

THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 27, No. 6

February 1999

Amalga Barrens Dam Meeting a Success!

We call it a success when 80-100 citizens come out for a BAS meeting on a local conservation issue and all walk away remarking that it was worthwhile and we should do it again.

The January BAS meeting was at a special place, with special speakers and for a special cause—protecting the ecological resources at the Amalga Barrens. A panel of diverse backgrounds shared new information about aspects of the Barrens and the proposal to build a large off-river storage project there. Dennis Strong, Assistant Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources revealed that the DWR is pursuing not *either* Honeyville or the Barrens, but **BOTH** of them. He showed graphs of municipal demand on the Wasatch Front and basically said that the Wasatch Front communities would be demanding over 200,000 acre-feet of water from the upper Bear by 2020. When asked about alternatives to more impoundments, he said the Division was working hard on programs for water conservation, underground storage, etc., but these would not be adequate to supply water for the projected population growth rates on the Wasatch Front. Of course, the only conservation strategies he mentioned were educational programs in the schools, so that leaves a lot of possibilities for new conservation programs.

Following Mr. Strong, Cache County Councilman Larry Anhder (who is himself an Audubon member) insisted

that the Barrens Dam was not being discussed by the proponents of the Cache Water Conservancy District. He said the Water Policy Advisory Board is concentrating their efforts on research and strategies to protect Cache Valley communities from having their water usurped by Wasatch Front interests. On later questioning, however, he admitted that they were not refusing to consider the Barrens as a project for the WCD.

Then we heard several speakers who revealed some new knowledge about the potential impacts of such a dam. Dr. Janis Boettinger described research conducted by both her and some of her students regarding wetlands and soils at the Barrens. They found soil survey reports as far back as 1913 indicating approximately 1500 acres of wetlands at the Barrens. These are justified by all three of the rules used today for defining

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February Calendar

Meetings

Tuesday, February 2, 7:00-8:00 a.m. , Forest Breakfast at JB's Restaurant. Join other citizens in a relaxed breakfast meeting with Brian Ferebee, USFS District Ranger for the Logan District. The next agenda will include the upcoming review of the North Rich Grazing Allotment. (Contact audubon@digitalpla.net if you have topics you'd like discussed.) Anyone is welcome and any topic is fair game. Come early if you like; breakfast on your own. To get the Document for the North Rich Allotment contact the Logan Ranger District at 755-3620.

Thursday, February 4, 7:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting, at the home of Bryan Dixon, 10 Heritage Cove, Logan. (NOTE change of date, time and place.) All BAS members are invited to join us as we review projects, priorities and issues.

Thursday, February 11, 7:00 p.m. General Meeting, Pacificorp's Strategy for Conservation of the Cutler Reservoir Marshes. This month's speaker is Eve Davies, the (relatively) new Biologist/Environmental Analyst assigned to Cache Valley. Ms. Davies has an obvious fondness for these marshes and is aggressively trying to protect them. She will describe Pacificorp's program for maintaining and improving the marshes and providing suitable recreation opportunities. Bring your questions and your friends. Refreshments will be served afterward. (Also see February 13 field trip.)

Field Trips

All BAS trips are open to the public. For more information, call the trip leader listed at the end of each description.

Saturday, February 13. Wetlands in Winter. Learn about the management of the Bud Phelps Wildlife Management Area and adjoining Pacificorp properties. Eve Davies, Pacificorp biologist and Kayo Robertson, local naturalist, will share their insights and knowledge of this habitat and the plants and animals (including cows!) which live there. Meet at 9:00 a.m. from the parking lot north of Straw Ibis at 150 North 50 East, Logan. Dress warmly; back by noon. For more information call Kayo at 563-8272.

Saturday, March 13. Bald Eagles at Willard. This is a perfect trip to chase away cabin fever and get some exercise in preparation for spring. This annual outing is led by Jim Sinclair and Reinhard Jockel to observe Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and other raptors. First stop is Willard Bay State Park about 10 miles south of Brigham City, where eagles have been roosting all winter. From there the group will drive to the edge of the Willard gravel pit and climb up a narrow ravine to a more

gentle ridge and a splendid overlook of Willard Canyon and graceful raptors soaring at eye level on their way to roosts in the firs above. We may even see some wildflowers poking up toward the spring. It's a strenuous hike, so bring good boots, warm clothes and lunch. A relaxed start; meet and carpool at 10:00 a.m. from the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East, Logan). Return by late afternoon. If in doubt about the weather, call Jim at 752-0061.

Saturday, March 27. Amalga Barrens - Returning Waterfowl and other Early Migrants. The Amalga Barrens are famous for their shallow ponds that attract tadpoles, aquatic invertebrates, and the critters that feed on them—namely birds! Owls are nesting, Sandhill Cranes are dancing, and all those odd ducks are hanging out waiting for the winds north. It's a bit early for the shorebirds, but you never know if you don't go! The official beginning of the Spring Migration—be there! The trip leaves from the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East, Logan) at 9:00 a.m. and we'll return by lunch. For more information call Alice Lindahl, 753-7744.

Safety for Kids at The Stokes Nature Center

The "Winter Safety for Kids" program will be held on Saturday, February 13 (Snow Safety) and February 20 (Winter Exploration) from 8:00-4:00.

The "Snow Safety" program will teach about snow crystals and their formation, how avalanches are formed and the tools used for safely reading terrain and snow in the winter.

The "Winter Exploration" program will teach about the many opportunities for exploring in winter, proper dress and equipment for safe winter experiences and building shelters and surviving emergency situations in the winter.

These programs are designed for ages 12-14. Instruction is provided by trained winter safety educators. Each of the programs will start at the nature center with approximately two hours of indoor work and then the rest of the day will be spent "in the field." Participants will be provided with snowshoes and should bring a lunch and warm clothing.

The programs are free but space is limited. Please call the Nature Center at 755-3239 for more information and to make reservations.

E-mail 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



Bridgerland Audubon Society

p.o. box 3501 Logan, Utah 84323-3501

22 January, 1999

Dear BAS Member,

The Board of Trustees has voted unanimously to oppose the formation of a Water Conservancy District in Cache County as proposed for the election on February 2, 1999.

The special election will be the first time that the formation of a WCD will be decided in a democratic vote. Consequently, BAS was tempted to embrace the WCD because its stated purpose is worthy of support by environmentalists, to wit: to research our water resources (quantity *and* quality) and adopt programs and projects to protect them. Though we believe this work rightfully belongs under the purview of a county department directly accountable to an elected council, it has become all too apparent that our County Council lacks the political courage to spend tax money on such research and planning. Having been failed by that body, it was tempting to support the creation of an independent entity.

BAS waited as long as it could to take a position because it wanted to see water planning established. But, despite last minute concessions by proponents to appoint someone from BAS or League of Women Voters to the governing board, we still have troubling concerns. Some proponents of the WCD have noble intentions, but the make-up of the governing board still leans much too heavily toward the agricultural interests who have a long history of anti-environmental rhetoric in Cache County. Moreover, despite verbal statements that they are not actively pursuing a dam at the Barrens, WCD proponents have failed to give any binding assurances that it won't be the focus of the WCD. That sounds like political posturing designed only to solicit our support. You know how important the Amalga Barrens is to migratory birds. We simply cannot risk the creation of a powerful, moneyed organization that will be difficult, if not impossible, to oppose. The discussions have been positive, but we're not prepared to create such a powerful entity with so little definition up front. We haven't exhausted other possibilities such as a special service district or a new department within the County Planning Department charged with water policy and programs, both of which would be more accountable to the public than a WCD.

Therefore, BAS encourages you to vote your conscience in the special election on February 2, 1999 – BUT VOTE! Since this is a special election, turn-out will be very low so a few votes could make the difference. Make sure you know your voting place, as the normal polling places may have changed. Call the county clerk (752-3542) for information on polling places.

Sincerely,

Bruce Pendery
Conservation Chair

Bryan Dixon
President

From the Utah Bird Hotline

Bill Neindorff, from New Mexico, is studying the roosting behavior of crows and is looking for information. Specifically:

1. Do we know if there are large [numbers of crows in roosts in the state in urban or rural areas?
2. Are there substantial changes in where they winter from year-to year?
3. When do wintering crows begin to leave wintering areas (roosts get smaller)?

If you have any information that could help answer any of these questions, contact him through:

Mark Stackhouse, Westwings, Inc.
1432 Downington Ave.
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
(801) 487-9453 — westwings@sisna.com

If you use e-mail, you might also ask Mark to put you on the Hotline mailing list.

Banquet Coming Up!

The tentative date for the Annual Banquet has been set for mid-April. In addition to fellowship, awards, and a great speaker, we'll also be having another silent auction. (We know, it seems like everyone's having them these days, but it IS a neat way to raise money!) If you've got some items you'd like to donate to the auction, please contact Mae Coover, 752-8871, or Robert Schmidt, 755-9262. Teri Peery is this year's organizer, so if you would like to help out, she could use some help (753-3249).

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

BAS is governed by a Board of Trustees which meets once a month (see calendar). All BAS members are invited, of course.

Outings – Keith Archibald has taken over the position of Outings Chair. Those of you who know Keith can imagine what kind of new trips we're going to have. A master birder, Keith's curiosity couldn't be contained and he's expanded into butterflies, spiders, wildflowers, ants (yep. . .), and now, mushrooms (his goal was to survive eating one he had identified himself). We've got some good trips lined up in February and March, so join in! They're always fun and educational.

Environmental Education – It's time to start thinking about our Environmental Education Grants program. Each year BAS awards 3-5 grants of \$300-\$700 each to local teachers to enable them to undertake some environmental project they couldn't do otherwise. If you're a teacher and want details, contact our Education Chair, Jack Greene at 563-6816, or e-mail audubon@digitalpla.net. Requests for proposals will go out this spring with awards in time for fall classes.

We're also moving ahead with our adult environmental education. Peter Ruben is surveying Sun City folks as

well as local citizens to determine how much interest there might be. Our objective is to offer courses of substance to adults who want the opportunity to learn from a teacher rather than just reference sources. Courses probably would be offered outside the 8-5 workday and might include: field ornithology, wetland ecology, field entomology, forest ecology, astronomy, geology, etc. If you'd be interested in one of these, please let Peter know (797-2490) or pruben@cc.usu.edu. We'll probably hand out some surveys at the banquet to assess interest.

Conservation – After long debate, the BAS Board voted unanimously to oppose the Water Conservancy District. A letter is included in this issue of the *Stilt* outlining our reasoning. A WCD has the potential to wreak irreparable damage on local habitats if it pursues projects like the Amalga Barrens Dam. Despite some new – and positive – twists to this WCD, there is still a lot of uncertainty about what it will do, how it will be organized, who will control it and how it will spend its money.

On the forest front, we just received the scoping documents for the Forest Service's review of the North Rich grazing allotment. Many of us are dismayed at the impacts grazing is having on our forests, and this is the first real opportunity we've had in a long time to effect some change in grazing practices. This is our opportunity to begin changing the way grazing affects our forest lands.

Needless to say, we're involved in other issues as well. If you'd like to get involved in conservation, feel free to contact anyone on the Board of Trustees and ask what you can do. You can also come to our Board meetings or the third Thursday Conservation Committee meetings to listen to what's going on and jump in when the spirit moves you! Hope to see you there.

— Bryan Dixon, President

USU Outdoor Recreation Center

The Banff Festival of Mountain Films, presented by Eagle Creek Travel Gear and brought to you by USU Outdoor Recreation Center, is sponsoring two nights of different outdoor films on February 16 and 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the Kent Concert Hall. The price is \$5/student, \$7/non-student. Tickets are available at the USU Ticket Office locations and in shops downtown.

To raise money for the Lyon, Maas, and Mueggler Outdoor Leadership scholarship a drawing will be held both nights for items such as a mountain bike, back country skis, snowshoes, climbing equipment and more!

On Saturday, February 20 there will be cross-country ski races.

For more information call the ORC at 797-3264.

Amalga Barrens Dam Meeting a Success!

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wetlands—water at or near the surface, hydrophytic (“water -loving”) plants, and hydric soils (experiencing saturation and chemical reduction due to inundation). Since the first canal wasn’t completed until that same year and the research for the soil surveys probably took several years prior to publication, it’s safe to say that at least this much wetland area is natural, not man-made. This assures them of the highest standards of protection by the Army Corps of Engineers. They also calculated the salinity of the water coming from the Barrens springs and concluded that the reservoirs would have to be managed very carefully to prevent unacceptable levels of salinity.

Dr. Susanne Janecke then presented maps of faults in the Cache Valley and explained how earthquakes happen. The biggest impacts from earthquakes are often 10-15 km from the surface expression of the fault. There are at least two faults, one on each side of the valley, which are about due (in geologic terms this could be the year 2500 or next Wednesday at 1:00). The lines of maximum ground movement run right through the proposed dam site. Other geology of interest includes the nature of the unconsolidated sediments in Cache Valley. Some specialists have estimated that some of these sediments are 5 km deep before reaching bedrock. That makes subsurface ground water storage a possibility. In response to later questioning, Mr. Strong said he believed that the dam could be engineered to survive these earthquakes. He estimated maximum ground water storage at 15,000 acre-feet, and he doubted whether there was enough subsurface storage to meet the needs of the growing population though no detailed studies have been done.

Finally, Dr. Ron Ryel gave a very cogent explanation for why this habitat is so important and why it’d be so hard to replace. In essence, the Barrens offer great diversity in habitat types and constitute some of the most inaccessible land in the valley, making them especially suitable for many of the threatened species in the area. One of the most insightful observations, however, was that these lands offer us a future economic resource—as Cache Valley becomes more and more developed, we’ll need places where we can create wetlands to mitigate for other developments. The Barrens offer substantial dry acreage surrounding the current wetlands that could be converted to wetlands, enabling landowners to reap an economic return from otherwise very low value land. Of course, this only works if we don’t flood it with a reservoir.

After two meetings on the Barrens one year apart, we’re not sure what the next step needs to be. The Division of Water Resources continues to study the site, but without specific proposals or documents to

comment on, we have nothing concrete (no pun here) to fight. Our task is to keep the public aware of developments, and to try to educate our elected officials about the importance of the Barrens, so that when the decisions are made in the political ring, the politicians have a full appreciation of what’s at stake. The Barrens Dam would be a VERY expensive proposition. We must make sure they realize that fact and make every effort to find some alternative.

— Bryan Dixon

New Members

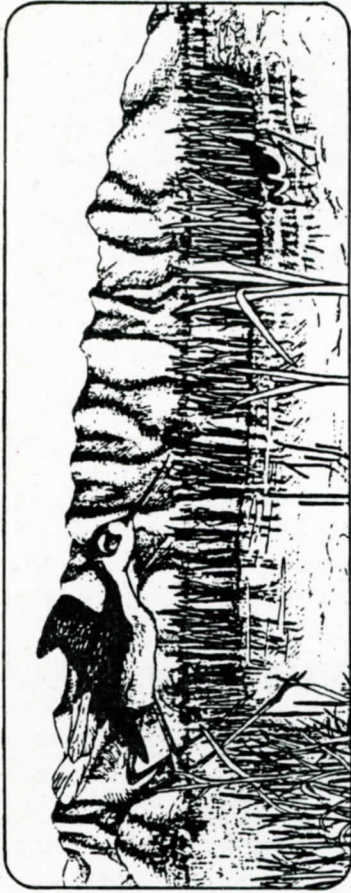
Kristin Armstead	Marci Mikesell
Christine Beorchia	Victor Nelson
Adelaide Bohart	Matt Townsend
Amanda R Cangelosi	Dennis Wenger
John Carter	Rachel B Young
Kurt Fronoff	

Renewing Members

Michael C Amacher	H Richard Hurren
Jamey Anderson	Douglas A Johnson
Larry Anhder	Linnea Johnson
R K Archibald	Harriette A Lanner
Robert Atwood	David & Kim Lewis
John W Carlisle	Wally & Sammie MacFarlane
Julie Conlin	James D Morgan
Norbert V Debyle	Mark Nafziger
Joy Dougherty	John Neuhold
David B Drown	Mark E Peplinski
Joanna Endter-Wada	John N Ream, Jr
Deborah Eshelman	James P Shaver
Lynne Stone Francom	Philip R Stafford
Al Forsyth	Kennita Thatcher
James Gessaman	Alison Thorne
K Gilbert	Maureen Wagner
Barbara S Hale	Dan & Cindy Walker
RM & MR Holdredge	Nina B Wilson
Nathan & Chris Hult	David S Winn
G Hunter & D Bronson	

Bird Seed

Bird seed is still available. Get it at Sunrise Cyclery, 138 North 100 East, Logan, where 50 pound bags sell for \$16. Too heavy to lift or don’t have the means to pick it up? No problem. Call 563-6816 to make arrangements for free delivery!



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The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, September through June, in the Meeting Room of the Logan City Building, 255 N. Main. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, September through June. The Conservation Committee will meet the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in Room 3 in Logan City Library. 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, 792-4150
Education	Jack Greene, 563-6816
Membership	Alice Lindahl, 753-7744
Field Trips	Keith Archibald, 752-8258
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; Doug Tempel, 755-6774
1996-99	Jack Greene, 563-6816; Lois Olson, 752-9085; Ron Hellstern, 753-8750; Merr Lundahl, 753-1707
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.

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.