

Southern Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC)

Minutes

September 13, 2011

- 1. Welcome & Introductions:** Brian welcomed everyone and introductions were made. Brian noted that it's great to see some new faces. Jake Schoppe put together the tour of the prairie dog translocation and recovery sites in Garfield County this morning. It was great and everyone enjoyed it.
- 2. Bryce Canyon National Park Planning & Projects Update:** Jeff Bradybaugh, Bryce Canyon Superintendent provided a project update for the attendees. Packets were distributed and provided by the Natural History Museum Association for Bryce Canyon of which Gayle Pollock (SUU Trustee) is the president. They have applied for funding with the U.S. Dept of Transportation to provide a multi-modal study looking at options and how do we better manage the visitors. The shuttle system has reached capacity during the summer and they are unable to transport some of the visitors until the next shuttle run. They are looking at a broad Environmental Assessment process to remedy. They are starting their prairie dog stewardship plan process. They have a great habitat and the prairie dogs so they are working on better management of the resources. They received funding and will be replacing the museum exhibits. Currently working on historic preservation of Bryce Canyon Lodge (it's the only original that has not burned). Chimneys have been restored and they had their first fire in the fireplace. The historic cabins are being renovated/restored. Jeff said he needs to do better outreach with Native Americans to build relationships with the area tribes and has started working on this recently. The annual visits were 1.3 million (they are down 1.6%) but September is a good visit month so the numbers will probably go up. He was the resource management chief at Zion and also worked at Parashants and the Arizona Strip. Historic restoration is in-house and outside contractors. Employees in facilities are doing some of the historic preservation. The concessions franchise fee is paid by Forever Resorts and this helps pay for the historic preservation. They have a historic architect with a crew working on the restorations.
- 3. Escalante River Watershed Partnership –** Amber Hughes, GSENM-BLM Botanist presented started clearing out the Russian olive and tamarisk. In 2006 the Monument began removing Russian olive. In 2009 it was suggested around a campfire turning this into a partnership. The partnership met for the first time in June, 2009 in Boulder. The mission statement is to "Restore and maintain the ecological conditions of the Escalante River and its watershed and involve local communities in promoting and implementing sustainable land and water use practices." They are divided into committees and meet quarterly. The next meeting is in November. Amber presented maps showing the watershed. They have demonstration project sites in Boulder, Calf Creek Confluence, and the headwaters. Russian olive was introduced to the area to stop erosion. In the west it out competes the native species. (Russian olive out-competes the Tamarisk).

She showed the before and after pictures of the removal in all the areas being renovated. The wetlands have really been rejuvenated in the headwaters with native plant growth. The Woody Invasive Control Plan was introduced using remote sensing mapping to determine woody based native trees. They are using conservation crews, private contractors and volunteers. Amber showed the workload for 2011 and beyond. New treatments, re-treatments and restoration are being worked. All partners are involved in the treatments and are focusing all along the river. We have a well-established species. They are monitoring throughout the year to see if the native plants continue flourishing. The Conservation Action Plan (CAP) is a 10-year action plan for the entire watershed. It contains 9 objectives with action plans. UDWR has a Beaver Management Plan which encourages restoration of beaver on Boulder Mountain. The beaver trap sediment which could have ended up in reservoirs. Currently they have finished the outline which includes the conservation plan, beginning the restoration plan, finalization of the Woody Invasive Control Plan, grant writing, education and outreach, etc.

ERWP partners: Boulder Community Alliance; BLM; Canyonlands Conservation District, City of Escalante, Color Country Cooperative, Color Country RC&D, Escalante Outfitters, Utah Department of Natural Resources, UFFSL; UDWR; USITLA, Walton Family Foundation, Wild Utah Project, USU Extension, USGS, US Fish & Wildlife; Trout Unlimited, Tamarisk Coalition, Private Landowners, Nature Conservancy, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, Four Corners School, USFS, and Escalante Canyon Outfitters.

4. **Dixie National Forest RAC Updates** – Rob MacWhorter, Dixie NF Supervisor updated the group on the first round project progress and second round project funding.

Round one of the Secure Rural Schools Act is finished. The counties opted to bring money back to their communities for roads and schools. Title I money came back and Title II is what came to Forest Service to Dixie. The RAC formed and is comprised of 15 members representing all counties. A federal advisory committee was formed (FACA) and with Round I they recommended projects to Rob MacWhorter from RAC. 14 projects were recommended for a total of \$835,000 and scattered among 4 counties. Round 2 counties requested \$2.4 million and there was only \$416,000 left in funding. 3 are watershed projects; 2 are wildlife preservation; 1 road; and 3 fuels reduction projects. Some projects were approved in round 1 by the RAC. If the bill is reenacted in Congress with funding then projects can be funded. 52% of the funding is for roads and watershed projects. Garfield County: There were 2 plague abatement projects and the prairie dog counts and translocation project for \$58K; Pine Lake gravel project for the road; the Upper Santa Clara fuels project in Washington County; Brian Head fuels reduction and Mammoth creek fuels reduction. There is a fuels project in Washington County to vegetation mapping on Pine Mountain. The round 1 progress is that some projects are getting done and some haven't started yet. The money is committed so there isn't a chance of losing it at fiscal yearend (9/30/11).

5. Round table

Matt Betenson, Asst. Monument Manager, GSENM announced to be aware that Calf Creek Campground is closed and is being renovated. They were hoping to have it opened by this weekend. Most significant there is approval for Garkane to install new power lines from Tropic to Hatch and a NOA will be published for the public tomorrow to amend the Monument's management plan and allow the power line. They are celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the GSENM this Saturday (9/17) from Noon to 2 p.m. in Jacob Hamblin Park, Kanab. They have reconstituted the Management Advisory Committee and will have a first meeting in November. This is comprised of an exempt group of specialists to guide and plan the Monument.

Gary Zabriskie reported that Five Co AOG is working with Kane County on their General Plan update (Go to: <http://kanecountyplan.wordpress.com/>) and their Resource management plan. They received Utah Permanent CIB board funding. His funding comes from this community impact board.

Go to: <http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov/programs/community/capital.php> to see the Five Counties priority lists of UPCIFB project funding. The SR-9 Zion Canyon Scenic byway corridor plan is complete.

Paul Wright DEQ does a great many projects with the Five Co. AOG. Paul asked about the role of Samantha Julian's office of energy. Amanda Smith is over the energy office but Paul doesn't interact with them that often. Brian Cottam stated that maybe at the next meeting possibly having the Energy Office come down to speak and provide the council with their role.

Mike Empey reported that just before the recess the House was not moving on appropriations, and the DOI bill had a lot of issues. There is a super committee for specific programs and they are just starting their meeting process. Budget limit was raised and they'll have to wait. Spoke to a very specific issue regarding Prairie dogs. It was really helpful to have the tour this morning because he learned so much.

Marreen Casper had heard of translocation but didn't know what it meant until this morning on the tour. She spoke to legislation that is being introduced (incorporated herein) this week. She noted that the golf course is not an immediate issue on health and safety. One of things the Senator does is the Western Caucus about the jobs summary and the losses. She distributed the Western Caucus report booklet (not incorporated). She has more if additional copies are needed.

Rob MacWhorter released the record decision on oil and gas on the Dixie NF was posted on line. A Garkane power line from Tropic to Hatch was approved and it went through the appeals process. Not one was lost. They are working on Prairie Dog habitat through US Fish and Wildlife. Timber sales are happening to meet all of their targets. 22 million board feet have been sold. Most is going to Panguitch or Loa for milling. Currently he is working on trying to get the mill back up and running in Escalante. There are issues with

recreation and the implementation of the motorized vehicle travel plan. Timber sales are going through without any problems.

Dirk reported that Kane County just finishing the trial on the RS 2477 road litigation issue and it's going fairly well. They've spent \$400K in litigation costs. The state has joined and hopefully will help manage the roads and costs. To lose those roads would be of greater expense. In the area of economic development he noted they don't have 19-30 year old culture and there are no stable economic offerings to retain the youth. Natural resource uranium mining EIS was done and shows no significant problems. This could be a \$29 million economic boon for Kane. They are currently emphasizing technology jobs in their respective communities. Big Water is petitioning for disincorporation. State Parks has approached Kane for the management assistant of the parks. The Secure Rural Schools Act funding is 26% of the county funds for Kane. Kane is working with Garfield to resurface the road to Kodachrome State Park and they are trying to find funds to do Coral Pink Sand Dunes roads. UAC along with the counties turned in a respectful decline of additional wilderness in their county. There were CIB funds secured for Kane County.

Jeff Bradybaugh said they've been really fortunate to have a close relationship with SUU and this past July they re-signed the Alliance for Education Memorandum of Understanding.

Chris Hughes said they completed the five year plan for the Glen Canyon Recreation Area and the priorities are: \$500K to continue to fight zebra mussels out of Lake Powell, a restoration of Carl Hayden Visitor's Center, and they are working with the Bureau of Reclamation in redesigning of all entrance stations. Todd Brindle is the new superintendent and manages the Colorado River through this area. They have established an Adaptive Management Group and Technical Management Group. They may be creating new campsites along the San Juan and have increased cultural and archeological finds. Restoration work is being done at Rainbow Bridge removing Tamarisk.

Rick Torgerson reported that UDOT has a lot of repaving being done currently. Garfield County completed highway 89 to 63 and they'll be chipping 89 south and 63 next summer. They have shoulder work on 143 to accommodate and a lot of work on the Byways. Interpretive panels are being done along the Byways. There is road work being done in the Red Canyon area. The expiration of the gas tax is next month. Hopefully it will be renewed as this is what pays for a great deal of the road work. They have 3 additional enhancement projects to provide access and will begin in 2013. 27 projects are out for bid for \$140 million for the next year.

Kevin Carter, SITLA is challenging an action of the Army Corps of Engineers on part of the Virgin River. ACE's claim is that any tributary (for what they believe is a tributary) is in their control. A block of land in Beaver has wild horses and the BLM is removing the

wild horses. SITLA has noticed that 40 have come back in. They are also working on a wind farm project lease at Anderson Junction in Washington County and are negotiating with the company.

Clare Ramsay said they are moving along on their courthouse construction. The hole in the Rock Heritage Center road has been repaved. A conservation group met with Garfield County and they formed a special improvement district to have an electrical power company for Ticaboo. They have solar power and biomass fuel generation for fuel. SITLA gave 3 sections of land to provide assistance.

Chris Kelleher said he had a great tour this morning. He is in the recovery programs State Department of Natural Resources in Salt Lake City. They have a fund from the legislature and it is distributed throughout the year. They fund a lot of work for the Utah Prairie dog and recovery implementation program. They work on preventing any further federal listings and assist local communities in dealing with the endangered species program.

David said he heard there was a free lunch and decided to come and report that there is a three county ACP draft for the recovery plan to come up with funds to put up a barrier for the prairie dogs at the Parowan Airport.

Rob MacWhorter said he attended the Sunday National Park Service dedication of Mountain Meadows Massacre proclaiming it as a national historical landmark. He said it was really a wonderful dedication.

6. Next meeting – November 8th at Kanab Emergency Services Building.

ATTENDEES
SUPAC MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Brian Cottam, SUU Regional Services
Amber Hughes, GSENM, BLM
Matt Betenson, GSENM, BLM
Rick Torgerson, UDOT
Chris Hughes, NPS
Jeff Bradybaugh, NPS
Nathan Brown, U.S.FWS
Chris Kelleher, State DNR
Clare Ramsay, Garfield County Commissioner
Kevin Carter, SITLA
Rob MacWhorter, Dixie NF
Mike Empey, Congressman Matheson's office
Marreen Casper, Senator Orrin Hatch's office
Paul Wright, UDOT
Dirk Clayson, Kane County Commissioner
Melinda Blakie, NPS
Gary Zabriskie, Five Co. AOG