

Air Mail

Volume 2 Number 3

Utah Back Country Pilots Inc.

February 2003

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Flight Plan (Upcoming Events)

February 25 (Tuesday) Salt Lake City

AOPA Town Meeting

Salt Lake City Hilton – 255 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT

February 26 (Wednesday) Skypark Airport

UBCP Monthly Meeting

“Back Country Accidents” – A discussion with Rick Stednitz, FAA Accident Investigation Coordinator
Starts at 7:00 PM. Refreshments served.

March 21, 22, 23 Mineral Canyon Landing Strip

UBCP Spring Fly-in

We have been weathered out three years out of four, so we threw the chicken bones on the floor and this is the date that appeared! Then we got in trouble for throwing chicken bones all over the place. Sit down RSVP dinner provided by Moab’s Fat City Bar-Be-Que on Saturday, the 22nd. Look for separate flyer as the date approaches.

June 28 – 29 Richfield Airport

Richfield Airport Fly-in.

Free breakfast and dinner! Camping on the field. Courtesy cars available for rides to and from motels in town.

July 11, 12, 13 Smiley Creek, ID

Fourth Annual Friends of Skypark / UBCP Fly-in

Great camping in an improved campground with bathrooms and free hot showers on the field. Rooms at the Smiley Creek Lodge available within easy walking distance. Fly-outs to back country strips in the Idaho wilderness. One day raft trips available on the Salmon River. Dinner Saturday night at the Smiley Creek Lodge. Contact Kent Bond or UBCP for additional information.

From UBCP

Steve Durtschi, UBCP President



UBCP Members – There is much news to share concerning Utah’s back country. My hat is off to many dedicated back country members around the state who are busy protecting and championing our recreational landing strips.

Vernon

As you know, the landing strip at Vernon was closed by the BLM last February. The closure was due to construction activities near the strip for an improved BLM summer fire base. The UBCP has maintained an open communication with the BLM throughout the construction period to let them know that we feel the strip is important to Utah pilots. The construction is scheduled to be complete in February and while the BLM has not said they will not open the strip, there is a concern on their part that the proximity of a new Quonset building and fuel storage are now too close to the landing area. (The BLM uses helicopters at the base, not fixed wing aircraft).

The Salt Lake Office of the BLM has asked us to visit the area and then arrange a meeting where we will be given an opportunity to render an opinion as to whether we believe fixed wing operations can still be conducted safely in light of the proximity to the new fire base.

Range Creek

The famous “Wilcox Ranch” on Range Creek in the Desolation Canyon area was recently acquired through a complex deal which involved the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources and the BLM. The ranch just happens to have a beautiful landing strip, about 3,000 feet long with clear approaches. The long range plan for this property is to allow public recreation which includes camping, and hunting and fishing in this beautiful and remote area.

UBCP has been in contact with our congressional representatives as well as state and BLM officials and we are now preparing a proposal that will allow the landing strip to be maintained in safe operating condition and open to the public. Our proposal will also include a camping area on the ranch. The prospect of continued use of the landing strip is viewed as important to the current managers of the Range Creek property. We anxiously look forward to this strip being open for general use. We will report on our progress as this exciting prospect matures.

Wind Socks

Mexican Mountain, and Grand Gulch recently received new wind socks. If you know of a landing strip that needs a wind sock, please call. UBCP can provide poles, frames and socks.



Hal Hilburn and Pat Carroll install a windsock at Grand

Disappointment at the Grand Gulch

Ever since Hal Hilburn from St. George introduced us to the Grand Gulch Mine and Landing strip a few years ago, we have looked forward to visiting this historic area from time to time. One of the goals of the UBCP is to promote a leave-no-trace attitude. If the airplane or our visiting a remote area does irreparable damage, we have failed as a group.

Even in the short time that I have been visiting the mine, I have noticed more than nature taking its course in the accelerated decline of the historic structures and equipment at the Grand Gulch. The mine was once the richest in Arizona and has a history that dates back to Native Americans. Its structures and equipment are of significant historic value. Unfortunately, some use this remote location to satisfy an insatiable need to destroy, and bullet holes and ransacked structures are the ugly result.

It is along this vein that we were saddened to find inside a mine building, scrawled in large letters on the wall, the name of an aviator – complete with the type and model of airplane he flies and the date he visited! Our point is not to offend or embarrass an individual. I do not know the pilot and he is not on the rolls of the UBCP. However, I bring this to your attention so that we might better understand how and why aviation is in the spotlight right now. This is especially the case in the Grand Gulch where the BLM is currently formulating a management plan for the national monument that now encompasses this area. Sooner or later, the BLM will visit this sensitive area in an effort to determine if airplanes have a detrimental effect. Pilots contributing to on-going vandalism could render the landing strip closed forever.

Utah State Aeronautical Chart

The Utah State Division of Aeronautics will release a new edition of the Utah Aeronautical Chart this spring. The Division of aeronautics has asked for our input concerning

adding more back country landing strips to the chart. We have provided detailed information on Mexican Mountain, Hidden Splendor, Dirty Devil, Happy Canyon, and Ibex Hard Pan and recommended that these five landing areas be added to the new chart.

We continue to enjoy a good working relationship with Pat Morley, Director at the division. Pat sincerely had general aviation at heart and is concerned with protecting the states remote recreational landing strips as well.

February UBCP Meeting

Finally, don't forget the UBCP general monthly meeting. February's meeting will be held on Wednesday, the 26th at Bountiful Skypark at 7:00 PM. Rick Stednitz will be our guest. Rick is in charge of investigating aviation accidents for the FAA and will tailor his presentation to back country mishaps. UBCP's first and foremost goal is aviation safety. As the saying goes, "those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it." We can all mitigate the risks of flying by reviewing the mistakes of others.

I hope you enjoy our Winter newsletter. Brent Watson has done a great job as newsletter editor and we appreciate his efforts. We are giving him a slight rest this time around. Matt Haag has put this one together. Thanks, Matt!

Arizona Strip Update (just south of the 37 parallel) *Hal Hilburn and Karl Spielman*

In May of 2002 Steve Durtschi and Hal Hilburn attended a scoping meeting held to solicit public comments guiding the direction of a newly created monument north of the Grand Canyon, in a section of land known as the "Arizona Strip". The public comment and input derived from these types of meetings and the subsequent letter writing "comment period" helps shape the activities that are allowed on public lands. The UBCP board has made several formal public comments before, on behalf of UBCP members. At this scoping meeting, Steve and Hal were invited to make a presentation to the BLM to familiarize them with the concept of "backcountry recreational aviation" and how its continuation in the new Grand Canyon/Parashant National Monument might impact the monument. As you may know, several prime backcountry airstrips, most notably the Grand Gulch Mine and Tuweep, were included in the monument.

Even though these lands lay over the border in the state of Arizona, UBCP decided to lay out a case for their continued enjoyment by all pilots. Hal spent the next several months researching the situation. By using aerial photographs from BLM computers, BLM maps and land ownership information, Hal was able to submit a list of 21 airstrips to be considered. He provided this information to Rob Hunter who, with the generosity of UBCP pioneer member, Jim Wark and his extensive collection of aerial photos, was able to create a PowerPoint presentation in support of backcountry recreational aviation.

Hal and Rob completed their stunning presentation and were booked for a 15 minute window to make their case on December 3rd, 2002. When Rob couldn't attend because of

his duties with Search and Rescue, Hal asked Karl Spielman to go to St. George and help with the presentation. The presentation showed the history of recreational aviation from its early beginning in Idaho to the present day use of these Arizona airstrips, provided suggestions for maintenance, and put to rest the liability issues so often thrown up to flyers as a reason for exclusion. Their 15 minute window was stretched to 65 minutes with a spirited question and answer period. In the end, the land managers were convinced that backcountry recreational aviation is safe, fun, low impact, and that flyers are just another segment of the public that deserves access to federally managed lands.

The battle, of course, only begins here. There are many people and groups outside of this meeting that oppose any type of access to these lands. The land managers, often caught in the middle, are willing to let us make a case. It remains the responsibility of all of us to make that case or come away empty handed.

If you would like to help, please stay alert and involved. Be aware of proposals affecting your flying privileges. Write letters whenever you see that a point on our behalf has not been thoroughly made. If you're not already a member, join an organization like UBCP and bring other interested pilots to a meeting or fly-in. Pitch in with club activities for the fun of it. Let's do everything we can to help people like Hal, Karl, Rob, and Steve make our case at every opportunity. See you in the Backcountry.

Windsock Replacement at Mexican Mountain

Rob Hunter

Until recently the wind always blew at Mexican Mountain, or at least that's what you would think from looking at the windsock. I've been there on many calm days with out any noticeable breeze but the windsock always stuck out at least halfway. The problem was that the windsock was too small for its frame. The double loop frame always held the windsock at least half way extended. In mid-November I set out to replace the windsock with one that fit better.

I had heard the horrific stories about the last time someone had replaced the windsock. The pole is designed to be lowered, but is so sturdily constructed that it is extremely heavy. At least the way I heard about it – the last time the sock was replaced, there were three people working together to raise and lower the pole, and it *still* almost killed one of them. I decided that instead of trying to lower the pole it would be easier and safer to climb the pole.

I wanted a partner in this endeavor that was knowledgeable about rope and climbing systems. I chose Dan Smith, a friend of mine from the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Search and Rescue team. Dan is one of the most skillful members on the team and I have seen him rescue many stranded climbers including some that were stuck hundreds of feet up a cliff. Dan had the knowledge and experience to figure out a way to safely climb up the pole and anchor himself in place while replacing the windsock.

Once we were at the base of the windsock it looked much taller and less sturdy than I had remembered. At the base I gave the pole a shove and could see it sway a little. I was glad Dan was going to be the one going up to change it. I decided it was about time I tell him. "Dan, you are the better climber so you should probably be the one to go up."

He then pointed out that I weighed about 40 pounds less than he did and the pole would be less likely to break with me at the top. "Oh it looks plenty strong" I said confidently, "and besides if it were to break and I got injured we would both be stuck here since you can't fly the plane. If you were to get injured I could still fly us home or fly out to get help." I was sure that logic would work. Dan said if anyone got hurt, which was unlikely with the lighter weight person being up the pole, he could always call for help. I laughed; cell phones don't work out here. "Oh, that's OK, I have a satellite phone", Dan said as he smiled and pulled it out of his pack to show me it had a strong signal. I'd been beat. I didn't know how to operate his phone and it was my project anyway. After a little more discussion and stalling I started up the pole.



Rob conquers the sock pole at Mexican Mountain

It took a little experimenting before we figured out a good system for climbing the pole. The normal techniques we use to ascend half inch diameter ropes had to be adjusted a bit to work on a 4 inch diameter pole. Once I was half way up the pole it began to sway a little and by the time I was at the top I felt like I was on a sailboat mast. I was starting to get seasick. Dan was encouraging me from the ground and I was comforted knowing that he was an EMT and had the phone number for Life Flight.

I cut off the old windsock and attached the new one without too much difficulty. The new windsock is actually a little bit too big for the frame and is still always a little extended because of the dual hoop design of the frame. Maybe next time we will try to replace the frame. But unless I can talk Dan into climbing the pole I'll plan on a big enough group of people that we can safely lower the pole to the ground to work on it.

P.S. Airstrip Condition

Afterward we walked the airstrip at Mexican Mountain to inspect and measure it. It was in good shape with the usual soft spots but very few weeds. The tamarisk bushes were low enough to be out of the way of a high wing airplane. It is 1,365 ft long and 24 ft wide at the narrowest part.

We also landed at nearby Cedar Mountain. This strip was in great shape. Its surface is smooth and firm. It is 1,850 ft long and 42 ft wide at the narrowest spot. This airstrip slopes significantly uphill to the South. I was too high on my first approach and elected to do a go-around. I was surprised that my 235 hp, lightly loaded Maule didn't seem to out climb the terrain on this cool day. Luckily I was already too high.

Southern Utah Report

Hal Hilburn

Somebody has to keep checking on the strips down here! It's a dirty thankless job, but I take it seriously.

My first stop is 40 miles north of my home in the St. George area at my friend Scott's new private landing strip. What a beautiful location with a new home, barn, hangar, and a fine mountain landing strip. Be careful here . . . the strip has a power line crossing it at the mid point. It's not a problem if you know it is there! Scott is working to get the line buried. When that is complete, he will welcome visitors. Until then it is best to not stop. We'll give you the coordinates when he gets the lines moved.

Heading south now, we check on the Grand Gulch strip. The main strip (16/34) is in fine shape as is the shorter crosswind runway (02/22). The windsock is in tatters, so we replaced it. The new orange sock is very easy to see from the air. Take plenty of photos here and a sample or two of the colorful copper ore, but please, nothing else. (My personal opinion is that most souvenirs end up in the landfill as they lose their magic when removed from their original location. And besides, taking stuff home deprives others of the "chance of discovery".)

We head east now over the hill to Bar 10. About 2000 feet of the runway has been chip sealed, but true back country pilots can still land on the dirt as there is enough left. A call on 122.9 will bring the ranch hand out and garner a ride to the resort, about mile away. The hand's name is Verdin and he always reminds me there is a landing fee – although he has yet to collect. He claims he really wants a ride in the tail dragger. The lodge has some improvements this year, is a nice place to stay in a fine location, and is a stone's throw from the north rim. If you visit, please pay my bill by taking Verdin for a ride! (Editor's note: only tail dragger pilots are responsible for Hal's bill!)

Taking off south at Bar 10, it is a short hop over to Tuweep. This landing strip is threatened with closure and we are watching developments here closely. It seems the Arizona State Trust Lands people who control the strip are claiming it produces no income for the state and they cannot justify its existence. We are screaming bloody murder down here in southern Utah in an effort to rally support for this landing strip. It has existed for many, many years and has much history associated with it.



Hal & Sue Hilburn at Bar 10

After a short nights' rest back in St George, we head southwest again. Today were headed for Death Valley. I like to stop in North Las Vegas for breakfast and fuel. It's fun to watch all of the students practicing here from the mezzanine of the restaurant. North Las Vegas has some of the finest controllers I have ever met and even though the strip borders Class B air space, these gentlemen will guide you in perfectly every time.

Arriving at Death Valley, look for the palm trees and stay west of "town" for your approach. Check your altimeter when you are on the ground – it won't look like this anywhere else. There is a nice visitors center here explaining the National Park.

Northeast from Death Valley we cross over into Saline Valley to visit the famous Chicken Strip landing field. This strip is a little shorter at about 1500 feet and 1360 msl. Do not land on the strip near the hot springs. Be sure to positively identify the right strip. The closer old strip is now X-ed out. It is a short walk to the hot springs, which are beautiful and well maintained. Since we are still in the national park, there is a volunteer stationed at the springs who has radio contact with the park officials. Be advised clothing is optional for some visiting here. We didn't look too out of place with our baggy swim suits, chalk white legs and farmer tans. Everyone we met was friendly and the water is delightful.

Well, we're almost out of gas so I guess we have to head for home. As you can see, we are keeping a good watch on "our" back country strips down here. Come on down and join us any time. Oops, just got a call from someone who wants to see the Grand Gulch. Heck, I love this job. Gotta go. See you soon, Hal.

Close Encounters of The Moosekind.

Dale Gardner

Stepping from the car I fumbled to keep my hands warm while searching for keys to open the door to the hangar. The little heater that had been running for the last couple of

hours appeared to have done its job and the aircraft felt warm and ready to fly. I unplugged the heater, but the big hangar door remained closed. I had called flight service and was not encouraged as they forecast a good chance of fog to develop later in the evening. A quick peek out the hangar door and I could still see across the valley to the west and to the Wellsville Mountains. I'm tempted, but close the door to the hangar, jump in the car and head down the highway towards Salt Lake City. An hour and half later I miss my turn off I-15 in Bountiful because I can't see the exit sign - yes, FOG! Such goes an early January evening in Northern Utah.

Like many of you my time in the air is greatly reduced during the heart of winter. I would like to adventure south more often and enjoy some of Utah's great flying destinations during this time of year, but more often than not, I'm reduced to hangar flying and hashing over trips from the warmer days of the year. In that fashion, I was asked to share about one such trip that occurred over the Labor Day weekend. I had joined up with several other members of UBCP for a weekend of flying and all the other good stuff that comes along with outings in the Back Country. The group included Steve and Cathy Durtschi (SLC), Hal and Susan Hilburn (SGU), Rich Carlstad and Margarite Hargrave (SEA), Patrick Doyle (SLC), and myself (LGU). We set up camp at Chamberlain Basin in central Idaho. The weather was great all weekend and from our base camp we ventured out daily.

For myself, a weekend of flying is great, but if I can throw in some fly fishing and bird hunting too, well, I'm just not sure it gets any better. A trip to central Idaho in September can afford just that. After a great breakfast at the Root Ranch on Saturday morning, I departed from the group and dropped into the Cabin Creek airstrip to check out some fishing and to do a little scouting for the opening day of grouse season on Sunday. A hike down the drainage from the Cabin Creek airstrip will take you to Big Creek. Normally this time of year the water is crystal clear and the fish are more



Big Creek Resident, Mr. Brown Trout

than willing to grab your fly and run for it. The water that day was a little off-color, a result of the rain three or four days earlier and runoff picking up dirt and ash from areas damaged by the forest fires a couple summers ago. The fishing was slower than usual but I could work the edges of the river where the water appeared a little clearer. I was able to fool a

few nice trout that were likely looking for a big fat grasshopper to fall from the tall grass along the creek bank (Big Creek is a catch and release stream so remember to handle the fish carefully and return them quickly to the water). On the return hike to the plane I flushed a small group of grouse near the bushy creek bottom. A return visit the next day is what Annie, my flying partner for this trip, was really looking forward to.

Annie is a 7-year-old German Wirehair pointer and it had been seven long months since the shotgun was put away. She was ready for action and the opening of grouse season. Annie seems to put up with the off-season activities, like fishing, by faithfully tagging along and when opportunity presents itself offers a helping paw by attempting to retrieve any trout that happens to get hooked on the end of my fly line.

A short hike the next day to a nearby drainage provided the birds we were looking for. It was only minutes after we started up the creek bottom that I noticed Annie's stride and intensity changed, telling me she was tracking birds. Annie had crossed the brushy creek and quickly disappeared from sight. Within seconds I heard the flushing grouse and the bird appeared from the brush on my side of the creek. I could almost feel the wind from its wings as it streaked past. After a quick turn, a point of the gun, and a quick prayer, I pulled the trigger. Luck won out and the bird fell from flight. Annie was not far behind and quickly found the grouse. I believe there was a big smile on her face as she returned the first bird of a new season to my hand.

As we continued up the creek bottom we were able to find two more birds and the day was looking awful good. A little farther up the creek Annie was working hard to find one more bird to fill our limit. She made a quick turn to her left, stopped abruptly and leaned slightly forward to investigate something more closely. In a motion like to a Jack-in-a-box she immediately sprung upward and back. Annie's unusual reaction caught my attention and I raced forward to see what the fuss was about. The buzzing sound in the long grass was a warning that I was not to approach any closer; I found the coiled snake a few yards away. I gave Annie a quick exam to ensure she had not been bitten and then a stern "NO" command to enforce that this critter was not what we were after and headed in the opposite direction. Fortunately this was not Annie's first encounter with rattlesnakes. A couple years ago we had gone into the Shearer airstrip on the Selway River. In one day of hiking we crossed the paths of five rattlesnakes.

The noon sun had started to heat the air so we headed back to the plane to depart before the temperatures or winds made for unsafe flying. Shortly after my return to Chamberlain Basin, Patrick returned from his trip north to Shearer and Hal and Susan returned from Fish Lake. The others had decided to make a day of it at Fish Lake.

After a morning of grouse hunting and the rattlesnake encounter I was ready for a relaxing afternoon. The suggestion of making the short hike over to the Stonebraker Ranch seemed harmless enough. The Stonebraker Ranch was built by homesteaders who raised cattle for local miners. It is now owned and operated by the Idaho Game and Fish Department and is about a one mile hike north of the

Chamberlain Basin airstrip. We had a great visit with the summer caretakers. They gave us a tour of the main ranch house, some of the bunkhouses and the grounds. They told us about their summer adventures with the salmon run, the fish scientist and the local cow moose and her new calf. We were admiring the large old barn and went to take a closer look. Patrick commented that the roof had deteriorated significantly since his last visit. As we looked skyward toward the roof structure some movement to the left of the barn caught our attention. A large brown animal stepped from around the corner of the barn and my initial thoughts were, "nice horse", and then there was the immediate recognition that the "nice horse" was actually a cow moose.

We stood about 15-20 yards from the moose and it was probably only one or two seconds before her ears went back, she lowered her head and started to close the short distance in rapid fashion. Hal was front and center and seemed to take the point of attack. The rest of us scattered like marbles dropped on the floor. I headed for the barn; Patrick and the caretaker's wife ran behind an old wagon. As the moose raced toward Hal he was only able to take maybe two steps backward before running out of room with a pole fence directly behind him. Hal fell to the ground and rolled under the lowest rail just as the thrashing hooves missed their target. Hal was very lucky and I could not believe the escape. I called for Annie. She was ahead of me and had split the scene, but unfortunately returned at my call to re-encounter the upset moose. An old piece of farm equipment saved her as she turned and quickly ran underneath it. Annie did, however, distract the moose's attention away from Hal long enough for him to gather his feet. We all backed slowly away and the mother moose relaxed as her calf joined her from behind the barn. Luckily no one was seriously hurt. Back at the main ranch house the caretaker's wife dressed a cut on top of Hal's head likely received when rolling under the rail fence. We thanked them for the tour (the moose encounter was thrown in at no extra charge) and headed back to camp.



Ed. wants to know - who had the nerve to whip out a camera at *this*

Just before sunset, Steve, Cathy, Rich and Margarite returned from Fish Lake. We finished a great weekend by sharing the adventures of the day by the campfire and the cooking of grouse on the grill. We were lucky with the moose encounter and would have never approached her and the calf

had we known they were on the other side of the barn. As for the grouse, the Idaho grouse season opens the first day of September. The limit is four birds and a non-resident small game license can be purchased for \$73.50 (you can not hunt in the first five days of the pheasant season with this license) or \$128.50 (allows you to hunt during the first five days of the pheasant season). A hunting or fishing license can be purchased from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game web site before you leave on the trip (a small extra fee is assessed for the web purchased license) or you can purchase a license from a local dealer. I know the general stores at Smiley Creek or Picabo are conveniently located next to nice airstrips and sell hunting and fishing licenses. In early September watch for rattlesnakes. Be especially careful if you bring your best friend along. A curious dog can take a strike in the nose. I believe Annie's preference is to return in October after the snakes have gone into hibernation.

How I Missed the Mineral Canyon Fly-in and Went Over a Cliff Instead!

Cathy Durtschi

I had personally looked forward to the Mineral Canyon fly-in scheduled for the weekend of Friday, November 1st, through Sunday, November 3rd, 2002. I'd even arranged time off from work so we could leave Friday morning. Unfortunately Karl Spielman called three days prior to say he'd flown over Mineral Canyon and the runway had standing water on it. We were disappointed, but the only reasonable decision was to call off the fly-in. A cancellation message was left on the UBCP answering service, and phone calls were made to those with confirmed lunch reservations as well as others who were planning on camping for the weekend (some from as far away as California, Idaho, and Washington).

We had several incoming calls Friday night from friends who were hoping to rectify a weekend totally stuck on the ground. Weather permitting, we planned to go to Angel Point and hike through the beautiful canyons near the strip in this famous "Robbers Roost" country. Rob Hunter and his wife, June, are veteran Yosemite rescue team members and expert climbers. They offered to bring their gear and give us some personal instruction in rappelling and a chance to try it.

Saturday dawned clear and smooth and by early morning, four planes left Skypark Airport. Karl and Melinda Spielman flew out from Moab to meet us. Dennis and Laurie Tyler accompanied us past Price, but then decided to press on to Laurie's home in Arizona. The other three planes landed on the east-west strip at Angel Point. Kent and Laura Bond were en route to southern Utah in their RV-4, and decided to divert slightly and stop for a visit.

We barely had the planes tied down, and Rob, always strides ahead of the pack, was already securing and testing the ropes as I arrived at the ledge. Rob had set up the equipment on a beautiful little slot canyon with about a 60 foot near-vertical drop. He used special high tech anchors that wedge into rock crevasses and hold by means of a cam device. (He removed the metal anchors when we left, leaving no trace that we were there.)



Dr. June shows us how it's

horizontal rock and slowly progress to more sloping face. That way, we could get the feel of the harness and control the friction of the rope before “taking the plunge”. He also had a separate safety rope attached by which he was able to stop our descent if necessary.

Rob asked Melinda if she and I wanted to try. Melinda had said she was perfectly willing to go watch,

but was quoted as saying something like, “no-way-in heck am I getting roped in to that!”

My earlier mind set was “definitely maybe”. Now I was thinking, “probably”. I agreed to try the harness and practice on the shallow part of the slope. It seemed fine, so I eased over the edge taking one step at a time. I felt pretty secure and comfortable as I controlled my descent rate by slightly releasing my grip on the free end of rope and moving down the vertical slope. Knowing that Rob had the separate safety rope was reassuring. As I reached the bottom, I felt excited and happy that I’d tried it and succeeded!

Now everyone gently encouraged Melinda to just get in the harness and try the technique on the gently sloping area. She geared up and tried it. Rob suggested he go down behind her and they descend together. She agreed, somewhat reluctantly I think. As she successfully finished her pioneer descent, she decided to try it a second time alone, and did it! I think I was more excited for her than for myself – just because she had conquered her fear.

We spent that night in Moab with Karl and Melinda. Since we’d all been drooling over the prospect of the catered fly-in luncheon, we went to dinner at the Fat City Barbecue. The owner was there and he expressed his disappointment about the cancelled fly in. He’d planned to personally come down to cook the steaks so he could see all the airplanes. We had great dinners and a nice evening, and promised to call him and set the whole thing up again in the spring.

June demonstrated first and Rob monitored her descent while the others looked on in awe. June made it look so easy and inspired confidence in the rest of us. We watched Steve and Karl as Rob instructed each on how to manipulate the rope through a braking device to control their descent. Rob had the ropes set up so you could start on



Karl drops in...



Melinda & Rob go over the

After breakfast the next morning, Steve and I took off with a planned stop at Canyonlands Airport for fuel. While we were there, we met fellow UBCPers, Steve Harless from Grand Junction, Colorado and his passengers as well as Steve’s brother and sister-in-law from Battle Mountain, Nevada. In lieu of the fly-in cancellation, they’d been to Needles Outpost hoping to get some lunch. That hadn’t worked out, so they opted for the vending machines at Canyonlands. We’d met these nice folks at the fly-in last year and it was fun to see them again.



The shadows get long enhancing the vista of Angel

Even though the weekend was totally different than originally planned, it was a Great Adventure and I’m always anxiously awaiting the next one!

UTAH BACK COUNTRY PILOTS INC.
Skypark Airport
1887 South Redwood Road #16
Woods Cross, UT 84087



PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bountiful, Utah
Permit No.
102

Air Mail to Master Pilot:

UBCP Web Site

The internet address for the UBCP's new web site is www.UtahBackCountryPilots.org. The searchable database of Utah's back country airstrips is now fully functional. If you have corrections, additions, photos, or additional comments on the airstrips, please e-mail them to Margarite Hargrave at hargrave@halcyon.com, and he will add them to the database.

Website service provided by:



UBCP Shirts & Hats Are Here!

T-shirts are royal blue 100% cotton with a 3 inch embroidered UBCP logo, available in all sizes. The hats are royal blue, fitted baseball hats with 2 inch embroidered UBCP

logos. The UBCP requests a \$15.00 donation for each shirt or hat. Please mail your order and donation to:

Utah Back Country Pilots, Inc.
1887 South Redwood Road, #16
Woods Cross, UT 84087.

Please include quantities, sizes and return address, and \$3.00 shipping and handling per order to insure prompt delivery.

Has Your Label Changed Color?

The annual membership dues of the Utah Back Country Pilots Association are \$30.00. If your membership is about to expire, your mailing label will not be white. This is your reminder to renew. Just send your check to our address and you'll retain your membership for another year.

There is also a membership application form included in this copy of Air Mail. Please pass this along to another pilot who appreciates the back country and make copies as needed for others to join in the fun of flying the back country.

Donation for the Preservation of Back Country Airstrips

Please accept my donation to the Utah Back Country Pilots' for Recreational Airstrip preservation, in the amount of \$_____. I understand this donation to the Utah Back Country Pilots, a not for profit organization, is to be used for the preservation of back country airstrips and may be fully tax deductible.

Name: _____ Phone Number _____

Address: _____