

Meeting Minutes
Emery County Public Lands Council
November 5, 2024
10:00 AM
Administrative Building
Canyon Conference Room

PLC: Rod Player, Ray Petersen, Bruce Wilson, Leon McElprang, Les Wilberg
Ben Grimes, Kim McFarlane, Rod Player.

Excused: Sherrel Ward, Varian Allen

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

Visitors: Jordan Leonard, Commissioner; Keven Jensen, Commissioner;
Brandon Behling (DWR); Kyle Beagley (BLM); Bryan Torgerson, Andy
Bedingfield, Michelle McConkie, and Stephaine Barber (SITLA); Jessica
Mortensen (UDAF); Mark Chamberlain (USFS); Ryan Wilson (CFC); Dal Gray
(DOGM); Chris Wood (DWR); Brian Kurta (OR); Larry Ellertson (Rep. Curtis);
Nicole Nielson (PLPCO); Ed Geary (Public); Kent Wilson (Sen Romney).

Electronically: Joel Brown, Jayde Mead, Julie Johansen, Kim McFarlane

1. Welcome

Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that several applications for the board vacancies had been received. The county commissioners will approve decisions before the new board members begin serving the county in January.

2. Approval of Minutes for October 1, 2024

Ben Grimes motioned to approve the September meeting minutes with a few changes, and Ray Peterson seconded it. The motion passed.

3. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments

○ **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

Kyle Beagley reported that the land exchanges required by the Dingell Act have been signed this week, and a 45-day protest period will begin with hopes of a wrap-up by January or February. He continued by reporting that they have had some calls regarding solar applications, but policies on solar development on government land are pending.

Some comments from the board were that if solar is installed, there can no longer be public use, solar is not wanted, and to at least keep money here. Beagley replied that he was glad to hear how the county felt about it. Board members also noted that the General Plan and the BLM will address the solar impact and must comply with the county plan and directions. Beagley reported that the San Rafael Travel Management is fine-tuned, and there won't be many surprises.

He also added that the Millsite exchange is getting closer, and he will meet with Ferron City on Wednesday. The State RAC meeting was announced for Nov. 13 and 14, and the San Rafael RAC meeting is on Nov. 20.

Jurassic Monument is now closed for the season, and construction is beginning for the new, more visitor-friendly buildings can be built there. After recent washouts, adding more concrete will widen several dips on the desert roads. The public reported that the Rochester Panel had been vandalized. Beagley responded that they have cameras there, and a second law enforcement officer, Nathan Christensen, has been hired to help with these problems.

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

No one in attendance

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

Dal Gray reported that the coal seam fire near Kenilworth is being put out, and the cave-in at Morland is also being fixed. Fossil Rock Mine is hoping to be in production by mid-2025. It was reported that Joe's Valley Reservoir is being monitored for mining in that direction. A Class VI Primacy Well permit is being processed and submitted to the EPA. Two other states, Wyoming and South Dakota, have also requested these well permits over seven years ago. These permits are for carbon sequestration, and the agency has no stance.

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

Brandon Behling reported to the board that contractors are working on repair at the Fuller's Bottom Wildlife Refuge. Trout Unlimited has two proposed improvement projects on Huntington Creek to slow the flow and create a healthier environment for the fish. About 20 participants participated in a successful Youth Pheasant Hunt. Questions about the Sego Trail Head and Tribal Hunt permits were directed to the department.

Enforcing law enforcement on trespassing while hunting deer.
Discusse Muel Deer Plans 2025, Nov 7th public input. The Tribes are allowing more permits to hunt on their land.

- **Trust Lands Administration (TLA).**

Bryan Torgersen announced that the controversial solar lease below Cedar Mountain has been released. The Oil Rig Dome Spur Road has been rerouted to accommodate Horn Shadow Solar Fields, and the Sego Trail Head is also being considered for a reroute. At the south base of Cedar Mountain, lease options will be given to remove limestone and aggregates.

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

Mark Chamberlain from the Forest Service reported work for Wildlife Habitat areas and range improvements, including ponds, corrals, and springs to help with livestock distribution on the range. Small junipers are being chained to also help with wildlife habitats. Pile burning will be in the Boldger Canyon area, so heads up that smoke will be seen from there. The Deer Creek Mine area is being fenced. Grazers responded that they still need access to these areas. Christmas tree permits are on sale.

- **Utah State Parks**

No one was in attendance.

- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**

No one was in attendance.

- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**

Jessica Mortenson reports that water optimization grants are starting in January or February. San Rafael Agriculture is preparing for its Fair on January 16, 2025

- **PLPCO**

Nicole Nielson reported that the State adamantly opposes the BLM Public Lands Rule and urges the BLM to focus efforts on working closely with states, local governments, and stakeholders on rulemaking that will genuinely enhance active management and conservation of BLM lands within the framework of multiple use and sustained yield—working on the BLM Travel Management program. The state protests Bears Ears and Grand Staircase: merits and amicus briefs filed with the Supreme Court.

- **Washington Delegation Staff**

Joel Brown, please get out and vote.

Kent Wilson, representing Senator Mitt Romney, thanked the board and commented that while the public land boards in most areas are elected officials, they appreciate the citizens who serve in Emery County. The public lands bill started five years ago, and I was involved then as a commissioner. I am a chairman of the RAC on the San Raphael Swell, and I dispersed camping out there. The goal is to keep it the same as it always has been and not be cut off. Protect our Joe's Balley Boldering. They do not like the coal mines in that area, so watch for that.

Larry Ellertson, representing Rep. Curtis, met with the house speaker and discussed shared interests. The Federal Government needs to learn how to create a budget and live within it; too much spending is going on. He has agreed to move forward with the AI of Energy, diesel credit, and lowering the fuel cost. Look at the letters of intent; they should carry weight regarding the swell.

4. Commission Comments on Public Land Items

Commissioner Jordan Leonard, gate-up to Rilda, and update on Long Street litigation: Tonight's election will affect our County. When looking at the gate-up at Rilda, which has no trespassing on it, who is keeping the public out? We didn't want it to turn into the Long Street situation. They will work with law enforcement to ensure it gets worked out before too long. Long Street is in litigation.

5. Additional Issues From Council Members

. Jordan, we do consider conditional use. Coal mine and rock climbers, we want them all to be recreated multi-use.

6. Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues

Nothing at this time.

7. Adjourn

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.