

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Emery County Public Lands Council**  
**February 6, 2024**  
**10:00 AM**  
**Emery County Courthouse**  
**Canyon Conference Room**

**PLC:** Rod Player, Les Wilberg, Ben Grimes, Kim McFarlane, Ray Petersen, Varian Allen

**Absent:** Bruce Wilson, Leon McElprang, Sherrel Ward

**PL STAFF:** Jim Jennings (ECPL), Jan Olsen (Secretary)

**Visitors,** Keven Jensen Commissioner, Jordan Leonard Commissioner, Lynn Sitterud, Larry Ellertson (Curtis), Kent Wilson (Romney) Dal Gray (DOGM), Joron Hansen (Farm Bureau), Darren Olsen (USFS), Jaydon Mead, Elijah Waters and Dana Truman (BLM), Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Don Bennett & Terri Bennett (Trails), Wayne Ludington, Ed Geary, Kam Weihing, (public)

**Electronically:** Joel Brown (Sen Lee), Phil Stubblefield (public)

**1. Welcome**

Rod Player chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the mission statement to everyone.

**2. Approval of Minutes for January 2, 2023,**

Les Wilberg motioned to approve the January meeting minutes, and Ray Peterson seconded it. Motion passed.

**3. Welcome of a new board member.**

Varian Allen has just been appointed to the Public Lands Council.

**4. Mike Olsen, "Closed session to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation regarding Long Street, real property in Green River."**

This meeting was never a closed session; everything discussed was public knowledge. Kim McFarlane gave a background on this issue and stated that this has been going on for years and years. Many have gone to this trail and have been turned around or met with a fence and sign; others have been let through with no issues.

Attorney Mike Olsen stated that the road is open and can not be closed by anyone. You have every right to access that road. He suggested that the Road Department grade the roads to make them more noticeable to the public. The removal of signs will need to be done, and the gate removed.

If this becomes more of a problem, it can be decided through legal action.

Kim McFarlane motioned to request the Commission Board to move forward with this action and put it in on the commission meeting; Varian Allen seconded it, and the vote was carried.

\*Construction on the Little's Creek Mountain Bike Trail was then discussed. It is a 13-mile, non-motorized trail west of Joe's Valley Reservoir. The public comment period is open until Feb. 22.

## **5. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments**

- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

Agency reports then began with Truman from the BLM introducing a new acting district manager, Elijah Waters. Waters explained that he was from Colorado and had only been here for 96 days. Truman also announced the San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council Meeting on March 6 and 7. It will include a one-day field trip on the 6<sup>th</sup> and an office meeting on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>.

- **Emery Water Conservancy District**

No one in attendance

- **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**

No one in attendance

- **Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)**

Dal Gray from the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining reported that helium well permits have been increasing, and the one active mine was promisingly productive. Gas production remains steady. He also reported that the carbon sequestering process is not an easy process and would probably take two to three years. Lila Canyon Mine is closed.

- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**

No one in attendance

- **School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).**

Bryan Torgersen from the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) talked about the rebranding of SITLA to Trust Lands. The land exchanges between them and the BLM should be finalized by midsummer. He then spoke about the proposed closing of three roads: Calf Canyon, Calf Mesa, and Muddy Creek. He gave the reasons being considered and concluded that all three would likely be left open. Horn Shadow Solar then reported that additional acreage was added, making them the largest solar field in the county.

Liz Payton presented on the Solar projects that Horn Shadow construction starting soon.

- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**

Darren Olsen, Forest Ranger, again reiterated the scoping period for comments on the Little's Creek Bike Trail until Feb. 22. He also

announced that they have hired 11 summer YCC seasonal employees and some permanent employees. They are working on range improvements, and Chamberlain has met with grazers to implement range improvements. They are burning cleanup piles from completing logging operations north of Electric Lake.

- **Utah State Parks**

No one in attendance

- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**

No one in attendance.

- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**

No one in attendance

- **PLPCO**

Joel Brown reported this bill requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to withdraw a proposed rule relating to conservation and landscape health and prohibits the BLM from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing the proposed rule or any substantially similar rule.

- **Washington Delegation Staff**

Larry Ellertson reported The Public Lands Rule would establish the policy BLM needs to build and maintain the resilience of public lands in three primary ways:

- protecting the most intact, functioning landscapes,
- restoring degraded habitats and ecosystems, and
- making wise management decisions based on science and data across all plans and programs.
- Natural Access.
- Companies tie up permits on public lands.

Kent Wilson stated that Emery County had input in the recreation area before the BLM travel management plan, which was the most restricted route. Romney is trying to get things passed with immigration.

## **6. Commission Comments on Public Land Items**

Long street access is essential, will go up and take a look at it.

## **7. Additional Issues From Council Members**

Snow is in the 90% Getting up in the mountains, not much down here in the valley.

## **8. Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues**

Nothing at this time.

## **9. Adjourn**

Les Wilberg motioned to adjourn, and Rod Player seconded.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Emery County Public Lands Council is to represent the interests of the public land of Emery County and its citizens and to perform an advocacy role for local users and stakeholders; to work in partnership with federal and state agencies in fashioning management decisions and policies affecting lands within Emery County;

and to participate in the development, coordination, and implementation of the planning objectives of federal, state, and local entities to ensure harmony between the objectives of these various entities and the Emery County General Plan.

It is the intent and purpose of the Emery County Public Lands Council to aggressively preserve the community heritage of Emery County by vigorously participating in and influencing all public land planning and decision-making processes on behalf of and under the authority of the Emery County Commission.