



Your town. Your Neighbors. Your Newspaper.

- [HOME](#)
- [Comments](#)
- [Search News](#)
- [Advanced Search](#)
- [Web Directory](#)
- [Articles by Date](#)

Spanish

NEWS

- [TOP STORIES](#)
- [WEATHER](#)
- [TRAFFIC CAMS](#)
- [NATION/WORLD](#)
- [OUR TOWNS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [Stocks](#)
- [Mortgages](#)
- [Legal Notices](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [LETTERS](#)
- [SUBMIT LETTER](#)
- [POLLS](#)
- [OBITUARIES](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [COUGARBLUE](#)
- [PREP SPORTS](#)
- [LIFE & STYLE](#)
- [UV/Entertainment](#)
- [CELEBRATIONS](#)
- [MOVIE TIMES](#)
- [GAMES](#)
- [COMICS](#)
- [PHOTO GALLERY](#)

AD RATES

- [Retail](#)
- [Classified](#)
- [Pre-print](#)
- [Web](#)

SERVICES

- [Home Delivery](#)
- [Going on Vacation?](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [News Tips](#)
- [Photo Reprints](#)

Conservation groups sue Utah county over park roads

Date October 14, 2005

Jennifer Talhelm

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- A southern Utah county violated the Constitution by opening trails and streams in national parks and recreation areas to off-road vehicles, three conservation groups contend in a federal lawsuit.

In the lawsuit, filed Thursday in Salt Lake City, Earthjustice, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Wilderness Society ask the court to stop Kane County, contending the county's actions violate Bureau of Land Management policies and a constitutional clause which gives federal law supremacy.

"The county has been warned up and down," said Ted Zukoski, lawyer for Earthjustice. "Kane County has been acting like a schoolyard bully."

The lawsuit marks the latest turn in a years-long feud between Kane County officials, the BLM and environmentalists over who should control local roads.

In 2003, county officials removed more than 30 BLM signs meant to close sensitive areas to off-road vehicles. This year, the county began designating routes for off-road vehicle use in violation of BLM policy.

In August, it passed an ordinance -- in contradiction to federal rules -- that opened trails and stream beds in Bryce Canyon and Zion national parks, the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Kane County officials have said they were trying to protect property rights and vital local interests.

On Thursday, County Commissioner Mark Habbeshaw said he welcomed the lawsuit because he wants the courts to resolve the dispute.

Environmentalists said the routes the county wants to open could erode fragile land and destroy quiet, scenic hiking trails.

But their bigger concern is that other counties will follow Kane County's lead.

"Road claims like these have become the weapon of choice by modern-day sagebrush activists trying to wrest control from federal government," said Heidi McIntosh, conservation director for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. "It's time to stop."

Habbeshaw said Kane County deliberately picked a fight with the BLM over the issue of pulling the federal government's signs and putting up county signs that conflict with the agency's policies.

"If environmental groups have filed litigation first, my opinion is

BROWSE TODAY'S NEWSPAPER ADS

[Search Ads](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[PLACE AN AD](#)

[FIND A JOB](#)

[FIND A CAR](#)

[FIND A HOME](#)

RSS Feeds

that puts us on the road we need to be on," Habbeshaw said.

BLM officials declined to comment on the lawsuit other than to agree the problem needs to be resolved.

"We have to trust the courts to work it out in a fair and equitable way," said Laura Williams, spokeswoman for the Utah office.