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## Herbert names influential Dem as senior adviser

Ted Wilson » He will head a mostly conservative group on environmental issues.

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The Salt Lake Tribune

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Updated: 11/05/2009 09:43:20 AM MST

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Gov. Gary Herbert says he's had enough with the bickering and incivility and relentless contentiousness suffocating debate over Utah's land and energy resource use.

So he's hired Ted Wilson, an ardent Democratic wilderness champion, to advise him on environmental matters with the help of a mostly conservative panel of opinion-makers.

The former Salt Lake City mayor, former executive director of the Utah Rivers Council, former vice president and board member with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, former director of the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics and 1988 Democratic candidate for governor, will lead Herbert's new Balanced Resource Council.

Wilson will be an "inside adviser," Herbert said during a Wednesday news conference at the Capitol, adding, "I think this is a pretty bold move today."

The panel's agenda already is full, what with active skirmishing over recreational road access, oil and gas development on public lands, wilderness designation, air quality and water allocation.

Herbert wants meaningful discussion and debate and maybe even solutions. "I don't believe being a good steward of Mother Earth and developing our natural resources need to be mutually exclusive," he said. "Frankly, I'm tired of the bickering. ... I believe we need everyone at the table even if we don't agree."

Wilson, 70, will collect a \$65,000 annual salary, but the council is all-volunteer. Members include Rep. Mike Noel, R-Kanab; San Juan County Commissioner Lynn Stevens; two former U.S. Bureau of Land Management directors, Pat Shea and Kathleen Clarke; Governor's Energy Policy Advisor Dianne Nielson; Leonard Blackham, executive director of the state Department of Agriculture and Food; Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Mike Styler; Amanda Smith, Utah Department of Environmental Quality executive director, and John Harja, Utah's public lands policy coordinator.

Noel and Stevens, among the most influential anti-environmentalists in the state, promised they would be open-minded about wilderness and other conservation measures; in fact, they said, they already are.

"I'm not a hard-nosed, non-compromising individual," said Stevens, a retired U.S. Army major-general.

Clarke served under President George W. Bush; Shea under President Bill Clinton. The rest of the appointees are members of Herbert's Cabinet.

Shea said he hopes for harmony and an end to expensive court battles over all-terrain vehicle and four-wheeler access on public lands. He also said it's possible the panel's future discussions could result in "conflagration."

But only of the verbal type -- the council is merely advisory. "We don't have any statutory power," Wilson said. "I don't think we should drive expectations too high. This is going to be a tough nut."

Wilson recalled when the Rivers Council had to back off its support of a mild Democratic water-conservation bill after Noel called him a "SUWA plant" and helped defeat the bill in the House. But Noel brought the measure back for another vote and it passed unanimously.

Wilson partially credits the thaw to a "Brokeback Mountain" joke he made to some cowboy caucus-like people Noel asked him to meet. Noel laughed until tears ran, Wilson said, even though no one else did.

Wilson, known as a skilled negotiator and eloquent defender of politics as a noble endeavor, said the council has scheduled its first meeting for Dec. 9. "It's not a whole new world until we produce something," he said. "I don't think we're going to make the world worse."

### **Shea still on DeChristopher's team**

Attorney Pat Shea, a volunteer on Gov. Gary Herbert's new Balanced Resource Council, said he sees no conflict between his future committee participation and his defense work for Tim DeChristopher, 28, who last year purposefully disrupted a federal oil and gas lease sale to protest the government's energy policies.

DeChristopher's felony case is now before U.S. District Judge Dee Benson.

"I will continue to vigorously represent him," Shea said during a Capitol news conference Wednesday. "I think most people wouldn't see a conflict of interest."

Herbert agreed. "Pat's a volunteer," he said.

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