

# Save Our Canyons

Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons

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

Summer, 2009

## Last Chance for Summer Trail Work

*Save Our Canyons has a long history of volunteer trail work. Come, help out, and party on September 12. See details on p. 6.*

*Save Our Canyons is a committee of citizen activists "dedicated, since 1972, to the preservation of Wasatch canyons, mountains, and foothills."*

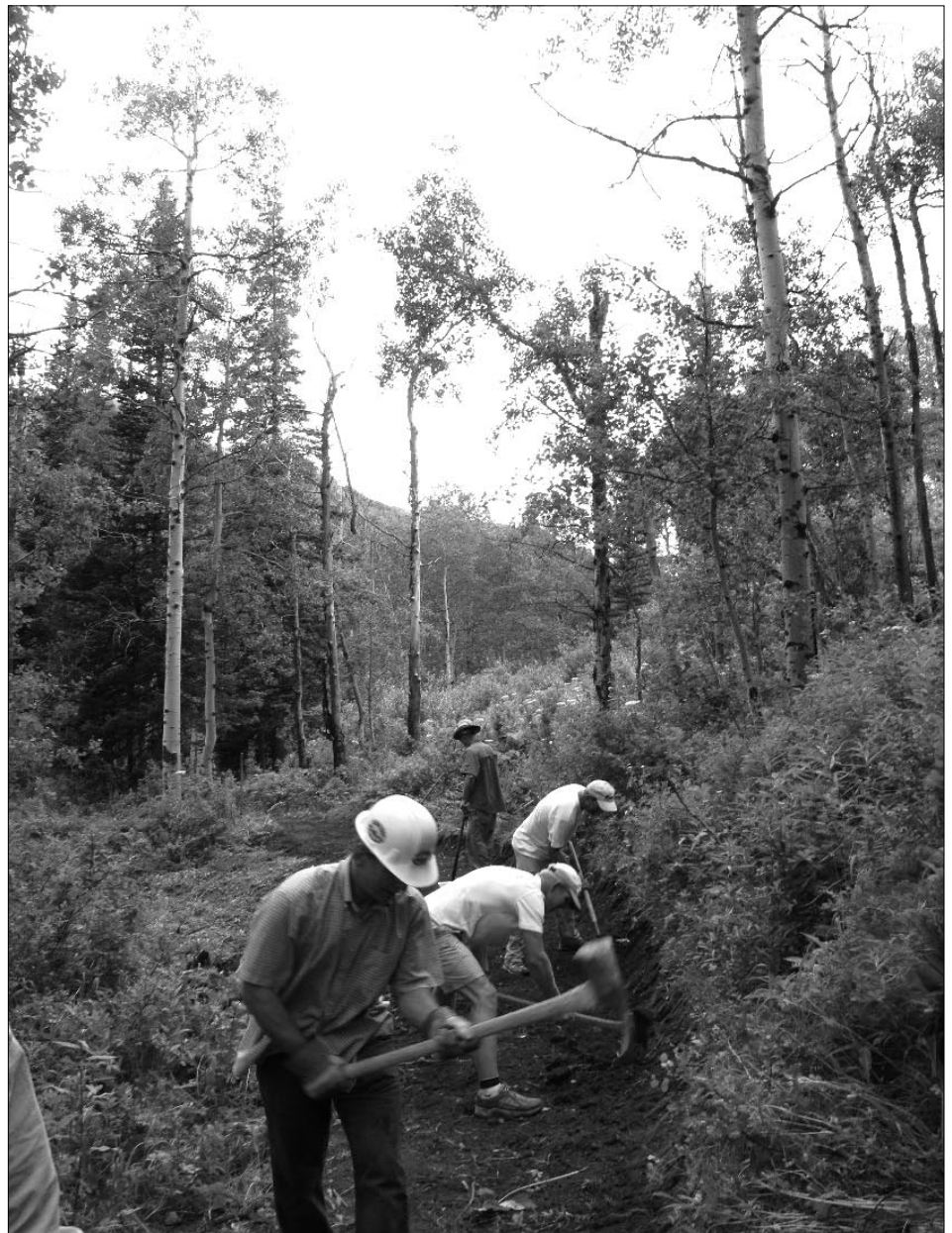
*Save Our Canyons* is the quarterly publication of the Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons

### CONTENTS:

President's Message.....	2
John Worlock and Wasatch Conservation.....	3
Roadless Forests .....	5
Realigned Trail in Millcreek Canyon.....	6
Gavin Noyes Joins SOC's Board of Trustees.....	7
New Summer Intern.....	8
SOC It To Me.....	9
"Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow" Survey .....	10
Wilderness Update .....	10
Summer Activities.....	11
Good, Bad, Ugly .....	12
Rep. Bishop Ignores Facts .....	14

ALEXIS KELNER,  
Perennial Editor

GALE DICK,  
Associate Perennial Editor



## Why the Push for Wilderness Designation?

People often ask why Save Our Canyons has expended so much time and effort to establish and enlarge congressionally mandated wilderness areas in the Wasatch. Why aren't already existing management policies of federal lands by the Forest Service and private lands in the Wasatch by Salt Lake County sufficient? Surely Smokey the Bear and his county friends are taking care of our forests.

The question needs an answer and Save Our Canyons, with its 37 years of history of working with the Forest Service, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County, is in a unique position to provide this answer.

SOC's relationship with these agencies has had its ups and downs. The ups have been significant. We have worked with many dedicated public servants who share our priorities and goals for the protection of the Wasatch. As SOC members know, there are plenty of threats. We have been encouraged and inspired by these agencies and their representatives, especially by Salt Lake City Public Utilities, which oversees the Wasatch watershed for the city.

It's the downs, however, that we worry about. True, the Forest Service has its Management Plan, the County has ordinances and the 1989 Canyons Master Plan and the city has extraterritorial jurisdiction over the watershed. But things can go wrong. People in control of these agencies come and go; the political climate shifts constantly; priorities change. Not all these changes have been beneficial and considerable power is in the hands of forest supervisors, county as well as city government officials. Smokey the Bear is not always the forest's friend.

A few examples:

- I remember, long ago, hearing the then head of Salt Lake County Planning saying, "We don't really like zoning restrictions. They tie our hands". Well, yes, they do and isn't that what zoning ordinances are supposed to do? This man had the power to permit or deny building permits.
- The Wasatch-Cache forest supervisors have been a mixed lot. Many have been thoughtful and diligent protectors of the forests. Others have had worrisome priorities. One of the more worrisome came with a dream of ski resort expansions in the Wasatch in order to create a re-

sort development on Forest Service land to echo and even rival Vail in Colorado, a very disconcerting thought. This supervisor was unusually cozy with the ski industry, so much so that he faced an investigation by the Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture—home to the Forest Service. He had the power to change the Forest Management Plan with a stroke of a pen and did so to negate a long-standing policy banning ridge-top structures. This cleared the way for the still unbuilt Hidden Peak structure.

- Another forest supervisor, defending one of his decisions that SOC questioned for not having a factual basis was taped saying, "What makes you think that having the facts would have altered my decision in any way"? It turned out that he got away with it and has moved high up in the Forest Service.

- Until about 1984 Mineral Fork up in Big Cottonwood Canyon was closed to vehicular traffic. This closure was not only a Forest Service policy, but also a physical fact due to a rockslide that made the road impassable. Mysteriously the motorized vehicle ban was lifted and the rockslide barrier was cleared. No one has ever figured out who in the Forest Service did this. This was done in stealth and never was examined in the public process required by federal law (NEPA) for any major federal action. Again they got away with it.

These are a few examples of the vagaries of land management by local officials. Such management is clearly erratic and often not beneficial to preservation of an extremely valuable resource.

The *Wilderness Act of 1964* provides a cure for this problem. It gives Congress the authority to establish Wilderness Areas with rigorous management rules that trump decisions by local Forest Service as well as county and city officials. This Act has proven to be extraordinarily effective. Just as it is difficult to get a Wilderness approved by Congress, it has proved, to date, to be impossible for Congress to remove Wilderness status. The status is too highly valued by voters.

And these are the reasons why SOC has been so anxious to create and expand Wilderness in the Wasatch. Rogue bureaucrats can be thwarted. We know, from long experience, how variable local and Forest Service protections are and how strong the Wilderness Act has been. — GALE DICK

# How I Got Involved in Environmental Work

By John Worlock, SOC Trustee

I sprang up in the depression and the dust-bowl years, in Nebraska. We lived at the edge of town with space all around us. We had plenty of clean air - frigid air from Canada and the Dakotas in the winter, humid air from the Gulf, and desiccated air from the Rockies to the west. But there was plenty of clean air: everyone burned their own trash and yard waste - one of my fondest memories is the smell of burning leaves in the autumn. But water was different. In the basement of our house was a small automatic pump, which drew water from, I suppose, the Ogallala Aquifer. It made quite a racket, and forced us to be aware of the effort, whenever we so much as brushed our teeth. We lived in constant fear that the water table might go down a few inches in which case we would have no more water.

By contrast, we took our summer vacations in a tiny cottage in Idaho Springs, Colorado, up from Denver at 7500 ft elevation, on the eastern slope of the Front Range. Below the cottage ran noisy Soda Creek, again constantly reminding us of water, but in this case a seemingly effortless and endless supply. A spigot at the back door ran soda water from that creek, and it was the only 'convenience.' We woke each morning to the sound of Soda Creek, and the smell of smoke when Dad built a fire in the wood-stove. Heaven!

We picnicked and hiked frequently and fearlessly. One memorable night as we were returning from one of our favorite destinations, counting on the full moon to light our pathway, we were surprised by an unexpected eclipse! The love of being in open country, afoot and happy, was an early implant in my personality. I remember with special pleasure the feeling that I might well be the first person who ever came this way.

My formal education took place on the East coast, but was interspersed by long trips to the mountains and two summer-student gigs at Los Alamos. Gale Dick (more about him later) was fond of organizing long backpacking adventures, called 'rendezvous,' involving mostly friends from Cornell. He was so

fond of them that he even organized trips that he had to skip. One of the first, for me, was to the Alaska Basin, behind the Tetons: in fact circumambulating the Tetons. We had bought our first pack-frames, army surplus A-frames, from REI (more than 40 years ago) and had to hike hunched-over to compensate for the unfortunate weight distribution in those packs. We took the boat-shuttle across Jenny Lake, but once on the trail, I believe we saw no one who was not a member of our party. So much space! So few campers! Those were the days, my friends.

Before coming to Utah, I worked and lived in New Jersey. It took me a long time to forgive New Jersey for having no decent mountains, but eventually I realized that it offered a different opportunity. I bought a sailboat, and devoted myself to its use and upkeep. It was small, but equipped for overnight trips, and we often ventured across the bay to New York City, and on one extended trip, up the East River and out into Long Island Sound. Sailing: it's another kind of freedom. Like hiking or backpacking, it requires some equipment and some preparation, but it offers the same slowing of time and quiet attention to the surroundings.

In New Jersey, I was mildly involved in Democratic Party politics, once even running as a candidate for Town Council, with the perfect certainty that I would not win, and didn't. I expressed my activism in the anti-nuclear movement, having read *The Fate of the Earth* and being thankful each morning to wake to a world not yet

incinerated by nuclear weapons. I was very certain that the USSR and we should not consider our arsenals as instruments of war. Consequently, we were in fact defenseless. I worried anew that the military minds might find that fact frightening and might do something crazy to avoid knowing it. So far, so good: no nuclear Armageddon, but we have created long-term environmental problems with our nuclear by-products, as for example, the Atlas uranium mill tailings near Moab, and the depleted uranium that EnergySolutions wants to put on their dump, in Tooele County.

It has taken me many years



John with Brother Bob and dad at the cabin in Idaho Springs, CO —1933



*John, sailing on Navesink River  
in New Jersey —1982*

(some three-score and ten) to arrive at my current level of environmental activism. At the gravitational center of this activity, you will find my long-term friend, Gale Dick. I am proud to have had the friendship of Gale since our Cornell graduate-student days in the 50's, and am pleased to be counted among his 'minions' as a Trustee and activist with the Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons. Gale was instrumental in my coming to the University of Utah in 1992 following my career as a research physicist in New Jersey, and eventually he drew me into tighter orbit within Save Our Canyons as a Board member and the producer and the voice of

our weekly radio piece, *Wasatch Environmental Update*. The *Update* has allowed, or forced, me to study a wide variety of environmental issues. I try to find topics related to the central Wasatch and the Canyons that we wish to save, but often I spread my wings and fly out to the West Desert and look at water-wars, or eastward to look at environmental problems with shale-oil and tar-sands mining. For example:

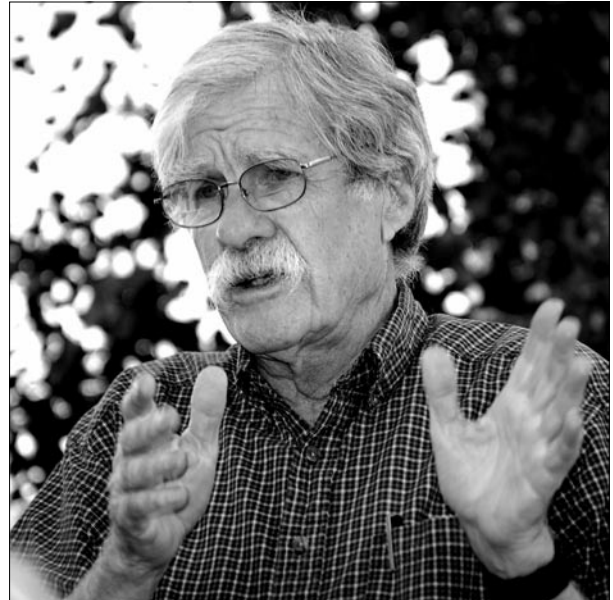
We're on KRCL most every Sunday at 2:00 pm. What's the topic next week?

Listen and find out! □

*John surrounded by space, solitude, and clean air – Soapstone Basin, Utah —1993*



John Worlock



# Roadless Forests and Wilderness

By John Worlock, SOC Trustee

(This item is John's June 7, 2009

*Wasatch Environmental Update.*

His updates are aired weekly on KRCL  
Sundays at 2 p.m.)

**I**t may be "hard to see with the human eye, but the trees, rivers and animals that make their homes in roadless forests are celebrating." So wrote Christopher Lancette for the Wilderness Society, following a ruling last week by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The Secretary stepped in to end the confusion of the past few years and regain federal control of development in the nation's 60 million acres of roadless National Forests.

A little history will illuminate the source of confusion. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was promulgated by President Clinton shortly before he left office in 2001, but it was immediately modified by President Bush, turning control over the roadless areas to the various states. Two different federal courts then issued contradictory rulings, so no one knew who was in charge. The new ruling, Vilsack said, will "provide consistency and clarity that will help protect our national forests until a long-term roadless policy reflecting President Obama's commitment is developed."

So far, so good. And of course, it's not just the trees, rivers and animals that are celebrating. Environmental groups such as Earthjustice and The

Wilderness Society are also delighted. But why, you ask, is roadlessness so important, and what's the problem with a few roads to go get a bit of timber and incidentally help the firefighters? The answer is that many of those roadless areas are prime candidates to be designated as wilderness.

Roads, and particularly networks of roads, leave the territory ineligible for wilderness designation. Wilderness advocates are suspicious that state and local authorities would build unnecessary roads more or less for the sole purpose of leaving the land ineligible as wilderness. Secretary Vilsack retains the authority to authorize any essential road building, but we expect he will take the longer view, recognizing that the National Forests belong to all of the nation's people.

Save Our Canyons, as you might know, is a big fan of Wilderness, and is engaged in a campaign to enlarge the wilderness areas in the Wasatch canyons so close above the Salt Lake Valley, in the hope of preserving, permanently, the natural solitude, not only for the plants and animals, but

## Want to know more about Save Our Canyons?

**Save Our Canyons is happy to announce the completion of a presentation that can be given to schools, community groups, clubs – any place where people congregate.**

**If you would like to hear about Save Our Canyons' Wilderness Proposals, History, Current Issues and Events, we would love to come and visit with your organization, group or class.**

**Everyone has a stake in the health of the Wasatch Mountains.**

**contact: [saveourcanyons.org](http://saveourcanyons.org) or telephone 801- 363-7283 to book the presentation.**

*Volunteers from Save Our Canyons and the Wasatch Mountain Club take a break during work on the Red Pine Road Trail in upper Millcreek Canyon.*



## Realigned Red Pine Road Trail Debuts in Upper Mill Creek Canyon

By Gayle Parry, SOC Trustee

Hikers and bikers who haven't already stumbled onto the realigned Red Pine Road Trail are due for a beautiful surprise this summer. A trail three years in the planning and making is nearly finished at the top of Mill Creek Canyon. Located to the east of the Upper Big Water parking lot, it follows an old local user trail for a bit and then climbs to the left approximately 60 feet up the side of the mountain along the north side of the canyon and eventually connects with the Great Western Trail. The new trail is 1.7 miles long and features beautiful wildflowers and stunning vistas.

Robert Piscopo, Uintah Wasatch-Cache National Forest Field Supervisor, says the old Red Pine Road used to go all the way into the Old Park West Ski Resort, but the road washed out during the wet years of 1983 and 1984. Some of you will remember the old trail that had you walking in wetland water and mud and necessitated crossing the stream numerous times. This old trail was part of privately owned land that was bought by Salt Lake County ten years ago. The Forest Service has wanted to realign the old trail out of the wetland that included the stream crossings to a place higher up where the trail would dry out early in the spring and where expensive bridges wouldn't have to be built. This is that trail. The new trail will now be part of the Forest Service trail system with signage and regular maintenance.

Right now, the trail is not completely connected. Hikers have to make one stream crossing on a plank and then find a faint trail on the left that takes you to the upper section. By press time, the route may not be as I have described.

Many different organizations and individuals have

worked on the trail up to this point. The Save Our Canyons-Wasatch Mountain Club Trail Day on July 11th was spent working on the new Red Pine Road Trail along with the Wasatch 100, the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, and some Boy Scout volunteers. In all, twenty-five volunteers took part clearing 1,000 ft. of trail, an amazing feat. Our trail crew (Save Our Canyons-Wasatch Mountain Club) hopes to work on the trail again on August 8th. We will meet at the Skyline High School parking lot at 8:00 a.m. and carpool to the top of Mill Creek. **In case there are changes in plans, please watch for your Save Our Canyons Alerts that will tell you where we will be meeting and going.**

On July 11th, Dax Reid, part-time Forest Service employee and part-time employee of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, supervised our trail crew. Dax has been leading trail crews for the past several years in our canyons and brings much expertise to the job. Assisting him was Mike Altman, formerly of the Forest Service and another knowledgeable and talented trail hand. Other participants from the Forest Service were Mike Orme, Jodie Smalley, and Josh Mocerri. Volunteers included Chris Biltott, Ron Younger, Richard Jirik, Dave Parry, Dmitry Pruss, Dave Andrenyak, Lee Moss, Erik Storheim, Peter Hirsh, Alec Baldwin, Troy Robertson, Wayne Baldwin, Austin Furrall, and Dan Mason. The names of the Boy Scouts were not available.

You are urged to take part in our Trail Days on the second Saturdays of August and September. On September 12th we will be at Brighton where following the workday, we will have our annual pizza party for the trail crew on the Wasatch Mountain Club Lodge patio. Meet at Big Cottonwood Canyon Park-and-Ride lot at 8:00 am. □



Gavin Noyes and son Ilario on the trail.

## Gavin Noyes Joins the SOC Board

By Gavin Noyes

It is hard to believe that more than ten years has passed since I attended my first Save Our Canyons activist meeting on Snowbird's Master Development Plan in the fall of 1998. I was impressed back then by the dedication and talent of the many volunteers I met that night, and became more impressed as time went by. As I got to know the Board Members, I realized what important and unique contributions they each make to the organization. They each brought strengths to the team and contributed what they were good at. They also worked very hard. I am excited to serve in this capacity, and am very pleased with where the organization is at and where we are headed. We may have beautiful rocks, forests, and wildlife to protect, but as always people are our most effective asset in effectively protecting the Wasatch. I hope that we can continue our success in getting more people effectively advocating for the Wasatch Mountains, canyons, and foothills, both inside and outside of SOC.

I am currently doing all of the things that have kept me busy since leaving Save Our Canyons, making and selling ceramics ([www.gavinnoyes.com](http://www.gavinnoyes.com)), working for a non-profit called Round River Conservation Studies ([www.roundriver.org](http://www.roundriver.org)), and most excitingly being a dad of an eighteen month old boy.

Currently, and as always, there is a lot going on at SOC and the three person staff is doing a great job!

SOC's defense of the Wasatch is strong, and its campaign to extend wilderness areas in the Wasatch is within reach. In the upcoming decade I'd like to see Save Our Canyons advocate a thoughtful and detailed vision for the Wasatch to compliment its strong defense of it. This proposal should advocate for the things that contribute the most to the quality of life of Utahns as well as for the things of intrinsic value in these alpine environments. It should look for restoration opportunities and prioritize what we don't know and should learn in order to better protect.

I'd like our elected officials to know how many undeveloped lots exist in the central Wasatch and be able to articulate why they should be protected and know the tools they have or need to ensure this. Perhaps even have them sign a "Wasatch Pledge." I'd like us to learn how many people use the Wasatch and for what kinds of recreational experiences. I'd like to know what impacts climate change will have at the local scale, and learn how we can better prepare ourselves and our native wildlife for this challenge. We know a lot about the Wasatch, but I think we can do a better job defining these things we all care about and not only better advocate for them, but develop more tools to protect them.

I'd like to see the day when the Wasatch Mountains are valued by all residents as an integral part of the

place we live, as much a part of our culture as the bay is to San Franciscans, and temples are to Kyotoites. I'd love to see a diverse urban environment with rich cultural opportunities, and unique business makeup with its own urban identity. Adjacent to this, I'd like to see a sharp distinction drawn between the edge of the city and the special natural area of the Wasatch. Rather than a gradual escape from this urban setting, a distinct boundary creates one of those mood-shifting experiences that allow one to leave one world and enter another.

I hope to see no increase in development of the Wasatch. With such great access to the mountains, we do not need more development, but rather should promote a richer urban setting to complement our rich natural setting. These environments can and do co-exist side by side. Our ski resorts do a lot to cater to tourists by building hotels, condos, restaurants, bars, shopping malls, and coffee shops at the resorts, but what tourists want, already exists in the city and at the resorts.

Visitors would be so much more impressed by a truly hopping and unique social scene located in Sandy (concentrated with Porcupine Grills, Pierre's bakeries,

and Lone Star Cafés rather than chains like Cheesecake Factories, Starbucks or Banana Joe's) with quick access to four world class resorts that provide beautiful, natural looking, forested mountains, rather than Solitude Ski Resort-like mini cities whose community culture is struggling because each resort clamors for a larger share of the tourist dollar to pay off their massive construction debts.

The Wasatch is not the Alps, and should not contain towns in its glacial cirques (those Swiss towns are hours, not minutes away from urban centers.) Our mountains are smaller, and we need a vision that allows people to enjoy them without urbanizing, privatizing, or degrading their natural qualities. Salt Lake is a special place thanks to the Wasatch. This natural "island" will only increase in value as our communities swell with more people. I hope we can all play a role in defending one of the special things that makes our houses feel like homes, and our towns feel like communities and jointly create a vision that protects the things we all care about; quality of life, clean water, open space, and a strong sense of community. □

## SOC's New Summer Intern

**Nick Catmur** is SOC's new summer intern. Nick is currently attending the University of Utah, where he is pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies with plans to graduate this fall. He moved to Salt Lake four years ago from the small town of Crested Butte, Colorado. Growing up in Crested Butte, Nick always had a love for the outdoors. His passions

include snowboarding, mountain biking, hiking, and camping. After relocating to Utah, he discovered that the Wasatch Mountains were a great place for all those activities. Nick's interest in the environment, along with his new found love for the Wasatch Mountains, has made him a perfect addition to the Save Our Canyons crew.



# SOC It To Me!

By Havilah Mills, Staff

Each quarter our members receive an appeal from Save Our Canyons. These appeals are normally written by Gale Dick, a cofounder of Save Our Canyons and current President of our Board of Trustees. They are usually formatted to fit on a single sheet of paper, printed double-sided (to conserve paper, of course) with a “please return your donation in the envelope provided” portion. We’re sure, as most of you reading this article are members, that you have seen these types of mailings. The content of the appeal varies each quarter, but informs our members of the work that lies ahead, reflects on our past accomplishments and undertakings and provides insight into the world of Save Our Canyons. Each appeal also (very kindly) asks for your financial support so that we may continue our good work to protect the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch canyons, mountains, and foothills – as we have done for the past 37 years.

The last appeal we sent out in June, however, was very different. It was our very clever “SOC it to me: Summer Pass to the Wasatch” mailing. We wanted to shake things up a little bit and make you raise an eyebrow at this very unusual appeal. When it arrived in your mailbox, we hoped you would have looked at the envelope, jumped for joy and shouted, “I want my Summer Pass to the Wasatch!” – Now, we doubt anybody actually did that, but we would like to think it happened, somewhere. Really, we just wanted to catch your attention. You see, the summer season is the most difficult for us here at Save Our Canyons, in terms of fundraising. Historically, we have seen a dramatic decrease in donations that begins around May and lasts through the fall. Our work, however, is year-round and regardless of season, we put as much time and energy (as well as blood, sweat and tears) into protecting the Wasatch and we need your support each and every quarter to help fund our issues work, our outreach, our Wasatch Wilderness Campaign and more. We are primarily funded by **you** – local citizens - and we thought perhaps if we could reformat the

appeal that we could change the trend of our “summer time slump”.

Our aim was to make the appeal fun and light-hearted and we had a type of epiphany – we thought, “Let’s give them something back for supporting our work!” – and that’s just what we did. The incentive of the appeal was a pass – not just any pass, but a Summer Pass to the Wasatch, which provides free stuff and discounts at local businesses including REI, Millcreek Coffee Roasters, Rico’s, and Wasatch Touring! The pass itself is very nice as well, laminated and everything (even hole-punched so you can attach it to your favorite pack or parka), but the benefits of the pass are cool too - show your pass at those local businesses and all of a sudden, you’re a VIP with special treatment and deals not available to just anyone.

*Want to read more about the benefits the pass offers?*

Log on to our website at [www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org) and click on the “SOC it to me” link in the center of our homepage – you can even donate online to get your pass!

We have had a positive response to the appeal and some of our members are out there right now with their passes, but we are still very much in a summer time slump and we hope that by reading this you will consider giving a summer time gift to SOC. Please log onto our website or use the envelope provided in this newsletter to give a gift today. Write a note that says, “SOC IT TO ME!” and we’ll send you the pass! Remember, the SOC it to me pass gives you unlimited access to your public lands in the Wasatch, way more than any ski area pass could ever offer at a fraction of the price! We thank you for your support and we really hope to see you out enjoying the Wasatch this summer! □



# “Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow” Survey Results Update

By Jennifer Kecor, SOC Staff

The *Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow* process kicked off May 7th with Mayor Corroon, Mayor Becker and Governor Huntsman, and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Supervisor Brian Ferebee all present to talk about developing strategies for the future of the Wasatch Canyons. Well it's now underway and the results of the first round of public participation are in. The public became engaged in Envision Utah's public process through a number of workshops, open houses and an online survey. An impressive number of individuals took the survey, approximately 2000 total responses, with most survey participants making their opinions known by responding via the online survey.

Questions in the survey were asked on issues ranging from land use, recreation, environmental concerns, to transportation and watershed issues. This was a unique opportunity for the public to have a say in the policy-making for the Wasatch.

An overwhelming majority of respondents live in Salt Lake City. The highest values for participants were recreation followed by environment/ecology. One way or another land use played an overwhelm-

ing role in both the Questions and Answers sections.

For most respondents land use in the canyons was the highest concern. With questions asking how land use impacts watershed health and what is the most effective way for ensuring watershed health. The public answered that development on private land impacts watershed health the most and the key to ensuring watershed health is to limit such development. Other issues such as transportation were also addressed in the survey, with most respondents opposed to a new roadway connection between Summit and Salt Lake County.

With the anticipated increase in population along the Wasatch Front quality of life is a key concern. The updated Wasatch Canyons Master Plan document will have the opportunity to outline wise and sustainable outcomes for the canyons striving for a proper balance between natural and urban policies. It is Save Our Canyons hope the updated document will be a document the County is proud to reference when it comes to decisions impacting the wonderful places found within the Wasatch Canyons. □

## Wasatch Wilderness Update

By Carl Fisher, SOC Executive Director

It has been nearly a year since we began participating a series of stakeholder meetings shepherded by Salt Lake County towards expanding Wilderness in the Central Wasatch Mountains. Years of ground work and preparations on behalf of Save Our Canyons members, Staff, and members of our Board are slowly becoming a reality. Representatives from Salt Lake City, Sandy City, all four Ski Areas, Wasatch Powderbird Guides (WPG), Black Diamond, Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club, and of course yours truly, have been convening to discuss ways to protect our municipal watershed and remaining wildlands by utilizing the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Proponents of additional acres of Wilderness in the Wasatch seek to preserve water quality, access to public lands, dwindling backcountry recreational opportunities, and natural environments for the enjoyment of future generations. Opponents see additional acres as a hindrance to the development of the Tri-Canyon area, impacting the grandiose visions of Interconnect, ski area expansion, and other developed recreation sites.

Of the five units we have proposed for additional Wilderness, the Mt. Aire Addition seems to be the least worrisome to the opponents due primarily to its distance from the ski areas. As you progress southward through our wilderness proposal, the opposition to preservation and protection of

our public lands gets more fierce. Everything from transportation problems, watershed protection, overlap with WPG, preventing ski interconnect, engaging in land exchanges, to putting the resorts out of business by not allowing them to expand further has been discussed. As we work through this process it becomes more and more apparent that the only way to absolutely ensure that we will be able to enjoy a clean and healthy environment, not to mention the recreational opportunities we all regularly enjoy, is through Wilderness Designation.

Save Our Canyons is dedicated to protecting all of these areas to their fullest potential. We have had to make a number of concessions throughout this process, taking thousands of acres off of our proposed additions map as a token of working with the other stakeholders and to get things done. We are now hoping that the same tokens will come our way as we work to finalize our collective recommendations to Congressman Matheson. We have some very hard decisions to make in the coming months ahead, but we know whole-heartedly that the decisions we make will render the Wasatch a better place, now and into the future. □

*If you want to ask a question or comment on the on-going Wilderness initiative send us a message at [wilderness.saveourcanyons.org](http://wilderness.saveourcanyons.org).*



*Rocks will play a prominent role during Save Our Canyons' final summer activities. We will learn all about rocks on Bill Parry's Geology Hike on August 22. We will then move a few during the final trails work party on \_\_\_\_\_.*

## SOC's End of Summer Activities

### **Geology Hike** **Saturday, August 22**

We're happy to announce that Bill Parry's ever-popular Geology Hike will take place on Saturday, August 22 this year. Bill is Professor Emeritus of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Utah.

The hike will go from Brighton to Lake Solitude, Twin Lakes, and Twin Lakes Pass. Distance is about 2.5 miles and 1260 feet elevation gain. The focus will be on igneous rocks, contact metamorphism, effects of mining, and water quality in the Wasatch.

Meet at 8:30 AM at the Park-and-Ride lot at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Bring lunch, water, and rain gear in case of inclement weather.

### **Trail Maintenance Program** **September 12**

We need volunteers to work with us and Wasatch Forest Service Rangers to maintain the trails we all use and love. Join us at 8:00 am at the Big Cottonwood Canyon mouth Park-and-Ride parking lot on September 12. This will be the last Trails work party of the summer; we will be working at Brighton. Following the workday we will assemble for our annual pizza party on the Wasatch Mountain Club Lodge Patio.

Bring water, lunch, rain gear, work gloves, and any other necessary items. Wear long pants, sunscreen, a hat, and sturdy hiking boots.

Sign up by contacting Gayle Parry at [gwperry@comcast.net](mailto:gwperry@comcast.net) or call 801-363-7283 with any questions!

### **Community Events**

Come over to the SOC booth at the following events and say, "Hello!"

People's Market at the International Peace Garden in Jordan Park  
10th South 9th West  
September 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am - 3:00pm

Salt Lake City Farmer's Market at Pioneer Park  
300 south 300 west  
August 22, September 19 from 8am - 1pm

For the most up-to-date listing of events involving Save Our Canyons, please visit our website at [www.saveourcanyons.org](http://www.saveourcanyons.org).



*A web search shows that snowmobiling is outlawed in Switzerland and rare in Austria. Should the Forest Service think about this too?*

## The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

**GOOD** - Here's something to think about: A SOC member reports that in Switzerland it is illegal to drive any vehicle off a highway. Here's what Swiss Law says, "*Motor vehicles may only be driven on public roads and subject to a vehicle registration document having been obtained and license plates being carried.*" Of course they have little federal land. What is regarded by some in Utah as a sacred right is illegal in the Alps. A web search shows that snowmobiling is outlawed in Switzerland and rare in Austria. Should the Forest Service think about this too?

**GOOD** - At the urging of SOC, Envision Utah has embarked on an update of Salt Lake County's 1989 Canyon's Master Plan. We are sure that many SOC members participated in the survey that was conducted in mid-May at several public meetings in the county and also could be completed on-line. About 1700 residents responded. It comes as no surprise, given the results of many such polls in the past, that a majority of county residents see canyon development as the greatest threat to the Wasatch and want it to stop. You can look at the results for yourself at <http://saveourcanyons.org/files/images/WCMPResults%28html%29.zip>. Click on the file named *SurveySummary*. You'll be interested. See the article by Jennifer Kecor on page 10.

**GOOD** - The environmental Protection Agency has granted California's long-sought request to tighten tailpipe emission regulations, a key step in the Obama administration's plan to make cars across the nation more fuel-efficient. Since 2005, California has been seeking a waiver from the EPA to impose stricter tailpipe emission standards than those in effect nationally. The Bush administration denied the waiver request in December 2007. Thirteen other states, including Utah, have also announced plans to adopt the California standards. Maybe we'll be able to breathe more freely on the Wasatch Front.

**GOOD** - Here is some good news from our friends at the Wild Utah Project:

"After decades of increasing and often unregulated Off Road Vehicle abuse on our wildlands, we have learned about a breakthrough with potentially far reaching and positive consequences. The Obama Administration has decided that the U.S. Forest Service needs strong Off-Road Vehicle Best Management Practices, something they have never had before! And the best news is that they have decided to turn to the BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE ON FORESTLANDS guide that Wild Utah Project and its partners created two years ago as the source for what these new Forest Service best management practices will be! This is a huge step forward towards more sensible Off-Road Vehicle management!"

**BAD** - Why aren't Salt Lake County's Planning Department and Board of Adjustment enforcing county ordinances? The question is raised by decisions made in processing a request to build a house near a perennial stream and wetlands near Silver Lake at the Brighton Circle (Parcel #2435143003, Walt Plumb). In granting permission Planning and the Board of Adjustment simply ignored county ordinances relating to building footprint and setback from wetlands. Unfortunately, this is only one among many such floutings of ordinances. Remember the development (photo below) at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon, which violated ordinances right and left and SOC fought all the way to the Utah Supreme Court - to no avail?





*Extensive damage along the trail to Greens Basin above Silver Fork.*



**BAD** - Solitude Ski Resort is proposing an increase in their allowable bedroom count from 560 to 680. Cumulative impacts of such an expansion on the future canyon environment need to be evaluated. Salt Lake County residents, in poll after poll, overwhelmingly oppose such expansion of ski resorts in the Wasatch. The question of who will win is still up in the air.

**UGLY** – Gavin Noyes writes:

“The week of July 12th, a full-sized pick up truck went up the trail to Greens Basin, top of Silver Fork area, where they proceeded to rip out the “no vehicles” sign which we found in the bushes below, dragged massive boulders that blocked the road, chain-sawed trees, and did all the other work necessary to get vehicles into an area long closed to them. Further up the trail they tram-

pled bushes and small trees, sank into the mud where streams crossed the road and exposed residential water lines that feed the cabins below. We weren’t able to see where the truck ended up because a moose was guarding the trail.” Red Neck Vandalism pure and simple! And where was the Forest Service during this event?

**UGLY** – Even Mother Nature sometimes seems to be doing ugly things or is that impossible by definition? The carnage in Cardiff Fork depicted in the photo below was the result of a recent storm or a spring avalanche. At first we thought it might have been vandalism of the sort that happened in Days Fork a while back or recently in Greens Basin. □



The PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE column in SOC's Spring 2009 newsletter also appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune's* June 21, 2009 Opinion section and drew a blistering response from Utah's 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District Representative Rob Bishop.

The following *Op Ed* was published on July 5, 2009 in the Opinion section of the *Salt Lake Tribune* and is being used with permission by the newspaper.

## Representative Bishop's Argument Ignores Facts About West

By Darrell Knuffke\*

In his rebuttal to Gale Dick about Western public lands myths ("History is on the side of the Sagebrush Rebellion," Opinion, June 28), Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, charges Dick with several "fallacies" before hurling himself into two of them: selective history and contextual deviance. His baseless claim is that the U.S. Constitution grants the states the land within them, but Easterners stole it and won't give it back. This is a curiously Western whine, erupting most predictably when the White House moves into more moderate hands.

And it's not new. In the middle of the last century, Western stock growers sought to snatch Western forest grazing lands. Utah native Bernard DeVoto, through his column in *Harper's* magazine, launched a lonely crusade against what he called a land grab -- the biggest ever. DeVoto won that round, but the clamor to eliminate public lands continued.

In 1964, the Congress chartered the Public Land Law Review Commission to comprehensively review land laws and federal agencies' policies and practices. It was scarcely an Eastern cabal. Colorado Rep. Wayne Aspinall, quintessential Westerner, was its chairman. When the commission issued its report in 1970, of 12 congressional representatives, all six senators and three of six House members were Westerners. (Interestingly, one was Rep. Laurance J. Burton, like Bishop a Republican representing Utah's First Congressional District.)

The PLLRC recommended "retaining in Federal ownership those [lands] whose values must be preserved so that they may be used and enjoyed by all Americans." The commission also recommended that "No additional grants should be made to any of the 50 states."

The PLLRC likely led directly to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 which also directed that "the public lands be retained in Federal ownership."

None of this fazes Rep. Bishop. He relies for most of his argument on the Constitution's Article IV and,

as he interprets it, the mandate that "public lands shall be sold by the United States." A fairer reading of that language, *and in context*, suggests that "shall" is meant to condition a possibility rather than dictate an action: "if you sell them," not "sell them now."

Bishop understandably doesn't bother to mention the plain language of Utah's Statehood Act, reiterated in the state Constitution, *by which the State renounced "all claim to unappropriated federal lands within its boundaries."* Even bizarre constitutional theories often land in the federal courts. Bishop's have and have repeatedly failed.

All this seems persuasive enough to settle the matter. It won't, of course. That, ultimately, is the mystery: that sentient people would oppose the very existence of public lands, open to and managed for all of us. Those lands are the great glory of the American West, something to be valued, not vilified. They are what keep native-born Westerners here, or bring us back, and lure countless others to share them.

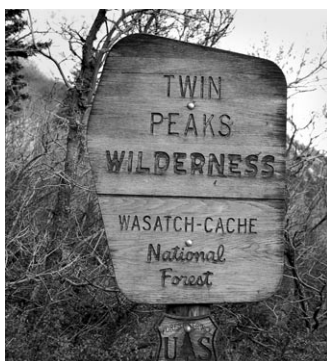
Not a Utah native, Wallace Stegner came to love Utah's people and its places. He said this of one such place, the Robbers' Roost country of Wayne County:

"It is a lovely and terrible wilderness, such a wilderness as Christ and the prophets went out into; harshly and beautifully colored, broken and worn until its bones are exposed, its great sky without a smudge of taint from Technocracy and in hidden corners and pockets under its cliffs the sudden poetry of springs. Save a piece of country like that intact, and it does not matter in the slightest that only a few people every year will go into it."

Though his subject was wilderness, Stegner was speaking of public land. He was speaking for most Americans. And he spoke for me. □

---

\*Darrell Knuffke is chair of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.



*Thousands of Salt Lake Valley residents and out-of-area visitors pass these glacially striated quartzite outcroppings alongside the trail just below Lake Blanche.*

*The area that includes Lake Blanche is located within the Twin Peaks Wilderness, established by Congress in 1984 as part of legislation establishing several wilderness areas along the Wasatch Front and throughout Utah.*

*Save Our Canyons participated actively in the legislative process. Today, SOC is deeply involved in convincing Congress to expand the wilderness areas in the mountains above Salt Lake Valley.*

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

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT  
PERMIT NO. 7271

*Return Service Requested*