



DownStream

Leaders in
Conservation Issues
within the Bear River
Basin

Bear River Watershed Council

Summer 2011



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On the Web at:
www.BRWCouncil.org

E-mail us at:
brwc@xmission.com

We're now on 



UWCNF Supervisor Brian Ferebee issued a temporary emergency closure for Millville Canyon after BRWC's request because of early-season impacts from irresponsible motorized users.

A Message from Our Chair

Happy spring and summer to BRWC supporters! It appears a change in seasons is finally underway. This is the kind of change we can all agree on. It's been a long, wet winter. Unfortunately, it appears some weren't willing to wait to get outdoors. In doing so, they destroyed public property and ruined recreational opportunities for others.

I refer specifically to early-season use in Millville Canyon, where irresponsible users went off road to chew up meadows, and perpetrator(s) cut through a buck and rail barricade and made numerous passes with a motorcycle through a protected meadow. When a volunteer reported this discovery to us, we investigated, took photos, and reported it to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), prompting them to issue a temporary emergency closure.

What's particularly maddening about this behavior is that BRWC installed barricades in the canyon 5 years ago through a partnership with the USFS and motorized recreation advocates. A broad consortium of interests came together to implement a solution, which took a renegade less than 30 minutes to undo.

Speaking of change, it's with trepidation that I report the departure of two longtime and very active board members. Sue McCormick has faithfully served as our trusted treasurer—and, at times, secretary and all-around gatekeeper—for over 7 years. She has done a remarkable job, and we will miss her dearly! (We are desperately looking for someone to pick up her duties. Hint, hint.)

The end of the school year also brought the

departure of Chris Cokinos, respected author and former professor of English at Utah State University. Chris took a new position at the University of Arizona. He was unbeatable as a strategic thinker, doer, and agent for change. We will sorely miss Chris but wish him well in his new endeavors.

At the same time, we enthusiastically welcome two new board members: Dave Bastian and Justin Miner. Both bring unique talents and skills to BRWC, which will enable us to grow and become more effective at what we do. You can read more about Dave and Justin in this newsletter. Be sure to give them kudos when you see them.

Lastly, we have updated the BRWC website and have a new Facebook page. Please "like" us and invite your friends to do the same. Keeping you empowered so you can make a difference helps us to lead the way in protecting our forest and our watershed.

Thanks so much for your support. See you on the trails in 2011!



Sue McCormick



Chris Cokinos

BRWC Updates

Over the last decade, the Bear River Watershed Council has made documenting and preventing illegal and irresponsible motorized use on the Logan Ranger District (LRD) our top priority. No finer example of our efforts exists than in Millville Canyon, where we discovered that irresponsible users had routinely been using open meadows and Millville Creek as their personal motorized playground. The results were huge scars and impacts to the canyon's vegetation, the stream's ecological values, and the watershed.

In 2007, we successfully partnered with the USFS, motorized groups, and many volunteers to construct and install numerous buck and rail barricades to protect the canyon's special resources.

Millville Canyon Emergency Closure

So imagine our disappointment this spring when a volunteer alerted us that someone had destroyed one of the barricades and had driven a motorcycle through the stream in several places and made numerous rutted tracks and scars in an adjacent protected meadow.

In response, we requested that Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Supervisor Brian Ferebee issue a temporary closure order. The LRD followed up with an investigation; they validated our evidence and recommended the closure. Ferebee agreed, and several days later, the district placed a barrier to stop vehicle access.

BRWC feels this is a prime example of volunteers making a difference. It also exemplifies how irresponsible behavior by a few individuals results in reduced opportunities for everyone else.

We applaud the LRD for acting promptly and decisively as a warning to potential perpetrators that a lot of eyes are watching out for our public lands and that

similar reckless and immature behavior will likely result in additional closures.

We encourage the public to remain vigilant and contact us about any issues impacting our public lands.

Logan Canyon Highway Expansion

The Utah Department of Transportation has requested input from user groups concerning future Logan Canyon highway expansion between the Beaver Mountain turnout and the summit. BRWC has been meeting with the Top of Utah Snowmobile Association and Nordic United to discuss the needs of users and possible impacts.

It has been agreed that an off-highway connector route between the Sinks Road, Swan Flats, and Beaver Creek, including two highway underpasses, would be appropriate. BRWC has suggested the use of an abandoned, already existing roadbed. Unfortunately, motorized



groups have presented two alternatives, either of which would create a new route. (See map.)

If the USFS considers either of these alternatives viable options, BRWC will oppose them as completely unnecessary.

LRD Builds Inventory of Unauthorized Use

The Logan Ranger District has spent the past two summers working on an inventory of unauthorized routes and trails on the district. BRWC has acquired the GIS data through the Freedom of Information Act and plans to produce a web-based site so the public can access the data.

We have posted the maps on our website and invite you to take a look.

The preliminary data shows 314 miles of unauthorized routes, which include cow, horse, and hiking trails. The LRD plans to refine their data in the next several months and predicts the unauthorized or illegal motorized route mileage should be around 60–70 miles.

But after an early analysis of our Motorized Use Data Project (MUD) data, we found that volunteers walked 130 miles of the LRD's 321.43 miles of authorized roads and discovered 30 miles of unauthorized routes. Extrapolating for the entire district, Project MUD's figures indicated a troubling 100 miles of unauthorized routes. BRWC believes that 100 miles was a conservative estimate.

We patiently await the LRD's final analysis and will inform you of the results. Please stay tuned.

Like Us On Facebook

BRWC has joined the social network and encourage you to "like" us for more frequent updates on Forest issues. As an incentive, we're having a monthly giveaway. Check it out!



This is not the road but a user bypass.

New Board Members



Dave Bastian, who has lived in Utah for 15 years, learned about BRWC while working at Save Our Canyons and the Utah Rivers Council in Salt Lake City. A recent move to Logan, where he works as the program coordinator for the Utah Conservation Corps, gave Bastian the opportunity to volunteer for BRWC. “I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve on the BRWC board,” Bastian said.

Bastian will use his years of experience with membership development and outreach “to help BRWC grow its membership and activist base and merge into its next phase as an organization.” “I look forward to meeting BRWC members and helping to keep my new home wild and beautiful,” he said.

“I’m excited to be a part of BRWC because witnessing and documenting damage will allow us to better help people understand what is at stake,” said Bastian. “I’ve always felt that a lack of respect for the idea of a commons is one of the greatest threats to our public lands. It’s hard to get an individual to care about his or her public lands and do something to protect them if they don’t feel a responsibility to those lands.”

Bastian is interested in exploring the Cache Valley area “both on skis and on foot.” “I am a skier, a woodworker, beer brewer, activist, and hack writer, he added. “Actually, I’m a bit of a hack at all those things, but I enjoy every one of them.” He also bikes, kayaks, rock climbs, and plays guitar and banjo.



Justin Miner, a certified professional wetland scientist with 10 years of experience, currently works for Three Parameters Plus and is the study leader for the Utah Department of Natural Resources project establishing baseline wetland habitat conditions in Utah’s Snake Valley. He credits Jon V. Hall, his mentor at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (where he worked as a senior GIS specialist), for inspiring him to volunteer for the BRWC board.

“I believe that my experience will enable BRWC to continue to collect legitimate ground reference data, organize and qualify the existing data records, and effectively communicate our data to other organizations,” Miner said. “My background in wetland and water quality issues will help BRWC interface very effectively with groups when discussing restoration activities throughout the watershed.”

Miner’s goals are “to develop relationships with like-minded individuals who are passionate about our landscape and are willing to put forth an effort to help protect and restore our public lands. I want to help make a difference with my hands and add my energy to the synergy of volunteer restoration projects.”

“Rallying support from the off-road community is key to those efforts,” said Miner. “With their support, we can make enormous progress on curtailing the unauthorized uses that are currently happening.”

Miner enjoys rock climbing, skiing, mountain biking, canyoneering, and running. He lives in Wellsville with his wife, Susan, two daughters, and a Siberian husky.

BRWC Launches New Website

This past winter we revamped our website for a more streamlined look and a more effective format to disseminate useful information. BRWC has drawn on several years of experience from Project MUD to present, in a concise manner, the types of impacts we’ve discovered. Our site also offers simple actions the average citizen can do to offset those impacts.

“The site revamp is long overdue,” said Dan Miller, BRWC executive director. “The old site has been up and running almost as long as our humble beginnings in 2001.”

BRWC has been collecting data concerning motorized impacts since 2005 and has organized restoration projects. We have partnered with the Logan Ranger District, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and private landowners such as Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife to implement those restoration efforts.



BRWC's new website

Friends of BRWC

- Back Country Horsemen
- Bowhunters of Utah
- Boy Scouts of America
- Bridgerland Audubon Society
- Bridgerland Mountain Bike Patrol
- Bridgerland Trail Riders Association
- Cache Critical Lands Conservation Campaign
- Cache Valley Musers
- Caffe Ibis
- Camp Chef
- Clif Bar
- DWR's Dedicated Hunter Program
- Einstein Bros. Bagels
- International Mountain Bicycling Association
- KSM Music
- Macey's Food and Drug
- Oneida Narrows Organization
- PetZen Products
- Stokes Nature Center
- USU Extension, Bear River Watershed
- USU Outdoor Recreation Program
- USU Parks and Recreation Club
- Utah 4-Wheel Drive Association
- Wasatch Outlaw Wheelers

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Special thanks to the following for their past and continued financial support:

- National Forest Foundation
- REI
- Patagonia
- JEPS Foundation
- Fund for Wild Nature
- Xmission.com
- Caffe Ibis
- Camp Chef

The website's highlights include a review of past projects, tips for OHV riders, information about how to collect impact data, and a library of reports generated by BRWC and others.

"We hope this site design will hold up for many years to provide easy access to information that is usable and easy to understand," Miller said.

The site offers a simple web-based form to submit information about concerns and impacts witnessed on the Forest. Currently, the form can't accept uploads of photos or GPX data files, but we're working on having that function incorporated.

Miller added, "If the site invigorates only a few people to take action and make a difference, we will have fulfilled our goal."

When you have a minute, visit our site and give us your feedback. You'll find us at www.BRWCouncil.org.



The barrier fence in Millville Canyon that was destroyed to allow a motorcycle to access the protected meadow. This photo shows the rails temporarily stacked and will be repaired by the Forest Service.

Bear River Watershed Council Needs Your Support!

Are you interested in becoming a member of BRWC or being 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 brwc@BRWCouncil.org.

Membership in BRWC is just \$20 a year. Dues 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.