



DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Minutes: RTP Motorized Scoring Meeting

*Minutes Of The Meeting Held on April 29, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Virtual*

HOST: *Utah Department of Natural Resources*

Division of Outdoor Recreation

1594 W. North Temple

Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Soldier Hollow Conference Room

(Virtual meeting)

ATTENDEES: Brett Davis, Jason Blankenagel, Brody Johnson, Scott Wheeler, Nicole Nielson, Mike Cook, Russ Cazier, Dave Jacobson, Cheryl Butler, Evan Beitsch, Rachel Toker, Wade Allinson, Maureen Casper, Carter Moore, Steve Block (audience).

MEETING MINUTES:

(0:00) Chairman Jason Blankagel opened the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) review meeting for the Utah OHV Advisory Council with a formal roll call. The council honored Eric Nelson for nearly eight years of service before beginning the agenda.

(4:05) Financial Overview and Resource Rundown: Evan Beitsch reported that \$325,000 in project rollovers increased the RTP cycle funding to \$1,887,000, leaving \$943,000 for 12 motorized applications. Endorsed projects will be submitted to the Utah Transportation Commission on May 14th, with official awards granted on June 25th.

- FHWA funding splits: 30% motorized, 30% non-motorized, and 40% diverse (multi-use) projects.
- Education funding is capped at 5% (\$94,000), providing approximately \$47,000 for motorized education.

- Unused motorized funds rollover to next year's motorized budget, within a three-year limit.
- The council utilized a master spreadsheet sorted by evaluation scores with links to Salesforce apps and project folders.

(13:01) Jason opens the floor for public comment. No one from the public is present and the meeting proceeds.

(15:04) Application Scoring: The council began reviewing the three highest-scoring applications, all from Grand County and focused on trail maintenance. While supporting the need for maintenance and signage, the council debated proposed modifications to well-known obstacles.

(16:41) Pritchett Canyon: Nicole and Scott flagged an aspect of the BLM application proposing to modify the "Down and Dirty" obstacle. They noted that the jeep community prefers maintaining the high difficulty level of Pritchett Canyon and suggested using winch anchor points or blocking off unauthorized bypasses rather than chiseling rock to make the obstacle physically easier.

(21:36) Jason pointed out that one of the associated trailheads featured pull-in, back-out parking spaces, which are poorly suited for OHV users hauling long trailers, noting a need for better pull-through layouts in motorized designs.

(22:53) Members debated regional grant overlaps, concluding that the county coordinator and local trail committees must ensure groups do not duplicate or disrupt work.

(33:20) Maureen Casper confirmed that the contract could legally mandate collaboration with local user groups (Red Rock 4-Wheel Drive and Moab Friends for Wheeling) to resolve the obstacle disputes before work begins.

(39:10) Nicole Nielson makes a motion to approve the top three applications (APP-005483 and APP-005693) with language added that BLM (APP-05433) work with Redrocks and Moab Friends 4-Wheelers, coordinate so not making an obstacle easier for the trail. Brody Johnson seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

(40:48) Utah Avalanche Center Motorized Backcountry Safety Infrastructure: Mike Cook raised significant concerns regarding the continuous funding loop and long-term sustainability of the project, arguing that resources might be more

efficiently spent lowering the cost of safety beacons for riders directly. Nicole makes a suggestion to come back if there is additional funding.

(45:11) Emery County Signing Crew Equipment (App 5649): The request for a side-by-side and utility trailer to support the local summer trail maintenance crew was universally supported by the council. Wade added that the county had already successfully hired its seasonal staff, making this asset an immediate necessity.

(45:25) Motion to approve Emery County's application is made by Nicole Nielson. Motion approved unanimously via roll call.

(46:17) US Forest Service European Trail OHV (San Pete Ranger District): The council reviewed an \$18,000 request to replace an aging, heavily utilized 50-inch OHV vehicle. Board members discussed requesting actual dealership quotes instead of national website printouts for equipment grants in the future, though Cheryl clarified that federal agencies face restrictive procurement laws preventing them from gathering local commercial vendor bids prior to secure funding.

(53:48) Motion to approve APP-05462 Arapeen Trail OHV approved unanimously by committee via roll call.

(54:12) Puffer Lake Legacy Trailhead Project (Beaver County): The Puffer Lake Legacy Trailhead request (Beaver County) was discussed to suggest changing specs on a rock crusher, and land ownership disputes under the lake.

(1:08:37) Motion made to approve App-005511 Monticello BLM Recreational Trail Access and Signage Project. Approved unanimously via roll call.

(1:13:56) Garfield County Road Grader Request: Council members worried a 12-foot road grader might be used to smooth 400 miles of rugged Class D trails prized by off-road riders. However, others highlighted Garfield County's pro-access stance and the budgetary constraints of federal agencies. To resolve a tie, the council approved funding with the condition that the grader be used only on existing graded routes or for emergency maintenance.

(1:29:21) Vote occurred and tied with four councilmembers voting yes, and four councilmembers voting nay. An agreement was made to give them full funding with the requirement that they need to use the grader on already maintained roads.

(1:44:54) Re-vote occurred with seven councilmembers voting yes, and one voting nay. The application moves forward.

(1:45:41) Salina Motocross & Mountain Bike Park (Phase One): The council briefly checked this application but collectively voted "No" without extended discussion due to the fact that ongoing landowner legal disputes and zoning agreements had still not been resolved by the municipality.

(1:46:42) APP-005415, Salina Motocross/Mtn Bike Park, application was denied unanimously due to unresolved landowner disputes.

(1:48:28) San Pete County Trail Dozer Request: The council reviewed San Pete County's dozer request for the Arapeen Trail System. Mike proposed a versatile track skid-steer over a traditional dozer. Wade noted the Forest Service requires mid-tier equipment for Class 2 roads wider than 50 inches that lack federal maintenance.

(2:02:13) Eric Nelson makes a motion to rewrite the contract to find the best equipment and best price, and to talk with the Forest Service to determine the correct piece of equipment with input from Castle County OHV Group and Roam West. Motion was approved by all.

(2:05:17) Motorized Backcountry Safety Infrastructure fund without Ambassador Position (salary and materials). The vote was unanimous and the application was approved with those stipulations.

(2:06:56) With individual allocations completed, Evan calculated that the council successfully endorsed a total of \$842,834 in project awards, leaving a healthy motorized rollover balance of \$100,732 for the next cycle.

(2:10:44) Eric Nelson made an official motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mike Cook and universally approved.