



Ride with Respect
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501(c)(3)

For Ride with Respect, 2019 has been about broadening the foundation.

Essentially we slogged through several initiatives, both inside and outside of the organization, to eventually pay dividends for off-highway vehicle recreation across beautiful Utah. On top of that, RWR's loyal volunteers logged over 250 hours of trail work, plus another 100 hours of trail hosting to promote safe and responsible riding (certified by the OHV Program of Utah State Parks).

These projects were made possible by our many individual and business contributors, most notably:

Recreational Trails Program administered by Utah State Parks

Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative

Trails Preservation Alliance

Grand County

Rocky Mountain ATV/MC



To make ends meet and start the new year swinging, we actually need to raise ten-thousand dollars this month. That may sound like a lot of money, but the wilderness-expansion group Grand Canyon Trust aims to raise ten-million dollars this month, and clothing manufacturer Patagonia has pledged to match those funds for a total of twenty-million. Meanwhile, for RWR to at least get a seat at the table, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution (by sending a check to Ride with Respect, 395 McGill Avenue, Moab, UT 84532).

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Tools, Toolsheds, and Trailers

To make trail work more effective for RWR, other nonprofits, and governmental entities, we received huge help from the Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative...

<https://www.yamahaoai.com/>

...and the Recreational Trails Program administered by Utah State Parks. Now our tools range from a cordless grinder up to a micro-blaster for splitting rock in a way that's more precise and easier to transport than a jackhammer. Our storage includes sheds and a high-cube shipping container. Our transportation includes an expedition trailer for hauling more supplies on 4WD trails, and a balloon-tired motorcycle for hauling on motorized singletrack. Thanks to State Parks and Yamaha, we now have the best tools for the job, which should empower our trail workers for years to come.

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Making more Statewide OHV Grants a Reality

RWR has been instrumental in assisting the state to establish a competitive grant program that will grow into at least \$6,000,000 for trail work and other projects that benefit OHV recreation. From RWR's previous year-in-review...

<https://www.coloradotpa.org/2019/02/04/ride-with-repect-2018-year-in-review/>

...you may recall that H.B. 143 reallocated a lot of the revenue from OHV registrations away from general budgets and toward the OHV Restricted Account so that oversight from the OHV Advisory Council and the OHV Program of Utah State Parks would ensure the greatest benefits for those who are paying the registration fees. After helping to institute new rules that would establish a Fiscal Incentive Grant (FIG) program last year...

<https://stateparks.utah.gov/resources/grants/state-ohv-fiscal-incentive-grant-fig/>

...this year RWR helped develop an application form that would ensure the intent of H.B. 143 and strike a balance for ease of use between the applicant, the Advisory Council that reviews the grants, and the OHV Program staff that administers it.

The Advisory Council has recommended approving over a dozen applications thus far, and it has wisely declined applications that didn't seem ready for prime time, as growing the scope of eligible projects too fast would jeopardize the entire FIG program. In contrast, growing the administrative capacity of FIG could and should speed up. H.B. 143 funds are available to hire OHV Program staff who would solicit quality applications, assist the Advisory Council in reviewing them, and of course oversee the approved projects. Yet the OHV Program is being told to administer FIG with its current staff on top of their existing responsibilities, and they're even being assigned new responsibilities, like managing an entire state park. We have been patient thus far, as leadership

changes often come with a learning curve, which is understandable. Next year we will follow through to ensure that the OHV Program and Advisory Council are allowed to grow FIG properly and fully. This vision was shared by the late Fred Hayes who directed all of Utah State Parks, and who testified in support of H.B. 143 as one of his last accomplishments, although his accomplishments will live on through the resilience of FIG and the 43 state parks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnleVaq3gOw>

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Motorized Trails Committee of Grand County

Moab's tourism success has increased the amount of use and types of use to the point where we may love our public lands to death. Of course active management—from travel planning to trail work and education—can dramatically improve the situation. Over the past couple decades, RwR along with other groups like the Moab Friends For Wheelin' and Red Rock 4-Wheelers have each contributed nearly twenty-thousand hours of volunteer service, but we're not keeping up with the pace of growth. Meanwhile Trail Mix, a Grand County committee for non-motorized recreation, has been quite productive. Even though we already have a good working relationship with the BLM, USFS, and state agencies, we decided to try the Trail Mix model of more formally convening the different recreation groups and land managers, with the county serving as a hub.

We met eight times as a provisional committee, with attendance from county staff of the Moab Area Travel Council, the Road Department, and Grand County Active Transportation and Trails. The County Attorney helped to draft a resolution and bylaws, which the County Council passed unanimously (see minutes 1:35:00 to 1:40:00):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqkoGFecRHo>

In past, some OHV riders may feel that the Grand County Council has taken positions that are overly-restrictive. The new Motorized Trails Committee (MTC) won't be a panacea for Moab's political differences or growing pains, but it should facilitate some common ground and the pooling of resources. It was great to hear the Council Chair's sentiment that it will be nice to have an OHV voice which the Council can refer to when facing challenges in recreation. As the MTC's current chair, I hope to deliver on service projects with the land managers as well as providing sound advice for the County Council when it comes to noise concerns, e-bike access, etc. A couple more meetings of the now-official committee have been well attended, but we could use more help (especially for the vacant positions of E-bike Representative, Treasurer, and possibly Secretary), so feel free to attend our monthly meetings starting January 9th:

<https://www.grandcountyutah.net/1023/Motorized-Trails-Committee>

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Emery County Public Land Management Act

The most significant legislation for public lands in Utah over the last decade passed this year in the form of the Emery County Public Land Management Act as packaged into the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. While the Act could've been worse (and would've been worse without our intervention), it could've been a lot better and still reached the president's desk, if only the Emery County bill's sponsors would

have recognized OHV representatives as equal to other stakeholders. Whatever your own perspective may be, it's worth peeking down the OHV rabbit hole to understand how everything transpired, so check out the addendum at bottom (see below this year in review).

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Reevaluation of BLM Travel Plans

After the BLM approved several resource-management plans that included travel plans in 2008, they were sued by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) and other groups seeking to vastly expand wilderness designation, which prohibits all mechanized use such as bicycling. The district court ruled in SUWA's favor on a few counts within the Richfield Field Office (which had the weakest RMP). By 2017, SUWA settled with the BLM to reevaluate portions of its travel plans across six field offices, and three OHV groups—BlueRibbon Coalition, Trails Preservation Alliance, and the Colorado OHV Coalition—courageously signed the settlement in order to keep its terms halfway reasonable.

The settlement assigned deadlines for reevaluating each "travel management area"...

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/travel-and-transportation/utah>

...with the first deadline being November of 2019 for the San Rafael Desert. The Price Field Office became bogged down by passage of the Dingell Act, not to mention issues with some of its contractors, so the BLM requested a three-month extension. SUWA challenged this request at first, but the settlement parties met last September, and the Utah 4WD Association contributed to ensure representation from the OHV groups' lead counsel, Paul Turke of MSBT Law. Paul performed his magic and, to SUWA's credit, cooler heads prevailed.

Earlier this year, BLM released preliminary alternatives for the San Rafael Desert's planning area of nearly 400,000 acres, and RwR joined other OHV groups to comment (see 2019-08-02 attachment). Now BLM has released official alternatives with its draft Environmental Assessment:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName=renderDefaultPlanOrProjectSite&projectId=93510>

The agency resolved two (#2 and #3) of the six modifications we requested to Alternative D. If you ask SUWA, Alternative D would "more than double" OHV access to the area because it would designate 891 miles as open compared to 309 miles of the current travel plan. What SUWA doesn't mention is that the current travel plan in the San Rafael Desert is blatantly incomplete (see lower-right corner with routes that are detached from any other routes despite not crossing state or private land):

<https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/price-ohvroutedesignations.pdf>

The BLM didn't even have a chance to inventory the existence of most routes SE and SW of the Swell before approving its current travel plan, which is why the 2008 RMP resolved to redo this travel plan within five years, only to be delayed by SUWA's litigation. (In the meantime, it's still important to keep your wheels on the trail and heed any posted signs.)

The real comparison should be to the total mileage that BLM has identified since actually inventorying the area, as that's the status quo in reality if you visit the area. Nearly a hundred pages into the Environmental Assessment, BLM mentions that it inventoried 1,202.7 miles of route, which means that Alternative D would close 312 miles, or one-quarter of the routes. SUWA appears to support Alternative B, which would close three-

quarters of the routes. Unfortunately the Dingell Act already removed 80 miles of BLM-inventoried route from consideration in the San Rafael Desert travel management area. Use of those routes, which were of course the most scenic routes, will be displaced to the rest of the San Rafael Desert. To ensure that the rest of the San Rafael Desert remains accessible, RwR will work with other OHV groups to develop comments and encourage public input prior to the January 13th deadline.

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Slickrock 50th Anniversary

It's important to count our blessings, with one of the biggest being Slickrock Trail. Fifty years after the BLM permitted motorcyclists to mark the route, Grand County staff of the Sand Flats Recreation Area took the initiative to honor this milestone alongside the BLM, motorcyclists, and bicyclists of all generations. RwR helped to plan and run the September 14th event, which consisted of a pancake breakfast, motorcycling / bicycling / hiking groups that volunteered to block braids while enjoying the trail, a display of vintage bikes, a silent auction that raised \$1,000 each for RwR and Trail Mix, and finally the debut of a documentary film:

<https://www.upr.org/post/moabs-famous-slickrock-bike-trail-turns-50>

RwR founder Dale Parriott appears prominently in the documentary along with others from all corners of the Moab community. In addition to great camera work by Finley-Holiday Films, the interviews demonstrate the spirit of cooperation that has enabled Slickrock Trail to inspire thousands of two-wheelers every year, just as nearby Hell's Revenge does for even more four-wheelers. Before the film's debut, I had the pleasure of publicly thanking Sand Flats manager Andrea Brand, and of meeting former land managers and volunteers whose positive impact can still be seen... and ridden.

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On The Road

This year RwR branched out to a dozen other cities across Utah for things like the Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit, the BLM's statewide Resource Advisory Council, and other things of statewide and nationwide significance. I volunteered this time outside of Grand and San Juan counties which, in combination with fundraising and administrative time, totaled nearly 500 hours of my time donated in 2019.

Each year the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law hosts its Wallace Stegner Center Symposium on natural-resource issues. This year's symposium focused on public-lands recreation, and RwR was invited to present our trail-work operations and perspective (see minutes 32:30 to 48:20 and 1:38:40 to 2:02:40):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r52bD8NO6sl>

Hopefully it's just because I was operating on one hour of sleep that I said "um" even more than usual. My last response of the question-and-answer session was circling around the concern that, when too much OHV access is on the chopping block, access advocacy drains our capacity to do service work. After a night's sleep, I figured out a decent analogy. Soliciting volunteers to do trail work in an area where future access is so tenuous feels like going door to door to sell home upgrades for energy efficiency in a neighborhood where everyone is under threat of eviction. I look forward to a day when we can spend less time arguing about access to the land and more time improving its condition.

This past fall, the OHV Program of Utah State Parks hosted two trails-training workshops with staff from the National OHV Conservation Council (NOHVCC). Based on NOHVCC's award-winning Great Trails book on trail design/construction/maintenance, the three-day workshops start with theory in the classroom and end with exercises in the field. RwR assisted with planning both workshops, and the television program At Your Leisure managed to stop by a workshop during its travels around the state, whipping up this intro:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-qnh0_-Zdo

OHV enthusiasts and land managers all seemed to find the workshops worthwhile, so the OHV Program is working with NOHVCC to host two more in 2020!

Also, if you'd like exposure to an even wider variety of OHV issues, save the date for NOHVCC's next annual conference which will be held August 17th-22nd in Knoxville, TN:

<https://www.nohvcc.org/event/save-the-date-the-nohvcc-2020-annual-conference-will-be-in-knoxville-tennessee/>

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OHV Program's Choice Award

Earlier this year, the OHV Program of Utah State Parks hosted a volunteer appreciation dinner, and presented an award "for outstanding contribution to the overall success of the OHV Program" to yours truly. I greatly appreciate this recognition, especially coming from a program that is run so well by Chris Haller and his staff, not to mention all my fellow members of the OHV Advisory Council as well as Brett Stewart of our H.B. 143 subcommittee. The Advisory Council has a long line of OHV ambassadors—from Glen Zumwalt of St. George to John Borg of Logan—who have been invaluable mentors to me. My at-large seat will open when I term out this coming spring, so let me know if you're interested in filling the position, and I'll notify you when the application form is released.

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TrailTaker Adventures Moab 2020 Rally

Perhaps the most fun way to support RwR next year would be registering for this April 23rd-26th rally:

<https://www.trailtaker.com/organizations/4/events/25>

TrailTaker Adventures has hosted similar events in Colorado that draw a friendly group of mostly dual-sport motorcyclists, many of whom become repeat customers. The Moab rally is not actually a race or even a ride, although people will likely group up and ride on their own. It's a place for ADV and dirt bikers to convene with camping, good food, and great sponsors. With a cap of 99 people, TrailTaker Adventures aims to raise at least \$5,000 for RwR. If you'd like more information, email contact@trailtaker.com. I hope to see you there.

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Helping to broaden foundations—like a state grant program, a county committee, and the public's ability to evaluate legislation beyond the press releases—does not necessarily help RwR as an organization. Nevertheless

our goal has always been the greater good, and we will continue to pursue it with whatever resources that contributors entrust in us. With any luck, it will put shared-use recreation in good standing for the new decade. We wish you happy and healthy holidays.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clif Koontz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clif Koontz
Executive Director

ADDENDUM to Emery County Public Land Management Act

From 2000 through 2017, Emery County developed a public-lands bill that would provide some assurance to each stakeholder, including some assurance of OHV access. Without approaching any OHV groups, Rep. Curtis and Sen. Hatch introduced a new Emery County bill in May of 2018 that kept assurances for wilderness advocates but abandoned assurances for OHV riders.

RwR began to analyze the new bill with the Sage Riders Motorcycle Club and Castle Country OHV Association. Even though many of the roughly 450,000 acres of wilderness study areas (WSAs) contain closed OHV routes that were painstakingly mapped, we were open to permanently designating those acres as wilderness in addition to another roughly 100,000 non-WSA acres (for a total of roughly 550,000 acres) because they had been vetted in previous years. This is no small concession, as wilderness designation prohibits motorized or even mechanized use in perpetuity, rendering the land pretty difficult to use and even to manage. Although the bill didn't propose to close any of the Coal Wash routes (like Devil's Racetrack and Fix-It Pass), it also didn't provide any kind of leverage to keep them open, creating a one-way valve for the San Rafael Swell travel plan to shrink but never expand. We simply asked for a portion of the OHV assurances from previous years so that the bill's balance would be honored going forward.

From May through November of 2018, the bill sponsors largely ignored our concerns, although consolations were made to avoid prohibiting BLM from rerouting trails, and to call the Swell a "recreation area" even though they wouldn't write into the bill that "recreation area" includes OHV riding. As a cherry on top, they added another roughly 100,000 acres of wilderness designation (for a total of roughly 650,000 acres) to the bill in December, then proceeded to tell the entire OHV community that no map of the additional acreage existed. Even Sen. Lee wasn't privy to see where the 100,000 mystery acres of wilderness would be located, so on December 19th he struck down the package of bills that required unanimous consent. Over the holidays, sponsors of the Emery County bill continued telling us that no map existed, specifically citing the government shutdown for delays, and assuring us that they would try to get us a map anyway.

Finally the map was released quietly on January 8th, the day before the Emery County bill was packaged in the new session of Congress. Incidentally this was the day at which point the bill could no longer be significantly changed. The map was dated December 11th of 2018, indicating that it existed the whole time that sponsors of the Emery County bill told us otherwise. The map also revealed that the 100,000 mystery acres tip the scales in the Swell, with more acreage designated as wilderness than recreation area, albeit with wilderness boundaries skirting recreational routes. On top of that, many of the acres don't remotely qualify for wilderness designation. For example, take this four-mile stretch of UT-24...

<https://goo.gl/maps/XW7H5jVGRGKMdQ1p7>

...and zoom in to get the "street view" along the highway. Everything on the west side of that stretch of highway would be designated wilderness, with all mechanized use prohibited in perpetuity, like even rolling a wheel barrow between that blackbrush.

In January we posted information about the latest bill...

<http://www.sageridersmc.com/land-use-issues.html>

...including the 7th document that shows how the 100,000 mystery acres would occupy half of the Emery-Wayne county line, yet Wayne County was not privy to the December 11th map any more so than Sen. Lee or the entire

OHV community. Consequently Wayne County unanimously passed a resolution opposing the latest bill. If the only way to avoid outrage within all three levels of government is to conceal the location of 100,000 acres to be designated wilderness, maybe designating that acreage isn't such a great idea. Maybe it's not worth deceiving an entire stakeholder group, neighboring county, and office of a senator from the affected state.

The 7th document also shows 74 miles of primitive road that Emery County had claimed ownership of but now effectively abandoned by supporting the 100,000 mystery acres in the latest bill. The Emery County bill's sponsors, now Rep. Curtis and Sen. Romney (who essentially inherited the bill from retired Sen. Hatch), did save one mile of road by removing a few-hundred acres of wilderness at our urging, but that left 73 miles to go. To Emery County's credit, the commissioners accepted our request to hold a meeting so the public could learn what the bill really would and wouldn't do. Even though it was probably too late to fix at that point, on February 5th we tried to accurately inform Emery County residents:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CKgfA6BYww&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR09uTOHR7gLqgx7qRL2okBDKslQ_vcZnCm9LULyTMP4JSqV4iIE2dWjGIQ

At the question-and-answer session, the commissioners graciously gave me the last word...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kbb_ZNcgmU

Since that February 5th meeting, in one of the new wilderness areas (Labyrinth Canyon), BLM has reported 80 miles of existing OHV routes, less than half of which are claimed as roads by Emery County. So, if that new wilderness area is any indication of the other ones, then the 73 miles of county-road closures is probably part of at least 150 miles of total route closures. This ratio is consistent with RWR's observations when visiting the 100,000 mystery acres last summer. Few of these routes had been legally closed by the BLM for motorized use, and a few of them had already been designated open. In contrast to the interior of the San Rafael Swell, much of the areas SE and SW of the Swell were not even inventoried for the existence of routes prior to approving the current travel plan, therefore the impacts of route closures could not be analyzed as required by NEPA. The BLM is aware that its travel plan on the SE and SW sides of the Swell is blatantly incomplete, which is why they haven't enforced it, and the agency is close to fixing this shortcoming in spite of overwhelming distractions from SUWA's litigation and the Emery County bill. The bill's sponsors claimed it wouldn't close any routes that aren't already closed, but most of the estimated 150 miles of routes were not closed, not in the field, and not in law. Subsequent BLM travel planning strongly indicates that roughly three-quarters of them would have been designated open if not for the Emery County bill.

After that February 5th meeting, virtually nothing in the Emery County bill changed—with 99% of the 100,000 mystery acres intact—except that the package of bills was renamed the Dingell Act. Sen. Lee again justifiably voted against it, but this time it didn't require unanimous consent, and most representatives from other western states voted for it because the majority of Dingell Act wilderness designations were contained within Utah. Residents of Utah gained the eventual revenue of consolidating SITLA property (state trust land) through the bill's trades with BLM land. The Emery County bill sponsors claim that SITLA consolidation required adding the 100,000 mystery acres (expanding the wilderness designation from 550,000 acres to 650,000 acres) in order to prevent Sen. Durbin—sponsor of the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA)—from striking down the bill on December 19th of 2018. Well folks, Sen. Lee did strike down the bill then, yet it still passed a couple months later.

The Emery County bill sponsors might argue that a 550,000-acre wilderness bill wouldn't have passed the muster of a new, more left-leaning Congress. Yet the 550,000-acre bill from November of 2018 had already garnered a position of non-opposition from groups like The Wilderness Society that have more clout than SUWA. Further evidence that the 650,000-acre bill from December of 2018 overshot the mark can be found in the Natural Resources Defense Council's press release describing the Emery County wilderness as a "landmark achievement, among the most important in NRDC's history":

<https://www.nrdc.org/experts/rhea-suh/public-lands-waters-bring-moment-unity>

Maybe the 550,000-acre bill would've only been among the most important in NRDC's year or decade, as opposed to the group's entire history, but it would've still passed Congress. Then why did local and federal elected officials concede another 100,000 acres rather than sticking to their guns? Maybe they honestly fell for SUWA's bluff, but more likely they wanted to eliminate even a slight chance that their SITLA consolidation would be stalled, and conceding more public access was like an insurance policy.

Even in a world where consolidating 100,000 acres of SITLA property requires designating 650,000 acres of BLM land as wilderness, would this tradeoff be worthwhile? That consolidation could generate tens-of-millions of dollars over the years, but it would eventually dry up. Indiscriminate wilderness designation, in contrast, hobbles productivity forever. Whether that's commercial productivity from backpacking outfitters, or wildlife productivity in the form of a water development, even primitive uses can have an uphill battle after wilderness designation. When wilderness designation surrounds graded roads like the southern half of McKay Flat Road, campsites can't be developed there, so the use proliferates in less suitable places. Wilderness has value as a social resource, and preservation has an important place on public lands, but in excess it hinders the natural resources that it touts to protect. When it diminishes pragmatic conservation projects or a modest tourism economy, where will that leave Emery County, and where will that leave the environmental movement?

OHV advocates were left with some insult to injury, as Rep. Curtis criticized our role in the Emery County bill (see minutes 12:30 to 22:40):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egucdEir1TA>

The Representative's arguments don't hold much water, such as the claim that OHV representatives were fractured and inconsistent. In reality, on November 27th of 2018 thirty Utah-based OHV groups cosigned a letter requesting four reasonable modifications to the Emery County bill, and none of the groups were satisfied by the response. On November 29th of 2018, a dozen national OHV organizations cosigned a letter requesting the same thing, and none of them were satisfied by the response. All of these entities, from Emery County OHV clubs to OHV trade associations in D.C., appointed a single spokesperson to negotiate on the bill. Michael Swenson of Swenson Strategies ensured that the OHV position was clear and consistent for sponsors of the Emery County bill, and he was a consummate professional. We appreciate this leadership and the OHV community for coalescing.

In contrast, let's consider SUWA's conduct leading up to November of 2018, when they were granted private negotiations with sponsors of the Emery County bill. Well SUWA had set an adversarial tone as soon as the bill was introduced in May of 2018:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9D8Zg1jggh0>

Right up through October of 2018, SUWA was raking the entire Utah delegation over the coals (see minutes 4:43 to 6:43 and 8:45 to 9:09):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81EkjmR0c3c>

Although SUWA's extreme position was backed by NRDC and the Sierra Club, most conservation organizations accepted the original 550,000 acres, yet sponsors of the Emery County bill rewarded SUWA. The lesson appears to be that we should stoop to SUWA's level, but rather than lowering our integrity, we could demand more of it from others.

Recently Sen. Durbin reintroduced ARROW, which is SUWA's wish list to prohibit mechanized use categorically on nearly half of BLM land in Utah, while the other half also prohibits mechanized use for the most part as designated routes occupy less than 1% of the land area. Sponsors of the Emery County bill are now crying foul that ARROW proposes wilderness in Emery County beyond the 650,000 acres just designated by the Dingell Act last March:

<https://www.ksl.com/article/46692963/herbert-3-utah-lawmakers-push-back-as-illinois-senator-again-proposes-red-rock-bill>

They claim that the Emery County part of the Dingell Act somehow ensured that additional wilderness would not be proposed in Emery County. If they sincerely expected this assurance, they would have seen it written into the bill, or at least they would've seen SUWA publicly acknowledge a supposed handshake agreement. Instead what they saw on February 12th, before the Dingell Act had even passed the House, was a SUWA press release explicitly stating that SUWA would pursue more Emery County wilderness designation in future (see 2019-02-02 attachment). If there were a handshake agreement, sponsors of the Emery County bill would've cried foul on February 12th, not December 16th. So are they trying to fool themselves, fool SUWA, or fool their constituents? I enjoy watching Tom and Jerry as much as the next guy, but matters of public access and resource conservation are too important. To demonstrate that SUWA has been deceptive, one need not resort to deception, himself. For the notion of accountability to have any value, it must apply to everyone.

That said, Rep. Bishop and Sen. Romney have merit when introducing a symbolic bill to designate wilderness in Sen. Durbin's home state, as it could help his constituents finally realize the inappropriate nature of sponsoring wilderness designations which are entirely contained within another state that's over a thousand miles away. This phenomenon of distant efforts to vastly expand wilderness designation—along with presidents proclaiming national monuments far beyond the Antiquities Act's intent—is what has turned comprehensive public-lands legislation into an exercise in absurdity.

There's also merit to recent efforts of Emery County—especially Commissioner Kent Wilson—to minimize damage from the Dingell Act by maintaining road access to Green River overlooks and to SITLA property (that is slated to become federal wilderness through BLM trades), by planning more OHV opportunities elsewhere in Emery County, and by appointing active OHV representation on local and federal committees. Our critique of the Emery County bill was not intended to make personal attacks or dwell on the past. Simply put, to get anywhere in future, we must understand where we are and how we got here.

Although the Emery County part of the Dingell Act won't resolve controversy in the long run, comprehensive public-lands legislation still has the potential to do so. For our elected officials to bolster their spines, they must be more transparent with OHV representatives, as they clearly need us to help fight for public access in order to achieve a balanced bill. They should extend that same courtesy to neighboring counties, the state legislature, and their fellow members of the Utah delegation (especially ones who serve on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee). The deserts of Southern Utah always seem to need more water but, figuratively speaking, they need more sunlight.