MINUTES
Emery County Public Lands Council
February 5, 2019
Emery County Courthouse
Canyon Conference Room

PLC: Rod Player, Ed Geary, Leon McElprang, Sherrel Ward, Randall Stilson, Laren Huntsman, Les Wilberg, Kim McFarlane, Bruce Wilson

PL Staff: Ray Petersen, Carol Cox, Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Kent Wilson, Commissioner Gil Conover.

Public: Ryan Jones, UDAF, Jay Humphrey, EWCD, Larry Johansen, State Parks, Marc Stilson, Division of Water Rights, Darren Olsen, USFS, Chris Conrad, BLM, Cody Allred, PacifiCorp, Chris Wood, DWR, Rowe Zwahlen, Extension, Bill Dellos, Gary Powell, Joan Powell, Brad Richman, Chelsea Guymon, Tricia Willson, Kevin Albrecht, Wayne Pahl

Excused: JR Nelson

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

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Randall Stilson made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 8, 2019. The motion was seconded by Laren Huntsman. The motion passed.

3. **Chairman Comments:**

4. **Commission Report on Emery Land Bill (Public Meeting)** due to the length of this item it was moved to the end of the meeting.

5. **Redge Johnson, Public Lands Policy Coordination Office (PLPCO) Report on FS Roadless Petition** Redge Johnson helps the Governor with public land issues, review EA, EIS, Special projects, ETC. Regarding the Roadless Rule Petition. About half of our Forest lands are in the roadless rule. This last year with the five major fires that were in the forest, about 78% of FS lands that burned were in roadless areas. There is not always this correlation every year, but it has become apparent that we have some fuel load problems in some of these roadless areas. The governor has asked their office to look at doing a state specific roadless rule. The original roadless rule was done under the Clinton Administration and then when Bush was there they decided to not take a look at the entire roadless rule areas but did allow state specific roadless rules. Idaho and Colorado took advantage of this and went through the process and got state specific roadless rules . Idaho finished the process under the Bush Administration and Colorado finished under the Obama Administration. As we were looking at what we could do to help with the fire and fuel loads , this was the best option we had to work with. Starting a year ago we started discussions with the Forest Service, specifically the Department of Agriculture and the ability to do this roadless rule. Alaska is ahead of us. They will be finishing up their

state specific roadless rule about the first of March. We are trying to have our petition ready in the next couple of weeks so when they are finished with the Alaska EIS they can move right into Utah's EIS. He thanked Emery County for helping with giving feed back for what they would like to see in roadless areas. They have been meeting with all the state agencies to get their expertise. We wanted to start with the counties because you are closest to the land and know the problem areas that you have. We are putting together all the information and working with the some NEPA experts to tweek the process to make it as effective, but as quick through the process as possible. He talked about a few things that they are trying to do with the rule. Reduction of fuels, habitat, conifer control, invasive species, drought, etc. The intent of the state specific roadless rule is to keep these areas in a natural state but actively managed. They are pushing to have this done for the Governor's review in the next two weeks. They are hoping to have it all done in eighteen months, next April or May.

6. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Chris Conrad reported that from the Price Field Office's perspective their relationship with Emery County has never been better. We have a number of mutual goals. The Good Water Rim EA should be signed in the next week or two. The Bronco ROW EA should be signed on Wednesday. SUFCO lease modifications will be signed by Wednesday also. Lila Canyon lease modificartions, the contractor is working on this and they have not received anything to review as of yet. Grazing applications are going out to the grazers. The recent government furlow will affect things that should have happened in December and January. We will feel the affects of the furlow for the rest of the year. BLM has had discussions regarding the Lands Bill. They do not have an opinion and they will work with what the legislature passes. They have limitations with what they can help with and comment about. Commissioner Kent Wilson asked for clarification of maintenance of trails within a WSA and wilderness area. Sherrel asked about grazing permits whether they are at 100%. They are assuming that growth will be at 100%.

Division of Water Rights(DWRi): Marc Stilson indicated that it has been quiet. The only thing he has to report is the waterline crossing for Big Bear Spring. They anticipate October for completion. Sherrel asked about the stream flow report. It is slow to get out this year.

Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (DOGM):

Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR): Chris Wood reported that Big Game application period is open until March 7. Shed/ antler gathering season is open as well. You need to go on line and take educational tutorial, pass a test and print out a certificate. This has to be done every year. Bobcat season ends on the 20th of this month. Predator clinic this Saturday.

School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA):

Manti LaSal National Forest (MLNF): Darren Olsen reported that canyon gates are open. Watch for danger of avalanches. He addressed the Roadless Areas that we have in the Forest. This will help us with management in these areas. He reported on the timber harvest areas and the management that they have to take in these areas. Reeder Canyon/Black Canyon will be their first sale. Whether they will be going in to log it this year or next year we do not know. They have a five year period to get the timber off. We will have to work through the active logging time and manage the safety of travel in these areas.

Utah State Parks and Recreation: Larry Johansen reported on the Millsite Expansion Project/Campground expansion. The engineering is done. They are cleaning up some environmental things. Hoping to be done by June.

Washington Delegation Staff: Larry Ellertson, Congressman Curtis's Office, Public Lands Advisor. He has spent much time with the power plants in Carbon and Emery County. He has visited this area often. Congressman Curtis is very interested in working with Emery County Public Lands and other agencies on forest and public lands issues.

Commission report on Emery Land Bill (Public Meeting):
Commissioner Kent Wilson reported that last Wednesday or Thursday the Commissioners heard rumors that this lands bill was going to close 50 miles of roads down in the wilderness area. This caused them some concern. The commissioners had been promising that for the last year that this bill would not close 1 mile of road. They felt that if that was true they were prepared to pull the bill. They felt that their integrity was worth more than this bill. So, on Friday they were talking with Romney's office, Curtis' office and Dept. of Interior to get some verification on some roads in the wilderness area. The classification was listed as 'other routes". From Washington's (Department of the Interior) perspective 'other routes' is listed as closed routes to them. Because of the uncertainty of this, the Commissioners felt that they needed a safety valve in case they wanted to kill the bill. The meeting we had yesterday at 6:30 am. was to meet the 8:30 am time in Washington to allow time to pull the bill if we wanted to. There was a lot speculation and talk about secrecy. There was no ulterior motive, no secret decisions being made. The weight of this decision is important. Our new Commissioner Gil Conover has not had an opportunity to lend his support or non-support, on record, for the bill. So this was the reason for the early hour meeting.

The Commissioners invited Romel Nicholas, former Assistant to Senator Orrin Hatch, who has been a key to negotiations with the Democrats on the bill to come to Emery County and address the public during this meeting and the public meeting being held tonight from 6pm until 8pm. The bill could be voted on tonight or tomorrow. It could take a week to ten days to get through the Senate. Ray commented that there has been a lot of misinformation put out there that has caused a lot of drama. He reminded everyone of the public information meeting tonight where

information will be presented. Romel Nicholas, representatives from SITLA will be here, Representatives from the Governor's office, Representatives from Congressman's Curtis and Senator Romney's office , Public Lands Council Board Members and the Emery County Commissioners will be here to address questions and provide information. Laren Huntsman commented that this council is an advisory council, our role is to advise the Commissioners. As a member of this council, we have advised that this is the best thing for the county. As a member of this council, in his opinion, keeping the bill in place is the right thing to do and support the Commissioners decision. Commissioner Wilson added there are a lot of people who feel bad that three people have to make this vote. And there are those that are angry that three people make this vote. But, he added, for me personally, I have found a lot of strength in the fact that it is not just three people. This council has spent decades coming to a conclusion. He added, that he trusts this council's wisdom and the process. This has given him the courage to make this decision. Twenty years ago Emery County decided to go down a process by choosing people to represent Emery County on this council.

Romel Nicholas addressed PL Council and concerned citizens in attendance. Romel concluded Senator Hatch's term in office as his Senior Advisor to Lands, Energy, Public Lands, etc. (Legislative Assistant) He stated he is here to lend some insight into the process to how were are here today. He commented that what Emery County has done with this legislation is historically significant. There has not been a piece of legislation on this scale to make it this far in the process in a very long time. This bill dwarfs some other considerable lands bills that have passed in the State of Utah in the past. The last a public lands bill passed in Congress was ten years ago. He is personally impressed at the local endorsement. Senator Hatch has not worked on any legislation that was not locally endorsed. In his time in DC he has not seen a piece of legislation that is a vetted and throughly thought through as this bill. This bill will be the standard for writing bills for years to come. When cloture is evoked debate is suspended and any amendment has to be relevant. Senator Lee wants Antiquities Act reform attached to the lands package. However, it is not germane to this lands package. If this bill package passes in the House it still has to pass in the Senate. This group should be commended for making it this far.

Commissioner Wilson asked what would happen if we wanted killed the bill and start it again next year? Trust would be broken. Deals were met to get to this point. Probably would not happen. Bruce Wilson asked if this bill fails where does the Swell fit on the National Monument list? Romel indicated that it is very high on the list. Utah is high on Democrat President's list because this is a Republican state and they can do what ever the far left wants with the Antiquities Act with zero political ramifications. There has never been a monument overlaid on top of congressional designation. Doing this Public Lands Act is as a major insurance policy ahead of future monument designation. It is as close as you can get to a guarantee. The far left hates what you have done because it allows you to dictate the terms on how the land is managed. One of the coolest features of the bill is the grazing inventory that has to occur within two years of enactment of the bill. The language in the bill says if there is existing grazing it has to be respected in perpetuity for as long as the grazer wants to be out there. Reasonable access must

be provided.
What has been achieved in this bill irritates the environmental community. This is the best deal Emery County might ever get. It will not get better in the next 10, 20 years. There will be a lot of counties in Utah that will be jealous of Emery County.

There were comments from the public.

7. Additional Issues from Council Members: Sherrel Ward reported that our snow level is at 111% precipitation is at 125%.

8. Concerned Citizens with Emery County related issues: Rod reported that the Trails Committee discussed a route from Millsite State Park down to the Hole Trail and on the Muddy. This will a be priority for the spring as well as finish work on the Good Water Rim Trail.

Bruce Wilson commented that the public is always welcome at the Public Lands Council meetings and appreciates the comments from the public.

9. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned.