

**SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES
COUNCIL (SUPAC)**

Minutes of a meeting held January 6, 1998

**** denotes action items**

The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met on Tuesday, January 6, 1998, at 12:00 noon at the Holiday Inn in St. George, Utah. Those in attendance are listed on the rosters attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

1. Vice Chairman Scott Truman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

2. The minutes of the meeting of November 4, 1997 were reviewed by the committee. Jeannine Holt made a motion to approve those minutes. Hugh Thompson seconded the motion and all voted aye.

3. Scott Truman explained that to reduce postage and copying costs they were going to try and e-mail to those on the mailing list who have access to e-mail. For those who do not use e-mail they will continue to mail out the hard copies of notices, agendas, etc. A list was passed to the committee to obtain e-mail addresses.

4. John Williams reported on the budget. He passed out copies of a budget report as of January 1, 1998. The balance brought forward from December 1997 was \$1,253.38. The revenue for 1997 totaled \$1,424.37 for total funds available in 1997 of \$2,677.75. The total expenditures were \$770.86 leaving a fund balance as of 12/31/97 of \$1,906.89. He reminded the committee that in March notices will be sent out to collect dues. Commissioner Allen Gardner made a motion to approve the budget and also moved to set the dues and material fee at \$60 per member for 1998. Louise Liston seconded the motion and all voted aye.

5. John Harja reviewed the planning calendar for Brad Barber. John said that Michael Crane is the person in their office to contact with calendaring items. John reviewed various upcoming items on the calendar and passed out copies to the committee. He said the Forest Service and BLM had mentioned they had trouble printing and downloading the calendar as e-mailed and asked if they could save the calendar in Word Perfect format in addition to the Quattro Pro format. He said he would see that this request was passed on to the right people. Scott Truman said to let him know if anyone else is having similar problems receiving e-mail on the agendas and minutes.

6. Scott Truman explained that we would need to go out of order a little on the agenda today. Don Falvey will be next and talk about transportation at Zion National Park since he has to leave early from today's meeting. Don Falvey indicated that the park service had received some negative publicity recently in some of their construction processes and so the director has started a new review process for all construction processes. As far as the transportation system at Zion Park the environmental assessment is out now. Their construction documents are ready to go. They are in a holding position right now while they finish off another internal review process. They have a development advisory review board working with them on this project. They had planned to be under construction by now so these delays will cost them the operating season of 1999 and it will be operating about December of 1999 instead. By spring of 2000 everything should be going even with these delays.

Don Falvey also discussed their general management plan. This is their major planning effort and it is a three year process. They have been using newsletters and public announcements to distribute information to the public. Jeannine Holt said that many Washington County residents were unaware of this planning effort. Don Falvey said about 1,000 people receive their newsletter and they have received many comments. They also have a workbook out on review to the public which presents a wide range of alternative concepts. They will analyze all the comments they receive. Once they get all the feedback and it is all considered and analyzed they will prepare preferred alternatives. This should be around November of this year.

7. Congressional Delegation reports were the next item on the agenda. Jeannine Holt of Senator Hatch's office said they got together as a delegation group for southern Utah and divided up the issues to discuss today. Senator Hatch was involved directly in 46 bills in the 105th Session of congress and 25 of those passed. He is ranked as the sixth most powerful senator in the Senate and receives a lot of national press. A million dollars has been allocated this year from the State Centennial Highway Trust Fund for the Southern Utah Transportation Corridor. One issue that Senator Hatch and his staff have worked hard on is the illegal alien issue. Beaver, Iron, Washington and Kane counties are really impacted by this problem. Commissioner Lewis spoke at Senator Hatch's crime summit in June and they are starting to see some movement in this area and some things that will be happening. They have worked hard on rural issues and convincing people that rural areas need help too. They need statistics, records and information from rural areas to back them up on this. Jim Crisp asked about the million dollar on the Southern Corridor funds -- will this be used for east-west route? Jeannine said it would be used for the east-west route and for more specifics check with Commissioner Lewis.

8. Bruce Richesen from Senator Bennett's office reported next. He said Senator Bennett felt good about the last budget cycle and the monies coming to Utah. He said Senator Bennett fully anticipated having the Zion National Park transportation system fully funded this year. They were able to get some additional funding for the desert tortoise

HCP for land exchanges and also for the prairie dog HCP in Iron County. Bruce said there has been a lot of concern on the American Heritage Rivers Initiative. This has been implemented. The administration has gone ahead with it and a list of rivers has been nominated. He distributed a list of currently nominated rivers. Of interest on the list to Utah is the Jordan River, San Juan River-Morning Water Child. They feel the whole program is very open ended and the nomination process is not clear. Everyone should watch this program very carefully. He indicated there has been talk of legislation preventing any spending on this program but this legislation would be very difficult to pass and if it did pass the president would probably veto it. There is an Internet address on the list of nominated rivers on the handout. The President will choose 10 rivers from this list by the end of 1997 but this has not happened at this point. There could be additional nomination of rivers in Utah. Commissioner Allen Gardner said that the Washington County Commission had submitted a resolution of non-support on this initiative on the Virgin River. Hugh Thompson asked if Bruce or any of the other legislative staff had heard of an initiative regarding roadless areas and could the same mechanisms of funding be used to limit the scope of that if it comes about. Bruce said he had not heard anything about this but will call their Washington D.C. Office and check on this and then let Scott Truman know so that he can pass that information on to the council members.

9. Keith Nash from Congressman Cannon's office said it has been exactly a year since Congressman Cannon took office. He said the Arches Expansion Bill has passed through the House and is waiting on the Senate side. It passed unanimously in the House. It created an acre for acre exchange between school trust lands and BLM. He also reported that money has started to trickle into Kane and Garfield County on monument issues. He also told about the Foote family and the Coral Canyons Ranch. They are looking for help as they are being deemed innocent trespassors on their land. Congressman Cannon's office is trying to help them.

10. Rick Ariel of Congressman Hansen's office said one of the major accomplishments of the last year for Congressman Hansen and staff was to be able to force the administration to honor the base closure act. This will help the Hill Air Force Base to be in a stronger position in the next round of base closure findings. Rick said that in September at the AOG meeting Congress introduced a plan for wilderness legislation. They are trying to raise the BLM lands to 2.8 million acres and include 1.3 million acres of national park wilderness study areas for a total of 4.1 million acres. As soon as Congress is underway again they will pursue this and try and solve this. He also thanked Jerry Meredith and his staff and the planning team for their efforts in regards to the monument. They are in the process of drafting legislation for a mini bill to tweak the boundary lines for the monument. Rick also discussed overflights of National Parks. Public hearings were held and several bills are floating now. Congressman Hansen was also successful in introducing a permanent moratorium to stop the Department of Interior from going to Court on RS2477 roads. In regard to the Endangered Species Act, as most are aware, nothing got done in the last session. They feel that the

Kemphorne bill doesn't go far enough in protecting private property rights and they want to either add amendments to that or introduce legislation.

11. John Harja reported on the Wild & Scenic Memorandum of Understanding. John said this has been a joint effort with the BLM, the Park Service and the Forest Service. They undertook along with the State to put together a Memorandum of Understanding that would make this wild and scenic river process a coordinated effort. Copies of the signed memorandum were distributed to the council. John explained that this is a statewide agreement. There are three partners plus the State of Utah and it has been signed by all parties now. They will put together a calendar of wild and scenic studies being undertaken by the three federal agencies. This memorandum says that the state will coordinate with local government and as a study is undertaken in local areas, the cities, counties, and water districts will be invited to be a full member of that process. The entity performing the study will coordinate with all others and the public. They will allow signatory parties to make comments. The final decisions will rest with the entity doing the study. They have had some open meetings regarding the Dixie Resource Area. The Dixie Resource Area became extremely detailed and became a very detailed process. The parties agreed it might be better to allow the BLM to get their studies nearer to completion.

John said that there will be an open meeting on the National Monument next Friday, January 16, 1998, in Cedar City at 10:00 A.M. at the District BLM office. Anyone interested in Wild & Scenic river issues in the monument should attend.

Bill Lamb expressed thanks to John Harja for keeping this moving and his patience and persistence in bringing this along. Hugh Thompson also thanked John and said we need to use this process wisely as this is a very good product that has been put together. Marty Ott said it has taken three years to get this final product and the SUPAC council can be proud that a product has emerged rather than a process. He said this whole thing is about everybody working together. Hugh Thompson asked if there could be a new release from the Governor's office to let people know that such an agreement has been developed. Vice-Chairman Scott Truman suggested that he and John Harja along with Marty Ott, Bill Lamb and Hugh Thompson put together a news release on this.

12. The next item on the agenda was Statewide Access Management. Hugh Thompson said there are statewide access management issues on all lands within the State. He introduced Bevan Killpack who is the District Ranger for Dixie National Forest. Bevan said a partnership was started over six or seven years ago that started this process for travel management across the state. People want to go to an "area" that might include forest service, BLM, state parks, etc. so their purpose was to try and improve that situation for the public by simplifying information for users and being consistent statewide with maps. They would have 24 maps covering the entire state which they would update yearly since this information changes continually. He passed a pilot map around the council table for their examination. The partnership is between the Forest Service, BLM and Division of State

Parks and Recreation. In the near future they will have everything digitized so the maps can be done digitally on the computer and it will be easier to make changes. Some of the pros are that the maps will include topographic information, full color, consistent scale statewide, consistent legend and they would be available in all Forest Service, BLM and state offices. It also encourages coordination with the state, BLM and Forest Service. Also these maps would generate funding as there would be a charge for them. It would require multiple maps and a lot of coordination with BLM and state. They hope to have maps for the whole state done by 1999.

13. Diane Nielson gave a report on the Grand Canyon Visibility Study. Diane said she gave a briefing to this council about a year ago on the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Study. That has now become the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP). She passed out copies of an executive summary that came out from the commission. The focus was to identify a regional entity that could look at visibility issues and develop a plan or strategy for protecting visibility in national parks and other scenic areas in the west. The Grand Canyon commission presented a report to the EPA in June 1996 and included recommendations for dealing with a variety of issues based on technical studies and also on a consensus process. They found in the study that they did not have very good baseline information for air quality in a lot of areas, particularly in rural areas and reservations. The commission also looked at issues like road dust affecting visibility in the west, fire management and emissions from Mexico. EPA concurred with their recommendation and they got similar support from federal land managers so the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP) was formed. Their first formal meeting was held in Jackson Hole earlier this Fall. Their purpose is to promote and monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transportation Commission and with the concurrence of its members engage in other common regional air quality issues. Governor Mike Leavitt is co-chairing this partnership. If anyone is interested in being active in this process, please let her know.

14. Sand Hollow Reservoir - Ron Thompson gave a brief update on the status of this project. The water district is presently finishing the land exchange with the BLM. They have recently let a contract for the archaeological work. BYU has that contract and has started the ground work. There will be some deep trenches in some areas while they are working. Ron said they should be final design phase this fall and that should take about a year to a year and half and after that it will be two to five years in construction.

15. Dixie Resource Area RMP - Jim Crisp said he had hoped the RMP would be in final form to report at this meeting. The wild and scenic river reversal altered their schedule. The BLM published a draft RMP in October of 1995. Public meetings were held the following December to receive public comment. The comment period was extended to May 1996. They received comments, the staff reviewed, categorized and consolidated the comments. Some of the major issues were water resources, wild and scenic rivers, utility corridors, off-road vehicles, coordination with state and local governments,

endangered species protection and economic impact recognition. In response to the many comments they drew elements from all of the draft plan alternatives and incorporated them into the preferred alternative. They have to keep the plan within the preferred alternatives. They are trying to do that and still make significant changes. Jim said he feels like they have responded to most comments. There are some areas, however, that they can't fix such as RS2477 roads and wild and scenic river issues.

The final EIS and proposed plan are being completed and should be sent to Denver for final printing and editing around March 1. They hope to have it on the street for public review by early summer. He will do everything he can to prevent future disruptions in getting this out.

He said people can expect the final plan to have a tremendous commitment to partnershiping, cooperative management agreements, planning initiative already under way such as the Desert Tortoise HCP, the Virgin River Management Plan, the Southern Transportation Corridor and others. They added a section on transportation which recognizes the importance of roads and public lands. They also looked at utility corridors and more fully addressed them.

Some issues that did come up were the Zion corridor. This section was significantly strengthened. The BLM will be working with communities along Highway 9 so that economic benefits of that corridor remain in place.

On Wild and Scenic Rivers the BLM will go back to its original plan to go to suitability again. He said they will call a meeting in accordance with the spirit of the recently signed MOU at which they will advise people of their intent to do this. Jim Crisp told the council members to contact him with any questions.

16. Jerry Meredith gave an update on the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. The planning/scoping process is winding down now. They received over 3,000 comment documents. They have been feeding them into a computer system that will break out individual comments. This will take some time but they have read all comments and scanned them into their computer system. Some of the major issues are access, facilities, vegetation management, range management, recreation use and wilderness. They were very pleased to see much higher participation from local residents than in the past on the comments. They had very high attendance at the scoping meetings in Escalante, Kanab and Tropic. They have a site on the Internet and have also been doing newsletters. They are working jointly with the state on many things. Along with scoping the comments they are concurrently working on the next step which is the management scenario. They are going to send out sample or tentative management scenarios that would give a range of alternatives. This is not a normal part of the planning so there won't be an official comment period but they will invite feedback

Jerry said that Cannonville had a problem with their water supply in September. They have issued and delivered a right-of-way for work that needs to be done to the Mayor of Cannonville. They had good support from everybody on this problem. They are also working on another major project in the monument now. Gar/Kane Power is running at brown out levels in the summer now and in order to energize their lines to the level they are built to handle they need a six mile connector line which will require a right-of-way in the monument. They met with them and worked out an alternate route that is along existing power lines which they are processing that right now.

The BLM did issue a permit to Conoco to drill on federal leases in the monument. The permit was suspended twice but is now lifted with a deadline of February 8. Preliminary indications from Conoco are that they might not drill but they do have permit in hand.

Jerry indicated that the planning team is trying to emphasize data gathering and baseline data. Kane and Garfield Counties are behind a lot of counties in their baseline data like soils date. They also have a contract with USGS to do a baseline bench study.

17. Wes Curtis reported on the 21st Century Community Program. Their kickoff target date is April. There are four parts to this program: (1) a community assessment tool to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and opportunities; (2) provide support and mentoring to communities on a regional basis; (3) community workshops and leadership training; and (4) use of telecommunications technologies to link all this together and make access to information available to people. Utah Reach is their website and the Internet address is utahreach.usu.edu. There is additional information at this site. Web pages for each county in the state will also be on there. Two of the board members for the 21st Century Community Program are Hugh Thompson and John Williams.

18. Scott Truman introduced Mel Herrick who is chief planner for the Colorado River Basin from the Bureau of Reclamation and will represent Bureau of Reclamation on SUPAC council now.

19. The next meeting is presently scheduled for March 3 which is during the last few days of the legislature. There was discussion of changing that date. Diane Nielson made a motion to change the meeting date of the next SUPAC council meeting to March 10, 1998. The motion was seconded and all voted aye.

20. Scott Truman reviewed the agenda and action items for the March 10 meeting. Bruce Richesen will gather information on administrative initiatives, particularly roadless areas and give a report. Commissioner Allen Gardner will report on the Southern Transportation Corridor. Scott Truman will work with John Harja and others on a press release on the MOU regarding Wild and Scenic Rivers. The dues for 1998 (\$60) will be due.

21. There being no further business before the council, the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary