Emery County Public Lands Meeting
December 4, 2018
10:00 a.m. Emery County Courthouse

PLC: Rod Player, Ed Geary, Leon McElprang, Bruce Wilson, J.R. Nelson, Sherrel Ward, Randall Stilson.

PL Staff: Ray Petersen, Carol Cox, Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Kent Wilson, Commissioner Paul Cowley.

Public: Brandon Behling,DWR, Darren Olsen,USFS, Marc Stilson,DWRi, Jaydon Mead, BLM Dana Truman, BLM

Excused: Lauren Huntsman, Kim McFarlane

1. Welcome: Chairman Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes: Randall Stilson made a motion to approve the minutes dated November 6, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ed Geary. The motion passed.

3. Chairman Comments: Rod Player indicated that he Googled the Emery County Land Bill and talked about the favorable comments that he read. He indicated that he spent a couple of weeks in November out on the Swell where he visited with a group called Colorado Outward Bound, a well organized hiking and climbing group staying in the Swell area for 17 days. These people, who are from all over the country as well as other countries, pay a significant amount of money to be guided to different areas for hiking and climbing experiences. Rod indicated that the group really liked the Swell area.

4. Commission Report on Public Land Bill: Rod reported on what was discussed regarding the land bill from a recently held special meeting. He explained that there were some changes being proposed by Senator Hatch's Office. There was more area in the southern part of the county, where they proposed 100,000 + more acres in wilderness. The area is south of Goblin Valley and to the west along the southern county line. There is another area in the southeast portion of the county along the river. The discussion revolved around whether we are ok with this or if we want to pull it. After much discussion the council decided to recommend to the Commissioners that we go ahead with the bill, but because so much wilderness had been added, to try and exclude the Candland Mountain Wilderness. However, we did not want that to be what killed the bill. The Commissioners and Randy were going to convey this to Senator Hatch's Office. Lauren Huntsman indicated that the mission or purpose of the bill is three fold. 1. Protect the resources that we have there now. Anything that we can do down there today, will we be able to do them tomorrow, if the bill passes? The answer is, yes. 2. To not close any roads. Will the existing roads that are there now be available in the future? The answer is, yes. 3. Keep a national monument out of here. Even though this doesn't guarantee that there will never be a national monument here, by law, it would be very unlikely to be designated in this area. All

three of these purposes were met. We have negotiating power today with a President, a Senate, and House of Representatives(Congress). One of these goes away after the first of the year. Who knows what we will lose in two years. So, there is a lot of discussion of, 'Is it everything we want? No, it is not! But, it could be a lot worse'. If the bill passes, there may be those who will say, 'We should have held out!' We do not know what the alternative would be. We have an opportunity to get a known today. If we do not get that know today, then we enter into the future with an unknown. In Lauren's opinion the unknown of the future will probably be worse than the known today. Rod indicated that the advisory council went from 7 members to 9 which allows more opportunity for local county representation. Leon McElprang expressed his concern that if they come back to us to negotiate for more acres, he is done. He expressed that he does not want to give them anything more. He would vote 'no' to any additional acres designated to wilderness. Randy Johnson indicated that at that point we would default back to the original bill. He added, if Congress signs this bill, it will be the premier legislation of more than 25 years. We are just waiting for Senator Durbin to sign off and we are running out of time. The Senate will be pushing the spending bill along to get through it before they recess for the year. Ray Petersen added that the SITLA land exchange will be an economic benefit for Emery County. They have agreed to come back on and participate in legislation regarding the bill. Lauren also added that the bottom line is, 'Everything we can do on the San Rafael today, we can still do tomorrow, if this bill passes. Commissioner Wilson added that this has been a long and difficult road. They wanted 200,000 acres of additional wilderness, we have negotiated that to 100,000 + acres. We have to wait to see if Curtis' office will accept that or kill the bill. Commissioner Wilson also reported that the frac sand is not an issue due to the fact that the sand does not contain a high enough quality to sacrifice the bill for. Randy indicated that we are in a holding pattern for now. If all goes well, the bill will be attached to other bills and will be signed. in mid December.

5. Consideration and approval of 2019 meeting dates:
2019 Meeting Schedule was presented for approval as follow:
January 8
February 5
March 5
April 2
May 7
June 4
July (no meeting, field trip)
August 6
September 3
October 1
November 5
December 3

Ed Geary made a motion to accept the 2019 meeting schedule. The motion was seconded by JR

Nelson. The motion passed.

6. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments: Bureau of Land management (BLM): Dana Truman reported that the vault toilet in Joe's Valley has been installed. They were able to push in a road for new campground in Cottonwood Canyon. They have improved and expanded some parking areas. The partnership with FS is working well in getting things done in the Bouldering Area. Myron and his recreation staff have been doing some trail work in the Sid's Mountain area and installing some signs. Their next step is installing some geology formation signs near the Dinosaur Quarry. BLM continues to work in partnership with Goblin Valley State Parks on management. Installed traffic counter data and collected data for the first time. Dinosaur Quarry is closed for the season. Several staff members are retiring. HR staff is reaching out to hire as quickly as possible. Livestock grazing will be limited because of lack of water. Horse gathers went well. In minerals, they have been doing some helium exploration in Emery County. Jaydon Mead reported that the comment period for public land sale south of the Hunter Power Plant just ended. They will be addressing the comments shortly and moving that project forward. Emery Town Irrigation Pipeline public comment period just ended. They did not receive any comments so they will be moving forward on that project and issuing a decision before the new year. They will be issuing a decision in the next month regarding the Big Bend Spring development in Huntington Canyon near the debris basins. This is for culinary water to North Emery Water Users. They received an application for ROW for a road past Long Street. The NEPA process has been initiated. Leon McElprang asked that the message be passed along to please, not do any construction on the Big Bend Spring during the month of June.

Division of Water Rights (DWRi) : Marc Stilson reported that there are several water right bills being introduced in the legislature. One is regarding a pilot program for water banking. This is the ability to sell or lease water. It makes it easier for two partners to connect. It facilitates the process of leasing or selling water rights. This would be drainage specific. Leon expressed concern that this has the potential to change the future of water in Emery County. He indicated he's not in favor of this especially when the water share moves across county or state line. Lauren indicated that owners of a share in irrigation companies can do whatever they want among themselves, they do not have to go through this bank. Another bill that the legislature is looking at is mandatory water meters for new secondary connections. There is a bill to remove the sunset provision from instream flow protections. This would be used to protect certain instream flow resources like fish or habitat. Lauren commented that an important point to remember is that there a lot of small interest groups out there that bring certain initiatives to the legislature. They are driving a lot of things. If we do not want to be driven then we need to consider how to become a special interest group to drive?

Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM): No report

Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR): Brandon Behling reported that in their wildlife section they just wrapped up pheasant hunt. State wide they released 10,000 rooster pheasants. In this

Southeast Region, they released a little less than in other regions in the state. They are divided out according to the amount of hunters in the region. This region has increased in pheasant hunting participation. DWR is excited to see these numbers coming up. DWR Wildlife biologist just wrapped up their Bighorn Sheep survey on the south side of the San Rafael. Brandon did not have any data to report. Currently they have two studies going on that are part of their migration initiative. Mule deer health assessment survey and a cougar survey. They hope to see if their paths cross. Bison hunt in the Range Creek area ends December 10th. The herd belongs to the tribes and is becoming difficult to manage. When bison cross the fence they become the DWR's problem. They are working closely with the tribes to resolve the issue. Their habitat section will be getting into full swing soon. Projects will start to be proposed and see which projects will be funded. In the Aquatic Section they received the go ahead from the Army Corp of Engineers to begin work on the Joe's Valley Ramp Expansion Project. Work was supposed to begin last week but, recent storms may have delayed things. They will be extending the ramp out fifty feet. This is as far as they will ever be able to extend the boat ramp due to the grade. They will work on the ramp expansion now, and then move on to the parking lot expansion in th espring. In law enforcement, hunts are winding down. They are focusing on checking on trappers at this time making sure they are checking their traps. Water bodies are starting to freeze up. They want to promote ice safety. Be aware of the ice conditions.

State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA): No report

Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF): Darren Olsen reported that the mountains are starting to get snow. Gates are not closed. They keep them open and encourage snowmobiling. Their Christmas Tree tags are going quickly. Fourth graders can get a tree tag for free. There are a number of programs available for this age group within various agencies. They continue with their Forest Plan efforts. They continue their analysis for future projects. They will have timber sales in early summer targeting Black Canyon and Reeder Canyon. They are looking at a reroute at Millers Flat Road north of Reeder Subdivision as it goes through Wilberg's property. We have never had an easement there. It will go a little bit to the east to the cattle guard. It has, in the past created some challenges for road maintenance.

Utah State Parks and Recreation: No report. Rod explained that Jonathon reported in the Trails meeting that the Trails Committee is looking at development of a trail from Millsite to Emery. Motorized and non-motorized. Motorized part will be off the forest. They have got several different alignments. Most of it is on BLM. They will continue to work on this. They have Forest Service representation, BLM representation, State Park representation on the committee.

Washington Delegation: No report. The council discussed a bill from Congressman Curtis' office to transfer ownership of the dam and water rights from Bureau of Reclamation for Joe's Valley Dam to Emery Water Conservancy District. It was suggested inviting Jay Mark Humphrey to Public Lands meeting for an update

7. Additional Issues from Council Members: Randall Stilson thanked Commissioner Paul Cowley for his service on the Commission and Public Lands Council.
Sherrell Ward provided an update of precipitation totals of the reservoirs in the county.

8. Concerned Citizens with Emery County related issues. None

9. The meeting was adjourned.