



Utah Environmental Congress

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Utah Environmental Congress

PROTECT OUR NATIONAL FORESTS



2008 Best Of Awards

The Utah Environmental Congress was thrilled to hear we had received the 2008 Best of Salt Lake City Award for Environmental Conservation by the U.S. Local Business Association (USLBA). The USLBA "Best of Local Business" Award Program recognizes outstanding local businesses and organizations throughout the country. Each year, the USLBA identifies companies and organizations that they believe have achieved exceptional success in their local community. The UEC was recognized as local organization that enhance the positive impacts to Environmental Conservation through service to their members and community.



SYLVAN SENTINEL

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THE FOREST AS A LIVING ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

Did You Know?

The Sylvan Sentinel was named ten years ago by Marilyn Glad, an exceptional volunteer from the very beginning. Marilyn was very creative and insightful with ideas for the name of our newsletter and some of her other suggestions were the "Canopy Clarion" and the "Arboreal Observer." We chose the name Sylvan for its meaning: consisting of or associated with woods, trees; pleasantly rural or pastoral. Utah offers hundreds of vistas with sylvan charm that the UEC seeks to protect. And the word Sentinel comes from the definition: a soldier or guard whose job is to stand and keep watch, figuratively safe guarding. The UEC's primary duty is to serve as a Sentinel for all National Forests in Utah.

Picture a warm spring day long ago, up in a pine belt on the Wasatch Plateau in central Utah. Maybe it was a hundred years ago, maybe a few hundred years ago; no one's certain. With a classic blue-bird Utah sky overhead, a Native American mother heads into the pines, as she has many times before, from the tribe's encampment in a grassy mountain valley. The rays of the mid-day sun have warmed the yellow-bellied ponderosa pine sentinels. The air is pungent with the smell of butterscotch. A group of children run from tree to tree, smelling the cracked crimson-colored tree bark, feasting on the sweet smells. Having found the right tree, the mother went to work with the care of a surgeon and cut and peeled off a large rectangle-shaped section. Satisfied, she took it back to camp for processing.



Fast forward to this summer: Manti-La Sal National Forest staff surveying a project area in Central Utah rediscovered the site! Often called peeler trees or medicine trees, a whole grove of these "culturally modified trees" was discovered in the ensuing search. None were known before in the area. It's the only such living archeological site on the Forest. The whole ordeal is really quite spectacular for fans of this pine, which has become an icon of the American West. Just a few years back, the extent of these ponderosa groves wasn't well known. The patches are isolated and located on the geographic edge of the species' range. Also, due to fire suppression and livestock grazing practices there's excessive in-growth of other trees like juniper. In fact, some of these ponderosa stands could look like juniper stands to the careless observer.

So what are peeler trees and what was this tribe doing? Was it a famine? No. In the spring, the outermost phloem layer in ponderosa can be scraped from the outer bark and used for many things. It can simply be rolled into balls and chewed as a sweet and nutritious treat. Just a little more than 1.5 ounces gives you as much calcium as a glass of milk. It also contains magnesium, zinc and iron. Strips can be tied into bundles and eaten later with salt. Parts are medicinal, and the ingredients were used as cleansing tonics. Some tribes in Utah have stories of placing sick people against the scarred portion of the ponderosa as part of a healing ritual. Other products include waterproofing for shoes and baskets, as well as glue for gluing rawhide to horse's hooves when traveling in rocky country (prior to horseshoes). The peeler tree sites in Utah are generally in the Uintah basin and Uinta Mountains, and are associated with the Utes that moved here from southwest Colorado. But this site is nowhere near there. These trees have many stories to tell us that we have not yet learned.



Our Mission:

Reclaiming and acting upon our ancestral responsibility to the land, the Utah Environmental Congress brings people together to engage in genuine protection of living forest systems that provide islands of refuge in Utah's desert country.

Board of Directors:

President, Ryan Pietramali
Vice President, Janelle Eurick
Secretary, Chad Hamblin
Treasurer/Founder, Denise Boggs
Forest Advisor, Martin Litton

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A Correction:

We erroneously gave credit for UEC's beautiful logo in our last newsletter and sincerely apologize. Correcting the record we want to thank and give credit to Kim Garner for her ingenuity with the design of our logo. In our last edition of the Sylvan Sentinel we discussed how our logo was created and the significance of each aspect of the logo. We love our logo and receive very positive feedback from our members and our public. You may purchase organic T-Shirts and tote bags, hats and hemp messenger bags from the UEC with our beautiful logo on them. Thank you Kim, for your brilliant work!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

10th Annual Conference

The UEC hosted its 10th annual conference on November 8th this year. Approximately 50 people attended the conference and everyone had an enjoyable evening. Kevin Mueller, the Executive Director, reported on UEC's Forest Monitoring Program and the formation of the UEC. Denise Boggs, Founder, spoke on the necessity of the organization, and the special niche that UEC fills. Denise welcomed special keynote speaker, Doug Peacock, who gave a very entertaining presentation celebrating the spirit and ideals of Edward Abbey. Doug's speech focused on protecting wildness during the most perilous time on earth.

Several local businesses contributed to the auction this year, making it the most successful auction of UEC history! We would like to thank Black Diamond, Patagonia, Voile, Margene Anderson of DanceScene, Salt Lake Acting Company, The Front Climbing Gym, Black Diamond, Kings English, Cactus and Tropicals, The Do Do & Porcupine Pub, Plan B Theater, Treasure Mountain Inn, Boulder Mountain Lodge, Wasatch Touring, Xmission, Sundance Institute, Ken Sanders Rare Books, Utah Symphony and Opera, Tom Till Photography, and Laura Alleman Framed Photography for their generous contributions to our auction. Vertical Diner and Sages Cafe, Squatters Brew Pub and Carlucci's bakery graciously donated appetizers, desserts, and other delicious refreshments to our anniversary event, and we can't thank them enough for providing the UEC with such a bountiful selection that evening. The UEC deeply appreciates the incredible support of these charitable businesses and encourage all of our supporters to patronize these conservation-minded businesses. Thank you!

The UEC also greatly appreciates all of the guests and volunteers who made it to the annual conference and shared in the 10th Anniversary experience. We are extraordinarily honored to have activists and participants of such caliber join us at this conference, and for the past ten years. A huge thank you as well to the generous contributions made by our members to benefit our Forest Monitoring Program. Without your support it wouldn't be possible!

A Message from the Founder

By Denise Boggs

As UEC celebrates 10 years of National Forest advocacy it is with tremendous gratitude that we remember and thank all of our members and supporters who make our work possible. It's never easy starting a grassroots nonprofit and UEC was ambitious from the beginning by implementing a statewide Forest Monitoring Program that covers all six National Forests in Utah. Relying on science and the law UEC has carved out a significant niche in Utah's conservation community and our work remains vitally needed. The National Forests and native wildlife in Utah are better protected because we are here.

We wanted to review some of the accomplishments of our Forest Monitoring Program that you helped make happen over the past 10 years.

- We stopped the largest timber sale in Utah history twice, in 1999 & 2007. The South Manti Timber Sale was 25 million board feet and would have logged 5 roadless areas and potential wilderness areas. The areas proposed for logging are home to black bear, elk, deer, Northern goshawk, Three-toed woodpeckers, and a variety of other species. We first won our lawsuit in Utah District Court on a wildlife issue - Management Indicator Species - a case of first impression that most everyone thought we would lose. The second lawsuit was won at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals and set another precedent that extends beyond Utah's borders. UEC strives to set good case law that benefits other conservationists around the region and the South Manti decisions are good examples.
- Back in 2001, the UEC appealed the reissuance of 42 Grazing Allotments that were not properly analyzed under NEPA for cumulative impacts. The Regional Office of the Forest Service reversed the decision based on UEC's appeal.
- Also back in 2003 the UEC began bidding on State Institutional Trust Land Grazing Permits. Utah allows anyone to bid on state grazing permits - not just ranchers - and

FOREST WATCH

Utah accepts the highest bid with the money going to support public schools in Utah. When UEC bids on a permit the rancher is forced to meet our bid or give up the permit. Thus far every rancher has met UEC's bid thus paying more for the privilege of grazing livestock on state lands. It also demonstrates that most ranchers can afford to pay more for grazing privileges that the pittance they are now charged. At a time when wildlife is losing habitat at a profound rate we believe wildlife should not have to compete for forage with livestock, but if they do the rancher should at least have to pay a reasonable cost of doing business. UEC's participation is a win-win for wildlife and public schools. If our bid is met our money is returned and the extra money paid by the rancher goes to the school. If UEC's bid is ever successful we will eliminate livestock grazing on the allotment and rehabilitate the land strictly for wildlife use.

• In 2004 the UEC won its lawsuit over the Monroe Mountain timber sale on the Fishlake National Forest at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. This too was a case of first impression on wildlife monitoring. The timber sale would have logged a roadless area that provided important wildlife habitat for Bonneville cutthroat trout and Northern goshawk, among other species.

• In 2005 The UEC successfully resolved the first Healthy Forests Restoration Act project. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act was passed by the Bush Administration and eliminated the administrative appeals process for HFRA projects replacing it with an "objection" process. The conservation community had no idea how this process would ultimately work and feared that bad projects would not be able to be stopped. UEC led the way proving these projects can be stopped. The UEC HFRA resolution made the rounds nationwide as an example of what can be done when you learn the law and how to properly apply it.

• In 2006 the UEC stopped the 1000 Lakes Timber Sale at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. This timber sale was also on the Fishlake National Forest and partially in roadless lands and potential wilderness.

• In 2007 the UEC won a massive lawsuit at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals that overturned multiple decisions on several timber sales and the East Mountain Road project. The combined timber sales totaled 31 million board feet of timber that provides important habitat to a variety of Management Indicator Species. The road project was a new SITLA all weather road in the middle of a roadless area on the Manti La Sal NF that would have permitted logging and oil and gas exploration in the roadless area.

• This year the UEC successfully stopped the Pockets Timber Sale on the Dixie NF through an administrative appeal. The new Forest Supervisor agreed with the UEC that the timber sale as currently designed would have logged mainly live green trees rather than the salvage the sale was billed as. We are hopeful for a better working relationship and more reasonable future decisions from this Supervisor.

The UEC has stopped many other bad projects on the National Forest lands in Utah through comments, appeals and litigation. We have written comments on well over a

thousand projects; appealed hundreds of decisions; and litigated almost a dozen projects. We consistently strive to work with the Forest Service first, but when the agency violates the law UEC will always step in to hold it accountable. Our excellent track record speaks for itself and we remain dedicated to the pursuit of a lawfully managed Forest Service that conserves our precious natural resources in the state of Utah.

Where does UEC go from here? As humans we inhabit the world with about 320,000 species of plants; 1 million species of insects; 400,000 species of invertebrates other than insects; 28,000 species of fish; 13,000 species of amphibians and reptiles; 9,800 species of birds; and 4,900 species of mammals. There are surely others that have yet to be identified. We unfortunately can't protect them all, but we can use some animals as "surrogate species" - here in Utah we call them Management Indicator Species - species that have diverse habitat needs and require large land areas. Some high profile species already serve this purpose primarily because they are charismatic and appealing to look at so they generate more public interest than other species. In Utah they include elk and deer because they are hunted and considered trophy animals by certain segments of society. If we concentrate on meeting their needs, we will in turn protect habitats that could encompass many of the other aforementioned species. However, UEC continues to push the Forest Service to recognize other non-charismatic species to serve as surrogates (MIS) such as the Black-tailed prairie dog, Three-toed woodpecker or Blue grouse.

Habitat conservation is the primary land issue we face today, particularly in a fast growing state like Utah. National Forest lands remain as one of the last refuges of unfragmented, non-developable land in Utah. If we want to conserve or manage habitat it is critical to collect sound scientific data to bolster our case. Repeatedly, scientific data is being called upon to argue court cases and land use claims. UEC has collected such data in its Roadless Area Inventory of National Forest lands in Utah. We surveyed 6.5 million acres of the 8 million acres in Utah. It is arguably the most comprehensive citizen survey ever conducted on public lands in the United States. This data is used daily in our comments, appeals and lawsuits and often proves the Forest Service information is erroneous. It is also the basis of our statewide National Forest wilderness proposal.

In addition, we need to get more involved in local communities. Conservation is also about people and conversation - talking with ranchers, recreationists, and other land owners about the National Forests in Utah we want to protect. It's about talking to the people who work in the landscape for a living. Conservation is a public communication issue and we need to get everyone involved. UEC strives to be inclusive; to listen to others perspectives; and pledge to always enforce environmental laws that protect and preserve our forests and wildlife.

For the past 10 years UEC has drawn upon our members to support our Forest Monitoring Program. In reality you are the foundation for what we do because National Forest lands belong to you. After you have browsed through this newsletter I hope you will consider an end of the year contribution. Your tax deductible donation ensures that UEC remains in the field being leaders in Utah for National Forest advocacy. That in turn promotes reliable wildlife management and conservation decisions. We can't do it without you.