**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Public Lands Policy Coordination

**November 2, 2017**

**Department of Natural Resources**

**Room 112**

**MINUTES**

 **Attendees:**

**Members**

Todd Stonely, DWRe, *Chair*

Bill James, DWR, *Vice Chair*

James Owen, DOGM for Jan Morse

Jay Olsen, UDAF for Melissa Ure

Laura Vernon, FFSL for Laura Ault

Tom Chidsey, UGS

Susan Zarekarizi, State Parks

Joel Karmazyn, DAQ

Carl Adams, DWQ

Tom Daniels, DERR for Hans Millican

Chris Merritt, SHPO

Allan Moore, WMRC

Brad Bartholomew, UDEM

Elisa Albury, UDOT

James Greer, DWRi

Chris Fausett, SITLA for Lou Brown

**Guests Staff**

Susie Tracy, U.S. Forest Service Sindy Smith, PLPCO

Chris Hansen, SHPO

Todd Adams, DWRe

Jason Gipson, USACE

Matt Wilson, USACE

Eve Davies, PacifiCorp

Connely Baldwin, PacifiCorp

Paul Thompson, DWR

Marisa Egbert, DWRe

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome**

Todd Stonely, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. After round table introductions, Todd welcomed everyone.

**Approval of Minutes**

The committee unanimously approved August 3, minutes.

**Bear River Comprehensive Management Plan**

**Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL)**

Laura Vernon reported on the Bear River Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). Laura expressed appreciation to all who assisted in developing the plan: the planning team, which involved numerous state agencies; the project team, Laura Ault, Program Manager, Laura Vernon, Land Use Planner, and Matt Combs, Sovereign Lands Coordinator; as well as the consultants, SWCA, CRSA, and Hansen, Allen and Luce, Inc. The planning process began May, 2016. Laura provided background information, presented a PowerPoint presentation of the CMP, and explained the online interactive system to illustrate management strategies and decisions.

Main discussion items included:

* The State Legislature designated the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands (FFSL) executive management authority over all beds of navigable bodies of water within the state; state sovereign lands other than School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. Sovereign lands are defined by the Utah State Legislature as “those lands lying below the ordinary high water mark of navigable bodies of water at the date of statehood and owned by the state by virtue of its sovereignty.”
* Statutory law requires FFSL to ensure that all uses on, beneath, or above the bed of the Bear River safeguard the protection of navigation, aquatic beauty, recreation, wildlife habitat, and water quality. The ordinary high water mark of the Bear River or its exact location at the time of statehood is unknown. Management for the Bear River covers the river bed from top of bank to top of bank, and does not extend into the local municipalities nor the counties.
* The planning process involved outreach to the general public, as well as counties, municipalities, recreationalists, environmentalists, and the agricultural community.
* FFSL prescribes best management practices for all river resources. None of these uses supersede one another. Each resource has management goals. FFSL has streamlined the permitting and application processes along with making available a user friendly interactive system.
* The interactive online viewing platform at the ESRI Story Map and use of a GIS spatial viewer offers viewers an exceptional way to review the plan. You can download all of the shape files and overlay them with what may be pertinent to your research.
* The river is divided up into segments and classified based on current and planned uses. The Sovereign Land Classifications are:
	+ Class 1: Manage to protect *existing* resource use options
	+ Class 2: Manage to protect *potential* resource use options
	+ Class 3: Manage as open for *consideration* of use
	+ Class 4: Manage for resource inventory and analysis (Not Used)
	+ Class 5: Manage to protect *potential* resource preservation options
	+ Class 6: Manage to protect *existing* resource preservation uses
* A PDF of the plan can be downloaded from FFSL website.

Laura answered questions.

**Cutler Hydroelectric Project**

**Hydro Resources, PacifiCorp**

Eve Davies, Principal Scientist, and Connely Baldwin, Hydrologist, Rocky Mountain Power (PacifiCorp), delivered a PowerPoint presentation titled, “*Bear River Water Development: Ideas for Alternate Solutions,*” and distributed a handout, “*Bear River Water System*.” Eve addressed the Cutler Hydroelectric Project. Connely provided background information about PacifiCorp’s operation of the Bear River Basin and talked about the need for innovation to improve processes throughout the system.

Main discussion items include:

* PacifiCorp is the primary Bear River water management entity. PacifiCorp holds sole ownership of Bear Lake storage rights and provides supplemental irrigation by contract to 150,000 acres in Utah and Idaho. The company acquired the rights to divert and store water from the Bear River into Bear Lake in 1907. These rights and obligations are described in the Bear River Compact, an agreement among the states of Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah through which the Bear River flows. Older court decrees and more recent formal agreements further govern the company’s operations and the use of the water in the Bear River.
* Water from Bear Lake is released only for irrigation or flood control. Multiple hydroelectric installations downstream involve Soda, Grace, and Oneida dams located in Idaho and Cutler Dam and Reservoir on the river located in Utah. Those storage basins power production. Some federal dams exist on the tributaries, but not on the main stem of the Bear River.
* Prehistorically the Bear River flowed into Bear Lake and flowed back out. The past 10,000 years the natural course of the river changed, by-passing Bear Lake. Bear Lake overflowed and contributed to the Bear River, but without a major water flow from the river into the lake. Estimates of the age of Bear Lake range from 2.5 million years because of its unique geology.
* Soon after the pioneer era the idea for a storage reservoir in this area called for diversion of the river into the lake. The river is higher than the lake. A canal diverts water into lake. To move water downstream it must be pumped out of the lake into the canal and back into the river. A 20 foot storage reservoir exists on top of the natural lake, an important concept in understanding how the lake operates.
* The operation of the Bear River has remained essentially the same for decades despite all of the changes in energy needs, sources, and infrastructure. Given PacifiCorp’s experience as the river operator and steward over the last century, the company is looking for innovative solutions to better use the resources, while recognizing existing water uses and rights.
* Ideas for improvement are conceptual at this point, but prompted this question:

*Given our experience as the river operator and steward over the last century, what can we do better to facilitate wise management of the Bear River among competing water users?*

* The four main concepts include:
	+ Increase the capacity of Bear River channels in order to provide reserve power from the Soda hydroelectric project. Increasing Soda’s flexibility will better integrate solar and wind power to benefit electric customers. No additional releases from Bear Lake would be required.
	+ The increased capacity in the Bear River channels also provides increased water storage capability in Bear Lake by reducing flood control storage requirements. These changes would require modifications to multiple legal agreements.
	+ Increased water storage at the Cutler hydroelectric project. Increasing the height of spill gates could allow an additional 15,000 acre-feet to be stored. Wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities could be enhanced.
	+ Substantial conservation measures for agricultural irrigation users. New irrigation technologies, plus canal lining could save 30 percent from current use. This would reduce irrigation demand on Bear Lake storage.
* The first two ideas are interrelated. The fourth idea, irrigation conservation, the most important concept potentially, remains a future project. The third idea, increasing channel capacity at Cutler Reservoir, the proposed Cutler Hydroelectric Project, will be evaluated for its prospects during PacifiCorp’s relicensing process.
* Cutler Reservoir can safely hold an additional 15,000 acre feet of water without causing alterations to anything but spill gates. No physical changes for this project have been anticipated. The increased water storage gives PacifiCorp more flexibility, not only to provide emergency backup power, but also to support the growing renewable and variable power generation portfolio throughout the area. This project will require lots of additional studies.
* PacifiCorp’s license expires 2024. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under the Federal Power Act regulates the production of hydropower systems like PacifiCorp’s. FERC typically gives between 30 and 50 year licenses. PacifiCorp must officially start the licensing process no later than the fall of 2018. The relicensing process takes at least six years to wrap-up.

Eve and Connely responded to questions.

**Agency Reports**

* Allan Moore reported the following from the Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control (WMRC):
	+ WMRC continues its review of two landfill projects in Box Elder County, Franklin Hill and Promontory Point. WMRC is evaluating Franklin Hill’s draft Permit Application, as well as public comments, and Promontory Point’s Permit Application.
* Tom Daniels reported the following from the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation (DERR):
	+ DERR carries on with the cleanup of its superfund projects.
* Laura Vernon reported the following from the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL):
	+ FFSL has finished the comprehensive management plan for the Bear River, as well as the Request for Proposal for the Master Leasing Plans for FFSL’s sections of the Green and Colorado Rivers.
* Susie Tracy reported the following from the U.S. Forest Service:
	+ The Utah Forest Supervisor commits, by letter, to restore a million acres across the state in the next five years.
* Chris Merritt reported the following from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO):
	+ November 27, 2017, SHPO launches its electronic Consultation System. In order to use the system, the first step is registration; registration should be by the person who will be submitting consultations to get a license, not a third-party consultant. Registration is free.
	+ As part of the digital Consultation System, SHPO is also designing its online system for cultural resource presentations, archeological sites, and reports; available, hopefully, by next spring.
* Carl Adams reported the following from the Division of Water Quality (DWQ):
	+ DWQ has acquired a stream trailer from Water Rights. The stream trailer will be used as an educational tool for fairs and education days.
	+ DWQ is currently in early discussions with partners for acquisition of property along Mud Creek, the southern tributary of Scofield Reservoir. Sanpete Water Conservancy District purchased the property for potential mitigation of the Narrows Project. The property is no longer needed for that purpose. DWQ is interested in a more riparian focused arrangement with DWR and other partners.
	+ Jim Harris has filled Erica Gaddis’ previous position, as Assistant Director.

**Other Business**

Next meeting: February 1, 2017

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:42 a.m.