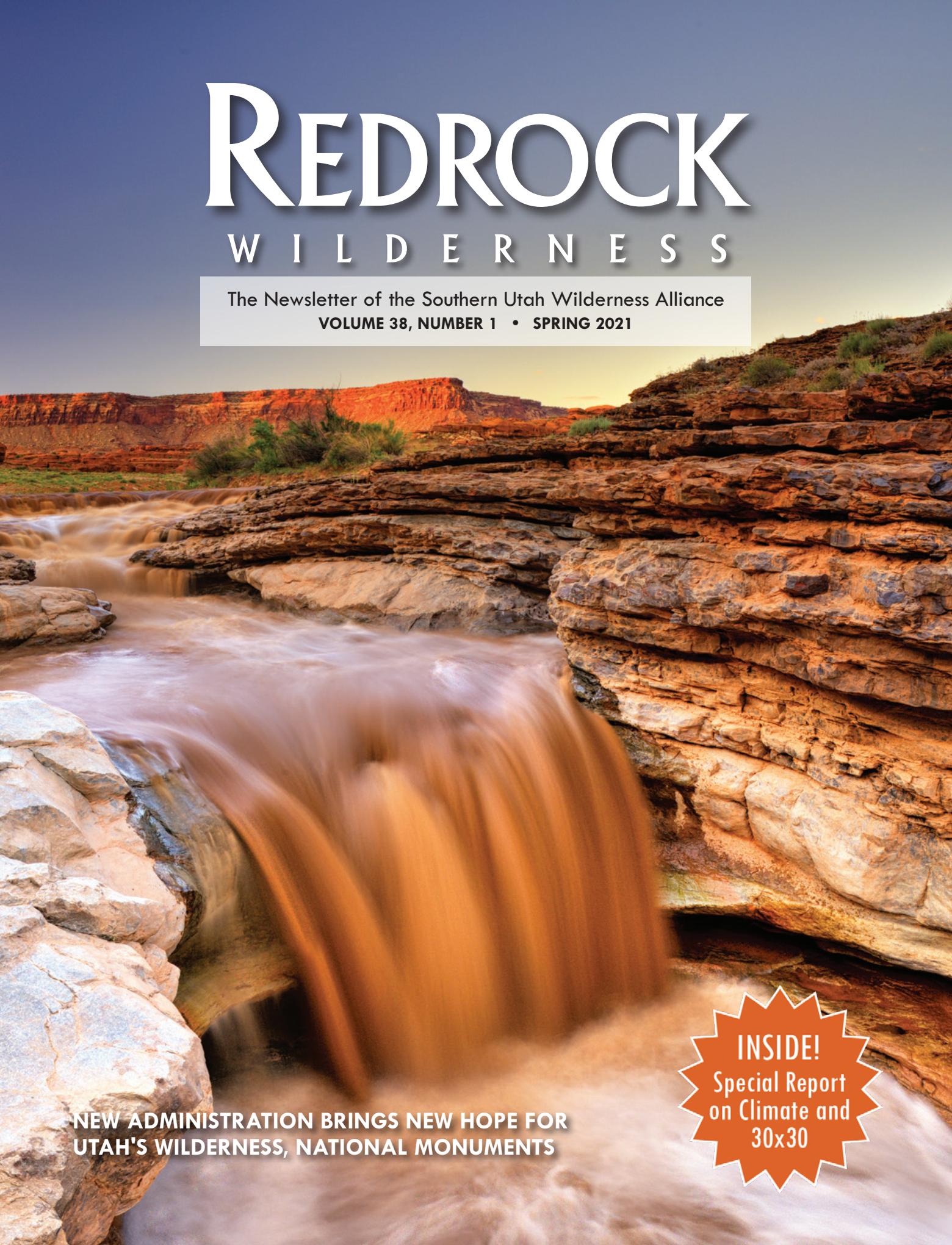


REDROCK

WILDERNESS

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1 • SPRING 2021



NEW ADMINISTRATION BRINGS NEW HOPE FOR
UTAH'S WILDERNESS, NATIONAL MONUMENTS

INSIDE!
Special Report
on Climate and
30x30



The mission of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) is the preservation of the outstanding wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau, and the management of these lands in their natural state for the benefit of all Americans.

SUWA promotes local and national recognition of the region's unique character through research and public education; supports both administrative and legislative initiatives to permanently protect Colorado Plateau wild places within the National Park and National Wilderness Preservation Systems or by other protective designations where appropriate; builds support for such initiatives on both the local and national level; and provides leadership within the conservation movement through uncompromising advocacy for wilderness preservation.

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AMERICA'S RED ROCK WILDERNESS ACT REFERENCE MAP

This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Steve Bloch, Joe Bushyhead, Neal Clark, Madison Daniels, Scott Groene, Mathew Gross, Travis Hammill, Katherine Indermaur, Olivia Juarez, Jeremy Lynch, Kya Marienfeld, Landon Newell, Dave Pacheco, Laura Peterson, Chris Richardson, Liz Thomas, Jen Ujifusa, and Michelle White. It was edited by Darrell Knuffke and laid out by Diane Kelly. Newsletter design by Amy Westberg.

Contributions of photographs (especially of areas within the citizens' proposal for Utah wilderness) and original art (such as pen-and-ink sketches) are greatly appreciated! Please send submissions to photos@suwa.org or via regular mail c/o Editor, SUWA, 425 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

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SEASON RENEWS MUCH IN UTAH, BUT NOT ALL

There is now more day than night in Moab. Spring has arrived in southeastern Utah. Out my office window, the snow melts from the La Sal Mountains, the turkey vultures have returned, the paintbrush and claret cup cactus bloom shocking reds, and the canyon cottonwoods show green. It's the season for hope and new beginnings, both here and in the Biden White House. In our lead article, Steve Bloch explains why, after four years of fighting, the door has opened for new protection of the redrock country. First on the list: President Joe Biden should soon re-establish Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments.

Of course, official Utah—from Governor Spencer Cox to the Utah congressional delegation led by Senator Mitt Romney and Representative John Curtis—are trying to prevent Biden from restoring the monuments. Utah pols argue that Biden should withhold action under the Antiquities Act so they can instead work out legislation for these landscapes. It's hard to listen to them with a straight face.

Gosh, they argue, there is great need to do “something” to avoid that awful political uncertainty—such uncertainty as they themselves created when they begged Trump to gut the monuments. And they promise to create precisely that uncertainty again once the monuments are restored. The magical, preventative “something” these uncertainty creators and monument opponents propose is to deal legislatively with these lands.

This all sounds familiar to those who recall how, in President Barack Obama's last term, Utah's congressional delegation and governor embraced the Public Lands Initiative (PLI). This promised and, for a time, promising legislation failed. Instead of working seriously to pass it, Utah politicians tried to use it to run out the clock on Obama's last days and to prevent protecting Bears Ears administratively in the first place. We have been down this road before.

NOT THE TIME FOR STALLING

The delegation may hope to stall, but the moment demands action. Trump's unlawful acts created a crisis for these lands. Consider that while Bears Ears faces exploding visitation, the planning that could have addressed this growing concern was stopped dead. No additional resources were brought to bear. Even today, visitors are hard pressed to know when they are in or out of the monument.

Meanwhile, at Grand Staircase-Escalante, Trump's Bureau of Land Management quickly got into the business of approving vegetation removal projects through the most destructive means possible. Trump-era plans remain on the books for both monuments, driving management to the lowest possible standards. Both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments are extraordinary landscapes, holding hundreds of thousands of significant cultural, natural, and sacred objects. These treasures include a living history of the Indigenous people who have dwelt there since time immemorial, and the record of prehistoric life dating back hundreds of millions of years. Unregulated visitation and off-road vehicle use threaten these values every day.

No one can seriously claim that it would be best for the land to delay any action for additional years, which would be the result even of successful legislation—a success far from assured.

IN ADDITION TO, NOT INSTEAD OF

The history of Utah's public lands, and the past actions of our governor and congressional delegation, make things crystal clear: Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante need President Biden to act. Nothing in such an executive action would preclude later legislation if improvements appear warranted.

If the Utah politicians are still interested, that is.

Re-establishing the monuments gets us back to where things stood four years ago. That would be wonderfully welcome but insufficient in the face of climate change; we'll need to do much more.

Last year, SUWA commissioned a scientific study to investigate the intersection between climate change and our work to protect the redrock wilderness. The study focuses on the opportunities posed by the "30x30" initiative, a science-based goal of conserving 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030 in order to fight climate change and prevent mass extinctions. We've included in this newsletter a brochure that explains the role of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in this work. We're excited by this new direction and the alliances it can bring.

Fortunately, this administration understands that doing more is both necessary and urgent.

Just one week after taking office, President Biden issued an executive order directing the Department of the Interior to identify strategies for the 30x30 goal. More recently, Deb Haaland was confirmed as Interior Secretary. She's the first Native American to hold that or any other cabinet post. While serving in the House of Representatives (where she was also a cosponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act), Secretary Haaland introduced a resolution endorsing 30x30. She is uniquely positioned to lead Interior towards a new era of responsible public land management.

Many of us have dedicated ourselves to protecting this landscape because of the solitude, the beauty, and the freedom we find there. But we now recognize that the need is greater than simply ensuring that these experiences remain for future generations, important as that is. We now understand that wilderness protection speaks very directly to survival. It is part of preventing mass extinctions and mitigating climate change. Saving this part of the Colorado Plateau as wilderness is really part of saving the planet—and all who live here.

For the Redrock,



Scott Groene
Executive Director

NEW ADMINISTRATION BRINGS NEW HOPE FOR UTAH'S WILDERNESS, NATIONAL MONUMENTS

We're just over three months into the Biden-Harris administration and our initial assessment is that we could get used to—and are not yet tired of—the winning. And we don't mean "winning" only in the narrow sense of keeping score, but in the overarching sense that there are serious people running the federal government who care about the future of humanity, recognize the existential threat the climate crisis poses, and are laying the groundwork to address it.

Closer to home, President Joe Biden's appointees are now overseeing the management of federal public lands that make up more than 63 percent of Utah. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) alone is responsible for administering 23 million acres of public lands in Utah, more than 42 percent of the state's total land mass. New leaders at the Interior Department and the BLM are already working to reject the backwards-looking "fossil fuels first" obsession in

favor of an approach that prioritizes renewables, conservation, and environmental justice.

It's an understatement to say this won't be easy, but we're encouraged by the early signs and want to share the good news.

CHANGE STARTS AT THE TOP

From his first full day in office Biden has prioritized environmental protection. One of his first executive orders stressed the importance of tackling the climate crisis and restoring the role of science to federal agency decision-making processes. It also ordered a review of Donald Trump's dismantling of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. The president made it clear that his administration would pursue these goals while emphasizing equity, diversity, and fairness.



He promptly backed up this order by focusing the first full week of his administration on tackling the climate crisis, declaring it a goal of his administration to put the country on a path to protecting 30 percent of the nation's lands and waters by 2030 (shorthanded as "30x30"), and hitting the pause button on any new oil and gas leasing on public lands.

At the same time, Biden nominated to be his Interior Secretary then-Representative (and America's Red Rock Wilderness Act cosponsor) Deb Haaland (D-NM). Now confirmed in that post, she becomes the first Native American to serve in a cabinet-level position.

Haaland is from Laguna Pueblo. She proudly calls herself a thirty-fifth generation New Mexican. Secretary Haaland has already begun charting a path that addresses the seriousness of the climate crisis. She recognizes that its impacts fall with disproportionate severity upon disadvantaged communities and communities of color and that we must deal with that disparity.

In short, we're thrilled with Secretary Haaland's selection!

President Biden also appointed Nada Culver as the BLM's Deputy Director of Policy and Programs, the agency's highest ranking political appointee not subject to Senate confirmation. She is currently exercising the delegated authority of the BLM director. Director Culver most recently worked at the Audubon Society and before that she established and then ran the BLM Action Center at The Wilderness Society. She is deeply familiar with the BLM and its work in Utah, and also with the redrock.

With these two women and dozens of other political appointees, the president has assembled a powerful and diverse array of cabinet and agency officials to implement his climate and public lands agenda. To be clear, we're not Pollyannas. The fossil fuel industry has dominated the Interior Department and the BLM for decades. That agency has also catered to rural county commissioners, which won't change overnight. But the groundwork has been laid to give us hope that things can and will be different.

TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS BY PROTECTING WILD PUBLIC LANDS

Protecting climate and biodiversity through the 30x30 initiative is one of the most important action items the Biden administration will undertake. To support that work, we are encouraging the administration to act swiftly to consider designating as new wilderness study areas (WSAs) public



INTERIOR SECRETARY DEB HAALAND IS THE FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN TO SERVE IN A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION. PUBLIC DOMAIN PHOTO

lands that the BLM itself has identified as having wilderness characteristics.

The Interior Department has broad authority under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The department has many tools at its disposal with which to protect the wild places, the irreplaceable cultural resources, and the native species the BLM is responsible for. But none has the reach and durability of designating new Section 202 WSAs under FLPMA.

In Utah alone, the BLM has identified more than 3.4 million acres of public land as having wilderness characteristics (places like White Canyon, Hatch Point, and Dome Plateau). Across the West, the total is close to 30 million acres. For the most part, they are unprotected and subject to land management plans that prioritize oil and gas leasing and off-road vehicle use over the protection of undisturbed landscapes.

Protecting these lands in their natural, undeveloped state is crucial to combating climate change. They provide real, quantifiable carbon sequestration and climate adaptation benefits. They also conserve scarce water resources and reduce fugitive dust emissions, which exacerbate climate change effects.

(Continued next page)



SECURING WILDERNESS DESIGNATION FOR UNPROTECTED LANDSCAPES LIKE HATCH POINT (ABOVE) IS A CRUCIAL PIECE OF THE CLIMATE SOLUTION PUZZLE. © RAY BLOXHAM/SUWA

Creating new WSAs will also keep fossil fuels in the ground and with them climate-damaging pollution from the exploration, production and combustion of those resources. WSAs are statutorily closed to new oil and gas leasing.

Some will argue that promoting such designations is “risky,” and that conservationists instead must focus exclusively on consensus-driven “small ball” opportunities. We respectfully disagree. This isn’t a zero-sum game in which if someone wins, someone must lose. The administration needs to pursue an all-of-the-above approach to make sure public lands play a significant role in combating the climate crisis. We can’t afford to wait until the last days of President Biden’s first term to set this ball in motion and hope for the best. There is too much at stake and no time to waste.

HITTING THE PAUSE BUTTON ON NEW OIL AND GAS LEASING

We know that ending the sale and development of oil and gas leases on federal public lands is a question of “when,” and not “if.” So we’re greatly encouraged by the president’s executive order directing Secretary Haaland to pause all new oil and gas leasing on public lands and waters pending a “comprehensive review and reconsideration” of whether any part of this practice is consistent with the realities of the climate crisis. While we don’t expect the BLM’s leasing

and drilling program to end overnight, the stage is set to begin winding it down.

Among the things we expect to see emerge from this review is a priority effort to clean up so-called “orphaned wells” (those that companies have abandoned without properly plugging the wellhead, reclaiming the drill pad, etc.). We also hope to see the end of policies that allow companies to hold onto leases for decades with no activity in “suspension” of requirements for timely development.

It is also way past time to end the sale of new leases on public lands with only low-to-moderate energy potential. This is particularly significant for Utah’s redrock wilderness. The vast majority of these lands are marginal at best for oil and gas development. It is unproductive all the way around for the BLM to expend the time and energy to offer these leases for sale and for the public to spend time challenging them. Shifting BLM staff to work on real priorities (renewable energy development, reclaiming orphaned wells, etc.) makes much more sense. We can tell you that our legal team won’t miss filing comments and protests over no-hope leases nominated by a lone prospector sitting in his basement.

Pro-fossil fuel states and state attorneys general, as well as oil and gas trade groups, are reflexively up in arms at the mere idea. They began filing lawsuits before the ink was

dry on Biden's executive order calling for the leasing pause. SUWA is working with our conservation colleagues to both defend the president's actions in court and to support them in the court of public opinion.

BUILD BACK BETTER: RESTORING GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE AND BEARS EARS

On the campaign trail the president made clear that reversing the unlawful dismantling of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments is a “top of the list” priority for him. His actions to date affirm that pledge and offer hope that the two monuments will be restored and, in the case of the Bears Ears, perhaps expanded. On his first day in office, Biden directed Secretary Haaland to conduct a review of Trump’s actions, “determine whether restoration of the [original] monument boundaries and conditions . . . would be appropriate,” and to submit a report with recommendations for presidential actions.

The secretary traveled to Utah in early April and met with Native American leaders, local residents and stakeholders, and elected leaders to hear their hopes and concerns about the monuments. SUWA representatives were invited and attended meetings in both Blanding (Bears Ears) and Kanab (Grand Staircase). Unsurprisingly, Utah’s congressional del-

egation was out in force at these meetings, wringing hands and spinning a false narrative about the uncertainty that restoring the monuments would bring to southern Utah. If only President Biden would wait, they complained, and give the delegation a chance to pursue legislation, that would be ever so much better. But there is nothing preventing the delegation from legislating after Biden acts to restore (or in the case of Bears Ears, expand) the monuments. We’re not holding our breath.

Looking ahead, we anticipate President Biden will fully restore or expand both monuments to their rightful place as crown jewels among the lands entrusted to BLM management.

IT'S A BRAND NEW DAY

These first few months of the Biden administration have been exhilarating—with priorities laid out, decisions made, and staff put in place that met or exceeded our expectations. We know it’s not going to be all roses and that there are disappointments ahead, but for the first time in a long while we can tell you that we’re excited about prospects for protecting America’s redrock wilderness.

—Steve Bloch



SUWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCOTT GROENE SPEAKS AT A BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT STAKEHOLDER MEETING WITH SECRETARY HAALAND (FAR LEFT) IN BLANDING, UTAH.
© TIM PETERSON

CELEBRATING OUR 2020 STEWARDSHIP SCHOLAR ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Recognizing that people of color have historically been left out of the U.S. public land conservation movement, SUWA is committed to raising up diverse voices from the Colorado Plateau/Intermountain West. Our first Stewardship Scholar Essay Contest sought to elevate these voices through personal narratives pertinent to the broader conversation around public lands and their protection. Three winners were selected to receive cash scholarships toward their undergraduate degree expenses. Here, we present the grand prize winning essay by Laci D. Begaye. You can learn more about SUWA's Stewardship Scholar Essay Contest at suwa.org/scholarship and read all three winning essays at suwa.org/2020essays.



About the Grand Prize Author

Yá'át'ééh! Laci Begaye yinishyé. Naakai Dine' é nishłi. Kin l ichii'nii bashishchiin. 'Áshiihi dashicheii. Táchii'nii dashinalí. Ákót'éego diné asdzáán nishłi.

My name is Laci Begaye. I am part of the Mexican People Clan, born for the Red House People Clan. My maternal grandfather is the Salt People Clan, my paternal grandfather is the Red Running into the Water People Clan. In this way, I am a Navajo woman. I was born and raised in the Four Corners area, and I call the Navajo Reservation my home. I am a junior in college majoring in English Secondary Education. I chose my major so I can help Native students become successful and confident in themselves as well as the world that surrounds them. I feel very passionate about maintaining our natural world because my ancestors had a deep respect for the world around us, and I would like to pass these values on to the next generation of indigenous youth.

TRUST IN THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD

BY LACI D. BEGAYE

It's quite difficult to feel a sense of trust these days. Amid a global pandemic, difficult political circumstances, and the troubling nature of everyday life, trust doesn't come easy. Feeling like one can trust another is something that should be protected and respected.

I grew up in a traditional Navajo household where the importance of this trust is emphasized. I recall the days my mother would say something along the lines of: "If you take from the Earth, you must replace the empty space you've created." Of course, as a child, I wasn't so sure of what she meant. Frankly, I felt embarrassed when she told me things like that, especially in public since many other children my age did not grow up with those value systems. I wanted to be like my white friends and neighbors who have better things and don't talk about the Earth as though it's a living thing. I constantly saw them with new toys, new clothes, new school supplies—new everything, it seemed. When they heard my parents speak of the Earth in this way, they often teased me about it afterwards, which made me feel even more disconnected from my peers.

I wanted to have the same things as them, but my parents never allowed me to get anything new until what I had was unusable. This meant that I went to school in old clothes, used old school supplies, and played with old toys. We never bought anything new unless my parents received their tax refund that year, which was rare. My father was sent to prison for the majority of my childhood, which heightened our family's poverty status. As children, we place trust in our guardians to take care of us and love us—completely. Trust goes both ways, and my parents trusted me to receive the many lessons of the Earth they gave me in earnest.

Since my family did not have much money, I was never able to join any school sports or extracurricular activities unless I could find a scholarship or some other method to pay for it myself. As a result, I was never interested in the outdoors, nor was I interested in nature at all. Then, in 2019 I found myself applying for a non-profit program called Southwest Conservation Corps, which programs hands-on environmental activism for young people and gives scholarships if volunteers complete the entire program. I needed the money to get through my first year as a homeless college student. Getting this scholarship required me to work in the forests of the Four Corners with a small team of people for about ten days at a time, with four-day breaks to spend with my family during the summer. At first, I completely hated it.

I didn't understand the point in picking up other people's litter. *It's their trash, so why would it be my responsibility*, I thought to myself. I have asthma, which made it tough on my lungs to hike for hours at high elevation every day. But eventually, it became easier to take in the fresh air. Being away from my phone for days at a time gave me the space to reflect more on my outlook on life. The work was very physically demanding, but I grew through it. I began to see my muscles change, and my mindset changed along with it.

One day, one of my bosses hiked with a big smile on his face as I struggled to breathe in my hiking gear. He said, "Isn't this so nice? People have to take time off work to vacation at a place like this. Here, we work in this place. It's beautiful!"

His statement felt like a splash of cold water on a hot day. All of a sudden, I was aware of everything around me. I was feeling dead, but in that moment, I found myself surrounded by life. After that, the hike stopped being about how tired I was. It turned into a competition of how much more of this beauty I could soak in. As I looked up from my feet, I saw a bright blue blanket that covered the sky in grace. The sun was open and shining along the waving creek, as dragonflies fluttered around the rocks. The birds sang their tunes, the clouds seemed to roll on forever, and the ground was a bright, warm green. I knew there was even life beneath my feet. Up in the mountains there were no bills, no academic pressure, no poverty. The Earth was wealthy. The plants fed the bugs, which fed the birds, and



This was the first time the people around me didn't make me feel like an outsider for sharing the traditions of my culture. I told them the stories my mother shared with me as a child that evening around a campfire. Those stories are from my ancestors."

so on. Everything had a place, and I sensed that I was where I needed to be. *This hard work is something everyone should experience*, I thought.

During one of our hikes, I had a dream of seeing two birds fly over me and my coworkers as we hiked to our new destination. The very next day, we were hiking in the southern Colorado mountains when two red-tailed hawks flew over us in the direction we were headed, just like my dream. I had no idea what to think or do. I ended up telling my

crew members, despite risking sounding crazy. Yet they accepted my confidence for what it was. None of them wrinkled their noses at my statement, and none of them showed any kind of confusion. This was the first time the people around me didn't make me feel like an outsider for sharing the traditions of my culture. Some of them even asked more about it. It became a very fun night indeed. I told them the stories my mother shared with me as a child that evening around a campfire. Those stories are from my ancestors. As we walked back to our tents under the starry sky, I couldn't help but look up and take in more of the night all to myself.

My parents were forced into boarding schools as children. They were both stolen from their parents in the 1950s and '60s, where they were made to speak English. I remember the stories they told me of how horrible it was.

In that moment, looking up at the stars, my heart felt a big, heavy ache. I felt so sad to remember how much my parents had to trust the system to take care of them, and were failed immensely. The world during that time did not value or respect the trust my parents had in the academic system—an unfortunate truth that lies forever in our history as a country. However, like the fire we sat around earlier that evening, my heart was ablaze just the same. Against those odds, against the killing and abuse of my ancestors, and against the malicious efforts to erase my culture, there I was. I was breathing the same air as my ancestors. My feet walked the same Earth, and my mouth had finally spoken the same stories.

After that night, I no longer complained of being tired. The next morning, I was the first one to wake up and start breakfast for everyone. The morning air was cool and teased my nose with its sharp breeze. Nobody was awake yet.

As the dawn brightened, I couldn't help but cry. I stood over some frying eggs and watched my quiet tears soak into the dirt. I thought of my life, my parents' lives, my family in general, and all the pressure I feel. I was always aware that I needed to succeed in college in order to provide a better life for us. I knew that my ancestors must feel welled up with sorrow to see their descendants struggle to live on the land that was supposed to be for all living creatures. I felt so small and debilitated; as my crew members slept I became overwhelmed. The Earth, however, does not sleep. Like the tides of the sea, it is constantly changing. The big mountains around me felt like giant arms wrapping me with chilled love. The sky displayed a lilac glow that brightened in each cloud. The winds whispered through the waving trees, and the birds kept their songs alive. These were the sounds that kept my family going all this time. The music that my mother tried to tell me about in her stories was playing just for me.

There are many other students just like me in this world. So many young people who don't see the Earth for what it is. It is alive, breathing, moving, singing, and loving.

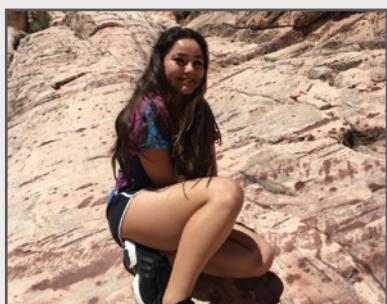
In the future, I want my own children to experience the Earth in all its nakedness. I want them to know what hard work, perseverance, and self-reflection look like. Right now, I feel there is a significant emptiness in our society. It is our

job to fill that emptiness of the Earth, as my mother would say. Looking back at my past, there are many things that I did not recognize. New toys, clothes, supplies—these would not have helped me. They would not have taught me how to be resourceful, responsible, and to care about the things I have. My parents had to teach me very difficult lessons in life because they knew I would struggle with those issues later on, and that they would have no control over it.

They taught me how to be independent, how to feel self-assured, and how to love my culture for all it is. My parents, my ancestors, and the Earth taught me how to cherish what I have now. I'm thankful to be alive today, despite the efforts of a racist history, and despite not having the resources many others had. I have seen poverty up close, and I still live in it today. But I would never consider myself unwealthy. I have recognized what real opulence is, and it does not exist in money.

These days, my relationship with nature has transformed into a mutual relationship of trust. It is my responsibility to care for this place the way it has cared for me all these years. This relationship has informed my activism and has given me a new sense of self. This is a gift I cannot repay, so I will remain doing community service work for as long as I can. This upcoming summer will be the second year that I will be working with SCC—I could not be more excited.

MEET OUR TWO SEMI-FINALISTS: RUBY VALENCIA AND ALEX SANCHEZ



Ruby Valencia is a first-generation Latina studying political science at the University of Nevada (UNLV). She is Vegas born and raised, and loves exploring Nevada's beautiful deserts in her free time. An avid environmental advocate, she has interned at the Nevada Conservation League, helping to advance their goal of maintaining and enhancing the natural character of Nevada and the quality of life for Nevadans. Ruby believes in environmental justice, stopping climate change, and protecting public lands. Visit suwa.org/2020essays to read Ruby's essay "Learning about Trust in Grapevine Canyon."

Originally from New Mexico, **Alex Sanchez** (they/them) moved to Tucson to attend the University of Arizona. They are currently majoring in psychology and creative writing with a minor in Africana Studies, and plan to pursue a PhD in social psychology upon graduation with the intention of doing research on social constructs such as gender, stereotypes, and injustice. Alex also hopes to continue to write and publish creative nonfiction essays. Their favorite outdoor activities include yoga and napping on campus under the sun. Visit suwa.org/2020essays to read Alex's essay "Naps to Activism."





GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT. © JACK DYKINGA

LEGISLATORS URGE SECRETARY HAALAND TO RESTORE UTAH MONUMENTS

Since the illegal reduction of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in 2017, SUWA has campaigned vigorously to have them restored and, in the case of Bears Ears, expanded. Your help has been invaluable. So has the strong support of dozens of members of Congress.

Members have sent three separate letters to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland urging her to restore the monuments. Leading the congressional effort have been Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and Representative Ruben Gallego (D-AZ).

“We wholeheartedly support the full restoration of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and expansion of Bears Ears National Monument,” wrote Sen. Durbin in his letter to Secretary Haaland. “Securing durable, meaningful protection for these places and their irreplaceable objects is entirely consistent with the President’s stated goals and policies; anything less would fall short of what is required at this moment and would jeopardize these treasured lands.”

We thank the letter signers individually for their concern, support, and advocacy for these precious treasures and we encourage you to thank your representative and senators for their help as well. You can see if they signed one of the letters by visiting suwa.org/monumentsletter.

—Chris Richardson

2021 WILDERNESS WEEK GOES VIRTUAL

Spring usually brings flocks of redrock activists to Washington, DC for the Utah Wilderness Coalition’s Wilderness Week featuring trainings, meetings, and evening events. This just isn’t an option this spring, and our dark, quiet office is without the excited, energetic, and coffee-fueled activists.

While Wilderness Week looks a little bit different this year, our grassroots are far from idle. Instead of in-person visits, activists all across the country are Zooming into meetings with congressional offices to discuss America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act and to seek House and Senate cosponsorships of the bill when it is introduced.

After months of planning, recruiting, and training ourselves to use the appropriate technologies, we began inviting activists for in-depth (and marathon) training sessions. In them, we discussed the legislation, our new climate report, and how the two fit together. Participants were then paired up with at least one Utah activist. Armed with email addresses and phone numbers, teams began to schedule congressional office meetings.

One advantage to holding these meetings at a distance is that we are able to ensure that there are constituents of every senator and representative at nearly every meeting. When Wilderness Week is held in DC, typically only one person from each state is able to attend. But now, we are able to recruit many more participants over Zoom so constituents are available to tell their congressional representatives why the Red Rock bill is so important. We are also able to schedule meetings over the course of the year instead of during just a few short days.

If you would like to participate in meetings with your senators or representative, please contact Travis Hammill at travis@suwa.org and we will get you on a team! If you want to take immediate action to urge your representatives to cosponsor the Red Rock bill, please text the keyword “ARRWA” to 52886.

GOOD NEWS

INTERIOR BOARD SIDES WITH SUWA IN GRAND STAIRCASE CHAINING/RESEEDING APPEAL

Last summer, two lightning-caused wildfires burned across a combined 5,400 acres on public lands within Wire Pass and Pine Hollow, two wild areas along the House Rock Valley Road within the original boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Following these two fires, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) pushed through a hurried environmental analysis and approved “restoration plans” in both areas to chain burned and remaining live vegetation and reseed with crested wheatgrass and other persistent and invasive non-native perennial forage species favored by livestock.

The agency’s plan to introduce non-native species in the name of restoration after a naturally occurring wildfire was particularly alarming given that both areas were largely untouched by human disturbance prior to the wildfires and dominated by a diversity of native plant and tree species—an increasingly rare baseline for public lands often devastated by grazing, motorized vehicle intrusions, and other human impacts.

Because of this, SUWA and several of our conservation partners sought to persuade the BLM to consider alternative restoration plans for post-fire rehabilitation in both burn areas. We advocated use of only native seed mixes and less disruptive manual treatment methods, rather than razing the area with heavy machinery and seeding with invasive perennial species that would dramatically and permanently change the areas’ natural character.

Although the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the BLM to at least consider other reasonable alternatives in their environmental analysis, the agency did not even acknowledge our comments or alternative proposals. Instead, the BLM quickly approved both projects and their plans to chain and seed the areas with non-native vegetation.

Because of this violation of NEPA, SUWA and our partners at Western Watersheds Project appealed both projects to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) last September.



PINE HOLLOW AREA (BEFORE WILDFIRE) LOOKING EAST TOWARD THE PARIA CANYON-VERMILLION CLIFFS WILDERNESS. © KYA MARIENFELD/SUWA

In early February of this year, the IBLA overturned both of the BLM's rushed decisions, agreeing with us that the agency erred in the NEPA process because it "fail[ed] to consider alternatives that would have limited its post-wildfire treatments to native seeds and to manual methods."

Unfortunately, the appeals process often moves slowly, and just days before the IBLA issued its ruling that the BLM violated federal law, the agency had already started on-the-ground operations.

Although our successful appeal did not prevent all harmful activities from occurring, this was an important win, and several thousand acres were left undisturbed by chaining in both project areas due to our appeal. Using natural restoration methods is critical for fragile desert ecosystems, because science shows that introducing vigorous,

non-native seed mixes significantly decreases the potential for native species to recolonize. This is precisely why the original Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan required the BLM to consider pre-burn conditions before approving post-fire management activities, and specifically required that only native seeds be used in restoration projects. These science-based directives vanished when President Trump drastically shrank the monument's boundaries in 2017.

We are looking forward to the restoration of the original 1.9-million-acre boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, with its full complement of management protections, preventing these kinds of ill-conceived activities from being carried out in the future.

—Kya Marienfeld

SUWA AND PARTNERS WILL SUE OVER TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S PARTING ATTACK ON WESTERN FORESTS AND SHRUBLANDS

In the last days of the Trump administration, SUWA and several of our partners filed formal notice of our intent to sue the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for violations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Our notice stems from two last-minute agency decisions that authorize destructive clearcutting, plowing, and chopping on native ecosystems across 223 million acres of BLM lands in the Great Basin and the Colorado Plateau.

These decisions are only two of many in the prior administration's targeted program of forest and shrubland destruction across western public lands (for more, see summer 2020 issue, page 7). Once again, the BLM used hurried, superficial, and non-site-specific documentation to authorize the removal of massive amounts of native vegetation anywhere within a 223-million-acre "analysis area" that spans parts of Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, and Utah, including lands proposed for wilderness designation under America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.

This huge area is home to more than 130 threatened and endangered species, many that occur nowhere else on Earth. Despite this, the BLM failed to consider the consequences of these highly destructive actions on ESA-listed species, a clear violation of federal law. These decisions also almost completely exclude the scientific community and the public from key management decisions on public lands.



This huge area is home to more than 130 threatened and endangered species, many that occur nowhere else on Earth. Despite this, the BLM failed to consider the consequences of these highly destructive actions on ESA-listed species."

Science, transparency, and public involvement are meant to be the backbone of public lands management, but these decisions preclude all of that.

Unfortunately, these decisions are on a long list of bad policies from the Trump administration that remain on the books after several months of a Biden presidency. We are working hard with our partners—the Center for Biological Diversity, Western Watersheds Project, and the Sierra Club—to see that they are overturned, either by replacing them with sensible new policies that restore the role of science and conservation in public land management, or by fighting them in court. We will keep you posted either way.

—Kya Marienfeld

HELIUM WELL AT EDGE OF LABYRINTH CANYON WILDERNESS COMES UP EMPTY

Last winter, just two days before the Christmas holiday, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) quietly approved a controversial helium exploration and drilling project at the edge of the Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness—one of the wildest and most scenic redrock landscapes in Utah.

As reported by the *New York Times*, the project constituted a last-minute gift to the industry of such perceived importance that “with time running out on the Trump administration, senior Interior Department officials were so determined to see the permit approved that they took control of the project from the local Utah [BLM] office.”

The project rightfully received fierce opposition from the public and from redrock champions Senator Dick

Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) and several of their congressional colleagues. They demanded that then-Interior Secretary David Bernhardt reject the controversial project and cancel the underlying lease. Nonetheless, in its unwavering fidelity to “energy dominance,” the Trump Interior Department ignored the public and approved the proposal to industrialize a crown jewel of Utah’s redrock wilderness.

The project—known as the Twin Bridges Bowknot Helium Project—highlights everything that was wrong with the Trump administration’s energy dominance agenda: it involved hasty decision-making, inadequate analysis, lack of public participation, and a complete disregard for the irreplaceable environmental values threatened by leasing and development.

SUWA rushed to federal court in Washington, DC to protect this remarkable landscape and initially won a two-week pause on all drilling and development activities. Unfortunately, the court eventually gave Twin Bridges the green light to proceed and the company built the well pad and began drilling only a few days before Trump left office.

The drilling came up empty, or in industry parlance, it turned out to be a “dry hole.” This result is unsurprising since all past drilling attempts (80 in total) in this region have likewise failed. SUWA’s litigation in DC continues to move forward to protect the Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness from any additional abuse and development. Stay tuned for future updates.

—Landon Newell



THE CONTROVERSIAL HELIUM WELL TRUMP’S BLM RUSHED TO DRILL AT THE EDGE OF THE LABYRINTH CANYON WILDERNESS PROVED TO BE A BUST. OUR WORK TO PROTECT THIS EXTRAORDINARY AREA FROM FURTHER ABUSE CONTINUES. © RAY BLOXHAM/SUWA

UTAH DISTRICT COURT UPHOLDS MIDNIGHT RAID ON BURR TRAIL

The Trump administration may have ended months ago, but the injury it did to Utah's wild places lingers. Just about two years ago, Garfield County achieved long-sought approval from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to chip-seal the Burr Trail to the very doorstep of Capitol Reef National Park.

The BLM's approval process was nothing more than a perfunctory, and meaningless, genuflection toward the agency's legal responsibilities under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act. And, most egregiously, the BLM approved the project under the cover of darkness, communicating its approval to Garfield County three days before notifying the public. The decision to authorize the chip-sealing relied in large part on a rural myth that Garfield County has an adjudicated RS 2477 right-of-way to the more than 60 miles of the Burr Trail. It does not.

While SUWA and several environmental partners swiftly filed a lawsuit, we're disappointed to report that after nearly two years, the district court in Utah has ruled in favor of the BLM and Garfield County. In its ruling, the court concluded that it did not have authority to overturn the agency's determination that Garfield County possesses an adjudicated RS 2477 right-of-way, stating: "the court's 'highly deferential review' is not directed to determining if the agency is mistaken."

Further, despite Garfield County's progress toward completing its ultimate goal of chip-sealing the entire Burr Trail, and the impacts to the backcountry character of Utah's wild places, the BLM's extremely abbreviated analysis of the environmental impacts from the project was also upheld. Though the court acknowledged the brief nature of the analysis, it also believed the project was not extensive.

SUWA and our environmental partners will be appealing this decision. This case involves complex, cutting-edge work in "RS 2477 litigation 2.0." We challenged not only Garfield County's claim to an RS 2477 right-of-way, but also asserted that all else notwithstanding, the BLM retains the duty and the authority to regulate road work and to protect surrounding public lands.

—Michelle White

GOOD NEWS

SUPREME COURT TURNS BACK RS 2477 APPEAL

In a one-sentence unsigned order, the U.S. Supreme Court in January declined to revisit a 2019 decision by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals that SUWA and The Wilderness Society are entitled to intervene "as of right" in Utah and Kane County's RS 2477 litigation.

While few such requests for Supreme Court review are granted, this denial is particularly notable because the last administration's Solicitor General asked the court to weigh in on this case and roughly 75 percent of requests from the Solicitor General are granted. And it's also important because it confirms (again) our right to participate in these important cases.

We're grateful to the professors and students at Stanford University's Supreme Court Litigation Clinic and our longtime partners at the Salt Lake law firm of Manning Curtis Bradshaw & Bednar for their work on this matter.

APPEALS COURT SAYS BLM CAN REOPEN FACTORY BUTTE AREA TO MOTORIZED USE

The Trump Administration's record over the past four years continues to haunt American's public lands. Thus, we're disappointed to report that the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) decision to open the lands surrounding Factory Butte to destructive cross-country off-road vehicle (ORV) use.

In 2006, SUWA and other conservation groups persuaded the BLM to restrict ORVs to existing roads and trails after we documented extensive damage to the fragile landscape and to a rare endemic threatened plant, the Wright fishhook cactus. In 2019, and without justification, the BLM abruptly lifted the closure order.

We sued the BLM for lifting the longstanding Factory Butte closure without complying with the National



THE RECENT TENTH CIRCUIT COURT DECISION IS A DISAPPOINTING SETBACK IN OUR DECADES-LONG BATTLE TO END OFF-ROAD VEHICLE DAMAGE AROUND FACTORY BUTTE.
© JEFF GARTON

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires that federal agencies study the environmental consequences of their decisions. But the law only applies to discretionary agency actions, and the key question in the case was whether the plain language of the BLM's ORV closure regulation made the lifting of a closure mandatory or discretionary.

REACHING BACK TO AN EARLIER RULING

The court read the regulation as requiring the BLM to lift ORV closures as a matter of course, making the decision exempt from NEPA. While the court ostensibly relied on the text of the regulation, it based its decision largely on a 2006 Tenth Circuit decision in which the United States and SUWA successfully argued that the BLM's implementation of an ORV closure under this regulation was nondiscretionary. In this case, the court didn't like the idea that the BLM could forgo NEPA when implementing a closure, but not when lifting one.

This case was the latest effort in our decades-long battle to stop ORV damage to the lands surrounding Factory Butte.

It won't be the last. With unchecked, irresponsible, and destructive ORV use allowed again, we'll be pursuing every option to restore protections to the area.

—Joe Bushyhead

THE BLM PLODS AHEAD ON TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is in the midst of a multi-year travel planning process that will determine where motorized vehicles may travel across roughly six million acres of Utah's public lands. Responsible travel planning is critical to protecting Utah's redrock wilderness and to meeting the Biden administration's climate change goals.

Federal law requires the BLM to locate off-road vehicle (ORV) routes in a manner that minimizes damage to cultural and natural resources. That includes minimizing damage to soils, watersheds, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and cultural sites, as well as minimizing wildlife harassment, conflicts between user groups, and impacts on wilderness values.

OFF TO A ROCKY START

The BLM has completed only the San Rafael Desert travel management plan, one of 13 it must finish within the next four years. The San Rafael Desert plan, released last August, inundates the remote desert with ORV routes, more than doubling the mileage from 300 to over 765.

SUWA and The Wilderness Society have challenged the BLM's destructive and illegal San Rafael Desert travel plan in federal court. We will keep you updated as the challenge moves forward.

The BLM's Price field office also recently completed public scoping for the San Rafael Swell travel plan. With its sinuous slot canyons and soaring redrock cliffs, the Swell is one of the most stunning and popular areas of Utah's public lands. Despite this, the agency is considering designating over a thousand miles of new routes in the heart of the Swell.

To date, the BLM's travel planning has been unacceptable. The BLM's plans prioritize ORV use at the expense of natural and cultural resources as well as other users. We

are working hard to ensure that the Biden administration moves quickly to develop reasonable travel plans that provide public access but protect the backcountry and minimize damage.

The next plans due out are for the Canyon Rims area (Moab field office), the Trail Canyon area (Kanab field office), and the BLM lands surrounding Dinosaur National Monument (Vernal field office).

We'll need your help to ensure that the BLM fulfills its duty to minimize damage to Utah's incredible wild lands as it plans for access to them.

—Laura Peterson

PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION: A MOAB CASE STUDY

We launched our 2021 stewardship season with a prime example of why we do what we do. The story behind our first project of the year highlights the resilience of the stewardship network we are building and what we can accomplish when we remain targeted and persistent.

In late 2020, a Moab resident contacted us and the BLM Moab field office with his discovery of what appeared to be repeated ORV incursions into the Mill Creek Canyon wil-

derness study area (WSA). On the BLM's end, the project was added to a very long list of such problems.

Meanwhile, our stewardship staff took up the cause. Over the winter we visited the site with a BLM ranger. We discovered a mile-long illegal route traveling into the Mill Creek Canyon WSA, culminating at an expansive motorized campsite where the bare earth of tire treads was rapidly overtaking the native vegetation and soil crust ecologies.

We developed a rehabilitation plan, then recruited a small crew of Moab locals to tackle the work. Our volunteers began a mid-March Saturday hiking the boundary between a popular motorized route and the Mill Creek Canyon WSA. Using all on-site materials—downed logs, boulders, brush, and limbs—volunteers employed strategies such as deadplanting (vertically arranging downed vegetation to make it appear living), iceberging (“planting” boulders vertically), and other forms of vertical mulching (placing objects across a surface to deter motor vehicle travel) to clearly delineate travel areas from protected landscapes. On a landscape not known for quick natural recovery, visual recovery is a first line of defense.

The pressures placed on protected landscapes remain many and serious. But it is remarkable to see what can be accomplished in a day when we work together. If you'd like to learn more about our Stewardship Program, please visit suwa.org/stewardship.

—Jeremy Lynch



BEFORE AND AFTER: STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS USED ALL ON-SITE MATERIALS—DOWNED LOGS, BOULDERS, BRUSH, AND LIMBS—and employed "VERTICAL MULCHING" STRATEGIES TO CLEARLY DELINEATE TRAVEL AREAS FROM PROTECTED LANDSCAPES.

THANKS AND SO LONG TO OLIVER WOOD, A FANTASTIC ADVOCATE AND COLLEAGUE

We send a hearty farewell to Oliver Wood (and an “awoo!” to his husky, Huck), who has served as a wildlands attorney in our Moab office since mid-2019. Oliver’s commitment to wilderness preservation, his optimism and desire to grow as an advocate, and his easygoing and friendly demeanor around the office will be missed.

Oliver was always looking for a new adventure. His commitment to long days of fieldwork and willingness to take on any task were unparalleled. In 2020 alone, Oliver managed to log more than 60 days in the field! Oliver has been a wonderful representative for SUWA and the redrock wilderness, developing relationships with Bureau of Land Management staff throughout the state and working hard to protect places like Bears Ears National Monument, the West Desert, and newly designated wilderness in Labyrinth Canyon and the San Rafael Swell.

Oliver can now be found exploring the Montana backcountry on skis or foot with Huck, where he continues to advocate on behalf of the environment and wild places. Utah’s loss is Montana’s gain. We wish him the best.



BEST WISHES AND HAPPY ADVENTURING TO OLIVER AND HUCK!



REGINA LOPEZ-WHITESKUNK IS ONE OF THREE NEW ADDITIONS TO SUWA'S BOARD.

SUWA WELCOMES THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

SUWA is pleased to announce the addition of three outstanding individuals to the SUWA Board of Directors.

REGINA LOPEZ-WHITESKUNK

We are honored and delighted to welcome Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk to our board. Regina brings an extensive background of Indigenous leadership, eloquence, and traditional knowledge to our organization.

Born and raised in southwestern Colorado, Regina is a member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and lives on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation near Towaoc, Colorado. At an early age, she began to advocate for land, air, water, and animals, and strongly believes that the inner core of healing comes from the knowledge of our land and elders. She was elected in 2013 to serve on the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, and in that capacity became co-chair of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition from 2015 through 2017.

As Coalition co-chair, Regina played a key leadership role in the effort to protect Bears Ears, successfully lobbying the Obama administration to protect the landscape as a national monument, and fending off attacks from Utah politicians with her typical poise, grace, and charm.

She's also served as the education director for the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose, Colorado, and has traveled

extensively throughout the country sharing the Ute culture through song, dance, and speaking engagements. In addition to SUWA's board, she currently serves on the boards of the Telluride Institute and Torrey House Press, and on the advisory board of Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

WAYNE HOSKISSON

Longtime friend, wilderness activist, and Moabite Wayne Hoskisson has also joined SUWA's board. Wayne is a key activist with the national Sierra Club and has served on several national and regional Club committees including its national Utah wilderness team and its wildlands and wilderness teams. He also served as the Utah chapter's wilderness liaison for many years. More recently, he was the point person for the Club's support of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition's drive to establish Bears Ears National Monument.

Born and raised in Utah, Wayne raised his own family in Salt Lake City and eventually settled in Moab. He's been part of the Utah wilderness movement as long as anyone—all the way back to the original Utah wilderness inventories of the 1980s—and has been

involved with most of the grassroots campaigns since. He and his former wife, Gail Hoskisson, headed up the years-long volunteer effort to document every RS 2477 claim in Utah (Gail, who passed away in 2011, was also on SUWA's staff).

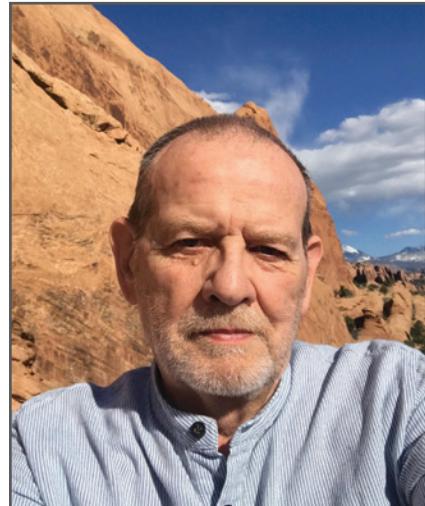
Wayne keeps busy in his retirement by serving on local government boards and committees and taking daily walks through town and beyond. His decades of experience will serve SUWA well, and we are pleased to welcome him to our board.

ANI KAME'ENUI

We are thrilled that Ani Kame'enui, longtime conservation advocate and friend of the redrock, has agreed to join our board as well.

Ani has been a SUWA ally for years, fighting alongside us on the Emery County public lands bill, in defense of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments, and even in the wonky trenches of RS 2477. She is currently the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Gates' Breakthrough Energy group, working on climate policy and the transition

(Continued next page)



LONGTIME REDROCK ADVOCATES WAYNE HOSKISSON AND ANI KAME'ENUI RECENTLY JOINED SUWA'S BOARD.



THANKS TO 2021 WEISSMAN INTERN ANIKA HEILWEIL

Our spring 2021 Weissman intern, Anika Heilweil, is a senior in environmental policy from Middlebury College in Vermont. Anika is from Salt Lake City. Her parents gave her a love of the outdoors and a healthy respect for working to protect the environment.

Anika was this year's recipient of the Dr. Norman Weissman Internship for Preservation of Wild & Scenic Utah, a generous gift made possible by the Weismann family.

"At SUWA, I worked on a project to encourage Utahns to write personal letters to Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) in support of wild lands protection as a means to mitigate climate change," says Anika. "This experience will be invaluable as I move forward into a career in climate policy and advocacy, utilizing the skills and tools I learned to structure future grassroots campaigns."

Anika certainly has a bright future ahead of her, and we thank her for her valuable contribution to our work.

to a clean energy economy, following previous stints at several conservation organizations, among them Oregon Wild, the Sierra Club, and the National Parks Conservation Association.

During the COVID-19 pandemic Ani and her husband, Kabir, relocated from Washington, DC to Eugene, OR, where she enjoys getting outdoors with her two young sons. We look forward to seeing her in Utah down the line.

MEMBER EVENTS MOVE ONLINE (FOR NOW)

Before COVID-19, we enjoyed hosting year-end celebrations and the occasional video screening or presentation for our SUWA members and Utah locals, too. It took us a while to get comfortable with the new technology, but we're finally hosting events again—and they've all been virtual!

Last October, we hosted our first members-only event online, "Wild Utah Today," a presentation from executive director Scott Groene on the history of our movement to protect the redrock.

After the emotional rollercoaster ride of the 2020 election season, our members were wondering how the new presi-

dential administration would change our work in the coming years. So before Thanksgiving, we hosted our second virtual member event, "A Monumental Vote," a post-election debrief featuring our legislative director, Jen Ujifusa, along with Scott Groene.

In February we hosted "The Nexus of Redrock Activism, Climate, & 30x30," a presentation from our grassroots organizers Terri Martin and Clayton Daughenbaugh covering a new scientific study on the impact that passage of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act would have on the climate crisis and 30x30, the scientific initiative to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.

If you're a member and you missed any of these events, not to worry! Just email membership@suwa.org, tell us which event you'd like to see, and we'll be sure to send you the link. If you aren't currently a member, please join SUWA today by visiting suwa.org/donate. Your annual membership will support the work SUWA does every day to defend the most spectacular desert wild lands in America.

Once it's safe to do so, we plan on throwing in-person parties again, but rest assured that no matter what the "new normal" brings, we will continue hosting members-only events online for you. Thanks for everything you do to protect wild Utah!

SUWA LAUNCHES FAITH-FOCUSED PODCAST

We are excited to announce the launch of *Bristlecone Firesides*—a podcast featuring casual conversations around a virtual fireside about faith, the Earth, the universe, and everything. Hosted by SUWA Faith Community Organizer Madison Daniels, each episode explores foundational themes of a spiritual practice rooted in the Earth and strives to re-enchant the natural world with an ecologically based spirituality that is centered in sacred texts, rooted in the Earth, and lived through activist issues relevant today.

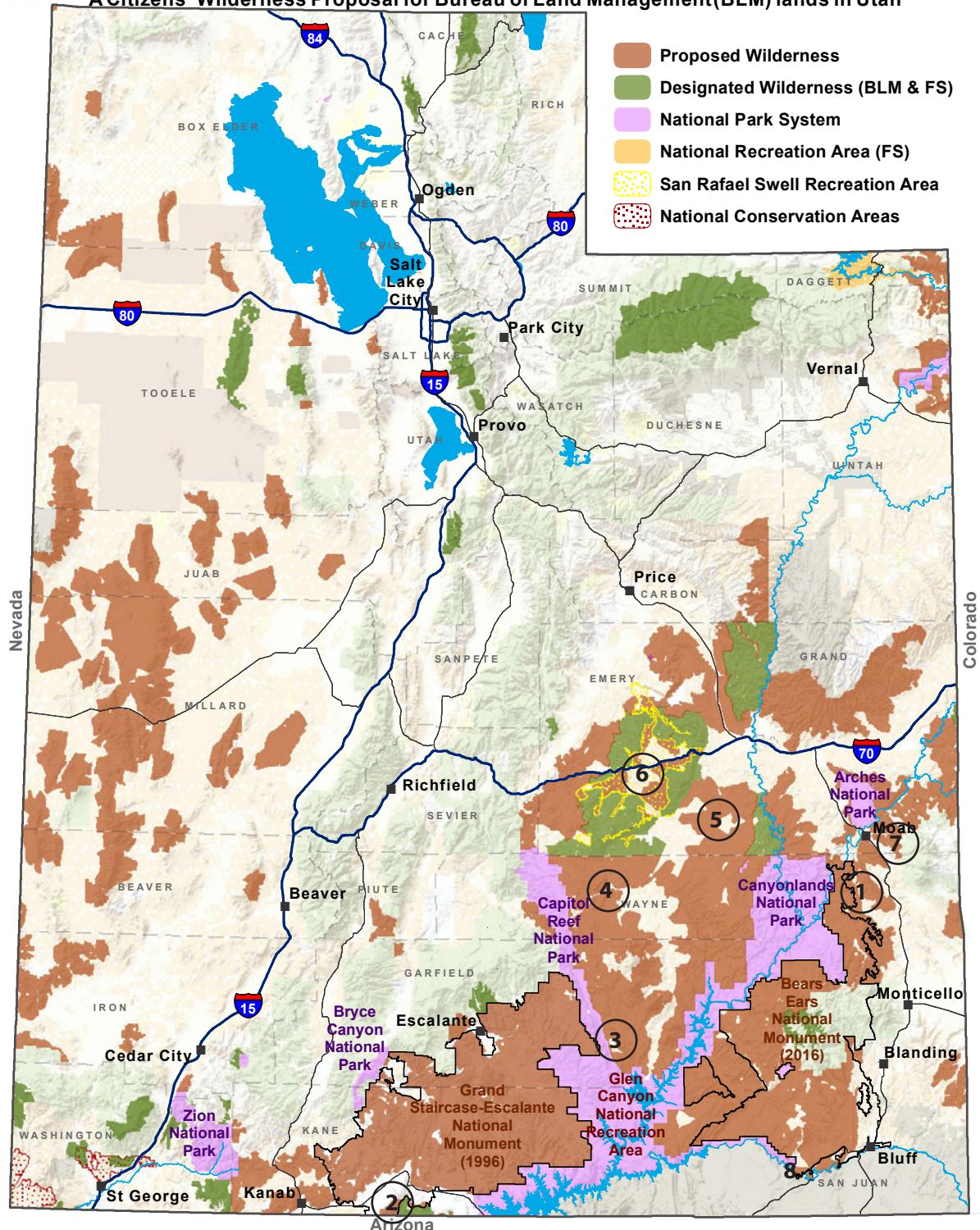
Bristlecone Firesides feels like a conversation around a campfire with close friends. Each conversation is a practice in re-grounding a life of faith and belief in the stuff of the Earth. This podcast is for people who feel as though their faith is detached from the issues they care about and who want to make their faith relevant to their lives. It is an effort to expand the circle of belonging to include the Earth, animals, plants, and each other.

You can find *Bristlecone Firesides* on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, or wherever else you get your podcasts. New episodes are available every Wednesday during each season with occasional bonus episodes. This first season began in March and will run through May of 2021. Season two will launch later this year.

Our original podcast, *Wild Utah*, is now in its third year and comprises 24 episodes. In addition to featuring staff experts discussing issues central to our cause, we include special guests from outside the organization who bring fresh perspectives on wilderness and public land protection. A special upcoming series, "Utah Silvestre," will explore the Latinx connection to redrock country. Listen on your favorite podcast service or at suwa.org/podcast.

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Bureau of Land Management(BLM) lands in Utah



1 Hatch Point (p. 8)

2 Wire Pass/Pine Hollow (p. 14)

3 Burr Trail (p. 17)

4 Factory Butte (p. 17)

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6 San Rafael Swell (p. 18)

7 Mill Creek Canyon (p. 19)



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LEAVE A LEGACY FOR THE REDROCK

Please consider leaving a gift to SUWA in your will, trust, or other estate plans. Bequests are a simple, effective way for those of us who love the redrock to ensure that when we're gone, the work to protect these amazing landscapes continues.

A gift to SUWA from your estate—whatever the amount—can reduce or even eliminate income taxes (including capital gains) and transfer taxes (including gift, estate, and inheritance taxes). This means we are able to use as much of your planned gift as possible to protect the redrock. You can also create a bequest so that the needs of your heirs are taken care of first.

A bequest for SUWA (or any other charitable organization) is simple to establish. Please visit suwa.org/plannedgiving for more information on how to leave a legacy for the redrock, including sample wording for adding SUWA to your will as a beneficiary.

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 michelle@suwa.org.



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