

Meeting Minutes  
Emery County Public Lands Council  
April 1, 2025  
10:00 AM

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**PLC:** Rod Player, Bruce Wilson, Varian Allen, Travis Richards, Kim McFarlane, Andy Gordon, Ben Grimes, Sherrel Ward, Kim McFarlane

**Excused:** Ray Petersen, Leon McElprang, Jan Olsen (assistant).

**PL STAFF:** Jim Jennings (ECPL)

**VISITOR:** Commissioner Jordan Leonard, Commissioner Keven Jensen, Commissioner Dennis Worwood, Nick LaFazio & Elijah Waters (BLM); Travis Gray, (DOGM), Nicole Nielson (PLPCO), Wayne Ludington (SRBCH), Darren Olsen (USFS), Ryan Jones (UDAF, Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Jay Humphrey (EWCD), Cash Stallings (DWRi), Chris Wood (DWR).

**Electronically:** Joel Brown (Senator Lee)

**1. Welcome**

Chairman Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Approval of Minutes for March 4, 2025.**

Bruce Wilson motioned to approve the February minutes, and Varian Allen seconded the motion, which passed.

Chairman Rod Player led a review of the Mission Statement, a crucial part of our annual meeting that reaffirms our shared purpose and commitment to the Emery County Public Lands Council's mission.

**3. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments**

**Utah State Department of Agriculture**

Ryan Jones reported that the Department has a couple of grant applications. The Utah Pollinator Habitat Grant closes on April 15th. There are applications for grazing improvement, a water project, and fencing. The Green River Crop School, a program designed to educate farmers on sustainable farming practices, will be held on April 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Green River Church Community Center, covering topics such as rootstock, organic farming, and soil health. Dinner will be provided by Ray's.

**Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**

Bryan Kurta reported they have been busy with the legislative session. The OHV program is looking to hire for a non-law enforcement position. The End Trails conference will take place at the end of April in Kanab on the 23rd and 24th, where the CRT team will be available to answer questions. A grant for outdoor recreation planning assistance is available from federal, state, and city sources. The Adopt the Outdoors' grant, a program that allows individuals to adopt a trail and receive funding to help clean and maintain a

specific section of the trail, is also available. Outdoor councils are beginning to meet and award projects.

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

Cash Stallings began by providing a legislative update for this part of the state. Bills and budgets on groundwater quality, such as House Bill 41, are essential. Promote the state water plan and the Emery Falls in the Western Colorado Watershed Council. Ongoing meetings and presentations. Working with Jay Humphrey, trying to update every five years. Encourage the sensible reuse of wastewater across the state. Staying up to date on water rights and the dates. PWR 107 claims set aside water for federal water use. Tribes, national parks, monuments, and those that need the water. In 1926, a federal BLM and Forest Service order was passed to reserve water rights across the state for stock water, domestic purposes, springs, and water holes. Water transfer shares can no longer be traded through an affidavit. Water optimization amendments have been made considerably over the last couple of years, including three projects: 75% off subsurface drip, automotive surge, and measurement and telemetry.

Water amendments last 5 years, secondary water. You have to meter all the water that goes out at a tier to users, and at a tiered rate. Emery County does not fall under this at the time.

Water commissioner, state employee distribution systems, and ensuring they receive their water promptly, as you are paying for. It's the board that decides how they get paid.

Brine mining interests lithium and precious metals, who should be in charge, and how it is regulated, and what royalties are. It will be looked at and regulated. We have lots of forms, and now they can be signed online. The budget for the last two years of the water network team in the Colorado Basin can be viewed on the website, which includes water rights, uses, and all information in one interactive place.

Colorado River's plan will revert to the 1922 plan; yes, it is being brought forward. We need an agreement, but no one agrees on this point.

### **Utah State Parks**

Tiffany reported that we have an opening for a manager. Water levels remain the same: 51% Milsite, 95% Huntington, and 97%. Docks will not be repaired for a few weeks. Moving forward with the zeroscape at Milsite. Huntington is replacing the irrigation system and hiring seasonal workers. Milsite open, showers on.

Nathan Martines, of Green River, is getting into their busy season. The watermelon crawl went well, and the campground fills up on weekends. A full-time position will be filled soon. The disc golf tournament will be at the end of April. Seasonal workers are all hired, looking forward to the busy season.

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

Darren Olsen has been logging over the last few years. Lowery water run off is where we have been working; it looks good. Getting rid of the beetles kills and cleans up the area. Gates are closed, and snow came off early this year. The higher country is better with the snow

pack, and wildlife gates open on April 15th. Scoping for the Watas Mine fire underground in San Pete County, and working on Grouse counts. The trail crew has been out on Old Pasture Canyon. Thanks to Leon for his help with the trails. Doing projects with the BLM and the Blue Trail Canyon in Ferron. With reduced staff and fewer seasonal employees, budget cuts will result in not hiring many this year, and we will adjust our setup accordingly. Range has met with permittees for plans for this summer. Grazing is regular for us, with no reduced restrictions: we hold stock water tickets and non-use claims to allow others access to the water.

No update on the Cleveland Reservoir project.

### **Trust Lands Administration (TLA)**

Bryan Torgersen reported that the board meeting on April 16 and 17 included a tour of Emery County, which featured stops at Fossil Rock/Wolverine Mine and the Solar Project, as well as oil and gas in Drunkard Wash. The Dingle exchange is reviewing all the property recordings and documenting the information. Emery County Commercial Lease Emery/Moore solar and natural gas on that lease. House Bill 103, Regarding State land access, stipulates that when selling land, the roads must be protected first before the sale occurs. 483 The school sold for no less than fair market value and granted grazers' first right to purchase. The spring auction at Hatt's Ranch is now available on the website.

<https://trustlands.utah.gov/work-with-us/surface/land-sales/>

The State Commission manages mineral lease money. Fifty percent of the revenue goes to SITLA, another twenty-five percent in royalties goes to the county general funds for land surrendered, and the remaining twenty-five percent is allocated to the counties with ore. The other funding is allocated to the Leta Fund and is distributed differently.

We, as the commission, are not in favor of providing incentives to solar companies and do not want to encourage any further solar development on public lands.

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

Chris Wood has been out for a few months with the legislative session. Legislative update bills passed ran through outside sources. Passed bill 8 to increase non-residence licence fees up to double, to increase revenue. 309 passed hunting licence required in new wildlife management areas class 1-3. To be on the boards, you have to have a hunting licence for the past 3 years to get on that board. 378 taxes on solar industries, wind energy, transmission, and nuclear waste. 149 guiding and outfitter strict regulations. 202 addresses private land on limited-entry elk units only. Board meeting and working meeting on YouTube on the 8th. RAC April 18th. Big Game opens now until April 24. Recruiting new RAC members. The natural archery competition in Price last weekend was a great success.

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

Travis Gray, the field manager, stated that a few bills have passed. The Carbon Emery collaborative group had to cancel the April meeting; the next meeting will be on August 20. Waiting for the Bronco expansion.

Urban has been working on diversion drainage from their location; they have put in a lot of effort on this for us. No leaking into waterways. Jeremy Winder was hired as a field inspector and brings a lot of experience.

Fossil Rock's service area: How to maintain transportation for coal being transported from the mine, Cottonwood Canyon Road, and the safety of these operations. We will discuss this at the next meeting, and then I can report back on it.

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

Nick LaFazio, Price field manager, and Elija Waters, district manager, are also here. Flights for the wild horses and burros, they have good feed but a lack of snow. We will be doing a gathering after July 2026. We currently have a total of 314, and next year, we plan to remove 180 of them. Jurassic Monument opens this weekend, off to a good start. The River Ranger Program is starting up this week. We are only able to have half of our seasonal workers. Enforce different RAC supplemental rules to implement them to help manage our lands. Help with camping in designated areas. As the management team, we will adopt a more hands-on approach for everyone. We will also be gaining one more field law enforcement officer.

### **PLPCO**

Nicole Nielsen reported that BLM has reauthorized gas leases near Wayne County. Co-agreement with BLM with the San Rafael recreation area to help outline what the state has to offer for resources. Outdoor recreation grant planning opportunities are now open for a month. Due to drought impacts throughout the state, a meeting on this issue is scheduled for April 16. RS277 has used a road in Carbon County; we would like to talk to them.

### **Washington Delegation Staff**

Joel Brown, a Washington-focused official worked to get the Office of the Interior confirmed with the Trump Administration. Legislative side reconciliation includes more Oil and Gas Wells on Federal Lands and Wildfire Mitigation.

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

Commissioner Jensen's Wild Horse and Burro Resolution. Have a council member from Public Lands report to the commission on a quarterly basis.

BLM has sent out letters for trails and wild horses. For Trails, conduct NEPA studies on trails instead of closing them as a thought.

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

Water report: 89% snow water further North, the better it gets, and South is struggling. By 9 miles, that area is really in bad shape. Land is going to

absorb a lot of the runoff. It's not looking great. A flyover operation can determine the amount of snow. Gipson Mine Road needs some help. Contact Justin Truman for more information about the road.

**9. Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues**

Nothing at this time.

**10. Adjourn**