

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**.
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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.
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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.
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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.