



GRIT AND DETERMINATION

SUWA 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

SUWA
SOUTHERN UTAH WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

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2019:



SCOTT GROENE

Executive Director

GRIT AND DETERMINATION

Grit: 1) a hard, sharp granule (as of sand); 4) firmness of mind/spirit, unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.
[Merriam-Webster.com]

In 2019 we helped pass the largest piece of federal wilderness legislation in two decades, protecting nearly three-quarters of a million acres (after land exchanges). These canyons, mesas, and rivers in southern Utah will be held in a natural state for the wildlife, the ancestral sites of the Tribes and Pueblos, and future generations.

Grit created these landscapes. Over eons, grit whipped by hot desert winds and tumbled in muddy flash floods helped sculpt the canyon country.

And grit protected these landscapes, too. In an effort stretching back decades and involving thousands of wilderness advocates, we challenged and transformed terrible legislation directed at the San Rafael Swell into an extraordinarily good wilderness bill, which was signed into law on March 11, 2019. Senator Dick Durbin's (D-IL) opposition to the original proposal forced Utah politicians to remake it into one good for the redrock. Muddy Creek, Mexican Mountain, and Labyrinth Canyon are all better for it.

The threats posed to Utah's redrock country since President Trump took office are as numerous as they are severe. But SUWA has been gritty, unyielding, and determined ever since our founding in 1983.

Over the past year, this presidential administration tested us day in and day out. Terrible policy changes or decisions were delivered nearly every week.

But we fought back. In 2019, we went to court against decisions to tear down piñon-juniper forests in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, to open lands around Factory Butte to Mad Max-style motorized toys, and to let Garfield County slap down more asphalt on the Burr Trail and make the Colorado Plateau a smaller, lesser place.

We also stymied the Trump administration's hell-bent drive to lease public lands for drilling. Thanks to our repeated efforts to block their oil and gas leasing in federal court, not one lease has been put into operation on proposed wilderness in Utah since the first day of the reign of Mad King Donald. No doubt they will try again, but we'll be there.

In the midst of everything else, we began the difficult work of analyzing a series of new off-road vehicle travel plans we forced the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to prepare after the agency's last attempt ran afoul of the law. And for another year, we fought the State of Utah's efforts to seize control of lands belonging to all Americans under a long-ago repealed Civil War-era law known as RS 2477.

SUWA grew up in a state hostile to wilderness, so we're accustomed to stopping foul decisions in federal court and mobilizing a national public to challenge Utah's backward-looking politicians. We know how to sue and organize. It's been good training for this administration.

I'm proud of how SUWA has responded to all of these challenges with grit and determination. Times are tough, but with our supporters and activists alongside us, so are we.

LEGISLATIVE

BY THE NUMBERS

663,000

Acres of New Wilderness Permanently Protected

217,000

Acres Designated as the San Rafael Swell Recreation Area

63

Miles of the Green River Designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

36

Years of Tenacity

ONE

Major Victory for the Redrock!

LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Jen Ujifusa

Legislative Director

Christopher Richardson

Legislative Advocate

It would be easy to remember 2019 as another grim year in the Trump administration, the end of a tumultuous decade, or the year that brought us “Old Town Road.” But when we at SUWA look back, we will remember 2019 as the year we had our biggest victory yet.

In March, the perfect confluence of events came together and Congress passed the John Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act—a mash-up of more than 100 public lands bills. Prominent within it was the Emery County Public Land Management Act, which protected more than 663,000 acres of wilderness in Emery County, including Labyrinth Canyon, Muddy Creek, and the San Rafael Swell.

The Emery bill had been gestating for years in various forms, and when it was first introduced, the meager acreage it proposed to protect as wilderness inspired us to do better. We spent months negotiating with its sponsor, the now-retired Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), insisting that the bill must go further. Other groups in the conservation community began to cave, succumbing to the Stockholm syndrome logic that they should be grateful to be thrown crumbs by a Utah delegation with a reputation for hostility to wilderness. At one point, convinced we’d need to pull out all the stops to kill the bill, we delivered a dinosaur hand puppet to every member of the Senate with a message explaining that the Emery bill was just Sen. Hatch’s latest ploy to take “a bite” out of Utah’s precious public lands.

All the while, our congressional champions, Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), held strong; Sen. Durbin even threatened to tank the whole package if the Emery bill did not improve. And so, with his legacy on the line and retirement on the horizon, Sen. Hatch struck a deal with Sen. Durbin to add more wilderness to the bill—enough that we could support its passage.

In the end, the Emery bill included the largest amount of legislatively protected Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in Utah’s history, and one of the biggest wilderness bills anywhere in decades. It is testament to SUWA’s 36 years of tireless dedication to the redrock. Our refusal to accept outcomes that do not further the mission of protecting the priceless wild lands of Utah is only possible because we know you stand behind us. Thank you!

Factory Butte / © Jeffrey Sipress



New Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness / © Ray Bloxham / SUWA

View from Smoky Mountain, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument / © Tim Peterson



As we expected, the Trump administration's Interior and Justice Departments threw everything they had at us in 2019. From working to cement President Trump's unlawful dismantling of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments to selling hundreds of thousands of acres of oil and gas leases, to opening 5,400 acres of Utah's remarkable Factory Butte region to cross-country motorized use, we've had our hands full. Yet we persisted. Fortunately, SUWA's legal team has never been stronger and more well-staffed to push back against these attacks on America's redrock wilderness. Below is a brief sample of some of the work that kept the midnight oil burning here in 2019.

First, our fight to restore the grandeur of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments continues in federal court in Washington, DC. In 2019, the judge handling these cases rejected the government's motions to dismiss the lawsuits, and we expect a decision in 2020 on the legality of President Trump's attack on these monuments.

Second, we have largely brought the Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oil and gas leasing program to a standstill. Based on federal court litigation, we anticipate that the BLM will be forced to suspend every Utah lease that SUWA has challenged since President Trump came into office. All told, in 2019 we filed three lawsuits in federal court and brought several administrative challenges against BLM oil and gas lease sales and other related decisions that keep leases on the books indefinitely. SUWA and our partners comment on, protest, and appeal or litigate every oil and gas lease sale that threatens Utah's redrock wilderness and other sensitive public lands.

Third, we sued the Trump administration over its unlawful May 2019 decision to open 5,400 acres of public lands surrounding Utah's iconic Factory

Butte to cross-country motorized use (the area had been closed to such use since 2006). We also sued the BLM over its decision to allow Garfield County to chip-seal a remote 7.5-mile stretch of the Burr Trail just east of Capitol Reef National Park. The BLM gave the county advance notice of its decision, which allowed the county to finish much of its work before we even learned about it. In our lawsuit, we have asked the court to order the BLM to rip up the chip-seal.

Finally, though the long-awaited RS 2477 "bellwether trial" was twice delayed in 2019, we spent hundreds of hours preparing our case and working to defend the public's interest in 15 claimed RS 2477 rights-of-way in Kane County, including alleged routes in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, several wilderness study areas, and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The State of Utah's long-running RS 2477 litigation—now more than two dozen cases claiming tens of thousands of miles of dirt two-tracks and cow paths as "roads"—poses one of the most serious threats to America's redrock wilderness. A key purpose of these cases is to prevent wilderness designation by riddling the landscape with motorized roads and trails.

SUWA sincerely appreciates and is deeply grateful to the following law firms and attorneys who donated their time and services in defense of America's redrock wilderness in 2019: Cooley LLP, Manning Curtis Bradshaw & Bednar PLLC, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell LLP, Zimmerman Booher, Parr Brown Gee & Loveless, Strindberg & Scholnick LLC, Denko & Bustamante LLP, Jeff Gould, and Tom Erbin.

LEGAL

BY THE NUMBERS

216

Oil and Gas Leases Protested

5

Appeals Filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals

6

Federal Lawsuits Filed

0

New Wells Drilled in Proposed Wilderness

227

Oil and Gas Leases Suspended Due to SUWA Appeals and Legal Challenges

328,223

Acreage of Suspended Leases

100

Approximate RS 2477 Depositions Taken (Across 12 Counties)

LEGAL TEAM

Steve Bloch
Legal Director

Joe Bushyhead
Staff Attorney

Landon Newell
Staff Attorney

Laura Peterson
Staff Attorney

Michelle White
Staff Attorney

Creed Murdock
GIS Manager

Michael Mason
GIS Analyst

WILDLANDS

BY THE NUMBERS

62

Meetings with BLM & Forest Service Staff

174

Fieldwork Days

2,500

Miles of Travel Planning Routes Inventoried

13,000

Travel Planning Fieldwork Photo Points

10

Comments Submitted on Proposed Projects

23

Stewardship Projects & Trainings

46

Project Days

250

Project Volunteers

3,432

Stewardship Hours Completed

WILDLANDS TEAM

Ray Bloxham
Wildlands Field Director

Neal Clark
Wildlands Program
Director

Kya Marienfeld
Wildlands Attorney

Oliver Wood
Wildlands Attorney

Jeremy Lynch
Stewardship Director

Last year saw the Trump administration shift its anti-public-lands agenda into high gear, with the rollout of abysmal management plans for the eviscerated Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments, the opening of Factory Butte to cross-country motorized vehicle mayhem, and an attempt to push off-road vehicles into Utah's remarkable national parks. But 2019 was also a year of substantial gains for Utah wilderness. We worked tirelessly to pass the most significant piece of wilderness legislation in SUWA's history, stopped destructive Bureau of Land Management (BLM) projects across the state, and developed campaigns to advance the conservation of lands proposed for wilderness in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.

Although these are trying times, we continue to forge a path forward, looking for strategic opportunities that allow us to protect wilderness-quality lands while steadfastly holding the line against an onslaught of shortsighted projects and policies.

In addition to protecting 663,000 acres of wilderness in Emery County, we've also ramped up our efforts against the BLM's misguided piñon pine and juniper clear-cutting program, raising awareness of the issue in the national media and with our congressional allies in Washington, DC. And we continue to hold the BLM accountable for failing to follow the law, successfully appealing the agency's approval of a 30,000-acre vegetation removal project in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Recognizing the growing threat of non-motorized recreation on public lands, we're currently developing a report to assist in a large-scale education and policy campaign that will roll out in 2020. As the tsunami of visitation to southern Utah shows no signs of waning, it's past time to view this issue as a serious threat to both designated and proposed wilderness throughout Utah.

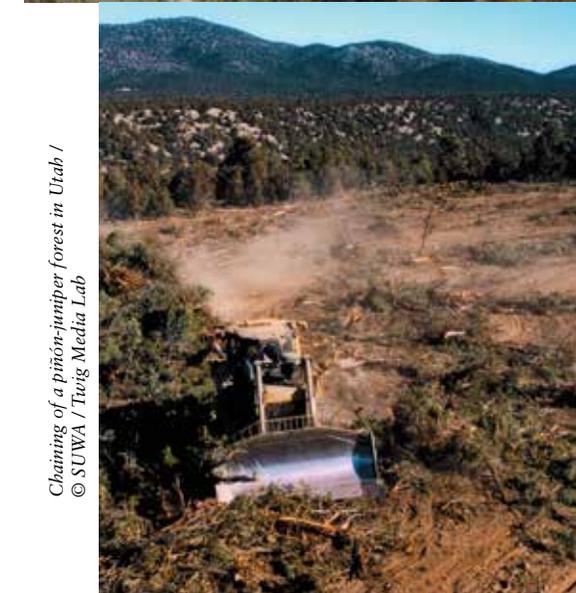
In the field, we continue to inventory proposed off-road vehicle routes for more than six million acres of BLM land that are subject to new motorized travel plans in the next eight years. This year alone, we spent more than 150 days ground-truthing around 2,500 miles of proposed routes. This effort allows us to independently verify the BLM's own analysis and, in turn, develop and advocate for reasonable travel plan proposals that minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources.

Meanwhile, SUWA's Stewardship Program continues to serve as a beacon of light in these dark times, providing the BLM with much-needed assistance and ensuring on-the-ground protection of our wilderness proposal. From the seasoned canyon country explorer to the first-generation college student camping in wilderness for the first time, our volunteers are true stewards of Utah's wild places. With a passion for learning through experience, a willingness to go where the work is—no matter how far from the familiar—and a commitment to carrying the cause, our volunteers "set the bar" (as one BLM ranger put it) for conservation volunteering in Utah.

We certainly anticipate another difficult year ahead, with terrible BLM projects and national policy changes already in the works. While the Trump administration will undoubtedly require us to keep digging our heels in, we'll work tirelessly and with determination to protect the incredible public lands that we all know and love.

"At the heart of wilderness protection in Utah, there have always been the wilderness protectors. We all have an obligation not merely to raise the issues, but to raise the voices that assert wilderness as a fundamental right of the many. These voices—young and old, alike and apart—will define our movement through the 21st century. So long as there are willing hands and minds, we will guide them into the wilderness." —Jeremy Lynch, Stewardship Program Director

Stewardship Program volunteers / © Jeremy Lynch / SUWA



Chaining of a piñon-juniper forest in Utah / © SUWA / Twig Media Lab



As the Trump administration ground away this long year with its repeated attacks on public land, redrock activists across the country refused to be worn down. When we called for your help, you didn't just show up—you showed up with your gloves on, ready to do whatever work was needed to resist and push forward. In other words, you showed up with GRIT! (We think it's an acronym for GrassRoots Is Tough.)

With determination and perseverance, you helped drive the largest Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness bill in Utah's history across the finish line. But you didn't stop there. You turned back to the critical work of meeting with your members of Congress and encouraging them to cosponsor America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA). You doubled down on efforts to educate and engage more citizens at farmers markets, college campuses, festivals, fairs, community events, and places of worship. You spoke out against bad ideas at protests and town halls. And you sent emails, made calls, texted, tweeted, and posted on Facebook, asking friends and elected officials alike to join the effort to #ProtectWildUtah.

While SUWA attorneys worked to protect wilderness from fossil fuel leasing and development through the courts, our activists brought public attention to the issue by showing up in force to protest lease sales and advocate for a more just and sustainable energy future. We sat in Utah Governor Gary Herbert's office to demand an end to the March 2019 oil and gas lease sale; we called for a just transition toward a regenerative energy system at the Governor's Energy Summit in May; and we envisioned a modern, climate-friendly economy at the People's Energy Summit in September.

Also in 2019, SUWA's organizing team created an "Activist Toolkit"—a set of documents and directions for activists to use in planning their

own local events in support of Utah wilderness. Without you, we would not be celebrating 663,000 acres of new wilderness. Nor would SUWA be the potent force that it is. Your passion and commitment—whether you're new to the movement or have stood with us for decades—is absolutely vital to our success.

What your GRIT made possible in 2019:

- **MARCH 12:** Congress passes the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, protecting 663,000 acres of wilderness in Emery County, including Muddy Creek, Desolation Canyon, and Labyrinth Canyon. It took years of work by activists across the US to shape this legislation into a conservation victory we can all be proud of.

- **APRIL 7-10:** Fifty activists from forty states descend on Washington, DC to ask their members of Congress to support ARRWA. In just a four-day period, activists collectively walked over 300 miles to meet with more than 240 offices and discuss the protection of wilderness lands in Utah.

- **JUNE 17, 19, & 27:** In response to egregious decision-making by the BLM on the Burr Trail and Factory Butte, teams of five to eight activists met with the three agency field offices involved. Their message: "Even when we have disagreements, we expect the BLM to be open, inclusive, transparent, and fair in how it makes decisions. You need to do better."

- **SEPTEMBER 13-16:** Thirty-five activists from across the US journeyed to southern Utah for a weekend of trainings, meetings, hiking, and in-depth discussions. The knowledge and inspiration gained that weekend helped fuel their continued redrock advocacy work back home.

GRASSROOTS

GRIT in Action

BY THE NUMBERS

137

Presentations to Organizations, Colleges, and Community Groups

95

Tabling/Outreach Events

313+

Activist-Led Meetings on ARRWA with Members of Congress

3,000+

Postcards to Congress Urging Cosponsorship of ARRWA

GRASSROOTS TEAM

Clayton Daughenbaugh
Organizing Director

Madison Daniels
Faith Community Organizer

Travis Hammill
Eastern Grassroots Organizer

Olivia Juarez
Latinx Community Organizer

Terri Martin
Intermountain West Organizer

Dave Pacheco
Utah Grassroots Organizer



Wilderness activists at the US Capitol / © Adrienne Carter / SUWA

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

AS RICK CRADLED HIS FIVE-MONTH-OLD UNDERNEATH THE SIENNA CANOPY OF DELICATE ARCH, HE FELT THE MAGIC OF THE REDROCK TWOFOLD: THE BEAUTY OF THE LANDSCAPE, SHARED.

DEVELOPMENT/ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Michelle Martineau
Administrative Director

Joyelle Hatch
Administrative Associate

Maddie Hayes
Membership Coordinator

Katherine Indermaur
Development Associate

Gina Riggs
Administrative Associate

In the late 1970s, Rick Marsh left New York on a series of cross-country drives with friends. On one trip, a man in an Idaho bar asked Rick whether he'd seen Utah yet. When Rick shook his head, the stranger told him he had to make sure he saw "the most beautiful state."

Intrigued, Rick flew to Denver the following year, rented a Ford sedan, and drove toward Moab. Heading southwest on state route 128, he followed and eventually crossed the meandering Colorado River. The old wooden suspension bridge was barely wide enough to accommodate his rental car. After a white-knuckled crossing, Rick and the river turned south toward Fisher Towers. The red sandstone cliffs and the whole desert vista "absolutely blew my mind," Rick recalls. The landscape was unlike anything he had ever seen. Before he'd even left Utah, Rick knew he had to come back.

The thing about having a deep love for southern Utah is that it's impossible to keep to yourself. To celebrate their first wedding anniversary, Rick and his wife Barbara hiked around Monument Valley. And after their son was born, the whole family came to Moab.

As Rick cradled his five-month-old underneath the sienna canopy of Delicate Arch, he felt the magic of the redrock twofold: the beauty of the landscape, shared.

The Marsh family has since traveled the world, but no place has ever stuck with them quite like southern Utah, where they've come back to visit more than a dozen times over the years. After volunteering for and donating to SUWA over many years, Rick and Barbara decided to leave a legacy for the redrock by naming SUWA as a beneficiary in their estate plans.

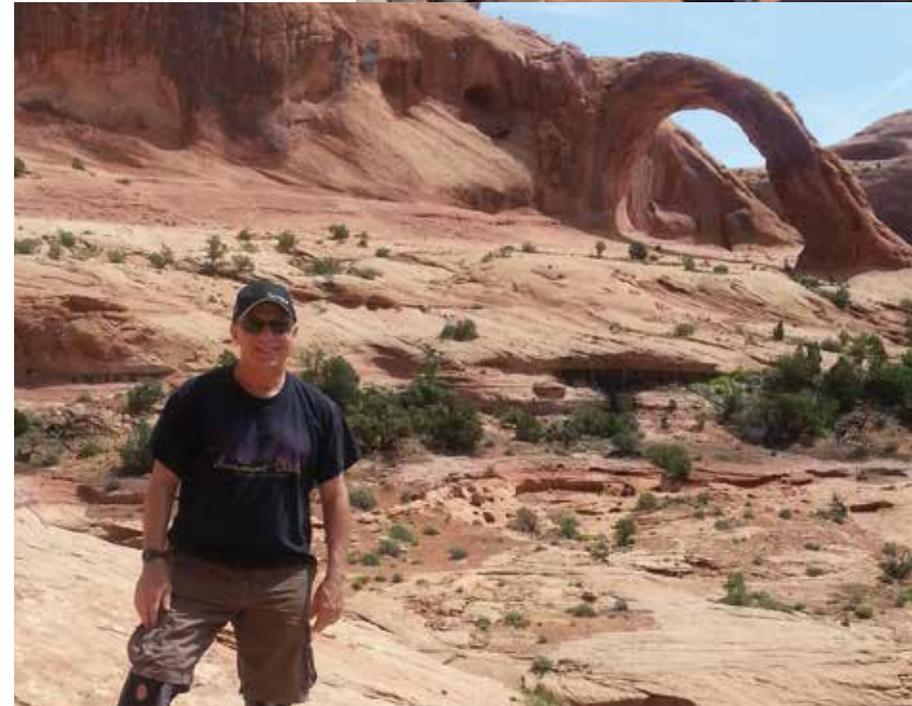
"SUWA's attorneys are extraordinary," Rick enthuses. And in spite of judicial setbacks and

antagonistic politicians, he adds, "SUWA's team has had a number of successes" in recent years, like with the passage of the Emery County bill in March.

In leaving a legacy for the redrock, the Marshes help ensure that the beauty and solace they found in Utah's wilderness will be preserved for many generations to come.

If you'd like to make a gift to SUWA or have already included a gift to SUWA in your estate, please contact Michelle Martineau at (801) 236-3763 or visit suwa.org/plannedgiving.

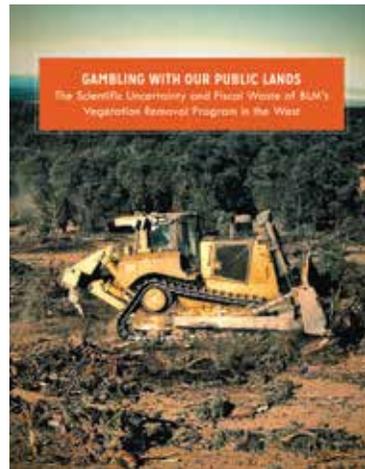
Barbara and Rick Marsh at Delicate Arch to celebrate Rick's 65th birthday / © SUWA



Rick Marsh at Corona Arch / © SUWA



Dave Pacheco / © Diane Kelly / SUWA



MEDIA/ COMMUNICATIONS

SUWA's media efforts in 2019 reflected the multiple campaigns that drove our day-to-day work in a year marked by a barrage of bad initiatives from the Trump administration.

A key media focus in 2019 was our campaign against the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) "vegetation removal" program. Every year, the agency spends tens of millions of taxpayer dollars destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of native piñon pine and juniper forests and sagebrush stands through "chaining" and other mechanical methods. In March, SUWA produced a brochure based on a peer-reviewed report by the Wild Utah Project—a Utah-based nonprofit organization focused on conservation science—that analyzed the existing scientific literature on mechanical vegetation removal projects on western public lands. The brochure was distributed to congressional decision-makers in Washington, DC, as well as to journalists across the country, leading to a *National Geographic* story on chaining in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, which brought national attention to the issue.

Lastly, we produced five episodes of our *Wild Utah* podcast, which give a good indication of the breadth of issues SUWA confronted in 2019.

BY THE NUMBERS

215,183 
Facebook Followers

6,439 
Instagram Followers

21,960
Emails Sent to Decision-Makers

348
Average Downloads per
Podcast Episode

MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Mathew Gross
Media Director

Diane Kelly
Communications Specialist

SUWA 2019 FINANCIALS

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 2019

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,440,787
	1,440,787
Long-Term Investments	
Property & Equipment	872,328
Endowment	2,997,760
Investments & Stocks	10,902,166
TOTAL ASSETS	\$16,213,118

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	1,991
Equity	
Fund Balance	12,442,139
Net Income	3,768,988
TOTAL EQUITY	\$16,211,127
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$16,213,118



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 2019

REVENUES:

Donations	2,013,167
Bequests	2,129,615
Membership	1,279,048
Grants	233,000
Events & Sales	21,328
Reimbursed Expenses & Other Income	202,705
TOTAL REVENUES	\$5,878,863

EXPENSES:

Wilderness Programs*	1,229,881
(*Not including employee compensation)	
Member Services	429,885
Fundraising	20,679
General & Administrative	165,142
Facilities & Office Expenses	271,120
Total Employee Compensation	1,963,268
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,079,974
NET ORDINARY INCOME	\$1,798,889

OTHER INCOME/EXPENSE

Bank Interest Income	5,041
Total Gain (Loss) on Sale of Investments	21,599
Investment Income	273,065
Unrealized Gains (Losses)	1,717,826
Total Other Income	2,017,531
Investment Fees	43,568
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	47,432
NET OTHER INCOME	1,970,009
NET INCOME	\$ 3,768,988

(*Figures above are unaudited—please see www.suwa.org for audited financial information June 2020)



SUWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Kenworthy
Chair

Richard Ingebretsen
Vice-Chair & Secretary

Rusty Schmit
Treasurer

Sharon Buccino

Rebecca Chavez-Houck

Darrell Knuffke

Mark Maryboy

Anne Milliken

Oriana Sandoval

Kerry Schumann

Liz Thomas

Terry Tempest Williams

Hansjörg Wyss

Top Left: Wilderness Steward Training in Salt Lake City / © Travis Hammill / SUWA

Bottom Left: New Sids Mountain Wilderness in the San Rafael Swell / © Scott Braden

Bottom Right: Dirty Devil proposed wilderness / © Ray Bloxham / SUWA



Front and Back Cover: Escalante River and the Waterpocket Fold / © Tim Peterson / LightHawk

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SUMA

SOUTHERN UTAH WILDERNESS ALLIANCE