# MINUTES
# Emery County
# Public Lands Council
# March 7, 2023

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**PLC:** Rod Player, Ray Petersen, Ben Grimes, Sherrel Ward, Kim McFarlane, Les Wilberg, Leon McElprang
**PLC Absent:** Wade Allinson, Bruce Wilson,
**PL STAFF:** Jim Jennings (ECPL), Jan Olsen (Secretary)
**Agencies:** Commissioner Lynn Sitterud, Commissioner Keven Jensen, Commissioner Jordan Leonard, Ryan Wilson (Canyon Fuel), Nathan Martinez (State Parks), Jay Humphrey (EWCD), Cash Stallings & Marc Stilson (DWRi), Darren Olsen (USFS), Jaydon Mead (BLM), Chris Wood (DWR), Terri Bennett (MECCA-Trails), Don Bennett (Trails), Wayne Ludington (SRBCA) Bart Kettle (DOGM) **Electronically:** Joel Brown (Sen. Lee), Clay Crozier (PLPCO) Larry Johansen
**Public:** Ed Geary

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

2. **Approval of Minutes for March 7, 2023,**
   Chairman Rod Player made some changes to the February Meeting Minutes. Kim McFarlane made a motion to approve the February Meeting Minutes with the suggested changes, and Les Wilberg seconded the motion.

3. **Chairman Comments**
   Nothing at this time.

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

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

   - **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**
     Dana Truman, Acting Field Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), reported that work continues on the land

exchanges required by the Dingell Act. The BLM Travel Management Plan is 60-70% completed and should have routes identified by summer. She also talked about monitoring the range conditions.

Truman stated that Jurassic National Monument opened last weekend, and tours there have been well attended. There is also trail work going on in that area. River rangers are monitoring now and asking for reports if the need arises.

Hiring is in process at the Price BLM office, including a permanent field manager. Truman was also questioned about signage on the Swell. The request has been made for recognizing grazers and multiple uses. A councilman had been unable to load his cattle out of the corral due to the parking of a large toy hauler on the road. Once again, it was emphasized that the people that are here need to be remembered.

Jaydon Meade, also from the BLM, commented that two of the seven installed signs have instructions to consider the grazing and multiple uses of the land. He apologized for not including that information on more signs. That permittee also drew attention to the overgrazing on his allotment by the wild horses, which he said have severely depleted the feed for his cattle. He was thanked for his information and told it would be considered.

- **Division of Water Rights (DWRi)**
  Division of Water Rights State Engineer Marc Stilson spoke about the unusual snowpack in Utah, being at 200% of normal. He continued that it could be really dangerous if it melts too quickly. He has spoken to all the dam owners in the area. Marc Stilson turned the time over to Jay Mark Humphrey, Cottonwood Creek Water District Manager, for further information about dam retention and water reports for various drainage.
  Humphrey reported 22.5 inches of water in the watershed, which has begun to shrink. He reported there will be flooding as there's no way to slow it down. Electric Lake will spill, which has never happened. They expect to have 400 to 500 acre-feet of water in the San Rafael River from May to June, meaning it will not be a place to recreate. There will also be water over the new spillway at Millsite. The Muddy River will be in the same situation, as there is no storage to slow it down. Humphrey also reported an update on dam inspections, stating that Joe's Valley

will need repairs in the next few years. The estimated cost is $10,000. The plans are to start releasing water from Joe's Valley next week. He ended by stating Utah has had more snow than any other state.

Stilson listed dams they are concerned about: Ralston, Joe's Valley, Millsite, and Electric Lake. All the upper Huntington Dams are in pretty good shape. He then spoke about SB 277, which is an Agriculture Optimization bill to make improvements in agriculture to save water. He said that those in Emery County who are interested need to contact Ryan Jones. Anyone applying must be able to quantify what they are saving. This legislation intends to save water for the Colorado River Project (Lake Powell) and the Great Salt Lake.

- **Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM)**
  Bart Kettle spoke about the applications they have received for mining. None were for Emery County, and all numbers are down. Most applications in Southeastern Utah are for lithium, potash, or helium. This process takes about 60 days for approval. Most drilling is horizontal, but very few are vertical and seem more numerous in Duchesne County. Lila Canyon Mine is being sealed off to make a portal inside the long wall area.

- **Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**
  Chris Wood gave an update about the troublesome bison. Sixty-six bison were on the west side of the river, so a helicopter was authorized for the Tribe to herd them back. This action took place on March 11, but the bison came back over the fence to the west side again about a week later. He then spoke about the filming company Horizon and the mitigation fund for the area where they filmed. The company paid over $70,000 in two separate payments. He then announced upcoming turkey hunts, April 8-27, with a youth hunt on April 28-30. Shed hunting is still prohibited until May 1.

- **School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).**
  Bryan Torgersen called to say he could not attend. He asked if you have any questions, please contact him, and he will get back to you.

- **Manti-LaSal National Forest (MLNF)**
  Forest Ranger Daren Olsen said the Forest Service reported that they have not even closed the usual gates on roads yet as the roads are still very snow packed. Sage grouse are rarely on forest land. They are

working with range permit tees for grazing this year. A small pond on East Mountain will be fenced to help preserve the burial toad.

- **Utah State Parks**
  Justin Martinez said the Green River State Park is still under construction, and it has caused the golf course to adapt some of the holes on the course, but it still has the same par and is ready for golfing. Huntington State Park and Scofield are hiring new managers.

- **Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation**
  The Forest Service reported that they have not even closed the usual gates on roads yet as the roads are still very snow packed. Sage grouse counts are also still pending because of the weather. They are working with range permit tees for grazing this year. A small pond on East Mountain will be fenced to help preserve the burial toad.

- **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**
  Joel Brown reported the State is worried about flooding, trying to help where we can. Manage the balance of Public Land 75-day comments. BLM is also hosting forums on PLM.
  Clay Crozier (PLPCO) parcel was sold, and BLM drooped a new proposed rule on conservation and landscape rule to help to make conservation to use land.

6. **Additional Issues From Council Members & Commission**
   Keven Jensen was talking about the Trees if the forest is overgrown, and they plant trees, it will consume a large amount of 2 ½ million trees. The kiosk has information to talk about food and the benefits of grazing.

Jordan Leonard asked about the Division of Wildlife and the hunts. The Big game hunt has applications out now. We are willing to help with those letters of support.

Les Wilberg brings up his concerns on Fullers' Bottom, there is a part of the road that was just hanging on by a sandbar. Will we need a hard closure on this road this Spring with all the rain? It is on the DNR property.

7. **Concerned Citizens with Emery County-related issues.**
   Rod Player mentioned his concern for water rafters with the high water that is expected.