

# LAND ACQUISITION SUBCOMMITTEE

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular** meeting of the Land Acquisition Subcommittee (LAS) was held at the Washington County Administration Building on **August 27, 2025**.

Committee members present were:

Jason West	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Jessica Kinross	Utah Dept. of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
George Weekley	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Elaine York	Nature Conservancy

Committee members excused were:

Gregg McArthur	SITLA, Chair
Zach Renstrom	Wash Co Water Conservancy District (WCWCD), Vice Chair

Also present were:

Cameron Rognan	HCP Administrator
Randee Sanders	Washington County HCP Executive Assistant
Devin Snow	Washington County Attorney
Lennie McConnell	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Eric Clarke	Utah Counties
Maile Wilson Edwards	Kirton McConkie Law

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

After the Open Meeting Training (agenda item 4a), Cameron Rognan called the meeting to order at approximately 1:04 p.m., noting that a quorum was present.

**2. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the committee for approval. The consent portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any member wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

**a. Approval of Agenda**

**b. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes**

**1. June 25, 2024**

**c. Next Meeting Date**

**1. October 22, 2025 or Feb 25, 2026**

**MOTION** by: George Weekley  
Seconded by: Jason West  
Discussion: To approve the Consent Agenda.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

**3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

None.

**4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**a. Open Meeting training – Devin Snow**

*This agenda item occurred before the consent agenda while waiting for one more committee member to join in order to have a full quorum.*

Since most committee members have had this training several times, Devin Snow kept it brief. Meetings of this body are public and require an agenda, to be noticed, for minutes to be taken, and a recording made. No matter what we call it, if there is a quorum that is doing the work of this committee, it's open. There is an exception to the open meeting requirement, but it will probably not apply to this quorum so Devin didn't go into detail. However, he is available to consult if such a circumstance arises. There is a prohibition in the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) that forbids members of a body from meeting together before an open meeting to predetermine the result. Meaning, it is prohibited for a quorum to meet beforehand to talk through how they are going to vote on action items.

**b. Red Cliffs Warner Valley land exchange**

Jason West said that BLM was able to get Blue Ribbon Coalition to withdraw their protest. The only group that BLM is waiting on now is Conserve Southwest Utah (CSU). The certified letter that was sent to them got delayed in Las Vegas so the State Office overnighted the letter by FedEx. It was received today, beginning the 30-day countdown for the appeal process. If an appeal is received anytime within the 30-days, BLM will have a 14-day window for the IBLA to make a decision on whether they are going to issue a stay (which would allow them to complete the exchange under the terms and agreements of the agreement to initiate). If they don't issue a stay, there will be a full IBLA land decision which could take a year or more for resolution. There are some indicators that CSU is not looking at taking this to appeal, but that's a wildcard with no way of predicting. BLM will move forward with the exchange if they don't appeal,

and they will move forward with the appeal process if they do appeal.

Jason reported that Teresa, who has been spearheading this exchange, is retiring. Brandon Johnson from the State Office is keyed into this and ready to pick it up and go. There will have to be an exercise of the options for the land to transfer to the Water District, which is a 3-week process. Theoretically, this exchange could be finalized in 30 days + 3 weeks, if there is no appeal.

**c. Status of LWCF applications and acquisition efforts**

Jason said that there's been no determination made to release LWCF funds at this time. BLM is working with Mr. Doyle's attorney, Maile Wilson. As soon as those funds are freed up, BLM will be looking to apply for those funds to purchase as many of the acreages as the dollars can handle. The County has agreed to facilitate the appraisal process so that it will not have to go through all of the BLM hoops, with the exception of coordination with the OBS. There are ongoing discussions with the State Office, the LWCF manager, and the private land owner's attorney. However, there has been no forward motion on BLM releasing the funds.

Cameron asked Jason to share any updates in regards to Teresa leaving and BLM's inability to fill positions. Jason answered saying that BLM is still under a permanent hiring freeze. There has been some motion on priority positions (oil, gas, coal, and mineral extraction), as well as fire and law enforcement. There hasn't been any movement on realty positions at this time, nor any of their other positions that are not related to the priority positions. There are some realty components that go along with oil and gas permits, so there are some discussions being held at the State Office to see if they can leverage that to help with realty positions. So far they haven't had any positive direction on that, and the hiring freeze is still in play. According to media outlets, there may be 170,000 more job cuts planned after this fiscal year. George Weekley said that there hasn't been any movement for USFWS either.

Jason said that the State of UT still highly values range and recreation realty. The state's BLM is using a shared model to share resources and are doing a gap analysis to see which offices can help other offices right now across districts and within the state. When that gap analysis is complete they are going to find some shortcomings, as well as some folks who have some ability to help with capacity, and others that are stuck in the middle and are operating at optimum capacity with no ability to share. When the gap analysis is done, they are hopeful that it will generate some more buzz. Jason doubts they will see anything change before the new fiscal year, and probably not for a while after that depending on if there are furlough or shut down threats. Midterm is coming up, they will see what

really happens with funding and everything next year.

Cameron wondered if there was anything that the County can do. Jason responded that he had shared that the County is still willing to fund a position in realty, but the State Office said that until that hiring freeze is lifted they can't move, even with a cooperating partner. If the hiring freeze does get lifted, he would be extremely open to work with the County and hire a realty position to represent the County.

**d. Section 6 Grant application for FY25**

It was Cameron's understanding that there hasn't been any new movement on Section 6 funding. If they ever do get around to making an award, he thought the HCP's request has a pretty good chance.

George said that the 2024 grant requests for Section 6 land acquisition funding hasn't even been approved by the department so we may be waiting awhile for this fiscal year approvals. UDWR put in for some UT prairie dog land acquisition money in 2024, and their request is still awaiting departmental approval.

**e. Other updates on exchanges/acquisitions**

Jason reported that Washington City is looking to annex Warner Valley land. BLM is working with them, and are not in opposition to that annexation right now because of the BLM Resource Management Plan.

**5. MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM**

None.

**6. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by: Jason West  
**Seconded** by: George Weekley  
**Discussion**: To adjourn the meeting.  
**Vote was taken**: All voted aye.  
**Motion passed**.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:17 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by Randee Sanders.