



# DownStream

**Leaders in  
Conservation Issues  
within the Bear River  
Basin**

Bear River Watershed Council

Volume 3, Issue 2



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Photo by Dan Miller

*Travis Taylor was the Bear River Watershed Council's 2007 Motorized Use Data (MUD) coordinator.*

## **A Message from Our Chair**

The momentum gained by the Bear River Watershed Council in 2006 has continued into 2007. Because of this impetus, I'm proud to say, additional areas on the Logan Ranger District have now been protected or are being restored.

We owe much of this year's success to Travis Taylor. BRWC hired Travis last spring through the Utah Conservation Corps, facilitated in part by a grant from the Fund for Wild Nature. Travis oversaw and managed Project MUD (our motorized use data collection project) for the summer months. In short order, Travis proved what many of us suspected—that MUD's effectiveness improved once we had someone focused on the on-the-ground details.

In addition to coordinating and training field volunteers to document motorized impacts, Travis also spent a significant amount of time collecting the necessary data himself. Within a couple of weeks of traipsing the Logan Ranger District long before the snowmelt was com-

plete, Travis noted, "I was amazed at the horrific problems. I saw everything from riparian habitat destroyed by late-season snowmobile use to unauthorized routes illegally constructed by motorized users. I had no idea the motorized impacts occurring on our public lands were so vast and widespread."

As summer progressed, Travis's leadership focused on the serious issues in Millville Canyon. With several successful BRWC restoration projects already in the canyon, he expanded on that effort. For more on this success story, see our main inside feature.

We look forward to continued success in 2008 as BRWC works to protect public lands and watersheds. As always, we simply cannot do it without your financial assistance and your volunteer time. With your help, BRWC will continue to make a difference!

**Tim Wagner**

Project MUD  
Volunteers:

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



*Travis Taylor and BRWC volunteers removed an illegal A-frame built from live trees and used the material to build a barrier (left) to stop a hillclimb.*

## ***Restoration, Collaboration, and a New Vision***

by Bryan Dixon

I never thought I'd see the day when a tree-hugger like me would want to talk with—much less work alongside—a group of motorheads. That day has happened, and my descent from pure self-righteousness is the fault of BRWC.

It seems that some of “them” share the same attitude about impacts caused by illegal use on the forest that I do. It just so happens that they've been a big help on several restoration projects in the Cache Valley-front canyons by helping reclaim unauthorized (illegal) routes.

It all came together in Millville Canyon, one of the drainages on the Logan Ranger District that has suffered intensive damage from illegal motor vehicle use. Irresponsible users have caused severe erosion by driving through streams and wet meadows, building crude A-frames in the forest, and leaving bare scars of vehicle tracks heading straight up hillsides. Hacked stumps, old furniture, and garbage mark dispersed camping spots along the road. Some people are even constructing new routes to connect to other unauthorized routes.

All of these impacts were documented as part of BRWC's Motorized Use Data (MUD) project. When BRWC expressed an interest in having volunteers take down illegal structures, put up restoration barriers, and clean up some trashed areas, the Forest Service (USFS) agreed;

BRWC mobilized its members. Also at the staging area were members of the Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers, a club of four-wheel drive enthusiasts.

The two groups eyed each other from across the parking lot while Ron Garrison from the USFS and Dan Miller from BRWC started loading up fence material. The Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers pitched right in, adding their vehicles to help transport materials.

Within a short time, some of us were digging holes and putting up a barrier to protect a spring in the “Big Meadow,” about two miles up the canyon, while another contingent, led by the Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers, headed a mile further up canyon to disassemble an illegal structure and pick up trash. All day the two groups worked together.

Later, I called Larry Olsen, one of the leaders of the Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers. He said, “I don't really want to see any more [user-created] roads cut through the forest or see any legal routes closed.” Although in his younger days, Olsen drove some places he shouldn't have (as some of us must also confess), with age and experience, he began to see how much damage motorized vehicles can cause. He's determined not only to help organize clean-ups and restoration projects, but to do what he can to educate irresponsible users.

How is that different from

*Continued on next page*



*The blue lines on this map show approximately six miles of unauthorized (illegal) routes in upper Millville Canyon. BRWC and the Forest Service have made a concentrated effort to reclaim these areas.*

BRWC's methods? It isn't, really. Data collection, direct action, and education are all part of BRWC's three-pronged approach to restore and protect our National Forests.

Travis Taylor, BRWC's MUD coordinator, is happy to have the help. He organizes MUD route surveys and works with volunteers on restoration projects. He's finding a lot of problem areas, but he's also discovered some tricks, such as placing American flags on signs that read "Restoration Area—No Motorized Vehicles." It seems that the flag decals keep the signs free of bullet holes.

Then there's BRWC's secret weapon: a local volunteer who, in cooperation with the Forest Service, has been building large brush piles to discourage travel on all the unauthorized routes in Millville Canyon—some five feet high, twelve feet deep, and woven into the adjoining forest. The masterpieces are so effective that aspen and shrubs are now growing in the middle of the illegal vehicle tracks. This effort has effectively kick-started the restoration of five unauthorized, user-created miles.

With the teamwork comes a new language of "we" rather than "us and them." Four-letter expletives are being replaced by terms of recognition. The faceless others are becoming known on a first-name basis. Faces like Larry, Bryce, Steve, and Seth. Instead of lumping all motorized users into one group, we're finding people who really care.

And that's a good thing. We can't fix the problem of irresponsible use by stereotypes and hatred. We have to recognize our common ground and



Photo by Travis Taylor

*BRWC and the Logan Ranger District have been actively placing signs and brush piles throughout the summer to restore unauthorized user-created routes.*

work together.

What's next?

Probably more collaborative restoration projects. Connie McCaughey is a natural resource manager on the Logan Ranger District. McCaughey is very enthusiastic about recent cooperative efforts between BRWC and motorized groups like the Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers. She says that because of the visible progress in Millville Canyon, the Providence City Council now wants to do similar restoration projects in Providence Canyon.

My old body aches from the efforts of building restoration barriers; I can only take so much at one time! But I'll be there next year and hope you'll join us.

## *Cedar Ridge, Hyde Park Canyon Update*

Our spring project to eliminate and restore several unauthorized routes into the Mount Naomi Wilderness was successful. Thirty-six volunteers participated, including members from the Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers, Bridgerland Audubon Society, Nordic United, Utah Conservation Corps, and the Dedicated Hunters program. The project was funded by a grant from the National Forest Foundation and REI.

"One of the illegal scars climbs a steep front-range mountain and can be seen across the valley," said Dan Miller, BRWC executive director. "This scar is a symbol of the impacts occurring every day from irresponsible users. The restoration and eventual healing of this scar will be a new symbol."

A recent glance to the hillside revealed a faint



Photo by Travis Taylor

*Connie McCaughey, Logan Ranger District's Natural Resource Manager (left) helped oversee BRWC's wilderness restoration project on Cedar Ridge and in Hyde Park Canyon.*

scar fading away—into the past.

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 Cache Valley's environmental community.

# Seasonal Non-compliance Observers

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

- Bridgerland Audubon Society
- Caffe Ibis
- CampChef
- Crumb Brothers
- Artisan Bread
- 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 Outlaw Wheelers

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

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

BRWC is preparing to launch a focused effort this winter and next spring to gather data on the impacts from early- and late-season snowmobile use. Stuart Reynolds will direct our Seasonal Non-compliance Observers (SNO) project.

Once the snow falls, volunteers will drive to areas where snowmobile users might be attempting cross-country travel with inadequate

snow depth; they'll take photos of the tracks (no user confrontation is required) and impacts, note the date and snow depth, and mark the spot on a map or take a GPS waypoint.

It's easy!

Would you be interested in helping us with this important task?

If you'd like to participate, please contact Stuart at: [sreynolds58@msn.com](mailto:sreynolds58@msn.com).



*Data collection and making a difference can be fun for the whole family. Melyssa Mynoz, Robert Malone and their son, Isaiah, had a great outing this summer.*

## Bear River Watershed Council Needs Your Support!

Are you interested in becoming a member of BRWC or involved in Project MUD? Please complete the form 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 \_\_\_\_\_

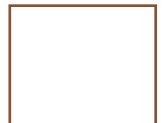
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BRWC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible. Thank You!

BRWC  
P.O. Box 404  
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### Bear River Watershed Council

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