Chapter Activities, Kay McLean

Last December Tom Messenger and Marc Thomas were elected to 2-year terms joining Albey Reiner, Bill Rau, and Kay McLean on the GCG ExCom. Our members also voted on issues they felt important, yielding the following top interests: tar sands, Greater Canyonlands, pipeline safety/fracking, hikes and campouts (9), Bishop process (8), and Blue Castle nuclear plant (7).

Tom Messenger continued to direct our Outings Program and the well-attended hikes helped spread information on our issues and activities throughout the community. Socially, our group had to pot luck dinners: spring pot luck hosted by the McLeans, and fall pot luck hosted by the Pickets.

The ExCom met in February and September to decide on policies and our involvement with various issues. In September we submitted and gained Chapter approval for endorsing three candidates for the Moab City Council.

In June, GCG members hosted a vacationing Michael Brune and family. Michael, Executive Director of the National Sierra Club, visited Moab a couple of years ago and returned this year to learn more about the oil and gas drilling explosion in our area. He also met with Navajo leaders to discuss their Bears Ears National Monument proposal. Along with SUWA, Grand Canyon Trust, and several other groups, he participated in panel discussion following the film "Our Canyonlands" at Star Hall.

Members of our group have continued their involvement with a variety of conservation issues, local politics, and working with other like-minded organizations. One member of our ExCom, Marc Thomas, in addition to representing us on Trial Mix, being a leader on with conservation issues and outings, has taken on a much more active role at the State and National levels. He will be Chair of the Utah Chapter next year.

Rep. Rob Bishop’s Public Lands Initiative, Wayne Hoskisson

Nothing has happened with the Public Lands Initiative proposed by Rep. Bishop and Rep. Chaffetz since late spring. We expected the draft language would be available before now but their offices have released nothing. We have heard that a draft of the legislation will be released before the end of the year. The delegation is running out of time. They need to have the legislation written soon or there will not be enough time to get it through Congress before the end of President Obama’s second term. If adequate legislation is not proposed and passed before the end of next year that will increase the likelihood that President Obama will use the Antiquities Act to create a new national monument in Utah.

Here is a partial list of provisions expected: 1. Some Wilderness Study Areas or portions of WSAs in Uintah, Carbon, Emery, and San Juan counties will lose protection. 2. Most lands in America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act will be ignored. 3. Energy zones will be created in Uintah, Carbon, Emery, Duchesne and San Juan counties. The language may vary by county. 4. Exemptions or restrictions to the Antiquities Act will be made in all counties included in the legislation. 5. Some version of language attempting to prohibit further wilderness consideration in the counties will
be included. In Grand County the Mexico Point and Hideout wilderness units may be dropped by the delegation. These two units would make the Bookcliffs Highway difficult to construct and were purposely proposed for Wilderness by the Grand County Council.

Bears Ears NM Proposal, Wayne Hoskisson
On August 15, Bears Ears Inter Tribal Coalition presented their Bears Ears National Monument to the public following a presentation to Rep. Bishop and Rep. Chaffetz. On the following days they met with representatives of various agencies in the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture. The proposal can be found on the coalition web site, bearsearscoalition.org.

The Bears Ears NM proposal includes about 1.9 million acres north of the San Juan River and east of the Colorado River. The formal proposal for the monument includes a map as well as extensive information about the region. The proposal also incorporates a new idea for co-management of the monument. The proposal thoroughly describes the concept. One essential element would be the creation of a monument board comprised of representatives from five tribes and representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and the National Forest Service. The management of the new monument would be determined through a NEPA process.

The Utah Dine Bikeyah started work on a monument/national conservation area proposal several years ago. The Sierra Club watched the growth of this new monument proposal and joined a loose ‘coalition’ to support the tribes in developing the proposal. The tribes met in Bluff, Utah in mid April. Mark Maryboy (former San Juan County Commissioner, local Navajo leader and representative to the Navajo Tribal Council) outlined the idea for a proposal. Mark Maryboy greeted the attending Tribes with "Welcome home." The Tribes spent three days discussing their interest in the area and their ideas for protecting the Bears Ears.

In mid July the Tribes met in Towaoc on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation. They formally created the Bears Ears Inter Tribal Coalition with an executive committee with representatives from the Navajos, the Ute Mountain Utes, the Northern Utes (Uintah-Ouray), the Zuni, and Hopi. Over the next three days the Tribes gathered at the Bears Ears camping on the edge of a meadow below the twin buttes. Five representatives from federal agencies met for a couple of hours with the Tribes just a hundred yards north of the gathering.

A representative of the Sierra Club attended the gatherings to show support for the efforts of the Native American Nations in proposing a Bears Ears National Monument.

Conservation report, Deb Walter
In August we submitted extensive scoping comments for proposed Environmental Assessment for Fidelity’s West Fertilizer Field 16-pad Oil and Gas Project. We emphasized the need to treat cumulative impacts of this project as being part of the larger Cane Creek Unit and Dead Horse Lateral Pipeline project and stressed the need for a more thorough analysis in an Environmental Impact Statement.

In November we will be submitting comments on the proposed new Master Leasing Plan, advocating for Alternative C which is the most environmentally protective choice. It protects Labyrinth Canyon, rules out any potash mining or production, allows the least number of wells, and creates many areas of NSO’s, No Surface Occupancy. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance is writing up extensive comments for the BLM, and we will be working with and coordinating with them to sign on to their comments. The Sierra Club is applauding President Obama’s veto of the Keystone XL pipeline. In another piece of the dirty energy puzzle, Enefit has stopped work on their oil shale project in the Book Cliffs with no immediate plans to resume.

City and county election results, Jean Bynion
On September 16, the Glen Canyon Group Executive Committee (ExCom) voted to recommend the endorsement of three candidates for the Moab City Council. The Utah Chapter ExCom took up the recommendation in its meeting September 19, and concurred in the endorsement of: Rani Derasary, Kalen Jones, and Tawny Boyd. Rani has a history with the Sierra Club having volunteered on several occasions between 1987 and ‘92 for the San Francisco Bay Chapter and Sacramento offices, and Kalen is a life member of the Club. Tawny is a progressive known to many members of the local group.

The Group sent a post card to its fifty members living within Moab City limits. And the majority of the city’s voters cast their votes for "our" three. Rani got 737 votes, the most of the six candidates in the race; Kalen was second with 707; and Tawny was third with 690. They will take their seats on the City Council in early January.

Three of the Glen Canyon Group’s three counties also put Proposition 1 on their ballots in this fall’s election. The ballot measure added ¼ of a cent
sales tax on all purchases except food, proceeds of which would be divided between the county and incorporated cities to pay for transportation-related costs. In addition to streets and roads, the funds could be used for trails, sidewalks, and similar uses. In all three counties, the measure passed handily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon County</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand County</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>1,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan County</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MOAB MADE US JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB, Peter and Ingrid ten Have

We live in The Netherlands, a small, densely populated country in the north of Europe. The countryside is flat, you won’t find mountains here, not even hills. It has a mild, but wet and windy climate. That motivates to travel and look around in other parts of the world.

On one of those travels we found the south of Utah and especially Moab and the area surrounding it. We write 1994. We went for four weeks on holiday to the USA, starting in Denver and with Arches NP on our bucket list. So from Denver we drove the I-70 West and about 50 miles past Grand Junction took a left onto the Utah State Route 128. To put it strongly, that really changed our life. We were not prepared to see a countryside like that with those red, towering rocks along the Colorado River. We fell in love instantly.

That year we stayed only 4 nights in Moab and during those days we started hiking. Of course we learned it the hard way, on sneakers and without taking enough drinking water with us, as tourists do nowadays likewise. But we learned, bought hiking shoes and water bottles the next day. That vacation we kept on hiking everywhere we had a chance. It made us feel more in touch with the scenery around us in stead of just looking at it from a viewpoint. After 4 weeks of visiting many beautiful areas we concluded that Moab was still our first love. In later years we made many roundtrips in the USA and always went back to Moab for a couple of days.

As we are retired now we can spend more time traveling. This year we stayed nearly six months in Moab. It has intensified the contacts we already had there. We owe the people of Moab and more specifically the Sierra Club members a lot, because they shared their knowledge and their love for the environment with us. They made it clear that regulation is needed for tourist and other activities that could harm nature irreversibly. That’s why we joined the Sierra Club this year. A drop in the ocean? Yes, that may be so. But many drops make eventually that ocean. We hope the Sierra Club can be such an ocean in environmental matters if enough people join.

Glen Canyon Group Hikes, Mike Stringham

The official Sierra Club hikes are posted on the Utah Chapter Sierra Club web page. They are usually every other Saturday during that particular quarter year. Hikes are chosen to appeal all interests and capabilities. Some hikes are short, some long, some easy, some hard. The most important consideration for all hikes is safety. We have put together an informal hike classification that may help in understanding the type of hike proposed.

**Easy:** Relatively even terrain, few steep sections, fit for every active walker. For example, all hikes in Arches are easy.

**Moderate:** Uneven terrain, may include several steep sections. Primitive trail in Arches and route to petrified wood on Colorado River off of Shaffer Trail road are these kinds of hikes.

**Difficult:** Rough terrain with perhaps steep up and/or down hill sections, hand holds necessary, possible ledges and injury if fall occurs. Ropes available if desired.

**Exploratory:** Terrain and difficulty uncertain. Even though the hike rating is unknown be prepared for a difficult hike.

Along with these ratings we’ll include approximate distance and elevation changes if possible.

Members of the GCG and others in Moab’s hiking community meet every Tuesday and non-official hike Saturdays at the old Red Rock Elementary School parking lot (9 am winters, 8 am summers) for informal hiking. Hikes are usually decided at the meeting place with everyone participating in suggesting and selecting the hikes. Everyone is encouraged to suggest hikes. A general discussion of the suggested hike’s difficulty, length and elevation gain will be discussed if requested. Often people suggest alternative hikes that may not be as long, as far to get to, or as hard. Frequently there are two hiking groups going on hikes they prefer. Choosing a hike really has to be a self select. If it is not a hike you want to do don’t go.

Some days we have hikes where dogs are welcome (call the McLeans for info on these hikes - 435-259-6199). Come join us for a hike.

Utah Nuclear Updates, Sarah Fields

- The Sierra Club supports Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva’s bill to designate the Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument. The bill would protect the Grand
Canyon’s cultural heritage and watershed and stop future uranium mining in the Canyon area.

- Blue Castle Project: On January 26, 2016, there will be oral arguments before the Utah Court of Appeals on the challenge of the appropriation of water for the proposed nuclear reactor near Green River. Blue Castle Holdings has not moved forward with an application for an Early Site Permit to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Right now, there is no evidence that the proposed reactor will ever happen.

- Transportation High Level Nuclear Waste: Then, there is the transportation of high level nuclear waste through Grand County should the Yucca Mountain spent nuclear fuel repository be brought back to life. There may be a Congressional push to provide funding and a directive to move forward with Yucca Mt., which is technically flawed and vigorously opposed by the State of Nevada and tribal and environmental groups.

Huge casks with spent fuel rods would travel on rail cars along the Colorado River from Denver, through Ruby Canyon in Grand County, and across the County to Green River and on to southern Nevada.

Two companies, located in New Mexico and Texas, have plans for a centralized interim storage site. EnergySolutions, a Utah company with a radioactive waste disposal operation in Tooele County, has purchased Waste Control Specialists, the Texas company that plans to develop an interim spent fuel storage facility. WCS also disposes of other types of radioactive waste.

Spent fuel could be transported through Utah if either facility is approved. The Sierra Club supports the development of a permanent spent fuel disposal facility, or facilities, not temporary, interim solutions.

**Official Outings**

**GCG Sat 1/16 Klondike bike trails.** Specific destination will depend on the weather. Expect an easy flat walk of five miles. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Barbara Crossan 435-259-0777 blcrossan@gmail.com.

**GCG Sat 1/23 Snowshoeing/Cross-Country Skiing in the La Sals.** Snowshoe/skiing (your choice) starts at the cross-country skiing parking lot on the road to Geyser Pass and heads towards Gold Basin or Geyser Pass for a round trip of 3 to 5 miles. Bring your own skis or snowshoes (can be rented locally). Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Jock Hovey 435-260-0239 jockhovey@gmail.com.

**GCG Sat 1/30 Sunshine Wall - Eagle Park.** Hiking in the extreme north west part of Salt Valley north of Arches NP. Hike along an old oil exploration road for a while and then walk under some Navajo formation cliffs. Loop around the south end of these cliffs and then return to the starting point via a route on a nice wide bench ringed on the east by Entrada formation cliffs. This should be an easy hike of about four to six miles with about 400 feet elevation gain. Meet at:

**Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader:** Michael Stringham 435-259-8579

**GCG Sat 2/13 Mill-Tusher Mesa.** From Tusher Canyon, ascend the slickrock on the east side 400’ to reach the top of the mesa between Tusher and Mill Canyons. At the south end, the Moab Member (biscuit rocks) gives way to an expanse of entertaining Entrada domes. Views of Monitor, Merrimac, Lone Mesa, etc. Moderate hike with four or five miles. High clearance/4WD needed to reach the trailhead. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Michael Stringham 435-259-8579

**GCG Sat 2/27 Dellenbaugh Tunnel.** From the Tombstone on the Spring Canyon Point road, visit the Dellenbaugh Tunnel, easy four miles round-trip with little elevation change. Or join Alby Reiner for a longer hike in the same area. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Thomas J Messenger 435-259-1756 messengert35@gmail.com.

**GCG Sat 3/12 Jedi Slickrock.** Start in Bartlett Wash opposite and south of the popular Bartlett Wash bike trail. Hike south ascending along the Entrada formation as it rises toward Lone Mesa. Our goal will be the pass between Lone Mesa and the mesa that Tusher Tunnel is in. Return the same way or join some others completing the circumference of the Tusher Tunnel Mesa. Beautiful views in every direction. Easy hike to the pass and return. Moderate if doing the circumference. Round trip around 6 miles doing either route. 600 + ft elevation gain. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas J Messenger 435-259-1756 messengert35@gmail.com.

**GCG Sat 3/26 Recapture Canyon.** Hiking in perhaps the largest concentration of Anasazi Ruins in Utah. These ruins are just outside the town of Blanding, about 75 miles from Moab. Any car can drive to the trail head. Hike descends into Recapture Canyon via an illegal ATV road and then up and down both sides of the canyon. View many cliff dwellings and some buildings in the canyon floor including a huge kiva. Hike should an easy hike with only a couple of hundred feet elevation change and be no more that 4 miles in length. If we have time and for those who are interested a side trip to the world class Edge of Cedars museum can be tacked on. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Michael Stringham 435-259-8579

**GCG Sat 4/9 Murphy Point, Island in the Sky.** Take the trail out to the point for a big view into the canyon of the Green River. Easy hike with about 4 flat miles. Those with more ambition might consider the Murphy Loop Trail, 8.3 miles, 1300’ of elevation. (Going out and back to Murphy Hogback saves about 200’ of elevation with little difference in distance.) Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Michael Stringham 435-259-8579