



The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

U.S. Forest Service Lawsuit Settled

We won (for now).

Our lawsuit against the Forest Service for improperly opening up Franklin Basin to snowmachines has been settled. The terms are pretty simple – effective June 1, 2006, the Forest Service will return to the motorized closure set forth in the revised 2003 Forest Plan, for which we all worked so hard and so long.

As you may recall, after years of input and effort, the revised Forest Plan was released in 2003 and closed part of Franklin Basin because snowmachiners were basically overrunning the Logan District, leaving little opportunity for peace and quiet in the winter mountains. There were also increasing conflicts as too many snowmachiners have become belligerent toward non-motorized users in meetings, at trailheads, and in the backcountry. The objective in the Plan was to protect from conflict, fumes, and noise a rela-

tively small area (less than 1% of the Forest) that was high enough to have reliably good snow cover and close enough to trailheads to be accessible to those on foot. This part of the plan was appealed – by snowmachine groups to eliminate any closure and by environmental groups primarily to have standing in the appeal process – but all appeals were denied in March 2005. In May and June of 2005, outgoing Forest Supervisor Tom Tidwell convened private meetings between a few representatives of motorized and non-motorized groups to seek a “mutually agreeable alternative.” Finding none, he unilaterally implemented an alternative designed by motorized representatives that gutted the closure. Immediately after his decision, we met with Forest Service officials, including the new Forest Supervisor and the Intermountain Regional Forester, to ask them to reverse his decision, but we met a brick wall.

Federal law (including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969) requires agencies to analyze alternatives and solicit public input before making major decisions that affect the human and natural environment. If we had let this decision stand, it could have established a very dangerous precedent – get a couple of groups together for meetings behind closed doors, call it “public input,” and then do whatever you want. We had no recourse but to seek redress in the courts, and we filed a formal complaint in December 2005 with the Federal District Court.

In the end, attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice must have realized they would probably lose if the case ever came before a judge, so to avoid wasting any more time and money, they agreed to go back to the boundaries in the 2003 Forest Plan.

It's apparently not over,

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Chapter Notes

Volunteer Opportunity Available: Bear River Bottoms Monitoring

PacifiCorp is considering a request by BAS and The Nature Conservancy of Utah to provide a conservation easement and long term lease for their 1,700 acres of bottomlands along the Bear River between Idaho and Cutler Marsh. These properties were acquired by PacifiCorp in the late 1970s for flood easements, but are difficult for PacifiCorp to manage because they're scattered, hard to access except via water, and outside any of their hydroelectric "projects." We, on the other hand, want these properties as a starting point for protecting and enhancing this entire riparian corridor.

As many of you know, this project has been in the works for several years now (Joan Degiorgio of TNC spoke about the BRB at last year's banquet), and PacifiCorp representatives have been very sympathetic. However, it may take some time to work out the details following PacifiCorp's recent acquisition by MidAmerican Energy Holding Company.

Meanwhile, it's Spring once again! It may take some time for the details to get worked out, but we don't want to lose the opportunity to get some baseline bird data this breeding season. We're working out a protocol with help from the Division of

Wildlife Resources, and we hope to do at least three monitoring trips in May and June to census ten different sites within PacifiCorp holdings.

We need volunteers with: 1) canoes and 2) at least intermediate skills in bird identification, including bird song, to help with the monitoring. Each monitoring team will need at least two people, so one person could provide the boat and the other the identification skills. We'll provide either GPS or detailed maps and some training. If you're interested in helping on this project, contact Bryan Dixon, 752-6830 or bdixon@xmission.com.

—Bryan Dixon

Lawsuit

(continued from p.1)

however. Comments from Faye Krueger, current Forest Supervisor, as reported in the Herald Journal on April 8, are chilling: she wants to reopen the decision yet again (perhaps legally this time) and build an "over-the-

snow" road between Franklin Basin and Tony Grove – right through the motorized closure. The Forest Service will apparently be developing new alternatives as early as this summer. Based on previous comments from snowmachiners demanding an end to restrictions, there's likely to be another contentious debate.

Still, we won and it's gratifying. We were right, we intervened, and the judicial process worked.

Stay tuned. For up-to-date information on this issue (and others) subscribe to the Econet by contacting bdixon@xmission.com.

—Bryan Dixon

Audubon Calendar

May 2006

3 BAS Board of Trustees. Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets at 7 p.m. this Wednesday at the offices of Bio-Resources, 135 E. Center. All are welcome to attend.

6 Breakfast, Sharp-tailed Grouse and General Birding. The wonderful land stewards and ranching family, the Selmans, have again invited us to their property in the foothills at the extreme south end of Cache Valley to view sharp-tailed grouse doing their mating ritual dance on their traditional leks. Some greater sage grouse have also recently been found near the same place. Because we need to be in place by dawn, we will meet at 5 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station and will carpool to the location where the grouse are. Dress warmly, because there is usually a cold wind blowing in the early morning. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Also bring your appetite, because the Selmans cook us a wonderful ranch-style breakfast at the end of the viewing. For more information, call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

13 Steel Canyon and Northwestern Cache Valley with Reinhard Jockel. Reinhard Jockel, a fine birder and a real master of bird songs, will lead us on a trip to observe and learn the songs of migrating songbirds as they pass through birding hot-spots in the northwestern part of Cache Valley. This is a unique area where several habitats come together to make it possible to see lots of different species of songbirds—including the rare blue-gray gnatcatcher. Meet in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) at 8 a.m. Saturday. Carpooling will be available. We will return in early afternoon, between 2 and 3 p.m. Bring water and a lunch. For more information call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

27 Bridgerland Audubon Birdathon. Come join us for a tiring but very fun day of birding that, in addition to the fun, raises money for our Audubon chapter. We divide up into teams, each team competing against the others, and see how many species of birds we can find from dawn to dusk. On one such Bridgerland Audubon birdathon, a team found 135 species. Will anyone be able to beat that record this year? The money angle comes from the fact that we try to get people in the community to pledge an amount for each species that a team sees. (see page 6 for pledge forms). Please come join us this Saturday. You need not spend the whole day. If you already know a team leader you'd like to go with, sign up with her or him. If you don't, call Sue or Dave Drown at 752-3797 or Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653; they will try to find a team with which you are compatible.

Note: You will notice that we have not scheduled an activity for Saturday, April 20. That is because the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival runs from the 18th through the 23rd of April and we do not want to interfere. In fact, we heartily recommend that our friends and members take part in the festival. It is always wonderful.



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.

Chapter Notes

Grab your lawn chair! It's time for...

The Big Sit



Please join us on Saturday, June 3rd for a Big Sit birding activity. Bring your favorite lawn chair, a cool beverage, and relax while watching and listening to the birds in the area. Sounds tough? Big Sits are conducted by birding organizations and birders all over the world, with a U.S. national Big Sit held every October. Several of the Utah Audubon Chapters

and the Utah County Birders have challenged us to count as many bird species as possible within a 24 hour period on June 3rd. Big Sit participants can work in shifts. No one person needs to be there throughout the whole Big Sit! If a bird is seen or heard from within the circle but is too distant to identify, the circle can be left to get a

closer look/listen to confirm the bird's identity. However, any new bird species seen or heard while confirming the original, can't be counted unless it's seen or heard from an "anchor" who stayed behind in your circle, or is seen by you when you return to your circle. The area can be left and returned to as frequently as desired, but you must be sure to return to the exact 17-foot diameter circle each time. If you would like to participate, or nominate an area that will produce the winning number of species, please contact Buck Russell at 755-6534, or winstonga@hotmail.com. It will be a fun day and a chance to showcase Bridgerland Audubon birders against the other birders in the state.

—Buck Russell

Local Notes

Making a Difference:

Spring Forest Route Workshop

Would you like to hike and explore the local mountains and at the same time, make a difference?

This is your chance to learn how.

Two workshops (in Ogden and Logan) will teach citizens like you how to document recreational impacts in our National Forests.

Citizen-volunteers will walk local Forest Service routes and when they witness impacts such as unauthorized roads, severe rutting, and dispersed camping damage, take digital photos and GPS (Global Positioning System) waypoints.

The resulting information will be entered into an online database developed by Great Old Broads for Wilderness. The data will be available for scientists who will analyze and

assess the impacts of various uses in the context of the broader forest landscape. This is a very powerful tool, and your contribution to this process can make a meaningful difference in the future condition of our local forests.

The workshop will include a 2-hour class session and an afternoon field trip to practice data collection skills. The workshop will cover the use of GPS units and what type of impacts to photograph. There will be extra cameras and GPS units available.

If you, your organization, or others are interested in attending, please contact Dan Miller at (435) 258-4432 or Dmill235@aol.com to reserve a space.

Workshops are sponsored by Bear River Watershed Council, the

Ogden Group of the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and Wild Utah Project.

Ogden
Saturday, May 13, 2006
Ogden Nature Center
966 W. 12th St.

Logan
Saturday, June 3, 2006
Edith Bowen Elementary
Laboratory School on the
USU Campus

Schedule

- 10 a.m. Class
- 12 p.m. Bring your own lunch (fruit and juice provided)
- 1-5 p.m. Field workshop

For more information see BRWC's Web site at: www.BRWCouncil.org

—Dan Miller

Chapter Notes

Birdathon 2006

BAS count teams are forming up, ready to take on the 24-hour count challenge called the Birdathon! Who will find the greatest number of bird species on count day? Which team will attract the most sponsorship dollars? No matter who wins, the Birdathon guarantees a great day of birding and a great opportunity to financially support habitat improvement in our beloved Cache Valley!

Years have passed since our last Birdathon, so here's a reminder. The Birdathon goes like this—team participants select one day (May 27th). We wake up at 4 a.m., and we go birding in count teams for 18 hours straight, trying to see as many different species as possible. All you others get to sleep in. But, because you care about the quality of habitat in Cache Valley, and because you feel for our slightly-crazed Quixote-

like zeal, you pledge to donate an amount of money per species that your count team finds. This year, all the support will go towards improving bird habitat right here at home.

So, please, join a team or pledge your support. You can do so right now—just fill out the pledge form below. All pledges are fully tax-deductible contributions to BAS. And thanks!

—Sue Drown

HERE'S TO A GREAT BIRDATHON 2006!!

I am happy to pledge \$_____ per species in support of the 2006 BAS Birdathon. I'll support the winning team.

I am happy to pledge \$_____ per species in support of the 2006 BAS Birdathon. I'll sponsor the following team: _____.

I prefer to pledge the enclosed gift of \$_____.

Please mail this pledge form to:

Bridgerland Audubon Society
c/o Sue Drown
1776 E 1400 N
Logan, UT 84341

Any questions?
Call Sue Drown at 752-3797.

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Mary E Carigan
Deborah A Gilbert
Harold Rossow

Renewing Members

C A Benson
Mike & Cathy Bullock
Keith L Dixon
Stephen Peterson
Lana Powell
Mimi Recker

Charles L Salzberg
G W Scoville
Dr R J Shaw
Marie Veibell
J Norton & G Wootton

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

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

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

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Webmaster	Stephen Peterson 755-5041, cllsp@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, 752-5637, 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*.



The Stilt

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

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Visit our website: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org>

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