MINUTES

Emery County Public Lands Council

October 1, 2019

Emery County Courthouse
Canyon Conference Room

**PLC:** Rod Player, Les Wilberg, Ed Geary, JR Nelson, Kim McFarlane

**PL Staff:** Ray Petersen, Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Gil Conover, Commissioner Kent Wilson, Deputy Clerk/Auditor Carol Cox.

**Public:** Larry Johansen, (State Parks), Darren Olsen (USFS), Clay Crozier (Senator Romney's Staff), Kevin Albrecht (USFS), Ryan Jones (UDAF), Makeda Hansen (DWR), Marc Stilson (Water Rights), Wayne Pahl (CCOHVA), Don Stephens (BLM).

**Excused:** Laren Hunstman, Leon McElprang, Randal Stilson, Bruce Wilson, Sherrel Ward

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

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

**3. Chairman Comments:**

**4. Report of September 18th Field Trip:**
Rod reported that on September 18th Public Lands Council hosted a Field Trip on the Green River Desert. Several issues were discussed as they relate to the Emery Lands Bill. There were more BLM embers that went than there were Public Lands Council members. They met at the Sheriff Sub Station and traveled south to Horse Bench Reservoir near the turn to Fossil Point Road where they talked about access to and resources at Fossil Point and other issues related to this area. From there they went to the San Rafael River Bridge, where they talked about ownership to some of the private land through there. From there they went to Three Canyon where mountain bike trails, cherry stemmed roads and access to the Green River were discussed. From there they went to Keg Knoll road and stopped at the helium lease site and an historic airstrip. From there they drove down out of the county into Wayne County back to Highway 24 then back to Green River. Some stayed for the BLM public meeting that evening in Green River. The roads are very good. Ray indicated that it's big country and it takes a long time to travel the road. If you don't have a reason to go there, you don't just happen to end up there. Rod stated that it is place where a lot of people go to avoid Moab congestion. Kim McFarlane talked about the problems created for search and rescue. If they are lost or hurt while in this area the County has to dispatch search and rescue to assist them. People wander out there, unprepared for the conditions and don't realize that they don't have cell service or even if they dispatch S/R out

there that it will take a long time to reach them. He talked about other counties that charge people when S/R has to be sent out to rescue them. He felt that this may be something that Emery County may want to look into.

On November 5th the Public Lands meeting will be in Green River at 6pm. At this time they are not sure of the location. Some of the agencies indicated that the date and time is acceptable. They will send out notice of the meeting to everyone.

**5. Commission Report on Emery Land Bill:**
Commissioner Wilson asked Ray to report on a meeting with Cody Stewart, Emery County's Consultant in Washington D.C. and BLM Staff at the State BLM Office in Salt Lake. Emery's request to keep the ball rolling with the implementation of the Dingell Act was well received by State Director Ed Roberson. Priorities for implementation were discussed, and they assured us that they are on the same page. Cody knows a lot of people and Ray talks with him at least once a week. Cody meets with our legislators and BLM officials regularly. Ray indicated that working with Cody, who is infuential at the Washington and State Level is an effective way to get more support here from the top down, especially with budgeting to get more people on the ground. Cody knows this area and he has a fair knowledge of the on the ground issues. Commissioner Wilson indicated that Cody has worked with SITLA to expedite the SITLA trades as well. He has also been working with the Department of the Interior to get the RAC Committee in place by the first of the year.

**6. Agency Reports and Council Member Comments:**

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** Don Stephens reported on the public meetings on the Dingell Act. He indicated that not many attended but they had good discussion with those who were there. Congress did not do a continuing resolution so they are on a budget that is 5% less than their fiscal 2019 funding. They are still actively working on filling positions, new and vacated, in their office. San Rafael Desert Travel Management Plan, they have a goal of February 28, 2020 to sign the decision record. The San Rafael Swell Travel Management Plan they have contracted the Class III cultural surveys which are currently being done. Also for the San Rafael Swell on October 7th they will start route evaluations which Ray will be a participant. They are working on Lila Canyon draft EA for the contractor. They are working on the air quality report for William's Draw. Hunter Plant wants to purchase 200 acres of BLM land that is surrounded on three sides by their property. That sale is under litigation on the realty pending a challenge from the Sierra Club. BLM had this property in their resource management plan as property that could be sold because of the location. However, it is now on hold. Good Water Rim Trail is still in consultation with Wildlife. Regarding the Little Wild Horse/ Temple Mountain Recreation Area they are still working on cadastral and a few other things. Jurassic Monument is getting a new sign. With the Range Creek wild horse unit gather they have 112 gathered currently. The goal was for 200 +. They are hoping to be finished up by this week. High winds have been a challenge for the helicopter. Moab Field Office has been helping with the Wilderness Plan. They are wrapping up the fiscal year 2019. Rod asked about Trail Mountain Mine opening back up? Don indicated that he was not aware of that being discussed

with the BLM. Rod asked about the helium lease? Don indicated that they 4 APDs. They have scheduled site visits.

**Division of Water Rights (DWRi):** Marc Stilson reported that things have been quiet on the water rights front. They have one application that has been filed recently by the City of Green River on conjunction with the Green River Canal Company. It is on the Green River for 500 cfs of water for generation of hydro electric power. This is to replace an old application that was filled in the 90's for 100 cfs for hydro electric power and some other uses. DWRi had a hearing on the application. GR discussed that some of their plans have changed and they were planning to replace the old application with a new application that was non-consumptive in uses. It would be just for hydro electric power. The application has been protested by some local GR water users and Fish and Wildlife Services. They have scheduled a hearing on November 6 at 2:00pm at Green River City Hall. DWRi has had several dam projects this summer. They just completed with Emery Water Conservancy District and Huntington Cleveland Irrigation Company some rehabilitation work on Rolson Dam above Miller's Flat. Burrowing rodents (badgers) damaged the dam extensively. The holes were grouted and fixed. Miller's Flat had problems with the gate gear mechanism. It was fixed but the gate was not closing. So they drained the reservoir and attempted to fix the problem but could not find anything that could be causing the problem. The gate started working so they were not sure if it was a rock that was jammed in the gate and it moved when the water flowed again. They are continuing work on Millsite Dam.

**Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (DOGM)**

**Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR):** Makeda Hansen Habitat Manager reported on fish sampling in Huntington Creek. The site just below Electric Lake had the usual number of fish. The site across from Nuck Woodward Canyon had about thirty fish which was a major increase since the fire. They have been stocking the area since 2015. They got multiple Colorado River Cutthroat and Brown Trout. They found some Brown Trout fingerlings which is probably natural reproduction since they were not stocked last spring. They have some stream restoration planned for Huntington Creek in conjunction with the Forest Service. Gill letting next week. Huntington North on October 15, Joe's Valley on October 10, Electric Lake on October 8. Later this fall they will do some plantings on Fuller's Bottom project management area. The road to Fuller's Bottom was washed out with the flows that we had on the San Rafael River this year. They are moving toward an MOU with the county to get some work done on that crossing. Wildlife Section, hunts are on going. Youth pheasant hunts at Hatt's Ranch on October 5th, Desert Lake on October 12th. Nine Mile Bison Committee meeting on November 4th. Outreach Section, they will be having a workshop in November on the new application for coyote bounty. Law enforcement, with the hunts going on they haven't seen any major issues. Currently, they are holding interviews for law enforcement throughout the state. They have a vacancy in East Carbon.

**School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration(SITLA):** Bryan was not able to attend the meeting, However, he reported to Ray that there are a couple of potential sales to make the PL Council aware of. Wolverine Mining has interest in a parcel in Cottonwood Canyon,

south of the existing mine portal. There is a possibility that they may be surface mining coal up there again. Some parcels East of Castle Dale are also being offered again to try and sell.

**Manti LaSal National Forest (MLNF):** Darren Olsen reviewed their new map for their forest plan. Forest plan documents are currently available for review. Now is the time for cooperating agencies to make comments on the plan. Late November early December they will go out for 60 day comment period to get feedback on the plan. Kent Wilson asked if there are any plans for maintenance of Mary's Lake? Darren indicated that he could not think of anything specific dealing with just Mary's Lake. Kent indicated that he has had conversations with several residents of EC and EWCCD as well regarding seeing that Mary's Lake is preserved. Jewkes and Van Buren Lake (Blue Lake) as well. Darren indicated that those lakes have been discussed but not as far as being addressed in the draft forest plan. Ray commented that it does talk about partnerships to maintain things like that. Kent indicated that he would like to see an MOU with the Forest Service to do some of these things. Darren indicated that we could look at the MOU's that we have. We may just need to add these lakes to the MOU we already have. Darren continued with his report. Black Canyon timber sale sold to Timberline. This sale was for 112 thousand ccf. It was a very large sale. They could be starting at anytime next year and beyond. They are working on the Reeder Canyon sale. This sale will be just under 50 ccf. They will go out for bid in late October/November. With the Mammoth fire in late summer, they have not seen any smoke or fire activity since they put in some effort. This fire burned about 980 acres. He talked about managing a fire during a green year. Grazing Season, a number of allotments come on late so a lot are staying longer. Watch for cows and sheep to start coming down in the next seven days. Logging activity, Barco is logging the Skyline mine area. They are using a tethered logging technique. Fuels, they continue to do work on Willow, which is on the Ephriam side. Dry Wash also. Campgrounds, they are starting to shutdown some of the systems to avoid freezing situations. They are winding down in some ways but at the same time they are busy with hunting season. Wood permits will be sold through November 30th.

**Utah State Parks and Recreation:** Larry Johansen talked about meeting with BLM on the NEPA process for the Goblin Valley expansion. Millsite expansion they are starting the process again to get the land transfer between the golf course and the park.

**Department of Agriculture:** Ryan Jones reported on Millsite Dam. They are working on the four foot raise on the down stream slope of the dam. They are almost finished. They have figured out a tentative plan for what they will do on the spillway. The floor of the dam, they will pour a six inch layer over the floor of the dam to seal the cracks. The are going to coat the walls with a substance that seals the concrete. For the rest of the spillway, they have come up with an new engineering design for the concrete and rebar to strengthen it to what is should be. Once they have the new level of the dam raised they will be able to go in and complete the spillway.. They hope to be competed by April. The Moore Independent Pipeline is complete. USU Extension is working on test spots for cannibas farming. They are still working on permitting.

**Washington Delegation:** Clay Grozier, Senator Romney's Staff, reported that Senator Romney is in support of the administration's interpretation of the Endangered Species Act. He talked about Emery Telcom's Rural Broadband project, Congressional intent on the Dingell Act, vaping legislation as it relates to minors, and fake news.

**7. Additional Issues from Council members:** Rod informed everyone of the Outdoor Recreation Summit. The name this year is Roots & Routes. It will be October 22nd through 24th in St. George. Ray commented that last year Adrianna Chimaras and the Bouldering Festival won an award. The director of the ORA has been to Emery County many times and was here in the county last week for the Bouldering Festival.

**8. Concerned Citizens with Emery County related issues:** Kent gave a shout out to the Trails Committee. In the last week they have worked on Fix-It-Pass. Les and his crew work hard to maintain trails in Emery County.

**9. Adjourn**