



# The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

## Utah Bioneers are Back

### Third Annual Conference at USU this month

The third annual Utah Bioneers conference takes place October 20-23 at Eccles Conference Center on the Utah State University campus. Many say this is the best sustainability and environmental conference in the country.

Bioneers means Biological Pioneers. The first Bioneers conference was held in 1990. The international conference is now held each year in San Rafael, California. More than 3,400 attend the national conference. Given its popularity, it is beamed to 17 U.S. sites by satellite.

The Utah Bioneers are proud to provide one of these live satellite feeds of the national Bioneers conference. Utah Bioneers conference attendees will see internationally known plenary speakers from the national event.

The Utah Bioneers, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, will also present their own terrific keynote speakers in Logan.

On Friday evening, October 20, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson will speak on global warming at the Logan Tabernacle. His presentation is open to the public at no cost.

On Saturday morning, October 21, Utah Bioneers will present one of America's best thinkers on sustainable communities and

regionalism in the west. Daniel Kemmis, from Missoula, MT, is a respected author, speaker, and former Missoula mayor and Montana legislator.

In addition, Utah Bioneers will produce more than 30 local workshops with northern Utah experts at the Eccles Center and in Vernal and Brigham City on a variety of subjects. Check out the full program at <http://extension.usu.edu/bioneers>.

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Salt Lake City Mayor  
Rocky Anderson



Author Daniel Kemmis



# Developing Bear River Water: Is it necessary and are there alternatives?

By Amy Defreese  
Utah Rivers Council

Imagine the Great Salt Lake without the Bear River. In other words, imagine it with 60 percent less contributing surface flow. Without the Bear River, the Great Salt Lake would be a fraction of its current size. Over time, acres of playa, wet meadow, and emergent marsh wetlands, in addition to some of the world's most specialized migratory bird habitat, would disappear.

## **Dams and Diversions Proposed for the Bear**

Yet water suppliers propose to create massive diversions and send Bear River water south to address a projected water deficit that cannot justify the ensuing monetary and ecological costs. Bear River development would cost Utah taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and reduce the average annual outflow of the Bear by 18 percent in a low water year, and up to 70 percent in a high water year.

Where did this idea originate? Under the Bear River Development Act, the legislature directed the Division of Water Resources to develop

220,000 acre-feet of municipal water for distribution among the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, Weber Basin Water Conservancy District, Cache County and the Bear River Water Conservancy District. The State now proposes to construct a two-phase, \$680 million project on the Bear. Yet the State's own numbers demonstrate that at the limits of their projections (2050), the predicted deficits are less than 20,000 acre-feet at the county level. The proposed solution is 11 times larger than the predicted problem.

## **Compelling Alternatives to Dams and Diversions**

Of the numerous methods other states and municipalities in the West have used to address water supply issues, there are two that have a history of success: water conservation and agricultural water transfers.

## **Water Conservation in Utah**

By the year 2050, the State of Utah aims to reduce water usage on a per capita level by 25 percent, or from 321 gpcd (gallons per capita per day) in 1995 to 241 gpcd in 2050. Already between 1995 and 2003,

Utah achieved a 17 percent reduction in water use. In contrast, Albuquerque, New Mexico achieved a 34 percent reduction in water use from 1995-2005, decreasing usage from 250 gpcd to 174 gpcd. It furthermore set a new goal for itself to achieve an additional 40 percent reduction by the year 2014. Clearly, the State of Utah can do more.

## **Agricultural Water Transfers in Utah**

As the population along the Wasatch Front grows, lands currently used for agricultural purposes will convert to residential uses. Consequently, agricultural water rights will be available for conversion to municipal and industrial uses. The State estimates that across the project area, approximately 209,000 acre-feet of agricultural water will be available for conversion by the year 2050.

## **Alternatives exist at a cost significantly less than dams and diversions**

The Council compared the cost of two alternatives, water conservation and agricultural water trans-

*(Continued on page 6)*



# Audubon Calendar

October 2006

**5 BAS Board of Trustees Meeting.** Bridgerland Audubon's board of trustees meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend.

**7 Our Annual Visit to Area Historical Barns.** This will be the fourth time we have done this trip and it gets better every year. An effort is underway to preserve certain barns in and around Cache Valley that are of special historical significance. Join us as resident expert Lisa Goede takes us to some of these beautiful structures that are a part of our heritage, and tells us about their historical significance and uniqueness. This year we plan to go a bit further afield and visit barns in the Mink Creek, Emigration Canyon. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring a lunch and binoculars if you have them, because in previous years we have found both barn owls and great horned owls roosting in the barns. Carpooling will be available. For further information, call Lisa 752-9650, or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

**12 BAS General Meeting.** Wayne Martinson, director of Utah's Important Bird Area (IBA) program, will present past and current work being done to identify, monitor and conserve sites for birds. IBAs are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. Cache Valley is home to the Cutler Marsh/Amalga Barrens IBA, which supports one of the largest white-faced ibis rookeries in North America. Recent monitoring of this rookery will be instrumental in qualifying Cutler Marsh as a globally significant IBA. Our bird identification workshop will highlight some common and unusual migrating waterfowl making their way through the valley in the coming month. Caffé Ibis and Crumb Brothers will provide refreshments. Join us at our new location, the Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors.

**14 Our Quarterly Roadside Cleanup Plus Birding.** Some years ago, BAS assumed responsibility for cleaning up litter along a stretch of road west of Richmond. It is currently time again to discharge this responsibility. We thus put out a plea for support from all those who benefit from BAS activities. 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 at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). 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 some birding afterwards; if you do, bring binoculars and something to snack on. For more information call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

**21 Support the Bioneers Conference.** No field trip is scheduled for this weekend because we will be lending our support to the annual Bioneers conference, which runs from October 20 through 22.



*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.*



**28 A Wild Ride through the Wilds of Western Box Elder County.** In response to requests from prior years' participants, we are offering this outing yet again. Several participants have dubbed it the "funnest" field trip they have ever been on. If you've never been to western Box Elder County, you owe it to yourself to come on this trip. We'll head out to the Spiral Jetty and Locomotive Springs via the Golden Spike National Historic Site. Then we'll go north to Snowville and have a late lunch at Molly's Restaurant (or you can bring your own lunch) before returning to Cache Valley in mid-afternoon. Bring binoculars and plenty of water. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available. For more information call Dick Hurren at (435) 743-2653.

## November

**4 Birding the South End of Cache Valley.** Spend a morning looking for migrating waterfowl, hawks, and other birds of interest with local experts Sue and Dave Drown. For the last two years we have had a very productive fun time birding this area. Probable stops include Hyrum Reservoir for ducks (in past years we have seen long-tailed ducks, trumpeter swans, and surf scoters) and loons, the Little Bear River bottom west of Paradise, and the fields, power poles, and brush in between. Beginning birders are welcome. Carpooling will be available. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and a snack, and dress for the season. We will be back early afternoon. For more information call Sue or Dave Drown at 752-3797.



Remember that gasoline is still very expensive, so if you are carpooling with someone, please remember to ask if you can help defray the cost of your driver's gasoline.

# Announcements

**Boating the Bear Available Again.** We've reprinted Boating the Bear; contact Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com for copies (\$15 each). Boating the Bear is the only river pilot to paddling 415 miles of the Bear River from Evanston, Wyoming to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

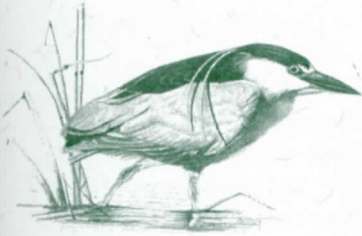
## Volunteers Wanted

**Editor, Boating the Bear.** Volunteer with excellent writing skills and reasonable paddling skills needed to update launch descriptions, etc. to bring this 1992 guide to the Bear River up to date. Major tasks are to update information on put-ins and take-outs, update sections below Soda Springs, etc.; editor doesn't need to paddle the entire river for this revision. Contact Bryan Dixon, 752-6830.

**Bio-blitzers.** Volunteers needed for intensive survey of land and water features of the 2,000 acres of PacifiCorp lands along the Bear River that are being considered for the Bear River Bottoms project. GPS experience helpful but not essential. We also need a few individuals with good plant identification skills. Volunteers needed for October 10, 11, and 12. Call Bryan Dixon, 752-6830 for more information.



# Conservation News



## Bear River Bottoms

We continue to help establish a conservation easement and land management agreement between PacifiCorp and The Nature Conservancy for up to 2,000 acres of Bear River bottomlands between the Idaho state line and Amalga, Utah. Recent work included a preliminary weed survey that indicated noxious weeds are a serious but not severe problem, talks with adjacent landowners who appear to be tentatively supportive, and a database for bird sightings and photo records keyed to the various parcels. On September 6, we met with PacifiCorp land managers to determine exact boundaries, particularly important because there are several debris piles on the edges of PacifiCorp parcels. October 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12, we're conducting a "bio-blitz" to visit each of the 65 parcels to determine exact locations of significant features (water features, structures, pumps, fences, debris piles, etc.)

and delineate vegetation communities and patches of invasive plants.

## Utah Rivers Council and the Bear River

Utah Rivers Council presented a report on alternatives to another dam on the Bear River at the September BAS Board meeting (see related story, p.2). It appears there are easier and much cheaper – not to mention less environmentally destructive – ways to supply Wasatch Front water needs through 2050 than building new diversions that take critical water from the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Get the report at [www.utahrivers.org](http://www.utahrivers.org). BAS will be sending a letter of support.

## Forest Plan

We're still waiting for the Forest Service to release their Environmental Assessment on changes to the Franklin Basin winter motorized closures following the scoping process conducted last spring. The Forest Service will be trying to implement changes for this winter, so when the EA is released, we won't have much time to submit comments. (Join the Econet to get up to date information on this development). We're also waiting for preliminary

documents on the new Summer Travel Plan updates. The Bear River Watershed Council continues to inventory legal and illegal motorized use on the forest. There are numerous new "roads" and "trails" being illegally created by renegade ATVs and motorcycles, though many motorized users seem to be respecting established road closures.

## Cove Dam Removal

In response to several failures of the flume supplying the Cove Power Plant (on the Bear River near the towns of Grace and Niter in Idaho), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission required substantial reconstruction if PacifiCorp wanted to continue to use the facility. PacifiCorp determined that the benefits of operating the Cove Dam and Power Plant would not justify the repair costs, and is now removing the flume and the dam. They will restore the river to a natural condition, including removing sediments trapped behind the dam, establishing new alignments for the river channel, and restoring native vegetation. It's rare to have a dam removed; we hope PacifiCorp does the same high quality job on this project that they did at Cutler Reservoir.

By Bryan Dixon  
BAS Conservation Chair

## Bear River

*(continued from p.2)*

fers, to that of Bear River dams and diversions. We determined that alternatives clearly trump development in cost-effectiveness. Dams and diversions on the Bear will cost \$420 million, in 2006 dollars, to deliver the first 75,000 acre-feet of water to the Wasatch Front. This translates to approximately \$5,600 per acre-foot. In comparison, by utilizing water conservation and available agricultural water transfers, the State can cut costs to \$1,600/ acre-foot developed ... a cost savings of

\$4,000 per acre-foot!

### The Council's Recommendation

There is a solution to the predicted water deficit that does not require dams and diversions on the Bear at an unprecedented cost to Utah's taxpayers. In its analysis, the Council reviewed several scenarios and recommended the following:

- Both the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District and the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District should increase their water conservation goal to 35 percent by 2050, a 10 percent increase from the existing goal;

- The Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District should also utilize 20 percent of the agricultural water transfers available in 2050.

These alternatives are achievable. In fact, under the Council's recommended increase in conservation, per capita use in 2050 would be equal to the per capita water use today in several western cities.

Read the Council's full analysis and investigate opportunities to take action at [www.utahrivers.org](http://www.utahrivers.org).

# Join Econet

Want to get the latest in environmental happenings in northern Utah? Join the Econet email mailing list. Send an email requesting to join to [bdixon@xmission.com](mailto:bdixon@xmission.com). You'll get occasional emails alerting you to take action, but also announcing field trips and other fun events. Anyone who's on the list can submit an environmental announcement for distribution. All email addresses are hidden from the other recipients, the list is NEVER distributed, and we only send text, never attachments.



# Welcome to BAS

## New Members

Burke Cannon  
Rula Smart  
Ollie Stamps  
George Stewart

## Renewing Members

Michael C Amacher  
R Keith Archibald  
Patricia Bahler  
Debby Bronson & Graham Hunter  
Carl Brothersen  
Gerald A Brunner  
Max Elliot Brunson, Jr  
Phyllis Conover

John Dymerski  
Jack Greene  
Barbara S Hale  
Joanne Hughes  
Linnea Johnson  
Linda Kervin & Jim Cane  
James D Morgan  
Rosalie Mueggler  
Robert Newhall  
Sandra Romesburg

Buck Russell  
Thomas Schroeder  
Nancy Williams

# Bridgerland Audubon contacts

## Trustees

- 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; David Liddell, 245-2705
- 2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Bret Selman, (435) 257-5260

## Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

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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, 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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**Logan, Utah 84323-3501**

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