

BACKCOUNTRY PROGRAM WATERSHED REPORT 2002



Pfeifferhorn Peak, Lone Peak Wilderness Area

Salt Lake Ranger District, Wasatch–Cache National Forest



USDA
Forest Service

*Caring for the Land and
Serving People*

Prepared by Backcountry Rangers: Joelle Dickson, Greg Hilbig and Sean Wetterberg

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INTRODUCTION

The Salt Lake City watersheds in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons are an invaluable community resource located in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Within the Canyons, there are four ski resorts, five picnic areas, five campgrounds and many miles of trails that are used regularly by local residents and visitors for recreation. This November marked the end of another very successful year that Salt Lake City Public Utilities and the US Forest Service have been partners in protecting this watershed resource. Because recreation and culinary water are the primary uses of the canyons, the watershed management program at the Salt Lake Ranger District (SLRD) focuses its efforts on minimizing recreation impacts to water quality.

To fulfill the partnership, Backcountry Rangers patrol the City watersheds on a regular basis. Patrols are conducted to educate the public about watershed issues, to ensure regulation compliance, and to protect and improve the quality of National Forest System (NFS) lands. New this season, were some additions to the program that should improve the management and protection of the resource. The SLRD reorganized its staff allowing us to have another Ranger to assist in the work. This improved the program's ability to reach its goals. Rangers collect information regarding visitor use, violations and work completed. A database was created for managing that information. Data can now be queried for up to the minute totals and statistics. A campsite inventory and monitoring program was developed. Methods were adapted from published US Forest Service research methods. The inventory will allow the SLRD to locate, evaluate and manage the impacts associated with backcountry camping in the watersheds. It will serve as a baseline of recreation impact data by which to measure change. A volunteer program was developed to assist in restoration and rehabilitation projects. Volunteers help the program by increasing our ability to maintain and improve the quality of NFS lands.

This paper is presented in four sections to report on the status of the watershed program. First, it details the goals, objectives and accomplishments of the 2002 season. Second, it presents and discusses statistics for visitor use numbers and preliminary results of the campsite inventory. It concludes with recommendations and ideas for program improvements followed by the campsite inventory map, figures and an appendix.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals and objectives were set by the Backcountry Rangers to guide their actions in the field. The goals, objectives and accomplishments for the 2002 season were as follows:

Goal 1. To improve public awareness of watershed issues and ensure public compliance with watershed regulations on U.S. Forest Service lands.

Objectives

- Include watershed issues as topics of conversation when making public contacts.

- Educate the public about Leave No Trace hiking and camping techniques.
- Distribute educational literature to the public if needed.
- Erect and maintain watershed posters and signs at all trailheads and lakes.
- Make contact with members of the public observed in violation of watershed restrictions.
- Issue Warnings/Violations for watershed regulations when necessary.

Accomplishments

While on patrol Backcountry Rangers made frequent casual contacts with the public. A total of 4,926 people were encountered this season. The majority of the visitors contacted were unaware that Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons are municipal watersheds or what that meant. Backcountry Rangers made a concerted effort this season to educate as many people encountered as possible about the watershed.

Approximately 359 campers and hikers contacted this season received a five-minute Leave No Trace (LNT) educational message. Boy Scout troops in particular were quizzed on their knowledge of LNT principles. Literature about watershed and LNT hiking and camping techniques were given to many individuals as well as groups affiliated with organizations such as church groups, boys and girls clubs, and hiking clubs.

Most posters and signs were maintained or replaced and others are scheduled for replacement next year. Additional signs were placed at problem areas. This season Backcountry Rangers installed large “No Swimming” and “No Dogs” signs at the trailhead for the Lake Mary Trail near the Wasatch Mountain Club lodge. This is a very popular swimming area, as well as a popular place for out-of-town visitors who may not be aware of watershed regulations. This year rangers contacted Alta Dispatch to have “No Swimming” and “No Dogs” messages added to the electronic sign at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon.

Our goal is always to try education rather than issuing citations. All violators received watershed educational messages and/or literature. Rangers did issue 77 warnings or violations. Most visitors who were in violation of watershed regulations were receptive to educational messages and/or issuance of citations. Pet owners were asked to take their animals out of the canyon immediately and some were cited.

Swimming in lakes and streams is the most frequently violated watershed regulation. Many contacts were made with people whose appearances indicated an intention to swim. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers, Salt Lake County Sheriffs and Alta Town Marshals also issued numerous watershed citations this season. To help prevent swimming violations, rangers bolted a metal “No Swimming” sign to a concrete wall at a particularly popular area on Little Cottonwood Creek. Within two days, the sign was destroyed.

The Little Cottonwood Trail continues to be a popular gathering area for swimming, wading, picnicking and partying. In addition to resource violations, criminal acts such as underage drinking, drug use, sexual assaults and gang activity have been reported in the area. Backcountry Rangers are coordinating with Forest Service Law Enforcement, Salt Lake County Sheriffs and Alta Town Marshals to control these problems. Problems in this area are widespread and difficult to control as the area has a

long history of these types of uses and enforcement personnel is limited.

Camping too close to water is also an ongoing problem facilitated by the fact that previously impacted illegal sites exist. Most campers tend to choose these impacted sites, a common Leave No Trace technique, and most people are attracted to water. Signs directing users to camp away from water sources are less effective given these conditions. Rangers advised campers of watershed regulations and the location of legal campsites as well as the rationale for camping away from water.

Goal 2. To protect and improve the quality of U.S. Forest Service lands within Salt Lake City watershed.

Objectives

- Rehabilitate all campsites located within 200 feet of water and any other heavily impacted sites.
- Maintain and improve existing trails to prevent excessive wear and erosion.
- Close social trails to concentrate use on existing trails to prevent additional erosion.

Accomplishments

Nine campsites around Red Pine Lake and a very popular site adjacent to Lake Martha were rehabilitated using a technique called “icebergs.” Icebergs are large buried rocks, with only a small percentage of the rock exposed above ground. This technique deters campers from using an area by making the campsite less hospitable. Icebergs are especially appropriate in the backcountry because they preclude the use of intrusive signs. However, the site adjacent to Lake Martha was too large and popular, and our rehabilitation techniques were unsuccessful, so a sign stating, “No camping, No campfires” was erected. A heavily impacted illegal site at Red Pine Lake was closed to camping during the 2000 season and signed during the 2001 season. The site has recovered significantly and is being monitored for further change.

Trail maintenance was performed on a regular basis over the course of the season. Water bars and check dams were cleaned to mitigate erosion. Trails were cleared to keep new social trails from forming. Much of the trail maintenance was accomplished with the help of volunteers this season. Trail maintenance and campsite rehabilitation are ongoing projects.

Goal 3. To develop and implement a Backcountry inventory and monitoring program.

Objectives

- Train personnel in the inventory procedure.
- Collect data in a standardized and reproducible way.
- Locate campsites, signs and structures using a Global Positioning System (GPS) and transfer all data into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database for mapping and spatial analysis.
- Evaluate each campsite’s level of impact based on data.

- Determine condition and necessity of all signs and structures.
- Complete the inventory of the Lone Peak Wilderness (SLRD portion only).

Accomplishments

Wilderness campsite inventories are a common and accepted method of measuring and monitoring backcountry recreation impacts. The US Forest Service has published methods and many inventories are in process nationally. The SLRD modeled this inventory after inventories being done on the Sawtooth National Forest and others in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Examples of the types of data collected are: size of camp area, size of barren core (area devoid of vegetation), amount of tree damage, distance to water and trails, number of social trails, and percentage of vegetation and soil exposure compared to similar non-impacted areas. Campsites are evaluated based on the data. Each parameter is weighted based on its environmental impact and an impact index is calculated. For example, the parameter of “cleanliness” has an impact weight of 1, whereas “size of barren core” has a weight of 3 because a site may be cleaned up easily, but the barren core will require years to recover. The impact index ratings are scaled 1-4, from light to an extreme level of impact. All campsite locations are mapped using a GPS. The data and locations are stored and analyzed in a GIS.

We were successful in the completion of the inventory of the Lone Peak Wilderness area in Little Cottonwood Canyon (Map 1). Through monitoring, we can watch to see how camping affects the quality of NFS lands in the watersheds and how our educational efforts affect that change. Additionally, the data will help to direct rehabilitation and restoration projects on the most heavily impacted or illegal sites. The inventory will continue through next summer and follow up inventories will be done every 5-10 years depending on the anticipated rate of change in backcountry conditions.

Another component of the inventory is to locate, photograph and map all signs and structures in the backcountry. This will help us to prioritize maintenance and give us perspective as to where, how many and the necessity of the permanent man-made structures. We were successful in inventorying many signs and structures but work will continue through next summer.

Goal 4. To develop and implement a consistent volunteer program utilizing local interest groups and individuals.

Objectives

- Coordinate with interest groups and individuals and schedule volunteer work projects at least once per month.
- Educate volunteers about the effects of their work to watershed, Wilderness and forest health.
- Solicit volunteer suggestions to determine potential work projects.
- Conduct training sessions with volunteers that prepare them for project work. Topics include, but are not limited to, tool use, trail construction and maintenance, rehabilitation, use of GPS and inventory, and personal safety.

Accomplishments

This season we were successful in developing a volunteer program that had outstanding results. Two local organizations active in the Wasatch Mountains were targeted, Save Our Canyons (SOC) and the Wasatch Mountain Club (WMC) as well as interested individuals. Volunteer projects were developed with the assistance of the volunteer coordinators of each organization. In the case of Save Our Canyons, two radio spots were aired on local radio stations to advertise the program. These messages not only requested volunteers, but also included a lengthy description of the values of Wilderness and watershed protection.

With the help of volunteers, Backcountry Rangers were able to undertake sizeable maintenance and rehabilitation projects identified last season. With continued participation, many more such projects will be completed in future seasons. Volunteers donated 375 hours to the Backcountry Program. Seven volunteer work projects were accomplished, five with Save Our Canyons and two with the Wasatch Mountain Club. Volunteers who opted to work with us individually donated a total of 169 hours. Volunteer duties included trail maintenance, data gathering for the campsite inventory project, sign installation, campsite rehabilitation, and clean-up projects. They helped us to cut back trailside vegetation on 2 miles of the Lake Blanche Trail in Big Cottonwood Canyon. We also placed icebergs in nine campsites adjacent to Red Pine Lake in Little Cottonwood Canyon. They were a tremendous help rehabilitating a campsite adjacent to Lake Martha in Big Cottonwood Canyon. They assisted in repairing 160 feet of trail.

Rangers ensured that volunteer experiences contained structured opportunities for watershed education. Each volunteer project was preceded by a short talk about the values of the Wasatch Canyons to the Salt Lake Valley as watershed, wildlife habitat, open space, and as a recreational resource. While working, volunteers invariably questioned the relevance of the work to watershed protection. The impacts of recreation were discussed and at the end of the workday, volunteers had the satisfaction of seeing the difference their work made in protecting the resource.

In addition to educating the volunteers, the program's educational efforts reached many other canyon users. Thanks to Save Our Canyons, the Backcountry Ranger Program was given favorable press in the form of the two radio spots mentioned earlier and a two-page article in their autumn newsletter. The article, written by volunteer coordinator Gayle Perry, included discussions of watershed regulations and the value of trail work to resource protection, as well as giving readers her perspective of a volunteer's experience. The SOC newsletter is published quarterly and sent to all of their 910 members, and 400 copies are distributed to other locations around the Salt Lake Valley. This type of press really helps get the watershed message out. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the article.

WATERSHED PROGRAM STATISTICS

This season a database was created to manage the information collected by Backcountry Rangers. Types of information collected include:

- Numbers of users (hikers, bikers, campers, etc)
- Numbers of Leave No Trace contacts

- Numbers of Warnings/Violations issued
- Work completed/needed
- Volunteer hours
- Numbers of cars at trailheads
- Trails hiked and miles logged

Previously this data was stored on hand-written forms in a log, making it difficult to compile and compare to previous years. The database will provide the Backcountry Program with up-to-date use numbers and statistics, as well as an increased ability to monitor its activities over time.

Program statistics discussed here apply to the time frame beginning June 5 and ending September 22, 2002 (last year's data is included for comparison). Differences in some of the terms need to be clarified. Use numbers are the number of encounters. Encounters are observations of visitors made by Rangers in the backcountry. They do not represent actual use. Rather, they reflect a relative level of use for each trail. Encounters are different from contacts. Contacts are those encounters in which a minimum five-minute Leave No Trace specific conversation took place. For this reason, contact numbers this season are significantly lower than last season, when we defined a contact as *any* conversation with a user. Next season, the number of watershed specific contacts will also be documented. To simplify the information, discussion is limited to use numbers and contacts on the four most heavily used trails. The remaining trails are combined into one group. Preliminary results of the campsite inventory are also discussed.

Figure 1 shows total use numbers per trail as a percentage of the total use recorded. Lake Blanche, Red Pine and Lake Mary were overwhelmingly the most heavily used in the watershed receiving almost 75% of all visitor use. Accordingly, these trails are targeted specifically for visitor contact and regulation enforcement. Lake Mary received the highest level of overall use, 1,152 encounters (Figure 2). This is probably due to its relatively easy access and its lake destination. The trails with the highest use have lake destinations, suggesting a visitor preference for areas with water as an amenity resource.

Five-minute Leave No Trace contacts were made whenever appropriate throughout the season. The majority of the contacts (110) were made on the Lake Blanche trail (Figure 3). Again, the high number of contacts at Lake Blanche, Mary and Red Pine, versus the low numbers of contacts on Catherine Pass and the other trails may reinforce a visitor preference for trails with lake destinations.

A comparison of use numbers between the 2001 and 2002 seasons is useful in monitoring change in the level of backcountry recreation. Figure 4 compares only the three most heavily used trails. The other trails were excluded because changes in the data collected between seasons caused inconsistency between them. Generally, the chart shows an increase in use over time, suggesting that more people visited these trails in 2002 than in 2001. The biggest disparity is between the seasonal totals recorded for the Lake Mary trail. Perhaps the increase can be accounted for by the addition of another Ranger to patrol and count visitors. Possibly this trail was hiked more often this season.

The actual trend in use numbers will become more evident as data is collected

consistently throughout the seasons to come. The use of automatic trail counters would be helpful in improving accuracy in determining a trend as well as capturing actual use. Currently, visitors are only counted if they happen to be hiking the same day and time as a Ranger. Actual use is likely to be much higher; unfortunately, that use is not being documented.

Analysis of the data collected during the campsite inventory of the Lone Peak Wilderness revealed some interesting results. Fifty-four campsites were mapped and evaluated. The average impact index for all sites is 2-moderately impacted. On a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 is extremely impacted, a 2 was better than anticipated. The level of campsite impacts could be much worse. Of the 54 campsites, 93% (all but 4) are illegal either due to their proximity to water or the trail. Given visitor preference to be near water and terrain limitations (e.g. steep slopes), a high percentage of illegal sites were expected. This presents a significant issue from a management standpoint as to how to best deal with illegal camping. Sites within 200 feet of water or the trail have a higher potential to negatively effect watershed and Wilderness values. The level of use associated with a campsite can increase sedimentation and pollution. Sites near trails can influence the backcountry experience and visitor's perceptions of crowding. It will be useful to complete the campsite inventory to get a broader idea of the spatial and environmental conditions of backcountry campsites throughout the Canyons. This information will be used to guide management actions to improve watershed conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WATERSHED PROGRAM

Based on the types of violations and associated impacts observed over the course of the season, the following recommendations are intended to help improve the effectiveness of the Backcountry Program. These recommendations could be carried out by the Forest Service or Salt Lake City Public Utilities, depending on funding and/or feasibility.

1. Signage
 - a. Watershed information should be on the electronic signs at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyons.
 - b. Roadside watershed regulatory signs should utilize "no dog" and "no swimming" symbols instead of or in addition to text messages to make them easier for motorists to notice and understand.
 - c. Signs with watershed messages should be placed at entrances to all major public areas.
2. Education
 - a. Circulate watershed regulation literature in a blanket mailing such as with private water bills.
 - b. Mail all employers and residents in the canyons watershed regulation information.
 - c. Coordinate with non-profit organizations that have interest in recreational use in the canyons to distribute information to their members.
 - d. Ensure that all canyon concessionaires receive education and literature about watershed issues.

- e. Create a watershed bulletin board display for the Park and Ride lots at the base of each canyon. Highlight personal responsibility and the effects that individual actions have on shared water resources.
 - f. Place interpretive roadside signs at significant watershed locations.
 - g. Provide watershed literature to all outdoor recreational supply stores.
 - h. Include watershed information in hunting and fishing proclamations.
 - i. Incorporate watershed education into public school science curriculum.
 - j. Increase presence of regulatory officers in the canyons.
3. Develop a monitoring plan to monitor watershed conditions:
 - a. Visitor Use—purchase trail counters to monitor use levels
 - b. Campsite impacts—inventory, evaluate and map backcountry campsites
 - c. Water quality—develop and implement a sampling program for alpine lakes
 - d. Staff—hire a volunteer/intern to improve the program
 4. Use area restrictions
 - a. Implement voluntary registration program for overnight backcountry users.
 - b. Provide watershed regulation and Leave No Trace information at registration boxes.
 - c. Post maps at trailheads indicating both the 200-foot no camping buffer around water and trail as well as the location of inventoried legal campsites to encourage their use.
 - d. Restore riparian areas where watershed is compromised and provide interpretive information of the restoration process.

CONCLUSION

Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons are vital resources to the Salt Lake valley, not only as watershed, but also as recreation areas for the valley's rapidly expanding urban population. Due to the ease of access into the canyons from Salt Lake City, pressure from public recreational use will continue to increase. Maintenance of the quality of the Salt Lake City watershed is dependent on the continued coordination of planning and activities between Salt Lake City Public Utilities, the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the Salt Lake County Sheriff, Alta Town Marshals, and other agencies responsible for watershed protection. The cooperation of businesses operating in the canyons, interested non-profit organizations, and the general public is also necessary to protect the watersheds of Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.

The Backcountry program came a long way this season, thanks mostly to the enthusiastic and dedicated Rangers. With some of the new aspects of the program now in place, next season should be even more successful. Hopefully, the volunteer program will grow and all those involved will continue to support it, as it is truly an effective way of involving the public in stewardship of the resource. Being a presence, contacting the public, enforcing laws, monitoring use and improving the quality of NFS lands in the watersheds of Salt Lake City are important. Salt Lake City Public Utilities and the US Forest Service are ensuring that happens. We look forward to continuing our partnership next summer and for summers to come.

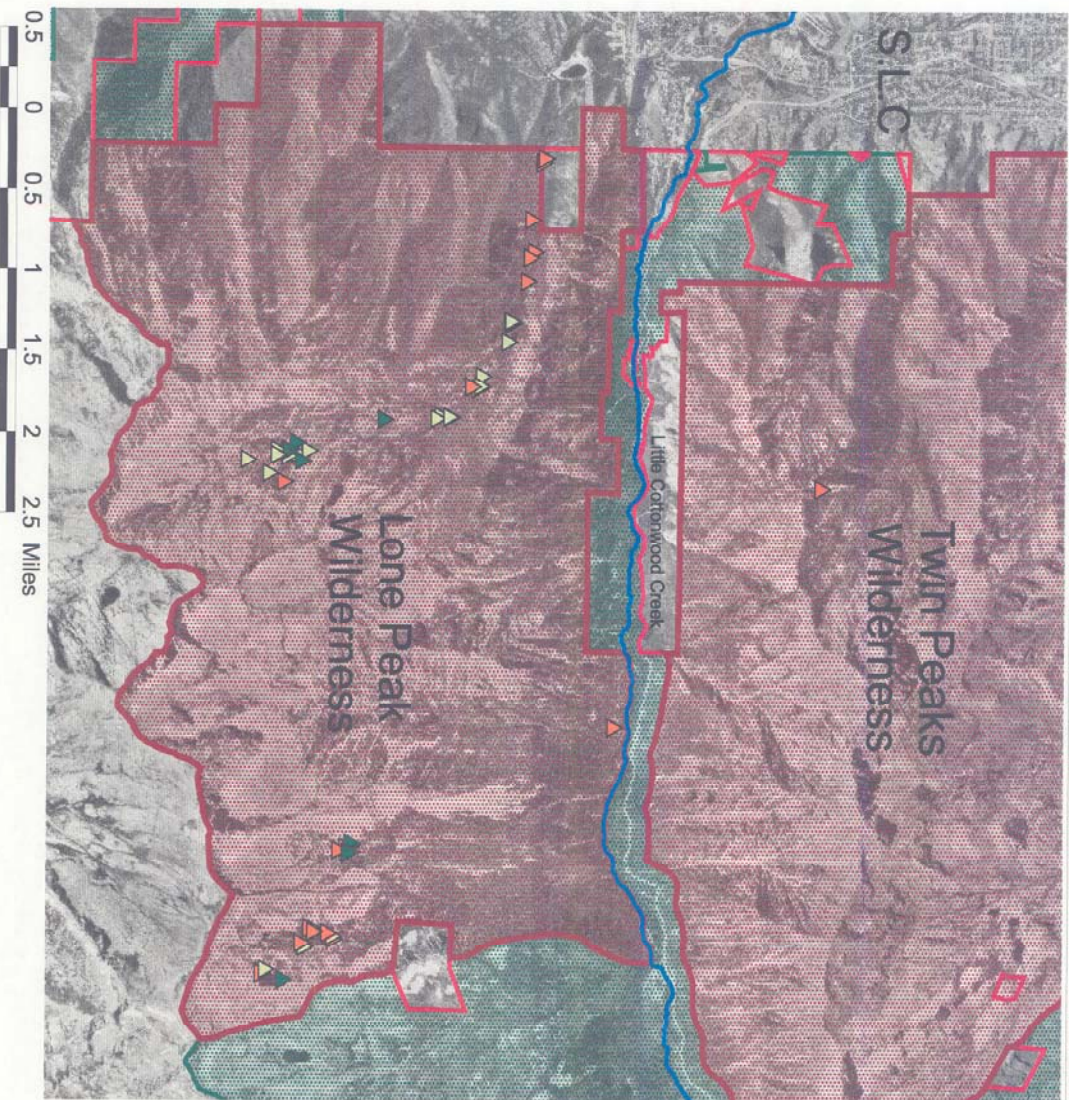
Campsite Inventory - Lone Peak Wilderness Area

Map 1



Legend

- Campsite Impact Level
 - Low (Green triangle)
 - Moderate (Yellow triangle)
 - High (Orange triangle)
 - Extreme (Red triangle)
- Little Cottonwood Creek (Blue line)
- Wilderness Area (Red outline)
- Private Land (White box with red border)
- WCNF Land (Green box with grid pattern)



Produced by S. Wetterberg
November 2002
WCNF-SLRD



Percentage of Watershed Backcountry Use by Trail

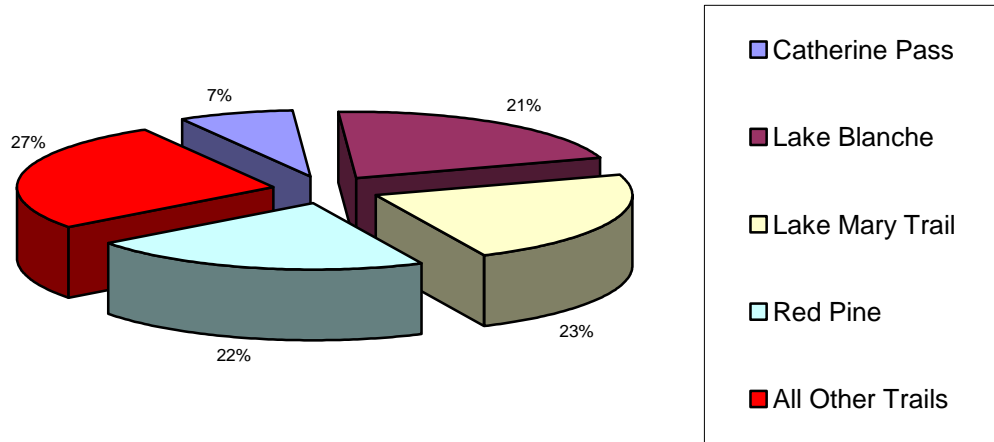


Figure 1. Percentage of use by trail for the Salt Lake City Watershed’s backcountry during the 2002 field season. Use numbers reflect the number of public encounters made by Forest Service Backcountry Rangers.

Total Use Numbers

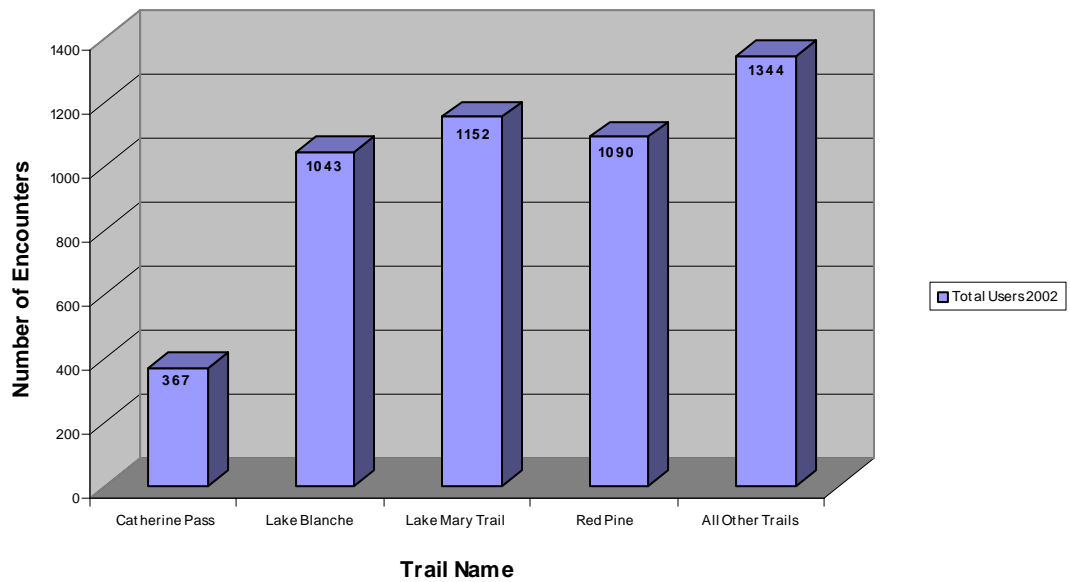


Figure 2. Total number of encounters made by Forest Service Backcountry Rangers by trail in the Salt Lake City Watersheds during the 2002 field season.

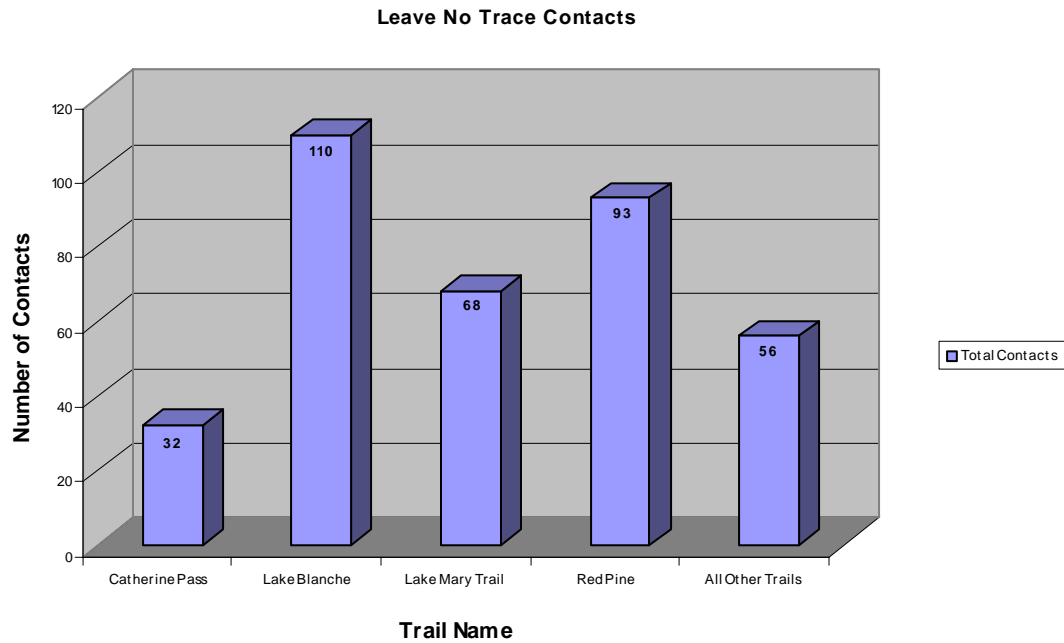


Figure 3. Total number of contacts made by Forest Service Backcountry Rangers by trail in the Salt Lake City Watersheds during the 2002 field season. Contacts are 5 minutes or longer specifically regarding Leave No Trace (LNT) backcountry ethics.

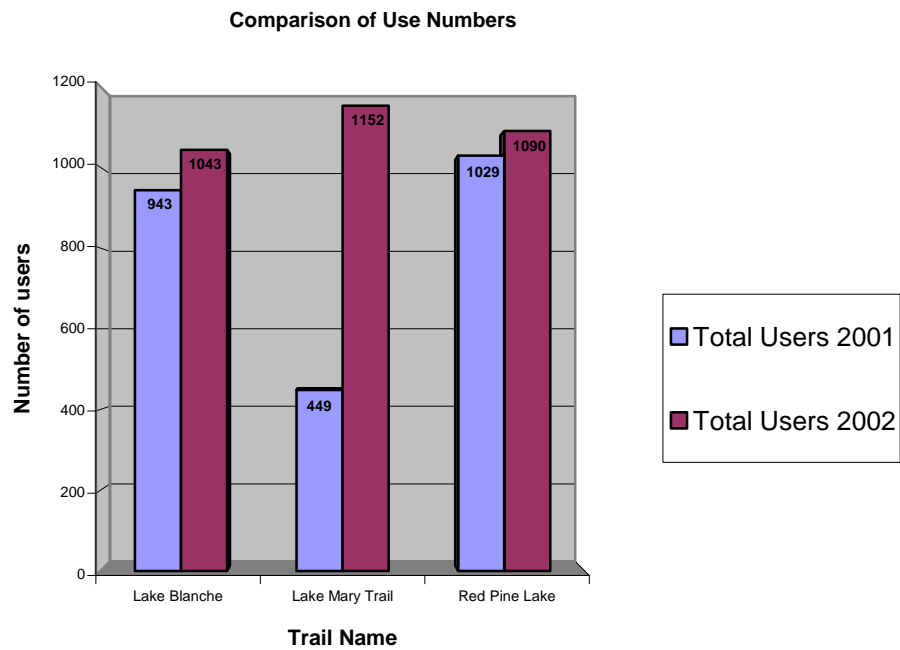


Figure 4. Comparison of the total number of encounters made by Forest Service Backcountry Rangers on heavily used trails in the Salt Lake City Watersheds during the 2001 and 2002 field seasons.

Save Our Canyons

Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons

www.saveourcanyons.org

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Save Our Canyons is a quarterly publication of the Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons.

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ALEXIS KELNER, Perennial Editor

THANKS TO:

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- Brewvies
- Sage's Cafe
- Bill Gray and Bill Parry

Smokey, the Gooood Bear, Needs YOUR Help on September 21

Please join these SOC Wilderness Volunteers in preserving our canyons. See p.5 for details.



Gayle Parry

SOC Wins Harper's Lawsuit
See p. 5



FRONT: l to r, Gayle Parry, Jessica Jackson. MIDDLE: Greg Hilbig, Joelle Dickson, Sean Wetterberg (all USFS), Spencer Stejskal. BACK: Kurt Becker, Justin Martin, Kate Bradshaw, Bryan Allen.



Justin Martin at work.

Gayle Parry

Save Our Canyons Wilderness Volunteers Hit The Trails

By Gayle Parry

As Wilderness is the highest form of protection for public lands, Gale Dick, Alexis Kelner, and others in Save Our Canyons were instrumental in the designation of the Central Wasatch Wilderness Areas: Mt. Olympus, Lone Peak, Twin Peaks, Timpanogas, and Mt. Nebo. Considering the tight budget and lack of Forest Service personnel, these wilderness areas are difficult to manage. In fact the Forest Service works in partnership with Salt Lake City Public Utilities in order to pay two of the three Wilderness Rangers who watch over Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood Canyons. The Board of Trustees of Save Our Canyons feel that it is a natural extension of our aims of protecting the watershed and the beauty and wildlife of the Wasatch Mountains to become involved in helping to maintain the integrity of the wilderness areas we worked so hard to create. Toward this end, we have asked and are asking for Save Our Canyons volunteers to help the Forest Service in this effort. Our goal is to find people who will donate some time to this project if only for one day a summer or for as many days as you can possibly give. On Sunday, June 9th, our first group of Wilderness volunteers set out.

We huddled for lunch in a flat place next to the trail being careful not to sit on any of the plants that make up the emerald green world of the

Desolation Trail in Mill Creek Canyon in the Mount Olympus Wilderness Area. There was a cold breeze blowing the scent of conifers and flowers our way. A few drops of misty rain were beginning to fall. Six Save Our Canyons and one Forest Service volunteer had just spent their first half-day of Forest Service orientation learning some basics of taking care of the Wilderness. Our instructors were Wilderness Manager, Sean Wetterberg and Back Country Rangers Joelle Dickson and Greg Hilbig who watch over four wilderness areas that include Mt. Olympus, Lone Peak, Twin Peaks and the Deseret Peak Wilderness Areas comprising 61,000 acres in the Salt Lake Ranger District. We chatted as we ate our lunches becoming better acquainted. There was a feeling of sharing a special time with friends who have worked hard together toward a common goal.

The morning had begun with the seven volunteers: Bryan Allen, Kate Bradshaw, Spencer Stejskal, Kurt Becker, Justin Martin, Jessica Jackson, and myself as picture-taker and tag-along, standing in a circle in the parking lot of Box Elder Flats Picnic area listening to ranger, Greg Hilbig, describe how to use some wicked looking tools. The importance of this exercise became evident when one realizes that mishandling a very sharp object called a pulaski, that has an axe on one end and an adze on the other, could result in bodily

damage to oneself and make an enemy of the person next to you in a hurry. As no power tools are allowed in Wilderness areas, these hand tools are kept extremely sharp and in good condition to be able to handle whatever jobs come along. It was evident that Ranger Hilbig was well qualified to deliver these instructions and we came away with a respect for the tools of trail maintenance. Looking around this fit group of people had a tendency to make me feel rather old. Realizing that these rangers are mean, lean machines who sometimes hike two strenuous trails in one day just to check on things, made me wonder if I could keep up. Or more to the point, was I going to survive? It was emphasized that this Desolation Trail was relatively flat and we would be going as fast as the slowest person. Was he looking at me? We donned our hard hats as we started up the trail following Greg. I noticed that Joelle Dickson walked in the middle, and Sean Wetterberg took up the rear. We were going to be well taken care of. About two-thirds of the way up the trail, Joelle got a good laugh from the group when she yelled, "Are we there yet!" It was obvious as we climbed that the interpersonal skills of these rangers are excellent making me wonder how the Forest Service can find so many even-tempered and congenial people for this job.

The "slow pace" seemed rather swift, but thanks to the gods, we stopped often while the rangers gave demonstrations. Soon the volunteers and rangers were fixing the cut bank (slope side of the trail) and the tread (trail) where erosion would occur or where hikers were being urged, via the contour of the path, to wear down an area that would encourage erosion. Soon we were dragging downed trees and brush into the many shortcuts we encountered. The trail was looking good. It was obvious that we were making a difference. The rangers spoke to every hiker who passed, sometimes carrying on a conversation and sometimes just wishing them a nice day. Even when giving tickets, these Forest Service folks are courteous. No tickets were given this day, but we were informed that in case you ever cut corners in putting out your campfire, be aware that you could be charged \$75 per person if caught, \$50 if you have a dog in an undesignated area and \$35 for swimming in a lake within the watershed.

At the next training session two weeks later, the same Forest Service employees led some new volunteers on a hike up the spectacularly beautiful trail to Lake Blanche in the Twin Peaks Wilderness. Our job was to lop off branches that were crowding and sometimes obstructing the view of the trail. Volunteers Nancy Pfeiffer, Randy Smith, Julia Hendrian, Alexis Kelner, and myself

helped the rangers make some improvements to this very popular trail. We learned that Wilderness areas get the highest level of Forest Service protection. The trails should be maintained at as close to 18" wide as possible, and only the part of a downed tree that is needed to permit foot traffic is cut away from a trail.

Alexis Kelner and Larry Swanson were the only volunteers on July 20th, however Ranger Wetterberg was amazed at the work they did rehabilitating a campsite between Lake Mary and Lake Martha on the Brighton Lakes Trail. Up to publication, Spencer Stejskal and Nancy Pfeifer have volunteered for another session on August 18th.

Time helping these outstanding rangers was as enjoyable as any I can remember. The volunteers seemed to feel the same way. The Forest Service would appreciate your giving even one day of your summer or some hours in the Forest Service office. Two types of trail activities are planned. There will be less strenuous days on the trail for those who do not feel qualified to do extra heavy work and other days for those capable and willing to do some very hard work. Training days with Sean, Greg, and Joelle will be set up according to the number of people who volunteer and will hopefully continue in the years to come.

The next wilderness trail day will be on Saturday, September 21. Volunteers should meet at the Park and Ride Lot at Big Cottonwood Canyon at 8:00 a.m. Required items to bring include long pants, boots, work gloves, sunglasses, 2 quarts of water, and lunch. Suggested items are sunscreen, bug repellent, and a hat. You can show up without registering, however, it would be appreciated if you would contact Gayle Parry at 277-4124 or gwparry@attbi.com to facilitate planning. Your destination for the day will be explained at the Park and Ride Lot. ☐



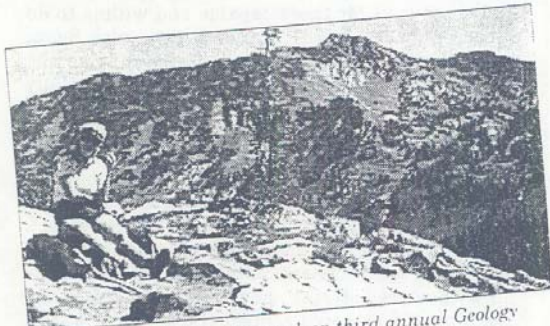
Greg Hilbig, Joelle Dickson, and Sean Wetterberg, Wasatch-Cache National Forest wilderness rangers.



Bill Gray led SOC members to unusual plants on the annual Botany Hike.



Great wildflower extravaganza on SOC's Botany Hike.



SOC member lunches atop peak on third annual Geology Hike.



Joelle Dickson (FS), with hikers Chris Hague and Mike Collett.

Sander Lazar wonders whether he's on the Botany or Geology hike.



SOC Summer Act

Save Our Canyons members had an active 2002 summer in the Wasatch Mountains.

Back-country trail work with Forest Service personnel brought out a lot of volunteers

Photos by:
Karen Marshall
Gale Dick
Gayle Parry
Alexis Kelner



Bill Parry explains remote eons of geologic time in Albion Basin.



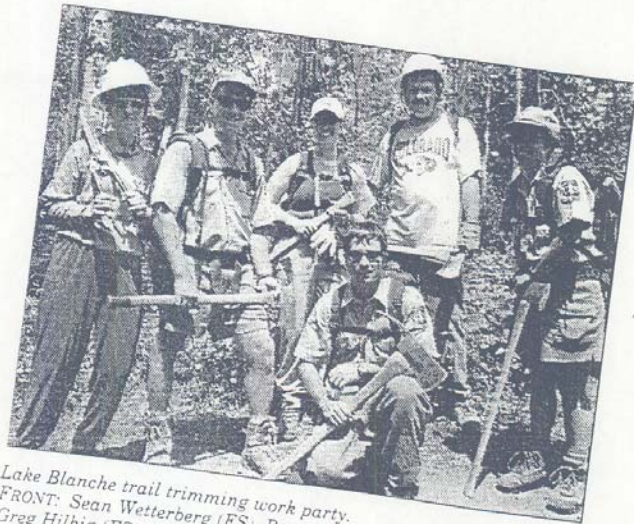
Dragging trees on the Desolation Trail

SOC's Activities

Every year, the geology and botany hikes become more popular. Join SOC's activities this fall. You will find announcements for them in this newsletter.

tos by:
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Volunteers search for the elusive moonwort at Silver Lake.



Lake Blanche trail trimming work party. FRONT: Sean Wetterberg (FS), BACK ROW, l. to r.: Julia Hendrian, Greg Hilbig (FS), Nancy Pfeiffer, Randy Smith, Joelle Dickson (FS).