



# The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

## Bioneers Conference Returns to Utah State

Join the Utah Bioneers for our second Annual Conference at Utah State University October 14, 15, and 16. Bioneers gathers people at the crossroads of ecological restoration, human health, and social justice. USU will feature three days of plenary speakers from the National Bioneers Conference, the world's largest Environmental conference. This event, now in its 16th year, will be carried via satellite on the big screen at Eccles Conference Center. Speakers from the national conference will include Bill McKibben (The End of Nature; Hope, Human and Wild ) David Orr, (Earth in Mind; Ecological Literacy ), and Janine Benyus, (Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature), together with many others. (See [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org) for the full program.)

The Utah Conference will open with two live plenary speakers of its own: Dr. John Ikerd, agricultural economist and nationally known authority on integrating sustainability and economics, will speak on the topic of his recent book, "Sustainable Capitalism: A Matter of Common Sense." He will show how capitalism can become the vehicle for a new economics of sustainability which integrates social and economic values.

Chip Ward, will open Saturday's sessions. He's a Utah activist and author of "Canaries on the Rim: Living Downwind in the West," and "Hope's Horizon: Three Visions for Healing the American Land," which the Washington Post called "an engrossing, even wonderful, secret history of contemporary environmentalism." In addition to these two live speakers, there will be

shops on clean air and water, food security, transportation, preserving agricultural land, green building and development, living wage, voluntary simplicity, renewable energy, sustainable communities and others.

All are welcome to attend the conference. Register starting August 20, as space will be limited. You may opt for all three days, or if your time is limited, single-day registration is accepted.

There will be natural foods and catered food available, live music, and time to visit informally with speakers, organizers, and other Bioneers.

For information, contact [extension.usu.edu/bioneers](http://extension.usu.edu/bioneers), or call 800-538-2663, or 435-797-0433. Fax: 435-797-0636.

—Utah Bioneers

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# Chapter Notes

## BAS Opening Social

BAS, Stokes Nature Center, and Utah Conservation Corps are joining together to create a new format for BAS's monthly meetings. We'll kick off the year with a social gathering at SNC's Nibley land in September, eating any fruit left on the trees! From October to March, we'll have a speaker/discussion series around the theme of sustainability, investigating how to "live well in place," in the words of Wendell Berry. Each month there will be an article in the Stilt that

coordinates with the discussion topic to give some background information and foster lively discussions. Invited speakers will also present additional information and viewpoints on each topic. Probable topics include land preservation, supporting local economies, and xeriscaping/landscaping for wildlife. We will promote the series at the Bioneers Conference, Oct. 14 -16. The speaker/discussion series will be held at the Logan City Library meeting room or an-

other convenient downtown location. Look to the next issue of The Stilt for more information. If you have any questions or input, please contact Kate Stephens [katestep@cc.usu.edu](mailto:katestep@cc.usu.edu) or Meg Barker ([mbarker@logannature.org](mailto:mbarker@logannature.org)) or call 435-755-3239.

To be added to SNC's Bird Call, a weekly programs e-mail that will promote the speaker series, contact Kara at [kutt@logannature.org](mailto:kutt@logannature.org).

—Megan Barker

## Utah Ornithological Society Fall Conference at USU

Do you know which bird was named "a big noise for its size" by Native Americans in the Great Basin? Learn this and more at the Utah Ornithological Society's fall conference, a three-day affair at Utah State University, September 16-18.

Keynote speaker for the event will be Kevin J.

Colver, a Utah physician with a 15-year passion for recording and studying the sounds of birds. The title of his talk, set for 7 p.m. Friday at University Inn, is "The Song of a Bird."

Other activities will include field trips to local birding hot spots and a Saturday paper session, where Stephen Peterson will pre-

sent BAS's work at our bird sanctuary in the Amalga Barrens.

For more information, including a conference schedule and registration form, please visit the UOS website at: [http://utahbirds.org/uos/UOS\\_Conference2005.htm](http://utahbirds.org/uos/UOS_Conference2005.htm). Registration deadline is September 12.



# Audubon Calendar

## September 2005

**7 BAS Board of Trustees Meeting.** The BAS Board of Trustees will meet for a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. Wednesday at the home of Dave and Sue Drown, 1776 E. 1400 North, Logan. A business meeting will follow. All are welcome to attend. For more information, call Dave or Sue at 752-3797.

**8 General Meeting - Opening Social.** Help us kick off a new year for BAS with a casual opening social at 6 p.m. Thursday at Stokes Nature Center's property in Nibley. We'll be catching up after our summer off and discussing plans for the coming year, including a new format for our monthly general meetings (see related story p. 2). Bring your family and a picnic dinner, but please leave dogs at home. To get to the Stokes Nature Center property, head south from Logan on Highway 165 toward Hyrum. Turn right (west) on 2600 North, just past the bridge over the Blacksmith Fork River. Enter through an open gate soon after the turnoff.

**10 Birding along the Wellsvilles.** Join us as we go to a number of good birding locations along the Wellsville Mountains. This year's trip will not be the strenuous hike to the top of the mountain. Instead we will take our time to enjoy several different hot spots, some along the base of the range and a couple higher up. Sue and Dave Drown will be our guides and will help us identify fall migrant thrushes, warblers, sparrows, and many others, as well as the migrating hawks that we normally look for. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and something to snack on. Dress appropriately for the season. Carpooling will be available. We will return in early afternoon. For more information, call Sue or Dave at 752-3797 or Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

**24 Annual Kokanee Salmon Run.** Come with us and local fish expert Ron Goede to view and learn the spawning habits of this inland salmon variety. Ron will explain the ecology and natural history of this unique fish and will take us to places where we can view them up close and personal. This should be an excellent trip for families. Birding in this area is also good, so bring your binoculars and plan to have fun. This last couple of years there have been both bald eagles and ospreys on hand to get their fair share of the fish. We will leave at 8:30 a.m. from the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Caffé Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available. Bring a snack. We plan to return in early afternoon. For more information, call Ron at 752-9650, or Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

## October

**1 Visit to Cache Valley Historical Barns.** Efforts continue to preserve certain historically important barns in Cache Valley. Last year we had a great time observing some of these magnificent old buildings and doing a good bit of birding, including owling, along the way. Join us as Lisa Goede takes us to some of the ones we did not see last year. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and to Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring something to snack on and binoculars if you have them. We will return in early afternoon. For more information, call Lisa at 752-9650, or Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.



*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.*



# Local Notes

## Forest Service Guts Motorized Closure

Some of us remember the controversy in the early 1980s as we fought for a decent wilderness bill to protect Mt. Naomi, in the end chopped in half for a few snowmobilers.

More of us will remember the discussions in the 1990s between the Forest Service, snowmobilers, and non-motorized interests in an attempt to protect some area in Logan Canyon from the increasing onslaught of motors in winter. Those efforts yielded some good ideas but never reached a consensus and were finally abandoned.

Still more of us will remember the massive documents to review, such as the "Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation" (huh?), and the contentious public meetings during the forest planning process around the turn of the century that

finally yielded a surprise in the Record of Decision (ROD) and FEIS released in spring 2003. The Forest Service actually closed a small area of about 9,000 acres (less than 1% of the forest) in Franklin Basin to motorized use, leaving over 546,000 acres in the forest open to snowmobilers (with more open in nearby Idaho). The Forest Service tried to address the one-sided conflict between the groups and, as with smoking in public places, sought to provide some protection for those who don't enjoy noise and fumes. The area they chose in Franklin Basin (see dark area in Figure 1, available on our website, [www.bridgerlandaudubon.org](http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org)) was accessible on foot and encompassed terrain for a variety of users, from beginners and families in Bunchgrass to more advanced skiers on slopes in upper Bunchgrass, around Steam Mill Peak, and the north-facing

slopes in Steam Mill Canyon.

Immediately, motorized users were in an uproar, objecting to lands having been "lost" for "traditional use" (since when is "traditional" defined as \$10,000 super-powerful snowmobiles?). They threatened to appeal the ROD. We were willing to see if the new boundaries would work but, fearing the Forest Service would cave in to a one-sided appeal, we filed our own appeal along with several other environmental groups, justifiably challenging the closed polygon as difficult to implement with the resources available in the local district.

It took two years for the Chief of the Forest Service in Washington, D.C. to decide to deny all appeals, upholding all of the work of the Forest Service planning team and recognizing that a closure was the only way



to reduce the conflicts caused by such intensive motorized use. We rejoiced, for they had listened and were willing to offer at least minimal protections for non-motorized users.

Unfortunately, politics reared its typically ugly head. The rules give the Under Secretary for Agriculture (a Bush appointee) 15 days to exercise discretionary review." We held our breath and after the period had passed we received notice that he had not exercised this option – BUT did write a letter of instruction to the Forest Service dated April 4, 2005 directing them to revisit the closure and use maximum discretion to "ensure that all users have ample and safe motorized and non-motorized access to the fullest possible range of winter recreation opportunities on the forest." (Note that he didn't direct the Forest Service to abandon the original decision – only to see if there might be a better alternative that could be mutually acceptable.) The political forces of the motorized lobby claimed another victim; although he didn't want to overturn the decision, he felt compelled to make some statement.

In response, Tom Tidwell, outgoing Forest Supervisor for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest convened another series of meetings between non-motorized and motorized representatives. I participated on behalf of

BAS, along with representatives from Nordic United (formerly Cache Backcountry Skiers Alliance), Bear River Watershed Council, and USU's Outdoor Recreation. It was obvious from the start that the snowmobilers involved wouldn't accept any significant closure, so a professional mediator was retained, and he suggested a new process, called "med-arb" as an alternative to either mediation or arbitration. In this process, the Forest Service was to issue criteria for an alternative to the ROD. The groups were to develop their own alternatives and, if the Forest Service found one or the other alternative better than the ROD, it would take that alternative – and here's the important point – without modifying it. This process is supposed to drive the two sides to some middle ground, fearing that if their proposal was too far "out there" the Forest Service would take the other side's alternative.

Our revised alternative (see Figure 1, available on our website, [www.bridgerlandaudubon.org](http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org)) addressed the biggest snowmobiler complaint - access up White Pine Canyon from the Tony Grove turnoff for easy access to the high bowls above Mt. Gog and Magog. This would, however, mean providing access across the bottom of Bunchgrass, and effectively eliminate any protection for White Pine Canyon, as noise and unrestrained highmarking would fill the canyon. In

an attempt to compensate for this loss, we added the upper reaches of Steam Mill Canyon to the closure, so as to give non-motorized users one quiet approach to the wilderness boundary. We debated a long time about this alternative. It had serious weaknesses, particularly in that it would cut the protected area in half (through White Pine Canyon). Still, we decided to make a good faith effort to accommodate the "needs" of the snowmobilers and hoped that our constituents would understand the tradeoff as worthwhile.

When the snowmobilers presented their proposal, we were aghast (see Figure 2, available on our website, [www.bridgerlandaudubon.org](http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org)). In their mind, the fair alternative was to eliminate any closure in White Pine or Steam Mill Canyons, put a groomed "snow road" across the bottom of Bunchgrass all the way to Franklin Basin, and protect only a small area around the yurt in Hell's Kitchen Canyon.

I must admit, however, that we also breathed a sigh of relief, confident that such an absurdly selfish proposal would never be accepted by the Forest Service, which had wanted to separate the uses to reduce conflict. They couldn't possibly accept such a radical departure from the closure which they themselves had developed.

Imagine our shock when the Forest Service did just that.



## Motorized Closure

(continued from p. 5)

On July 22, Faye Krueger, Acting Forest Supervisor (Tom Tidwell had already left for California), issued an email announcing that the Forest Service had found both alternatives to meet six of the criteria, but ours was unacceptable because it closed just one of the high bowls. They chose instead the snowmobilers' alternative, despite the radical reduction of over 55 percent of the Franklin Basin closure! Furthermore, she said this revision would not require an amendment to the Forest Plan; the public would not be given an opportunity to comment on it prior to its implementation. They'd just find out that snowmobiles could go virtually anywhere in Franklin Basin this winter.

Clearly, we're disappointed. Actually, "appalled" would be a better adjective. This is such a bizarre outcome that, after collecting our senses, we are searching to understand what happened. Could it be that the Forest Service was so intimidated by threats, real or imagined, from snowmobilers, political appointees in Washington, or deeper budget cuts forced by the radical right that they were willing to subvert even their own process?

During this entire time, we came to know a number of the Forest Service managers. We were impressed with

their willingness to listen to us, and were encouraged by them to continue to participate in the discussions, assuring us that rational policy would prevail in the end. It's hard to learn that placing our trust in these officials was not a good idea.

On Monday, August 22, we met again with the acting Forest Supervisor to ask what happened, and she had the most amazing explanation. The criterion in question read: "Provide snowmobile access to the higher, unique terrain with adequate snowfall and snowpack. (Tony Grove - Franklin Basin area). Access includes being able to return to the trailhead." Our proposal did provide access - and return - to all of the high bowls except one small basin at the head of Steam Mill Canyon, which snowmobilers use infrequently at best. The Forest Service, however, claims "access to" meant "access through" so as to preserve some loop along the high ridgeline. And when they wrote "Tony Grove - Franklin Basin area", they meant "from Tony Grove to Franklin Basin." Our alternative apparently never had a prayer. We're left to wonder, however, if it was so fatally flawed why did the Forest Service not point that out when we presented it? If they are telling the truth, then our Forest Service officials need to learn to write more clearly and think more quickly during presentations. It's possible, however, that we've been confounded by political forces the Forest Service is unwilling to cross. There is no

administrative remedy, they say, only the courts.

I realize that this is "only" recreation, and only winter recreation at that. This issue isn't nearly as important as policy in the Forest Plan regarding wildlife habitat protection or controls on more destructive summer ORV use, grazing, or logging.

However, the decision to gut the motorized closure in Franklin Basin after so much public input demanding protection from the hordes of snowmobiles was so irrational, so obviously the result of sloppy policy-making or behind-the-scenes political influence, that we cannot let it stand. If the Forest Service can't restrict simple recreational use by a small special interest group in winter on a relatively small part of the forest, and is so willing to have their plans perverted by a constituency so intolerant and self-serving, how can they possibly be trusted to develop and implement policy for more important issues such as threatened and endangered species, grazing, logging, and roadless areas?

I'm not sure where this is going. I do know we have a responsibility to remain in the fray, and to try to force a more fair and reasonable winter recreation policy. Our future relationship with this United States Forest Service is on the line. We want our country back.

— Bryan Dixon



# Welcome to BAS

## New Members

Britt Fagerheim  
David Liddell  
Barbara Talbot  
Paula Watkins  
Fred C Brasfield  
Carl Hammar

Janis G Heiner  
Kathleen Howard  
John G Lyne  
G W Scoville  
L V Summers  
Cristy Transtrum

## Renewing Members

Max Elliot Brunson, Jr  
Jane Erickson  
Barbara S Hale  
Rosalie Mueggler  
Richard Ratliff  
Buck Russell  
Mr & Mrs Robert E Taylor

Daniel Webb  
Nancy Williams  
David S Winn  
Dennis D Austin  
John Dymerski  
Kerkman Family  
Julie Ripplinger

## Bridgerland Audubon contacts

### Trustees

2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608; Andreé Walker, 755-2103  
2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Melanie Spriggs, 245-4376; Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041.  
2005-2008 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Richard Mueller, 752-5637; Dick Hurren 435/734-2653

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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



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

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

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 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.