



# SYLVAN SENTINEL

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## What's In A Name?

The UEC was formed in 1998 and chose the name Utah Environmental Congress because we represent statewide environmentally responsible and ethical choices for our public land. We also believed there was a need for a statewide organization to focus on National Forest issues. The word "congress" was chosen based on the precept that we would establish a body of caring citizens to act as representatives for the National Forests and Wildlife in Utah. "Congress" also represents our founding principle that an organization of concerned citizens can achieve lasting change for the benefit of our environment. We combine citizen action with forest monitoring and litigation to provide a voice for the forests and wildlife in Utah.

## WOLVES IN THE NORTHERN ROCKIES

Back in 2003 something momentous occurred in Utah's wildlife community. For the first time in over 75 years a gray wolf set foot on Utah soil. Many Utahans were thrilled the wolf had rightfully returned to Utah, but not everyone saw it that way, and "Hoppy" was trapped and moved back to Idaho from where he had migrated.

Wolf 253M or Hoppy, named by his fans because of a limp caused by an injury from a fight with another wolf pack, was shot the day after delisting on an elk feeding ground in Wyoming where he had established his own pack in Grand Teton National Park. He was eight years old. This black wolf was one of the most recognizable members of Yellowstone's famous Druid Peak pack. People snapped his photograph and shot video as he and his pack mates played, hunted and snoozed.



The gray wolf was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1973 after decades of extermination efforts almost succeeded. Settlers moving westward depleted most populations of bison, deer, elk, and moose – animals that were important prey for wolves. Wolves then increasingly turned to sheep and cattle as a replacement for their natural prey. To protect livestock, ranchers and government agencies began an eradication campaign.

In the northern Rocky Mountains, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reintroduced gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park and U.S. Forest Service lands in central Idaho in 1995 and 1996. Those wolves dispersed and now there are about 1,200 wolves in MT, WY and ID. The USFWS delisted the wolf in March 2008 claiming the reintroduction efforts were a success and the wolf was recovered. Thankfully a judge in MT disagreed and ordered a temporary injunction thereby granting ESA status back to the wolf. The judge cited two primary reasons for issuing the injunction; the USFWS couldn't guarantee genetic diversity between the packs since after delisting management went back to the states and all three states intended to have aggressive wolf hunts, and the WY plan intended to kill off 90% of the wolves. Idaho planned to kill up to half of its wolf population.

Most people know that dogs descended from wolves. They are intelligent, clever, sentient creatures that are beautiful and magnificent. When the wolf was delisted back in March about one wolf per day was shot and killed mostly by ranchers, totaling about 106 dead wolves. Like so many other conservation issues, wolves became endangered because of human greed and stupidity, and once brought back are again at risk because of human greed and stupidity. Why do we need wolves? Like Aldo Leopold who spoke eloquently about 'saving all the parts', we need wolves as a top predator to balance out prey species and create healthy ecosystems.



**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.

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**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

(continued from page 1)

Studies at Yellowstone National Park indicate that wolves support a wide variety of other animals. Ravens, foxes, wolverines, coyotes, bald eagles, and even bears feed on the carcasses of animals killed by wolves. Antelope are swift, elk are alert, and mountain goats are adept at climbing steep cliffs, in part because of the longterm effects of wolf predation. Wolves also help maintain the balance between these ungulates (hoofed animals) and their food supply, making room for plant-eaters such as beavers and small rodents.

Montana, Wyoming and Idaho are all upset at losing their brucellosis free status for cattle production. This disease was brought by domestic livestock to this county, and cattle in turn infected wild animals – particularly bison and elk. The livestock industry has been calling for the all out slaughter of bison for many years now, and this year over half the herd in Yellowstone National Park was killed. Now the Fish and Game Departments of these states are planning to dramatically increase elk hunting and hold damage hunts for elk to lower the populations even further. Wolves could thin the herds naturally if they were given a chance thereby strengthening bison and elk genetics and fostering healthy predator/prey relationships. We would hope that at some day in the near future our society would demand the government quit capitulating to a livestock industry that causes immense environmental damage by thwarting natural processes in favor of special interests – namely cattle ranchers.

As a culture we should be able to find it within ourselves to make room for more "Hoppy's", allowing wolves to roam our vast public lands without fear of persecution.

**DOUG PEACOCK CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF UEC!**

GREAT NEWS FOR HAYDUKE FANS! - Doug Peacock will be speaking at this years' Annual Conference on November 8th!

Doug Peacock is a renowned author, naturalist, and outdoorsman. He is widely known for his book Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness, a memoir of his experiences in the 1970s and 1980s, much of which was spent alone in the wilderness of the western United States observing grizzly bears. He was a friend of author Edward Abbey, and served as the model for the character George Washington Hayduke in Abbey's famous novel The Monkey Wrench Gang.

Peacock is a key element in the effort to educate about and designate Wilderness throughout the Rocky Mountain West. Peacock speaks in schools about wilderness, conservation, and the need to preserve our wilderness. He is also the chairman of the board of trustees for Round River Conservation Studies.



**UTAH  
BACKCOUNTRY  
VOLUNTEERS**

We are so pleased to welcome Doug to Salt Lake and hear what he has to say about wilderness and wildness and to help us celebrate our 10th Anniversary! Be sure and mark the date and check our website at [www.uec-utah.org](http://www.uec-utah.org) for additional details.

**Utah Backcountry  
Volunteers need YOU!**

UBV is a volunteer driven organization whose mission is to improve the natural state of public lands in Utah by recruiting, organizing, and leading volunteers on work service trips.

UBV partners with agencies such as the BLM, National Forest Service, and National Park Service to identify on-the-ground projects and needs, then actively recruit, organize, and link volunteers to service trips that restore, repair and maintain our public lands.

If you would like to volunteer to help out the hard working team at UBV, please contact Dave at (435) 785-8955 or visit [www.utahbackcountry.org](http://www.utahbackcountry.org)!

## FOREST WATCH

### Largest Timber Sale in Utah in Years Approved on the Dixie National Forest

In July the Dixie National Forest approved a timber sale that would log more acres than any other (with one exception) since UEC formed in 1998! The “Pockets” timber sale would build more than 11 miles of new logging roads and includes over 4,000 acres of high elevation logging units scattered across the landscape. This 10,000 foot elevation spruce/fir and aspen logging includes a sizeable amount of roadless, old growth forest and is located up on the Aquarius Plateau, about 17 miles northwest of Escalante. Mega-projects of this scale are so large that they are hard to visualize so we'll offer a couple comparisons.

- This includes about six and a quarter square miles of logging units, if they all were stacked next to each other.
- That makes a square so large that if one corner was Pioneer Park in downtown Salt Lake City, the opposite corner would reach to Sugarhouse Park!
- For members out-of-state, if placed over Manhattan that would cover the island from Times Square down to Wall Street.
- That's almost a record number of acres for a Supervisor to approve for logging in one stroke of the pen!

Most of this project has been dressed up to the public as ecological restoration to reduce fire danger. Forest science is not easy for the general public to fully comprehend as it deals with very complicated biological systems; it's easy to mislead. We believe that is what the Forest Service is trying to do here. Almost 90% of this project is logging that aims specifically to remove the old growth and mature forest structure in spruce/fir forest. The body of peer-reviewed scientific literature studying this type of high elevation spruce/fir forest tells us that this forest is within the natural, or historic, range of variability and that fire suppression and human activity has not altered fire risks, nor does past beetle activity increase fire danger. In



*Recap Sale -recent logging of the same type near the Pockets timber sale. This was approved before UEC formed.*

other forest types like lower elevation Lodgepole and Ponderosa pine trees killed by past beetle outbreaks increase the probability of a big fire spreading (That's actually Lodgepole pine's evolutionary strategy.) It's counter intuitive but the peer-reviewed literature shows that, in this type of high elevation Engelmann spruce/fir forest, the risk of a big fire spreading goes down to a statistically significant degree for at least 80 years following a beetle epidemic.

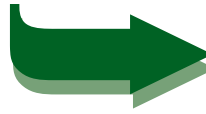
The only part of the forest ecosystem in the area that is in need of active restoration is the riparian zone along Antimony creek and nearby aspen clones, both of which are suffering greatly due to continued over-grazing by ungulates such as permitted cattle. Of course the Pockets sale will not fix either of these problems.

UEC is going to survey the cutting units and appeal this timber sale together with UEC member Mary O'Brien PhD (and Southern Utah Forests Project Manager of GCT) who submitted excellent Draft EIS comments. WildEarth Guardians and the Sierra Club may also be an active part of the effort. Regardless, UEC will never let something like this slip by!



## Utah Environmental Congress

1817 South Main Street, Suite 10  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115  
Phone: 801-466-4055 • Fax: 801-466-4057  
General E-mail: [uec@uec-utah.org](mailto:uec@uec-utah.org)  
Website: [www.uec-utah.org](http://www.uec-utah.org)



### **PASS IT ON...**

**KEEP THE WORD GOING!**  
*Share this with a friend or family, leave it at a coffee shop, or any community friendly place!*

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# Utah Environmental Congress

PROTECT OUR NATIONAL FORESTS



If Wildlife could read, write and vote, we wouldn't be asking for your help speaking up on their behalf!