

Meeting Minutes
Emery County Public Lands Council
June 3, 2025
10:00 AM

PLC: Rod Player, Kim McFarlane, Ben Grimes, Les Wilberg, Sherrel Ward, Varian Allen, Andy Gordon

Excused: Ray Petersen, Travis Richards, Leon McElprang, Bruce Wilson,

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

VISITOR: Commissioner Jordan Leonard, Commissioner Dennis Worwood, Commissioner Keven Jensen, Nicole Nielson (PLPCO), Darren Olsen (USFS), Bart Kettle (DOGM), Kyle Beagley, Nick LaFazio, Michael Tweddell, Jayden Mead (BLM), Larry Ellertson, Senator Curtis) Julie Johansen (ETV), Brian Kurta (Outdoor Rec), Wayne Ludington (SRBCH), Andy Bedingfield (TLA), Ryan Jones (UDAF), TJ Cook (DWR), Cindy McFarlane, Ron Dunn (Cong Kennedy)

Electronically: Nathan Martinez (USP), Akalii Windwalker -Leo Hardy

1. Welcome

Chairman Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes for May 6, 2025.

There was mention that there were some spelling mistakes, and a paragraph was repeated. Those have been corrected. Ben Grimes motioned to pass the May meeting Minutes, and Sherrel Ward seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Rod Player asked if the board has reviewed the bylaws and has changes that need to be made. It was brought up that the board member term should be reapplied every 2 years, whereas we have been doing this every 4 years. Commissioner Jensen would like to have them remain every 2 years. The board agrees we should do as the commission has asked.

Rod shares that High Country News, in Jackson Hole, states the problem is that one agency is working and paying to have tourism come, and the other agency is working to keep them out. We need to work together.

On June 12, a panel will share comments on the Wild Horse and Burros issues.

3. Field Trip 2025

Rod asked the board and agencies to return to the July meeting with some ideas and places to tour for the upcoming field trip.

Field Trip - This will not be in July, but the regular meeting will be held.

4. Report on Wild Horses & Burros From Kyle Beagley & Mike Tweddell

Mike Tweddell, Assistant Field Manager from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), then gave a presentation on the wild horses and

burros on the Muddy Creek Herd Management Area (HMA). He talked about the GnRH-based immunocontraceptive vaccines practiced on the wild horses in that area. PZP and GonaCon Equine vaccine prevent the fertilization of eggs in the mares. They are administered by darts injected into the horses, but have been complex to administer and not found to be very effective. Two injections are needed to be effective. Only six mares out of about 150 females, or approximately 300 head of wild horses, were treated in that area. Burros have been gathered but are diseased when found, and are hard to find. Only about 40 burrows have been spotted by air. Planning is also happening for fertility treatment in burros.

Les Wilberg asked, How many have been treated? Response is 6/300. We are waiting for the NEPA study to be completed before returning to this area. Darting is the only form of control other than implants, but that has not been successful. They are always trying to establish new efforts to control this. Only 1% is being treated at this time.

Sherrel Ward asked, Are you the only person treating at this time? The response was yes, and my team and one on Range Creek were trying to hire some summer volunteers.

Rod Player asked, What are the actual counts? The response report as of March 2025 was 344 on the Muddy Creek. It is around 80%, and if you adjust for the double counting, it is between 390 and 400 head. The limit range is 75-125 head. I need to get the NEPA study done.

Leo asked if they had looked at just targeting Stallins. Response: We can gild stallions, but don't usually do that over 300 head turning guildings.

Jim Jennings asked, What are your goals moving forward? Get the heads below 75 heads, dart, capture, adopt, treat, and release. It is tough to get close enough to them for darting.

Burros- had 300 heard, cap 150 heard, we have only located 6 for the past 2 years, so the count is around 60 as a total, but they have been losing many due to asinine herpes, which affects the female burros; it is only affecting the burros, no other animals. Same plan for them: capture, treat, release.

5. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments

BLM

Jaden Mead spoke about the Wedge Camping area. They will have a public scoping meeting next week, with a 15-day response period. Trying to get the word out there. There is a need to make more camping areas out there and to move the current ones away from the rim. People are camping everywhere and anywhere, and it is causing many issues. We are moving camping and parking, and new bathrooms are back from the lookout rim, and that area is available for the public to view anytime. We will start with getting all permitting and NEPA for the entire 32 acres on one side and the smaller area on the other side complete, then add 10-20 campsites and see how that helps, and if we need more, we will do that in a new phase. It is planned for 140 campsites total.

There will be some trees around it, but there will not be as many trees currently in the campsites. We will move all the campfire rings off the rim and put them in campsites only.

Les Wilberg mentioned that they need to keep the ADA people in mind so they can also visit this area.

Commissioner Jensen asked how we would enforce this, and it was the hope and intent of the law enforcement team and the BLM.

Sherrel Ward asked what the environmental groups are saying about this. Response is, this is new and they are most likely not aware of it yet, but from the WCC Crew that has helped us in the past, they are very much in favor.

Nicole Nielson asked where the closure would be. Buckhorn draw - Green River, Wedge block that all off there. It will be a fee camping area, and they will also have group sites.

Kim McFarlane suggested that they make a few group sites.

Kyle Beagley then reported meeting with Johanson and Tuttle and the road department down on the Buckhorn Draw by Furniture Wash to do some burm work from the flooding near and around that area.

Utah State Department of Agriculture

Ryan Jones reported that drought loans are available to producers experiencing losses due to drought. This loan is interest-free for the first two years and 2.75% for the remaining years. This was made possible by Governor Cox's drought declaration.

Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

Brian Kurta reported that an OHV recreation grant is ongoing until July 31.

Division of Water Rights (DWRi)

No one in attendance

Utah State Parks

Nathan Martiniez reported they had a great season; it is getting hot and slowing down.

Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)

Darren Olsen reported that the Forest Plan meeting was canceled but will be rescheduled when information is gathered.

They have opened gates in the lower areas, but are still not passable in the high regions. Grazers will put livestock in the forest in the next few weeks. The wildlife guzzlers on Horn Mountain are finishing up and should be very advantageous, and the dedicated hunters' help was appreciated. It was also noted that the Forest Service regional offices are being restructured.

Rod Player asked about the status of the Rilda gate; the gate and sign should not be there, as it was not put there by the forest, but

they think it was put there by the mine reclamation group. It needs to be removed and opened to the public.
Mill Canyon has a road closed sign at the bottom of the Canyon.

Trust Lands Administration (TLA)

Andy Bedingfield handed out a map to explore limestone mining in Emery County. TSJ Construction has proposed to lease the land for 10 years, hoping there will be high-grade limestone material to help make asphalt and concrete.

Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)

TJ Cook announced that permits are available from the Tribal Council to pass through the Sego Trailhead. These can be obtained at [Wildlife.Utah.Gov](https://wildlife.utah.gov), but it could take three weeks to grant, and a hunting or fishing license is required to apply. He announced that free fishing day is coming up on June 7.

<https://wildlife.utah.gov/sego-trailhead.html>

- Email it to the Ute Indian Tribe Business Committee Secretary, Martha Mountain Lion, at marthamountainlion@utetribes.com, and to the Ute Tribe Fish and Wildlife Department Director, Robert Johnson, at rjohnson@utetribes.com. Note that you should allow seven business days from submission for an Access Permit to be processed.

OR

- Mail it to:
Ute Indian Tribe
Attn: Business Committee Secretary
P.O. Box 190
Fort Duchesne, Utah 84026

Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)

Bart Kettle reports that mining has received an application on the deed for the SITLA Walker Flat. Fossil Rock Mine is modernizing the coal handling facilities. Minerals- Stakers Parsons was applied to explore limestone, lithium, and gypsum—oil/Gas - Class 6 Carbon Sequestration. There will be a public comment period from mid-June to mid-July for 30 days.

PLPCO

Nicole Nielson Foundation for Public Lands panel for comments. Forest Plan, getting help with that, and BLM co-management for the rec area—Federal Fix Our Forest Act.

Washington Delegation Staff

Larry Ellertson reported on the Big Beautiful Plan that passed the House. In the Senate, much work is needed to recognize that costs must be cut and not damage things moving forward. The tax code must be stable and predictable for incentives, welfare programs, and benefits. Grant program increases trained firefighters May 23- July 23, 2025—volunteer fire departments to have 24-hour staffing.

Ron Dunn, representative for Congressman Kennedy, is working on 55 bills that sponsor many on public land, Glen Canyon Motor vehicles,

stopping discrimination on firearms, protecting acts, and the Department of Agriculture—overreach on public lands, birthrights, citizens, and livestock.

7. Commission Comments on Public Land Items

Comm Jensen reports that we are taking action on the Cleveland Reservoir, taking a stance on that, and have removed all signage. Dennis Worwood reports that Long Street is still working on depositions with the attorney and waiting on that process; no signs or gates have been removed. I want Historical use for both of these projects.

8. Additional Issues From Council Members

Les Wilberg asked if the golf course BLM transfer is going through by the first of next month. No, they are waiting for the NORA package to be completed. It will still take some time for this to take place.

9. Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues

Nothing at this time.

10. Adjourn