

Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC)

Minutes

September 7, 2010

1. **Morning Field Trip:** Nicki Frey from Utah State University's Community-Based Conservation Program, along with members of the local sage grouse working group, toured sage grouse projects and habitat in Garfield County. The tour was informative and participants learned more about sage grouse management and research, and received an update about the Alton Coal project and interactions between the proposed mine and sage grouse management.
2. **Welcome and Introductions:** Wes Curtis, Vice President of SUU Government Relations & Regional Services, and SUPAC Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the SUPAC meeting and introductions were made.
3. **Alton Coal Project:** Dana Dean, Associate Director of Mining, Utah Division of Oil, Gas, & Mining presented a PowerPoint on the Coal Hollow Mine in Alton. The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining regulates exploration for and development of Utah's oil, gas, coal and other mineral resources. When exploration and developmental activities are completed, the division ensures that mining sites are satisfactorily reclaimed. "Application" means the documents and other information filed with the Division under the R645 Rules for the issuance of permits; permit changes; permit renewals; and transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights for coal mining and reclamation operations or, where required, for coal exploration.

"Approximate Original Contour" means that surface configuration achieved by backfilling and grading of the mined areas so that the reclaimed area, including any terracing or access roads, closely resembles the general surface configuration of the land prior to mining and blends into and complements the drainage pattern of the surrounding terrain with all high-walls, spoil piles, and coal refuse piles having a design approved under the R645 Rules and prepared for abandonment. Permanent water impoundments may be permitted where the Division has determined that they comply.

Dana said that highway 193 will not go through the town of Alton. They expect truck loads will be running every 15 minutes. The mine will be doing a box cut concurrent reclamation which will happen in pit #3. The overburden will be backfilled as they advance forward with the mine. The mine has a maximum of 150 days to reclaim that the grading backfill and seeding is done according to standards. Ten (10) years after its reclaimed they may get their money back as long as the work has been done to satisfaction of regulations. Photos were shown of permit area and plants. Dana showed the permitting chronology. In 2006 permitting began. In 2008 they had a complete permit and they had a conference in Alton with the public about the performing application and it was approved in 2009. Dana's office did the technical analysis and the application was approved, but it was challenged by SUWA in Nov 2009. Then the approved permit was upheld in August 2010 by the courts. They're expecting a challenge to the Utah Supreme Court. Dana noted that alluvial sediment has water closer to the surface and this was in question. The air quality was also in question. A procedural challenge was sent to the mining board and they upheld the application approval. People have a misconception of what kind of input they may have and their input of concerns are met within their jurisdiction. Procedural challenge was upheld for

the technical approval of the application. If petitioners decide to appeal, it will go directly to the Supreme Court.

4. **Quagga Mussel Update:** Crystal Stock was ill today but Larry Gray gave a report that a live adult Quagga mussel was found in May 2010 at Sand Hollow and one was found attached to the state park's boat with crazy glue. An inspection was sped up on the docks and one was attached to the dock which was determined to be 3 years old. Sand Hollow is now considered to be infested. All boats leaving Sand Hollow before they leave must be cleaned. They are testing every two weeks and divers check the docks. They are in full containment and protection mode. It must have 3 continuous years of negative findings to be considered clear of the infestation. Wildlife resources received some money for statewide Quagga Mussel infestations. The US Fish & Wildlife grant may assist with costs associated with this containment.
5. **Color Country RC&D Projects:** Kevin Williams, Color Country RC&D Coordinator, gave an overview of the Resource, Conservation, and Development division of the USDA. Local governments petitioned the USDA to have an R, C, & D council designated for local projects. They have been doing projects since the 1970's.

Current Projects: R, C, & D has a Safe Harbor agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The partnership gives a permit to a private land owner to continue managing their species of wildlife on their land. The R, C, & D is permitted to take on multiple land owners. They also have a safe harbor agreement with prairie dogs. They are helping people to have a mitigation bank for prairie dogs to purchase a conservation ranch, purchase a conservation easement, and promise not to subdivide or develop. They are also involved in CWMA Cooperative Weed Management Areas Cooperative Agreement with individual southwestern counties. They are still working on getting an agreement with Washington County. The cooperative agreements include the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Division of Wildlife Resources, state agencies and counties and NRCS. The R, C, & D is assisting with the Canyon Region Economic Development Association (CREDA) and they are also working with the Escalante Watershed Project. They have applied for a grant for signage from Parowan to Panguitch. They've also applied for a Minersville Park grant to have a playground.

6. **Round Table Updates:**

John Bennett GOPB is beginning the budget preparation during a lean year. Please let GOPB what is needed for the budget. If prior year money needs protection let them know this week. They are working on the McAllister critical land application for Zion National Park conservation easement and gateway to the Narrows, the Buffalo Meadows area to east end of Zion Park to put bison there. Invasives projects of the Virgin River or previously approved projects are likely to be funded.

Brian Cottam updated everyone on the SUU mountain ranch property by sharing that they had the signing of the demonstration forest stewardship plan. A lot has been accomplished in the past two years and they are working on a community wildfire protection plan. Hand thinning and piling was done on 90 acres. There will be a free firewood day on September 25. Hundreds of poles were given to the Frontier Heritage Park. II-C is placing interns with the agencies and there were 111 placed over the summer. We had youth crews as well. II-C will hire a part-time youth coordinator. Wes has been working on an appropriation which will go to renewable energy business

development with SUTREC. The SWATC, SUU BRC, and SUTREC at Beaver High School are partnering to provide services for renewable energy business development.

Joe David, Glen Canyon NRA, reported that for the Zebra and Quagga mussels they were just certified as clean. As a planner he has been working on the Off Road Vehicle planning effort. The scoping period is mid-October to mid-November. They will be contacting the counties involved. The EIS should be out by next summer.

Paul Wright, DEQ, announced that for the southwest this Thursday they will have an air quality summit at 11:30 a.m. at Dixie State College. They are bringing some monitors to the area to check air quality. Kane County WCD is taking control of all the water districts to assist with their issues with drinking water and waste water.

Ron Wilson, UFFSL reported that they formalized the agreement with SUU. Dick Buehler and the President Benson signed. Fuels work is being done with the ARRA funds given last year. They had many projects that were won by local business owners. We had 200 SUU freshman forming a human chain and they moved the wood from the SUU Mountain ranch woods and sent it to the parking lot for easy access. Ron reported on the Twitchell fire – No private land was impacted in Beaver. Jeff Hunter is in the firewood business now rather than logging. He has a contract in Texas. They had the community open forestry plan in Santa Clara signing.

Ken Sizemore reported on the Highway 9 corridor management plan. It's been an interesting process because Hurricane and Kane County are not participating. They are one-half through the process and will have a plan draft next month. Transportation planning is continuing and they are working on a metro plan organization and a rural planning organization. They will be able to program dollars locally - - The DOT is assisting with this process. Congressman Chaffetz will speak at the Steering Committee AOG meeting in Beaver next week. Ken reported on finances for SUPAC.

Larry Gray reported that he received two parks in addition to the 12 he's responsible for now. Discussion of privatization is ongoing and the legislative body auditors are meeting in New Mexico to look further at privatization.

Jock Whitworth – Road being built and if it goes well it will be ready next summer. Jed Bradybaugh (sic), is the new Bryce Canyon National Park Superintendent. Zion is about done with the Park Management Plan and public comments are done. There were 7 deaths in Zion. Angels landing is installing chains in the high parts to minimize accidents. They are redoing the Cable Mountain work and will rehab as much as they can. Visitation records are broken each year. John Wessels (sic), NPS is our new regional director.

Alma Adams – Genpak is expanding; Cedar City will get their amount back and road improvements to be done. Scatec (sic) Solar is investing ½ billion dollars and solar capabilities are endless. \$100,000 will be spent to hook up to the substation. They have 2 phases of photovoltaic solar. County fair had record number crowds and the Demolition derby did very well. Budget is going to be austere and restructuring will take place.

Clare Ramsay reported that the Special Improvement District received a \$5 million grant to bring electricity to Ticaboo.

Todd at the UDWR, serves conservation districts in the five county areas. There are several conservation districts which are comprised of subdivisions of landowners who are elected to a 4-year term. They are working on watershed projects in Beaver. Leonard Blackham has challenged the districts (chair of the Utah Conservation Commission) and they were given a short time to complete resource assessments. 29 counties will be doing resource assessments to determine natural resources. Todd will be responsible for all of them. He'll be working with Brennan Wood. John Bennett offered demographic data for the resources.

UDOT reported that Census 2010 will bring about road classifications. Take a look at them and let them know about your classifications. The year 2040 transportation plan is being done setting goals for the next 30 years. ARRA funding is leading the nation in obligating their money out on the highways. Largest program we've ever seen. They are putting a 3rd truck lane on the Black Ridge grade. St. George has many projects in the works already. 12 projects are to be signed this month to finish before September 30th.

Kristi Hatch, NRCS, is working with the sage grouse initiative: Currently working on the historical Sorensen sage grouse project and a second one for conservation stewardship program. She is working with people who are advancing in conservation on the ground. 70,000 acres are involved in good conservation at this time. They are starting on 3500 acres to restore historical seedlings and the CSB conservation Long canal which Kevin Williams is working on that. They are working on the New Harmony clean up and restoration and Mossy Cave restoration.

Larry Crutchfield, GSENM reported that the Monument's advisory committee is being renewed. Nominations are due September 20 at close of business. They have openings for Fields, Geology, Paleontology, Wildlife, Range, and Grazing and are looking for applications to serve on these committees. Go to their website for applications.

7. **Next Meeting:** November 9th in Kanab. To be determined later.
8. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

APPENDIX "A"
Attendees

Larry Gray, Utah State Parks
Jock Whitworth, Zion National Park
Alma Adams, Iron County
Clare Ramsay, Garfield Commission
Kevin Carter, SITLA
Larry Crutchfield, GSENM
Kevin Williams, Color Country R, C, & D, NRCS
Paul Wright, UDEQ
Marreen Casper, Senator Orrin Hatch's Office
Ron Wilson, UFFSL
Ken Sizemore, Five County AOG
John Bennett, GOPB
Wes Curtis, SUU Govt. Relations & Regional Services
Brian Cottam, SUU Govt. Relations & Regional Services
Dana Dean, Utah Division of Oil, Gas, & Mining
Joe David, NPS Glen Canyon NRA
Charlie Frear, USDA
Kristi Hatch, NRCS
Alma Adams, Iron County Commissioner
Bryan Thiriot, Senator Bennett's Office
Mike Empey, Congressman Matheson's Office