

# Save Our Canyons

Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons

[www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org)

Winter, 2008 - 09

## SOC's Editor Tells the Story of His Involvement in Wasatch Conservation Issues.

(This is Part II of the new and ongoing series of why and how  
SOC activists were drawn to local conservation issues).

PHOTO: *Alexis Kelner on the summit of Symmetry Spire in the Tetons.  
Summer, 1957*

*Save Our Canyons is a  
committee of citizen activists  
"dedicated to the preservation  
of Wasatch canyons,  
mountains, and foothills."*

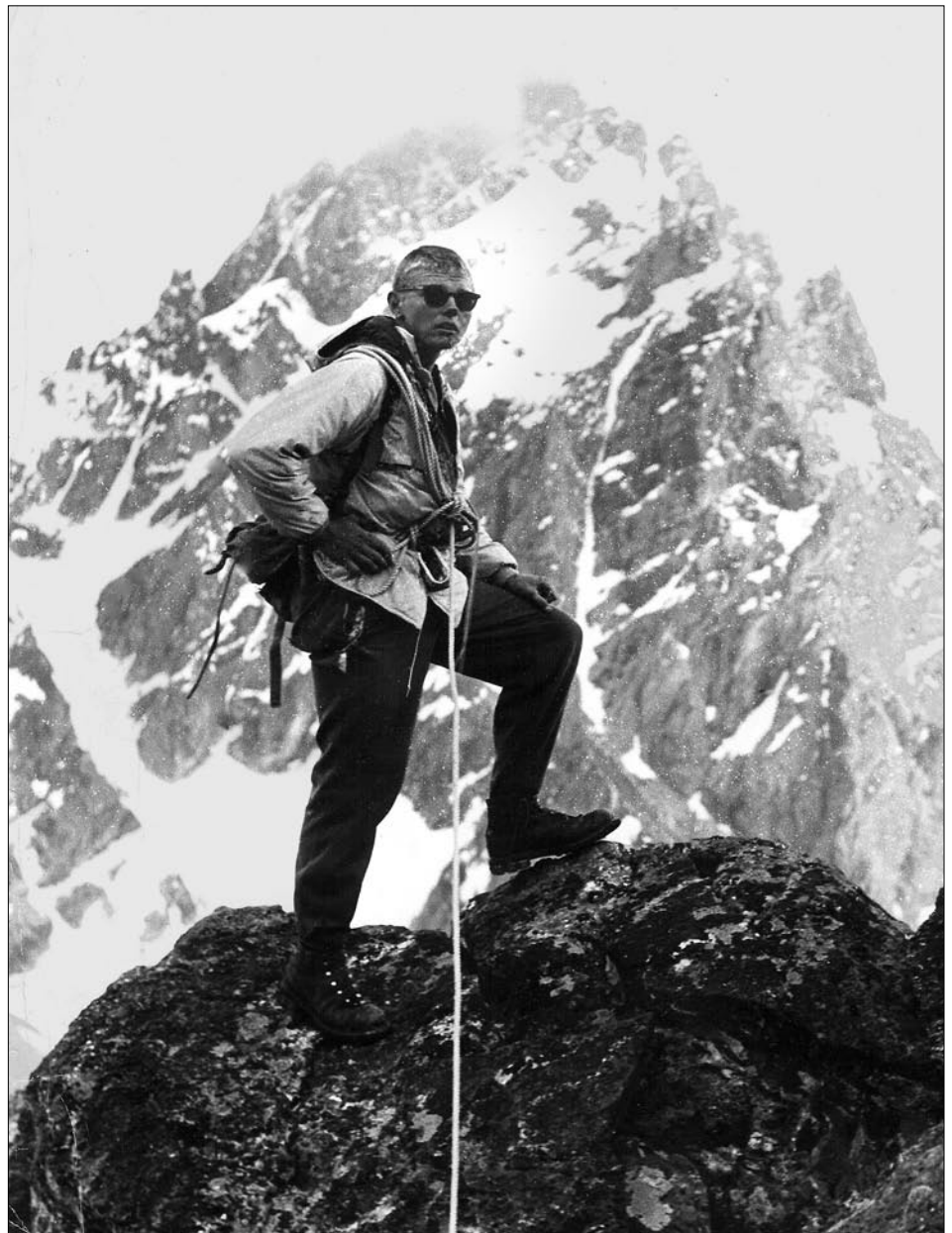
*Save Our Canyons*  
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of the Citizens' Committee  
to Save Our Canyons

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ALEXIS KELNER,  
Perennial Editor

GALE DICK,  
Associate Perennial Editor





## President's Message

### “Bidder 70”

Tim DeChristopher, aka “bidder 70,” emerged as a hero of civil disobedience when, last December 19, in a moment of inspiration, he disrupted an auction of oil leases on federal Bureau of Land Management land. You have no doubt read about how he walked into the auction after visiting a protest gathering outside, accepted the offer of a bidding paddle and then started lifting that paddle raising the ante by upping the bids. He ended up actually winning bids to the tune of \$1.8 million, for which he never had the resources or the intent to pay. He has explained his actions in an interview that you can watch on YouTube\* where he comes across as thoughtful, clear-minded about what he did and willing to accept the consequences.

With the exception of the miffed legitimate bidders, many have cheered his actions, which could (and did) delay ultimate decisions on what to do about the messed up auction until the Obama administration gets (and is apparently becoming) involved in the issue. Editorials in local and national papers have praised him. He has been offered pro bono legal representation by prominent attorneys. Many donors have contributed to an impressive and growing fund to make good on DeChristopher's bids.

The hasty auctions enabling oil exploration in areas adjacent to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks as well as in residential neighborhoods of Moab have been deplored in editorials and by organizations and individuals seeking protection, not exploitation, of Utah's unique and beautiful canyon country. The haste of the BLM in trying to lease scenic and sensitive lands in southern Utah and Colorado and the shoddiness of the process by which the areas were evaluated have been a part of the scramble by the past Bush administration to leave a legacy of privatization of federal lands and of their administration by the Forest Service and the BLM. This would be a legacy that would drastically affect Utah where 63% of the land is federally owned.

DeChristopher said that he was spurred into his

actions by disillusionment with common efforts to protest unpopular government actions such as letter writing to congressmen and women, petitions, peaceful demonstrations, law suits and Op-Ed jeremiads.

All of this has led to a certain amount of soul searching among the members of Save Our Canyons. Why didn't we think of something like that? We once thought of chaining ourselves to a cliff destined to be blasted to “improve” a ski run at Alta, but never did it. Perhaps we have missed opportunities by shying away from civil disobedience as an effective and honorable tactic. One could argue that the Forest Service and the BLM themselves often maneuver to avoid the requirements of federal law and that this is a sort of civil (or governmental) disobedience by the agencies themselves. Conservation organizations often find themselves challenging these shenanigans in court. Why not enter the free-for-all flouting the rules like the agencies do?

For better or worse, SOC hasn't taken this path. In its 37-year history it has used the tools offered by the law and by regulations to participate in the processes set in place by NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. SOC has worked with national, state, county and municipal governments as well as businesses and civic organizations inching its way toward solutions in the battle between development and conservation. This route has often been disappointingly ineffective, but we believe it shouldn't be abandoned. Never give up and stay with it for the long haul.

But we have to take our hats off to DeChristopher who had the guts and imagination to use the system against itself and the dignity to say that he is willing, like Socrates himself, to accept the consequences of his actions.

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\* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D067bg4MSVA>  
and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LB\\_3jcrNY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LB_3jcrNY)

# My Involvement with Wasatch Conservation Issues

by ALEXIS KELNER, SOC'S CO-FOUNDER AND TRUSTEE

I was born in Riga, Latvia in 1938 on the eve of the Bolshevik takeover of the small, independent country in the Baltic region of Europe. The new socialist government "nationalized" our family home, a multi-story apartment house. Two years later, the German army invaded, occupied Latvia, and installed an equally repressive fascist government. During autumn, 1944 the Russian army again assumed control of the small country. To evade the Communist repression everyone had already experienced my parents filled two suitcases with bare necessities, and with me in tow, abandoned our home and homeland. We were in Sonneberg, Germany when World War II came to an end.

With no country to return to we had joined the ranks of several million similarly displaced individuals. The United Nations classified us as Displaced Persons (DPs). The U.S. Army moved my family three or four times from one DP camp to another. Ultimately we were settled at a Displaced Persons Assembly Center near the town of Berchtesgaten, at the base of the German Alps. With no employment in the immediate post-war period, hiking in the nearby mountains became one means of maintaining one's sanity. Such family outings were my first introduction to the beauty and serenity found in the foothills, canyons, and mountains of the Alps.

My love for Utah's magnificent public lands commenced during the mid-1950s, while I was studying aviation in a Civil Air Patrol cadet program. I had been interested in aviation since grade school and had been planning to make a career in the U.S. Air Force. Frequent flights, as a student observer on various civilian and military aircraft, further reinforced my interests. My soon-to-be military career evaporated on discovery of astigmatism and nearsightedness during a pre-induction physical examination required of all registrants for the draft.

Two of my Civil Air Patrol squadron's senior advisors were also active in the National Speleological So-

ciety (NSS), an association of amateur cave explorers and professional speleologists; its local branches were called "grottoes." They invited me on several Salt Lake Grotto sponsored outings. By that time I had also discovered hiking, rock climbing, and generic mountaineering.

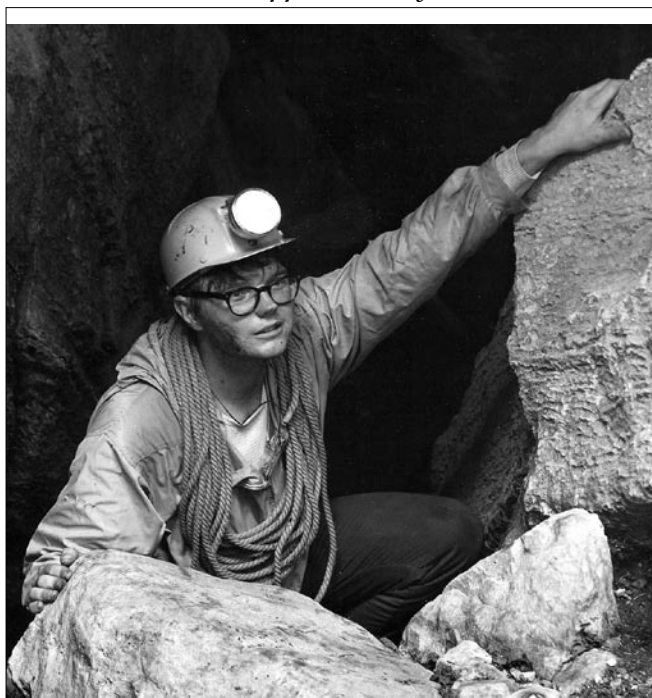
My climbing skills led to participation in a cave mapping expedition of Neffs Cave, located in a small drainage a couple of miles above Salt Lake's Olympus Cove subdivision. The cave was a narrow fissure that descended steeply through layers of limestone and shale; numerous vertical drops made descents especially dangerous and challenging. Over the years several groups had made attempts to reach the cave's bottom. In 1953 a trio of Wasatch Mountain Club climbers finally reached its terminus. Much speculation as to the cave's actual depth followed; some believed it was the deepest cave in the region.

The mapping expedition was led by Caine Alder, a participant in the 1953 descent. Our expedition included a geologist, two engineers, a cave surveyor, and me. Our team entered the cave at 6:00 am on a mid-October day in 1956 and exited 26 hours later. Analysis of our measurements determined the cave's depth to be 1,186 ft. below the surface. It proved to be the

deepest cave in the U.S. Since that time numerous American caves have surpassed Neffs Cave's depth. At present Neffs is considered to be the 12th deepest in the U.S.

During my senior year in high school my interests in speleology and mountaineering merged with my interests in skiing. At about that time I had joined the Wasatch Mountain Club where I met—and climbed with—Cal Giddings, a recently appointed Assistant Research Professor in the University of Utah's Department of Chemistry. Aware of my interest in science he helped me obtain a part-time job with the department and later hired me as his part-time research assistant.

*Alexis Kelner, at the entrance of Neffs Cave.  
Photo: approximately 1965.*



My continued outdoor activities with the mountain club and rock climbing activities with Giddings broadened my appreciation and love for the Wasatch Mountains. During the spring and summer of 1958 Giddings, I, and Dick Bell (another club member) made two major first rock climbing ascents on the south flank of Lone Peak.

During the early 1960s I developed an interest in photography and journalism and began taking classes in those subjects. One of the classes was magazine article writing. It was taught by Milton Holstein, head of the department. I was the only student in his class who submitted stories for consideration by actual publishers. I sold two illustrated articles, one to the *Salt Lake Tribune's HOME* magazine and one to *New Mexico* magazine, that state's equivalent to *Arizona Highways*.

The *Tribune's* Editor, Roy Hudson, encouraged me to submit more articles. I became Publicity Director for the Wasatch Mountain Club and in that capacity kept the paper supplied with numerous outdoor recreation stories. Eventually my interests broadened to include other subjects.

Cal Giddings' recreational interests and love for the nearby mountains mirrored mine and we were soon lamenting the fate of the Wasatch if continued development of ski areas was allowed to spread into the Little Cottonwood drainages to the west of Alta. Late in 1964 Giddings and I co-authored an article (published in *Summit* magazine) proposing the creation of a Wilderness Area surrounding Lone Peak and including the terrain west of Alta. Local U.S Forest officials responded favorably, but were overridden by their Washington superiors. The wilderness proposal was shelved until the Forest Service completed roadless area reviews and evaluations mandated by the Wilderness Act and the courts.

In the late 1960s representatives of several Utah environmental groups organized the Lone Peak Wilderness Committee to focus on wilderness designation for the area. I participated by designing and producing a widely distributed "LONE PEAK WILDERNESS PROPOSAL" flyer and photographic exhibit, and giving slide presentations to numerous civic organizations and governmental entities.

Our efforts resulted in unanimous endorsement of the "wilderness concept" by the Salt Lake County Commission and a United States Senate bill, sponsored by Sen. Frank E. Moss, to establish the Lone Peak Wilderness.

Late in 1972 Physics Prof. Gale Dick, biochemistry Research Professor Floyd Sweat, and I founded the CITIZENS' COMMITTEE TO SAVE OUR CANYONS. Our small group hoped to counteract development pressures being exerted on Wasatch Front public land management agencies by real estate, ski resort, and other commercial interests. We joined several other Utah conservation groups in active lobbying on behalf of wilderness designation for the Lone Peak area.

Noting that the area should undergo "an intensive study and review process," the Forest Service again

argued against the Lone Peak bill. Senator Moss re-introduced his bill, this time accompanied by a House bill sponsored by newly elected Congressman Wayne Owens, on whose campaign I had worked as photographer, writer, and advertising consultant. Forest Service officials again scuttled the effort.

In March, 1977 Idaho's U.S. Senator Frank Church and Arizona Congressman Morris K. Udall (along with 60 co-sponsors) introduced the ENDANGERED AMERICAN WILDERNESS ACT OF 1977 that singled out fourteen *critical* western forest lands for statutory protection. The Lone Peak area served as flagship for this legislation. The Forest Service opposed the legislation based on the notion that a wilderness could not exist within "sights and sounds" of civilization. Newly elected President Jimmy Carter convinced his subordinates to drop their opposition.

The Lone Peak wilderness debate focused, for a good part, on the question of "ideal" recreational and land-use balance in the proximity of Snowbird ski resort. Resort officials had set their eyes on the summit of American Fork Twin Peaks for a second tramway, and on White Pine Gulch for ski area expansion. Their marketing director stated that inclusion of White Pine into the wilderness would result in Snowbird's becoming an "uneconomic resort unit." Congressman Wayne Owens countered that including Twin Peaks and White Pine into the bill "is merely an attempt to restore balance to the development of our mountains." The Mormon church's conservative newspaper, the *Deseret News*, polled the public and reported that a solid majority of local residents were opposed to further development in the canyons. They editorialized in support of including White Pine in the wilderness and the wilderness effort in general:

*"There is already a great deal of ski development in Utah. But wilderness – particularly wilderness located next door to major population centers – is a limited commodity."*

Utah's political fortunes changed radically during the 1974 and 1976 elections, when three ultra-conservative — and virulent anti-environmental Republicans, Orrin Hatch, Jake Garn, and Dan Marriott — were elected to Congress. All three opposed the wilderness designation. Jake Garn suggested that "eastern liberals" were pushing wilderness and used watershed protection as the basis of his opposition!

I, and several Wasatch Mountain Club activists, invited Senator Orrin Hatch to visit the Lone Peak area and see for himself why we were pushing for protection that only the Wilderness Act could offer. He accepted the invitation and enjoyed the hike part way up to Red Pine Lake, joking, along the way, that the area really should be opened to Winnebagos.

In the meantime, Salt Lake City's Mayor Ted Wilson convinced the head of the city's Water Department to abandon his long-standing opposition to wilderness designation. Perhaps due to public pressure (or to deal-making with other Congressmen) Utah's entire Congressional delegation eventually signed on as co-

*Alexis Kelner, photographed during  
a 1958 spring ski tour  
above Alta's Cardiff Pass*



sponsors, or voted in favor, of the Endangered American Wilderness act of 1977.

Due to pressure from Snowbird officials, the Chamber of Commerce, and various area businesses American Fork Twin Peaks, White Pine, and some other sections of land were ultimately withdrawn from the legislation that created Lone Peak Wilderness, Utah's first wilderness area. The successful outcome took fourteen years' of civic activism by many Wasatch Front residents, organizations, and even a few progressive businesses.

My wife Karla and I participated actively in promoting wilderness designation for Lone Peak and later the other Wasatch Front and Uinta Mountains areas. I made two lobbying trips to Washington, D.C. to encourage congressional staffs to support wilderness designations. Representing Save Our Canyons, the Wasatch Mountain Club, and the Utah Chapter Sierra Club, I testified twice before Congressional land and resource sub-committees. One of the trips was funded, to a great extent, by R.E.I.

My activism on behalf of land preservation was not limited to the mountains in our back yard. I participated in the Escalante Wilderness Committee, a precursor activist group to the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. Our modest proposal included about a third of the acreage that was ultimately preserved by President Clinton when he designated the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

I, as well as many others involved in wilderness leg-

islation proposals were discouraged when qualifying land parcels such as American Fork Twin Peaks and White Pine Gulch were excised at the request of ski resort interests.

The effort to reunite those two areas to Lone Peak Wilderness – as well as to enlarge the nearby Twin Peaks and Mt. Olympus wilderness areas – was renewed by Save Our Canyons in 2008. The new effort has the full support of Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County mayors as well as the City's watershed management officials. Salt Lake City's WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN, in fact, urges enlargement of the wilderness areas *for the purpose of watershed protection*. Many businesses, dependent on non-motorized mountain recreation, also support the new effort.

Preservation of wilderness quality lands, I felt then, still feel today, and will continue to feel till my last breath, is for the benefit of many future generations.

## Erratum

Correction for the article  
"AVALANCHE CONTROL IN UPPER LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON"  
in SOC's last newsletter:

On p. 5 in the section "FUNDING FOR ALTERNATIVES TO ARTILLERY OVER ALTA" the end of the first sentence should read:

*"...calling for 25 exploders and 7 shelters to target 20 slide zones, might cost over \$4 million."*

# One Episcopalian's View on the Environment

BY REV. DAVE SAKRISON  
St. Francis Episcopal Church; Moab, Utah

Where to begin? The previous writers in this series have pretty much said it all. They have eloquently and articulately expressed not only what I believe in but have given me some new insight and for that I am grateful. What truly is a common thread throughout the essays is that there is a common concern and awareness of this time and place in our human history. Another thing I find is that all the diverse faiths have so much in common. We as a species are at a critical juncture, what we do or choose not to do will have consequences.

The Episcopal Church is made up of many diverse people and therefore many diverse views and beliefs; this is my way of saying that the views that I express in this article are my own and not necessarily those of the Episcopal Church.

My first real awareness of environmental issues did not come from a religious perspective or teachings but from my sixth grade teacher Mrs. Jorgenson at E.C. Hughes Elementary School in Seattle. She obviously had made a lasting impression on me. Back then (mid-fifties) she was known not as an environmentalist but a conservationist. Her beliefs, concerns and advice have stayed with me throughout my life and, as my belief system has grown, I have connected her love and concern for the environment to my religious beliefs.

As a member of the Episcopal faith I subscribe to the words of our Baptismal Covenant particularly the last three questions and responses:

*Celebrant:* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

*People:* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant:* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

*People:* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant:* Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

*People:* I will, with God's help.

As an Episcopalian I have an obligation to see God in all things knowing that all of creation is my neighbor and that I have an ethical and moral mandate in caring for and sustaining all of creation. I realize that all of creation is interconnected and that no part of creation can be separated from the whole. To do so violates the covenant. I believe that I am part of creation and that I am creator myself. I have an ongoing relationship with all things, a cause and effect relationship if you will. My faith asks me to consciously live in this way and I try to do so; it is a holistic approach to living and looking at life and the world. It brings a certain balance to all that I do and think.

The Hopi Indians have a word which I think reflects the current state of our world and the lives we are living, the word **Koyaanisqatsi** (which was also the title of a film in the 80's). It means 'crazy life, life in turmoil, life out of balance, life disintegrating, a state of life that calls for another way of living'. This world has become out of balance. We live in a finite world

with finite resources and yet our desire to consume and live the way we do does not reflect this reality.

As the mayor of Moab I am often asked what motivates my stance on environmental issues and some of the environmental goals that our community has achieved. Obviously my religious beliefs come into play but I think more importantly (and the answer I often give) is "because it is the right thing to do." Our lives and our planet are out of balance and it is up to each of us as individuals to try to bring some balance back into it all. Whether you are religious or not, individually we need to take responsibility and set an example for our children our neighbors and our communities. The example we set and live by will create change and awareness and hopefully balance. Our responsibility to bring balance back into this world lies not only to all of humanity and creation but more importantly to those yet to come. The crisis we all face is not a religious issue; if our collective faiths and beliefs can help motivate people and help solve the problems all the better. We need to reach out, educate, sound the alarm to the population at large and elect people and leaders that understand not only the problem but have



*Moab Mayor Sakrison kept Moab from having to accept oil leases in Moab and the surrounding area*

an idea of what the solutions are as well.

It is the right thing to do...the clock is ticking...take responsibility.

In closing I would recommend a couple of books  
SIMPLER LIVING COMPASSIONATE LIFE by Michael Shut, the

PLAN B books by Lester Brown, and an excellent article by Auden Schendler in the Jan/Feb 2009 issue of *Orion Magazine*. □

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## Wilderness Update

BY GALE DICK, SOC PRESIDENT

Much has been going on in the long process of gathering support for Save Our Canyons' and Salt Lake City's Wilderness extension and watershed protection proposal. Many people and organizations have been working hard and long to bring this effort to a successful conclusion and they deserve the thanks of citizens of the Salt Lake valley and the rest of the nation.

Starting last September, a series of unusual and intense meetings has been taking place under the auspices of Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. Over the last four months a group of stakeholders in the management of the central Wasatch has met eleven times – with more meetings to come. The subject of these meetings has been proposed congressional Wilderness status for Forest Service roadless areas adjacent to existing Wilderness areas in the central Wasatch Range, proposals that started with the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities and have been further developed and refined by Save Our Canyons.

Included in this group of stakeholders have been high level representatives of all affected ski resorts in the area, Wasatch Powderbird Guides, the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities, the Salt Lake City and County mayors' offices, a key member of Rep. Matheson's staff, prominent leaders of a large local outdoor equipment business, a representative of the national Outdoor Industry Association, the City of Sandy, prominent local citizens, The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club and Save Our Canyons (represented by Carl Fisher, Gale Dick and John Johnson). Before the meetings started the concerns of the International Mountain Biking Association had been met through negotiations between SOC and that group leading to boundary adjustments and IMBA's support for SOC's Wilderness proposal.

There have been many conversations and meetings among these stakeholders in various groupings, so the last few months have been very busy ones for the participants. Unlike what often happens with such intrusions on the time of busy people, attendance at these still ongoing meetings has been absolutely remarkable.

Right from the beginning people have continued to attend; participation has been open and frank. Everyone in the group deserves a vote of thanks for their impressive dedication to wilderness protection for our watershed.

The aim of the meetings has been to reach a common agreement on the boundaries of the proposed Wilderness and any special provisions that might be a part of the proposed legislation. Realization of this goal can only come about through compromise and there has been an amazing willingness by stakeholders to discuss the possibilities of such compromise – no small accomplishment already. Everyone is still on board and working hard.

Needless to say, the concerns of this remarkably varied group have been diverse. Business leaders have their obligations, those charged with the protection of the watershed and environmental organizations have their own concerns and responsibilities. Meetings have often been tense white-knuckle affairs but have been kept on an even keel by Ann Ober (from Peter Corroon's staff) who has presided over the meetings with firmness and tact. Many boundary adjustments, concessions and compromises have been hammered out. Impenetrable barriers have been penetrated and non-negotiable demands have been negotiated. Almost everyone has given up something and more will do so before this is over. The group is now down to the stage of moving boundaries 50 feet or so or reconsidering areas of a few acres for inclusion or exclusion.

This is the way things are supposed to work in a democratic society and these meetings have taught all participants new things about what is possible.

I am hopeful, and on good days believe, that a Memorandum of Understanding document is going to emerge that can be unanimously supported. This will be a tremendous accomplishment and a very significant milestone in the long road to legislation protecting our watershed and mountain lands. □

## Volunteer Profile

# An interview with Ryan Parrish

By Havilah Mills, SOC staff

*In October, 2008 Ryan Parrish contacted Save Our Canyons after seeing an on-line posting asking for web design help. His enthusiasm was immediately apparent and his portfolio proved that he had what it took to create a great looking site, so we met with him. He volunteered over 50 hours to help SOC create the new website and we just can't thank him enough for all of his hard-work and dedication! He was such an interesting guy, we interviewed him to learn more about his background and his work in graphic and web design.*

*Where are you from?*

I grew up in Salt Lake City, though I do have a bit of northwest in me.

*Why did you decide to stay in Salt Lake City?*

After attending college in Washington State at Northwest College of Art, I was swept away by my now beautiful bride Monica. I decided it was either here or there, so naturally we found ourselves in Utah where we can enjoy the plentiful mountain snow and lovely Great Salt Lake air! I do miss the ocean and Olympic national park though.

*What is it about the Wasatch that you enjoy the most?*

Mostly the heavy winters and unmatched beauty. Relative close proximity to the city, but within minutes, you're worlds away from it. All the recreational opportunities it provides. This place seems to draw a unique crowd of characters that are hard to find anywhere else.

*What are your hobbies?*

Painting, digital art, photography, playing guitar, playing the pots and pans with my son Zeke, and long boarding with my dog Mendieta.

*What types of outdoor activities or recreation do you enjoy?*

Snowboarding, skateboarding, mountain biking, rock climbing, canyoneering, hiking, rafting, fly-fishing, skipping rocks and climbing trees.

*Did you go to school for web design?*

I studied Fine Art, Graphic Design and Multimedia at the Northwest College of Art, and decided half way through that I was mostly interested in Fine Art and Multimedia. The broad multimedia experience made it easier for me to grasp web-related scripting languages, but most of the skills I use today are self-taught. I did end up working as a print designer for a while after graduating and now stick to mostly web related design.

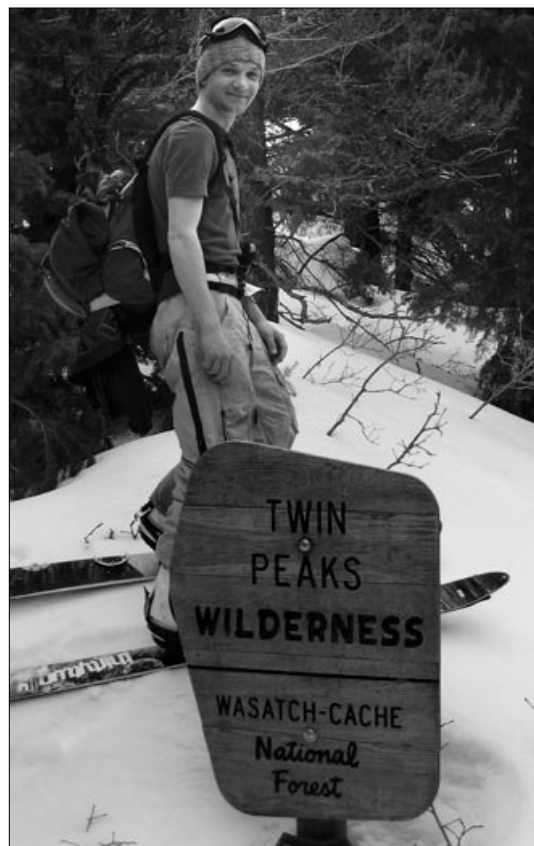
*How long have you been into graphic/web design?*

Well, it all started on a cold and windy night, with candles lit and a glass of wine... just kidding! I was in college; I got interested in why people have web sites and figured I should make one too. I have been working as a graphic designer and web developer for five years. I still paint as well. You can see some of my work at [www.marklynarts.com](http://www.marklynarts.com).

*What interested you about working with SOC?*

I had the bumper sticker on my first car, an '82 Datsun pickup. At that time I didn't really know what SOC stood for, what I did know was that our canyons were my favorite place to be. The statement, "Save Our Canyons" meant something to me even before I knew who SOC was. A decade later, I saw the influence and difference SOC had made. So, when I heard SOC was looking for help with their web site I was excited to jump on board.

When I'm not working I'm most likely playing in the mountains; mountains that have been protected for years by SOC. Technically I owe SOC a debt for fighting on the front lines for our environment and



winning battle after battle. This was an opportunity for me to support a cause I believe in and an organization that's making a difference in an area that's meaningful to me.

*Provide any details about your experience designing the website for SOC and your thoughts on the process.*

My experience designing the website was very positive. I basically wanted to help create a space for SOC that represents them and resonates with my local Utahns. Beyond the visual aesthetics of design it has to catch people's interest, get people informed and motivate action. SOC has been awesome to work with.

*What do you hope the new website will accomplish and how do you see it helping the overall mission of SOC?*

I hope it draws a ton of new traffic, boosts the number of volunteers and donations. Ultimately my hope is

that it will raise awareness in our community on issues that matter and mustn't be ignored. As the saying goes - the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Hopefully this site can be a hub to catch people's attention. Sometimes we need people to get mad, to be persuasive, write their government officials, we'll have to march, we'll have to shout, we'll have to vote, lobby, volunteer, donate, rally together. I'd like to think that's not too much to hope for. I want this site to help make all these things happen.

- Cheers!

*Once again, all of us here at Save Our Canyons want to thank Ryan for all of his help. You can see what an incredible job he did redesigning the SOC website by visiting it at: [www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org)!*

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## Popular Newsletter Series Draws to a Close

By Gayle Parry

**T**he *Religion and Environment* series that ends with this issue of the Save Our Canyons' newsletter has included sixteen essays over the past four years from church members and secular citizens, Christian clergy and local leaders of other world religions on the subject of how their religions view the environment. All essayists represent religions within the state of Utah.

Contributors managed to take time from their very busy schedules in order to write these essays. They did research and talked to other knowledgeable individuals within their faiths. Some of the religions represented originated in other countries and cultures that are very different from our own, but their beliefs about the environment seem universal. As Rev. Dave Sakrison pointed out, the different religions have very much in common with regard to the environment. The essays were beautifully written and Save Our Canyons members have been fascinated with what they had to say. They all give us food for thought. All contributors stated ways in which they or their faiths promote environmentalism.

Our thanks to Pastor Steve Leiser who led our series with the first essay. Pastor Leiser emphasized how we allow ourselves to be dominated by selfish interests. He believes that all religions need to do better. He says, "Treating the environment with love and respect goes hand in hand with the Christian belief of loving God and loving neighbor".

Father Rick Sherman stated that caring for God's creation is one of eight major themes of Catholic social teaching. He believes that the surest signs that we are not following God's Plan and order of God is that we have pushed the natural world beyond its natural carrying capacity. Any restriction on how we consume, recreate or treat our bodies is considered a grievous offense.

Rabbi Tracy Rosen and lawyer, Joel Ban, both included examples of how Judaism promotes a very strong environmental commitment. Rabbi Rosen stated, "Jews don't know what the afterlife will be until we get there so we must take care of this earth". She said that the synagogues have lessons and field trips on the care of the earth and they celebrate Earth Day as a religious holiday. Joel Ban states, "After all, how can we justify the extreme inequities in usage of resources, here in the U.S., as others in this country and throughout the world struggle to simply live, based on the barest levels of natural resource consumption."

BYU professor, George Handley, in an effort to point out LDS scriptures that supported a strong LDS environmental ethic to his fellow Mormons, organized a symposium in February of 2004 entitled, "Our Stewardship: Perspectives on Nature" that showed LDS theological foundations for stewardship. For example, "...in The Pearl of Great Price: 'I, the Lord God, created all things...spiritually before they were naturally upon the earth' (Moses 3:5.) This record of

the creation goes on to explain that this makes plants as well as animals “living souls” (see Moses 3:9,19). The notion that physical matter and all living things have some living spiritual character grants a sacred identity to the nonhuman realm, and this would seem to give us pause to consider the ethics of our use of such in-spirited material...”

Quaker, Elaine Caldwell Emmi, described how the Friends, while erecting a green building, refocused their lobbying efforts to congress toward the environment. Just changing the heating system from a traditional furnace to a heat pump allowed for the funding of a full-time lobbyist on energy and the environment.

Zen Buddhist, George Jisho Robertson says that Zen masters teach concern for each leaf, branch and rock. Their concern is for future generations. “Each of us is now one of the sole guardians and protectors of this Earth....Buddha taught that all beings and this great earth are One....We can easily lose our sense of the innate sacredness of all forms of life in the turbulence of politics, debate and controversy.”

Rev. Tom Goldsmith feels that Americans show little or no restraint in their insatiable appetites for more, bigger, better, entitled in fact to disproportionate quantities of non-renewable resources while remaining exempt from any global effort to heal and restore the world. “We deliberately deny the natural world any respect....We rely on answers to a pre-scientific past.”

Rev. Elizabeth O’Day, writing about spiritual living says, “Contrary to what many believe, it is not enough to simply feel good thoughts for our world; we must take responsible action too. How do you know what is yours to do? If it bothers, if it calls to you, then it is yours to care for with appropriate action. Even if in a seemingly small way you take appropriate action to care for the things that call to you, the results can be amazing.... It would be foolish arrogance for us to think that we are the ultimate product of the universe. Regardless of our abuses and excesses as a species, life will not stop its evolution on this planet. Our choice is whether we are part of that future.”

Forrest Cuch tells us that Ute Indians believe in the interconnectedness of all life and have developed ceremonies that acknowledge and recognize the importance of nature. Utes are now very aware and worried about the high carbon dioxide levels and the effects of global warming and the droughts that come with it.”

In the Sikh View of Nature, Mahan Singh Khalso gives us something a bit uncomfortable to think about and extends the idea beyond the usual concerns of global warming, species extinction, water quality, preserving wilderness and so on because nothing stands alone. “But isn’t our environment really more than this? Aren’t our cities part of our environment? .... How about our lifestyles; our health care; our education; our government; and our international relations? ....Over half the world lives in poverty. How can we talk about air quality and CO2 buildup and not talk

about global poverty and the inevitable increase in air pollution if poverty is to be reduced....

Ben Bromley says, “Currently I own a big SUV to carry the 8 members of my consanguineous family. But I use this vehicle rarely. My family owns a hybrid, and this car gets the majority of our mileage. Furthermore, my spouse and I ride our bikes or take a UTA bus to/from work, a 16-mile commute. We challenge each other to limit the number of times we drive to work. Our goal is that we can drive to work only once a month.”

High school student, Kristen Bernabe, studied Taoism. “Human beings have come up with substitutes for joy... We’ve created a bubble for ourselves so far from nature that some people cannot even breathe fresh air. ... We’ve forgotten how to live simply, and in compensation, we run around in little circles wondering why the world is so messed up...”

Muslim, Tarik Nosseir, stated that Islam does endorse the transformation of wilderness into agricultural lands and pastures; however, they have created haram zones known as hima and haram, in which resources were to be left untouched. ...Haram areas are often drawn up around wells and water sources to protect the groundwater table from over-pumping. Hima applies particularly to wildlife and forestry and usually designates an area of land where grazing and woodcutting are restricted, or where certain animal species are protected; these have become modern wildlife reserves.

Rev. Dave Sakrison wears two hats. He leads the congregation at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Moab, Utah and is also the Mayor of Moab. He has won accolades by being an exceptionally “green” mayor. In this final essay he gives us the sobering thought that when the wind blows out the air pollution in our cities, it doesn’t go away, it is just displaced. This is something that most of us don’t think about. “As the mayor of Moab, I am often asked what motivates my stance on environmental issues and some of the environmental goals that our community has achieved. Obviously my religious beliefs come into play but I think more importantly (and the answer I often give) is ‘because it is the right thing to do’”.

The list of environmental achievements and strong philosophies about the care of our natural world are definitely part of the religious communities in Utah. Religion is very important in our American way of life. The influence it exerts or could exert is tremendous. There can’t be enough emphasis on taking care of the creation in our religious messages as we confront global warming with our very survival on the line.

Our last essay by Rev. Dave Sakrison sums up this series very well. It all boils down to individual commitment and responsibility. In the spirit of the times, let’s just say: “YES WE CAN save our planet.”

Go to [www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org) to read the essays in this series. □

# What The People Want

From John Worlock's KRCL WASATCH ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE broadcast  
of December 28, 2008

When asked about urban development in the Wasatch Canyons, the wishes of residents of Salt Lake County are strong and striking. A Dan Jones Poll conducted in April 2007 found that only 7% of Salt Lake County residents wanted to see more urban development in Salt Lake County's watershed and a whopping 64% actually wanted less development than already exists. It is not at all clear how a goal of less development than that existing could be achieved other than by purchase and demolition, but the sentiment expressed in this poll (and many like it in recent decades) is clear. Less urban development in the adjacent canyons! Not surprisingly, this is not a view held by most of the businesses or would-be developers of these canyons.

For the last century Salt Lake City's Department of Public Utilities (they are our water department) has been the ultimate protector of the watershed of Salt Lake Valley. They have been the heroes of many battles between commercial interests and preservation of watershed, and this watershed protection also means preservation of wild areas and open lands.

In recent decades non-profit citizen groups, such as Save Our Canyons, have also become important players in the on-going work of preserving the beauty and

wildness of the Wasatch canyons, mountains and foothills. These citizen groups are representing that overwhelming majority of citizens who want less canyon urbanization.

We think you will be interested in a few of the things Save Our Canyons has been doing as your representative during 2008. Much of its time has been spent pushing its Wasatch wilderness expansion legislation (the gold standard of public land protection), for possible introduction in the next congress. This has involved many map revisions, negotiations with Salt Lake City, County and the Utah governor and our congressional delegation, discussions with business stakeholders and other environmental organizations. At the same time SOC has been doing volunteer trail maintenance, working with private land owners seeking open-space land easements, preparing for a controversy over a proposed lift up Flagstaff Peak, responding to Wasatch Powderbird Guides' application for a 10-year permit – and much more.

We hope you will want to join with your fellow citizens in Save Our Canyons to assure a great future for our watershed and wildlands. When you think future, think "200 years", at least for starters. □



**Plan on attending  
Save Our Canyons' most popular social event  
7th Annual Lone Peak Celebration  
Thursday, April 23rd  
at a NEW location –  
The Jewish Community Center  
Visit SOC's *NEW* website for more information.**



*The south end of the Snowbasin ski area. Aerial photo by L.Swanson and A. Kelner*

## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly



**GOOD.** Ken Salazar, Colorado Senator since 2004, has been named Interior Secretary in President Obama's cabinet. Salazar has been critical of the Bush administration's hasty auctioning of oil leases on BLM lands. We can expect new policy directions to be pursued by the BLM, a bureau of the Department of Interior, in the future.

**GOOD** U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina issued a temporary restraining order to indefinitely block 77 protested oil and gas leases on more than 103,00 acres in eastern and southern Utah. The judge found that the BLM didn't properly analyze air-quality damage that would result from industrial activity near Arches, Canyonlands and other scenic areas.

**GOOD.** The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which Bill Clinton signed into law eight days before he left office, protected 58.5 million acres of national forest land from logging and energy development. In spite of a series of efforts to kill the rule, we are heartened to read this quote in the *High Country News*: "The Bush administration has basically blown it," says Craig Allin, professor of political science at Cornell College. "They have spent eight years trying to abolish the rule, and they have been so incompetent

in their efforts that it's going to be left for the next administration." Obama has expressed support for roadless preservation.

**BAD, BUT WITH A SILVER LINING.** Hey, we're *number one!* According to a recent EPA map, Utah stood out as having the worst air quality in the nation. But that's good since a new executive order by President Obama might allow Utah to join other states like California in establishing more restrictive auto emission standards than the current federal ones.

**GOOD.** Snowbasin resort thought it would be a good idea to provide guided ski trips on Forest Service lands outside their permit area. The Forest Service seems to have thought this was no big deal and was inclined to say it was OK. They also seem to have forgotten the required evaluation of the environmental impacts of such a decision. Alarms were raised; people complained; critical editorial comments appeared. In the end Snowbasin withdrew its pursuit of a back-country permit. *Good work watchdogs!*

**GOOD.** As of January 15, 2009 student activist Tim



DeChristopher, with help from his legal team and donors, has raised more than \$90,000 in hopes of making initial down payments on land he won in a BLM lease auction in December.

*Malans Basin, the small sheltered basin below the snowy slopes of Mt. Ogden has been proposed as the site for a residential complex.*

*(Aerial photo by Larry Swanson and Alexis Kelner)*



**BAD.** The painted lines on the highway in Big Cottonwood Canyon have worn away so much that night driving has become hazardous and scary. UDOT says it can't paint new and visible lines until the weather improves, but also because it doesn't have enough money to do it even then. Sure, economic times are hard for state governments; but this is an example of a high priority public safety problem that shouldn't be ignored due to an across the board "slash 'em all" approach to Utah state budgeting.

**BAD.** The placard pictured at right appeared recently on the front page of the *Deseret News*, put there as you can see by Dr. Kevin Tolton. Tolton and colleagues of his have, in recent years, been trying to break Salt Lake City's Congressionally mandated extraterritorial authority over its Wasatch watershed. Judging from their activities in Cardiff Fork and their unending efforts to gain water rights in Albion Basin, they are primarily interested in commercial development. We issued a caution with regard to this group in these pages last spring. We believe them to be persistent and dangerous.

**UGLY.** Ogden Citizens have been troubled by brush and tree removal activity on Chris Peterson's Malans Basin property pictured above. They worried that its aim might be to make way for a road leading to a resort development proposed there. According to an *Ogden Standard Examiner* report, "Mr. Peterson...the very tight-lipped son-in-law of a billionaire [Earl Holding, who owns Sun Valley and Snowbasin ski resorts] said: 'I don't have any comment on that.'"

**U of U pays \$629 per acre-foot  
BYU pays \$184 per acre-foot  
UVU pays \$186 per acre-foot**

Salt Lake City's Big Cottonwood Treatment Plant can make all the U of U's water for \$212,500. Why does "non-profit" SLC mark it up to \$2.2 million?

**U of U's unfair \$2.2 million water bill means fewer University seats and fewer University graduates.**

Why does "non-profit" SLC charge the U of U a \$161,219.97 account fee & 12 times the \$52 per AF rate SLC charges Alta?

**Dr. Kevin Tolton Utahwater.net**





## Welcome to the new (virtual) home of SOC!

By Havilah Mills, SOC staff

Save Our Canyons has a new website! Launched at the beginning of February, the new site - designed by Ryan Parrish (see our volunteer profile on Ryan on page 8), coded by DharmaTech, and powered by Drupal - has it all. The new site was designed with ease of use and availability of information in mind. If you've never visited [www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org), now is the time to do it! If you're a regular to our site, you will notice a lot of great changes, but you will also find that you still have access to everything that was on the old site!

Upon visiting the new website, you will notice a "Current News" section on the left-hand side of our new home page. This section will be continuously updated with our most current news stories and issues updates, allowing you to stay informed and up-to-date on what we're working on! When applicable, these updates will give you more information on how you can get involved! If you want to see all of our current news, just click on the bottom link to "See All Current News." If you don't want to check the website every day to see if there has been an update, no problem! All you have to do is subscribe to our RSS feed, denoted by a symbol (a square with radiating arcs), always located at the top

right-hand corner of the screen. RSS is a simple technology designed to distribute (or syndicate) content from web sites. First developed in 1999 by Netscape, the RSS acronym has had a number of meanings, but today has come to be aptly defined as Really Simple Syndication. To learn more about RSS feeds and how to use them, please see the article, "The Mechanism of RSS" below.

In addition to interactive news updates, we have also implemented a new events page that shows approaching events and a calendar that allows you to see all events by date or you can search by type of event! Our events page also gives you the ability to sign up for RSS feeds - so if we add an event to our calendar or change information for an event, you will be alerted!

The new site also gives you the option to download our quarterly newsletter and MP3's of John Worlock's Wasatch Environmental Update (WEU), which airs on KRCL (90.9 FM) Sunday's at 2:00pm. Other documents, maps, and information are just a click away in our "Resources" section! If you need help or have questions just click on the *envelope symbol* at the top of the page and send us an email! We are happy to help!

Last, but most certainly not least, is that donating

online is now easier than ever! Use the *dollar symbol* located on the top right corner of the page to donate. Save yourself the stamp and envelope – just click on this symbol and you can quickly and securely donate, purchase tickets to events, or renew your membership online!

We are very proud of our new website and hope you will take the time to visit. Our new website will help us continue our work to protect the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch canyons, mountains and foothills by allowing us to communicate more efficiently with our members and the public. Please tell your friends and family to visit too!

*Special Thanks to Ryan Parrish and DharmaTech for making the website possible!*

## The Mechanism of RSS\*

There are four steps to publishing and receiving an RSS message.

**Step 1:** Save Our Canyons will create and publish an RSS XML file (an update to our “Current News” section). This file is called the feed, which is the container into which messages are sent. The XML file has a URL associated with it, just like any other Web page. The publisher can then post that URL on his or her Web site.

**Step 2:** The recipient who wants to receive the feed adds that URL into a program called a reader. A reader is just a program located either on the Web or on the recipient’s desktop (many RSS readers are add-ons to Microsoft Outlook) that can read and interpret RSS XML files. There are more than 1,000 readers available, most of them free. RSS is also built into the open-source Web browser Firefox, the Apple Macintosh OSX operating system, and the Web portals AOL, Yahoo!,

Google and MSN. Plus, Microsoft is building RSS into the Internet Explorer browser and incorporating it into the next generation of its Windows operating system. As of January 2005, six million U.S. Internet users were using RSS readers, according to the ongoing Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Readers are not proprietary. Any reader can be used with any feed, and a reader can keep track of any number of feeds simultaneously. Two examples of common feed readers are My Yahoo! and NewsGator. The process for subscribing to a feed varies from reader to reader, but usually is a matter of only a couple of clicks.

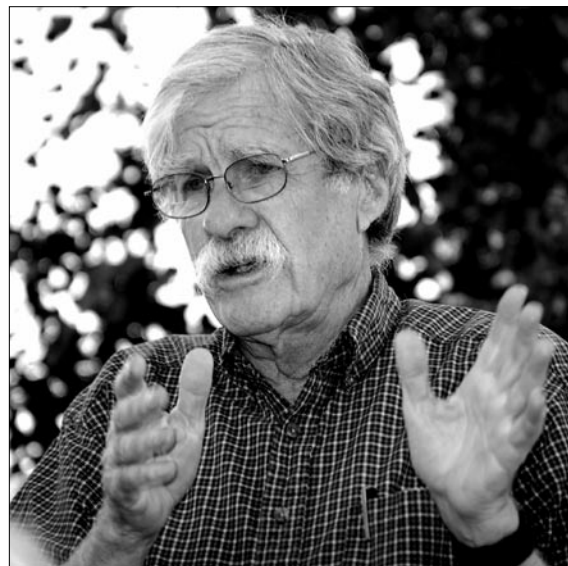
**Step 3:** When Save Our Canyons wants to send a message to the recipient, we simply add entries to the XML file. Messages have three parts: a title, a summary and a message body. The title and the summary are added directly to the XML file, along with an entry date. The message body is an HTML file that is referenced in the entry.

**Step 4:** The function of the reader is to make “virtual visits” to the specified XML Web page at specific intervals (usually once an hour) and check for updates. When the reader finds updates, it makes them available to the recipient. The form in which the message is delivered depends on the reader. In a Web-based reader, it might appear as an entry under the feed banner (see My Yahoo! below). In an Outlook plug-in reader, it would look like an email message.

\*This information was found at:  
[http://www.silverpop.com/rssdirect/about\\_rssdirect/rss\\_tech.html](http://www.silverpop.com/rssdirect/about_rssdirect/rss_tech.html)

## *Listen to John Worlock’s WASATCH ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE*

**Sundays at 2:00 p.m.  
on  
KRCL 91 on your FM dial**



Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons  
P.O. Box 112017  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84147

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**Plan on attending  
Save Our Canyons',  
most popular social event**

**7th Annual  
Lone Peak Celebration**

**Thursday, April 23rd**

**Visit SOC's *NEW* website  
for additional information.**

*Return Service Requested*

## **Want to Learn More About "Capital W" Wilderness with Friends?**

**Save Our Canyons can show you pictures, tell you about Wilderness Facts and Myths,  
give you maps of and information about  
our current Wasatch Wilderness proposal.**

**We are happy to talk with a gathering in your home or to your club, discussion group, or  
other group.**