Rock Canyon: Recreational Mecca or Rock Quarry?

See page 18
To increase interest in our chapter elections and to get a sense of what our members think, we included a presidential straw poll in the chapter ballot. We listed the announced candidates of the two major parties and allowed a space for write-in candidates. Some members who voted for chapter or group candidates chose not to indicate their presidential preference. But of those who did, here are the results. The number following the name indicates the vote total.

- Carol Moseley Braun 1
- George W Bush 3
- Wesley K Clark 15
- Howard Dean 31
- John Edwards 0
- Richard A Gephardt 5
- John Kerry 10
- Dennis J Kucinich 8
- Joseph I Lieberman 4
- Al Sharpton 1

Each of the following received write-in vote(s) although at least two are not announced candidates:

- Hillary Clinton 3
- Lyndon LaRouche 1
- John McCain 1
- Ralph Nader 3

I hope this exercise piqued readers’ interest in the 2004 presidential race. Please take the time to familiarize yourselves with the records, statements and plans of the candidates and most of all, PLEASE VOTE!
Notes From The Chair
by Jean Binyon, Chapter Chair

By the time you read this column, I will have ended my nine-month term as Chapter Chair. I am grateful for the support of our chapter volunteers and staff. I feel we made progress in 2003, and I am optimistic about prospects for 2004.

In the Fall issue of the Utah Sierran, I reported on the Strategic Planning Retreat which I think provided a good start. I also reported on membership statistics. I am happy to inform you that as of the end of November, the number of members and memberships in our three groups and in the ungrouped area had all increased, giving the chapter a new total of 4,326 memberships and 4,824 members. Early December figures showed us at over 5,000.

In this column, I will report on the Utah Chapter vis a vis the other sixty-five chapters which the Sierra Club boasts in the United States and Canada. Most chapters—like Utah's—cover a single state, however California has about a dozen chapters, and most of them have multiple groups. Chapters range in number of members from the Angeles Chapter with over 58,000 members, to such states as Wyoming and the Dakotas with under 1,000 each. The average size of chapters is about 11,500 members, more than twice Utah's. In fact, Utah is the smallest chapter of the four comprising the Southwest Regional Conservation Committee (SWRCC).

There is also a wide range in the number of groups that chapters have. The Lone Star Chapter has 18, and there are four chapters with no groups at all. The number of groups seems to vary in relation to membership and geography. Although relatively small in both number of members and number of groups, Utah is far from being the smallest. Twenty-seven of the sixty-six chapters have fewer members than Utah, and more than a dozen chapters have fewer than three groups. And we are growing.

In Utah, we are very aware of geographic distances. The chapter executive committee now has members stretching from Logan in the north to Hurricane in the south. The Glen Canyon Group (GCG) alone covers seven southeastern and central counties. And the Southwest Utah Conservation Committee, a subcommittee of the Chapter's Conservation Committee, represents all of four counties and part of two others, overlapping slightly with the GCG. It's often hard for us to meet face to face, and so we do our best to communicate by phone and email and to share information over the internet and in newsletters.

I want to close by urging all Utah Sierrans to be active, to reach out, and to grow in influence and in commitment to Sierra Club environmental ideals.

Jean Binyon by Clair Gardner

Protect Utah's Redrock Wilderness: Saturday, February 28th Training

Want to learn more about some of Utah's most remarkable and undiscovered Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands? Would you like to help with a service project that protects the Utah Wilderness Coalition's BLM wilderness proposal? Would you like to work to ensure that upcoming BLM land-use plans protect our wilderness proposal? These are a few of the activities that the Utah Chapter is planning for the forthcoming year as part of its Adopt-a-Wilderness Program.

The Utah Chapter's public lands team will hold an introductory training on Saturday, February 28, 2004, to help folks with an update on our wilderness program and how to get involved in helping protect these special places as part of BLM’s planning process. Join us on the 28th for this training session from 1:00 to 5:00 pm in the University Room (4th floor) of the Olpin Union Building on the University of Utah campus. Hop on the University TRAX Line to the Fort Douglas Station and walk downhill (to the west) a couple of hundred yards. If you can’t take TRAX, parking in the lot immediately east of the Olpin Union is free on Saturdays.

Near Easter, we hope to schedule a trip to southern Utah for a service project with BLM to install on-the-ground protection of candidate wilderness areas. Additional training and trips are being developed to help our volunteers work with BLM to increase needed protection in land-use planning. BLM is developing new resource management plans for the Price, Richfield, Moab, Vernal, and Monticello Field Offices. A lot is going on now, and these plans are likely to shape BLM land management for the next 15 years.

If you want be kept informed, drop an email note or phone call to Jim Catlin at wup@xmission.com or (801) 328-3550.
The internal Sierra Club election this spring could prove pivotal and could dramatically alter the direction and mission of our organization. In fact, the Sierra Club we all joined may have a very different look to it next year, depending on the outcome of the 2004 Board of Directors election. That’s because current members of the Sierra Club Board of Directors have openly recruited candidates with agendas widely different from the club’s historic conservation mission.

The Sierra Club’s direct elections make us unique—and vulnerable. One of the most important opportunities Sierra Club members have is the chance to select our own board of directors. Every year members select five directors for three-year terms on our fifteen-member board. But as the club has grown, the proportion of our members who vote has declined.

And now the Sierra Club is in trouble—our own democratic process is being used against us to hijack our agenda and assets. Because fewer and fewer members are voting, it has left us vulnerable to take-over efforts by small groups and parties with narrow, one-issue agendas like animal rights and anti-immigration. These outside groups can recruit and run petition candidates from outside the club who share their ideology.

And that’s exactly what’s happening—with help from some current members of the board of directors. Director Paul Watson outlined this effort at an animal rights conference earlier this year, just weeks after he was first elected to the club’s board. “One of the reasons I’m on the Sierra Club Board of Directors right now is to try to change it,” Watson proclaimed.

And once we get three more directors elected, the Sierra Club will no longer be pro-hunting and pro-trapping, and we can use the resources of the $95-million-a-year budget to address some of these issues,” said Watson, who calls fishermen “sadistic bastards”—even though about a sixth of the club’s membership fishes.

Watson noted his task will be made easier by low voter turnout in club elections. “The heartening thing about it is that, in the last election, of the 750,000 members of the Sierra Club, only 8 percent of them voted. So, you know, a few hundred, or a few thousand people from the animal rights movement joining the Sierra Club—and making it a point to vote—will change the entire agenda of that organization.”

Noted outdoors writer Jim Shepherd characterized this statement as an “attempt to hijack the Sierra Club,” an effort Watson confirmed at the Club’s annual September meeting, when he admitted that he’s trying to “take over” the Sierra Club and its agenda.

In addition to Watson’s efforts to commandeer the Sierra Club, the anti-immigration forces which have been targeting the Sierra Club for more than a decade have now joined forces with the animal rights activists. Club Director Ben Zuckerman, another director elected last year as a petition candidate with little club experience, has recruited candidates to run for the Sierra Club board from an obscure organization called the Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable America. This organization shares his desire for the club to become involved in closing down immigration. The DASA has been funded in part by grants totaling $125,000 from foundations controlled by the notorious Clinton-hater and right-wing patron Richard Mellon Scaife and his family. According to the Washington Post, “Scaife and his family’s charitable entities played a central role in the rise of the right, giving at least $340 million to conservative causes and institutions.”

Director Zuckerman’s principal focus on the board has been a relentless effort to persuade his fellow directors to overturn the membership vote several years ago to remain neutral on the question of immigration policy. Zuckerman has compared immigration to cancer, defended Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo—an anti-immigration zealot who earns an average League of Conservation Voters score of 15%—as “the person in congress doing the most for the environment.” A number of anti-immigration web sites have recently been urging people to join the Sierra Club in order to elect the candidates recruited by Zuckerman.

These unrelenting efforts to undermine the Sierra Club, its conservation agenda, assets, and democratic process prompted the Southern Poverty Law Center, perhaps the nation’s leading organization in exposing hate group activities, to advise the club’s volunteer leadership this fall: “We think members of the Sierra Club should be fully alert to the methods and motives of some of those who are trying to shift it from its historic mission.”

So consider yourself alerted to these take-over efforts, this deliberate attempt to undermine our democracy and hijack the agenda chosen by a majority of Sierra Club members. Consider all that is at stake in this Sierra Club election—our democracy, our direction, our ability to stop the Bush administration’s assault on our environment and overcome some of the most serious environmental challenges we have ever faced.

Don’t sit on the sidelines this election. Vote.

Ballots will be mailed to all members at the end of February, and must be filled out and received back by the Inspectors of Elections by April 21, 2004. Every Sierra Club member will receive a ballot and an accompanying statement, in which each candidate describes his or her background, qualifications and goals for the organization. These last are often written in general language, but the club and the candidates provide internet mechanisms through which they can be questioned more specifically about their views. Take the opportunity to question them.

“Sierra Club Board elections are a fine opportunity for our members to determine the directions they want the organization to go,” said Sierra Club President Larry Fahn. “I urge all our members to study the candidates carefully. And I urge all members to vote. It is member participation that has made the Sierra Club the most effective environmental organization in the world. It is member participation that will empower us to stop George Bush, and will allow us to carry on our wonderful tradition of effective-ness into the future.”

Drusha Mayhue is a long time Sierra Club leader and has held many positions including Chair of the Houston Group. She currently sits on the Montana Chapter Executive Committee. If you have comments or questions, or would like further information, please contact Drusha at: drusha_m@yahoo.com.
Gregg Frohman has been an outdoorsman all of his life. He grew up in rural Ohio, exploring the woods behind his house by day and watching deer from his bedroom window at night. As a teenager, Gregg became an Eagle Scout and created a nature trail for his community service project. He and his wife, Stephanie, now run on that trail when they visit his parents for holidays.

Gregg attended the University of Michigan where he earned a degree in chemical engineering and met his future wife. After graduation, the couple moved to Chicago to begin their careers. A few years later, they were married in a small outdoor ceremony at a cabin in northern Michigan.

Gregg began his career as an analyst for Andersen Consulting where he discovered a love of computer technology. After less than a year, he switched to DiamondCluster International, a consulting firm specializing in business technology solutions. Today, he is a senior consultant with DiamondCluster, traveling to client sites all over North America solving technology problems.

Although traveling every week can be a difficult lifestyle, it has its upsides, too. In 1998, Gregg’s wife was offered a transfer from Chicago to Salt Lake City. Since Gregg could live in any city with an airport, they jumped at the chance and headed west. Nearly six years later, they couldn’t be happier. Living on the Wasatch Front is, “like living in Disneyland,” says Gregg. He and Stephanie are both avid backpackers and backcountry snowboarders and enjoy the mountains every season of the year.

The other benefit of full time travel is an incredible number of frequent flyer miles. In the past few years, the Frohmans have taken hiking vacations to Denali, Alaska; Glacier, Montana; and Monteverde, Costa Rica. This year, they hiked, snorkeled, and surfed their way through Australia and New Zealand. Closer to home, they love hiking in the Cottonwood Canyons and canyoneering in Utah’s red rock desert.

Gregg is happy to be able to support the Sierra Club by serving as the Utah chapter web master. Volunteering with Sierra Club is a terrific way to combine both of his passions - computer technology and the great outdoors.
The Lowdown on Grazing in Kane and Garfield Counties

by Tori Woodard

In 2003, public lands grazing permittees launched a campaign to undo the Grand Canyon Trust’s grazing permit buy-out program in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. They are also trying to undo the monument itself. As a local, I believe the monument is a good thing, and we are defending its cattle-free allotments. For example, we pressured Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to fence cattle out of the Steep Creek Allotment, one of the trust’s earliest buy-outs. (See the last paragraph below.)

Three permittees have appealed BLM’s decision to close allotments the Trust recently bought out. One of those permittees, unbelievably, is Garfield County Commissioner Dell LeFevre, who benefitted handsomely from the deal that closed those allotments, as well as from prior buyouts. His attack on the trust is therefore pretty hard to swallow, and we hope voluntary buy-out advocates take notice.

State Representative Mike Noel (R-Kanab) has worked with LeFevre to funnel $50,000 of state money into the coffers of Karen Budd Fallon, a Wyoming lawyer, to help the three permittees appeal the Trust’s right to buy permits and not graze cattle on the allotments. (One of the 3 permittees is Noel’s son-in-law.) The Salt Lake Tribune, in both a story and an editorial, accused Noel and LeFevre of self-dealing, conflict of interest, and graft in procuring this money.

Kanab has become the epicenter of a “take back the monument” campaign. Noel and the Color Country Cattlemen’s Association are spearheading a campaign to eliminate funding for the monument staff and transfer all authority over the monument to the BLM Kanab Field Office (FO). The Kanab FO is about as reactionary as you can get. Therefore, when the Kanab FO began to issue Environmental Assessments (EAs) on 10-year grazing permit renewals in Fall 2002, we realized we had better get involved. Our biggest effort this year focused on those EAs. (See below.)

Another major concern is the ongoing drought and federal agencies’ response to it. The drought started four years ago, and the United States Geological Survey predicts that it will last 20-40 years. Last winter BLM did not authorize animal unit months or AUMs (the basic measure of grazing livestock numbers) on most allotments in the monument, but this winter they allowed turnout, so we are going to have to do something about that in 2004.

The drama regarding Fifty-Mile Mountain continues. A hearing has been scheduled on March 29, 2004, for Mary Bulloch’s appeal of BLM’s year 2000 impoundment of her cattle on the remote Rock Creek-Mudholes Allotment. Patrick Diehl climbed up to the allotment in September 2003 to assess its condition, escorting national grazing activist and photographer Mike Hudak. In 2001, after the impoundment, BLM still counted 34 cattle on the allotment. Last year those cattle had really trashed the springs and meadows. By this fall most of them seem to have died from exposure, starvation, and thirst—but it will take decades for the allotment to recover, especially under long-term drought conditions.

Kanab Field Office Grazing Permit Renewal EAs This year the Kanab FO decided to take one EA out of the twenty-six they plan to write and see it through to the end. Working together with the Escalante Wilderness Project (EWP), Boulder Regional Group (BRG), Center for Biological Diversity, and Western Watersheds Project, the Sierra Club Glen Canyon Group (GCG) appealed that EA and asked for a stay. Other environmental groups appealed the EA but did not request a stay.

The five allotments covered by the EA are located just east of Zion National Park. Our main arguments were 1) BLM had categorized the Cogswell Point and Coop Creek Allotments as unsuitable for grazing, but was authorizing AUMs anyway, and 2) the Orderville Gulch riparian area in the Neuts Canyon Allotment has been hammered for decades, threatened Mexican Spotted Owls living both upstream and downstream use it, and BLM should manage it so that endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatchers can use it. We also argued that grazing on the uplands damages archaeological sites and that BLM has not considered the relative value of grazing versus cultural sites and recreation, both of which are very important in this area.

The IBLA denied our request for a stay, but granted us standing. Then Administrative Law Judge James Heffernan in Salt Lake City announced a hearing on the appeal. Joro Walker, an attorney with Western Resource Advocates, started representing us. SUWA and the Great Old Broads for Wilderness petitioned to participate in the hearing, and the judge said yes. Kane County tried to intervene in the hearing, but the judge denied their request.

By the time the hearing began on November 17, BLM had withdrawn Cogswell Point Allotment from the case, agreeing with us that it has always been unsuitable for grazing and no AUMs should be allocated to it. The Neuts Canyon Allotment permittee had fenced off part of the Orderville Gulch riparian area and signed a voluntary agreement to keep cattle out of it for one year.

The three-day hearing in Kanab was pretty exciting, actually. Forty people attended the first day, mostly pro-grazing folks and BLM staff. Amanda Gorski and I were there for GCG, and two BRG
Overgrazing...Moove them around

by Chuck Allen and Remy Okasaki

Editor’s Note: Chuck and Remy wrote the following as part of a semester-long study of overgrazing.

Overgrazing, or the grazing of too many animals on any area of land, is a problem throughout the world because it results in the deterioration of environments. When livestock overgraze, they place excessive stress on the natural vegetation. The native grasses may be overwhelmed or not given enough time to recover. Gradually, the grasses are eliminated or replaced by non-native vegetation, which is often unsuitable for livestock. This also causes imbalances in the natural ecosystems. Overgrazing occurs for several reasons. Some causes include inadequate Bureau of Land Management (BLM) measures, negligent grazing practices, and environmental conditions.

Causes
Livestock can cause overgrazing in several ways:

1. The amount of livestock on the land - More livestock will tend to increase the frequency of plants that are eaten.

2. The area of the land upon which the livestock graze - The more confined the space, the more stress is placed on the plants within that area.

3. The length of time livestock graze (or length of time plants are allowed to recover) - Grasses need time to recover between bites.

4. The movement of livestock - Trampling the ground can stimulate growth or compact the soil, depending on how the livestock move through the area.

Consequences of Overgrazing
Environmental deterioration occurs through several avenues. The different causes of overgrazing result in a range of adverse environmental effects.

These effects include:

1. A decrease in total biomass and biodiversity in an area. Overgrazing may set the stage for nonnative vegetation that is unpalatable for livestock. Overgrazing may also reduce the number of species, worsen environmental conditions, or even prevent growth in areas.

2. Compaction of soil from trampling. Compacted soil may prevent plants from growing, and hard crusts may form on the ground. Plant cover can also be reduced as a result of trampling and its effects.

3. Water and wind erosion of soil. As ground cover decreases due to overgrazing, soil becomes more exposed to the elements. Wind and water erode the soil, reducing the capacity of the land to harbor growth. Less ground cover prevents plants from absorbing more water, causing more erosion from runoff.

4. Waterway depletion and harm to aquatic wildlife. Waterways are often diverted or depleted in order to support herds. This includes irrigation for fields or fencing off water sources. These practices decrease the water supply for wildlife and aquatic species. The sediment stirred up when livestock herds ford waterways and from erosion may block sunlight to algae and cover fish eggs, among other effects.

5. A decrease in available resources for native wildlife. Most wildlife may be adversely affected when they are fenced out of grazing areas, displaced from land...
because of overgrazing and desertification, or deprived of needed food because of encroaching nonnative vegetation. Native predator populations that regulate wildlife, such as coyotes, are killed by government agents and lack of certain prey. Diseases carried by livestock harm native wildlife as well.

6 The inability of land to carry livestock. When overgrazing totally changes the land (e.g. desertification), livestock may be unsustainable. New, indigestible species of grass or soil conditions may not support livestock's dietary needs.

What can we do?
1. Get involved! It is important that we get involved in the management of public lands. We need to voice our opinions to the BLM and show them the flaws in how they manage public lands. Of this point, the BLM uses the principles of multiple use management, along with any scientific documented impacts on ecological, archeological, or recreational resources to determine conditions. We need to show the BLM how livestock is a major factor in the failure of a section of land and the habitats of its native species.

2. Once a section of land is overgrazed or has a better use, it should be used for that different reason. The land needs time to rest, if it is not too late. These areas could be used to educate people on what happened to the areas and what is being done to improve them.

3. It is up to us to ensure that land is used responsibly. With a better understanding of overgrazing, we can help preserve our lands and wildlife while still allowing livestock to graze. This can be done through careful grazing practices, adequate monitoring, and reclamation programs.

Special thanks to Dr. John Carter and many others, for all their hard work in the field.

Want to learn more?
The following links highlight some problem areas in Utah:
1 http://rangenet.org/directory/jonesa/sulrprec/index.html
2 http://rangenet.org/directory/jonesa/riparian/index.html
3 http://rangenet.org/directory/diehlp/calendlp.html
4 http://www.rangebiome.org/headlines/nr/50miletrespass.html
5 http://rangenet.org/directory/jonesa/litrev.html
6 http://rangenet.org/directory/carterj/

Political Ponderings — The First Day of The Rest of Your Life
by Aaron Jones, Member, Utah Chapter Political Committee

A few years back there was a popular aphorism, “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.” As I write this, it is January 1, 2004. It is the first day of an important election year and the first day in a year that will determine the quality of your life. The people who will be elected to office this year will have enormous power over your well being. The air you breathe, the water you drink, and the wild places where you seek solitude are all up for grabs in this process. If urban sprawl abutting radioactive waste dumps is not part of your ideal future it is time to take a stand and make a difference. Become a political delegate, help elect an environmental candidate, or step up and run as a candidate yourself.

An ideal way to get involved is to run as a delegate in your voting precinct. Utah has a political system that really begins at the grassroots. Parties elect precinct officers and delegates in neighborhood precinct meetings. Typically, only a very few people are present, and a very modest amount of preparation can usually insure your election as a delegate. Delegates go on to participate in county conventions, state conventions, and in this presidential year some individuals will be selected to attend the national conventions. The Democratic Party in Utah has an established environmental caucus that meets with candidates and arranges face-to-face interviews and questioning of candidates.

The Sierra Club is nonpartisan in its support of candidates. Candidates are endorsed based upon their environmental stances and not their political party. The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club will be actively examining and interviewing candidates and making endorsements of environmentally-friendly candidates.

Please let me know if you are interested in running as a delegate or serving on the Utah Sierra Club Political Committee. Also if you are elected as a delegate, please let me know so that you will be contacted for any environmental caucus meetings. I can be reached at (801) 467-3532 or by e-mail at ajonesmvp@msn.com.

Political Calendar Dates
February 24, 2004
Utah Presidential Primary
March 8, 2004
Candidate filing begins
March 17, 2004
Candidate filing closes
March 23, 2004
Statewide precinct caucus meetings
June 22, 2004
State Primary Elections
October 14, 2004
Deadline for voter registration for the Presidential Election
November 2, 2004
Presidential Election
Note To Participants:
All members and nonmembers are welcome on any of the chapter or group activities listed. Radios, firearms and dogs are not welcome on Sierra Club outings. Unless otherwise noted in the description, outings are not suitable for children. Interested participants are strongly encouraged to contact the outing leader in advance and inquire as to updates, degree of difficulty, and other outing details. Participants should be prepared for various seasonal weather conditions, temperature changes that occur due to rapid increases/decreases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for the given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone who appears unprepared for scheduled outings. Call the Sierra Club office (801) 467-9297 for a recorded message on forthcoming activities.

Also, it must be noted that, although a very effective way of reducing air pollution and fossil fuel consumption, the Sierra Club cannot recommend carpooling as a safe means of transportation. If you choose to carpool, fees charged by the US Forest Service are expected to be shared by participants carpooling to trailheads. For the most current and updated outings listings, please visit the website http://utah.sierraclub.org and look at the outings under the Salt Lake and Ogden Groups and the new Southwestern Utah Conservation Committee.

Liability waiver policy:
In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club’s outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/ or call the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed copy.

Call For Volunteers:
Volunteers needed to monitor ATV damage in rural Utah. For information on how to assist the club in this important issue contact Dick Dougherty:
172 West Clinton Avenue # 201
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103
Phone: 531-7830
e-mail genres@sisna.com

January 4, 2003, Saturday. Snowshoers and X-c Skiers from Ogden and Salt Lake Groups starting out on East Fork Wheeler Cr. Trail at Snow Basin. Be the first (before February 15, 2004) to list the first name of nine of these trekkers and receive a Back-Country Guide Book of the High Untas. Send List to Ron Younger at 920 East 1500 South, Bountiful Utah 84010-2138

Call For Volunteers:
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Phone: 531-7830
e-mail genres@sisna.com

UTAH CHAPTER

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 7th
First Aid/Leadership Training Workshop
This workshop will be provided for current leaders and members interested in leading Utah Chapter, Salt Lake and Ogden Group outings in the future. The focus of the workshop is basic wilderness first aid including applying splints, treating sprains, and first responders treatment of wilderness injuries. The workshop will also include establishing pre-outing procedures to assist leaders in organizing an enjoyable experience for and ensuring the safety of outing participants. Refreshments will be available for breaks, and pizza will be served for lunch. A hiking or snowshoe adventure is planned after the workshop, conditions permitting. Meeting time is 9:30 am at the Sierra Club office (On the second floor of the building just south of the gas station on the southwest corner of 21st south and 13th east). Contact Ken (484-3112) for more information about the workshop.

Saturday and Sunday
February 15-16
Presidents/Valentines Day Lodge Weekend In Red Rock Country
We’ll meet at Anasazi State Park in Boulder, Utah on Saturday, and enjoy a casual afternoon in the park area before Dutch oven dinner and conservation/history discussion led by the former park superintendent (and wonderful story-
**Salt Lake Group**

**April**

**Saturday and Sunday**

**April 24th and 25th**

**Antelope Island Car Camp**

A campsite will be reserved on the island for this outing which will include biking, hiking, and camping on the Antelope Island State Park. There are numerous hiking and biking trails on the island for participants to enjoy a full weekend of leisurely recreational adventures. The number of participants will be limited so RSVP to outing leader in advance to reserve a space for the camp. Call Rebecca (487-4160) for information regarding meeting time, place, and other details.

**May**

**Friday, Saturday, and Sunday**

**April 30th, May 1st and 2nd**

**Canyonlands Car Camp**

To anyone interested in exploring the Needles area of Canyonlands National Park in southern Utah. The outing will include day hikes to Big Spring Canyon and a hike to a point overlooking the gorge where the Colorado and Green Rivers merge. Expect a moderate level pace and a round trip hiking distance of 11 miles. The Wooden Shoe Camp Ground will be reserved. Bring camping supplies and all the essentials needed for an extended weekend of camping and hiking. The number of participants will be limited so RSVP to leader in advance. Call Margaret (292-7602) for meeting time, place, and other details about the outing.

**Salt Lake Group**

**February**

**Sunday, February 8th**

**Snowshoe on the Great Western Trail**

Snow and weather conditions permitting, snowshoe from Parley’s Summit (I-80) northwest towards Bald Mountain on the Great Western Trail. Distance on outing determined by trekkers but come prepared for an all day snow sport beginning at 10 am. Call Ron Younger (292-4040) for meeting time, place and other details.

**Sunday, February 22nd**

**Norway Flats X-Country Ski**

Although participants may not make it all the way to the flats, the trip will be worth the effort. The Norwegian Flats trail winds through pine and aspen stands and the turnaround point will be a section of the trail that offers a spectacular view of a portion of the Uinta Mountain Range. Distance will be approximately 3 to 4 miles one way with an elevation gain of about 1000 feet. Meeting place is the eastern part of the K-Mart parking lot on Parleys Way and Foothill Drive at 9:00 am sharp. Call Ken (484-3112) for more details.

**Saturday, February 28th**

**Joint Outing with Ogden Group**

Refer to the Ogden Group outings list for details of this outing.

**Sunday, February 29th**

**Snowshoe in the Uintas**

This snowshoe adventure will take place somewhere in the Uinta Mountains along the Mirror Lake Highway corridor. Expect and intermediate level pace and bring enough snacks and water for an all day outing. Meeting place will be the K-Mart parking lot on Foothill Drive and Parleys Way, Call Margaret (292-7602) for meeting time and other details regarding the outing.

**March**

**Saturday, March 6th**

**X-Country Snowshoe Trekking**

Snow and weather conditions permitting, the group will snowshoe the Plantation Trail from the Mirror Lake Highway east of Kamas. The trek will be mostly on trail but expect some X-Country terrain. Good fitness and proper winter spot gear necessary. Call Ron Younger (292-4040) for meeting place, time, and other details regarding the outing.

**Sunday, March 7th**

**Diamond Fork Hot Springs Snowshoe Uinta National Forest**

The Diamond Fork trail leads to a series of pools with temperatures ranging from 100 to 108 degrees. During cooler weather the hot springs emit a steamy mist that encompass a nearby waterfall and the rocky ledges overlooking the pools, creating a magical ambience for those who happen upon this unique area in the Uinta National Forest. Although the hike is a relatively easy 3 mile trek as far as slope, well treaded boots and walking sticks are highly recommended due to possible icy conditions on the trail. Also be advised the hot springs area is frequented by nude bathers whose unabashed undress may be offensive to some. The trail is in Utah County, therefore expect about 2 hours of round trip driving time. Meeting place is the eastern section of the K-Mart parking lot on Foothill Drive and Parley’s Way at 9:00 am. Call Rebecca (487-4160) for more information about the outing.

**Saturday, March 13th**

**Joint Outing with Ogden Group**

Refer to the write up in the Ogden Group outings listing for details.

**Sunday, March 14th**

**Dutch Hollow Snowshoe**

Snow and weather conditions permitting, we shall snowshoe an intermediate trail beginning in Wasatch Mountain State Park. This outing will provide participants with an opportunity to see first hand the environmental and user conflict issues associated with this multiple use recreational area. Call Gaynell (435-649-8917) for meeting time, place and other information regarding the outing.

**Sunday, March 21st**

**Snowshoe/X Country in Silver Fork**

Enjoy a leisurely trek in Silver Fork from the lower Solitude parking lot to the mine at the base of the Honeycomb Cliffs.
Based on snow conditions, we will either snowshoe or cross-country ski. For details on time and meeting place and what to bring, call Richard at 487-1840.

APRIL

Saturday, April 3rd
Moonlight Ski
Assuming the road is still snow packed, the ski trek will begin at the gate in Millcreek Canyon. Distance will depend on will of participants and snow conditions. Although the outing takes place two nights before the full moon, a waxing gibbous moon will provide ample moonlight for an enchanting trek through the nighttime forest. If snow pack is marginal, participants will snow shoe or hike along the road. Meeting time is 7:30 p.m. at the Skyline High parking lot. Call Rebecca (487-4160) for details about the outing.

Sunday, April 18th
Hike in the Stansbury Mountains
Although the exact location has not been determined, hikers will explore a section of the Stansbury Mountains west of Tooele. Expect an intermediate level pace and bring enough food and water for an all day adventure. Meeting time is 9:00 am at the Department of Natural Resources Building parking lot, 1590 West North Temple. Call Dick (531-7830) for more information regarding the hike.

MAY

Sunday, May 2nd
Rails to Trails Mountain Bike Ride
Wanship to Park City
The ride will be an out and back, beginning in Wanship with the turnaround point in Park City. There is a slight uphill grade to Park City, so riders will enjoy a gentle decent on the way back to Wanship. The pace will be moderate and the trail is suitable for novice mountain bikers. It is planned to eat in a local restaurant in Wanship after the ride. Meeting place is the east part of the K-Mart parking lot at 9:00 am. Participants will then car pool to Wanship. Helmets are required. Call Ken (484-3112) for more information.

OGDEN GROUP

The public is welcome on all outings.

Participants are requested to call the leaders in advance for outing details. For information related to outings in general, contact Mike Morrison, 475-4845. For membership information, contact Suzanne Storer, 479-5035.

Please note: All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to: http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

January

Saturday, 3, Leader’s Choice Snowshoe, 3
Peter will be looking for someplace for a snowshoe outing. Check the Group’s website or call for details. Expect snowmobiles. 9:30AM. 626-6642.

Saturday, 10, Snowshoe/ski the Art Nord trail to the Green Pond.
3 Except for one steep ascent, this trip will involve a gradual ascent going out. No novice skiers, please. 3-4 hrs. Meet, 9:30 at Rainbow Gardens. Leaders, Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701.

Sunday, 11, Sierra Singles, 3
Another moderately difficult ski tour followed by a soothing soak at Crystal Hot Springs. Perhaps we’ll go to the Dry Flats area up Logan Canyon. Call Suzanne Storer, 479-5035

Saturday, 17, XC ski rails-to-trails, 2-3
We’ll start between Wanship and head for Park City on one of many trails that start ed out as a train track. Meet, 8AM. Leader, Al Stockland, 479-9597. Call for details.

February

Friday, 6, Deadline for contacting Mike Morrison for the March 6th outing.

Saturday, 7, Ski North Fork Park,
Sat/Sun 20-21,
Two 5-star hikes in Moab!
On Saturday PM, we’ll go see Corona Arch, which is large enough for an airplane to fly through! A moderate 3 miles.
On Sunday AM, we’ll hike Negro Bill Canyon, which Larry raves about! Easy–moderate. We’ll follow a stream to Morning Glory Ridge. Call Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701. Participants should make their own reservations.

Saturday, 27,
Ski/Snowshoe Sardine Peak from Snow Basin,
moderate We’ll go through the Maples Camp Ground to Pole Pass, then bushwhack to the peak. (Skiers may want snow shoes or skins). Figure all day, starting at 10. Call Mike Morrison 475-4845

April

Saturday, 17,
Mahan’s Peak and Basin,
moderate We’ll ascend about 2100 ft, view the old hotel site and get a lecture from Larry. Plan on 4 hours. Meet 9 AM at the 29th St trailhead. Call Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701.

May

Saturday, 15,
Hike Adams Canyon to the Top Waterfall,
moderate This is a favorite hiking canyon with lots of cool, shady trees. Figure 4 hours with 1300' of elevation gain. Meet 8 AM by the gas station at Albertson’s (5691 S Harris Blvd.). Larry & Chris Woolsey, 731-3701.

Saturday, 22,
Leader’s choice hike,
moderate Call Dan Schroeder, 393-4603 for details

June

Sunday, 6,
Bike West of Corinne, 2-3
A 30-mile loop on a seldom travelled road with 1 major hill. It surveys some farmland and other rural countryside and is near a wetland. Figure 2-3 hours. Meet at 7 AM. Call Al Stockland for details, 479-9597

Bush Court Packing: A Threat To The Environment
by Joan Jones Holts

The Bush Administration has been relentless in its drive to place anti-environmental, extremist judges onto the federal courts. At risk are provisions protecting the health and safety for Americans, progress toward social justice, and our hard-fought safeguards for environmental protections. Already the Bush Administration has brazenly sought to weaken the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the sanctity of public lands.

As of this writing, 167 of nearly 200 handpicked Bush nominees have sailed through the Senate confirmation process to take their places on the federal benches. The Senate rejected only three.

The Bush judicial nominees have been carefully selected for their staunch conservative leanings. Many seem unwilling to separate personal social and economic philosophies from the impartiality needed to judge case law. Their rulings could change the scope of American justice for decades to come—and cause irreversible environmental damage. Federal judges serve FOR LIFE!

Here are just a few of the Bush judicial selections:

William G. Myers is a former officer of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. In his role as Interior Solicitor he cleared the way for a cyanide heap-leach gold mine on the Quechan Tribe’s vital sacred sites. Mr. Myers is now under investigation as to whether a lawsuit concerning violation of federal land use was properly settled. He has been nominated to the 9th Circuit Court that hears most environmental cases.

William Pryor has argued against enforcement of the Clean Air Act, is in favor of gutting the Endangered Species Act and has argued that the Clean Water Act does not cover small lakes and wetlands.

Priscilla Owen has sided with big business against the health and safety of individuals and against the protection of the environment. She has argued that the state has no obligation to disclose government reports on unlawful discharges of wastewater. She was in favor of allowing a developer to by-pass a water quality law passed by the city of Austin, Texas. She later accepted a campaign contribution of $27,500 from that developer and its counsel.

Carolyn Kuhl rejects the right of organizations and groups to represent their members in court. This would destroy the ability of environmental groups—like the Sierra Club—to represent its members in court to protect our air, water, and wildlife.

David McKeague denied a private citizen the right to sue to enforce a federal environmental protection law even though that citizen was using a law specifically designed to allow “citizen suits.” At issue was the government’s illegal dumping of hazardous waste that resulted in the destruction of wildlife in a nearby park.

John Roberts (already confirmed) has argued before the Supreme Court that groups concerned about the environment should not be allowed to sue to enforce federal environmental protections. As a new judge on the D.C. Circuit, he has already written a dissent strongly suggesting that the Endangered Species Act is unconstitutional.

Janice Rogers Brown regards court decisions that upheld the New Deal as a “disaster” that marked “the triumph of our socialist revolution” and is so hostile to legitimate government regulations, like those which require property owners to abide by zoning and density requirements, that she says property use regulations turn “a democracy into a kleptocracy.”

It is the duty of the U.S. Senate to examine judicial nominees and to reject those who are unfit to serve. And it is OUR duty to urge them to take the lead in opposing extremist nominees. Please contact the Committee for Judicial Independence, judicial.independence@adelphia.net for more information about Bush judicial nominees and for timely, take-action alerts.
What’s Up On The Hill

by Mark Clemens

In the Spring 2003 issue of the Utah Sierran, we reported on the highs and lows of the Utah Legislature’s 2003 session. In this issue, we publish our regular legislative scorecards. You can see how your Utah senator and representative voted on important environmental legislation during the legislature’s 2003 General Session.

The legislators’ votes are represented by 0 for an absent, 1 for a yea and 2 for nay. The pro-environmental vote for each resolution, bill or amendment is shown at the top and bottom of the table. I’ve also included a brief description of each item. One can look up the full text of legislation by bill number from the 2003 General Session at http://www.le.state.ut.us/session/2003/bills.htm. For your convenience, these scorecards are also available on the Utah Chapter’s website at http://utah.sierraclub.org/legislative.asp along with other a digest of priority bills in the 2004 session. Salt Lake County Clerk Sherrie Swensen has added a feature to the clerk’s website to help you find out who your state senator and representative are at http://www.clerk.slco.org/Elections/Elected. Of course, this site will only work for you if you live in Salt Lake County.

If you’re interested in helping to promote pro-environmental legislation in 2004 or joining the Utah Chapter’s Legislative Committee, please let us know at mark.clemens@sierraclub.org.

Sierra Club Utah Chapter
Utah House 2003 Scorecard

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HB 51 Historic Preservation in General Plans allowed cities and counties to include historic preservation in their plans and to treat it as a priority equal in importance to other issues.

HB 67 Electronic Equipment Waste Disposal & Recycling Act would have encouraged the Solid & Hazardous Waste Control Board to provide information about recycling electronic and computer equipment on a web site.

HB 143 High-level Nuclear Shipment Safety would have required shippers of waste more radioactive than Class C to "file for a permit for each shipment and pay $1,500 per shipment into the Nuclear Waste Oversight Account."

HB 148 Unlawful Taking of Game Fish raised the penalties for capturing, injuring or destroying certain types of protected wildlife.

HB 157 Control of Wolf Population allowed wolves to be transplanted on the same basis as turkeys, big game and sensitive species.

SB 35 Redevelopment of Superfund Sites allowed redevelopment agencies to classify superfund sites as blighted and permitted redevelopment areas to exceed 100 acres if they are superfund sites.

SB 84 Real Property Voluntary Environmental Restrictive Covenants permitted property owners to place use restrictions on real property affected by a cleanup or environmental risk assessment.

SB 85 Underground Storage Tank Amendment raised the per gallon fee on petroleum products to increase funding for the voluntary Environmental Assurance Program to prevent releases from underground storage tanks.

SB 146 Waste Fee Amendments levied a new tax of 50 cents per ton on non-hazardous municipal waste and construction waste and debris. It also created facility fees for municipally-owned non-hazardous waste dumps.
Who knows how many highways Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff intends to claim across public lands. The process, the consultations with the counties, even the AG’s detailed definition of what constitutes a highway under Revised Statute 2477 are all secret.

But at least we know that Salt Lake County has repudiated eight frivolous and menacing highway claims in Big Cottonwood Canyon. They are:

- Mill F East Fork,
- Mill D South Fork (Cardiff Fork),
- Mineral Fork,
- Silver Fork,
- Days Fork,
- Honeycomb Fork,
- Willow Heights Canyon,
- American Hollow.

We’re grateful Salt Lake County Mayor Nancy Workman repudiated these claims, but our gratitude is unmerited. These claims, cooked up by as yet nameless bureaucrats at the county’s secret too-should never have been made. Last summer, when offered the chance by Councilman Joe Hatch, six members of the Salt Lake County Council, Ashton, Harmsen, Hendrickson, Jensen, Skousen, and Wilde, all declined either to reject these claims or even to make public how or by which Salt Lake County employees the claims were made. Hatch offered the same resolution last week-after Workman announced her opposition to the “highway” claims-and the rest of the council saw the light, voting unanimously to support the mayor’s position.

As so often in the past, the real champions in this matter are Salt Lake City employees, in particular LeRoy Hooton, Salt Lake City’s Public Utilities Department Director.

Salt Lake City versus the speculators

Several land speculators, individuals and corporations, have bought up land in Cardiff Fork (also known as Mill D South Fork) in Big Cottonwood Canyon. This land was acquired with the understanding that development could never occur; the properties had neither access nor water rights. The prices they paid for the land reflected the absence of any development potential.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “The fifth amendment was never intended to be a one-way bet for land speculators.” The fifth amendment to the constitution provides for the payment of just compensation when the government condemns or “takes” private property. The Cardiff Fork speculators-despite knowing the land was undevelopable-now charge anyone who objects to their plans with wanting to deprive them of their property and their constitutional rights.

The speculators are reported to want road access to take snowmobile and hunting tours, and groups onto the property. They also apparently want to build a four-season lodge. Although even the county is no longer seeking legal status for the road up Cardiff Fork, the speculators have pressured the United States Forest Service into granting motorized access up the Cardiff Fork trail. They have one more obstacle.

We all live downstream

The Salt Lake City Public Utilities Department purchased a sizeable acreage in Cardiff Fork to protect the quality of our water. Now the speculators have begun to pressure the department to grant them motorized access across Salt Lake City-owned land. Public Utilities Director Hooton has turned them down. Please write or call him to thank him for standing up for the environment and the public interest.

Salt Lake City Public Utilities Department
ATTN: LeRoy Hooton
1530 S West Temple
Salt Lake City UT 84115
(801) 483-6900

Or send a letter to the editor to the Deseret Morning News at letters@desnews.com and the Salt Lake Tribune at letters@sltrib.com.

The mystery connection

We still don’t know conclusively which Salt Lake County employees developed the eight claims in Big Cottonwood Canyon and why. How much staff time was used to survey and document these claims, and by whom was that time authorized?

Salt Lake County Surveyor Vaughn Butler bought a little over two acres in Cardiff Fork at about the same time these claims were submitted to the state. Butler also spent the better part of a day waiting to testify on behalf of Cyle Buxton in a trial-at which Buxton was convicted-for blading a road illegally into Day’s Fork. Buxton, once a landowner himself in Cardiff Fork, is the son of Verl Buxton, one of the principals who demanded road access from the Forest Service. Given these troubling potential conflicts of interest and the secrecy surrounding them, the public has an obligation to request County Attorney David Yocom to investigate Butler’s involvement with the development of the claims, and his land purchase in Cardiff Fork.
Executive Committee Election Results

by Claire Gardner, Election Committee Chair

There were 124 valid voters in this election. That total includes single memberships and joint memberships. The ballots and tallies are on file in the Sierra Club office. Votes were counted and verified by Claire Gardner, Mildred Martinez and Mark Clemens on December 7, 2003, at the Sierra Club office in Salt Lake City. The Glen Canyon Group sent out separate ballots, and these were counted on Thursday, December 18, 2003, at 1:00 pm by John Weisheit, Karen Robinson and David Stolfa (for Ed Dobson) with Mike Binyon observing.

The winners are in italics. Vote totals follow candidate names.

Utah Chapter Sierra Club Executive Committee
(4 open positions)
Jim Case
Ann Wechsler
Ken Anderson
Gibbs Smith

John Weisheit
The elected Utah Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) members for 2004 are Ken Anderson, Jean Binyon, Jim Case, Al Herring, Sarah Lundstrum, Gibbs Smith, Ann Wechsler, and Brad Yates. Each group also selects a representative who sits on the chapter's ExCom. Members whose terms expire at the end of 2004 include Jean Binyon, Al Herring, Sarah Lundstrum and Brad Yates.

Glen Canyon Group Executive Committee
(3 open positions)
Ginny Carlson
Bill Love
Mike Binyon
Tori Woodard

Utah Chapter Plays Big Role In Mayor's Victory

by Claire Gardner, Utah Chapter Political Committee Chair

Early last year, on the recommendation of the Utah Chapter Political Committee, the chapter Executive Committee unanimously endorsed for re-election Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson. Mayor Anderson has one of the best environmental records of any office holder in the nation. His 2002 Utah Chapter award for Politician of the Year is proudly displayed on the fireplace mantle in the Mayor's office. Last fall, the national Sierra Club recognized Rocky with its Distinguished Service Award.

The political committee's primary goal was to mobilize the Club's two thousand members in Salt Lake City to vote in the election. Laurel LeGate volunteered to be the chapter's liaison to the campaign office each Wednesday night. Voter identification, phonebanking, and mailing preparations required many hours. Committee Chair Claire Gardner worked with committee members and other volunteers to design and mail a postcard to every Salt Lake City member. Next, volunteers recruited by the political committee telephoned Sierra Club members in Salt Lake City, urging them to vote for Rocky in both the October primary and in the general election in November. The mayor has frequently singled out the Sierra Club for its contributions to his 54% to 46% victory over challenger Frank Pignanelli.

The Utah Chapter also endorsed Dennis Guy-Sell in Salt Lake City Council District 4 who ran against incumbent Council member Nancy Saxton. Guy-Sell is an ardent environmentalist who has been a member of the Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Mayor’s Open Space Advisory Committee. Saxton supported the grand Salt Lake “Sprawl” Mall, strongly opposed by the Utah Chapter; she won the race by a margin of 54% to 46%. The political committee also mounted a Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) effort for Dennis Guy-Sell by mailing to members and phonebanking for the primary and general elections.

Finally, the chapter supported the passage of Proposition 4. Voters approved the $5.4 million bond proposal to purchase open space for the city. In its general election GOTV phonebanking Chapter volunteers urged members to support Proposition 4 which passed by a margin of 71% to 29%.

Special thanks and congratulations for a job well done are due to Laurel LeGate, Naomi Franklin, Jeff Johnson, Aaron Jones, Brad Yates, Jim Catlin, Margi Hoffman, Tim Wagner, Alexa Wagner, Mark Clemens, Emily Mecham, Nina Richards, Roger McDonough, Tania Toro, Brian Emerson, Kevin Emerson, Beatrix Sieger-Emerson, Brian Watkins, Amber Ayers, Eric Schnibbe, Michelle Miller, Nate Lear, Marc Heilesen, Jennifer Visitacion, Colleen Wooten, Chip Ward, and Lawson LeGate.
Chasing The Golden Aspens: A National Activist Outing In Utah

by Jock Glidden, Ogden Group Conservation Chair

Early October is the best time of the year to visit southern Utah. The nights are cool, and the days are just right. And, the sun always shines.

The architects and leaders of the trip were Jim Catlin and Vicky Hoover. Their national Sierra Club mountain bike outing through then new Grand Staircase Escalante Monument five years ago was a success. This outing was its offspring.

Each day we biked through new and different territory. Some of it belonged to Bureau of Land Management, or United States Forest Service, or the state. Most of our journey wound over dirt roads on the La Sal Mountains and the Abajos. And always, Toni Wall would faithfully bring up the rear with the sag wagon hauling camp supplies, our personal gear, or a tuckered-out biker.

As advertised, the foliage was overwhelming. Several times I had to stop to drink in the colors. There were often steep drop offs and rocks in the road. So, it was best to attend to one matter or the other, not ride and swoon at the same time.

One afternoon I remember pausing near a huge stand of back-lit aspens whose silver white trunks still bore brilliant leaves of yellow gold. It seemed as if I were in a cathedral surpassing anything like it in Europe. With each moment something changed: a passing cloud would adjust the light, a slight breeze would play upon the dry leaves causing them to flutter past the bone white trunks before me. I did not bring a camera. It is etched in my memory.

Jim picked campsites with exquisite views. It was never pitch dark because the waxing moon would arrive on schedule to light our way about. One such camp was in the Abajos on Elk Ridge. Sure enough, our distant vistas of sandstone buttes were celebrated by bugling elk and a hooting owl. By midnight we wished the rutting bull would shut up.

After dinner Vicky would assemble us to discuss wilderness designation. As activist outing participants, we were expected to write congressmen on behalf of wilderness when we got home. Janice, from California, asked, “Why should we, as mountain bikers, promote wilderness when bikes would be excluded from wilderness?” After some discussion, we agreed it’s the existence of protected, contiguous wild areas that enhances adjacent areas not wilderness. This benefit even serves back country motorists.

Some of the hills were steep, some long, some so rocky I couldn’t even ride down them. But eventually we would reach camp, sweaty, tired and hungry. So much happened, so much beauty, new friends, a renewed appreciation for Utah. It’s critical to protect all the wilderness we can.

The Hunted Moon - a novel of Amazonia

Synopsis reprinted courtesy of William Mader

The year is 2002 and a lonely cowboy on a parched Venezuelan savanna stumbles across a grave at the foot of a tree with a bullet-scarred propeller nailed to the trunk. Below this is a mysterious poem about life and death and the words, “John Moses.” A tribute to a forgotten man who overcame adversity. Moses, after a distinguished scientific career that cost the life of his beloved wife, sees humanity as an ingrate and is haunted by a guilty voice that begs for personal change. He now runs guns on both sides of the law as a bush pilot in the Amazon. He’s asked by a beautiful pharmacologist - Jonesy - to fly her to an isolated mission where a banished priest is rumored to have found the fountain of youth plant which will stretch people’s life to over a hundred and twenty years. Temporarily putting aside his quest for greed, Moses reluctantly agrees but they are shot down in route. By blunt fortitude they push on, tumbling down a trail of self evaluation. But they don’t realize they are being relentlessly tracked and hunted by an avenging Indian who unjustly believes Moses killed his father. Against a dramatic backdrop of deforestation and extinction, Moses and Jonesy discover things more important than any mythical drug. In the end, they realize it is not where you went in life but how you dared to change getting there.
Editor’s Note: The following essay, reprinted by kind permission of The Daily Herald, contains material originally published as editorials on 30 October 2003 and 6 November 2003. Rock Canyon is not just one of the premier ornaments of the City of Provo—it’s one of the most beautiful canyons in Utah. For current information about the continuing attack on Rock Canyon or to become involved, log on to http://www.rockcanyonalliance.org, or call DeAnn Wright at (801) 373-2244.

An irreplaceable treasure is being destroyed in Rock Canyon.

Last week, heavy equipment rumbled into the canyon and excavation was renewed, chopping at the base of the beautiful cliffs on the south side of the canyon’s mouth after a 30-year lull.

It’s a horror story far worse than any Halloween nightmare.

If this exploitation continues, we will lose one of the most beautiful landmarks in Utah Valley, its face hopelessly marred.

This is simply unthinkable.

The Rock Canyon cliffs are extraordinary. Dignified, silent sentinels, they preside over the canyon’s entrance, catching the evening light in infinite variations and serving as a regal backdrop for all who venture into the canyon’s cool reaches. With smooth rock faces turned westward to the valley, they provide an eagle’s perch for hikers and rock climbers, romantic views for lovers, a place of solitude for the troubled.

They are ageless and priceless.

Excavating their base is like driving into Yosemite National Park and blasting away at the foot of Half Dome to haul off a few pieces of granite, or chiseling at the base of Delicate Arch near Moab, or knocking down Moses Tower in Canyonlands.

It is wrong. And it can never be undone.

Alarmed by the excavation within city limits and alerted by concerned residents, Provo attempted to take remedial action — the only public entity to do so. The city filed a criminal complaint Tuesday in Fourth District Court against Michael Joseph McPhilomy Jr. and Michael Joseph McPhilomy Sr., owners of a local company whose equipment was observed doing work in the
canyon. The complaint alleges violations of zoning regulations, grading and excavating without a permit, and doing business without a license.

McPhilomy told the Herald he was simply cleaning up the site for a Richard Davis, who reportedly owns the land.

A U.S. Forest Service spokesman said the land in question, part of an 80-acre tract, is private property surrounded by public land. The ground was deeded by the government to a private party who held a mining claim sometime in the past century. Regardless of the aesthetic value to the public of adjacent geological formations, the spokesman said, the Forest Service can do nothing until public land is damaged.

Provo’s engineer said the land falls within the city limits, which is why the city can enforce zoning, excavating and business regulations.

Mayor Lewis Billings expressed frustration at what he called the excavators’ “brazen attitude in not being willing to do what’s necessary” to abide by reasonable standards. Unfortunately, he said, the owner appears to have some rights, and while the city may dictate certain terms it may not have authority to stop the digging altogether. Answers to that and other questions will unfold in coming weeks, he said.

But, clearly, a mining operation in one of Utah Valley’s most beautiful parks and in such close proximity to homes is inappropriate by any standard. Breaking up these beautiful cliffs is a crime against decency.

Who is Richard Davis, and why is rock being removed from Rock Canyon? Residents of the valley have a right to know, and all possible pressure needs to be brought to stop this outrage.

Longtime residents who know the canyon will remember that the southern cliffs at its mouth once swept beautifully down to the road, just as other cliffs farther up do today. Sometime around 1970, however, heavy equipment moved in and great chunks of stone were blasted from their ancient moorings and hauled off piecemeal, perhaps for landscaping decorations. The site then lay dormant, apparently, until this month. Now the destruction appears to be starting again.

The story has not yet fully unraveled, but it is urgent that the public become aware of the problem. We won’t get a second chance to save this important piece of Utah Valley heritage.

Provo deserves credit for its response, but other groups need to get involved to identify all the effects of the digging, and to help seek accommodations. But the question is larger than that.

Obsolete 19th-century laws governing mining claims need another look when they allow the destruction of what we hold dear today.

The roots of today’s Rock Canyon problem go back to a time when people weren’t as sensitive to natural resources as we are today. During the settlement of the West, nature was seen as something to be conquered; exploitation of land for commercial gain was considered a higher use than the preservation of beauty.

It was just such attitudes that prompted the government to proclaim Timpanogos Cave a national monument in 1922 — to protect it from miners who had begun blasting their way through its chambers for minerals.

Few today would say that was a mistake. While there are places where mining and natural beauty can coexist, the mouth of Rock Canyon is certainly not one of them.
# Executive Committee Members or Officers 2003

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