MINUTES
Emery County
Public Lands Council
February 7, 2023

PLC: Ray Petersen, Ben Grimes, Sherrel Ward, Bruce Wilson - Kim McFarlane (online)
PLC Absent: Rod Player, Les Wilberg, Leon McElprang, Wade Allinson
PL STAFF: Jim Jennings (ECPL), Jan Olsen (Secretary)
Agencies: Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Keven Jensen, Commissioner Jordan Leonard, Ryan Wilson (Canyon Fuel), James Wells (State Parks), Dana Truman(BLM), Karin Madsen (DOGM), Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Brian Kurta (ODR), Addison Healy (UDAF) Brad Crompton (DWR), Darren Olsen (USFS), Eddie Taylor (USFS), Jaydon Mead (BLM), Kurt Price (ECSO), Chris Wood (DWR), Larry Ellertson (Rep. Curtis), Kent Wilson (Romney), Dal Gray (DOGM)
Electronically: Joel Brown (Sen. Lee)
Public: Scott Wheeler, Lesa Miller, Laurel Killpack, Ed Geary, Steven Jeffery

1. **Welcome**
   Vice Chairman Ray Petersen welcomed everyone and excused Chairman Rod Player from the meeting. He began by reading the Mission Statement of the Public Lands Council. He reminded the council and audience that the Lands Council was formed almost three decades ago to address public land issues in Emery County. He also spoke about the need to amend/update the Emery County General Plan to comply with new state statutes and recent legislation such as the Dingell Act. The General Plan is a guiding document for the county.

2. **Approval of Minutes for January 3, 2023**
   Bruce Wilson motioned to approve the minutes as written, and Sherrel Ward seconded the motion.

3. **Chairman Comments**
   No comments at this time.

4. **Commission Comments on Public Land Items**

No comments at this time.

5. **Discussion on Bison in Range Creek, Presented by Butch Jensen.**
   Ray Petersen then invited Butch Jensen to address the council about the impacts of bison on his ranching operation properties at Range Creek, Rock Creek, and The Tavaputs. Jensen stated that this issue has been growing for the last 12 to 14 years as the bison have migrated off the Tribal lands into other areas. He reports that areas have been decimated by their grazing, but his number one concern was the possibility of spreading brucellosis to his herd of cattle. He feared that this could completely wipe out his operation. Several meetings with government agencies have yet to happen. He also said that State Senator Watkins had tried to present a bill to keep the bison on the tribal lands, but the bill had died. He is extremely frustrated with the situation and warned that the bison herd will continue to expand to the Cisco Junction area on I-70 and could move as far as Highway 6.
   Chris Wood, Department of Wildlife, told of the various attempts the agencies have made to help with the situation, including fencing, allowing the Tribes to herd the buffalo back by a helicopter, and hiring a rifleman to harvest the bison when leaving tribal lands. A motion was made for the council to write a letter to the state supporting the implementation of the Bison Management Plan.

6. **Discuss plans for Fossil Rock Mine.**
   Ryan Wilson with Wolverine Mining then spoke to the Council about the Fossil Rock Mine (formerly the Trail Mountain Mine) up Cottonwood Canyon. They purchased the mine in 2015 and have yet to determine when to open it. They have a DOGM permit to do rehabilitation at the mine site following a couple of floods that have happened in the area. They await approval and financing while continuing to work with the BLM and Forest Service. The Council spoke to him about the traffic of both the Bouldering community with campgrounds and livestock trails through the canyon.

7. **Agency Reports and Council Member Comments**

   - **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**
     The acting Field Manager for the BLM, Dana Truman, next addressed the council. She spoke about the transition of Field Manager positions within the BLM, stating they are trading every 120 days. The focus of work with the BLM in the Price office has been preparing for summer and staffing changes. They are

excited to have a new recreational specialist coming soon and expect more river runs with higher water this year.

- **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**
  No one in attendance
- **Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)**
  Field Inspector Karen Madsen gave an update on the activities at the Lila Canyon Mine. She said the fire is out, and rescue crews are underground doing rehab work in the mining areas. They are building permanent seals and pumping nitrogen into the fire area. They have installed water monitoring units. Bronco Mine has also installed these same units. She concluded Deer Creek Mine is in the final reclamation progress.
- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**
  “No antler gathering from now until late April,” was the big news from Chris Wood, Department of Wildlife Resources. This is to take any additional stress off the elk and deer already experiencing hard times with all the snow. He also reported having moved some bothersome turkeys from residences in Emery County. These birds were transported to the lower San Rafael and Price River area. Deer numbers seem to be up this year, even with much snow. When questioned about the beaver on the San Rafael River damaging the giant cottonwood tree, he responded that it is a good thing as it rejuvenates new growth.
- **School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).**
  Brian Torgersen reported that land exchanges from the Dingell Act are being appraised and should be complete by midsummer. They are offering two parcels of land again for sale, one at Straight Hollow and another west of the Green River Industrial Park. They are working with other agencies to increase the parking at the trailhead of Sego Canyon. Parking there has been very prohibitive.
- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**
  Forest Ranger Daren Olsen also discussed enlarging parking sites northeast of Miller Flat Road and Highway 31. Other sites with changes are Gooseberry Reservoir and the west side of Joe's Valley reservoir. He then reported that meetings with livestock operators have started as they look at the coming grazing seasons. Timber sales and work are continuing in the Reeder Canyon area. They will continue selling timber north from Reeders to the Potters Pond area.

- **Utah State Parks**
  Goblin Valley Park Ranger Jim Wells noted that some of the parks are closed due because of the unavailability of propane. He also stated that the ice at Huntington North is unsafe. The Green river campground expansion is proceeding, but the one at Goblin Valley is suspended because of financing. He next explained that large crowds are expected during fall break because of the eclipse on October 14, 2023, which will be seen in Emery County.
- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**
  No one in attendance
- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**
  Addie Healy announced a Crop School at USU Eastern on February 8 and a local group's meeting in Green River on February 13 at 4 p.m. This meeting will help determine natural resource needs for Carbon and Emery County and where the NRCS funds are needed.
- **Washington Delegation Staff**
  *Kent Wilson from Mitt Romney's office commend us on our meeting and getting to the heart of the meeting, which is well attended. Tribal meetings and Bison were not on their agendas; he will address that. What do you want to see with the Federal delegation that you would like to see? Solve Social Security, abortions, and legal immigration, logging contract for 10 years and can drag that out for 8 years before starting, change our arrangements regarding that contract.
  *Joel Brown reports for Sen. Lee Energy and Natural Resources and the Public Lands Committee.
  *Larry Ellertson says that the congressman has had a change in assignments. He is now on the Natural Resources committee. Energy and technology and the New Energy and Climate Grid Security. Agreement on all forms of Energy. The wildfire Recovery Act bill is being worked on, sharing federal cost shares. Public Lands Search and Rescue Act help with equipment, which is essential to this Area. Act to save Mt Rushmore. Abortion Act., Sherrel Ward asked about the Infrastructure Act, and if you have a project that you want to be done, do check into this, let them know, and they will pass this along. Obtaining Grant writers to help get money, the money will not just be given to States; you will need to go after it.

Coal and natural gas are running out, and we need to get the sales back in the United States. We need to protect our energy resources. Emery County does things right. You do an excellent job!
Kurt Price is our Desert patrol from the Emery County Sheriff's Office.

8. **Additional Issues From Council Members**
   Snowpack is good; Mammoth and Cottonwood 198 drainage Timberline are out on 9 mile 210. 169 Red pine 154 Buck line, Joe's Valley will spill, 203 at Seely Creek. Looking promising for this upcoming year. 200% on Camp at the Muddy.

9. **Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues.**
   No Comment.

10. **Adjourn**