



The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Nordic United v. U. S. Forest Service – Returning Franklin Basin to Non-motorized Use

On Thursday, December 16, Nordic United, Bridgerland Audubon Society, Winter Wildlands Alliance, and Bear River Watershed Council filed suit against the Forest Service in U.S. District Court, seeking to restore the non-motorized area in Franklin Basin established in the 2003 Wasatch Cache National Forest Revised Forest Plan.

The suit was brought because the Forest Service implemented a decision made behind closed doors in July 2005 that cut by over half the area in Franklin Basin originally set aside for non-motorized recreation. The agency acted inappropriately and illegally to change the newly released Forest Plan without soliciting public input or revealing the impacts of opening this unique area to motorized winter use by snowmobiles. Such actions are direct violations

of the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Immediately following the announcement of the Plan in March 2003, snowmobile groups appealed to eliminate the closure. BAS appealed as a friend of the Forest Service, to gain intervener status in other appeals. Two years later, the Chief of the Forest Service denied all appeals. A few days after that, Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture Tenny upheld the Plan by not exercising discretionary review, thus ending the administrative review.

Tenny did, however, ask the Forest Service to engage the two sides in meetings to seek an alternative with “mutually agreeable final boundaries.” The Forest Service complied with his direction and initiated meetings between a half dozen representatives of each side, intended to seek a mutually agreeable alternative.

Snowmobile advocates repeatedly and adamantly opposed any significant closure and the meetings degenerated into a new, untried, and as it turned out, poorly managed “med-arb” process. Under intense political pressure from this handful of individuals, the Forest Service adopted the “motorized alternative” to replace the Franklin Basin closure, and immediately moved to implement it this past July without any public input or comment. This is exactly the kind of action that laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Federal Committee Advisory Act, and the Administrative Procedures Act were designed to prevent.

We tried to find a solution without litigating. In August, we appealed to Faye Krueger, the new Forest Supervisor for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. She was determined to back the outgoing Forest Supervisor’s decision.

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Join the EcoNet!

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—Bryan Dixon

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

- 2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608; André 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

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

- President Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net
- Vice Pres. Bill Masslich, 753-1759, bmasslich@pcu.net
- Outings Dick Hurren, 435/734-2653, hurrens@aol.com
- Secretary Jamey Anderson, 881-1244, jameya@cc.usu.edu
- Treasurer Susan Drown, 752-3797, drown@cc.usu.edu
- Wetlands Alice Lindahl, 753-7744, alindahl@bridgernet.com
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- Hotline Nancy Williams, 757-0185, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
- Webmaster Stephen Peterson 755-5041, clslp@msn.com
- Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu
- Conservation Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com

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.

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*.

Audubon Calendar

January 2006

4 BAS Board of Trustees Meeting. BAS Board of Trustees meets at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the offices of Bio-Resources, 135 E. Center, Logan. All are welcome to attend.

7 Learn How to Attract and Feed Winter Birds. See the various types of feeders, feeds, and water devices in use locally as we visit some people who have really elaborate bird feeding and attraction setups. Bring binoculars and dress for the season. Most of the observing will be done outdoors. Leave at 9 a.m. from the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available; beginning birders are welcome. We will finish up in early afternoon, but people can leave early if they need to. For more information call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653, or Dave and Sue Drown at 752-3797.

12 BAS General Meeting. This winter, BAS is partnering with Stokes Nature Center and Utah Conservation Corps to explore and discuss topics related to sustainable living in Cache Valley. In January, we'll explore the topic of building sustainable communities. Join us at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Logan City Building, 255 N. Main St. in Logan. All are welcome to attend.

14 Waterfowl in Winter: The Sewage Lagoons Again? We will go to the best places for waterfowl based on the weather. This will likely include starting at the Logan Sewage Lagoons, unless they are frozen over. After that we will hit other locations where there is open water on which waterfowl can survive. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available. If you haven't been to the sewage lagoons before, you will be amazed by the numbers and diversity of waterfowl that is there. Dress very warmly, bring binoculars, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. We will be finished around noon. For more information, call Sue or Dave Drown at 752-3797, or Keith Archibald at 752-8258.

28 Skiing, Birds, and Perhaps Beavers. Join local cross country skiing experts Jim Cane and Linda Kervin as they ski/snowshoe to what we hope will still be an active beaver colony to study the inhabitants, their architecture, and their friends. Meet at the Logan First Dam parking lot at 9 a.m.; return early afternoon. Dress warmly and bring your own skis or snowshoes—do not come without one or the other. Bring something to drink and some munchies if you feel so inclined. Some carpooling up to the start of the trail will be available. For more information call Jim or Linda at 713-4668.



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.

February 2006

4 Antelope Island in Winter. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) for a morning and early afternoon of nature watching at Antelope Island State Park in the Great Salt Lake. At this time of year the bison and pronghorn are usually easy to see up close. Coyotes are almost always seen and bighorn sheep are a possibility. Unusual birds are often seen both from the causeway leading to the island and on the island itself. In past years such oddities as snow buntings, black rosyfinches and Lapland longspurs have often been sighted on this trip. Unusual waterfowl are often seen in the lake, and falcons are often seen chasing them to try to have them for dinner. Bring warm clothing, binoculars, and a lunch (or be prepared to buy something at the snack bar on the island. We'll also make a short stop at Mayor's Pond in Brigham City, where unusual waterfowl are often found in winter. We will plan to be back by mid-afternoon. For more information call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

Tell Us What You Think: Extended Forays to More Distant Areas

We intend to take at least three longer, out-of-area trips this year. One of them will be to the Texas Gulf Coast in late April. (We did an absolutely fabulous four-day trip there last year thanks to Val Grant and want to hit some of the places we visited on that trip as well as some new areas.) If you want more information or have ideas on places near the Texas Gulf Coast that you would particularly like to see, please call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653, Val Grant at 753-5370, or Dave or Sue Drown at 752-3797.

We are also planning on doing an overnighter to southwestern Utah (around St. George and Zion National Park) in early spring. If you have interest or there are particular places you would like to visit in these areas, please call Sue, Dave, or Dick.

We would also like to hear your thoughts on other extended forays you think would be of interest. We are thinking of places like Washington's Olympic Peninsula and the Cascades, southern Arizona, or Glacier National Park and surrounding environs. We are also considering another trip to Hawaii in January 2007. Please let us know which of these areas you would like to see, or other areas you would prefer to see.

—Dick Hurren

We've Got Birdseed!!!!

Bridgerland Audubon once again has birdseed for sale! Our regular local seed grower got hit with a crop failure this year, so we've had to scramble to find seeds. The good news is we've succeeded, thanks to the heroic efforts of Allen Christensen and a good-hearted local seed store.

Please order your 50-pound bag (or bags) of black oil sunflower seed by phoning Allen at 258-5018 and leaving him a message. He will deliver the seed to your door! The cost this year will be \$18 per bag.

Thanks for helping BAS and the birds thank you, too!! Sunflower seed is their favorite!

—Sue Drown

Local Notes

Nordic United

(Continued from page 1)

In September, we went to the next level and appealed to the Regional Forester. He said, "[t]here just isn't enough wiggle room in the process to change the decision."

We had no further recourse. The Forest Supervisor suggested that if we didn't like the outcome we should go to court. After hundreds of hours of meetings and participating in good faith, we were let down by the Forest Service. Public forests are for the public, not a few motorized users. The Forest Service took a positive step in 2003 by designating another 1% of the Forest for non-motorized winter recreation (leaving 42% open to snowmobiles). We're only

litigating to make Forest Service administrators listen to the public.

We are NOT litigating against the motorized users. This lawsuit seeks to compel the Forest Service to simply obey the law. We cannot afford to let such a back-room process become the norm, not after having made so much progress in open government over the last few decades.

The legal process provides each side with opportunities to respond. A hearing before Judge Dee Benson will probably be held sometime in late January or early February.

Many employees of the Forest Service understand the importance of non-motorized protections; after all, that's how we got the Revised Plan in the first place. There is still a need, however, to demon-

strate to Forest Service administrators that there are many non-motorized users who value quiet, clean, winter experiences in nature, and who have used and wish to continue to use Franklin Basin without being overrun by snowmobiles. Please take the time to write a letter or email to Rob Cruz, Logan District Ranger, 1500 East Hwy 89, Logan, UT, 84321, or rcruz@fs.fed.us (and send a copy to BAS or bdixon@xmission.com). Rob needs to hear our voices now more than ever before.

You can view maps of the reduced closure and download our formal complaint from: <http://www.brwcouncil.org>.

-Bryan Dixon

Water Development

(Continued from page 2)

The BAS Board of Trustees is watching this issue and trying to decide when and how to intervene. Our interests go far beyond taxes and water rights, to protecting natural resources for wildlife and (hopefully) many generations of County residents

that follow. As famous individuals have noted before, we did not just inherit this world from our ancestors, but are also borrowing it from our descendents.

We'll try to keep you up to date on Bear River water developments (as it were) but things could move

quickly. To get the latest, you may want to subscribe to our Econet email alerts send request to (dixon@xmission.com), or contact Ron Ryel (ron.ryel@usu.edu), a BAS member and long standing member of the Water Advisory Board.

-Bryan Dixon

Chapter Notes

Nominations Sought for BAS Officers

Nominations are now being accepted for BAS officers and board of trustee members. Officers serve a two-year term, board members serve three years. If you have someone you wish to nomi-

nate, please record their name on the form below and send to:

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

Responses are needed prior to February 15, 2006 so that ballots can be posted in the March and April Stilt.

—Val Grant

Nomination Form

Officers for Election to a Two-Year Term:

President	C. Val Grant	_____
Vice President	William Masslich	_____
Treasurer	Sue Drown	_____
Secretary	Jamey Anderson	_____

Trustees for Election to a Three-Year Term

2006-2008	Ron Goede	_____
	Kate Stephens	_____
	Andreé Walker	_____
	Buck Russell	_____

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- Education Jack Greene, 563-6816, jgreene@lhs.logan.k12.ut.us
- Newsletter Miriam Hugentobler, 752-8237, stiltnews@hotmail.com
- 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 Stephen Peterson 755-5041, clslp@msn.com
- Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu
- Conservation Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



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PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001
W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

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