Utah Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office

Executive Summary

Date:	April 27, 2026
To:	Utah State Board of Education
From:	Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office
Subject:	Notice of Trust Land Block Sale to DNR

Following the passage of H.B. 262 by the legislature in 2024, the Trust Lands Administration (TLA) is authorized to conduct the sale of 5,000+ acre land blocks directly to the Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under certain conditions. The intent is to sell trust land blocks, with low revenue generation but high public and recreational interest, to better fulfill the state's fiduciary duty to trust beneficiaries.

The Advocacy Office and the School Children's Trust at USBE, which administers the LAND Trust Program, have been consulted throughout the process in accordance with TLA rule. According to rule, a certified letter was recently sent to USBE in addition to adjoining landowners, the Advocacy Office, and the Grand County Commission regarding the proposed sale.

Trust land sales proceeds will be deposited in the Public Schools Trust Permanent Fund account, invested by SITFO, and factored into the annual distribution formula.

Relevant Code and Rule

HB262 Enrolled bill from the 2024 General Session
53C-4-104: Sale to State Entities TLA Code
R850-80-630. Sale of an Eligible Property to the Utah DNR TLA Rule

Timeline

- HB262 Passed: 2024 Session
- Legislative Appropriation: 2025 Session
- TLA Adopted Rule R850-80-630: September 2025
- Appraisal Process: October 2025 - April 2026
- Contract development between TLA and DNR
- 30-day public notice sent: April 20, 2026
- TLA Board of Trustees Public Meeting: May 21, 2026
  - Director's Finding Issued
  - Public Comment Opportunity
- TLA Board of Trustees – Possible Action: May 29, 2026

Proposed Sale

Trust Land Block: Roadless Area of the Book Cliffs in Grand County
Size: 50,608 acres
Beneficiary: The Public Schools Trust
Fair Market Value: A formula with three comprehensive appraisals establishes the fair market value that the sale price must meet or exceed.

Current Land Use of Property

- The property considered for sale currently generates about $125,000 each year from grazing permits and a proportion of the hunter access fee.
- There has been a lack of successful commercial activity or private interest expressed for the property in the past due to its rugged topography and limited access.
- The property has mineral development potential, and this surface sale reserves the mineral estate as a trust asset for the respective beneficiary.

Funding

DNR may execute the purchase of land blocks through a combination of funding sources.

- Legislative Appropriations
- Pittman-Robertson funds (federal tax on firearm and ammunition purchases)
- Out-of-state hunting license revenue
- Donations from private organizations with an interest in wildlife management
- Other DNR accounts

Conclusion

Education stakeholders and the Advocacy Office favored H.B. 262 for its ability to transform underperforming land blocks into cash assets, bolstering the permanent fund and compounding growth for school distributions. This transaction satisfies the statutory fair market value requirement through a series of rigorous appraisals, reinforces protections for the mineral estate, and secures a mutually beneficial outcome with a viable buyer.

Additional eligible large block properties may be considered in the future for the benefit of the Public Schools Trust and other institutional beneficiaries. Each potential sale will follow the adopted TLA rule and appraisal process.