MINUTES
Emery County
Public Lands Council
April 5, 2022

PLC: Rod Player, Les Wilberg, Ben Grimes, Bruce Wilson, Sherrel Ward, Ed Geary, Ray Petersen
PL STAFF: Jim Jennings (ECPL) Jan Olsen (Secretary)
Visitors: Clay Crozier (Sen Romney), Larry Ellertson (Rep. Curtis), Larry Johansen, Commissioner Kent Wilson, Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Gil Conover, Marc Stilson (DWRi), Darren Olsen (USFS), Ryan Jones (UDAF), Wayne Ludington (SRBCH), Jay Humphrey (EWCA), Jordan Leonard (USU), Kyle Beagley (BLM), Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Julie Johansen(Newspaper) Marla Kennedy(SITLA), Justin Hart (UDWR), John Baza (UDOGM), Bart Kettle (UDOGM), Johnny Collin (USFS).
Electronically: Kim McFarlane (PLC), Joel Brown (Sen Lee's) Chris Fausett (SITLA), Nate Roberts, Wayne Urie

1. **Welcome**

2. **Approval of Minutes for March 2022**
   Les Wilberg made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ed Geary seconded it. Motion passed.

3. **Chairman Comments**
   Emery County Public Lands Chairman Rod Player opened the April Public Lands meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, with comments about a proposed amendment to the Emery County General Plan. He announced that Councilmember Ray Peterson had drafted a proposal that had been sent to council members and comments had been received. He asked the council to study it and the comments so that recommendations to the Planning and Zoning committee could be made. This amendment would bring the transportation section of the general plan up to date, emphasizing the importance of trails and roads to Emery County as travel has increased exponentially. He listed the reasons this was necessary. 1. To maintain county roads, 2. Engage Utah Dept. of Transportation,3. Engage the federal transportation

system, 4. Enlist the BLM to see needs, 5. Participate in the planning process of the BLM, 7. Develop a comprehensive inventory. It was not on the agenda, so no action could be taken, but a general statement was given to approve the amendment.

4. **Bryan Torgerson and Chris Fausett from SITLA will be presenting: *Possible Land Acquisitions in Emery County as Part of the Bears Ears National Monument Land Exchange*.**
   Bryan Torgerson, Chris Fausett, and Marla Kennedy from Utah School and Institutional Trust System then gave a screen presentation about SITLA land exchanges to the council. They explained how important these exchanges are to the economic status of the state and schools. They stated that they have been working on the Bear's Ears monument land section exchanges for about a year. They feel that they are on favorable terms with the BLM as they work through these exchanges. They are trying to streamline the process, not like the Dingell Act, which is a pretty lengthy process. Bear's Ears is a hot topic and right now is a narrow window of opportunity. Because of other encumberments on the land, their choices are limited. The legislation was presented at the last session of the state Legislature but was tied up and not passed, so they are hoping that the Legislative Management Commission can make the decision on April 27. They are working fast and furiously and would appreciate the support today.

   When questioned about how their choices are made, their response was that they consider value for value but try to choose parcels that have future potential for profit. They do try to make trades with the BLM to conserve the land and make the best balance possible, avoiding any possible visual impacts. A request for support from both the Public Lands Council and Commissioners in the form of letters was voiced. Another question presented was a concern for grazing rights in the state sections. Mr. Torgerson's reply was that grazers are beneficial to the lands.

   Trust Land Funds in the amount of $471,567.00 were sent to 10 schools in Emery County. This was Emery County's share of the record $92.84 million sent to Utah schools in the 2021-2022 school year. This is especially important because it can be used at the individual school's discretion.

5. **Commission Report on Emery Land Bill**
   Commissioner Wilson stated that SITLA was in a rough situation and wanted Bears Ears to remain as it was. He was grateful to SITLA for working with Emery County. Anything moved into Trust Lands is beneficial to Emery County. He then turned his time over to Jim Jennings who had been in the desert with a couple of attorneys and after being there he felt that the BLM had basically made good choices. They looked at the roads and trails and found that 33 out of the proposed 35 miles to be closed were not used. The whole process would be better if the county could be involved in the decision-making process with the government. He had a definite concern for the vandalism they found. Cameras are being considered as a means to stop vandalism.

6. **Agency Reports and Council Member Comments**
   - **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**
     Kyle Beagley, BLM, expressed his appreciation for the trail work in the Chimney Rock Area. A meeting on Jurassic Park Monument road is scheduled for next Wednesday. The Federal highway commission is looking at some alternate routes. A settlement agreement on the San Rafael Desert hasn't been approved yet. He is hoping for a June or July time frame. He announced that the burrow gathering is still scheduled for later this month, but a press release will be sent out. He explained that there are 5 conveyances in Land Exchanges. Goblin Valley and Emery Sheriff are being reviewed by the state. Buckhorn Flat, Emery County, and Huntington Airport are included in an MOA sent to the county. He stressed how important public comments are to help regulate public lands.

   - **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**
     Marc Stilson, State Water Engineer, stated that the secondary water metering bill had passed the recent legislative session, but he felt that Emery County may

receive an exemption. He then added that the grant monies are greater the sooner they are applied for, starting at 70% and going down each year. He then reported that studies are underway on dam safety standards for Joe's Valley and Huntington North reservoirs. The studies are about 6 months out and will look at the spillway and seepage of the dam.

- **Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)**
  Steve Fluke reported on the Hardscrabble fire, emergency action for fire reasons, and a lot of coal following the road. Trying to get this fire out ended more significantly than expected.
  Worry that Old coal piles can catch fire and become a problem with wildfires.

- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**
  John Baza from the Division of Oil Gas and Mining (DOGM) then reported that Lila Canyon Mine has applied for an expansion of leases. These depend on lease permits from the federal level. The state is moving forward, but a federal mine plan has to happen. He also said that it was the year of water with the state legislature. The infrastructure acct will fund abandoned mine closures and well plugs in reclamation. He reported interest in helium mines, but no specific applications at this time. Also, cultural minerals interests are beginning to surface.

  Justin Hard, the Aquatic Biologist from the Department of Wildlife, reported that they are producing Tiger Muskie to bring and plant in Joe's Valley. He spoke about how they manage stocking lakes in a drought situation. Fishing may be low because of stocking strategy, so they may stock earlier before the water bodies get low and hot. Bouldger Reservoir will be drained so that Skyline Mine can begin to mine underneath it. This will be for a couple of years. A fly-fishing clinic will be in Price on April 23 and the

Migratory Bird watching is scheduled for May 17 to 19th. Call the office for reservations.

- **School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).**

- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**
  Darin Olsen introduced John Collin from the Ephraim Office, who is in charge of the timber sales on the Manti LaSals. He said that they share employees between the two offices, but Skyline Drive is basically the division line. Sage Grouse counts on Wildcat and Horn Mountains are continuing, but weather and travel means hamper the counting efforts. They have received over 6000 comments regarding the Forest Plan they are working on. He then reported that because of the continuing drought, grazing permits were being lowered by 20% either in time or numbers depending on each herd management decision. They have been doing pile burning on the forest near Lowry Water. Seasonal and temporary employment is happening at this time

- **Utah State Parks and Recreation**
  Larry Johansen reported that most of the state parks are open, but the new restrooms at Huntington are now put on hold for a month

- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**
  Ryan Jones, State Department of Agriculture reported that Emery Irrigation System is finishing with big lines and a 40-acre feet reservoir will be installed this summer to fill the lines. He then spoke about grants available for irrigation upgrades, but they are matching grants. There is also an open position as a conservation planner which can be applied for on Government jobs.com.

- **Washington Delegation Staff**

Joel Brown from Senator Lees's office stated that they are working on legislation dealing with inflation and housing. Senator Romney is trying to curtail government spending on COVID and looking for modifications. Larry Ellertson said they have an ongoing interest in public lands and are monitoring all local land issues. He stated that Grand County is working on conservation areas issues. Also, legislation on drugs and immigration. He told of the Golden Passport that gives immigrants an automatic passport to the US.

6. **Additional Issues From Council Member**
   Sherrel Ward reports that water is at 80% waiting for streamflow counts to come in this next week.

7. **Concerned citizens with Emery County-related issues.**
   No comments

8**. Adjourn**