

Meeting Minutes
Emery County Public Lands Council
February 4, 2025
10:00 AM

PLC: Rod Player, Ray Petersen, Bruce Wilson, Leon McElprang, Rod Player, Sherrel Ward, Varian Allen, Ben Grimes, Les Wilberg, Travis Richards, Andy Gordon, Kim McFarlane.

Excused:

PL STAFF: Jim Jennings (ECPL), Jan Olsen

VISITOR: Jordan Leonard, Commissioner; Keven Jensen, Commissioner; Dennis Worwood, Commissioner, Kyle Beagley, Nick LaFazio & Jaydon Mead (BLM); Dal Gray (DOGM); Ryan Wilson (CFC); Brian Kurta (DOR); Nicole Nielson & Clay Crozier (PLPCO); Wayne Ludington (SRBCH); Darren Olsen, Kevin Albrecht, Joshua Drake, Alex Eisley & Mike Scottorn (USFS); Larry Ellertson (Sen Curtis), Ron Dunn (Congr. Kennedy) Beth Williams & Ryan Jones (UDAF); Bryan Torgerson (SITLA); Don and Terri Bennett (EC Trails) Ed Geary (public); Julie Johansen (ETV).

Electronically:

1. Welcome

Chairman Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting. We have a presentation that will take place here in just a few minutes.

2. Approval of Minutes for December 3, 2024, and January 7, 2025.

Varian Allen motioned to approve the December minutes, and Ray Peterson seconded the motion, and the motion passed. Bruce Wilson motioned to approve the January minutes, Varian Allen seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. Presentation of Future Timber Management Plan, Forest Service

- The meeting involved discussions on timber management and forest health, focusing on the Manti-LaSalle Forest Service's efforts to manage forest resources and reduce wildfire risks.
- Key activities include fuel reduction, prescribed fire, stewardship agreements, and commercial timber sales to manage forest health and reduce wildfire risks.
- The Forest Service is dealing with challenges such as Spruce beetle epidemics, warming trends, and historic fire suppression efforts.
- There is a need for collaboration with other agencies and communities to effectively manage forest resources and implement strategies like the wildfire crisis strategy.
- The Forest Service is working on several timber sales and has plans for future treatments to manage forest resources and reduce wildfire risks.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of timber sales on recreation and trails, with discussions on balancing timber management with recreation needs.

- The Forest Service faces roadless areas, funding, coordination, and personnel challenges.

****Conclusion****

- The meeting highlighted the importance of active forest management in reducing wildfire risks and maintaining forest health. Collaboration with various stakeholders and addressing challenges is essential to achieving these goals.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning>

4. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments

- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**
Beth Williams and the Utah State Department of Agriculture reminded the group that the Water Optimization grant applications are open until Feb. 28 of this year.
- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**
Not in attendance
- **Utah State Parks**
Not in attendance
- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**
Forest Ranger Daren Olsen continued that industry is needed, and they are pushing timber sales despite challenges. The objection period on the Forest Service Plan closes on Friday, Feb. 7. He also noted that with the new administration in Washington D.C., everything is "kinda" on hold.
- **Trust Lands Administration (TLA)**
Brian Torgerson, State Trust Lands, reiterated that they are waiting to see what new administration laws and directions they receive. He invited the council to their Spring Board Meeting in Price. They have issued a gravel pit permit on Burma Road. He was asked about the royalties from Trust Land Funds, and he answered that the money is distributed throughout the state per capita with consideration to smaller school districts.
- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**
No one in attendance
- **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**
No one in attendance

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

Dal Gray reported that Legislation Bill 352 will now implement fines for noncompliance with Carbon Sequestration stipulations. Oil production continues to increase.

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

Kyle Beagley introduced the new Price Field Manager, Nick LaFazio, to the group. LaFazio then discussed his background in law enforcement with the BLM in California and Wyoming. He added that they are concerned about the graffiti on the Rock Art Panels and ask for assistance in watching these areas and reporting if they notice it. With the new administration, a hiring freeze is in effect.

- **PLPCO**

I think one of the first things I was already going to talk about this, but it was great that the Forest Service came and presented on the work that they're doing on their timber sales, but over the past year or so, our office has been a cooperating agency for the Forest Service.

Old Grove Forest Management would amend every forest plan to reflect this. You know, these plan amendments could affect active management, like what the Forest Service is trying to do, affect the industry, and that, you know, that information that was taken back, and the chief of the Forest Service I put a halt to that planning effort for now.

I'm just wondering if that's something that needs to be I revisited those because they're way more common than they initially thought. That's something that will be in the queue eventually. There are other species where they feel like they have much more information and can get there, but eventually, yeah.

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- **Washington Delegation Staff**

Senator Curtis has hit the ground running and is working on several things. Obviously, much attention has been drawn to the confirmation process of the recommendations for the president's staff and cabinet. The senator takes the responsibility of giving advice and consent to those nominees very seriously. He's vetting those to ensure he's comfortable with them. Because of that, he hasn't come. A bipartisan bill and Legislation it's called the Kids Safe Health Act deals with access to social media, which we're hearing about even at the state level this year in the legislature.

My name is Ron Dunn. I'm with Congressman Kennedy's office and I've got outreach for the four southeast counties including this Grand County, and I used to live right next door over in Price

5. Commission Comments on Public Land Items

Representative Malloy has a bill that she's introduced that would limit abuse of the Antiquities Act. A resolution came in through email about a resolution opposing the abuse of the Antiquities Act, and I just wanted to let public clients look at this. They requested the Commission to look at it and pass it.

6. Additional Issues From Council Members

But we've talked previously about hyperlinks on the minutes. For things like the public land use or the travel management plan, there should be a link to the information discussed in the minutes, a link to the final travel management plan document, and things like this.

7. Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues

Nothing at this time.

8. 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.