MINUTES
Emery County
Public Lands Council
March 7, 2023

PLC: Rod Player, Ray Petersen, Ben Grimes, Sherrel Ward, Bruce Wilson, Kim McFarlane, Les Wilberg, Leon McElprang
PLC Absent: 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), Bryan Torgerson (SITLA), Jay Humphrey (EWCD), Marc Stilson (DWRi), Darren Olsen (USFS), Jaydon Mead (BLM), Kyle Beagley (BLM), Larry Ellertson (Rep. Curtis), Kent Wilson (Romney), Dal Gray (DOGM), Terri Bennett (MECCA-Trails), Don Bennett (Trails), Wayne Pahl (Trails), Keven Albrecht (USFS),
Electronically: Joel Brown (Sen. Lee), Clay Crozier (PLPCO)
Public: Randall Stilson, Kim Birkinshaw, Ed Geary

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

2. **Approval of Minutes for February 7, 2023,**
   Kim McFarlane motioned to approve the minutes as written, and Sherrel Ward seconded the motion.
   - For the council to write a letter to the State on the bison that was motioned to be written in the Feb meeting but was never sent as of today.
3. **Chairman Comments**
   Letter addressed to the Public Land Council from The Office of Surface Mining and the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining regarding the review process. We determined the success of the reclamation program and how they used the grant money for reclamation and abandoned mines. Do we have any criteria that need to be done that they should use on the reclamation? Les Wilberg suggested post-historical markers. Preserve the history that was there and not removed, keeping it the way it was back in the day.

Ben Grimm's motion to write the letter to preserve history, he moves to write the letter to let them know what we would like to see, and to use the general plan as a guide suggested Kim McFarlane seconded the motion. Les Wilberg, Ben Grimes, and Jim Jennings drafted the letter.

College of Colorado and did a poll of voters in different states. 2.4% accuracy, and this is what was reported for Utah. 33 % feel an extreme problem with overcrowding in our recreation areas 77% feel that it is a severe problem. 21% as hunters, 29% as fishermen, and Utah are one of the lowest of the states. Concerning water 95% of the drought is a big issue. In energy and public lands, 77% support oil and gas companies drilling on lands that are likely to hit something. 64% feel our leaders place more inference on water, air, wildlife habitat, and recreation over protecting drilling and mining on public lands. 91% support requiring oil and gas companies to clean up rather than the federal government paying for the cleaning up. 30 x30 land protected, 75% of the people support the goal. One of the council stated that maybe the questions were not understood, and the numbers surprised the council.

4. **Commission Comments on Public Land Items**
   No comments at this time.

5. **Discussion on Olsen's Canyon by Randall Stilson.**
   Randall Stilson then addressed the council, asking for their assistance or explaining why Olsen Canyon Trail was closed and had never been reopened. He reported that it had been closed temporarily years ago but has remained closed. He reported that his family would like to have it opened and then adopt it and keep it open. Forest Ranger Daren Olsen gave a history of Olsen Canyon. He showed photos from as early as 1976 and continued until 2008 that showed no road or trails through the canyon. There seemed to be a short beginning with a hairpin turn, but it doesn't continue through the canyon or up on Olsen Bench. In 2008 barriers were placed on the trail to stop illegal use in the Canyon. Ranger Olsen said, " There are a lot of other trails for access in the area, and if every request for a road were answered, there would be roads everywhere. It would require a NEPA process to consider a road ." Others in the room reported having driven in there in previous years to sheep camps and for camping.

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

- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**
  Agency reports then began with Kyle Beagley, BLM reporting first. He reported an eighty-acre plot of land east of Castle Dale is being offered for sale. Jurassic National Monument will open on March 30 and Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. He stated that Park Rangers would start in a couple of weeks, as will 2 law enforcement officers. Hiring at the office in Price is like a yo-yo. He was asked about the enlargement of the critical habitat for Sage Grouse being proposed. He replied that it could be more significant, smaller, or remain. Kevin Albrecht with the Forest Service pointed out that there are three habitat areas for Sage Grouse on the Mountain, Horn Mountain, Wildcat Knolls, and Schofield, but the proposal to join the three is not preferred.
- **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**
  Marc Stilson, State Water Engineer, spoke to the council about three bills from recent legislation affecting water use. One bill would affect the metering of secondary water uses in rural Utah. Another dealt with an emergency $5 million loan fund giving compensation to agriculture users for municipality use. The other bill presented by Senator Hinkins would allow farmers to lease their water downstream with the Colorado River Compact.
- **Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)**
  Dal Gray with the Division of Oil Gas and Mining reported the sale of Conoco Phillips to Urban Energy. He added that Urban Energy is aggressive in its work.
- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**
  No one in attendance
- **School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).**
  Bryan Torgersen, SITLA, reminded the group that they still have two parcels of land for sale, one west of Green River and the other at Straight Hollow. He then spoke about a possible Solar Farm near Cedar Mountain. The Lands Council voiced their dislike for this and concern at the placement.
- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**
  Forest Ranger Daren Olsen said the Forest Plan would be completed in about 90 days or in June. Timber sales are available for the Canyons Project totaling approximately 6,000 acres. They have been conducting range Meetings with permit tees outlining their grazing plans for summer. Pile burnings have been almost completed.
- **Utah State Parks**

Jim Wells, Goblin Valley State Park Ranger, reported that interviews for manager positions for Huntington, Millsite, and Schofield State Parks are beginning. Activity at Green River Park is slow right now.

- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**
  No one in attendance
- **Utah State Department of Agriculture**
  No one in attendance
- **North Emery Water Conservancy**
  Jay Mark Humphrey gave snow number Mammoth Cottonwood to Eccles Canyon 172% 25.8 inches of water Red Pine 151 % 16 inches Seeley Creek 168% 18 inches of water Buck ridge 142 19 inches of water Huntington can62,000 acre feet 69-acre feet at Joe's Valley. Ferron Creek 45,000. Has been an excellent year for snow. Rain on top of this snow could be disastrous.
- **Washington Delegation Staff**
  *Clay Crozier, Land sale, and the Sage Grouse.
  *Kent Wilson from Mitt Romney's office commended that PLPCO is doing a Recreation Public Multi-Purpose to look for Counties that need Federal Land to be turned over to County; where do we need federal land for sewer and water it can take two years for this process.
  BLM will pay private individuals $7/day to keep wild horses and burros.
  *Larry Ellertson reported that our Congressman is working on a bill improving the permitting processes. About Oil and Gas renewed to have internal combustion engines, and on the pipelines to open back up.

7. **Additional Issues From Council Members**
   Ray Peterson motioned to write a letter encouraging the State agencies to implement the actions stated in the Bison Management Plan was seconded by Sherril Ward.
   MOU on the Sage Grouse.
   Jim Jennings received a letter regarding The Guzzlers on the Mountain. Our letters need to be sent to the commission for approval and sent to the council as well. Have our issues going through a commission meeting for approval.
8. **Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues.** No Comment.