company. If I’m able, I love to combine my love of storytelling with my passion for social justice. After graduating DePaul, I worked as a Communications Officer for an international NGO in Honduras and then later worked as a Group Communications, Marketing, and Media Coordinator for a Latino social service agency in Chicago. Currently, I’m working as a Proposal Writer for an education technology company and am volunteering with the Sierra Club. I have always had an interest in the environment and sustainability and have mostly pursued that by making steps to live more sustainably in my own life. In the past few years, I joined the Sierra Club to delve deeper into this issue and hopefully work toward more systemic changes.

HOBBIES
I love writing, reading, hiking, camping, salsa dancing, rock climbing. I try to spend as much time as I can outdoors now that I moved to Salt Lake, but I also love to read and am very, very slowly working on a book of my own, trying to write a novel (mostly for fun).

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO UTAH?
Mostly for a change of pace and access to the outdoors. I was born and raised in the Midwest but have loved the outdoors since I was young. My family took me camping a lot when I was younger, which maybe is why I’m so comfortable being outside and sleeping in a tent, and every chance I could, I have found ways to try and live near the mountains. I studied abroad in college in Spain near the Sierra Nevada and worked in a rural part of Honduras after college. Sometime over the past few years, my partner and I began talking about wanting to live out West, and I began talking about wanting to live out West, and so we finally decided to make the move a year ago. We have a lot of concrete opportunities for volunteers to get involved. There is always something happening and even showing up to the meetings just to listen gives me a much more inside look at to what is happening in regards to environmental policy here and throughout the US.

WHY IS SIERRA CLUB IMPORTANT TO YOU?
Climate change and the fate of the planet. I learned about climate change young and it has been a concern ever since I can remember. Recently, I've come to the thinking that we're not going to make much progress on this issue unless there are large, systemic changes and so Sierra Club seemed like the organization to join if I was looking to make a more concrete impact.

WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENCES YOU SEE BETWEEN UTAH AND CHICAGO RELATED TO SIERRA CLUB?
Honestly, it's been really nice coming to the Utah Sierra Club chapter. I hadn't quite found my space in the Chicago chapter before I left, and was doing some odd volunteer duties here and there. With the Utah Sierra Club chapter, I've been able to take on leadership roles and feel like I'm doing important, fulfilling work. I am working on a website redesign and am also working on the Ready for 100 campaign for Millcreek. At the time I was volunteering at the Sierra Club in Chicago, there were so many committees and often led so there wasn't Sierra Club support stuff helping to lead the committee (I think this has changed now though) so they lacked a bit of structure. That being said, I did meet some great people in Chicago and they recently led the charge for Chicago to commit to 100% renewable energy by 2030. The nice thing about the Utah chapter is that they have a lot of concrete opportunities for volunteers to get involved. There is always something happening and even showing up to the meetings just to listen gives me a much more inside look at to what is happening in regards to environmental policy here and throughout the US.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?
I’m working to organize Millcreek to sign onto HB411 the Community Renewable Energy Act, which would add Millcreek to the cities working with Rocky Mountain Power to transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030 (currently Salt Lake City, Park City, Moab, Summit County, and Cottonwood Heights have signed onto the bill). I’m also working on the Comms committee to update the Sierra Club website. There are so many ways to get involved with the Sierra Club and so I want to help spread the word through the website.

WHY DID YOU TAKE ON WEBSITE AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?
Ironically, I want to update the website to get people off the internet and get more involved in real life. The internet can be so all-consuming, but it is also a starting point for people to learn more information and get involved. By making sure our website content is up to date and easy to digest, I’m hopeful we can get people off the internet and connecting, and organizing in larger numbers.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE SC’S MAIN GOAL IN UTAH?
There are so many goals and as a transplant, I don’t feel I can even speak to all of them! I think it’s important to protect our amazing public lands here and also with Oregon, California, New Mexico and other western states’ transition to renewable energy, it’s important that Utah doesn’t get stuck with all of the coal-generated power that Rocky Mountain Power will be transitioning over to us. We need all states to be transitioning to renewable energy, and so I want to do my part to put pressure on Utah to work toward that.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THOSE WHO THINK THE CLIMATE IS DOOMED AND THERE IS NO HOPE?
Oh boy I might not be the person to ask about this! Ha. I definitely have my moments of climate grief and hopelessness. But I guess I would say that I try to remind myself that even though we are living through a very disturbing time (i.e. the Trump administration and everything he represents), it is pushback from progress we had been making. Overthrowing white supremacy and capitalism is necessary and radical and it is never going to come easy. So we are just in the midst of difficult conversations, difficult fights that challenge the way we have been doing things for hundreds of years. Living in accordance with the earth’s real limits and demanding justice, equity, reparations, respect for the native and immigrant community, for people of color, for women, for LGBTQ all requires some serious reckoning that we need to do and system-level overhaul. It’s going to be hard but hopefully, we are in the midst of working toward something better.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OUR POLITICIANS IN UTAH AND NATIONALLY DO?
Make investments in our future. Put the interests of future generations before the interests of corporations. I’m upset that we withdraw from the Paris Agreement, that we’ve dismantled protections for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, that the Trump administration has gone forward with drilling in the Arctic and the Keystone Pipeline. There are a million things that are disheartening but I’m thankful for finding the Sierra Club amidst this horrible administration. Showing up to the meetings and spending time with other people who are actively working against all of this gives me some relief.

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INGRID GRIFFEE
When my family returned to Salt Lake City from the Pacific Northwest, I was re- minded how quickly Salt Lake's beauty can go missing behind our wintrytime smog. For several years I volunteered with Utah Moms for Clean Air, spending many long days at the Capitol talking to legislators about air quality and helping to organize some of the biggest environmental rallies in our state. I am now studying at the “U” to become an elementary school teacher. I view education as key to our viable future.

I welcome the opportunity to run for the Executive Committee, and look forward to the chance to step back into advocacy. My particular interest is air quality, of course, but I am interested in learning more and more about land and water issues. I find that it is becoming harder and harder today to address any one environmental issue individually. I appreciate the Sierra Club's long-standing commitment to a holistic approach to conservation, and look forward to bringing my skills and experience to the ExCom.

KATHERINE DAVIS
I have been privileged to serve as an Executive Committee member for the Utah Chapter for the last two years. I continue to see exciting and noteworthy progress being made by Chapter staff and dedicated volunteers - we have increased membership, money raised, chapter visibility in Salt Lake City and state-wide, and influence in state and local decision making. I stand behind all of our staff and see my job as an Execu- tive Committee member to support their efforts in any way possible.

In addition to my ExCom experience, I have extensive professional expertise in conservation advocacy, policy, and non-profit management. I believe my skill set is an asset to the Chapter and that continuing on as a Committee member will help ensure we can sustain the Chapter's growth and momentum. I hope to continue to have a seat at the table, serving as a representative for our thousands of members across the state.

STAN HOLMES
During my first term on the Executive Committee, I’ve seen many positive changes in the Utah Chapter's organization, visioning, and activities that have drawn the attention not only of the public and partner groups, but also national Sierra Club. We are active on a broad front of critical issues, from public lands and clean air to solar power and minority rights. I’ve learned how environmental justice is connected to all social justice issues, and that we must help empower and mobilize every community voice for justice.

I’ve been fortunate to work with our dynamic team of young environmental activists, benefitting from their creativity, energy, and 21st century vision. I enjoy my roles with the chapter's Utah Needs Clean Energy team and Equity Task Force as we promote 100% renewable energy and assist Equity Partner groups with community engagement projects. I appreciate the team spirit and commitment of fellow ExCom members and look forward to working with everyone for another term.

KIKO SWEENEY
Born in Los Angeles, I grew up exploring the wild landscapes of California: Joshua Tree, the Eastern Sierra, the coast and beyond. I first moved to Utah in 2008 and have felt the pulls of Wasatch several times since. After graduating from Colorado College in 2014 with a double major in Media Stud- ies and Classics, I travelled all over North America as a full-time Outdoor Educa- tor. While doing so, I cultivated the bond young people create with wilderness and active environmental stewardship.

I now work for Patagonia, whose mis- sion states: “We are in business to save our home planet.” Through Patagonia, I facilitate community events focusing on local and global environmental issues. I engage with customers, co-workers and friends about the environmental crisis and have coordinated actions between Patagonia and the Utah Sierra Club. I joined the ExCom 2019 and would like to keep working on the Keep Public Lands in Public Lands Campaign and with the Membership Committee.

WILL MCCARVILL
I have chaired the Executive Committee for almost 2 years, having previ- ously served as Conservation Director and President of the Wasatch Mountain Trust. I currently represent the Utah Sierra Club on the Central Wasatch Commiss- ion Stewards Committee, the Office of Outdoor Recreation Advisory Com- mittee, and the Salt Lake Ranger District Stewards Committee. I closely track transportation policies affecting the Cottonwood Canyons and lead wilderness re- mediation trips to the San Rafael Swell.

I’m excited to have been part of the Utah Chapter’s growth in capability and capacity. We have new staff, new ExCom members, and new ways of getting our conservation priorities accomplished. Our team is recognized as a leader in local, state, and regional issues. We are working with Sierra Club National to build a more inclusive, just, and diverse organization. On the ExCom, I’ll continue working to improve air and water quality, protect public lands, and replace fossil fuels with clean renewable energy.

KIRSTEN JOHANNA ALLEN
I’m publisher/executive director at Torrey House Press. Our mission is to promote conservation through literature, bringing to the page new works and unheard voices that compel action to protect wild wonders. I manage editing, production, marketing, acquisitions, and fundraising for the Mountain West’s only nonprofit literary publisher. My commit- ment to conservation of America’s public lands originated with childhood summers spent in Nevada’s Great Basin and in Utah’s canyon lands with my own children.

I’ve been honored to serve for two years on the ExCom and appreciate the opportunity to continue for another term. The Chapter’s staff and our work in the areas of social justice and public lands protection resonate with me both personally and profes- sionally. The experience I bring includes a master’s in public health, data analysis for the Utah Department of Health, 25 years of freelance editing experience, and volun- teer work with Wild Utah Project, Entrada Institute, Zion Canyon Mesa, and Grand Canyon Trust.

Your ballot must received by November 22, 2019. Mail your completed ballot to Utah Sierra Club at 243 W 800 S A103, Salt Lake City, UT 84101. The second set of boxes below are for the second member of a joint membership only. Blank lines are for write-in candidates. Please vote for no more than 6 candidates, including write-ins.

ExCom Candidates

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KATHERINE DAVIS  S J
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YOUR ZIP CODE:  
THANKS FOR YOUR VOTE!

https://sc.org/utexcomballot