

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**
Public Lands Policy Coordination Office

February 5, 2026

MINUTES

Attendees:

Members:

Christopher Merritt, SHPO, *Chair*
Rachel Shilton, DWRe, *Vice Chair*
Jan Morse, OGM
Jodi Gardberg DWQ
Conner Peterson, UDAF
Daniel Olson, DWR
Sarah Ward, DEQ
Sheila Vance, DAQ
Steve Bowman, UGS
Kate Novak, FFSL
Janna Wilkinson, DEM
David Allison, DERR
Reed Soper, SITLA
Mark Stratford, WRi
Devan Chavez, State Parks
Brandon Weston, UDOT

Invited Federal Agencies:

Jason Gipson, USACE

Guests

Todd Adams, DNR,
Laura Ault, DGO, DTS, AGRC
Tracy Harrison, DEM
Mark Boshell, PLPCO
Dillon Hoyt, PLPCO
Nicole Nielson, PLPCO
Dan Adams, Franson Civil Engineers
Lindsey Mayer, OED
Collet Cox, GOEO

Staff:

Sindy Smith, PLPCO

Welcome and Introductions

Chris Merritt, *Chair*, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. After introductions, Chris welcomed everyone.

Approval of Minutes

Representatives unanimously approved the draft minutes of the November 6, 2025, meeting.

UDOT'S PEL Study

Brandon Weston, Manager - Admin, UDOT, presented the **Northern Utah County Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study**, which explores long-term transportation needs and the feasibility of a **Utah Lake crossing**.

- **Study Goals:** The 30-month plan aims to assess long-term traffic needs beyond 2055 and build consensus on corridors before formal NEPA analysis.
- **Utah Lake Crossing:** A major component is a feasibility study for a lake crossing. UDOT is evaluating geotechnical data and traffic modeling to determine if a bridge is viable, noting it is "foundational" to long-term regional planning.
- **Coordination:** Discussion touched on the need for extensive coordination with Forestry, Fire and State Lands regarding sovereign lands, as well as water user associations and school districts.

Brandon addressed questions and comments.

Legislative Update

Nicole Nielsen, Program Manager, and Dillon Hoyt, Deputy Director, PLPCO, discussed the following priority bills affecting public lands.

- **SB44:** State Resource Management Plan: Annual update regarding state collaboration with federal land management partners.
- **HCR5:** State Management of Federal Public Lands: Urges Congress to create a system for states to voluntarily take over management of federal lands, adding areas like Skyline Drive and Pine View to the previous list of 10.
- **HB444:** Statewide Access Road Amendments: Requires PLPCO to finish recording Class D roads in various counties; changes are expected in a second substitute.
- **HB185:** Carbon Credit Amendments: Focuses on transparency in markets tracked by the United Nations' IPCC group. Revenue from a potential tax (which dropped from 25% to 19% to 5%) would fund state legal defense against cap-and-trade.
- **HB12:** Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Amendments: Tracking accessibility requirements for public lands and infrastructure.

- **HB16:** Solar Power Plant Amendments: Establishes rules for state incentives on solar farms based on parcel productivity and soil surveys.
- **SB209:** Gooseberry Narrows: A bill for a reservoir/state park above Fairview Canyon that failed in a Senate standing committee where only three members were present.

Agency Reports

- Christopher Merritt reported the following from the Utah State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO):
 - Proposed bill SB53 (Public Land Management Advisory Board Amendments), introduced by Senator Kwan, to add SHPO and the executive director of Trust Lands Administration to an oversight board for a new department. The bill aimed to add these members to the board, particularly if the state acquired over 200,000 acres of federal land, but it failed in the Senate.
 - SHPO is tracking an RFA involving East Carbon's acquisition of 1930s-40s coke kilns and railroad shops for heritage tourism and potential coordination with State Parks if they receive the property for a monument or campground.
- Devan Chavez reported the following from the Division of State Parks (State Parks):
 - State Parks reported a \$1.9 million building block request for infrastructure at "Manowway" (Honeyville/Brigham City area) pending agreements with local governments.
- Laura Ault reported the following from the Department of Government Operations, Division of Technology Services, Utah Geospatial Resource Center (DGO, DTS, AGRC):
 - AGRC requested \$600,000 in one-time funding to maintain imagery services for three years.
- Jan Morse reported the following from the Division of Oil, Gas & Mining (OGM):
 - Senate Concurrent Resolution 4 proposes that Utah take the lead on technical reviews for Applications for Permit to Drill (APD) and other mining permits on federal lands. The goal is to leverage state expertise to reduce permitting delays that currently impact resource development.
- Mark Stratford reported the following from the Division of Water Rights (WRi):
 - H.B. 63 Livestock Watering Amendments (2026 General Session) is a bill that establishes a framework for sub-basin livestock watering claims, allowing water right holders to manage water sources within defined sub-drainage areas without needing individual change applications for small ponds.
- Jason Gipson reported the following from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):
 - The Nationwide Permit program and the state joint permit (PGB10) are expiring. PGB10 expires Feb 22 (new Feb 23); Nationwide expires March 14 (new March 15). A one-year grandfathering period applies to projects under contract or construction as of those dates.
 - Note the new "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) definition may be finalized by late spring or early summer.

- Jodi Gardberg reported the following from the Division of Water Quality (DWQ):
 - DWQ is watching SB234 regarding environmental health.
 - DWQ announced its public notice for the draft 2026 Integrated Report.
- Collette Cox reported the following from the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO):
 - GOEO is tracking energy and natural resource extraction bills impacting rural economies, specifically SB21 (Geothermal Amendments) and SB43.
- Kate Novak reported the following from the Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL):
 - FFSL is tracking HB496 (forestry projects on federal lands), HB41 (wildland urban interface code adoption), and SB130 (Jordan River restoration).
 - FFSL is also tracking an RFA for Utah Lake enhancement funding following the recent study.
 - State Parks is also tracking an RFA to combat HABs at Utah Lake and Mona Reservoir.

Other Business

The next RDCC meeting will be held on May 7, 2026.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:03 a.m.