

# Air Mail

Volume 2 Number 1

Utah Back Country Pilots

June 2002

## Who's In Charge

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Treasurer	Kent Bond	(801) 913-5223
Board Member	Matt Haag	(801) 466-3417
Board Member	Rob Hunter	(801) 583-5705
Board Member	Chris Tuckfield	(801) 576-9926
Board Member	Brent Watson	(801) 298-3680
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Web Address: [www.UtahBackCountryPilots.org](http://www.UtahBackCountryPilots.org)  
Back Country Information Hotline (801) 583-0342

## Flight Plan (Upcoming Events)

### July 12, 13, 14

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Skypark Airport Fly-in at Smiley Creek, Idaho (U87)

Camping and showers available on the field, or rooms available at the lodge. Chuck Wagon Dinner Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. Social hour 6:30, dinner at 7:00. Dinner approx. \$15. Please RSVP for the Chuck Wagon Dinner on the 13<sup>th</sup> to Mel Rosema, (801) 292-4987

Float trips and horseback riding both days.  
Contact Cindy Corbitt: (801) 292-9932

For lodging, call (208)774-3547  
Rooms are reserved for fly-in pilots.

### September 28

Mineral Canyon Cleanup

### October 11, 12, 13

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual UBCP Fall Fly-in at Mineral Canyon

The regular monthly meetings of the Utah Back Country Pilots Association are held on the last Wednesday of each month at Skypark Airport (BTF). The meetings begin at 7:00 upstairs in the main building. **PLEASE NOTE: No meeting will be held in July.**

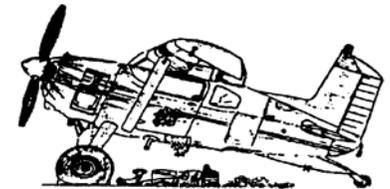
The UBCP information line is now active. The phone number is (801) 583-0342. Call this number to get the latest back country information or to leave a message for the Board of Directors.

## Directions

-Steve Durtschi

Our Utah Back Country Pilots Board of Directors tasked me with providing a sketch of the UBCP.

Why are we organized? What are we accomplishing? Where do we hope to be next year? In five years?



## WHY THE UBCP?

For the record, the UBCP was "born" during a conversation on 122.9 MHz, at 7,000 feet, southbound around Snowville, UT, in July, 1997. Several pilots were returning from another memorable flight from the Idaho back country. As had been the case for many years, about the time the valley is coming into view, and the Idaho wilderness is becoming another notation in the log book, someone asks, "what's wrong with us?". "Idaho is such a wonderful place. The recreational landing strips are secure and there is an organization in place to protect and maintain them. We have a handful of strips as beautiful as anything in Idaho. Why aren't we doing anything to protect them?" That was the first time, to my knowledge, that anyone suggested we organize in an effort to protect Utah's back country landing strips.

Out of curiosity, the next day I called the BLM in Price and asked them what they could tell me about the landing strip at Mexican Mountain. About the same time, we learned that the BLM rescinded the airplane right of way at Mineral Canyon – a strip long used by on-demand charters to ferry rafters to and from the Green River. It soon became clear that if someone did not speak up, the Utah recreational landing strips could disappear completely.

## THE MISSION OF THE UBCP

At the outset, we believed that as pilots, our first and primary mission was to promote safety. We could have a manicured landing strip in every canyon, but if we weren't safe pilots our purpose would be defeated. One incident is too many.

One way the UBCP meets our goal of safety first is by disseminating information. Many people have contributed to the Utah landing strip data base. This data base is free to

anyone, not just UBCP members. We will share every bit of information we have just for the asking.

We also meet our primary goal of safety by devoting a good share of space in the UBCP newsletter to safety issues. The excellent contributions by Rob Hunter, Bill Meine, Brent Watson, Hal Hilburn, and others are good examples of survival, education, and landing strip safety and information-related topics.

The second goal of the UBCP is to protect Utah's recreational landing strips. Why would a landing strip need "protection"? Anyone reading the national aviation magazines knows that airports are disappearing at an alarming rate. Remote recreational landing strips are closing at a far greater rate. One can count the recreational landing strips in California and Colorado on one hand. Montana has only a few. Only Idaho seems secure in preserving several dozen, and then only because some very far-sighted people championed them many years ago.

Very few strips will ever be opened once closed. Wilson Bar on the Salmon River and Rodgersberg in Hells Canyon are exceptions that come to mind. Closed by the Forest Service, Wilson Bar was successfully challenged and re-opened. Tom Jensen of the Washington Pilot's Association has worked tirelessly and almost single-handed to open Rodgersberg in Hells Canyon in Oregon. This strip was recently opened – and then immediately closed for almost a year when a brush fire was inadvertently started by a clean up crew mowing the weeds. Both of these success stories have one thing in common: the tireless dedication of a few individuals.



Mexican Mountain

Unfortunately, the success stories are few and far between. Taylor Flat near Flaming Gorge was closed and obliterated after an EA (Environmental Assessment) asked for by Daggett County, who volunteered to maintain the strip, concluded that the loss 4.4 acres of sagebrush was unacceptable. Recently, the Montana Recreational Airstrip Committee attempted to re-

open the landing strip at Ming Bar. A government EA recommended against it and the request was denied. The Ming Bar project eventually made the local news, and for their efforts, the Montana group received biased and negative exposure. Off-road vehicles and power boaters are welcome to the lands surrounding Ming Bar, but not airplanes. This past winter, the Vernon landing strip was closed by the BLM. The UBCP contacted the BLM and developed a written plan to mitigate the agencies reasons for closing the Vernon strip. The Salt Lake City BLM Office is, at present, luke warm at best, to our proposal and the strip remains closed.



Jackie Martin takes off from Mineral Canyon

### How Does One "Save" a Landing Strip?

UBCP's second goal of saving and protecting our remote landing strips is achievable. First, if the strip is legal, it should be used. The UBCP does not support illegal activity. We will not achieve our goals by extremist means. Many strips have no official protection, but are still legal to use by the public. Mexican Mountain falls into this category. The more a strip is used, the more we can convince the agency controlling it that it is in the public's best interest to keep it open. The next step for strips like these on Federal lands is to apply for a permanent "right of way". This is not a difficult process. The BLM has granted a right of way at Mineral Canyon, Fry Canyon, and Hidden Splendor. The UBCP is the "Airport Manager" at these locations. The right of way allows on-going maintenance and insures the survival of the landing strip. The right of way is key to getting the strip on the sectional charts. Then, maybe a magazine article or two appears, more people visit, and before long the landing strip is a well known destination. This is the best thing that can happen to the strip. Mineral Canyon is a good example.

As we have seen, recognition by the controlling agency is the key. Landing strips on state lands can be leased. The UBCP leases the landing strip at Happy Canyon from the State of Utah. This is fairly expensive (about \$1,000/year), but

legitimizes the strip and in our opinion is well worth it. This process also allows the strip to be added to the sectional chart.

### **As an Individual, What Can I do?**

Individual effort is the key to our success. My advice is get involved. Wherever you go, be an ambassador for aviation. I believe that the UBCP's greatest asset is the diplomatic relationship we have fostered with the various agencies we have worked with. I have found that for the most part, the people in these agencies are good, honest folks who will respond to professional, diplomatic visitors. In addition to the BLM, we are fortunate to have a very good rapport with the state lands people who write the lease for Happy Canyon. This past year, we met with the state in an effort to reduce the yearly lease fee. They agreed with our request and are working to help us create a new classification for the UBCP which will allow the fee to be reduced. (We are currently at the least expensive classification possible.)

Get involved. Hal Hilburn and I recently attended the BLM Initial Planning Meeting for the Parashaunt National Monument on the Arizona Strip. The beautiful Grand Gulch strip is inside this monument. The rules are in the process of being written for the monument and the future use of this strip will only be considered if some member of the public brings it to the manager's attention and get it on the agenda. The Parashaunt BLM manager had no idea that the Grand Gulch strip was used as much as it is. He stopped me in the middle of a sentence and said he had never heard the term "recreational landing strip", and asked exactly what that was. Before we left, he invited us to give a presentation to the BLM



in St. George on recreational landing strips this fall.

Get involved. Be an ambassador. Be a salesman. Avoid a confrontation in the field at all costs. If there are horses and campers at one end of the strip, park at the other end. Aviation does not need one more detractor, and you may be able to turn one's negative opinion around by simply being extra considerate.

### **UBCP's Third Goal**

Safety, protection, and finally, conservation. The UBCP hopes to insure that generations to come can enjoy the back country. I love to remind people that only footprints are left at the landing strip. We will see articles in future newsletters promoting environmentally friendly camping.

### **UBCP's Future**

So, that's where we are now. We have a state landing strip lease, BLM rights of way on three landing strips, and a healthy relationship with state and federal officials. Where do we go from here?

In addition to maintaining what we have, there are still several strips that need official protection. Utah's premier landing strip at Mexican Mountain, while legal to use, is not officially protected. There is talk about a San Rafael Swell National Monument. This new monument would include both Mexican Mountain and Hidden Splendor. If this monument comes to fruition, aviation will have to become an agenda item in the management plan. In the course of the monument planning, we hope to develop a working relationship with our state divisions of aeronautics. Pat Morely is the new Director of the Utah State Aeronautics Division. Pat is a great guy and is sympathetic to back country issues and is very enthusiastic about aviation in Utah. We wish him a long and successful career and hope that we can be of assistance to the division on back country issues.

The BLM recently purchased the private ranch at Range Creek. This beautiful ranch had a marvelous landing strip that could be easily rehabilitated. The BLM officer in charge of Range Creek has contacted the UBCP and asked about opening the landing strip. This could be one of the grandest locations for aviators in the west. It will require a lot of work on our part, but will be a legacy for generations.

I recently had the opportunity to provide an air tour for a few officials representing a national conservation group. They were investigating some private lands they may acquire to set aside as open space. What a perfect opportunity while they were captive, traveling in the airplane, to educate them on the environmentally friendly method aviation is to visit sensitive lands. We landed on a private strip and they were able to hike around the area for a while. (I could hardly wait to say only foot prints are left at that landing strip!) They had never considered flying to this location before, and indicated that it may be possible to keep the strip open for public use should they acquire the land.

So, you can see, the UBCP has a lot to do. We have three goals, a few successes, and a plan for the future. We need your participation. Come join us on the last Wednesday of each month at Skypark Airport. We have informative speakers that support our goals. If we all get involved, we can make a difference.

## Tax Exempt Status

The UBCP is now registered as a 501 (c) 3 corporation. What does this mean? It means that your donation to the UBCP can now be tax exempt. For donations to the UBCP, you should ask for and receive a receipt. This receipt will enable you to consider your donation to the UBCP as a donation to a charitable organization. This is a significant step for our organization. Thank you to Dale Kimsey for his work in accomplishing this very important step.

### THANK YOU

In response to our plea for funds to help defray the legal costs associated with the Hidden Splendor right of way, and the legal help we received from the Blue Ribbon Coalition, the following have made donations as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. The UBCP board of directors wishes to extend our deepest thanks for your help in defraying these costs.

Bill Ahlstrom	Shad Anderson	Dr. Ronald Apfelbaum
Michael Beus	Steve Blomquist	Kent Bond
Bruce Brideford	Calvin Brubaker	David Chuljian DDS
Bill Bruce	Doug Compton	Corbitt's Car Care
Reg Cridler	Bruce Crouch	Mark Davis
Steve Durtschi	Barbara Hanson	Kenneth Eldredge
Steven Harless	Dale Gardner	Richard and Rita Erickson
Steven Gilman	Larry Hall	Mary & Eugene Foushee
Harry Harden	T. Darryl Hickey	Matt & Holly Haag
Rob Hunter	Gregory Illes	Charles Jarecki
Steve Johnston	Dr. Dell Keyes	Daniel Lilja
Larry Luckinbill	R. C. Maclennan	Vincent Mancini
Jackie Martin	Dr. John Mohr	Brad Mullen
Dan Nelson	Jamie New	Pat Newton
Keith Osojnak	John Parish	Frank Protiva
Charles Reeve	Jon Robinson	Rocky Mtn. Kitplanes
Mel Rosema	Chuck Schroll	Karl Spielman
Chris Tuckfield	Laurie Tyler	Zadoc B. St. John
Alan Tower	Brent Watson	James Wise
Crista Worthy	Tom Wrobel	Rex Zollinger

## Hidden Splendor

-by Karl Spielman

I'd like to tell you a little about the history of the Hidden Splendor Airstrip in southeast Utah, and its owners, Floyd Odlum and Jackie Cochran. In case you've not yet had the opportunity to visit, Hidden Splendor is set in a magnificent canyon where Muddy Creek cuts through the San Rafael Reef, at the site of the famous Delta uranium mine. This strip is one of the crown jewels of the Utah back country and it has an interesting connection to some of this country's most famous aviation heritage.

The Delta Mine was a contemporary of the world famous MiVada mine, discovered by Charlie Steen in the Big Indian District south of Moab, Utah, and together they triggered a mineral rush that rocked the entire Colorado Plateau. After its discovery in 1952, the Delta mine was purchased in 1957 by

Floyd Odlum and his wife Jackie Cochran, who renamed it, Hidden Splendor.



Hidden Splendor Airstrip from the Delta Mine

Although Amelia Earhart has more name recognition, it was her close friend, Jackie Cochran, who had the greater impact on American aviation. Jackie was brash and confident, and in the fabulous air racing circuits of the late 1930's, Jackie competed with the likes of Roscoe Turner, Howard Hughes, and Jimmy Doolittle. She won the transcontinental Bendix Trophy Race in 1938, crossing the finish line in her silver P-35 with only a few minutes of fuel left in her tanks. During WWII, she started the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP's). After the war, she was a regular visitor to Pancho Barnes' Happy Bottom Riding Club at Muroc Dry Lake where she became close friends with Chuck Yeager and many other famous test pilots. In 1953, she was the first woman to break the sound barrier, and still holds more speed and altitude records than any other American, man or woman.

Floyd Odlum also figured prominently in mid 20th century history. He was the son of a small town minister who began working at an early age, and eventually put himself through college and law school. By the time he bought Hidden Splendor, he was the highest paid CEO in America, and sat on the board of many charitable organizations and foundations. As Chairman of RKO Studios in Hollywood, he was thought to be the only man capable of getting the controversial movie "Citizen Kane" made, due to fear of reprisals by the powerful William Randolph Hearst. He was CEO of Convair Corporation, (which later became General Dynamics), during the heyday of the dawning jet age. His experience with the War Production Board gave him the unique ability to hurriedly push Convair's Atlas missile program into a man-rated status after the Soviets successfully launched Yuri Gagarin into orbit. The Atlas, named for his Atlas Corporation, which virtually controlled the uranium industry, eventually orbited all of our Mercury astronauts. Dwight Eisenhower, in his memoirs, credits Floyd and Jackie with personally convincing him to run for president in 1951.

Jackie was born in abject poverty and left school in the third grade, though she retired from the Air Force as a Colonel. Floyd and Jackie met in 1932 and were married a few years later. He adored her spirit and built several of her famous

aircraft, including the Northup "Gamma" racer, and a two place Gee Bee C8 racer. Later, she flew "Beguine", a highly modified P-51 C named after a group of powerful female mystics of the twelfth century, and a Lockheed F-104 G Starfighter. Floyd and Jackie were lifetime sweethearts, but his death in 1976 finally broke her spirit and her health began to decline. She asked to be buried with a doll that she had won as a child, and a sword presented to her by the Air Force Academy. The latter, she said, she wanted in case she had to fight her way out of hell.

The Utah Back Country Pilots are proud that we can preserve not only a stunning back country destination airport, but also a little piece of American history. Our search continues on this fascinating story, and someday we hope to find a photo of Floyd and Jackie on their way through southeast Utah in a Beech Staggerwing or maybe even a converted PBY "Catalina". After all, they **MUST** have visited, to be struck with the impression, **Hidden Splendor.**

For us to be able to continue to do this work we are going to need your help. Many of you already support these types of back country airstrip projects through your hard work at cleanup parties and your membership in UBCP, and together we've accomplished a lot. During the effort to protect Hidden Splendor, the UBCP encountered a legal challenge to our proposed Right-of-Way by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA). UBCP board members decided that this airstrip was worth fighting for. **A favorable precedent had to be set.** We joined with the BLM to bring our case before the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) in Virginia. We were granted "Intervener" status, which means that UBCP is now an official stakeholder in future discussions about Hidden Splendor, including its possible **inclusion** in the San Rafael National Monument. The IBLA ruled in favor of UBCP and the BLM, and against SUWA. The right-of-way was granted.

This victory of reason over extremism came at a price. The costs, although a bargain by legal standards, still threaten to deplete our treasury. We think these actions will be few, but we realize that inevitably there are legal costs associated with airports and airplanes, especially in the back country. We need your help and tax deductible contribution to continue on our course, and accomplish our objectives. **Please use the form at the back of this newsletter for your contribution.** Thanks for your participation.

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## Thank You, Richfield

The Richfield Fly-in left many VERY impressed with the hospitality and organization of the good folks in Richfield. Pilots were greeted with a cold drink and a place to park. Hamburgers and hot dogs were the fare for dinner on Friday night after a close look at the static displays. Breakfast included pancakes, sausage, bacon, and eggs. The best part of the whole affair was the friendly hospitality afforded all who attended. UBCP especially thanks the Richfield folks for donating the proceeds to the UBCP. THANK YOU!

## Around the State

-by Rob Hunter

### Report from the Dutch John Fly-in:

Bob Stucklen and his son Lowell flew up from Colorado on Friday with an oar-raft in the back of their C-182. My wife, June, and I flew up Saturday morning with an inflatable two person kayak in the back of the Maule. We got our river stuff together and called Green River Outfitters who promptly picked us up and took us to the put-in spot just below the dam. Shortly after getting on the river we looked up to see a pretty yellow airplane circling overhead. We later learned that it was Herb Holt and Dave Edgerly. The four of us had a leisurely float down the river and took time to play in the class II rapids and have a picnic. Along the way we saw hundreds of huge trout in the clear water and almost as many fishermen trying to catch them. After about four hours on the river we got to the take-out spot where Green River Outfitters picked us up and took us back to the airport. There we met up with Dave and Herb and got a closer look at the Piper Colt that we had seen from the river earlier.

We borrowed a car from UBCP member Bob McCall (thanks, Bob!) and drove to the Flaming Gorge Lodge for a great prime rib dinner. We got back to the airport in time to watch the beautiful sunset. Camping in the grass and sagebrush field near our airplanes was convenient and pleasant. Although



Camping at Dutch John

Dutch John is a paved airport, we never saw another arriving or departing airplane other than those of our group. The next morning after breakfast we all flew back home.

Although there were only six people and three airplanes who attended, we all had a great time. I have talked to several people who had planned on coming, but decided to not come, based on the forecast high winds of 60mph. Luckily those winds never developed. I think other members decided not to come because the location was not as exciting as some of the short dirt airstrips in Southern Utah.

Please let us know what locations YOU think would be good ones for future fly-ins and what kinds of activities you would like to have available. You can give us your ideas by leaving a message on the UBCP voice mail at (801) 583-0342.

### **PIREP on Needles Outpost:**

Needles Outpost is a beautiful 4,500 ft long dirt runway about 35 miles south of Canyonlands Field and right on the edge of Canyonlands National Park. The runway is oriented 07-25 at an elevation of 4,950 ft. Parts of the runway are pretty soft, especially the west end, where we are asked to park. The facilities available there include a store, small restaurant, campground, car gas and showers.

Unfortunately, UBCP has received several negative reports from members about their visits. All of these reports have been about disagreements with, or being made to feel unwelcome by the proprietors, Gary and Tracey. UBCP also receive positive reports from pilots who visit there, but we feel the need to enumerate the proprietor's rules for visiting there.

I went there earlier this summer to chat with Gary and Tracey. They lease the airstrip and surrounding land, and they have the right to make rules they need to operate the airstrip, or close the airstrip entirely. Here are the rules that are currently in place. Any one that lands is required to check in at the store and to pay a \$20 landing fee, unless you have a meal in the restaurant or camp in the campground. According to Gary, the landing fee is to help cover the cost of maintaining the runway. Camping is \$15/night and is only allowed in the campground. Shower use is an additional \$3. You would be hard pressed to spend more than \$20 buying a meal for two people. The restaurant is open from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. Three of us ate lunch for less than \$20, and we had a pleasant talk with Gary and Tracey.

At the time this article was written, pilots are welcomed as long as they adhere to the above rules. If you have questions, feel free to call them at (435) 979-4007 or check out their website at [canyonlandsneedlesoutpost.com](http://canyonlandsneedlesoutpost.com).

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## **Brush Pilot – Southern Utah Report**

-by Hal Hilburn

Adventure in the southern part of the state continues to provide great excitement. Several airfields have recently improved their cross-wind strips... and better yet, they're DIRT. Yep, the one at Bryce Canyon looks like an international strip just waiting conditions to use it for landings and take-offs. Even with no wind or better yet a little cross wind condition, it provides excellent conditions for practice. The cross wind runway is about 100 feet wide and at least 3500 feet long, with runway end markers. However.... remember the density altitude FAA Supplement you have stored away in your closet. Get it out and read up on it. The field elevation is 7586 feet. Combine this with a hot afternoon, and a full load of passengers, and you will have your hands

full on take off. Without a little preflight preparation you just might stay in ground effect most of the way down the valley before you have sufficient airspeed to climb. Call on 122.8 10 to 15 miles out and ask the airport personnel to call Ruby's Inn for a shuttle to the lodge for a fine meal and a good time looking through the gift shops. Horses and four wheelers are also for rent, or you can catch a shuttle into the park with stops at all the view points for photos and exploration. There are also several hiking trails along the shuttle's route.



Windsock at Boulder

Looking for some real hiking adventures? Fly into Boulder airstrip. We took our mountain bikes and rode into the town of Boulder, a couple of miles, down hill most of the way. The museum there provided a great education about the area and the ancient Indians that lived there. There are several restaurants in town, along with a couple of lodges and gas stations. We whooshed out...!! And hitched a ride back up the hill in the back of a pick up.

Just to the south of the tie downs is a trail head. The trail takes you into a red rock canyon, then all the way down to the Escalante airstrip at the bottom. The trail follows a small stream and it looks easy, but it clearly is an all day hike. You could leave a plane at Escalante, shuttle passengers to Boulder, and hike all the way to the waiting plane at the bottom of the trail. No permit is required, but a sign in book entry is requested. There is no fuel nor are there tie downs available at Boulder. Bring your own, or plan on using ROCK CHOCKS. There are plenty around to be used. Look out for traffic crossing the end of the strip as this is used by both autos and aircraft. Don't use the south half of the strip either. It's very rutted.

For fishing mid state at a Minersville State Park, land at Beaver. You can ride a bike about five miles to the west along a dirt road that almost goes straight to the reservoir. According to the park attendant, this is a prize fishing area. The fishing proclamation allows you to keep only the monsters. The larger and medium fish are catch and release only. Artificial bait and flies only are allowed. There is a nice camp site with clean rest rooms and showers, and great accommodations for RVs with electricity and water hook ups available. Back at the airport, there is a self service fuel island, and a DIRT CROSS WIND STRIP.

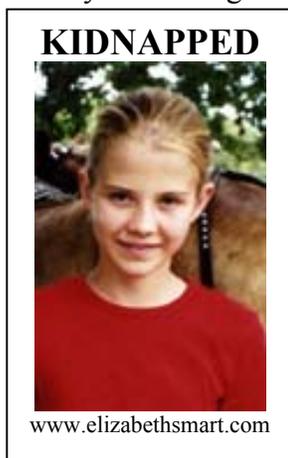
More dirt needed? Try Tuweep, and visit Claire Roberts the famous ranger that keeps a Cessna 170 tied down at the strip. He can be reached at [Clair\\_Roberts@nps.gov](mailto:Clair_Roberts@nps.gov). He is leaving Tuweep and is headed for Alaska the end of July for reassignment at Sitka. He needs to have water, and traded a spot of the planet that receives 1/2 inch of water per year, for a spot that receives over 100 inches a year. I think he plans to build an ark. He will be missed, as he is a good friend and host to all that fly into Grand Canyon National Park.

Dirt for sale! I saw an ad in the local newspaper, "Airport for Sale: Beryl International Airport (1L6)", a sort of International Airport. It looks like it is up for sale; hanger, airstrip, adjoining acreage, and tumbleweeds. Asking price about \$165,000.00. Phone numbers can be sought out in the AOPA book 435-477-8911.

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## UBCP looks for Elizabeth...

-by Matt Haag



“Richfield unicom, Cessna 170HT, 10 miles north, airport advisory please.”

“0HT, Richfield unicom, winds are 220 at 29 gust 42, temperature 37 Centigrade, altimeter 2968. Favored runway is the intersecting southwest dirt runway, but landing is at your own risk”.

“Richfield traffic, 0HT 8 miles north, we’ll be overhead pattern entry to a left downwind, landing southwest in the dirt, Richfield...”

Not exactly ideal conditions... But at least the wind is right down the dirt runway. It’s time to put it on the ground before the fellow sitting behind me deposits his lunch down the back of my shirt. Besides, all three of us could use a break from my pitiful efforts at keeping the old bird coordinated on this hot and blustery afternoon.

Back and forth the three of us have weaved across the Sevier River Valley at low level. We have been airborne for nearly three hours slowly working our way south from Ephraim and arriving in Richfield, maneuvering as far as we could safely fly up and down the tributary canyons, and scrutinizing the countryside for something... anything.

All the fellows hanging out at the Richfield airport on this dusty Saturday afternoon came out to grab a wing strut to keep the ol’ gal from blowing away as we refueled. It was also awful nice of ‘em to help us walk the bird out to the runway in the gusty winds for the takeoff... all 50 feet of it!

It was a long, hot and uncomfortable afternoon. But my back seat passenger kept it together the whole time... well, almost. He made it all the way back to the Salt Lake Valley. Somewhere over Draper as we bounced and yawed all over the sky, he lost his snack from the Richfield airport. Bless his heart, he stretched the neck of his shirt out and ralphed right down the inside... just to save the back of my head and everything else within hurling distance. Yep it was my fault too! I couldn’t find the sic-sacs fast enough and made the mistake of assuming he’d be all right. I mean the worst was over, right? Wrong.

This low level mission had been a bust. We’d seen cows, sheep and chickens; campers, hikers, horseback riders; motorbikes, ATVs, and jet-skis; and a guy and a gal skinny-dippin’ in a mucky stock pond (really gross!)... but no sign of a young woman in red pajamas, suspicious vehicles, or any guilty-looking individuals.

It was really hard to imagine having any success covering that much ground, in those conditions, and bouncing along at 80 miles per hour. But time was crucial (and still is as I tap-tap-tap on my keyboard), and if there was the slightest chance of finding the girl or her abductor; that chance was most certainly worth our minor discomfort and an afternoon of less than optimal flying conditions. Our thoughts and prayers have been and continue to be with Elizabeth Smart and her family.

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Did you know there is a back country e-mail list? If you have a question about back country flying in Utah there is a good chance that someone on the list knows the answer. To sign up, send an e-mail to [majordomo@lists.xmission.com](mailto:majordomo@lists.xmission.com). In the body of the e-mail type “subscribe ubcp” (don’t use the quotes). You can leave the subject line blank and shouldn’t add any other words. You will then be sent an e-mail with an authorization code. Then you need to send another e-mail to [majordomo@lists.xmission.com](mailto:majordomo@lists.xmission.com) with that authorization code line in the body of your message. That’s all you need to do to enjoy the wisdom of your fellow pilots.

UTAH BACK COUNTRY PILOTS

Skypark Airport  
1887 South Redwood Road #16  
Woods Cross, UT 84087



Air Mail to Master Pilot:

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**UBCP Web Site**

The internet address for the UBCP's new web site is [www.UtahBackCountryPilots.org](http://www.UtahBackCountryPilots.org). The searchable database of Utah's back country airstrips is now fully functional. If you have corrections, additions, photos, (JPEG, about 80,000 pixels, i.e. 200x400) or additional comments on the airstrips, please e-mail them to Rob at [ubcp-rob@attbi.com](mailto:ubcp-rob@attbi.com). He will add them to the database. Many other great features are planned, including a bulletin board where we can share up to the minute information about our back country airstrips

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**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. Please make copies as needed for others to join the fun of flying the back country.

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**Recreational Airstrip Preservation Donation**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**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 501 (c) 3 qualified not for profit organization, is to be used for the preservation of back country airstrips and is fully tax deductible**