IN THIS ISSUE:

- GCG Chair Kay McLean presents a summary of the January Business Meeting (ExCom)

- In Memoriam – Mary Suarez

- Moab’s recent resolution to become the 3rd Utah City to commit to 100% clean, renewable energy!

- Marc Thomas presents PR Spring Tar Sands Strip Mine Rearing Its Ugly Head Again

- Tammy Berrie makes a case for Service Projects

- Bears Ears National Monument: Let’s Keep a National Monument

- Sarah Fields presents a Nuclear Issues Up-Date
- Jean Binyon presents a report on our treasury
- Mike Stringham to lead goal setting sessions
- Tom Messenger presents our Second Quarter official outings
- Tammy Berrie talks about why her Sierra Club membership is important to her

The new year has found the Glen Canyon Group continuing to be immersed in a flurry of activities as you will see from this newsletter. This is a long newsletter (but it’s good stuff), but if your reading time is limited, read the articles that are of most interest to you. BUT, please be sure to read the last article, ‘Why I am a Sierra Club Member’.

**From the Chair – Kay McLean**

The ExCom (Executive Committee) met in January and welcomed our newly elected members, Bobbi Cronk and Marc Thomas, to their 2-year terms. Officers for 2017 are: Chair, Kay McLean; Vice Chair, Albey Reiner; Secretary, Kay McLean (Temp); Treasurer, Jean Binyon; Outings, Tom Messenger; Conservation, Vacant; Chapter Delegate, Marc Thomas; Membership Coordination, Tammy Berrie; MEAN Coordination, Bobbi Cronk, and Newsletters, Dave McLean and Mike Stringham.

Tammy Berrie has continued her excellent fundraising Half-Marathon work and on March 18, our members will staff two Hydration Stations and the Beer Garden. The money we make by participating in this fun event will support local as well as State and National conservation efforts. In addition, Tammy is playing a key role in recruiting and encouraging members. She is investigating how we can interact with young people who do not have easy access to the outdoors, and she is setting up a local service outings program.

Our group does not currently have a Conservation Chair, but we are none the less involved with many timely issues. We are fortunate that our Chapter Delegate, Marc Thomas, who has agreed to again be the Utah Chapter Chair for 2017, keeps us informed and working on important conservation issues. Many of our members worked on getting the Bears Ears area designated a National Monument on 28 December 2016, and some attended the celebration in January.
In support of Moab’s recent resolution establishing a community-wide goal of 100% renewable energy by 2032, many of our members, led by Marc Thomas, wrote letters, staffed phone banks, and attended the City Council meeting where the resolution was passed by all council members present.

Many of our members have also been involved in the Moab City Council review of our state’s (SITLA) demands to approve a multi-faceted resort development on the Lionsback property on the Sand Flats Road. The project, which sits on our aquifer, includes a 150-room hotel, approximate 250 luxury condo type units, employee housing for their mid-level managers (not the work force that needs housing), as well as many resort type amenities. Letters, phone calls, and visits to the City Council members have been persuasive and hopefully will help determine the need for public hearings on this project, even though SITLA precisely wants to avoid public hearings.

Members have also been involved with the community activities surrounding the ATV/UTV noise and safety issues since Utah state law now makes these off-road vehicles legal on all city, county, state, and federal roads except interstate highways. These activities include the Throttle Down in Town campaign, potential speed limits on city streets, and potential enforcement of noise ordinances.

The Utah Chapter is going to hire a hybrid organizer, to be funded one-fourth by National and three-fourths by the Chapter. This person will be employed full-time and will work with our National Wild America campaign, organize volunteers, lead Chapter campaigns on conservation issues, and raise funds. Currently, the Chapter has National organizer Lindsey Beebe working on Beyond Coal and related issues.

Our GCG is continuing to work with other local conservation groups by participating in the Moab Environmental Activists Network. This networking group meets to communicate the activities of each member group and encourage support among the various conservation groups.

After reading this newsletter, please consider sharing your thoughts and ideas on any of the issues or programs, or perhaps you have an interest that we have not addressed. Your input will be valuable to the ExCom in determining our direction and activities. Even better, your involvement on any level would be very appreciated, and of course you will find we are an enjoyable group to be around. Contact any ExCom member, or join us for any of our Tuesday or Saturday hikes (we meet at 9am at the old Red Rock Elementary School parking lot).

We have a number of upcoming events and activities, so watch for these opportunities to get involved or simply participate. Earth Day on April 22nd, Spring Highway clean-up service outing, late spring party and pot luck dinner at the McLean’s home, White Mesa Uranium Mill march on May 6th, and the Half Marathon fund raiser on March 18th are some of the activities you will be learning more about.
COME JOIN US AND GET INVOLVED!

In Memoriam

Longtime member of the Sierra Club, Mary Suarez died at age 73 of cancer February 18. In the Glen Canyon Group's early days, Mary produced and posted notices of upcoming hikes every month. Mary and her husband Mike were instrumental in founding the Moab Area Progressive Network and she was its moderator for years until she was overtaken by the illness. Her body was interred in Lubbock, Texas, where she grew up. A memorial service at the Moab Valley Multicultural Center will be announced. Mary was a charming and liberal activist who will be greatly missed.

Moab Becomes 3rd Utah City to Commit to 100% clean, Renewable Energy

*The following is excerpted from a February 14th Sierra Club news release:*

Moab, Utah became the 23rd community in the United States to commit to 100 percent clean, renewable energy on Tuesday [February 14]. The Moab City Council unanimously approved a resolution establishing a community-wide goal of 100% renewable energy by 2032. Moab is the third city in Utah to make this commitment following similar pledges from Salt Lake City and Park City, showing that mountain and outdoor sports communities are leading the way to a clean energy future.

“For Moab, one of the world’s great outdoor recreation destinations, the implications of climate change could not be more troubling. Rising temperatures, reduced water availability, economic instability, and other impacts threaten our residents and greatly limit activity that fuels our city’s economy. It is an imperative that Moab takes steps to protect our community while expanding the horizons for the local economy. Today, we are taking bold and meaningful action to confront these threats by doubling down on 100% clean and renewable energy and shifting away from fossil fuels,” said Moab City Council Member Kalen Jones.
Glen Canyon Group members Marc Thomas, Peter Nicholson, & Gigi Love (center) join city officials & others in heralding Moab's commitment to 100% renewable energy.

Rocky Mountain Power’s Hunter and Huntington [coal-fired] plants are responsible for nearly 40% of all nitrogen oxide emissions from Utah’s electric sector, according to EPA emissions data. Monitoring studies have shown visibility at Arches and Canyonlands national parks, just on the outskirts of Moab, is diminished by human-caused haze 83 percent of the time relative to the annual average level of natural haze.

“Our new president may be a denier of the science behind climate change, but we who live in Moab know better. We are grateful that by transitioning to 100% clean and renewable energy, our community is not only protecting the health and well-being of its residents, but also ensuring that a livable environment will be part of its future,” said Marc Thomas, Moab resident and Utah Sierra Club Chapter Chair.

Editor’s note: GCG members provided many of the supportive comments sent to city council members on the resolution and made up a large share of the audience that cheered and clapped when the resolution passed unanimously. You have earned the right to share in the thanks that Utah Chapter Chair Marc Thomas received from council member Rani Derasary. “Just wanted to thank you for all the help in making this climate resolution happen last night! I know with this sort of thing there are people putting in many hours and doing things they do alone or collectively that I’ll never know about, and people who helped whose names I’ll never know.”

In 2004, Moab became the first Green Power Community recognized by the EPA. As Mayor Dave Sakrison said at the council meeting that approved the resolution, this is the next way to lead by example and show other communities in Utah that 100% clean, renewable energy is possible.
Canadian-based US Oil Sands Inc. is engaged in the exploration and development of dirty energy from tar sands leases covering 32,000 acres of state-managed lands on top of the Book Cliffs. In its first phase, the company is currently permitted to strip mine 235 acres at PR Spring on the border between Grand and Uinta Counties. The construction of open pit test sites and mining infrastructure has been underway off and on for several years, but actual large scale extraction of tar sands at PR Spring has yet to start.

In a mid-February news release, for distribution only in Canada, the company announced it has issued stock, rather than paying cash, to its creditors. The release also said that "the Company expects to complete commissioning and initiate start-up operations over the next 8-10 weeks. Following successful initial operations, the Company anticipates ramping up to capacity.”

By paying in shares rather than cash, US Oil Sands saves money for salaries and other start-up expenditures, but it also shows what a narrow monetary window the company is working within. Bill Rau, our GCG member who is closely monitoring the moves made by US Oil Sands, writes that "if production experiences further major delays or production levels (when and if it occurs) are less than advertised, the company will face further financial problems. Interestingly, the new release didn't mention the water monitoring required of the company or the additional regulatory approvals it needs.

Tar-sands extraction - the industry prefers the term “oil sands” - involves strip mining and water consumption. Such projects are most often opposed because of physical damage to the land (e.g., see Alberta, Canada) as well as risks of water overuse and contamination.
The Moab-based watchdog group Living Rivers has fought several administrative skirmishes to keep the project at bay, and will continue to do so, hopefully with the Sierra Club as an ally. John Weisheit, the group’s conservation director, has repeatedly stated that if allowed to proceed, full-scale tar-sands mining in the Book Cliffs will disastrously impact the entire Colorado River Basin.

“This is the most insidious, insane thing I have ever seen in my entire life,” John says. "The Colorado River watershed is the only watershed we have. They’re going to level an aquifer system and turn it into rubble and waste sand. It won’t even have the ability to store water any more, and whatever water it has will be polluted with their chemicals.”

The best-case scenario is that US Oil Sands is playing chicken with us, only wanting to sell its technology and assets without actually beginning large-scale production. The worst case is that production occurs, forever leaving the top of the Book Cliffs with a scarred, contaminated, and desolate wasteland in place of a thriving ecosystem.

Nuclear Issues Up-Date – Sarah Fields

There will be a walk this spring from the White Mesa Ute Community to the White Mesa Uranium Mill in early May in opposition to the operation of the Mill. Sierra Club members are welcome and encouraged to participate. Stay tuned for schedule of Walk and related activities.

The Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS), which includes the City of Blanding, has proposed a 12-unit small modular reactor (SMR) in Idaho. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is reviewing, and must approve, the proposed NuScale design. Funding will be from US taxpayers and municipal bonding. This is a new, untried technology. SMRs use uranium and produce irradiated nuclear fuel, for which there is still no permanent disposal solution. For more information:

http://www.uraniumwatch.org/UAMPS_NuScale_SMRProject.htm

Pitch-In for Service Projects – Tammy Berrie

Ever wondered where those water drainages on the side of your favorite trail came from? Or how some areas have escaped the plague of invasive plant species that thrive everywhere else? If so, you may be looking at the work of dedicated Sierra Club Service Outings volunteers.

There’s going to be some upcoming opportunities for us to pitch in and help clean up some of our favorite trails and special places. We are working to form partnerships with the local BLM, Forest Service, and Park Service, and the Utah Department of Fish & Wildlife to organize local service projects.
Projects will range from trail maintenance to shoreline restoration. We may be called upon to plant grasses, trees, shrubs, and ground cover to stop soil erosion. Or we may be asked to help remove invasive plant species or restore habitat. Projects could also include removal of litter and garbage or highway cleanup, just to name a few possibilities.

We urge you to consider volunteering as those opportunities arise! Service outings allow volunteers to contribute their time and labor to improving the environment. In return, participants gain a deeper understanding of the land, what’s involved in maintaining the land, and a sense of pride and ownership.

Please keep an eye out for forthcoming projects. As you consider putting on those work gloves, remember we appreciate your efforts to change the world, one project at a time!

PRESIDENT OBAMA DESIGNATES BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT! – Marc Thomas

President Obama made history by designating the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah on December 28, 2016, along with Nevada’s Gold Butte National Monument. The Glen Canyon Group applauded the president’s action, coming in response to a historic unity of five tribal nations and 30 Native American tribes with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to Bears Ears who together requested its permanent protection. This marked the first time in history that Native American tribes called for and succeeded in protecting their sacred ancestral homelands through National Monument designation by a President of the United States of America.

From “Protect Bears Ears” to “Bears Ears Protected”
Until now, Bears Ears was arguably the most significant cultural landscape in the United States left unprotected. Field work had documented more than 100,000 cultural and archaeological sites linked to the history of the Navajo, Ute, Hopi, and Pueblo peoples who considered this region their homeland. The 1.35 million acres of America’s public lands south and east of Canyonlands National Park now protected by presidential proclamation contain prehistoric hunting camps, pit-house burrows, cliff dwellings, and ornate petroglyph and pictograph panels that tell the story of thousands of years of human history.

Historically, inadequate monitoring and insufficient funding had resulted in damage to these archaeological treasures from illegal looting, mismanaged recreational use, and inappropriate energy development. The Antiquities Act was enacted in 1906 to provide protection for objects of historic and scientific interest from looting or destruction. The designation of the Bears Ears National Monument provides the foundation to protect this national treasure. Just as importantly, the action taken means these lands will stay publicly-owned, lessening any threat that they will be transferred to the state of Utah to be sold-off and privatized with access prohibited.

The Utah Chapter has been glad to support the native tribes’ efforts to get a national monument created. Chapter volunteers attended rallies, signed petitions, and mailed post cards that asked the President to honor the wishes of the tribes and most other Americans. Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune visited the monument proposal twice and camped with the tribes near the Bears Ears Buttes. At a public hearing in Bluff last July, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell heard enthusiastic support for a national monument from chapter members and their allies.

We who love Cedar Mesa, Comb Ridge, Grand Gulch, and the basins and canyons of the Colorado River that make up Bears Ears, do so because of their natural beauty, unmatched vistas, and cultural treasures, but we will never know the depth of emotion that the native tribes attach to an area they consider their ancestral home and contemporary spiritual center. Nor can we ever fathom just how meaningful it is to the tribes that their “traditional knowledge and regional expertise” has been codified as federal policy for the first time in public lands management.

This monument designation is both durable and defensible, since poll after poll, including the most recent one conducted by Colorado College, show Utahns have favored its establishment, as have the native peoples who have lived here since time immemorial. But instead of embracing the new national monument, Utah’s federal and state legislators have opted to put on their black hats in trying to get the monument downsized or overturned altogether. This intransigence has already cost the state the twice-a-year outdoor retailers trade show in Salt Lake City, which takes with it a $100 million-a-year windfall to the state’s economy, including an estimated $9 million in state and local taxes.
We ask instead that President Trump and Ryan Zinke, the likely new Interior Secretary, heed the voices of the five native nations and 30 Native American tribes who are united to fight any and all attempts to undo the monument, no matter what obstacles Utah’s reactionary politicians put in the way. And we are confident that if called upon, we can tap our GCG members strong support for Bears Ears at any public event the new secretary attends in Utah. We will let him know that as residents of a county sitting on the doorstep of the new monument, we embrace its existence.

Treasury – Jean Binyon

GCG’s current balance is $1,300, thanks to our stalwart water station volunteers. Note that we submitted our 2016 financial report to the Chapter to be included in the state’s report to national.

Goal Setting – Mike Stringham

What do we want the Glen Canyon Group organization to be in the future and what do we need to do to get to be that organization? Today we have various volunteer efforts towards conservation, education, recreation, fund raising, etc. Let’s get together and try to define better who we are, what we do, when we do it, how do we do it, etc. The Glen Canyon Group has been asked to develop long term goals and plans to meet those goals. I plan to hold several one hour meetings with those interested to define the goals and the plan to attain those goals for our local Sierra Club. I’ve done this for business and private organizations. Everyone who participated enjoyed this effort and helped their organization. We will be starting in March as soon as we have a few participants. Please call Kay and tell her of your interest. I’ll send out a meeting scheduling email to insure when we can hold the meetings and have the most participation.

Outings for Second Quarter – Tom Messenger

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. Frequently there are two or more hiking groups with individuals selecting their hike of choice.

The first Tuesday of each month will include a “dog friendly” hike that will be short (4 miles or less) and easy. Dogs are not mandatory but welcome.
Official Hikes

GCG Sat 4/15 Yellow Machine and Petroglyphs. 7 to 8 mile mostly moderate hike. Start at the Yellow Machine trail head and then follow a bench above Rill Creek for about three miles. Then loop back over a ridge to North Fork Mill creek drainage and return on a bench above this creek to the Yellow Machine. This is a variation of a hike route we have taken to see the petroglyph panel southeast of the Yellow Machine. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Michael Stringham 435-259-8579 mikechrista@earthlink.net.

GCG Sun 4/23 Entrajo Canyon - Mill Creek Loop. Park off of Steel Bender, just past the fenced petroglyph area. Start by climbing up a side canyon for about 50' to connect with the trail the canyoneers use to approach Entrajo. We'll eventually get up onto a bench about 300 feet above the canyon which will eventually drop us back into Entrajo just south of the potholes that begin the canyoneering route. Cross the wash, continuing north and west down into Mill Creek via some old bike route (seems to me I've been told that it wasn't a “legal” bike trail... but I don't know if that's accurate, or not) past some pictured rock sandstone. There will be 2 creek crossings. Minor scrambling along the Entrajo Canyon canyoneering approach trail. However, this is a now well established trail. We’ll return to the vehicles at the end of the loop. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Tammy Berrie 435-260-0462 southeasternutahtammyb@yahoo.com.
GCG Sat 5/6 Anniversary Arch and Southeast. 6 to 7 miles. Starting near Anniversary Arch hike southeast along a series of fins and little canyons exploring as we wish. Eventually we will loop back toward Anniversary Arch on the west side of the fins and canyons we just viewed. This is a seldom visited area and will be interesting. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 9:00 AM. Leader: Michael Stringham 435-259-8579 mikechrista@earthlink.net.

GCG Sun 5/21 Peekaboo Spring Through Hike. Given drive time and hike time, this will be an all-day event. We'll set up a shuttle - leaving vehicles at our exit point at the Horse Canyon entry gate near Cave Spring. We'll start hiking from the Squaw Flat Loop A Trailhead and head towards Peekaboo Spring. Trail crosses Squaw and Lost Canyons as it continues to Salt Creek Canyon. We'll eventually traverse along high slickrock benches with spectacular views! We will encounter some steep slopes and cliff edges, and two ladders must be down-climbed. We'll travel past the rock art panel near Peekaboo camp and up past the spring for approximately 1 mile. There we'll turn around and travel down Salt Creek past the Salt Creek/Horse Canyon confluence to our awaiting vehicles. 10.5 - 11 miles. Strenuous, mostly due to length. Some minor scrambling, mostly along established NPS trail. Salt Creek runs year-round, so you may get wet, but it can likely be avoided with some relatively minor effort. Time permitting, at the Salt Canyon/Horse Canyon confluence, there is an option to travel up Horse Canyon to Paul Bunyon's Potty Arch, but that would add 3 miles. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Tammy Berrie 435-260-0462 southeasternutahtammyb@yahoo.com.

GCG Sat 6/10-Sun 6/11 Lavender Canyon Campout. Plenty of ruins and arches in Lavender Canyon! On Saturday May 20, we'll rendezvous at 8am and head down to the Needles! There is a 15-mile drive from 211 to the park boundary. "Road" follows a canyon bottom where deep sand, deep water and quicksand are common. Two major creek crossings with steep banks. There is no vehicle camping allowed inside the park, so somewhere along the way, we'll find suitable campsites for the group and set up camp. There should be time to day hike and explore from camp. On Sunday May 21, depending where we camped, we can either hike or drive to locked gate at the park boundary. Along the way, we will visit 6 Granaries Ruin which is just outside the park boundary. If we have driven, once we reach the park boundary, we’ll park and start our hiking. There are 5 Arches on the west side beginning at the park boundary. We'll hike up to Cleft Arch near the head of the canyon and to some ruins beyond Cleft Arch. We should aim for an 8am start on Sunday to allow for strenuous hiking in deep sand, maneuvering up and down steep slickrock benches to get below Cleft Arch, and hand over hand climbing and bouldering to get to Cleft Arch ruin. VERY weather dependent - any threat of even minor rain and we'll need to postpone. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Tammy Berrie 435-260-0462 southeasternutahtammyb@yahoo.com.
**GCG Sat 6/24 Descent of Burkholder Draw.** Drop a car on the Sand Flats road at the Yellow Machine road. Continue up Sand Flats road into Rill Creek past the paved stretch. Park a little after the little spur over the ridge to the Porcupine Rim road. Skirt the head of the big pour-off of Rill Creek and walk under the cliff along the north and west sides of Balanced Rock Mesa. At the detached southwest tip of the mesa, work down to the lower right bank bench of Burkholder Draw and go down canyon. Cross to the left bank bench at the top of a big pour-off and continue down to the junction with Rill. Scramble down into Rill. At the potholes, go up past the Yellow Machine to the Sand Flats road. About 7.5 miles generally downhill 1500’ except for a 200’ climb at the end. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas J Messenger 435-259-1756 messengertj@citlink.net.

**WHY I’M A SIERRA CLUB MEMBER – TAMMY BERRIE**

Do you ever wonder about the reasons people join groups? Lately, I’ve been reflecting on what motivated me to join the Sierra Club. Enlisting even though I do not necessarily agree with 100% of the Sierra Club’s stances; signing up even though I knew for certain it would mean a never-ending series of correspondence, emails and maybe even phone calls pleading for money or possibly to take some form of uncomfortable action...

Here is what Sierra club membership offers me in return for all of those things:

**Security.** I don’t have to feel the uncertainty of standing alone! When organizing Sierra Club initiatives and even when hiking, I feel stronger and suffer fewer self-doubts being a member of the group.

**Self-esteem.** I am empowered with feelings of self-worth as I positively interact with other Sierra Club members who have similar interests, principles, and ideals!

**Affiliation.** I enjoy regular contact with Sierra Club members! Group membership is a primary source of that fulfillment.

**Power.** We have achieved impressive environmental advancement in the Sierra Club! What cannot be achieved individually often becomes possible with group affiliation.

**Goal achievement.** Successful campaigns require a need to collaborate, pool talents, and to increase knowledge base in order to achieve the goal. This success is obtained through group participation in Sierra Club objectives. At least one of these initiatives are fundamentally important to each and every single one of us! Initiatives such as:

- **Ready for 100:** Committed to a future of 100% clean and renewable energy.
- **Beyond Coal**: Uniting grassroots activists across the country to move America beyond coal.

- **Clean Air/Regional Haze**: Ensuring all Utahns have the chance to breathe clean air.

- **Beyond Dirty Fuels and Water Conservation**: Diminish oil, gas and tar sand development that threatens the quality and quantity of our water supply.

- **Keep Public Lands in Public Hands**: Preserving Utah’s public lands as a source of awe and wonder, keeping them in public ownership and management, free of exploitation by special interest industries.

**Resources.** I have access to local resources that are not available anywhere else! The expertise of many of our members, maps, geological data, archaeological information, and camaraderie, are just a few of the things I benefit from. My profound appreciation for these resources inspired me to give back to my local group by virtue of Sierra Club membership.

If you’re a current member, I encourage you to renew. If you’re not a member, I urge you consider joining the millions of individuals who make us the Sierra Club. Together we explore, enjoy and protect our most precious natural resources - the clean air, safe drinking water, precious wildlife and incomparable wild places we all love.

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**Glen Canyon Group ExCom Officers**

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