

THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 26, No. 4

December 1997

Amalga Barrens Dam

Where are the Facts? What are the Issues? Where are We?

In 1992, the Utah Division of Water Resources published the Utah State Water Plan for the Bear River Basin. There was a chapter on "water development," i.e., potential dam projects which reviewed the possible sites for dams on the upper Bear River. The conclusion of the study was that, if a dam were to be needed, the site at Amalga Barrens was much less preferable to other sites, such as Honeyville. In the last couple of years, however, Senator John Holmgren of Bear River City, has had a great deal of opposition to the Honeyville site from his constituents in Box Elder County and as a result, is maneuvering to make the Barrens site the preferred location for a dam.

Since early October, several BAS members have been researching the situation to see what has changed. So far, the only thing we've turned up is political—folks along the Bear River in Box Elder County don't want it in their back yard. Can't say we blame them, for who would?

There is a great deal of pressure from several parties, including water providers in the Salt Lake Valley and agricultural interests in Box Elder County, to build some large storage facilities on the upper Bear River. But, why is a surface reservoir the only idea receiving any substantial attention? When are we forecasting to need it? What are the environmental impacts of the various proposals, and what realistic alternatives are there to another dam that inundates our precious wetlands—be they at the Barrens or in Honeyville?

If these are some of your questions, then come to a public meeting designed to raise questions about water development in northern Utah, and the Amalga Barrens Dam

in particular, to be held Tuesday, December 16 in the General Purpose room at Sunrise Elementary School in Smithfield (255 South 455 East). Maps and information will be available starting at 6:30 p.m. Panel presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. followed by questions from the audience. Senator John Holmgren, the chief proponent of Bear River dams will be there, as will Dennis Strong, Assistant Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources, and several other people informed about water and wildlife resources in Cache Valley. BAS will be the moderator.

The objective is to answer as many questions as possible and articulate the concerns and issues of the public so those who make public policy in Utah about our water resources will know where we stand and what we want to know before building yet another dam and flooding yet more wetland habitat. See you there!

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October Calendar

Meetings

Thursday, December 4, 7:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Monthly Planning Meeting. At the home of Bryan Dixon, 10 Heritage Cove, Logan. We will be discussing issues and plans for upcoming activities. All Audubon members are welcome to attend and share in the discussions. For more information (or directions) call Bryan, 752-6830.

Thursday, December 11, 7:00 p.m. Antelope and Bison: the Art of Getting Close to Antelope Island. The December meeting of the Bridgerland Audubon will feature a program on two major animal species from Antelope Island, antelope and bison. Billy Gunnells and Jen Bohannon are graduate students from USU who have been stationed on the island observing various aspects of the behavior of these species. They will share some of their pictures and experiences at the meeting. The meeting will be held at the Logan City Building, 255 North Main. Remember we will have a special program and room available for children, staffed by university volunteers, so bring the whole family.

Tuesday, December 16, 6:30 p.m. Amalga Barrens Dam – What are the Facts? – What are the Issues? – Where are We? At Sunrise Elementary School (255 South 455 East) Smithfield in the General Purpose room. Maps and information will be available starting at 6:30 p.m. A panel presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. followed by questions from the audience. This is a public meeting to articulate our concerns about a proposed dam at Amalga Barrens.

Field Trips

Saturday, , December 13. Celebrating Winter. Meet at the Forest Service parking lot at 2:00 p.m. We will be exploring how animals and plants adapt to winter. Bring your skis, snowshoes or travel on foot. Dress in layers and bring trail snacks and water. Must pre-register by Friday night, December 12. Minimum, five people. Call Jack Greene, 563-6816, for details.

Saturday, December 20. Christmas Bird Count. Mark your calendar for the 21st Annual Christmas Bird Count. The CBC is conducted every year in the same 15 mile diameter count areas in countries around the world. Compilations are sent to a central database and an annual report is published to describe trends in bird populations. In Cache Valley, we put over a dozen teams in the field in a circular area centered in Hyde Park and manage almost every year to find 90 species. It's a fun-filled day with birders of all levels of skill participating. We meet that evening at someone's home for a potluck supper and compile reports from each team. If you're interested in leading or participating on a team this year, contact Keith Archibald, 752-8258. No experience necessary!

Saturday, January 10. Natural Signs of Nature. Come along and explore animal tracks, scat and other signs of winter activity. Depart from Fred Meyer at 9 a.m. return 12 noon. Please pre-register by January 6. Contact Kayo Robertson, 563-8272 (10 people minimum). Bring your family for this one and wear warm clothing.

Wellsville Raptor Trip

The Bridgerland Audubon Society took its annual trip to the Wellsville Range ridge above Cache Valley on Saturday, October 4. The great attraction of this trip is the large numbers of hawks, eagles, and falcons that can be seen as they make their way south using the updrafts created by the north-south mountain ranges. The birds conserve energy by using these updrafts as they make their way past the Great Salt Lake. The Wellsville Range, as a major pathway for a large number of birds each fall, was discovered by Steve Hoffman of HawkWatch International while a student at USU in the 70's, and has become a major observing point for the organization each year. Two observers spend about 40 days camped on the ridge for the count, and last year a total of 3794 birds were observed in 38 days.

Besides the birds, the hike itself is a lot of fun, and the fall colors and foliage add to the enjoyment. After a short drive from Logan, about 25 people started the hike at the mouth of Deep Canyon at the southern end of the range. The trail passes through a maple stand at the beginning and generally heads up steadily. Near the point where the canyon opens up, there was evidence of extensive avalanches from last winter with 50-year-old trees ground up into bite-sized pieces. The group spread out over most of a three mile trail with everybody enjoying their own pace and surroundings. Every so often one of the local red-tail hawks circled above to keep an eye on us.

At the saddle of the main ridge the winds were very strong and cold, and most of the group stopped for a rest and drink before continuing back to the northwest along the ridge to the viewing area. There the two HawkWatch volunteers, along with the rest of us, spent the next few hours watching the birds come in from the north, yelling out the location, "over Baldy, or Red Hill, or Nucor." With the stiff wind a bird spotted a few miles away would go zipping by in a few minutes, particularly the kestrels. A good number and variety of birds were seen in those couple of hours, including at least one peregrine.

— Jim Sinclair

Email service provided by Digital Planet. Use the following addresses to contact your BAS leadership:

stilt@digitalpla.net – for newsletter items
audubon@digitalpla.net – for anything else

Fall Field Trip

The Tetons in the Fall! If you didn't come, you missed another great trip. I know the weather wasn't all that great, but then again experiencing a variety of weather is part of nature we explore on this trip. T-shirts to snow pants and back again seems to be a tradition on this trip. We had folks from Vernal to Elko and it was magical.

Louise Murch, with her incredible enthusiasm, taught us to canoe. Paddling String Lake and Leigh Lake was for some a first experience with the canoe, and for me a trip back in time to my childhood. In String Lake we saw some great moose tracks on the shallow bottom where the moose had walked across the lake. It was so clear and you could observe where the moose had come from and what habitat it was heading for. What a treat!

We saw so much and had so much fun it is impossible to describe it all. However, seeing a mother black bear and her cubs was a definite highlight. One of the cubs was black and the other brown, which is not unusual according to Louise who has had some experience with black bear field research in the Vernal area. A hike around Swan Lake was full of experiences. Brenna, who is six and hails from the Tintic Mining District, led us on quite a hike. We spotted tracks and saw an incredible variety of mushrooms thanks to Rhinehart and Justin keeping a sharp eye out. We also had a great experience watching a beaver swim casually, dive down to get something to eat, swim to the surface and eat, and then back to the bottom for more food. We heard elk bugling in the late afternoon.

Justin and Cheri found some scat on the ridge above the campground. Marilynne and I dutifully bagged it and identified it for the Logan Canyon Nature Center. Although we didn't actually observe the scat being dropped, our best guess, with the help of Olas Murie, was bobcat. Cheri had an interesting experience with a mouse trying to make a nest in her engine. She thinks she managed to leave it behind, preferring to leave it in its natural habitat. Thursday and Friday were cold in the mornings but beautiful days. Friday, Barbara Kirkman and her daughters arrived. Then Alice Stokes and a car full arrived very late. I didn't envy them putting up their tents in the dark. Saturday morning we awoke, got breakfast going, and then the weather took a dramatic change (an understatement). Within minutes the thunder, lightning, hail, and then snow, sent us scattering for shelter. Cheri was already sheltered in the outhouse and didn't want to come out. When the fireworks stopped and only the snow was falling, Justin, Marilynne, Jessie, Janine, Brenna, and Allison built a snowman and caught snowflakes on their tongues. We decided to pack up and then spend the day in the area. We went to the river behind the Teton Science School and saw lots of beaver activity, tracks, scat, and a ruffed grouse up close. We stood

quietly and watched a squirrel eat a spruce cone leaving only a spindle at its center.

If you haven't been on this trip before, it is hard to describe how special it is. Please plan next year to come with Jessie and me to the Tetons. Gather good gear and come. Plan for cold, snow, rain, sleet, and sunshine, but come! It is a trip which each year brings new experiences and wonderful memories. Jessie and I like to tell people that this is a magical trip where magical things happen. Jessie knows, since she has been coming on this trip since she was eleven months old. Don't miss it next fall. Watch the *Stilt* for the dates next year.

— Terry Barnes

Board Stuff (As opposed to bored stiff . . .)

BAS is governed by a Board of Trustees which meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The venue is always listed in the Calendar of this newsletter, and varies depending on the issues to be discussed and who's made the latest batch of cookies. All BAS members are invited, of course.

Mae Coover organized a committee to review and comment on the **Draft Cache County Countywide Comprehensive Plan (CCCP)** and a public hearing was held on November 11. The hearing was friendly for a change, with most of the public voicing support for the plan. The essence of the plan is a focus on density controls, with incentives to developments that cluster construction so as to leave some open space. Towns and cities are to work with the county to establish zones around the incorporated areas where future development will be concentrated, hoping to limit sprawl. BAS's comments focused on the need for more attention to biological resources and incorporating concerns for wildlife habitat, preserving wetlands and riparian zones, and controlling development in the FR40 zone.

The Council did not take any action on November 11, preferring to discuss the comments over the next couple of months. Mae Coover, however, needs a couple of folks who can sit in at the planning and council meetings to work on the long term amendments to the plan and zoning ordinances. (More information in Mae's article on page 5.)

Chris Wilson reported that the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources together with Trout Unlimited, is looking to expand their successful **enclosures on Rock Creek** at Hardware Ranch. This project has fenced out livestock from large areas on either side of the stream, with the predictable result of letting riparian vegetation become restored and improving stream quality. They hope to repeat their success with new projects farther up stream. Cache Anglers is seeking a grant for this project and Utah Partners in Flight may also be involved. The board expressed support for these projects and BAS may be asked for help next year.

Whirling disease outbreaks traceable to Governor Leavitt's family's fish farms are once again receiving political and press attention. Whirling disease is currently under the auspices of the Utah Department of Agriculture. However, Trout Unlimited is pushing legislation that would establish a board with less strong ties to agriculture and with regulatory authority, or even return this aspect of fish management to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, where it once resided. Ann O'Connell, the Audubon lobbyist, has been involved in this issue and will continue to follow it.

A meeting with Dennis Strong of the Division of Water Resources concerning **the Amalga Barrens Dam** took place recently. We successfully communicated our resistance to dams which flood so much wetland acreage (1,500 acres at Amalga) and wondered what had changed in the last five years to make this a viable project. Apparently, the only change is that Senator Holmgren is closer to retirement and has been blasted by his own constituents in Box Elder County to not build the Honeyville Dam because it would inundate so much good habitat. He has apparently taken up the cause of the Amalga Dam because it would only flood some "Barrens." We need to impress upon him that this, too, is precious habitat and it will be difficult and certainly prohibitively expensive to mitigate the wetlands and unique playa habitat. More meetings are planned with key decision makers and we may hold a public meeting in December to let the public tell these "leaders" how important the Amalga habitat really is. Watch for announcements of the meeting and come if you possibly can.

Grazing on National Forests was addressed by Bruce. He related a meeting with John Carter, Kathy Gilbert, and himself where a strategy for addressing grazing concerns was developed. Basically, John will focus on the science, Bruce on the law, and Kathy on public relations and public involvement.

Suzanne Marychild and Teri Peery announced they would organize the annual banquet to be held again in April. We are soliciting recommendations for the Allen Stokes Conservation Award and the Carl Johnson Educator of the Year Award.

— Bryan Dixon, Presidential Poobah

Sponsor a Classroom for Audubon Adventures

BAS is currently sponsoring the *Audubon Adventures* magazine for 17 classrooms in Cache Valley. This magazine focuses on a variety of nature and wildlife themes and comes complete with a teacher's guide. There are eight issues each year, and the cost is \$35 per classroom. If you'd like to sponsor a classroom, send a check for \$35 to BAS, and note if there is a particular class you'd like to sponsor.

Wanted: Environmental Activists

The Conservation Committee will hold a meeting on Thursday, December 18, 1997 at 7:00 p.m. at Bruce Pendery's house at 755 Canyon Road in Logan. If you are interested in becoming involved in environmental issues—the Barrens Dam, land use planning, livestock grazing, and much more—you should plan to be there. This will be the first of what is planned to be regularly monthly meetings of the Conservation Committee. We will meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m., although future meetings may not be at Bruce's home. Put it on your calendar! If you have any questions or want more information, call Bruce at 792-4150.

— Bruce Pendery

Bird Friendly Yard

A Snowdrift crabapple tree and a planting of squawbush (a sumac) can be wonderful additions to a landscape plan and both are hardy in Cache Valley. In the spring the Snowdrift crab is a wonder to behold as it is totally covered with pink-centered white blossoms. The tree will seem to hum and sing its delight in the season for it is a food source for thousands of bees of several varieties.

In the fall, when the leaves have fallen, the Snowdrift crab will be covered again, but this time the cover will be tiny, red apples which attract birds by the hundreds. This year our Snowdrift has been the focus of attention for a flock of 80 cedar waxwings (we could find nary a Bohemian waxwing in their company), robins by the dozens and a few starlings.

At the same time five, mature, male rufous-sided towhees have discovered our squawbush bed and seem to have become delirious in their discovery. They have chased each other in and out of and around the base of the squawbush in a wild game of tag. Craig Johnson, the landscape architect who planned our yard, obviously heard our request to plan a bird-friendly yard with a multitude of bird food sources. We continue to be grateful for Craig's expertise.

— Mae Coover

Ibis Holiday Blend

(shade grown organic coffee)

For every pound of Ibis Holiday Blend Coffee
Straw Ibis will donate \$1.00 to the
Stokes' Nature Center.

Thanks to Straw Ibis for this generous donation.

Cache County Master Plan Update

The Cache County Master Plan is at a standstill again until the County Council resumes consideration of it in January. Any delay in adopting the Plan is, at this point, a matter of concern.

The Plan came before the Council in the first two months of 1997. But, the public hearing on the Plan was attended by a large number of developers who had paid almost no heed to the Plan throughout the two-year study. With very little resistance the Council turned the Plan back to the Planning Commission for review. There the Plan stayed while the Commission wrestled with changes to make it more developer friendly. Changes were made, but, interestingly the Commission could not agree to recommend the Plan to the Council. Thereupon a period of turmoil ensued during which the Commission and Council massaged the problem. Ultimately, the Council decided to throw it back to the Commission with instructions to come up with a plan they could recommend.

Audubon's Committee on the Cache County Master Plan has met often to discuss the issues treated in the Plan and has also attended County Council meetings to be there at any time the Plan might be discussed.

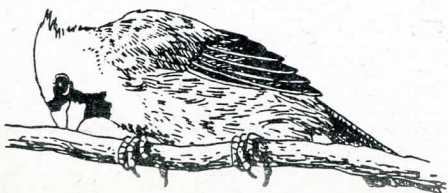
Members are: Gail Christensen, Lois Olson, Bruce Pendery, Bryan Dixon, Krista McHugh, Mae Coover, Chr., and Russ Goodwin by invitation (a non-member).

Audubon has petitioned the County Council to include a biological section in the Plan to emphasize the value of our biological resources and afford them protection. Also, the Forest Recreation Zone treatment needs to be strengthened to protect our forests and particularly our canyons against the type of cabin construction we are now seeing in Logan Canyon, Blacksmith Fork and Smithfield Canyons. The one almost white, two-story house just west of the Franklin Basin turnoff on the left side of the highway (going east) in Logan Canyon is a case in point. It could be replicated 50 times in the canyon because there are about that many parcels of privately-owned and yet to be developed land within view of (or immediately adjacent to) the highway.

Audubon is asking for "quality development standards" addressing location, siting, materials, height and colors plus ample setback from the highway.

The Master Plan Committee asks that you phone or write our County Council people to state Audubon's concerns and support them. Also, urge quick adoption of the Plan.

— Mae Coover



New Members

Kathryn Anhder
Allison Arquette
Nicolle Bartschi
Stacie Bevan
Jaymie Bingham
Hallie Blackham
Jeanie Boynton
Brad Clawson
Shawn Curtis
Cristina DiRaimo
Marci France
Shalice Groll
Nic Gyllenskog
Steven Hadfield
Brad James
Kadee Larsen
Amanda Lewis
Brooke Lindley
RaAnn Lindley
Bracken Longhurst
Crystal Lyle
Cameron Macken
Brodie McLeod
Summer Munyan
Heather Nelson
Landon Preece
Leslie Perry
Jane Post
Tanner Smith
Shad Sorensen
Deborah Tanner
Luke Toone
Eliza Walbridge
Justin White
Nicole White
McKenzie Willmore
Brady Woolf
Andrea Zeller

Renewing Members

Michael C Amacher
Diane Behl
Nils Bergeson
Jim Bilskie
R Burger
Claire S Caldes
Joyce Cline
Windsor Copley
Swede Dahl
John W Devilbiss
W Bryan Dixon
David & Susan Drown
Janice Durst
Mike Engle
John Fitch
Al Forsyth
Jack Greene
Terry Griswold
Andrew D Guss
E N Hatch
Ruth B Helm
Anna Holden
Larry J Jacobsen
Susanne Janecke
Skylar Jensen
Reinhard A Jockel
Douglas A Johnson
Linnea Johnson
Frederick F Knowlton
Harriette A Lanner
Josh Lawler
James D Morgan
Richard J Mueller
Randy & Lois Olson
Bryce Passey
Ann W Peralta
Beverly & Jerry Ridenhour
Sandra Romesburg
Kim & Peggy Smith
Philip R Stafford
Kim Sullivan & Bruce Pendery
Miiko Toelken
Dan & Cindy Walker
Gene & Melle Washington
Nina & Chris Wilson
David S Winn
Michael L Wolfe

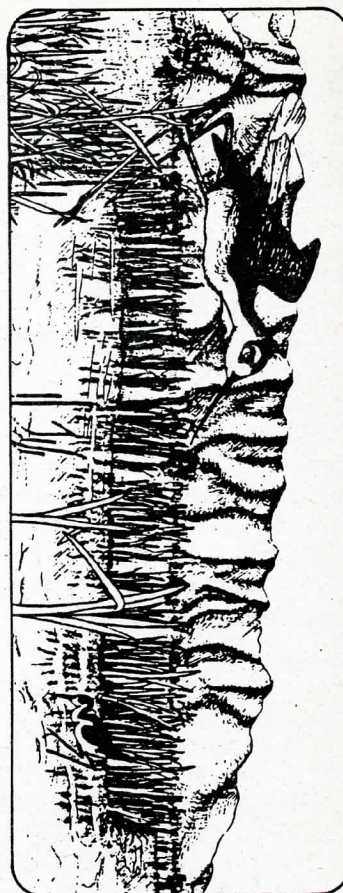
Sunflower Seed Available

Sunrise Cyclery -138 North 100 East, Logan
\$16.00 for 50 lb. cleaned seed

Thanks to those folks who were so willing
to help haul the seed from Tremonton.

THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 3501
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Nonprofit Organization
BULK RATE
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Permit No. 104
Logan, Utah

The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in the Meeting Room of the new Logan City Building, 255 N. Main. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. Locations may change monthly. Check calendar page. Everyone is welcome to attend.

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| President | Bryan Dixon, 752-6830 |
| Vice President | Chris Wilson, 753-3769 |
| Secretary | Wendy Hellstern, 753-8750 |
| Treasurer | Susan Drown, 752-3797 |
| Conservation | Bruce Pendery, 750-0253 |
| Education | Jack Greene, 563-6816 |
| Membership | Alice Lindahl, 753-7744 |
| Field Trips | Ron Hellstern, 753-8750 |
| Newsletter | Lois Olson, 752-9085 |
| Circulation | Susan Durham, 752-5637 |
| Hospitality | Tim & Jackie Henney, 755-6888 |
| Hotline | Nancy Williams, 753-6268 |

Trustees

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1995-98 | Suzanne Marychild, 755-5571; Peter Ruben, 797-2490; Allen Christensen, 258-5018 |
| 1996-99 | Jack Greene, 563-6816; Lois Olson, 752-9085 Ron Hellstern, 753-8750 |
| 1997-20 | Glen Gantz, 258-2748; Robert Schmidt, 755-9262 Teri Peery, 753-3249; Mae Coover, 752-8871 |

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as the *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions of any kind, due on the 15th of each month. Send to 280 N. 300 E., Logan, UT 84321.

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National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the national Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.



Send this application and your check to:
National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, CO 80322-1001

LOCAL CHAPTER _____

Bridgerland Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3501
Logan, UT 84323-3501

W-52
Local Chapter Code
7XCHA

Subscriptions to *The Stilt* are available to non-members for \$5.00 per year. Call Susan Durham, 752-5637. Also, call Susan for new subscriptions or address changes.