

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Emery County Public Lands Council**  
**December 2, 2025**  
**10:00 AM**

---

**PLC:** Bruce Wilson, Ray Petersen, Leon McElprang, Varian Allen, Kim McFarlane

**EXCUSED:** Rod Player, Sherrel Ward, Les Wilberg

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

**VISITOR:** Commissioner Keven Jensen, Commissioner Jordan Leonard, Commissioner Dennis Worwood, Nicole Nielson (PLPCO), Julie Johansen (ETV), Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Colton Taylor (UDWR), Dal Gray & Billy Cogor (DOGM), Darren Olsen (USFS), Kyle Beagley & Nick LaFazio (BLM), Ryan Jones (UDAF), Larry Ellertson (Sen. Curtis), Ron Dunn (Congr. Kennedy), Wayne Ludington (SRBCH)

**ELECTRONICALLY:** Ben Grimes (PLC), Judi Brawer, Leo Hardy, Joel Brown (Sen Lee)

## **Emery County Public Lands Council**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** November 4, 2025

**Location:** Emery County Courthouse

**Chair:** Acting Chairman Ray Petersen

---

### **1. Call to Order / Welcome**

Vice Chairman **Ray Petersen** opened the meeting and stated he would act as Chairman due to Chairman Rod's absence (traveling in Iceland). He noted a good turnout and acknowledged that this time of year can make attendance difficult.

---

### **2. Approval of Minutes – November 4, 2025**

**Motion:** Bruce Wilson

**Second:** Varen Allen

**Action:** Motion passed.

---

### **3. Approval of the 2026 Meeting Schedule**

**Motion:** Varian Allen

**Second:** Kim McFarlane

**Action:** Motion passed.

---

## 4. Council Member Comments

Acting Chairman Ray Petersen emphasized the critical importance of continued advocacy for **RS2477 claims and Title V rights-of-way**. He noted these roads were managed without issue for over 40 years and stressed the need for a consistent effort to protect and maintain these rights.

---

## 5. Agency Reports

### Utah State Department of Agriculture

**Ryan Jones** reported on the upcoming **Water Optimization Program** scheduled for January–February 2026. The program can cover **up to 50% of costs** for irrigation upgrades, including transitioning from flood irrigation to pivot systems.

He also announced a **Soil Health Conference** in St. George on **February 10–12, 2026**, and offered to provide additional information.

---

### Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

**Colton Taylor** reported that he gathered information related to solar projects.

---

### Division of Water Rights

No representative in attendance.

---

### Utah State Parks

No representative in attendance.

---

### Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)

#### Prescribed Fire Activities

- Prescribed fire was conducted in the North Elks area near Monticello, treating several thousand acres.

- Prescribed fire in Ephraim Canyon resulted in noticeable smoke in mid-November.
- Fire activity also reported near Last Chance at Wiley's Fork.

## **Forest Management and Logging**

- Prescribed fire is emphasized as a critical forest management tool.
- Logging limitations are discussed due to wood quality, location, and cost-effectiveness.
- Recognition that multiple management tools are required to maintain forest health.

## **Cleveland Reservoir Land Trade Proposal**

- Meeting held with landowner **Kelly Walker** regarding a proposed land exchange.
- The proposal would trade most of the north end of the Cleveland Reservoir for approximately 20 acres where the current campground is located.
- The proposal is viewed as reasonable from the Forest Service perspective and aims to preserve public access.

## **Public Access and Infrastructure**

- The north end of Cleveland Reservoir is a historic high-use public area.
- Potential cabin development by the landowner highlights the importance of resolving the land trade.
- Possible future campground development on the north end was discussed.
- A visual map of the proposed trade was reviewed.

## **Regional Office Update**

- The Forest Service plans to establish several main hubs; the local office will no longer function as a regional office.
- The primary hub for this area will be located in **Salt Lake City**.

---

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

### **Poison Springs Solar Project**

- Interconnection application submitted to Rocky Mountain Power.
- The process is delayed due to a large project queue.
- A landowner agreement with the mineral lessee is required due to existing oil wells and remains a significant challenge.

### **Drunkard's Wash Canyon Solar Project**

- A proposed 80-acre solar project intended to serve an adjoining landowner was reviewed.
- Details remain limited at this time.

### **Salt Lake City Staff Presentation**

- Proposed presentation on the **Dingle Act** and special service district funding.
- Scheduling to be coordinated with Jim.

---

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

### **County General Plan & Water Management Plan**

- Both plans are in progress, with drafts available for review before approval early this year.
- The water section currently addresses only the west side of the Green River.
- An east-side water plan must originate from residents and is encouraged to be presented at the Green River annual meeting in January.
- The plan-writing firm has been notified of the omission and provided contact information for Green River City and the canal company.

### **Lithium Project**

- Preliminary testing shows economically viable lithium concentrations.

- The project currently lacks contractors for injection-well drilling and has been referred to **Randy Irwin**.

### **Cleveland Reservoir and Longstreet**

- The Cleveland Reservoir dam was constructed in **1893**.
- Federal deed dated **1910**; state sale occurred in **1912**.
- A prescriptive easement exists on the north side; the extent remains a legal question.
- A closed session is scheduled for the next meeting to discuss the Cleveland Reservoir and Longstreet.

---

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

- Two wells were drilled on the Grand County side of Green River approximately two years ago.
- A proposal is now under consideration to drill injection wells at that site.

---

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

**Kyle Beagley** provided updates on several topics:

#### **Minerals and Staffing**

- Mineral work continued during the shutdown.
- Coordination with Washington staff is needed to maintain momentum.
- Additional funding and staffing are required.

#### **Erosion and Road Maintenance**

- Erosion issues are being addressed in Buckhorn and Jackass Flat.
- County to perform road maintenance in Buckhorn Wash and Furniture Wash, including cleaning dips and culverts.

- Appreciation expressed for county assistance with cattle guards.

## **Vandalism**

- Graffiti was reported near Temple Mountain.
- A suspect has been identified.

## **Mineral Exploration**

- A company is exploring gypsum in the Moore Cutoff area.

## **Swing Bridge Access**

- Request to move the barrier back approximately 100 feet on the north side of the swing bridge to allow safe vehicle turnaround.

## **Wild Horses**

- Concerns were raised regarding wild horses damaging the range.
- BLM is working on gathering and AML management.
- A plan was made with the Washington staff to assess conditions on-site.

---

## **PLPCO**

**Nicole Nielsen** reported that the BLM Basin travel plan process will begin in mid-January.

---

## **Washington Delegation Staff**

**Joel Brown** offered assistance and expressed interest in visiting the wild horse areas.

**Larry Ellertson (Sen. Lee's Office)** discussed efforts to streamline the permitting process and addressed healthcare system abuse concerns.

**Ron Dunn** noted significant cost waste in healthcare and referenced **H.R. 376**, which is in committee and addresses BLM authority over county roads.

---

## 6. Commission Comments on Public Land Items

### **Battery Storage Safety Training**

- Training coordinated by **Jeremy Lake** (Sheriff's Office).
- **Art Dale** (State Marshal's Office) will lead the session.
- **Date:** January 17
- **Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- **Location:** Sheriff's Office (Metal Building)
- Open to the public.

### **General Plan and Water Management Update**

- Continued work on both plans.
- Emphasis on local involvement for east-side water planning.
- Documents available for review before final approval.

### **Cleveland Reservoir Prescriptive Easement**

- Request made for historical documentation regarding agreements between the canal company and private landowners.
- Closed session scheduled for the next commission meeting with special counsel present.

### **Closing Remarks**

The Chairman expressed appreciation to council members for their service, noting the council's value as a long-standing advisory body since 2003.

---

## 7. Additional Issues from Council Members

None noted.

---

## **8. Concerned Citizens**

None noted.

---

## **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned.