



The Stilt

Volume 32, Issue 8
October 2003

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Check's in the Hand

It seemed too good to be true, but our grant from the Intermountain West Joint Venture finally arrived, and by the time you read this issue of the Stilt, we should be proud owners of a whole lot

more mud. In our last episode, you'll recall that BAS purchased



For years, we resisted the Division of Water Resources' efforts to create a huge off-river reservoir at the Barrens because it would have flooded up to 12 square miles of unique wetlands in Cache Valley. About two years ago, we started in earnest to purchase some of this land from Pacificorp in order to be able to challenge the state as bona fide landowners. Along the way, the legislature came to its senses and took the Barrens off of the list of potential water

and a check in hand, we're finally ready to complete the purchase.

Not that the delay of the formal purchase has slowed us down very much. Todd Sherman provided a very professional wetlands inventory. We've had the entire parcel surveyed and corners marked. Sandra Schimmelpfening organized crews from the Utah Conservation Corps last fall to put up boundary markers and roadside fencing on

Now We Buy the Land!

about 80 acres of land in the Amalga Barrens, mostly with donations from our members. There's always been a keen interest among local birders in preserving the Amalga Barrens because, contrary to its name, it teems with avian life, especially during the waterfowl and shorebird migrations in spring and summer.

storage sites along the upper Bear River. That in turn cleared the way for funding agencies to consider grants to BAS to purchase more of this habitat.

Now, with all of the environmental reviews satisfied, historic and hazardous waste surveys completed, a valid appraisal (in itself a weird story),

the north parcel, and got help from more UCC volunteers, as well as Joanne Hughes and Dave Drown to about finish the job on the south parcel this past spring and summer. Meanwhile, on the vegetation front Jim Cane and another bunch of volunteers started a

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Chapter Notes

BAS Joins In Protest of Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan

In late June Bridgerland Audubon Society joined with several other conservation groups in an appeal I prepared on their behalf of the recently approved Revised Forest Plan for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The other groups signing on to the appeal were the Bear River Watershed Project, Western Watersheds Project, Wild Utah Project, the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and Defenders of Wildlife.

The objective of the appeal is to try to get improvements in the Forest Plan to better protect native wildlife and ecosystems. Six general issues were raised in the appeal. We argue that the Forest Plan fails to comply with the "roadless rule," a regulation prohibiting road building or timber harvesting on 58.5 million acres of Forest Service roadless areas nationwide. The Forest Plan would allow for "development" on 149,000 acres of roadless areas on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and would only "mostly maintain" roadless values on another 267,000 acres. For example, locally the 45,000

acre Mount Naomi Roadless Area would not receive full roadless rule protections under the Revised Forest Plan. It may be worth noting that "inventoried roadless areas" are not wilderness areas; they are wild, undeveloped areas of the National Forest that have tremendous importance for protection of biodiversity and other values that nevertheless have not been designated as wilderness as, for example, the Mount Naomi Wilderness is.

Other issues that were raised included failure to protect and provide for the threatened Canada lynx, as required by Forest Service regulations and the Endangered Species Act. We also argued that the Revised Forest Plan fails to ensure the viability of all vertebrate species, as required by Forest Service regulations, because it failed to provide sufficient protection for some species, such as the flammulated owl, boreal owl, sage grouse, and sharptailed-grouse, among others. Furthermore, we argued the Forest Plan was deficient because it failed to designate

"management indicator species," which are species intended to show the effects of management, for certain habitat types that will be the focus of management efforts under the revised plan. For example, the sagebrush habitat type and mountain shrub habitat type have no management indicator species designated even though the Forest Plan calls for "treatment" (burning, chopping of brush, etc.) on several hundred thousand acres of these habitat types.

The Revised Forest Plan calls for development of the several-hundred-mile-long "Shoshone Trail," an off-highway vehicle (OHV) circuit that would wind through large areas of the forest. We challenged this element of the revised plan because development of the Shoshone Trail is an effort to convert the Wasatch-Cache National Forest into a destination OHV playground, and it was never subject to any environmental review, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—the most fun-

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Audubon Calendar

October 2003

1 Board of Trustees Meeting. Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets this Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the offices of Bio-Resources, Inc. All interested are invited to attend.

4 Antelope Island and the Causeway. Although we are quite late in the season for migrating shore birds, this is still an excellent time to visit this wonderful island state park in the middle of the Great Salt Lake. There will probably continue to be some shore birds along the causeway to the island, and there should be growing numbers of waterfowl there too. The island itself will have a variety of migrating and resident songbirds, and the ever-present big game (bison, pronghorn, deer, and bighorn sheep). Coyotes are also fun to look for. Wild turkeys, partridge, and interesting raptors are also usually seen. Please join us for this trip, suitable for adults and children and for experienced and novice birders. Meet Saturday at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East and 150 North in Logan). Carpooling will be available. Bring a lunch or be prepared to buy a bison burger or bratwurst at the island restaurant; we will not be back in Logan before mid-afternoon. For more information call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

9 General Meeting. Be part of the Barrens Sanctuary closing (see related story, p.1) at October's monthly meeting. We're planning an informal get-together to celebrate the new land purchase, socialize, and talk about possible speakers for the coming year. Join us for refreshments and conversation at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Logan City meeting room, 255 N. Main St., Logan.

11 Quarterly Roadside Cleanup. Some years ago BAS assumed responsibility for cleaning up the litter along a stretch of highway west of Richmond. It is currently time to discharge this responsibility again. We thus put out a special plea for your support. When we have a strong turnout, we are able to take care of this assignment in short order, and we have fun in the process. Meet Saturday at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East and 150 North in Logan). Bring gloves if you have them, and wear clothing suitable for the time of year. Bags and safety vests will be provided, as well as gloves for those who have none. Carpooling will be available. Some may wish to do a little birding afterwards. If you do, bring binoculars. For more information, call Jim Hoffmann, 787-4083, or Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653.

18 Fall Hawk Watching for Beginners. There should be lots of migrating hawks and other raptors around Cache Valley at this time of year, so join us for a mostly driving trip around the valley to learn how to identify the various species that are passing through. We may also take a side trip to the new sewage lagoons just off the Benson road. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have one. Meet Saturday at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East and 150 North in Logan). Carpooling will be available. We will plan to be back around noon. For further information call Sue or David Drown, 752-3797, or Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653. An excellent family trip.



If you'd like to come along on a field trip but do not have binoculars, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653. He'll try to find a pair for you to use.

25 Stone Soup Canoe Trip on the Bear River. This is sort of a pot luck on water. Meet Saturday at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East and 150 North in Logan) to paddle the Bear River from the Preston/Weston bridge to Cornish. Expert paddlers Jean Lown and Bryan Dixon will lead this trip and will provide the basics for a soup; you are encouraged to bring something to add to the pot. Bring binoculars, water, warm clothing, and your own boat. Boats can be rented from USU Outdoor recreation, Trailhead Sports, or Muddy Road Outfitters. We'll return mid-afternoon. For more information call Bryan or Jean, 752-6830, or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

November

7 Utah Ornithological Society Fall Conference. The Utah Ornithological Society is hosting their annual fall conference November 7 to 9, 2003 at the University of Utah, Aline Wilmot Skaggs biology building. There will be a keynote address and reception on Friday evening; scholarly, general interest and member presentations on Saturday; and field trips on Sunday. For detailed information please visit the UOS website at <http://www.utahbirds.org/uos/> and follow the link to conference information and registration form. If you have any additional questions contact John Cavitt at 801-626-6172; jcavitt@weber.edu OR Jeanne Le Ber at 801-532-7384; jeanne_leber@hotmail.com. Contact Jeanne if you would like a copy of the print brochure.

Yippee More Mud

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crusade against the invasive teasel, and Mark and Cheryl Brunson followed up on vegetation surveys begun by Brian Nicholson's wetlands monitoring program. Others have contributed who knows how many hours on other facets of the project.

We don't want this project to be all-consuming - after all, there's enough stress in our lives - and this land has provided good habitat just as it is for decades, so there's no hurry. But we do have some more minor projects lined up for the fall,

and we're planning a big celebration out there next April.

This project would never have been possible, however, without the financial backing and enthusiastic support of our members and the support of Wayne Martinson, Important Bird Area Coordinator for the National Audubon Society, Jim Cole from the Intermountain West Joint Venture, and Eve Davies of PacifiCorp itself. The Barrens Sanctuary is now a reality and it's our contribution to preserving real habitat in our own backyard. Next time you need some place of your own to go and watch wildlife, take a trip to the Barrens. Our property is about halfway between Amalga and Newton on

either side of the Clay Slough and between Route 218 (6200 North) on the south side and 7000 North about a mile to the north. Look for the 6-foot posts planted in the ground to mark the corners. With the passing of time we'll increase our knowledge about this particular piece of the world, and we may even get it designated as an Important Bird Area, one of NAS's signature programs for protecting avian habitat.

For more information on the Barrens Sanctuary, contact one of the project managers, Jim Cane (713-4668), Bryan Dixon (752-6830), or Alice Lindahl (753-7744).

—Bryan Dixon
BAS Board Member

Local Notes

The Cache National Forest: Politics, the Land, and a Century of Federal Stewardship

Next year marks the centennial year of the Cache National Forest, and the U.S. Forest Service, USU's College of Natural Resources, and USU's Mountain West Center for Regional Studies will present a two-day conference to honor this event. The conference, which is free and open to the public, takes place in the Eccles Conference Center Auditorium at USU October 30 & 31 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Throughout the sessions, historians, scientists, and forest professionals will discuss the past, present, and future of the Cache National Forest.

The first day will be retrospective, beginning

with a look at the human and natural history of the forest. Speakers include geologist James Evans, wildlife professor Fred Wagner, range professor Thad Box, historian Mike Johnson, forestry professor David Roberts, architectural historian Richa Wilson, and Patty Timbimboo Madsen of the Northwest Bands of the Shoshone Nation. A panel of retired rangers will reminisce, and the day will end with a keynote address from Intermountain Regional Forester Jack Troyer.

Day two will focus on current issues and the future of the forest. Ross Peterson will speak on the folklore of Logan Canyon. Dave Baumgartner and Rob Cruz will talk about trends

in recreation, range and watershed issues will be discussed by Stan Miller, Terry Padilla, and Chris Call, and Dr. James Long and Evelyn Sibbersen will look at forest health management. The day will close with Wasatch-Cache Forest Supervisor Tom Tidwell speaking about the future of the forest and some concluding remarks from Dean F.E. Busby of the College of Natural Resources.

This conference is for everyone who enjoys and is interested in the national forests. No registration is necessary. For more information, call (435) 797-3633.

—Mike Johnson
Mountain West Center for
Regional Studies

Protest

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particularly owing to a 1998 Supreme Court decision that immunized the Forest Service against judicial challenges to forest plans in some respects (often you have to wait until there is

a "site-specific" application of the Forest Plan and then use that as a vehicle to challenge the Forest Plan in court).

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—Bruce Pendery
Attorney at Law

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

- 2001-2004 Merr Lundahl, 753-1707; Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816
- 2002-2005 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Joyce McMullin, 713-4399; Dick Hurren 435/734-2653; Jamie McEvoy, 753-3559
- 2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608; Andree Walker, 755-2103

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- Hospitality Allen & Gail Christensen, 258-5018, gaichr@pdp.usu.edu
- Hotline Nancy Williams, 757-0185, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
- Webmaster Chris Wilson, 753-3769, cwilson@sisna.com
- Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jcane@biology.usu.edu or Bryan

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, due on the 15th of each month. Send to stiltnews@hotmail.com.

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter, *The Stilt*, and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

- New member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.
- Renewing member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed (\$20 membership dues)

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Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to:
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PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001
W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8 week delay, contact Susan Durham, 753-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.

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- Circulation Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu
- Hospitality Allen & Gail Christensen, 258-5018, gaichr@pdp.usu.edu
- Hotline Nancy Williams, 757-0185, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
- Webmaster Chris Wilson, 753-3769, cwilson@sisna.com
- Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jcane@biology.usu.edu or Bryan

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