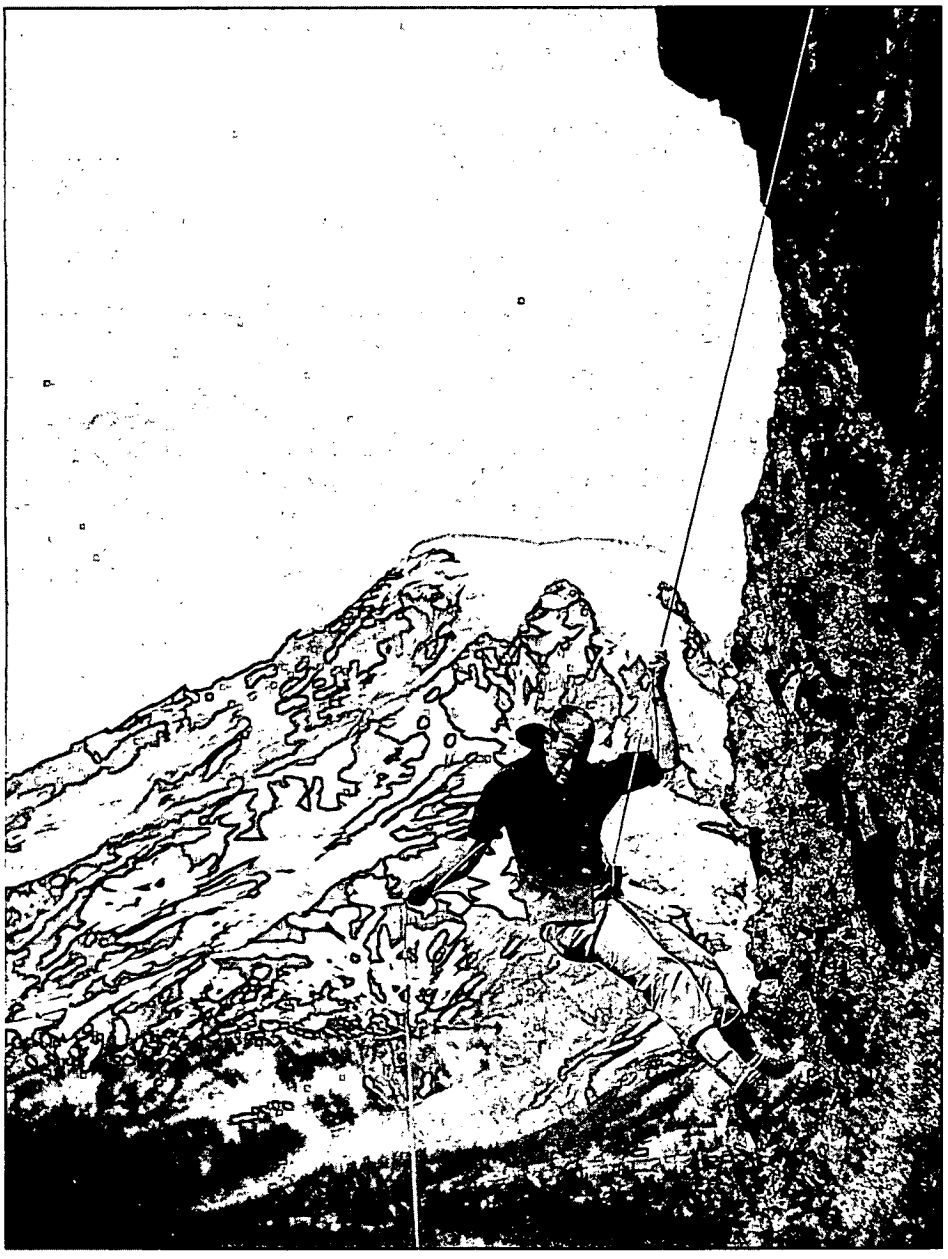
Save Our Canyons

Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons www.saveourcanyons.org Spring, 2009

SOC's President Tells the Story of His Involvement in Wasatch Conservation Issues. Part III of a series.

In the Tatoosh Range next to Mt. Rainier Gale Dick rappels in 1948. Note those clunky Tricouni nails on the boots – popular at the time. *See article on p. 3.* *Photo by Don McKay.*



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

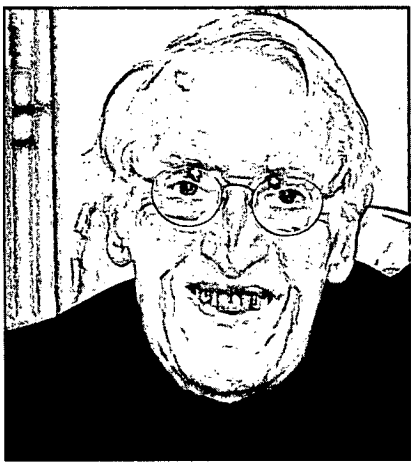
Save Our Canyons is the quarterly publication of the Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons

CONTENTS:

President's Message 2
Gale Dick and Wasatch Conservation 3
Flagstaff Lift Meeting 6
The Locals' Canyon 8
SOC's Summer Schedule 9
Lone Peak Celebration 10
Wilderness Advocate .. 12
Ski Resorts in Summer 13
Good, Bad, Ugly 14

ALEXIS KELNER,
Perennial Editor

GALE DICK,
Associate Perennial Editor



President's Message

A Great Utah Myth

It's spring and apparently the time of year when the Sagebrush Rebels get restless. One of the most restless of the bunch in recent times has been State Senator Mike Noel (R-Kanab). Noel recently opposed the shelving of gas and oil drilling site leases by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar saying, "We're the Legislature, the ones who are supposed to have the control." It's time to stand up and be counted." Spoken like a true Rebel.

Noel's remarks are nothing new in Cowboy Caucus rhetoric. We've been hearing them for at least the last 50 years and they are based on enduring myth that seems embedded forever in the minds of some Utahns. The myth is that federal public lands were somehow wrested from the legitimate control of locals and should rightfully be "restored" to the jurisdiction of states, counties and municipalities – that, as Mike Noel asserts, the Utah legislature should be in control.

Federal lands have always been national lands and were not stolen from states. What has changed through the years has been how those lands have been managed and valued. From the time of the Louisiana Purchase until the 1870s the emphasis was on disposing the lands to private ownership to encourage westward expansion of the nation. Beginning with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 and the *General Land Reform Act* creating the forest reserves in 1891 there was a growing sense that many lands should be held in public trust. Note that these first steps occurred before Utah statehood (1896). The next phase was dominated by commodity-oriented thinking such as that espoused by Gifford Pinchot. Since the 1940s it has become clear that the public wants more emphasis on watershed, wildlife, and recreation. Management of these national lands has slowly followed that desire with the *Wilderness Act of 1964* and the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*. Where in this history was there a "land grab" by the feds?

We should celebrate our great good luck instead of smarting under the perceived "injustice" of the existence of federal lands. This very existence has made possible the envy of the world: our national parks and monuments. Salt Lake City is a very lucky beneficiary of these lands. All you have to do is spend a few days in, say, Los Angeles to realize what a privilege it is to have wilderness (with both a small "w" and a capital "W" right on our doorstep. It makes SLC one of the most beautiful and desirable cities in the world.

Thinking of public lands as commodities to be evaluated as objects of commerce is a pattern of thought that is more than a century out of date. It is also an increasingly tarnished model for the organization of public life. The global economic collapse that we are enduring has disturbed our confidence in business as usual. Laissez-faire unregulated commerce is not as appealing as it might have been just a year ago. Some things are not best left to the invisible hand of the market: schools, libraries, infrastructure, defense and maybe even health care.

When it comes to thinking about public lands, remember their history and values; when it comes to wilderness, remember that wilderness can only be lost, not created.

And don't fall for the myth that imagines that federal lands were usurped from the states, that deplores their existence, that demands that they be returned to their "rightful owners" and that insists their regulation be vested in states and the developers that often dominate their legislatures. — *Gale Dick*

Third in a series of articles on how SOC Trustees became involved in Wasatch conservation issues

How I Got Involved in Conservation Activism

by GALE DICK, SOC's CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

For me it started with mountains. I grew up in Portland, Oregon and had a view of Mt. Hood from my bedroom window as well as one of pre-eruption Mount St. Helens from our breakfast nook. These were distant and alluring and Mt. Hood became a vivid reality for me when I got to climb it with Boy Scout Troop 81 when I was in my early teens. That experience is still vivid for me and I have a blurry picture of several of us on the windy summit. It is hard to say why it is that mountains affect many people the way they do. For me, it was the incredible beauty, the purity and adventure of being there. I was never very good at sports but here was something where endurance and determination counted and I loved it immediately. I knew at once that I had found a place where I needed to spend a lot of my life.

I got my first chance of doing so when I went to Reed College in Portland after I got out of the navy in 1946. It was a great time to be in colleges anywhere; they were full of returned veterans eager for higher education and happy to be out of WWII. Among these vets were members of the Tenth Mountain Division who had been trained in skiing and mountaineering. One of them, Don McKay, became a close friend and mountaineering teacher. Don showed me the ropes (literally) and took groups of friends up the volcanic peaks and spires of Oregon and Washington. We lugged our skis up Mt. St. Helens and skied down the north side on pretty crummy snow. He lured me into climbing a face of a big monolith in the Columbia River Gorge called Beacon Rock, a climb way beyond my abilities, that scared the living daylights out of me. I learned to ski at Reed and enjoyed the usually soggy slopes of the Cascades, not yet realizing what real skiing was going to be like in the Wasatch nor even dreaming that I would, one day, live in Utah.

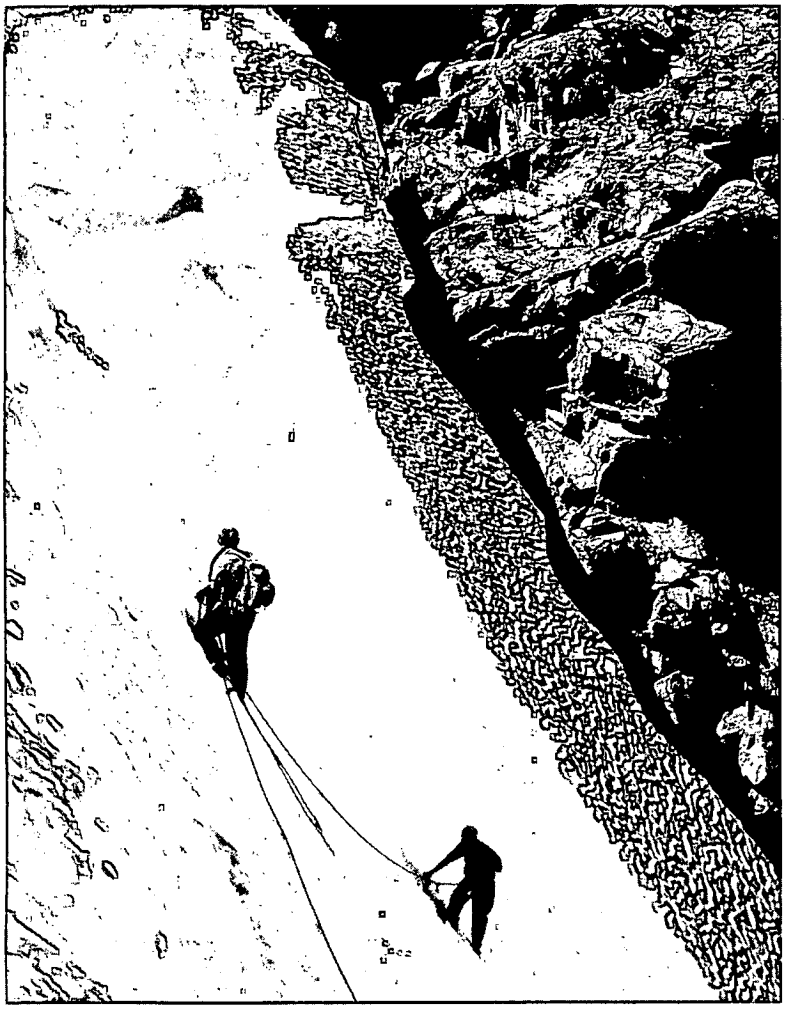
Gale, with friends in Boy Scout Troop 81. (1939)

Everywhere we found matchless beauty, the delight of companionship in remote places, the pleasure of exhaustion and sound sleep. We also began to fantasize about things to come: "What would you do if you found gold on the Middle Teton," was a question we once chewed over by a campfire in Garnet Canyon. No activism or even awareness of it yet.

It became clear to me that I was going to try to be a physicist, probably an academic, and I set out on the long process of getting the necessary education. Even while I was doing graduate work at Oxford in England, at Cornell and at the University of Illinois, I somehow got a chance to do classic climbs in the Alps, the Tetons, the Wind Rivers and in the North Cascades.

Then we moved to Utah and found a mountain wonderland, discovered the red rock desert country and the Colorado River system. It was a wonderful time to have come here before the deluge of population growth.

During these formative years I began to meet friends who knew a lot about environmental activism and how to use it to protect the places we loved. We began to realize the importance and uniqueness of the legacy of federal lands here in the American west. At that time, the Echo Park and Glen Canyon controversies dominated public awareness of the endangerment of public lands. My wife and I were lucky enough to float through Glen Canyon before the dam was completed. On one of these trips we visited the dam site and, with explanations provided by a Bureau of Reclamation information officer, watched the pouring of concrete. Someone in our group asked the BLM guy what the dam was for. He was



Gale, last on the rope, in Washington State's North Cascades.

Gale, on an ascent of the Matterhorn in 1952.

flummoxed. It was clear that he didn't know and that no one had asked him that question before. For me it was a radicalizing moment. I was new to Utah. It was a sort of earthly paradise and it was in great danger. I realized that I had to be part of the work to protect this land from overdevelopment.

From that moment on, I have tried to be part of this work. New laws were passed that offered very important tools for conservationists: The *Wilderness Act of 1964* and the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*. These have proved to be immensely important pieces of legislation. During the same time urbanization in the Wasatch increased: highways were widened, sewer lines installed in the canyons, ski resorts expanded, ridgeline structures gained approval, back country skiing opportunities inexorably diminished. Paradise was being lost. Help!

Crucial at this moment were friends like Alexis Kelner, Cal Giddings and others who shared the vision of protecting the Wasatch from the relentless pressure of commercialization. Together we conceived and launched Save Our Canyons. Meanwhile I was working as a father, physicist, teacher and university administrator. Our children were being introduced to the mountains and deserts that my wife Ann and I had come to love. They took this pretty well although I can remember being asked by our daughter, "Why can't we have normal family vacation sometime?"

By today's standards, I came late to serious activism. By 1972 when we started SOC, I was pretty well established in my professional life. I had promising research projects, tenure and good students. It was time to get truly involved in saving our canyons. Today young people, far more knowledgeable and aware than we were back in the sixties, are setting out on careers of environmental activism and thank heavens for them. They are impressive and everyone should be grateful for their expertise and dedication. They bode well for the future.

Awareness of what is at stake in management of public lands has taken huge strides since 1972. Back then it was rare to find any in-depth coverage of local, national or global environmental issues in the media, and what little existed often was hostile. The issues are now more newsworthy and attitudes more friendly, but progress is still hard work and individual dedication to the protection of our mountains, foothills and canyons is still as much needed and as individually rewarding as it ever has been.

I'm glad that I was taken up Mt. Hood as a boy, that I learned to ski, that I climbed up to and beyond my ability, that I have rarely passed up opportunities for outdoor adventure, that I have been lucky enough to find a host of like-minded friends and that I have been able to work with so many dedicated people of all ages in this crucial undertaking of our era. ❑

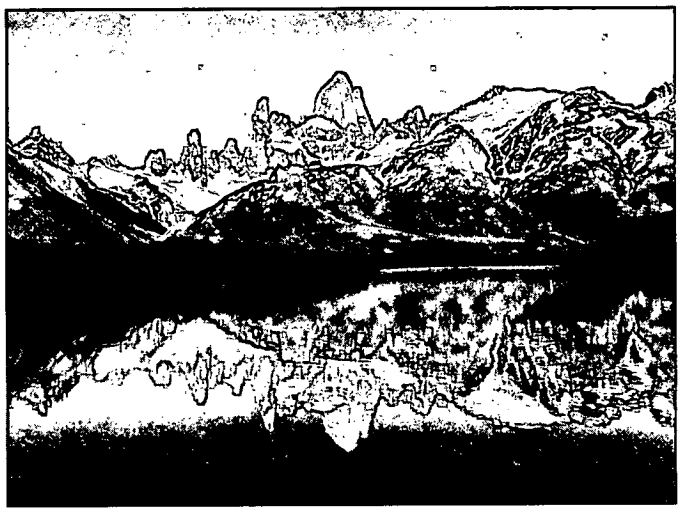
Join Us For:

"Patagonia, Monarch Butterflies of Mexico, and the Wasatch Mountains"

A slide show event by nature and fine arts photographer Howie Garber.

At Brewvies Cinema Pub
Thursday, June 4th – 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Tickets: $6.00. *All proceeds benefit Save Our Canyons!*
Buy tickets online at www.saveourcanyons.org or at the door.
Seating is limited and tickets are sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.



Come explore the wonders of the American Continent from the rugged Patagonia Mountains in South America, to the delicate forests of Mexico where the monarch butterflies congregate, and back home to explore the spectacular Wasatch Mountains in the backyard of Salt Lake City!

Howie Garber, nature and fine arts photographer lives in Salt Lake City and has shared the beauty of the Wasatch Mountains and other wonders of the World through his lens. Howie has photographed on 7 continents and has won national and international awards for his photography as been published in a number of books and magazines including Nature Photographer and Newsweek.

Overflow Crowd Attends Friends of Flagstaff Mountain Meeting

By Gayle Parry, SOC's Trustee

Friends of Flagstaff Mountain organizers must have been wishing for a larger auditorium when people were turned away from the standing room only meeting room at REI on March 31. There were as many people turned away at the door as were able to get into the event. There was an electric hum in the room as Friends of Flagstaff Mountain organizer, George Vyargas; Utah Department of Transportation avalanche forecaster, Lium Fitzgerald; Alta manager, Onno Wieringa; world renowned skier, Andrew McLean; and Black Diamond attorney, Rick Luskin, spoke to a packed room of polite but definitely agitated citizens about the proposed Flagstaff lift.

Alta Ski Lifts claims that a ski lift up Flagstaff Mountain to the ridge is the best option for controlling avalanches that threaten the road and inhabited structures from Flagstaff Mountain into Grizzly Gulch. This lift would also access what well-known international ski legend, Andrew McLean describes as, "probably the biggest bang for your hiking buck, with a 45 minute approach to some of the best backcountry skiing the Wasatch has to offer. " With this approach, avalanche personnel would ride the lift to access the ridge where they could throw charges. Part of this also hopes that skier compaction can be relied on to keep the snow from sliding. Anyone want to be the first skier down the mountain?

Avalanche control in Little Cottonwood Canyon is managed by the Utah Department of Public Transportation that maintains an office at Alta where Lium Fitzgerald, UDOT avalanche forecaster, has the huge responsibility of keeping us safe from avalanches in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Fitzgerald explained that his duties include keeping the inevitable avalanches small rather than large. In the past, Alta has relied on recoilless rifles for bringing down the snow, however, the surplus Korean War ammunition will run out in four or five years. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security doesn't like the idea of shooting over inhabited buildings with the rifles. It is obvious that a new method must be found. There are several possibilities and they all have their own unique problems. In addition, there are limited places to put them to do an effective job.

UDOT's Avalanche Forecaster Lium Fitzgerald.

Howitzers are one method of avalanche control that has the advantage of plenty of available ammunition and greater building safety. The drawback is that howitzers throw out a great deal of shrapnel. The last few years early-bird skiers have been accessing the mountain in the early morning hours when avalanche control work is being done. This leads to the possibility of skiers being hurt.

Fitzgerald said that there has been discussion about using more Gazex concussion systems that use a combination of propane and oxygen. He said that it is an ugly device that would cost five to six mil-

lion dollars for the twenty-five exploders that would be needed. Another system, called Avalanche Guard, is even less desirable because there are only a limited number of times that it can be used before it needs to be replaced. The last system discussed was avalaunchers that are effective but hard to get. Fitzgerald claimed that skier compaction and hand charges touted by Alta are a viable alternative to some of these, but UDOT's preferred alternative would be howitzers. **The avalanche forecaster told the audience that UDOT was not promoting the lift.**

Onno Wieringa, General Manager of Alta Ski Lifts, also expressed concern about increasing numbers of backcountry skiers going into the backcountry at all times of the day and very early morning making it unsafe to use any kind of artillery for avalanche control. Wieringa feels that a Flagstaff lift is a feasible alternative and would solve the avalanche problem. A concern from a member of the audience involved a rumor from Alta employees that the lift was already a done deal. Wieringa assured the audience that that was not the case and there was plenty of time to discuss all the alternatives to the lift, although Andrew McLean has observed that the lift route had already been surveyed and survey stakes were in evidence on Flagstaff Mountain. Wieringa mentioned several times that the public would have their say when the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) was put into play.

Andrew McLean made a big impact on the anxious crowd when he showed disheartening slides with maps of the areas of the Wasatch that were already under ski resort control. The area became much larger when he showed a map slide of how much backcountry terrain would be lost if this lift were to be built, and even worse when he added to the map the areas adjacent to ski runs (slack country) that would also be impacted by lift skiers going out of bounds and spoiling the terrain for backcountry skiers such as is found in Scotties Bowl and White Pine. It was obvious to the audience that with this lift, backcountry skiing in the Wasatch will be all but destroyed. Downhill skiers would be able to ski into Big Cottonwood Canyon via Days Fork, Silver Fork, and Cardiff Fork. McLean also pointed out that once the Flagstaff lift were to go in, there would no longer be uphill traffic allowed for safety reasons. This would eliminate the convenient forty-five minute climb up to Flagstaff ridge from Alta that the backcountry skiers use to access the Big Cottonwood drainage. **See StraightChuter.com for Andrew's commentary on the meeting and his photos.**

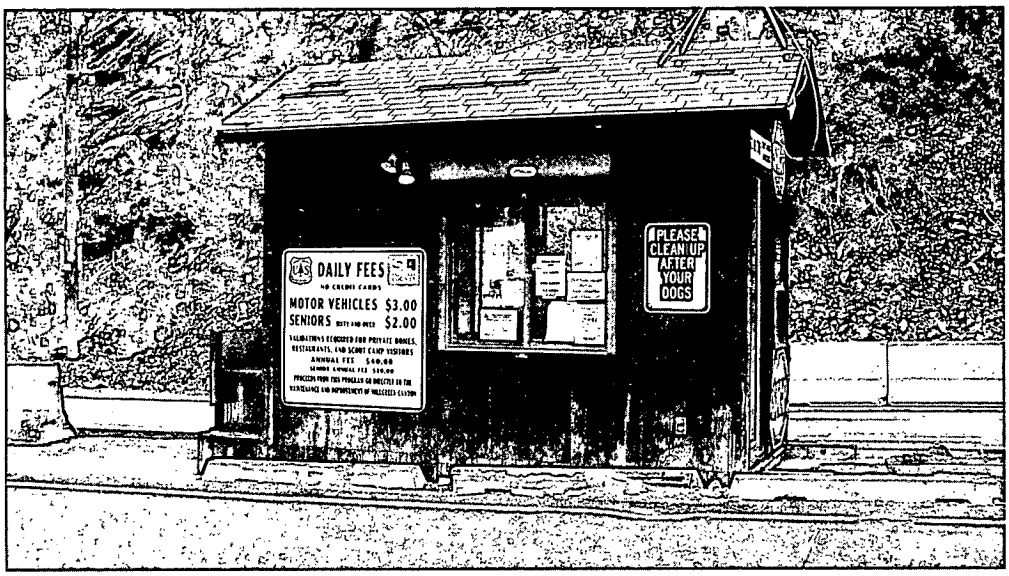
Flagstaff Peak, with Alta at its base.

Rick Luskin, environmental attorney for Black Diamond, told the crowd that Black Diamond opposes the Flagstaff lift and believes that the carrying capacity for human visitation has already been achieved in the Wasatch. He continued with a story of trying to save a meadow in Squaw Valley, California from turning into a golf course. He contacted the opposing attorney on a Friday saying that he was going to get a restraining order for the weekend to protect the meadow from the developer. The opposing lawyer told him not to do it as it was the weekend and nothing would happen over the weekend. It would be better to wait until Monday. By Monday, the developer had completely plowed the meadow. He also told of a huge avalanche in California that took place on a heavily skied slope at Alpine Meadows. This avalanche wouldn't have taken place if skier compaction were effective as avalanche control. Luskin's words were a great way to end the discussion. **He said, "It is good to listen to people and like them, but not necessarily trust them. Pick your argument, be credible and DON'T TRUST ANYBODY. Remember that the public process is where the rubber hits the road."**

Alta has always been the favorite ski resort of the hometown crowd from the time that the first ski lift in the Wasatch was built to take skiers to the greatest snow on earth. Over the years, skiers have always treated Alta with incredible loyalty. With the coming of the Flagstaff lift, Alta will not be remembered for this glorious past history, but will be remembered for ending the adventure and thrill of backcountry skiing in the Wasatch.

Please remember that a ski lift is forever. Once there, it stays there or is upgraded to a bigger lift.

If you would like to help prevent the Flagstaff Mountain lift from being built, stay informed, write letters and e-mails, and get actively involved if you can. E-mail or write an opinion letter to the Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret News. Let Salt Lake County Mayor, Peter Corroon, the Salt Lake County Council, Onno Wieringa, Manager of Alta Ski Lifts, UDOT and the State of Utah know your concerns about this lift. For more information concerning the proposed Flagstaff lift, read Julia Lester's article in the Save Our Canyons newsletter of Autumn of 2008 and visit our website. If you wish to send a donation to Save Our Canyons or Friends of Flagstaff Mountain, you can do so through our website. Clearly indicate where you want your donation to go. ❑



The Fee Station at the mouth of Millcreek Canyon in the Wasatch. Revenues are used in the canyon.

The Locals' Canyon

By Ann Wechsler

The fee station at the mouth of Millcreek Canyon is a fixture today, and still the only one for the seven major canyons of the Wasatch Front. Nearly two decades ago, when a fee was proposed for Millcreek, opposition centered on what it might mean for Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons as well. However, no other canyon entrance fees have materialized.

The Forest Service and Salt Lake County are intensely proud of the public-private partnership they formed as an outcome of the 1989 Canyon Master Plan. The Plan identified Millcreek Canyon as the most trammeled of all the canyons. No surprise there. It was within an hour's drive of a million people. To this day, no accurate account of usage is available, though it is estimated at 500,000 annually. With the Forest Service's perennial budget constraints, the Salt Lake Ranger District approached Salt Lake County with a plan to improve recreation, picnic sites, and stream conditions through a means to generate funds to support their rehabilitation and maintenance.

The fee, and the partnership that established it, is still considered a model for the country, according to Carol Majeske, Recreation Manager for the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Parking and safety was the catalyst. The Forest Service has statutory authority to charge parking fees, as well as to enter into agreements to channel such revenues back into the canyon, rather than the U. S. Treasury. A fee structure that would minimize administrative costs and be acceptable to the Forest Service permittees and all the private commercial operations was critical. For 16 years, that fee remained unchanged; the recent modest increase still seems very reasonable.

Has the fee accomplished what was intended? By all accounts, most would agree it has. The sites are kept up, and unlike the other canyons, there are staff on the ground every day, as well as law enforcement. The lone ski trail is groomed for two to three hundred skiers a day, and water quality of the stream has improved.

Millcreek is truly a magnet for locals. Hikers, cyclists, dogs (on and off leash), skiers, snowshoers, restaurant and event patrons, picnickers, many access trails from other canyons, a growing valley population – all contribute to increasing congestion and potential conflicts. The upcoming revised master plan for the canyons, conducted by Envision Utah, is bound to present transportation and parking issues that currently exist, and invite innovative solutions from the public. Incidentally, the master plan of 20 years ago suggested a shuttle system for Millcreek Canyon.

My hopes for Millcreek is for its former, and hopefully current, residents. Long before the fee station, I led a Sierra Club hike on a hot July evening. As we carpooled to our meeting place, we spotted a bear in a watercress pool at the Alexander Basin trailhead. He was taking a bath! Stopping the car to gaze in wonder caused him to stand up and stare back. A nearby fisherman seemed unaware. With one backward glance at his dinner, so rudely interrupted, the little bear scampered up the bank to the safety of the trees. This canyon is surely a treasure, and worth the price of admission. ❑

SOC's 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.

Bring lunch, water, and rain gear in case of inclement weather.

Space is limited so please register in advance with Save Our Canyons office.

Botany Hike
Saturday, August 8

We're in luck again. Like last year, this botany hike's leaders will be Bill & Bill – that is, Bill Gray and Bill King. They are both experts' experts and great guys to learn about Wasatch plants. Both are long-time members and leaders of the Utah Native Plant Society and Bill Gray is the creator of that original and fascinating flower identification tool, Cyberflora.

Bring lunch, water and rain gear, just in case.

Space is limited so please register in advance with Save Our Canyons office.

Adopt-A-Highway
June 7, July 5, and August 2.

Spring's here (along with its sun, rain and snow!) and it's almost time for the annual SOC Adopt-A-Highway in Big Cottonwood Canyon. The scenery and camaraderie at these events are unmatched! Come join us for our first event on June 7, the second July 5, and the final one on August 2.

Meet at 8:30 AM at the Big Cottonwood Canyon mouth Park-and-Ride parking lot. Get out those work gloves, sturdy boots, a pack to carry at least a quart of water and snacks (Some drinks and bagels will be provided by SOC before we start), a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sunscreen. Sunglasses and a hat might come in handy too. Helmets will be provided by SOC. UDOT will be providing safety vests and bags for cleanup.

Please contact Julia Hendrian Lester at 801 201-9460 or jhendrian@

Trail Maintenance Program
June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12.

Every year the trails in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest needs routine maintenance due to weather, overuse, and abuse. Now is your opportunity to give back to the Wasatch by volunteering with Save Our Canyons!

Help Save Our Canyons and the Wasatch Mountain Club with our Trails Days!

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 the second Saturday of the month: June 13, July 11, August 8, and September 12. 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 gwparry@comcast.net or call 363-SAVE with any questions!

Community Events

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

Venture Outdoors Festival (Canyon Rim Park)
3100 South 2900 East
Saturday June 20th, 2009 from 3:00pm - 9:00 p.m.

People's Market (International Peace Garden in Jordan Park)
10th South 9th West
July 12th and September 27th from 10:00am - 3:00pm

Salt Lake City Farmer's Market (Pioneer Park)
300 south 300 west
July 25, 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.

The 2009 Annual Lone Peak Celebration Was a Great Success

Now in its 7th year, SOC's annual Lone Peak Celebration was a resounding success. Over 100 SOC members, volunteers, and guests attended to hear an inspirational – and motivational – keynote address by lifelong wilderness proponent Doug Scott.
(More on Doug Scott on page 12)

Volunteers who helped with the event: Megan Knight, Asher Koles, Rachael Mathey, Alana Felt, Jim Catano, Dave Bastian, Adam Cunningham, Cathy Wright, and Eric Spreng.

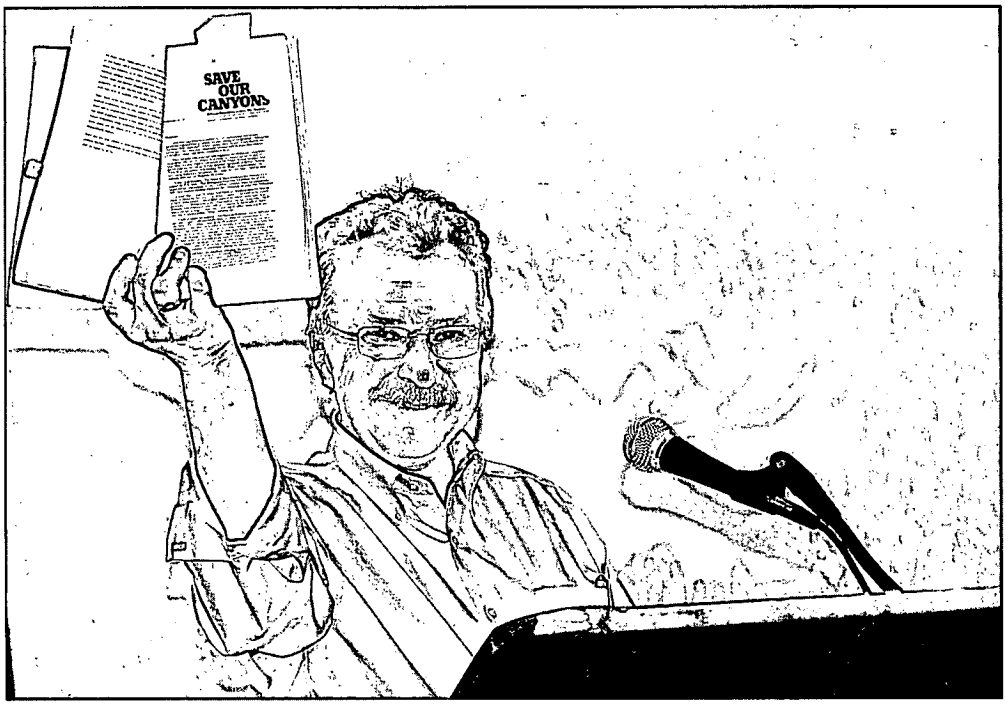
SOC's staff: Havilah Mills, Carl Fisher, and Jennifer Kecor.

The auctioneers were Robert and David Olsen.

Many local businesses contributed to the success of SOC's Annual Lone Peak Celebration.

This event would not have been possible without the support of the following businesses that generously donated items for the live and silent auctions. We urge SOC members to patronize these establishmentsts during these days of economic crises.

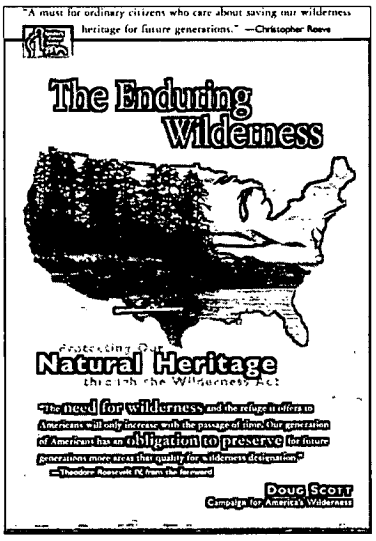
Adrian Prazen
Adrift Adventures
Alpine At
Alpine Sports
Alta Ski Resort
Bacchus Event Services
Beehhive Cheese
Bill Gray
Bill Parry
Black Diamond
Boulder Mountain Lodge
Brewvies
Brighton Resort
Cactus and Tropicals
Caffé Molise
Carlucci's Bakery
Carolyn Guild Photography
Cascade Designs
Cataract Oars
Chaco
Deanna McLaughlin with Health 2 Go!
Dear Valley Resort
Desert Edge Pub
Desert Star Theaters
Drake Family Farms
Eggs in the City
Gastronomy, Inc.
Gear 4 Guys
Gibbs Smith Publisher
Huddart Floral
Ken Sanders Rare Books
Kirkham Outdoor Products
Knead-A-Massage
La Caille
Lamb's Grille Café
Liston Concepts
Martine
Moki Pottery
Neptune Divers
Patagonia
Petzl
Polly Hart Jewelry
Red Butte Café
Red Iguana
Red Lion Hotels
Redmond Trading Company L.C.
Reflections Salon: Ashlie Long
Rico's Mexican Delicatessen and Catering
Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory
Sage's Café
Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort
Stoneground Restaurant
Sundance
The Beer Nut
The Dodo Restaurant
The Front Climbing Club
The Jewish Community Center
The King's English Bookshop
The Porcupine Pub & Grille
The Red Rock Hot Club
The Tin Angel: Bistro Café
The Yarrow Resort Hotel
Uinta Brewing Co
University Guest House
Utah Symphony and Opera: Deer Valley Music Festival
Voilé Equipment Inc.
Wanderlust Images: Howie Garber
Wild Bird Center
Wild Rose Sports
Xmission



Lifelong wilderness advocate Doug Scott holds up a 1970s era Congressional Hearing Record containing Save Our Canyons' wilderness proposals.

A Lifetime of Wilderness Advocacy

Save Our Canyons was lucky to have Doug Scott as keynote speaker at its Lone Peak Celebration on April 23. Doug is policy director for the Campaign for America's Wilderness and knows Utah wilderness issues well having been a key player in the Lone Peak Wilderness legislation in the 1970s and an important participant in the current work to enlarge Wilderness areas in the Wasatch. He has written an outstanding book on the history of the famous 1964 Wilderness Act, both inspiring and important – *The Enduring Wilderness, Protecting Our Natural Heritage Through the Wilderness Act*. It was written for people like all of us, as members of Save Our Canyons, will enjoy reading it. He is also author of the recently published. *Our Wilderness: America's Common Ground*. Get them! Enjoy them! And make a pledge to write your City and Congressional representatives. Let them know what Wilderness designation means to you and your descendants and why the Wasatch Front wilderness areas need to be enlarged.



John Worlock is host of the KRCL ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE *program airing Sundays at 2:00 pm. John began broadcasting these updates in July of 2002, almost 7 years ago. He has produced 320 archived texts, with MP3's archived from 2005 available on SOC's web site. This is an impressive accomplishment, comprising some 12,000 words and about 16 hours of on-air time. Thank you John for this great community resource.*

Summertime Activities in the Ski Resorts

By John Worlock, SOC Trustee.

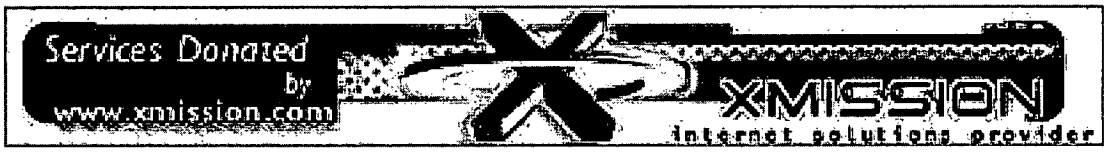
There is a new bill in Congress that would encourage the Forest Service to allow those ski resorts operating on public land to expand their activities beyond the skiing and snowboarding now permitted. At present, many resorts actually ***own*** at least some of the land they operate on, and so advertise and operate as four-season resorts. This proposed measure would presumably be of economic benefit to ***other*** ski resorts, allowing expansion of their commercial operations into the summer and fall seasons, when the mountains are, according so some, at their most welcoming and most beautiful.

Surprisingly this bill comes from Colorado Senator Mark Udall, a member of the illustrious Udall family that has done so much for the environmental movement. Perhaps we should not be surprised, as Udall brought a similar bill to Congress last July, when he served as a Congressman. At that time, the Deputy Chief of the Forest Service expressed limited approval, saying that permitting year-round recreation would help the ski industry remain economically viable. He went on to criticize the bill as so broadly written that it would allow "water parks, amusement rides, and other urban-based recreation."

Those are also SOC's concerns. Locally the ski industry is an important cog in the economy, as it is nationwide where it has become established. But the Forest Service, charged as it is with the care of the public land, has no charter to be concerned with the profits and losses of its permitees and concessionaires.

But even more troubling is the specter of amusement park-like development in the local canyons. The ski resorts are run by ambitious people, and they have a history of reaching for more turf: for example, moving parking lots onto public land, allowing them to build more hotels and restaurants. Maybe all they will do is organize commercial mountain-biking activities, but we can imagine that, with enough downhill bicycle traffic, Alta Ski Resort would want to close the Albion Basin to summertime foot traffic.

Udall's bill proposes to make the forests more accessible for family recreation. A good idea, indeed, but let's encourage more ***low-impact*** activities, like hiking, and keep ***industrial*** recreation out of the forests. ❑



It is always alarming to see a sign such as this one on your drive into one of our scenic Wasatch canyons. It is not the sign that is ugly, but the development it is promoting.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

GOOD. The *Omnibus Public Lands Management Act,* which was passed by Congress at the end of March, is described as "one of the largest public-lands measures ever to make its way through Congress." It creates more than 2 million acres of wilderness in eight states. This is a victory a long time in the making. On the occasion of President Obama's signing of the act, Mike Matz, executive director of the Campaign For America's Wilderness said, "The depth of support for this law by people from all walks of life, as well as the size, scope and diversity of the lands protected are a clear indication Americans recognize that our wild lands must and do serve many purposes, not the least of which is as a place to hunt, fish, hike, camp, watch birds and just find solitude."

GOOD. The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver has denied arguments lodged by Kane and Garfield counties that the BLM's land-use plan for the Grand Staircase-Escalante national Monument unfairly infringes onto roads and water rights claimed by those counties. State Representative, Mike Noel (R-Kanab) denounced the decision saying that it emboldens "faceless, nameless, unaccountable bureaucracy in Washington, D.C., who thinks they can old sway over a sovereign state." The Sagebrush Rebels ride again!

GOOD. HB122 & S3 were bills before the recent 2009 Utah State Legislature session. According to their critics, it would have greatly restricted the present *Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA),* which gives the public and the media access to records of vital public interest. SOC and other environmental groups have found the current law very useful in raising the veil of secrecy that sometimes beclouds those issues of vital public interest. It is the Utah equivalent of the federal *Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).* To quote from the Utah Chapter of Sierra Club's invaluable tracking of legislative session, "Fortunately this beast expired in the session's waning hours on March 12." Watch out for the reintroduction of this legislation in future sessions.

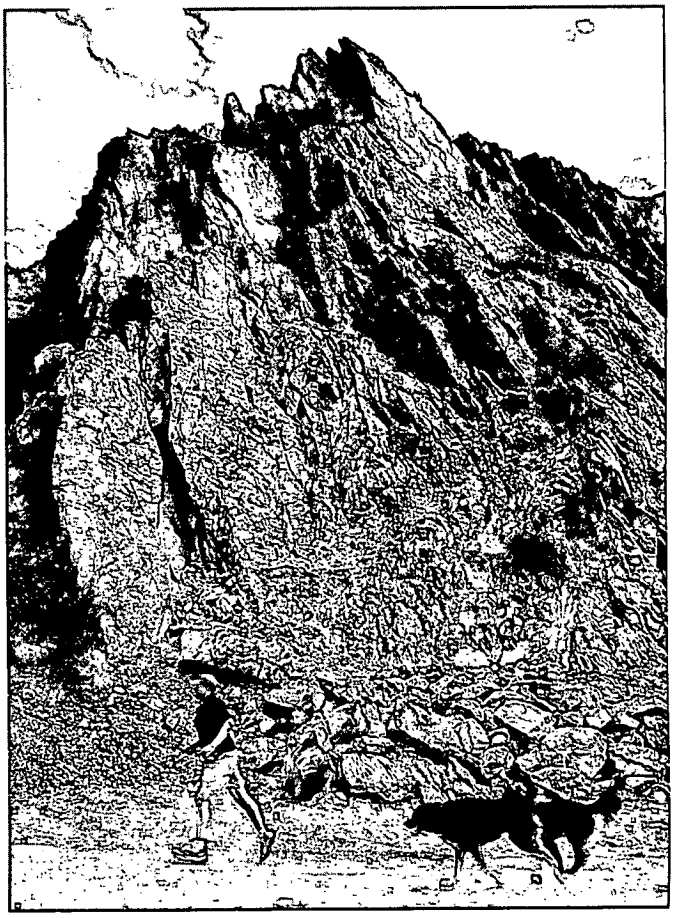
GOOD. Concerned and knowledgeable Salt Lakers have raised a whole slew of questions on a Salt Lake Public Utilities plan to begin cutting a firebreak in City Creek Canyon this spring. The purpose would be for fire prevention, management and evacuation. Public Utilities' Florence Reynolds and SLC Councilman Eric Jergensen listened to these questions and the pace of the proposed project that been dramatically slowed down and the public process related to it much broadened. Thank you Bill Gray, S.D. Williams and the other citizens who stepped up to this challenge with recommendations and constructive comments. This is the way democracy is supposed to work.

GOOD. SOC has previously reported on the high-handed, ham-handed, and under-handed way in which Beaver County officials have handled the development of an 1,800 acre Mount Holly Club. The Club is a proposed exclusive, gated community on the former

This magnificent red quaartzite buttress at the mouth of Provo's Rock Canyon is being slowly eaten away by an environmentally insensitive landowner. The light colored area indicates where quarrying has occurred.

A large majority of nearby property owners are opposed to the quarrying operation.

Commerce must not be the only consideration where the Wasatch canyons are concerned.



Elk Meadows ski resort and subdivision 18 miles east of Beaver. The property in the Tushar Mountains used to be public state land under the control of SITLA, Utah's Schools and Institution Trust Lands Administration. SITLA sold it. Many Beaver County residents have been opposed to this development and wished to put the matter to a public vote. County officials tried to stop the referendum seeking to put it on the ballot. Legal wrangles ensued but the State Supreme Court upheld the residents' referendum rights. Thanks go to SOC member Joel Ban for his arguing the case on behalf of Beaver residents. The efforts to gag public comment on planning and zoning decisions in Utah never seem to end. *Photo below.*

BAD. Rock Canyon, east of Provo in the Wasatch Mountains, is popular with climbers and is once more in the news. Again, a part owner of a mining claim has applied for a permit to remove decorative rocks from the canyon. A recent neighborhood meeting attracted an estimated 200 or more residents who deplored the planned mining proposal. Litigation looms. Go for it residents! Commerce must not be the only consideration where the Wasatch canyons are concerned.

BAD? Three years ago a small brown beetle from Kazakhstan, *Dorhabda elongata*, was released along stream banks in the Colorado drainage in an effort to control the invasive and abundant tamarisk plant. Philip Dennison of the U of U's Department of Geography worries that this may be leading to harmful unintended consequences. The beetle is spreading fast and far and endangering the habitat of the southwestern willow flycatcher. An Audubon Society lawsuit has been filed. Cures sometimes are as bad as the disease.

UGLY. It is always alarming to see such a sign as the one pictured on page 14 (for Altabird Estates) as you drive into one of our Wasatch canyons, in this case at the mouth of Little Cottonwood. O.K. It's private property, the project evidently passed muster with county planners. But what it stands for makes it ugly. Watching our city creep into the canyons is heartbreaking. ❑

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

Join Us For:

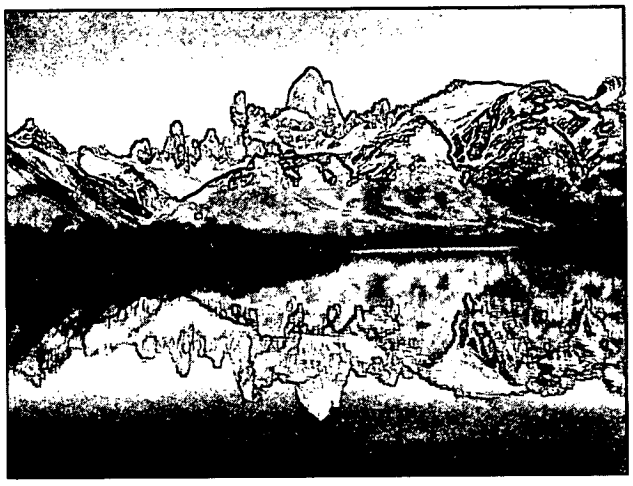
"Patagonia, Monarch Butterflies of Mexico, and the Wasatch Mountains"

A slide show event by nature and fine arts photographer Howie Garber.

At Brewvies Cinema Pub
Thursday, June 4th – 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Tickets: $6.00. *All proceeds benefit Save Our Canyons!*
Buy tickets online at www.saveourcanyons.org or at the door.

Seating is limited and tickets are sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.



Come explore the wonders of the American Continent from the rugged Patagonia Mountains in South America, to the delicate forests of Mexico where the monarch butterflies congregate, and back home to explore the spectacular Wasatch Mountains in the backyard of Salt Lake City!

Howie Garber, nature and fine arts photographer lives in Salt Lake City and has shared the beauty of the Wasatch Mountains and other wonders of the World through his lens. Howie has photographed on 7 continents and has won national and international awards for his photography as been published in a number of books and magazines including Nature Photographer and Newsweek.