



OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY COUNCIL DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

*Minutes Of The Meeting Held on May 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.
Hybrid*

HOST: *Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation*
1594 West North Temple #100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
(Virtual and in-person meeting)

ATTENDEES

OHV Council Members Present:

Jason Blankenagel (Chair)
Eric Nelson (Vice Chair)
Brody Johnson
Scott Wheeler
Mike Cook
Cheryl Butler
Dave Jacobson
Brett Davis
Kirk Chester

Absent:

Nathan Curtis
Bonnie McCallister
Nicole Nielson

Non-Motorized RTP Council Members Present:

Jason Curry
Brandon Stocksdales
Alex Davenport
Mathew Podolinsky

Absent:

Jenna Jorgensen
Julia Geisler
Patrick Parcell

Division of Outdoor Recreation:

Rachel Toker
Jorge Vazquez
Patrick Morrison
Evan Beitsch
Maureen Casper
Wade Allinson

Department of Natural Resources

Employees Present:

Todd Royce
Jacob Hinton
Chris Haramoto
Cheston Slater
Josh DelMonte
Shane Stroud

Visitors:

Brett Stewart
Kevin Mortensen
Tim Nelson
Jeff Bieber

Audio/video recording of this meeting is located at:

📺 Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council 5/23/2025

TIME AGENDA ITEM AND SUMMARY

0:00 1. WELCOME

1.1. Call to Order

The Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory (OHV) Council Chair, Jason Blankenagel, called the meeting to order, and OHV Grant Administrator Rachel Toker recorded the minutes. Ms. Toker also took attendance of the council members present. With a quorum of council members in attendance, the meeting proceeded with its agenda.

1.2. Attendance and Introductions

Chair Blankenagel introduced himself to the council and everyone in attendance. He then asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. Council members provided their names and affiliations for the record.

1.3. Approval of April 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Chair Blankenagel opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 25th, 2025, meeting.

**CHAIR BLANKENAGEL MOVED FOR A MOTION TO APPROVE THE
APRIL 25TH, 2025, MEETING MINUTES. BRODY JOHNSON MADE
THE MOTION, SCOTT WHEELER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

10:00

2. COMBINED RTP REVIEW & RECOMMENDED APPROVAL

Evan Beitsch, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Administrator, provided an overview of the RTP and the projects awarded by both the motorized and non-motorized committees, noting the limited funding available and the disparity in application numbers between the two categories. They highlighted the total project value leveraged by the award \$2 million in funding. Four motorized projects were awarded funding: Grand County BLM, Utah Avalanche Center, Southern Utah University, and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office. A question was raised regarding shared administrative costs for projects applying to both motorized and non-motorized funding, which Patrick Morrison, Recreation Program Director, suggested could be a topic for future discussion. Mr. Morrison also summarized the non-motorized projects receiving \$1.5 million, highlighting their diverse recreational benefits, with notable mentions including the Grand County Trail Ambassadors, the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance, and the Utah Avalanche Center's safety initiatives.

Council member Brody Johnson asked about the Kanarraville Falls grant, to which Mr. Morrison clarified that maintenance was primarily on BLM and SITLA land, supported by partner letters, with council member Dave Jacobson noting there is no Forest Service land involved. Mr. Morrison initiated a discussion on improving RTP utilization, especially given the lower number of motorized applications, suggesting it could serve as a supplementary program and support non-infrastructure projects like education. Closer collaboration between motorized and non-motorized efforts was also proposed. Chair Blankenagel called for a motion to approve the \$2,046,135 in RTP project awards, which was moved by Non-Motorized council member Alexander Davenport and seconded by Non-Motorized council member Matthew Podolinsky. However, due to a lack of quorum of sworn-in members, the vote was postponed, with the understanding that both committees had already voted to recommend the grants, and this meeting served primarily as a summary notification.

36:30

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND INPUT

During the public comment period, Brett Stewart of Utah OHV Advocates recommended adjusting the spring and fall grant cycles to expedite funding and sought confirmation on whether volunteer hours accrued before the contract start date could count toward matching requirements. Chair Blankenagel and Assistant Attorney General Shane Stroud

indicated this might be possible if no rules or laws were violated, pending council input. Mr. Stewart also inquired about HB456 and its effect on search and rescue funding, with Division Director of Outdoor Recreation Jason Curry clarifying that it reimburses county rescue costs—not equipment purchases—and applies only to third through sixth-class counties. He further suggested encouraging search and rescue and snowmobile groups to apply for RTP grants to prevent unused funds from being returned. Ms. Toker and Mr. Beitsch concluded by reiterating RTP eligibility, emphasizing its focus on trails and trail-related user safety.

49:00

4. STATE PARKS PRICING MENU FOR OHV EVENT PERMITS

Deputy Director of State Parks Chris Haramoto and Sand Hollow State Park Assistant Manager Josh DelMonte presented on the state parks pricing menu for OHV event permits, outlining the special use permit process, the importance of timely submissions for larger events, and coordination with stakeholders such as UDOT and county sheriffs. Mr. Haramoto described efforts to streamline approvals, establish a consistent statewide pricing menu to eliminate cost ambiguity, and launch a web-based portal with online payment by October. He confirmed that community economic benefits are factored into event approvals and noted that long-term date reservations for recurring events are under review.

Mr. Haramoto also addressed the restructuring of law enforcement rangers, which may add service charges, as well as challenges related to limited campsites and camping costs for organizers. Mr. DelMonte detailed the “fee menu” approach, factoring in vehicles, people, campsites, and locations, with options to bundle park entry fees into event tickets. He discussed camping fee structures, location reservation fees, accommodation of diverse event types, and the inclusion of School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) fees, while acknowledging concerns about pricing consistency. Mr. DelMonte also noted the inclusion of manager time for complex events, the vetting of third-party vendors, and potential discounts for nonprofits or events offering community benefits, with Mr. Haramoto concluding by expressing regret for the limited time to address law enforcement topics in detail.

1:22:45

5. DESERT ROADS AND TRAILS SOCIETY LAND & BUILDING PROPOSAL

Kevin Mortonson with Ride Utah and Tim from the Desert Roads and Trail Society presented a proposal for a 120-acre staging area near Sand Mountain to relieve pressure on Sand Hollow State Park and Hurricane City, emphasizing the economic benefits of OHV tourism and the need to address the interface between visitors and rural communities. The plan includes developing 45 acres initially, with potential expansion, and features such as a building with air conditioning, search and rescue and law enforcement space, water, power, and possible showers, as well as future camping with utilities. Estimated costs are \$3.5 million for the land and around \$5 million total. The nonprofit Desert Roads and Trail Society would own the land and facilities, donating profits to similar organizations, though concerns were raised about long-term protection and the possibility of a reversionary clause if the nonprofit dissolves.

Mr. Curry outlined potential funding sources, including OHV grant funds, the outdoor adventure fund, and a budget request, while Chair Blankenagel noted the need for more information before the advisory council could consider funding. Council member Eric Nelson raised concerns about ensuring funds primarily support trail work and riding opportunities for Utah users, with Mr. Curry suggesting refined grant requests and possible OHV camping improvements. Suggestions were also made to consider a public-private partnership with Hurricane City or the county to expand funding options.

and address land ownership concerns, noting the landowner's preference for OHV use. A follow-up meeting was proposed in three months once a detailed written proposal is prepared.

1:54:30 6. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS

Ms. Toker proposed an amendment to the OHV Advisory Council bylaws to remove the secretary duties as a council position, noting that record-keeping, meeting arrangements, and agenda preparation are already handled by program staff. The change aligns the council's structure with other grant programs. After confirming a quorum of voting members, the council was invited to provide input or ask questions regarding the amendment. Ms. Toker clarified that the redlines in the bylaws only reflected the removal of the secretary role and minor grammatical edits.

CHAIR BLANKENAGEL MOVED FOR A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED BYLAWS. BRODY JOHNSON MADE THE MOTION, ERIC NELSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

2:02:30 7. OHV RESTRICTED ACCOUNT GRAMA DISCUSSION

Mr. Curry provided an overview of the OHV restricted account, emphasizing that it is not directly controlled by their division but is subject to legislative appropriations. Revenue sources include registrations, fuel tax, non-resident permits, and fines, totaling approximately \$12 million this year, with appropriations covering law enforcement, equipment, grooming, and education, some of which typically lapse back into the account. Mr. Curry and OHV Program Manager Wade Allinson discussed the creation of a mechanized trail crew focused on heavy equipment for trail maintenance, suggesting Richfield as a potential location and seeking council support to develop a detailed proposal, which the council approved. Mr. Curry also explained trail crew funding sources, coding of work hours to specific trail types, and a preference for tracking hours rather than miles to better correlate costs. He highlighted the growth in OHV recreation grants from \$1.1 million in 2020 to around \$6 million annually, noting the need for future funding requests as the ongoing \$3.7 million appropriation is insufficient.

Mr. Curry provided a history and structure of OHV law enforcement funding, noting authority to spend on enforcement and administration dates back to 1971, with consolidation under the Division of Law Enforcement in 2024. He explained that funding primarily comes from restricted accounts, with collaboration from county sheriffs on Forest Service lands. Mr. Curry addressed questions about the rationale for a separate natural resource law enforcement division, shop building replacement plans, winter grooming budgets, and accountability measures ensuring registration funds are used appropriately. He clarified that the legislature controls restricted account appropriations, including law enforcement funding, and acknowledged complexity in the reimbursement process. Mr. Curry concluded by expressing appreciation for the council's engagement and guidance, noting the contrast with a past advisory council that dissolved due to lack of interest, and highlighting the value of the current council's active input.

2:27:00 8. LUNCH

At this time, the OHV Advisory Council turned off the recording and took a 30-minute lunch break.

2:50:00 9. DISCUSSION ON TABLED OHV RECREATION (OHVR) GRANTS

Chair Blankenagel introduced the discussion on the tabled UPLA and Tread Lightly grants, noting previous questions regarding administrative spending. Ms. Toker then introduced Loren Campbell, president of UPLA, to present on the grant request.

2:51:45 9.1. Utah Public Lands Alliance

Mr. Campbell provided background on UPLA, explaining its evolution from a 4x4 group to an organization uniting various OHV user groups for a stronger voice in land use decisions. He highlighted UPLA's advocacy for OHV access, collaboration with other outdoor recreation groups, and the need for field outreach and education to improve participation in land management processes. Mr. Campbell explained the request for a full-time executive director to handle travel and outreach, noting that volunteer efforts had reached their limit and that UPLA had increased its grant match to 30%.

Ms. Toker presented the grant request for \$182,000 over 28 months for the executive director's salary and travel, and questions were raised regarding the legality of funding, overhead expenses, and whether the role would be solely OHV-focused. Mr. Stroud clarified that overhead generally refers to administrative costs, not wages for individuals directly advancing the work, and Mr. Campbell confirmed the executive director would focus on outreach, education, and collaboration—not lobbying—to maintain 501(c)(3) compliance. Council members discussed the title and focus of the role, with Mr. Nelson expressing support for UPLA's work.

SCOTT WHEELER MADE A MOTION TO FUND THE UTAH PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE GRANT.

THERE WAS NO SECOND FOR THIS MOTION.

MOTION FAILED.

The motion failed due to lack of a second, and Ms. Toker recommended that UPLA revise the application to better align with funding criteria, offering assistance with the next grant cycle.

3:33:00 9.1. TREAD LIGHTLY!

Danielle Fowles-McNiven and Doug Bigelow presented on behalf of Tread Lightly, requesting funding to support their Utah program manager, Mr. K. Wolf, who focuses on education and stewardship related to responsible OHV use. Ms. Fowles-McNiven highlighted Tread Lightly's volunteer projects, educational outreach, and collaboration with federal agencies, explaining that the funding request increased due to federal budget uncertainties and the inclusion of staff contributing to these projects. In response to questions from Mr. Johnson about whether the projects were strictly motorized, Ms. Fowles-McNiven clarified that while the organization's national mission is broader, this specific request is solely for OHV-related projects in Utah, with Ms. Toker affirming their significant contributions to motorized trail maintenance and volunteer efforts across forest service districts.

Mr. Bigelow clarified that his executive director position is funded outside of this grant, allowing the program manager to focus on on-the-ground work. Ms. Toker added that the funding would also support contributions from Tread Lightly's design team for educational materials. While noting similarities to the UPLA request, Ms. Toker emphasized that Tread Lightly applied under the education category, which has different rules than access protection.

ERIC NELSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE TREAD LIGHTLY'S GRANT AT A REDUCED AMOUNT OF \$281,020 BY REMOVING THE CONTINGENCY.

THERE WAS NO SECOND FOR THIS MOTION.

MOTION FAILED.

Ms. Toker clarified that unfunded grant requests remain in the current cycle and do not carry over, requiring a new application for future consideration. Ms. Fowles-McNiven and council member Dave Jacobson expressed strong support for Tread Lightly's project, emphasizing its value as public land advocates and its ability to address gaps where the federal government is limited. Ms. Fowles-McNiven will collaborate with Ms. Toker to refine the application for the next cycle, incorporating recommendations to address any ambiguities.

3:59:00 10. OHV RECREATION GRANT ADMIN RULES

Ms. Toker emphasized the importance of the OHV grant administrative rules and reviewed proposed changes, noting that blue text indicates additions. She explained efforts to better define in-kind contributions, referenced a website for volunteer rates, and highlighted the shift to prioritize federal grants over state-to-state matching to ensure responsible use of taxpayer funds. Ms. Toker discussed removing the 25% cash match requirement for OHV tourism projects and the current non-weighted scoring system, initiating a discussion on implementing a weighted scoring system where different categories would have distinct values, potentially requiring separate review sections. While

Mr. Nelson sought clarification on the current system. It was decided that the topic is not urgent, and the council would review the draft and provide feedback via email. Ms. Toker also proposed removing categorical funding percentages from the rules to allow the council to determine allocations annually, with council member Scott Wheeler emphasizing prioritization of trail maintenance and access. Procedural flexibility was addressed by Mr. Stroud, suggesting language allowing the council discretion to award funds outside set percentages if criteria are met.

Ms. Toker and Mr. Curry further detailed changes to the upfront funding process, now allowing up to 100% of funds based on prior performance and requiring proof of expenditure, a change approved unanimously by the council. Ms. Toker discussed grant cycle timing, proposing earlier spring deadlines and a potential fall cycle to better accommodate project planning and workload. Tentative dates were set for January 15th–February 28th for the spring cycle, with consideration of an August 15th opening for the fall cycle, providing improved timelines for summer project work and winter planning.

BRODY JOHNSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED RULES. BRETT JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL WERE IN FAVOR AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4:37:30 11. OHVR GRANT DISCUSSION

Due to time constraints, several items were only briefly mentioned, with staff noting that additional information would be provided or that the topics would be addressed in greater detail at future meetings.

4:37:45 11.1. Assets

Ms. Toker presented the asset tracking system for grant-funded purchases with serial or VINs, detailing information such as type, year, make, model, intended use, organization, county, price, and amount paid, and noted the requirement for pictures of equipment at closeout as well as signage recognizing the funding source.

4:39:00 11.2. Fuel Cards and Tracking Fuel Purchases

Ms. Toker addressed auditor concerns regarding the use of gift cards for fuel due to tracking and accountability issues, presenting alternatives such as direct reimbursement with fuel logs and receipts or reimbursement based on state or federal fuel rates, and seeking input on handling upfront funding for fuel. She also introduced the idea of developing hourly or daily rates for personal equipment used on trails. Mr. Johnson raised concerns about tax implications, and the use of state gas cards for equipment was briefly discussed, though it also had potential drawbacks. The topic will be revisited at the next meeting with more concrete proposals.

4:45:30 11.3. Salt Lake County SAR

Ms. Toker noted that Salt Lake County inquired about grant eligibility, clarifying that House Bill 456 excludes first- and second-class counties.

4:45:30 11.4. Eligible / Ineligible Requests

Ms. Toker noted that Salt Lake County inquired about grant eligibility, clarifying that House Bill 456 excludes first- and second-class counties.

4:47:00 11.5. Future Grant Cycles

Having discussed this in depth earlier in the meeting, the council moved on to the next agenda item.

4:47:15 11.6. Grant Process Behind the Scenes

Due to time constraints, the council proceeded to the next agenda item.

4:47:30 11.7. Survey

Ms. Toker briefly explained that the council and anyone who has submitted an application within the past three years will receive an in-depth survey to help the division continue improving the OHV Recreation grant program.

4:50:00 12. FUTURE PUBLIC COMMENTS DISCUSSION & DIRECTION

Mr. Allinson suggested postponing the discussion on future public comments to the next meeting and prioritizing it, noting that the schedule for future meetings has not yet been finalized, but the goal is to hold them at least quarterly. He expressed appreciation for the committee's dedication and contributions.

4:55:30 13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Blankenagel thanked staff and council members, acknowledging the upcoming holiday weekend. He noted that the next meeting would likely be in August and then called for a motion to adjourn.

BRODY JOHNSON MADE THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.