DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
UORG Updates Meeting

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes Of The Meeting Held on July 14, 2026
Virtual

HOST: ***Utah Department of Natural Resources***
Division of Outdoor Recreation
1594 W. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
Trailhead Conference Room
(Virtual meeting)

ATTENDEES: Noemi Molina, Patrick Morrison, Rebekah Rawlings, Tara McKee, Jason Curry, Evan Beitsch, Scott Strong, Cameron Diehl, Erin O'Brien, Russ Steadman, Evan Glenn, Jordan Washburn, Jeffery Rosenbluth, Jake Deslauriers, Tracy Meier

MEETING MINUTES:

(13:53) Meeting officially began after resolving technical issues.

(14:16) Quorum confirmed with 8 to 9 voting members present.

(14:52) Jason Curry welcomed everyone and apologized for the technical difficulties.

(15:15) Evan Beitsch introduced the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) non-motorized project list for annual approval.

(15:39) Evan explained that this may be the final year the committee needs to formally approve these projects, as they already go through scoring subcommittees, UDOT (Utah Department of Transportation), and to this committee for final approval. This delays the approval process and could be removed.

(17:53) RTP Applications (motorized & non-motorized categories):

- 44 total applications received across motorized and non-motorized categories.

- 24 total projects recommended for approval with approved funding for $1.8 million.
- 15 non-motorized approved applicants, $942,872 in approved funding, with a total project cost of over $3 million.

(20:59) Scott Strong asked for a summary of the projects.

(21:04) Evan summarized key project types funded by RTP:

- Utah Avalanche Center (avalanche forecasting).
- Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (climbing infrastructure replacement).
- **Highest-ranked project:** Utah State Parks ($90,000 for adaptive equipment on trails, starting at Kodachrome Basin State Park).
- Equipment, trail signage/kiosks, large-scale maintenance, and outdoor trail education (e.g., Grand County / Stewart Moab).

(24:25) Formal Motion: Scott Strong moved to approve the list of RTP non-motorized grant projects as presented by staff and the subcommittee.

(25:02) Staff clarified that duplicate project funding across grant programs is prohibited, though matching funds are encouraged.

(26:16) Motion seconded by Erin O'Brien.

(26:25) Motion passed unanimously (9-0 in favor).

(26:50) Patrick Morrison summarizes what the future of approving RTP non-motorized grants will look like. After speaking to the attorney general, the change will either require full committee approval or determine if final administrative authority rests with UDOT.

(29:16) EKO Update: Rebekah Rawlings introduced herself as taking over Youth Engagement Grants:

- **UCORE:** Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation and Education grant (focused on youth program costs).
- **UCORE for Educators:** A new subcategory specifically targeting school field trips.
- **Nature-Based Learning Infrastructure:** Formerly "Outdoor Classrooms," funding building infrastructure.

(30:17) Caroline Weiler transitioned to a compliance and internal auditing role across all grant programs (UORG, OHV, RTP, federal grants) to ensure grantees meet agreement commitments.

(32:07) Noemi Molina presented findings from the committee and applicant feedback surveys:

- Committee Experience: 100% rated their overall experience 5/5.
- Applications are lengthy and have turned into a “word salad” due to the use of AI. Concise applications are better.

(37:38) Presentation of potential future structure for the CPR grant program based on survey feedback favoring subcommittees and split application categories.

(38:58) Presentation on suggestions and future improvements.

(39:49) Presentation on source of matching funds be considered in project scoring. Private funding could receive greater consideration than state or federal. How will funding sources be prioritized?

(40:42) Committee expressed strong interest in holding future meetings at state park locations outside the Wasatch Front.

(41:05) UORG dates are opening January 11, 2027 closing March 27, 2027.

(41:12) Possibility of hosting the April 2027 committee meeting at a state park venue (suggested locations: Soldier Hollow, Deer Creek State Park, Jordanelle State Park, Utah Lake, or a site in the Uinta Basin).

(44:24) Noemi gave insights from applicant results.

(45:41) Jason Curry returns the conversation to CPR. He asks for feedback on the proposed future of CPR and refining its criteria.

(46:24) Key goals discussed include aligning CPR with larger regional asset park projects while preventing local governments from neglecting their baseline parks and recreation budgets.

(47:03) A proposal was introduced to evaluate applicants using a ratio of a municipality’s or county's parks and recreation budget relative to its total budget as a filtering or incentive mechanism.

(47:41) Clarification was provided regarding application scoring methodology: scores are calculated using the average of reviewer evaluations (typically three reviewers) rather than composite totals, ensuring applicants are not penalized if fewer reviews are completed.

(50:33) Patrick Morrison outlined potential administrative options for future CPR cycles:

- Using the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) expert panel as a dedicated parks/rec subcommittee for preliminary reviews before presenting recommendations to the full committee.
- Shifting the CPR grant evaluation to an off-cycle period (e.g., in the fall) via virtual meetings.

(52:04) Staff discussed incorporating metrics for community need, including municipal parks/rec spending and population growth rates, into future application processes.

(53:49) Potential program renaming options were discussed ("Community Growth and Recreation") to better reflect program goals and applicant expectations.

(54:20) Staff noted that while CPR accounts for roughly 10% of total grant funding, it consumes approximately 50% of committee discussion and a disproportionate amount of staff technical assistance.

(55:22) Staff plans to conduct internal planning and informal polling with committee members to identify methods to streamline the CPR review process, balance staff workload, and simplify application requirements for newcomers.

(56:02) Meeting leaders thanked the committee for their participation and instructed members to submit further questions or feedback via email to Patrick, Noemi, or Jason.

(56:18) Formal Motion: Scott Strong moved to adjourn the meeting.

(56:27) Vote Outcome: Motion **passed**; meeting adjourned.