



**BOARD OF THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION,
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

*Minutes Of The Meeting Held On March 5, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Department of Natural Resources | Soldier Hollow Conference Room
1594 West North Temple, Ste. 116 | Salt Lake City, UT | 84116*

ATTENDEES

Board Members Present:

Bob Murri (Chair)
Corey Cram
Kevin Christensen
Leshia Coltharp
Natalie Randall
Claudia Jarrett
Russ Steadman

**Department of
Natural Resources:**

Jeff Rasmussen
Dave Harris
Scott Strong
Kate Croft
Chris Haller
Susan Zarekarizi

Eugene Swalberg
Devan Chavez
Laurie Backus
Wayne Monroe
Chase Pili
Darin Bird

Excused:

*Doug Thompson
Ryan Starks (Vice Chair)*

Audio recording of this meeting is located at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vco9Eh7rPkuBcu-BGk1gyfi3CPayzjv4/view?usp=sharing>

TIME AGENDA ITEM AND SUMMARY

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- :00 1. WELCOME**
 - 1.1. Call to Order**
Board Chair Bob Murri called the meeting to order and presided. Ms. Kate Croft recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board members being present, the meeting proceeded with business.
 - 1.2. Attendance and Introductions**
Chair Murri took attendance of the board members present. He acknowledged the members of the Division of Parks and Recreation present, both as participants in the meeting and as members of the audience. It was noted that Natalie Randall was delayed by a meeting at the Capitol, but would be arriving shortly.
 - 1:19 1.3. Approval of Agenda**
Chair Murri reviewed the agenda and asked that it be approved. The agenda stands approved as presented.
 - CLAUDIA JARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS DISTRIBUTED. LESHIA COLTHARP SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
 - 2:00 1.4. Approval of November 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes**
Chair Murri presented the minutes of the November 1, 2019 Board meeting and asked that they be approved. The minutes stand approved as presented.

COREY CRAM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 1, 2019. RUSS STEADMAN SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3:00 2. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Each member of the Board provided a brief update on their respective activities as board members of the Division.

Lesha Coltharp commented on her delight at seeing Utah State Parks advertised on the large, street-facing screen in the lobby of the Eccles theatre in downtown Salt Lake City. Ms. Coltharp reviewed a number of upcoming events in Utah state Parks in her region and invited board members to PaddleFest in June 12th through 14th at Red Fleet State Park, to Dino "Saur" Days at the Field House State Park Museum on May 9th, and to the Egg Hunt on April 11th, also at the Field House. She shared that she was pleased to see that Steinaker Reservoir is filling up, since construction on the dam has been completed. She mentioned that Steinaker will be hosting a large dinner event for the ATV Jamboree in May, which will help bring tourism back into the park.

Keving Christensen has been working with Palisade State Park to create biking and hiking trails on the west side of the lake. He has coordinated with a cycling group to help groom the trails. There will be a fishing tournament at Palisade in May, as well as a golf tournament, The Sand Pete Open. Mr. Christensen is looking forward to the triathlon and sandcastle building tournament at Yuba State Park this spring, as well.

Claudia Jarrett reported that in October, she ran a marathon that passed through Snow Canyon State Park, and she visited Quail Creek and Gunlock state parks last fall. She is looking forward to a visit to Frontier Homestead State Park and Museum this spring.

Russ Steadman has spent a lot of time exploring Sanpete County recently as he commutes to visit family. Visitation at the Knolls OHV area has started to pick up recently.

Chair Bob Murri loved being out at Antelope Island for the Board's last meeting. He is excited to hear that bighorn sheep have been reintroduced to the park. He had a wonderful experience at This Is The Place Heritage Park's candlelight Christmas event.

Corey Cram said that water conditions across the state are good. In Sand Hollow State Park, new beach access is being developed. Mr. Cram discussed maintaining the balance between bringing in more people and providing a quality recreational experience. He feels that the new developments at Sand Hollow are helping disperse visitation more evenly around the park. Candace Smith, the park manager at Quail Creek State Park, has moved the entrance station for Quail Creek to make it safer and easier to access the park. Mr. Cram said that he also feels that Candace has done a great job maintaining and expanding the beach area and controlling vegetation there. Mr. Cram observed a problem at Sand Hollow: a large road development around the south side of the park that will limit access to the park for about eight months during construction. Mr. Cram visited Territorial Statehouse State Park Museum for the first time recently and enjoyed learning about state history.

Natalie Randall arrived at the meeting and shared her update. She is working with Eugene Swalberg, Communications Program Manager for the Division, on a collaboration with Grand and San Juan counties to develop a cohesive marketing plan for the parks in the region. Ms. Randall reported that Edge of the Cedars State Park is

being featured in the Utah Natural History Museum's marker project because a notable *Seitaad ruessi* fossil found on Comb Ridge by a local artist is featured in the Utah Natural History Museum. She further reported that Goosenecks State Park has moved into the public scoping additional mountain bike trails and campsites. She shared that there is a new parking area going in at Dead Horse State Park, which is positive for the mountain biking community. Lastly, Ms. Randall said that she is collaborating with Grand County on a "Be In the Know" training to update consumer-facing businesses and land managers in Grand and San Juan counties.

Chair Murri concluded the board member reports by saying that he believes the vision of Utah State Parks is clearer than ever before in 2020.

21:34 5. DEMONSTRATION OF NEW RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Communications Coordinator Eugene Swalberg presented a series of four video advertisements designed to promote employment at Utah State Parks. These advertisements will be aired at recruitment events, and will be shared on social media platforms, as well as the Utah State Parks website. The Communications Program is planning a cohesive recruitment campaign for 2020.

Director Rasmussen expressed that he believes that this campaign will create awareness of employment opportunities at our agency.

31:22 3. DIVISION REPORT

The director and deputy directors of the Division of Parks and Recreation gave a brief report regarding the Division's recent activities.

3.1. Business Report

Deputy Director Scott Strong delivered a financial report to the Board and shared an overview of Division spending and revenue. He is creating a two-page document that will summarize Division accomplishments and financial plans. He shared the following financial data with the Board:

In the past 10 years the Division has reinvested \$44M back into state parks.

Requests for this legislature this year:

One-Time Funding (General Fund)

- #4 Bear Lake Marina \$50,000,000
- #5 Utahraptor State Park \$10,000,000
- #12 Jordanelle Perimeter Trail Expansion \$1,000,000

Ongoing Restricted Fund Appropriations

- Goblin Valley Expansion \$100,000
- Parks Equipment \$500,000
- OHV Program \$3,500,000

One-Time Restricted Fund Appropriations

- Goblin Valley Expansion \$1,500,000
- Gunlock Campground \$2,500,000

- Snow Canyon Parking \$500,000
- Parks Equipment \$500,000
- OHV Program \$2,500,000
- Wasatch Mountain Campground \$5,000,000

Mr. Strong stated that all of these projects have received unreserved support from the legislative committee, in part because of the agency's track record of bringing economic, educational, and recreational value to the state.

Mr. Strong reported a positive and productive legislative session. He explained that the Division has worked with the legislature to shift the appropriation and partnership structure with AIS, the body responsible for quagga control; it will now be controlled by the Division of Wildlife Resources, which is more sensible, in Mr. Strong's view.

Mr. Strong briefly described preliminary research on the fiscal viability of the proposed Utahraptor State Park.

Mr. Strong addressed the issue of wait times at state park entrances. He explained that the Division is currently experimenting with technological solutions to issues around overcrowding and wait times, including a device called ParkHub that is a mobile unit park staff can use to take entrance fee payments and print receipts. Mr. Strong said that thus far, these devices have been very helpful in streamlining access to the parks that are using them. He also mentioned that the agency is considering offering visitors the opportunity to make advanced reservations for day use.

Mr. Strong stated that the proposed annual pass fee increase went through the legislative committee without any pushback. He commented that he believes that \$150 is a very good value.

Ms. Claudia Jarrett noted that many parks seem to be bringing concessions in-house, and inquired whether that is going to continue to be a trend. Mr. Strong and Mr. Rasmussen confirmed that it is likely to be an ongoing trend, since the Division has the unique and unusual business model where it is required to generate revenue sufficient to cover its own operating costs and development projects. Chair Murri asked what impact bringing concessions in-house has on staffing. Mr. Strong said that when staffing is not sufficient, more park staff will be allocated, or if it makes better financial sense to contract out the service, the Division will do that.

Ms. Jarrett asked whether bringing concessions in-house affects insurance premiums. Mr. Strong explained that the Division is already covered by the Division of Risk Management, so that there is no additional cost, but that their agency is always consulted in the event of new endeavors.

Mr. Rasmussen addressed concerns about the annual pass cost increase. Ms. Leshia Coltharp said that there are concerns about revenue impacts at parks in the Vernal area. Mr. Rasmussen suggested annual passes for individual parks as a viable alternative.

Ms. Coltharp described the positive competitive business environment in the paddleboard industry in her area.

54:00 3.2. Operations Report

Deputy Director Dave Harris reported updates to the Board on new statewide services initiatives within the Communications Program, Heritage Program, OHV Program, Boating Program, and Law Enforcement Program. He also updated the Board

regarding events, activities, and developments within various parks in each of the three regions.

Mr. Harris reported that he is collaborating with colleges and universities to promote recruitment opportunities for employment at Utah State Parks, after conducting a survey of all of the parks to see how they are managing recruitment, and researching opportunities for improvement. He discovered that last year, only 20% of Utah state parks were recruiting from colleges and universities. His focus has therefore been on facilitating those partnerships, improving recruitment materials access on the state parks website, and utilizing the digital recruiting platform Handshake. He found that there are 12 job fairs this spring at nine different universities, and urged parks to participate. Dixie State and Weber State have new parks and recreation degree programs, and are particularly enthusiastic. There is also a 50/50 jobshare match offered at Utah State University as a part of their collaborative employment program. Additionally, Weber State would like to develop an apprenticeship program in partnership with the Division. Mr. Harris said he is in the process of redeveloping a paid internship program with the University of Utah.

Mr. Harris reported on the results of the Hunting Rule change that was approved by the Board on November 1 and became effective in February.

Mr. Harris provided an update on the Goblin Valley conveyance. He also discussed progress on enhanced visitation management at the waterfall site at Gunlock State Park.

Mr. Harris shared that the Division is in the process of restructuring the Law Enforcement, Boating, and OHV programs, for consistencies and efficiencies.

Mr. Harris expressed specific appreciation for a number of high-performing Division employees, including positive feedback from the public for Steve Sroka at the Utah Field House Museum and OHV Program Manager Chris Haller. He commended Echo State Park Assistant Manager Aaron Hone for conducting a recent snowmobiler rescue; Darren Tucker and Josh Gibson, two Utah Lake State Park rangers who responded to a capsized duck hunter boat and rescued two endangered individuals; and Deer Creek Park Manager Steve Bullock, who intervened in a particularly heated vehicular domestic dispute.

Mr. Harris reported that in the past quarter, there have been 16 hiring actions. He said that there are still five position vacancies, meaning that there are opportunities for promotion in the Division.

Mr. Darin Bird commended Devan Chavez, of the Division's Communications Program, for winning a Department Award—one of just four available to the employees of the Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Corey Cram asked a question regarding the future of Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs). Director Rasmussen responded and expressed his concern about the change in public perception and media attention surrounding HABs, even though, from his perspective, there has not been a drastic increase in the presence of blooms. Devan Chavez contributed his view of the issue from the perspective of the Communications Program.

1:13:34 3.3. Director's Report

Director Jeff Rasmussen reported updates to the Board on the following topics:

Mr. Rasmussen expressed his gratitude for the support for Utah State Parks from the

Utah State Legislature during the ongoing 2020 Legislative Session. The Division is tracking approximately 50 bills that will impact Utah State Parks, such as:

H.B. 255, sponsored by Rep. Waldrip, which requires out-of-state boaters to pay a fee for aquatic invasive species management.

H/B/ 283, The Outdoor Adventure Commission Amendment, which is a planning initiative that Speaker Wilson started to determine how future outdoor recreation should be managed in the State of Utah.

Joint Resolution 21, sponsored by Rep. Barlow, which would open access to Antelope Island via the South Causeway, which is currently closed. The resolution would permit Utah State Parks, Utah Sovereign Lands (FFSL), and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), to work together to determine whether public access is feasible via this entrance. Mr. Rasmussen expressed that he felt it would be a great opportunity for Utah State Parks, but acknowledged that there are also a lot of potential hurdles, such as costs incurred, environmental issues, and sourcing funding.

The two proposed Utah State Monuments approved by the governor's office, Danger Cave and Old Irontown. Mr. Rasmussen noted that a bill to make the Spiral Jetty a Utah State Monument in Box Elder County failed.

The proposed Utahraptor State Park has been a rollercoaster during the session, explained Mr. Rasmussen, who has worked to ensure that the Legislature doesn't pass a bill that awards the Division a park but no funding. Mr. Rasmussen described his predictions for the 2020 Legislative Session regarding the proposed park. Ms. Jarrett asked what the site has to offer, and Mr. Rasmussen explained the resources and recreational opportunities associated with the site.

Mr. Rasmussen shared that the Division is reinstating biannual van tours for Division employees, alternating years with Employee Development School. The first tour is scheduled for this spring.

Mr. Rasmussen mentioned that budget hearings are approaching, where Division leadership meets with employees at each park to discuss what's working, what's not working, and opportunities for growth.

Mr. Rasmussen also shared that the Division is working on official State Park Criteria, which will be used for future new park proposals.

Mr. Rasmussen congratulated Ms. Kate Croft, who is assuming planning needs for the agency. Ms. Coltharp suggested that visitor data be collected and included in planning endeavors. Ms. Croft concurred that this data would be valuable to planning.

Lastly, Mr. Rasmussen shared that former Board member Ryan Starks has accepted a position with the governor's office and is therefore no longer permitted to serve on the Board.

1:42:11

APPROVAL FOR REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION: MONTE CRISTO TRAILHEAD

Mr. Chase Pili, Assistant Manager at Jordanelle State Park, gave background information regarding real property adjacent to the Monte Cristo Trailhead Recreation Area. He explained that the Monte Cristo Trailhead Recreation Area, which is approximately 160 acres, is an all-seasons OHV destination in Weber County, Utah, owned and managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation, and is currently "landlocked" by properties not owned by the State, as well as a major highway that is

not a safe access point for recreators. The 28-acre property under discussion provides access to the trailhead and would be an important staging area for motorized recreation enthusiasts, including ATVs and snowmobiles. Mr. Pili asked that the Board approve acquisition of the property.

Chair Murri asked about the price of the property and the source of funding. Mr. Pili responded that the price has been determined to be approximately \$123,000. Mr. Scott Strong said the funding comes from the agency's Land Access Fund. Ms. Claudia Jarrett asked if the property is priced at general market value. Ms. Susan Zarekarizi replied that the price is only very slightly above market value, which is appropriate considering the value access to the trailhead provides.

RUSS STEADMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ACQUISITION OF THE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE MONTE CRISTO TRAILHEAD RECREATION AREA AS PRESENTED. KEVIN CHRISTENSEN SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

1:48:54 4. DISCUSSION OF REAL PROPERTY: WASATCH MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

Lands Coordinator Susan Zarekarizi discussed the intent to dispose of a narrow tract of land that is currently part of Wasatch Mountain State Park. The parcel bisects an adjacent private landowner's property and provides no recreational value to Utah State Parks. Ms. Zarekarizi and Mr. Rassmussen recommended the Board approves the disposal of approximately 0.7 acres of land adjacent to Wasatch Mountain State Park to the owners of the directly adjoining property.

COREY CRAM MOVED TO APPROVE THE DISPOSAL OF THE REAL PROPERTY ADJACENT TO WASATCH MOUNTAIN STATE PARK AS PRESENTED. LESHA COLTHARP SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

1:55:55 11. LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT APPROVAL

Ms. Susan Zarekarizi, Land Coordinator, gave background information regarding a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant application for funding the development of a new campground at Antelope Island State Park, and asked that the Board approve dispensation of the grant.

Chair Murri asked for a map of the proposed development, when it becomes available.

CLAUDIA JARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ANTELOPE ISLAND STATE PARK CAMPGROUND LWCF GRANT PROPOSAL FOR SUBMISSION TO THE NPS FOR FINAL APPROVAL. RUSS STEADMAN SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

1:59:09 13. OHV FISCAL INCENTIVE GRANT (FIG) RECOMMENDATIONS

OHV Coordinator Chris Haller presented the OHV Fiscal Incentive Grant recommendations for January 2020 for approval by the Board. Mr. Russ Steadman abstained from the vote due to conflict of interest.

LESHA COLTHARP MOVED TO APPROVE THE 11 RECOMMENDED QUARTERLY FISCAL INCENTIVE GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR JANUARY OF 2020 AS PRESENTED. COREY CRAM SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:09:06 7. **APPOINTMENT OF BRODY JOHNSON TO THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL**
OHV Coordinator Chris Haller gave background information regarding the proposed appointment of Scott Wheeler to the OHV Advisory Council as ATV Usage Representative to replace Kevin Jones, who resigned, and requested that the Board approve his appointment.

RUSS STEADMAN MOVED TO APPOINT MR. BRODY JOHNSON TO SERVE AS THE ATV USAGE REPRESENTATIVE ON THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL. CLAUDIA JARRETT SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:11:17 8. **APPOINTMENT OF KIRK CHESTER TO THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL**
OHV Coordinator Chris Haller gave background information regarding the proposed appointment of Kirk Chester to the OHV Advisory Council as Snowmobiling Representative to replace Kelly Leishman, who vacated the position after serving four years on the Council, and requested that the Board approve his appointment.

CLAUDIA JARRETT MOVED TO APPOINT MR. KIRK CHESTER TO SERVE AS THE ATV USAGE REPRESENTATIVE ON THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL. NATALIE RANDALL SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:13:10 9. **APPOINTMENT OF BRADLEE WHARTON TO THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL**
OHV Coordinator Chris Haller gave background information regarding the proposed appointment of Bradlee Wharton to the OHV Advisory Council as Youth Member Representative, a position that had previously been vacant, and requested that the Board approve his appointment.

KEVIN CHRISTENSEN MOVED TO APPOINT MR. BRADLEE WHARTON TO SERVE AS THE YOUTH MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE ON THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL. RUSS STEADMAN SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:15:43 10. **APPOINTMENT OF CHERYL BUTLER TO THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL**
OHV Coordinator Chris Haller gave background information regarding the proposed appointment of Cheryl Butler to the OHV Advisory Council as USDA Forest Service Representative to replace Nick Glidden, who resigned, and requested that the Board approve his appointment.

COREY CRAM MOVED TO APPOINT MS. CHERYL BUTLER TO SERVE AS THE USDA FOREST SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE ON THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL. CLAUDIA JARRETT SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:17:22 6. **APPOINTMENT OF LANA VISSER TO THE OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL**
Boating Coordinator Ty Hunter gave background information regarding the proposed appointment of Lana Visser to the Boating Advisory Council as Education Organizations Representative to replace Michael Williams, who vacated his position after fulfilling the maximum eight years of service on the Council, and requested that the Board approve his appointment.

LESHA COLTHARP MOVED TO APPOINT MS. LANA VISSER TO SERVE AS THE EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTATIVE ON THE BOATING ADVISORY COUNCIL. COREY CRAM SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2:20:24 14. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Murri opened the floor for other business.

Ms. Kate Croft asked for the Board's permission to share their contact information on the State Parks website. The Board members consented to publication of their contact information.

Ms. Croft asked whether the Board would be amenable to an abbreviated format for future board meeting minutes. The board discussed and determined that the current format is preferable.

2:29:04 15. SET NEXT MEETING

The Board agreed that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28, 2020, in Vernal, Utah. Further meetings will be scheduled for August 20 and November 19, 2020.

2:31:47 16. ADJOURNMENT

The Board having no further business, Chair Murri sought a motion to adjourn.

CHAIR MURRI MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN. RUSS STEADMAN SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.