



# DownStream

Leaders in  
Conservation Issues  
within the Bear River  
Basin

Bear River Watershed Council

Volume 2, Issue 1



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Photo by Larry McCormick

*Logan Ranger District Forest Technician Ron Garrison and BRWC's executive director measure for the barrier to be placed on the Mt. Naomi Wilderness boundary.*

## A Message from Our Chair

Some of my favorite memories are from 1993 when I ventured into the Mt. Naomi Wilderness shortly after I moved to Utah from flat, farm country. To say that I was awestruck by the majestic beauty of the Bear River Mountains would be an understatement.

I juxtapose those early days of mountain serenity with what I'm now seeing with alarming frequency: the oftentimes uncontrolled abuse of our public lands by a minority of irresponsible and law-flouting individuals who seem to think that such lands should be managed by a one-word policy, "me."

One must wonder if those who have the wherewithal to inflict such careless harm on something that doesn't belong to them have any respect, for themselves or anyone else.

This spring, BRWC, in partnership with the Logan Ranger District, will be installing

barricades and performing restoration measures in Hyde Park Canyon (see story on page 2). To become involved, go to our Web site at [www.BRWCouncil.org](http://www.BRWCouncil.org), or call 435-258-4432.

The BRWC family lost a great friend recently. Hyrum resident Mike Johnson lost a long and courageous battle with melanoma cancer in February. Mike was one of the first individuals to show interest and support for BRWC's ideals back in 2000, when Dan Miller and I first started organizing. Over the years, he and his wife, Suzanne, continued to be strong supporters, both financially and as volunteers. One of Mike's most distinguishable characteristics was his robust laugh. When Mike was in the crowd, you knew it. Mike, wherever you are, drink one for me and I'll drink one for you.

*Tim Wagner*

On the Web at:  
[www.BRWCouncil.org](http://www.BRWCouncil.org)

E-mail us at:  
[dmiller@BRWCouncil.org](mailto:dmiller@BRWCouncil.org)

# Mt. Naomi Wilderness Restoration Project

Project MUD  
Volunteers:

Stuart Reynolds  
Diane Behl  
Diana Toth  
Martha Balph  
Greg Beveridge  
Chris Cokinos  
Heather Robison  
John Alley  
Mary Alley  
John Carter  
Peter Mentzel  
Chris Conte  
Melyssa Mvnoz  
Robert Malone  
Bryan Dixon  
Jean Lown  
Jim Cane  
Kevin Kobe

As this issue of *DownStream* goes to press, the first of two Bear River Watershed Council spring projects—the Hyde Park Canyon Unauthorized Route Restoration Project—is in its final planning stages. On April 21, volunteers will gather at the mouth of Hyde Park Canyon to begin the process of restoring a severely damaged area with close proximity to Cache Valley’s growing population. One month later, on May 19, volunteers will build a buck and pole fence on the north ridge of the canyon.

According to Logan Ranger District Forest Technician Ron Garrison, who is in charge of the project, the canyon “has the most roads and user-created routes in the wilderness. Motorized users are, in fact, breaching the boundary into the wilderness.” BRWC’s Motorized Use Data Project (MUD) had previously documented off-road abuses in Hyde Park Canyon as far back as June 2005.

In that year, Cache Valley’s population was 103,564; it is expected to double in twenty-five to thirty years. Roads extending into wilderness

not only affect wildlife habitat and ecosystem health, they change the character of a place. If not properly addressed, off-road vehicle impacts will forever compromise the beauty, quiet, and solitude wilderness provides for anyone who visits the val-

ley’s easily accessible canyons.

The project’s five objectives are to: completely restore, by reseeding, four unauthorized routes into the Mt. Naomi Wilderness; construct vehicle barriers to stop illegal travel; curtail weed dispersal; stop erosion by placing erosion-control barriers in strategic locations; and bring public attention to the issues currently impacting wilderness.

Funded by a \$5,000 grant from the National Forest Foundation, the official nonprofit partner of the U.S. Forest Service, the project was one of fourteen awarded throughout the country in 2006. Partnered with REI, the by-invitation Wilderness Volunteer Program supports

nonprofit groups that work on projects directly affecting Wilderness Areas within the country’s National Forests and Grasslands.

Grant money paid for fencing materials, weed-free hay and native plant seed, and wooden signs. The remaining money paid a volunteer to coordinate the project and for publicity. All major northern Utah newspapers and radio stations received press releases about the impending project along with additional notices calling for volunteers.

Building on relationships forged on three Project MUD restoration projects completed in 2005–06 in High Creek and Millville canyons, the Wasatch Outlaws, an organization of off-road enthusiasts based in Ogden, have already agreed to help with the Hyde Park project.

Wes Thompson, a local hydrogeologist for BIO-WEST, Inc., and a member of the Bridgerland Trail Riders Association, volunteered to provide erosion control expertise on optimum placement of water bars and reseeding.

“I seriously like doing erosion control. It’s fun for me to put my education and experience to use in that area, and I love being outdoors,” Thompson said. But he has more than a passing interest in the project. “As a motorized user of public lands, I have a responsibility to mitigate the impacts caused by illegal motorized use so that agencies like the Forest Service don’t use blanket closures as a management tool.”

This sense of shared ownership is one reason why BRWC designed the project—to create collaboration among different user groups. BRWC hopes to forge a “common ground” relationship by using citizen volunteers from both motorized and non-motorized communities as ambassadors for the project.

BRWC Executive Director Dan Miller said, “We’ve said it before and we’ll say it again. While everyone has a right to enjoy our public lands, no one has a right to abuse them.”

The Hyde Park Canyon Unauthorized Route Restoration Project continues BRWC’s commitment to making a difference by healing problems caused by illegal motorized impacts.

“The difference we’re making is small compared to the problem, but BRWC hopes this will be the catalyst for an ever-growing movement with shared responsibility between responsible



*Wes Thompson, a local hydrogeologist for BIO-WEST, Inc., and a member of the Bridgerland Trail Riders Association, volunteered to provide erosion control expertise on optimum placement of water bars and reseeding.*

users. We all have a stake in protecting public lands,” Miller said.

Garrison agreed: “This project is important because it protects wilderness for future generations.”

If you would like to volunteer, plan to meet at the staging area (see map on page 4) April 21,

and/or May 19 at 8:00 a.m. and be prepared for a full day of outdoor work. Bring shovels, picks, other tools and sunscreen, and wear long pants and a hat. Food and drinks will be provided.

Look for an update on the Hyde Park Canyon project in the next issue of *DownStream*.

## ***MUD Work***

by Heather Robison

The drive up Providence Canyon follows a slow, bumpy road through Utah Juniper and Bigtooth Maple. Just before the sign for Route 022 is an open area with dusty picnic tables and space to park where we heard the creek running parallel to the roadway. The June sunshine herded us into the shade where we ate lunch and played with Global Positioning System (GPS) units. A few hours earlier I learned the details of BRWC’s Motorized Use Data Project (MUD): hike a trail, observe and document off-road vehicle impacts such as rutting or off-route spurs, take a digital photograph, and mark the spot on a simple to use yet wildly fun and MacGyver-feeling GPS (camera and GPS provided by BRWC). Now, with our brief classroom session over, my fellow trainees and I were eager to delve into the field.

We grouped with experienced MUD collectors to guide us and help identify the different codes for each type of impact. This process was made ridiculously easy by a cheat sheet with color photographs of each kind of impact with a brief description and the impact’s code: R-1 for rutting, S-2 for a damaged trail sign, etc.

On our first hike, we stayed together and practiced marking the same things. It was a beautiful, clear day. As we paused to document the trailhead sign with an S-0 on our clipboards, we noticed the route number did not correspond to the Forest Service map and the user rules had been used for target practice—S-2 for damaged sign and inconsistent route number. We made it ten paces before someone noticed an off-route spur (U-2) that we quickly learned was a parallel track only five feet from the official trail (I replaced my former mark with R-2). Fifteen paces later was a dispersed campsite with riparian impacts, two fire rings within six feet of one

another, and a faded Gatorade bottle (O-3, R-5, O-4). As the hike continued, we realized why our training took place in Providence Canyon: so far, in just one half-mile area, MUD volunteers have documented fifteen entry points, fifty-nine intersections, six hill climbing areas and four stream crossings, all created by OHVs weaving through and around the designated trail. Trash, hill climbing, rutting, vegetation impacts, bare soil, and fire rings have heavily impacted the area. Heaviness settled on our group as we moved forward, stopping every few yards to document things I probably wouldn’t have noticed before.

“At this point, don’t spend all your time on each detail but get an overall sense of the trail,” our instructor explained. “Most of this can be considered ‘typical of route,’ so document the most significant impacts and build a general description. Otherwise, you may be out here for days.” As my clipboard filled, I no longer needed the cheat sheet and was able to document trails at a steady pace.

“But isn’t that depressing?” one friend asked me later. “I go out hiking to take my mind away from problems.”

“Not at all,” I answered. “I feel empowered. I’m actually doing something specific and valuable about an issue I care about.”

BRWC and Project MUD give me the opportunity to take direct action. Collecting OHV data makes me a more observant hiker and focus on areas of the backcountry I was not likely to experience otherwise. Hiking is an activity I do anyway, and with the added motivation of MUD, I’m strengthened by my sense of responsibility and connection to the landscape. It is easy to become overwhelmed by the number of worthy causes and crises regarding our natural and social environment. I still try to save polar bears, but being a member of BRWC and a MUD volunteer provides specific, local action where I can direct my energy and concern.

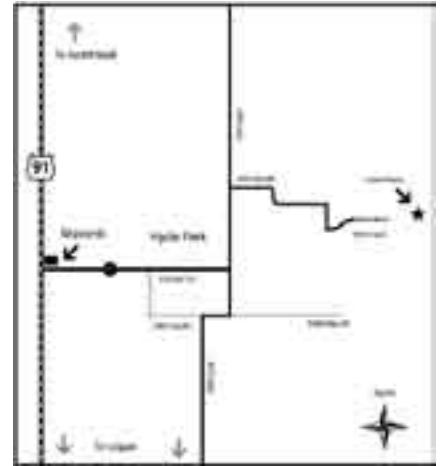
We want to thank everyone who has become a supporting member along with those who have volunteered endless hours of their time to see BRWC come to the forefront of the valley’s environmental community.

Special thanks to the following for their generous donations:

David Lancey  
Chris Cokinos &  
Kathe Lison  
Dan Schroeder  
William Moore  
Charles Ashurst  
Arthur Caplan &  
Frances Wherry  
Chris Sands  
Naomi Franklin  
Jacob &  
Crystal Blasi  
Carol Rosenthal

All those who wish to remain anonymous but have given so freely.

# Expanding Our Efforts



*Map to the Hyde Park Wilderness Restoration Project for April 21 and/or May 19 at 8:00 a.m. (See article on page 2 and our Web site.)*

Our thanks to the following local businesses and organizations for their commitment and continued support:

- Bridgerland Audubon Society
- Caffe Ibis
- Crumb Brothers Artisan Bread
- ECOS (USU)
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Nordic United Square One Printing
- Utah Conservation Corps
- Utah Sierra Club
- Western Watersheds Project, Inc.
- Western Wildlife Conservancy
- Wild Utah Project
- Winter Wildlands Alliance
- XMission
- Wasatch Outlaws (4X4 Club)
- Circle K Club USU

Our most heartfelt thanks to the following foundations for their generous contributions:

- National Forest Foundation
- Recreational Equipment, Inc.
- Patagonia
- Fund for Wild Nature

BRWC has hired Travis Taylor as Project MUD's volunteer leader and main data collector. Taylor is uniquely qualified due to his extensive trail work with the Utah Conservation Corps (UCC) and laboratory work at Utah State University's Wild Soils Laboratory and Agricultural Research Service. In May Taylor will receive a BS degree in Conservation and Restoration Ecology from USU.

This spring BRWC intern, Steven Clark worked on a newsletter article along with our new membership letter and brochure. Of his BRWC internship Clark said, "I can take what I've learned about [off-highway vehicle] use and apply it to my life, wherever that may take me." Clark graduates from USU in May with an English degree.

## Bear River Watershed Council Needs Your Support!

Are you interested in becoming a member of BRWC or involved in Project MUD? Please complete the information below and return it with your donation to BRWC, P.O. Box 404, Richmond, UT 84333-0404, or contact [dmiller@BRWCouncil.org](mailto:dmiller@BRWCouncil.org)

Membership in BRWC is just \$20 a year. These funds are used to fund Project MUD and help offset the cost of educational information made available to the public at community fairs and events. Only a small portion is used for administrative overhead thanks to our charitable supporters.

Yes, I would like to become a member of BRWC. My \$20 check is enclosed for a one-year membership. In addition, I would like to make a donation in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

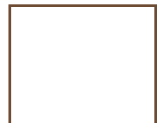
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

BRWC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible. Thank You!

BRWC  
P.O. Box 404  
Richmond, UT 84333-0404



### Bear River Watershed Council

believes that everyone has the right to use our public lands but no one has the right to abuse them.