**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Public Lands Policy Coordination

**February 1, 2018**

**Department of Natural Resources**

**Room 112**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

**Members**

Todd Stonely, DWRe, *Chair*

Bill James, DWR, *Vice Chair*

Jan Morse, DOGM

Jay Olsen, UDAF for Melissa Ure

Laura Ault, FFSL

Tom Chidsey, UGS

Susan Zarekarizi, State Parks

Joel Karmazyn, DAQ

Carl Adams, DWQ

Michael Storck, DERR for Hans Millican

Brad Westwood, Director, SHPO

Allan Moore, WMRC

Brad Bartholomew, UDEM

Elisa Albury, UDOT

Sonja Wallace, SITLA

**Guests Invited Federal Agencies**

Chris Merritt, SHPO Susanne Tracy, Forest Service

Chris Hansen, SHPO Abbie Jossie, BLM

Elizabeth Hora, SHPO

Whitney Seal, SHPO **Staff**

Brandon Weston, UDOT Sindy Smith, PLPCO

Brian Maffly, Salt Lake Tribune

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

**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 November 2, 2017, minutes.

**Little Cottonwood Canyon (SR-210) Environmental Study**

Brandon Weston, UDOT Environmental Program Manager, reported on the Little Cottonwood Canyon (SR-210) Environmental Study. Main discussion items include:

* The Legislature approved a billion dollar bond for new UDOT projects last year. Within that billion dollar bond, the Legislature set aside 100 million dollars for UDOT to identify projects that could enhance economic development specific to recreational areas. The Transportation Commission and other entities came up with a draft prioritization list of areas throughout the state that would benefit from transportation improvement, enhance tourism and economic development, and make available access to recreation areas. Bear Lake, American Fork Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyon, Zions National Park, Arches National Park, and Canyonlands National Park were selected to move forward for additional study and potential funding.
* The Transportation Commission approved the list of potential projects and made it available for a 30-day comment period on their website. The majority of comments concerned Little Cottonwood Canyon.
* The Transportation Commission provided two million dollars to UDOT to start an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Little Cottonwood Canyon with a focus on safety and mobility. The Notice of Intent has not been issued but expected to be published mid-February. The U.S. Forest Service will be a Cooperating Agency with UDOT. One EIS and one Record of Decision (ROD) will cover both agencies.
* UDOT will build upon the 27 planning studies that have been done for both Little and Big Cottonwood Canyons, as well as other data to develop a baseline and define the scope of the project.
* Besides the mobility and safety concerns, Little Cottonwood Canyon has serious water and environmental degradation issues.
* The U. S. Forest Service will be an important component to the EIS.
* The Utah Department of Transportation is another significant participant in the EIS.
* From now until June the team will look at the data being collected and define the purpose and need. The purpose and need will inform the alternatives. UDOT plans to complete the EIS within two years, which is an extremely aggressive schedule.

Brandon responded to questions.

**Process and Programmatic Agreements, SHPO**

Brad Westwood, Director of SHPO, introduced himself, Chris Hansen, who discussed historic architecture and buildings, Elizabeth Hora, who reported on archaeology, and Chris Merritt, Deputy Director, who talked about archaeological Fort Douglas and programmatic agreements. Brad expressed his appreciation for the opportunity for SHPO to inform RDCC about cultural resources and programmatic agreements. Programmatic agreements, he pointed out, not only help create fast tracks, but also afford early and continuous interaction, facilitating federal compliance of Section 106 of the Natural Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and state compliance of Utah Code Annotated 9-8-404. Compliance is a big wall to hurdle when associated with cultural resources and its preservation. Main discussion items include:

* Many of our nation’s historic resources were lost post World War II. Laws are now in place that require agencies to plan for historic resources. Section 106 review and state law, UCA 9-8-404, require consultation with SHPO whenever a federal or state action may affect historic properties.
* An agency can move forward as long as it follows a process, a process that shows the agency has planned for other alternatives in terms of historic resources.
* The National Register of Historic Places is a listing of resources identified as worthy of recognition and preservation. Threshold tests are age, 50 years or older, and integrity. When evaluated within its historic context, a property must be shown to be significant for one or more of the four Criteria for Evaluation:
  + events in history
  + significant person or group of people
  + architecture, construction, aesthetic qualities
  + archaeology (ability to yield important information)
* Buildings are easy to see because they are usually above ground. However, archaeological artifacts are not so easy to see. In Utah over 100 thousand sites are known to exist.
* Archaeology considered in Utah spans from 11,000 BC to mid-20th century. Archaeology is important to the public, especially Native Americans, researchers, ranchers, and enthusiasts, such as the Utah Statewide Archeological Society and the Utah Rock Art Research Association, etc.
* There is excitingly more archaeology to discover, but with some trepidation for people who might want to be building structures with state and federal money.
* With all this archaeology and state agencies needing to do stuff with the ground, SHPO has advanced solutions to mutually benefit the state of Utah. While federal law dictates operations, state law, UCA 9-8-404, allows for flexibility. SHPO works closely with agencies partners. SHPO has developed a “para-archaeologists” training program; training state agency staff to function as para-archaeologists who inventory and survey the ground before consulting with SHPO.
* SHPO’s web-based compliance system, <https://community.utah.gov/e106/s/>, lists over 270 cases submitted to SHPO since the online system launched November 27, 2017. The compliance system has decreased consultation times by half, from 15 days to 7 days, and also increased staff efficiency, improved communication with agency partners, and created transparency for the public.
* Program Alternatives—Programmatic Agreements (PAs) streamline decision-making, efficiencies, prioritization, exemptions, predictability, and shared expectations.
* SHPO would be happy to work with all agency partners to develop a unique PA, if none exists, or to bring up-to-date an outdated PA. PAs benefit everyone.

SHPO responded to questions.

**Agency Reports**

* Abbie Jossie, BLM’s Deputy State Director for natural resources, cultural, and recreation, and the planning environmental branch as well, reported the following from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM):
  + Scoping notices are out for both the revised Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments. As a result of the new monument modification, Kanab Field Office is also revising its RMP.
  + The BLM is looking at targeted, potential Greater Sage-grouse Plan Amendments to align more closely with Utah’s Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan. Whether or not that will require an EIS or an EA will be determined within the next couple of weeks. BLM is working diligently with the state on that effort.
  + Scoping meeting for the nation-wide greater sage-grouse effort began before the holidays. Some states may push a bit different than Utah. In the meantime BLM is implementing the signed 2015 plans.
  + The BLM, Great Basin region for Sage Grouse, is preparing two regionally focused, landscape-scale, programmatic environmental impact statements (PEISs). One PEIS will focus on the construction of fuel breaks and the other PEIS will focus on hazardous fuels reductions and rangeland restoration to protect and restore the sagebrush steppe ecosystem. This week the BLM initiated public scoping meetings.
  + The BLM plans to analyze past nominated competitive oil and gas lease sale parcels to determine whether or not the BLM should move forward and offer the parcels for a lease sale.
  + The BLM continues work on the Cedar City FO RMP revision.
  + A Settlement Agreement in the *SUWA vs Schneider* case, which challenged six land use plans and off-highway vehicle travel plans, provides for a schedule and process for the BLM to update travel planning decisions, such as reconsidering certain proposed land designations and incorporating air quality considerations into management of oil and gas leasing. The BLM is developing, with SHPO, a Programmatic Agreement for these efforts across the state.
  + Scoping notices are out for both the revised Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments. As a result of the new monument modification, the lands formerly part of the GSENM now located in the Kanab Field Office will also be addressed in the planning effort.
  + The BLM is looking at targeted, potential Greater Sage-grouse Plan Amendments to align more closely with Utah’s Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan. Whether or not that will require an EIS or an EA will be determined within the next couple of weeks. BLM is working diligently with the state on that effort.
* Chris Merritt reported the following from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO):
  + May is archaeology and preservation month. SHPO will present small events across the state for the public interested in history and archaeology.
* Allan Moore reported the following from the Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control (WMRC):
  + WMRC is drafting the response to comments on the Franklin Hill project in Box Elder County and continuing to evaluate the Permit Application for the Promontory Point project, which has received a lot of interest.
* Joel Karmazyn reported the following from the Division of Air Quality (DAQ):
  + The wildfires last summer produced a record wildfire season. Wildfire is a complex matter involving air quality, airshed, climatic, and geographic issues; all of which encompass Utah’s Smoke Management Plan. The Smoke Management Plan is under an MOU with the BLM, the Forest Service, the state land managers, and Indian tribes. They are all partners along with DAQ who follow rules when you can and cannot burn. An airshed management group meets annually. For years a topic of discussion has been how to amend the smoke management program, which has been approved by EPA. This year the group has new ideas. Several foresters have come forward with white papers. All of the Western states are reviewing their smoke management programs. The agencies are now taking a fresh look at goals and reviewing how to work with the existing rule structure to come up with a multi-faceted matrix, which will provide for more flexibility, without a request for a rule revision with the EPA.
* Elisa Albury reported the following from the Department of Transportation (UDOT):
  + As Branden indicated earlier, UDOT has funds to study recreation related facilities and has developed a robust program with several EAs and a couple of EISs currently in the scoping stage.
* Laura Ault reported the following from the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL):
  + FFSL kicks-off the first ever Green and Colorado Rivers Comprehensive Management Plans and updates to the current Mineral Leasing Plan. Seven county public scoping meetings are scheduled at the end of March through the end of April.
  + A group called Lake Restoration Solutions, Inc., submitted a proposal to FFSL, which administers the bed of Utah Lake, to dispose of the lake bed in exchange for comprehensive restoration around the lake. The lakebed lands disposed of will be used to construct islands to be used for development. FFSL put out a nomination for competing bids. Lake Restoration Solutions was the only nomination. FFSL is reviewing the application.
* Brad Bartholomew reported the following from the Division of Emergency Management (UDEM):
  + UDEM is beginning the process of mapping the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake flood plains.
  + UDEM continues to update of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.
* Jay Olsen reported the following from the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF):
  + UDAF has concerns with the short comment period of the Manti-La Sal Plan Revision Wilderness Evaluation review. UDAF recommends PLPCO request the Forest Service grant an extension of time to comment.
* Susanne Tracy reported the following from the U.S. Forest Service:
  + The Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan Revision comment period for the Wild and Scenic River review is open until February 12. The Forest Service is reviewing the Ashley National Forest Draft Assessment Report.
  + The Three Creeks Allotment Consolidation project objection period ended January 29, 2018. The Forest Service is currently reviewing those objections.
  + The Forest Service is in the process of determining the best way to review over 50 thousand comments and over 200 unique comments it received for the sage-grouse proposed RMP Amendment. The Forest Service is working with the BLM and the state of Utah on the proposed sage-grouse Land Use Amendment.
* Bill James reported the following from the Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR):
  + FFSL, on behalf of DWR, received over $1.8 million in a bonus bid from an oil and gas company bidding on a “no surface occupancy” mineral lease on 280 acres of mineral rights that DWR owns in the Uinta Basin just southeast of Myton, Utah. DWR will receive approximately $1.5 million of the proceeds to support wildlife management efforts. FFSL keeps a moderate percentage for the services they offer as the mineral agent representing DWR in this matter.
* Todd Stonely reported the following from the Division of Water Resources (DWRe):
  + A report from the Legislative audit for water use showed that the culinary or the potable water data estimates are accurate compared to what they had been previously. DWRe’s secondary water use estimates were underreported by 15-20 percent. The Legislature made specific recommendations on how to address that in the State Water Plan.
  + Currently there is significant interest moving toward metering secondary systems, which will provide better data.
  + At the moment Utah’s water supply looks grim. DWRe expects some resource and community impacts due to the drought. However, the reservoir storage looks good, which will mitigate the dry winter somewhat.

**Other Business**

Next meeting: May 3, 2018

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.