Forest Service Releases Draft ATV Travel Decision

By Dan Schroeder

In our December 2014 newsletter I wrote about the remarkable recovery of the Box Elder Creek valley, south of Mantua, after many years of abuse from ATVs and other motorized travel. Now there’s good news: In a tentative decision released this spring, the Forest Service has dropped its plans to reopen this area to motorized recreation. This is a tremendous (if provisional) victory for wildlife habitat and quiet recreation. Now would be an excellent time to contact the Ogden Ranger District (801-625-5112) and thank the Forest Service for this wise decision.

That’s the good news. The bad news is that the rest of the draft decision for motorized recreation in the Ogden District is essentially unchanged. In particular, the Forest Service is still intent on building a new motorized trail in the remote Mollen’s Hollow roadless area, and also opening a popular hiking route there to motorized use. (To see this scenic route, join us on our annual July 4 hike, listed in the outings schedule in this newsletter.) The draft decision would also create serious enforcement issues allowing ATV use in some areas where there are no natural barriers to off-route travel, in locations that are too remote for regular visits by rangers. The Sierra Club and its partners have filed a formal objection to these aspects of the draft decision, and we will keep working to improve it in whatever ways we can.

Ogden Streetcar All But Dead; Bus Improvements Proposed

By Dan Schroeder

It has been ten years now since the first serious proposal for a streetcar between downtown Ogden, Weber State University, and McKay-Dee Hospital. During that time we’ve had seemingly endless studies, and the estimated capital cost has risen from $100 million to $220 million. Even if half that money comes from a federal grant, (Continued on p2)
Ogden River Clean Up
By Ranee Johnson

Sierra Club volunteers joined Ogden City on April 25th for a river clean up sponsored by Comcast. We ate donuts at the Lorin Farr Park arena before dispersing to assigned areas all along the river. The Sierra Club’s adopted area had a lot of thistle, but we could see a marked decrease from last year. Rain, the night before, made digging the thistle easier, and by 11:30 we joined others at the arena again for pizza.

With a rainy spring, the thistle is sure to be up and going again. Anyone can volunteer a few hours to help eradicate noxious plants and clean up our adopted river section; please call Ranee Johnson at 801-985-1058, and one of the experienced volunteers will arrange a time to meet you there and help you get started.

Streetcar from p. 1
our local elected officials are unlikely to approve funding for the rest (plus an estimated $3.7 million in annual operating costs) in the foreseeable future.

But there is still a chance that Ogden could get an improved bus system in this corridor. The idea would be to spend a few tens of millions of dollars on nicer buses, nicer boarding areas, traffic signal priority, and possibly some exclusive bus lanes on Washington and Harrison. The improved system would be only one minute faster than the existing 603 bus, but the hope is that the new amenities would attract passengers who haven’t been willing to ride the bus in the past.

Unfortunately, another danger lurks in this proposal: The currently preferred alignment would route the new bus line along 30th Street instead of 25th Street, bypassing Ogden’s most pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with all its high-density housing, not to mention the public library. Part of the rationale for the realignment is that it could promote development along Washington Blvd. between 25th and 30th. What planners seem to be overlooking is that the new service along this segment of Washington would duplicate the existing service of the 612 bus (and a planned future improvement thereto).

As always, the Sierra Club does not see public transit as an end in itself. It is merely one component of making our city centers more attractive places to live with a smaller ecological footprint.

To learn more about the current Ogden-WSU Transit Project Study, go to www.rideuta.com/openuta.
Upcoming Ogden Group Outings

To see outing descriptions as well as the activities of other groups in the Utah Chapter, go to http://utah.sierraclub.org/content/calendar

Sunday June 21, 2015: Meet at the 22nd street trail head at 7:00 am, and bring at least two liters of water.
   Joanie 801-399-0034

Saturday, July 4, 2015: Mollen’s Hollow Overlook. 13th annual 5-mile family holiday hike.  Call Dan Schroeder at 801-393-4603 for details.

Saturday, July 18, 2015: Notch Mountain Trail in the high Uintas. Call Larry at 801-690-4335

Sunday, July 19, 2015: White Pine Lake in Logan Canyon. Call Joanie @ 801-399-0034 for details

July 22-27, 2015: Claire Tappan Lodge – Truckee California, hiking and dining.Call Dale & Debra Davis at 801-430-1209

Saturday, August 22, 2015: Mt. Naomi from Logan Canyon. Call Larry at 801-690-4335.

Saturday, August 23rd, 2015: Beus Trailhead to the top of Snowbasin and back down on the gondola. Call Dan at 720-936-0599

Saturday, September 19, 2015: Brighton to Sunset Peak via Catherine Pass.  Call Larry at 801-690-4335.

October 2-5, 2015: Devil’s Tower Wyoming.  Call Debra and Dale at 801-430-1209

Saturday, October 10, 2015: Frary Peak on Antelope Island. Call Larry at 801-690-4335

November 27-30, 2015: Colorado National Monument Contact Dale and Debra at 801-430-1209 or daledon@gmail.com

Time to Go Solar?

By Dan Schroeder

Prices for solar photovoltaic panels have plummeted in recent years. Even in Utah, where electricity is inexpensive, rooftop solar panels are now paying for themselves with the help of federal and state tax incentives.

If you’re considering a rooftop solar system for your own home, a great place to start is sierraclubsolar.org, where you can learn about the Sierra Club’s partnership with Creative Energies, a Utah solar contractor that was carefully vetted and chosen by Club staff and volunteers. Creative Energies provides Club members a “best value guarantee” and returns a share of its profits to the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club in exchange for the Club’s referrals. Fill out the online form at sierraclubsolar.org to get a free assessment, or call Creative Energies at 801-487-6489 (and be sure to mention the Sierra Club).

Another rooftop solar program you may have heard about recently is Susie Hulet Community Solar, a joint venture of Weber State University and Utah Clean Energy, a local nonprofit. This program is specifically for residents of Weber, Davis, and Morgan counties, and has no connection to the Sierra Club. Like Sierra Club Solar, this program has chosen a reputable contractor through a careful vetting process, and provides a web site, weberstatesolar.org, where you can learn all about rooftop solar systems and fill out a survey to learn whether your home is a good candidate.

A rooftop solar system will lower your electricity bills while reducing your personal “footprint” of carbon emissions and other pollutants from power plants. Both of these programs promote grid-connected systems, which let you put power into the electrical grid at mid-day and draw power from the grid when the sun isn’t shining. Grid-connected systems are practical and economical, but they don’t completely free us from dependence on the fossil fuels that dominate Utah’s electrical grid.

Whether you go solar or not, you can probably save even more money—and do even more to help the environment—by looking around your home for ways to reduce your electricity use. Try to minimize your use of air conditioning this summer, perhaps by spending more time in the basement and/or opening windows at night. If your refrigerator is more than 15 years old, replace it with a newer, more efficient model—and get along without a second refrigerator or freezer. Hang your clothes to dry, and use efficient lighting (or natural lighting). Take pride every time you use less energy. Understanding your home’s electricity use is the first step toward using this resource responsibly and, when practical, switching a portion of that use to solar power.
Ogden Sierra Club Summer Social
Saturday July 11

@ 1444 Binford
Ogden Utah
6:00 pm
Pot luck affair
Adult beverages are welcome

We shall be celebrating Jock Glidden’s birthday
And honoring him for being a founding member of our group