

SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES COUNCIL  
(SUPAC)

**Minutes of a meeting held May 12, 1998**

**\*\* denotes action items**

**The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met on Tuesday, May 12, 1998, at 1:00 P.M. 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 everyone. Scott asked everyone to introduce themselves since there were some visitors and new attendees.
2. Dave Terry made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 1998 as written. Marty Ott seconded the motion and all voted aye.
3. John Williams passed out a financial report representing membership fees received in March, April and part of May. John asked for each agency to check and see if they are listed as having paid and if not to take care of it as soon as possible.
4. Scott Truman said there is no one here today from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. They will try and be at the next meeting. As soon as they get any dates or information from Scott from today's meeting they will e-mail or mail out copies of the planning calendar. Scott asked if anyone had items to be placed on the planning calendar.

Dale Peterson, UDOT, indicated the Transportation Committee will be holding a meeting at Ruby's Inn this Friday, May 15 at 9 a.m.

The data subcommittee will hold a GIS training session at the water district offices on June 12 from 1 to 5. This will be GIS data training for Washington County.

Jerry Meredith said that the Governor's Community Economic Development committee on monument meetings should be included on the calendar. He will get that information to Scott to include.

Don Falvey reported that the 40 day period for accepting bids on the transportation system at Zion National Park starts today.

Howard Roper said that anyone wanting information on an upcoming agricultural meeting could call Tice Palmer at 865-0703.

August 11-13 the State NPS Pollution conference will be in Richfield.

5. An overview of watershed programs for northern Arizona was next on the agenda. Howard Roper with NRCS said they had met with the Arizona Department of

Environmental Quality and talked about water quality issues on the Arizona Strip. In an effort to bring them to the table and coordinate planning efforts he brought them to today's SUPAC meeting to meet the participants and hear the issues. He introduced Mike Hill. Howard said that Consolidated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) started in Utah five or six years ago. It has expanded since that time to include additional agencies. Their agenda is to address issues as they relate to the proper and wise use of natural resources within the State of Utah. Soil, water issues, and sustainable agricultural are all part of this. They would go into a watershed and look at all the issues that the watershed might have as well as opportunities for preservation of environmental assets and other issues.

Roy Gunnell from DEQ was introduced next. He said they were approached by Arizona DEQ. They had concerns about the Arizona Strip area and asked them to join them in some sort of partnership to look at the Arizona Strip and see if there was a water quality problem there. This CRMP process that Howard explained is a locally driven planning process. The DEQ follows that type of process. At this point they are in the process with Arizona and Nevada of data gathering on if there is a water quality problem on the Arizona Strip. He showed a map with their area of concern. It is 21,000,000 acres - that combines areas of Arizona, Nevada and Utah. They are looking at data in data banks to see what they have. Arizona and Nevada are doing this also. They are just starting to put data together and compare.

Roy answered some questions from council members. Mike Hill suggested that one of the major constraints is that they have three states and two EPA regions they are dealing with. There are different sets of laws and restraints yet we share watersheds and pollutants. As agencies they are working together to share efforts and data between states and regions of EPA.

6. Ron Thompson of the Washington County Water Conservancy District gave an update on the Lake Powell pipeline. Ron said that over the last few years they have completed a feasibility study on the pipeline and are now ready to update that study. The district did a population management study, a purpose and needs study and this Lake Powell pipeline feasibility study. The district has a let a contract to have these all updated and hope to have this completed by mid-July. As they update these studies they will go back to the various communities and look at their water supplies. They will look at alignments for the Lake Powell pipeline including an all Utah alignment, what the effects of the monument are on that project. They will look at the Virgin River and treating the high salinity of water at the Washington Fields. The District also asked the contractor to look at the long term population projects. The studies will also look at the Ashcreek project and the costs associated with that.

Ron answered various questions. Dave Terry asked if we have enough water rights to fill the pipeline. Ron said there is 1/2 million a.f. of unused Utah water in Lake Powell. Kane County has expressed an interest in this also. The pipeline would be approximately 120 miles long and they are looking at a cost of about \$200 an acre foot for the water. The

pipeline would terminate at the Sand Hollow reservoir site and have two pump stations. The preferred alignment would follow the highway to Hurricane Cliffs.

Ron Thompson also gave an update on the Virgin River Management Plan. All of the towns and cities in county are sponsors of the plan along with the State, County environmental community, private property owners, Indians, etc. There is a steering committee in place that has been working for several months on refining the plan. It is basically a watershed plan locally driven to address wildlife needs, multiple use, recreational, riparian, wetland issues, water quality issues, and floodplain issues. There is also an Endangered Species mitigation plan put together in connection with the river management plan. They are getting near to the end of a draft on this. The thrust of this program is that it is a mechanism to implement recovery goals for the Virgin River corridor fish and will set up a mitigation bank to process credits for things done to enhance species. The State, water district, BLM, and Utah Wildlife Resources and USFWS are the main participants of this program.

Scott Truman asked Ron if he would report back at the July meeting on these studies, depending on when they are done.

7. Bruce Richeson from Senator Bennett's office gave an update on the American Heritage Rivers Programs. An advisory committee has been selected and has been meeting yesterday and today to come up with 20 rivers for nomination to the president. Jordan River was the only river in Utah on the list at the last SUPAC meeting. Congressman Cannon's office protested that and the Jordan River was removed. It was reported that the entire Third Congressional District has opted out of the program. So there will be no rivers in Utah on this first round of nominations. The first part of April this advisory committee was named. They will develop this list of 20 rivers and then pass it on to the President and he will name 10 rivers as American Heritage Rivers. He said that they feel that once the list is sent to the White House the designation will be made very quickly. He said he had checked to find out who had nominated the San Juan and Jordan Rivers in Utah in the first place. It appears that Murray City nominated the Jordan River and he is still uncertain who nominated the San Juan River. He said he has no indication of when the next round of nominations will take place after this first round so we will all have to watch the process rather carefully. There is an Internet address where there is some information including short biographical summaries of the advisory committee. That Internet address is <http://www.epa.gov/rivers>. Bruce answered some questions. When asked why there was so much fear of a designation Bruce said he believed it was really a fear of the unknown since nobody seems to sure what the impacts will be. Howard Roper indicated that on the first list that came out the Virgin River was listed 21<sup>st</sup>. Bruce said since Utah doesn't have any rivers designated we can sit back and watch the process with these first rivers and see if it is a beneficial thing or not.
8. Snow Canyon Management Plan - Gordon Topham of Utah State Parks gave an update on this. They completed the resource management plan in January. It

passed with one exception by the Board of Parks and Recreation. They are taking upper half of canyon and making it a one way exit and some spoke against this. Since there is such a large number of hikers through the park the City of Ivins has built a bike/hike trail through the park at the south end and St. George city is doing the same thing at the north end of the park. They have hired a transportation consulting company to do a transportation study on the transportation problems. It is not completed yet. People will be able to make comments to the Board of Parks and Recreation at their meeting in Moab. Since the plan was completed they have started implementing some of the non-controversial parts. The parking near the sand dunes along the road had been a safety problem. That has been moved to another area where the riding concession was. Solar restrooms have been installed at the sand dunes and another day use place in the park. Day use is a big part of the management plan. They are also in the process of acquiring some land and making some trades. These are some of the things they have started on.

9. Bill Mader reported on the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan and Education Center. Bill said the HCP is also called Red Cliffs Desert Reserve or partnership. It is a partnership between Utah Department of Natural Resources, BLM, Ivins, Utah State Parks, USFWS, and interlocal agreements with key cities. The cities of Santa Clara, St. George, Washington City, Hurricane and Springdale are the mortar between the bricks of this partnership. The reserve 61,000 acres or 90 square miles from Ivins to Hurricane. Bill said there is a lot more than desert tortoise in the reserve. There are 2,000 acres of private property inside the reserve that have been purchased or traded out. Six million dollars was appropriate through Congress for that. The School Trust is the biggest private landowner inside the reserve. Bill said the HCP was to set up a reserve for tortoises and other species but it also permitted development of property that has tortoises. That is why the plan is working. They have cleared over 500 acres of tortoises for private landowners and processed over 80 tortoises. They have purchased over \$150,000 of grazing rights within the reserve, built over 10 miles of fence, put up special horse gates, designated parking areas and started tearing down barbed wire fences that serve no purpose so users can have better access. They have also started an activity level plan so hikers, mountain bikers, rock climbers and others can use the reserve and trails and yet still maintain the integrity of the reserve.

An education subcommittee is developing a field guide for reserve regarding the animals in the reserve. They will have a 50 to 100 page homepage on the Internet with lots of information. Bill said that the County is committed to a partnership for education and that one outcome of the Snow Canon management plan was the suggestion that an education center for the reserve be built at the mouth of Snow Canyon. The Arizona Strip Interpretative Association is the legal vehicle that will move this forward. A site has been identified for the education center. The County is going to put \$40,000 seed money in the project to get it going. The Education Center will be a regional center with teaching

rooms, live and static displays of animals unique to the area and a retail area to help sustain the center.

10. Karen Sudmeier, Division of Travel Department, gave an interagency report on visitor tabulation. She said after the discussion at the last meeting she was asked to take a look at how visitors are counted on public lands in southwestern Utah and the methodologies, multipliers, units used, etc. She said this was not intended as a report card on the different agencies and how they handle doing this. She said that the National Park Service and the State Parks seem to have an easier time determining visitation than the BLM and Forest Service as they have a totally different type of recreational use. She said she felt it was like comparing apples with oranges. It is more of a challenge for BLM and Forest Service to determine visitors since they have the type of dispersed recreation that precludes easy visitors counts. The National Park Service has an elaborate system to track visitors. They have gates, visitors centers, etc. where they are able to determine persons per vehicle, length of stay and other data. She passed out handouts with some of the information she was able to obtain. She review how each of the different agencies tracks visitors. Her conclusions were that if the BLM and Forest Service want to have more accurate visitor count it would take a lot of resources and they would have to weigh the benefit of that. She said that visitors counts would provide the first step toward understanding a number of issues affecting the SUPAC area such as tourism trends, economic impact from recreation use and impacts to the resource. A coordinated interagency effort to understand recreation visitor use across agency boundaries may assist agencies in tracking resource use. She said she would encourage SUPAC council to think hard about what is important and what they would want out of this type of a project before any additional work is done.

Don Falvey passed out information on a money generation model (MGM). The latest version of this is available on the Internet . It can either be run online or downloaded. The direct address is: <http://www.nps.gov/planning/mgm>. This model was developed by the National Park Service to be used to estimate economic benefits of parks for local economies. The model looks at several areas - sales benefits, tax revenues and job benefits. These are the three general areas assessed. There are other similar models but this is the one that the park service uses. It is all based on visitation and what people do in the parks.

There was discussion of what to do with this information. Scott Truman asked the council where they want to go with this information. Howard Roper said he thinks it needs to go to the counties. The costs associated with trying to make this information consistent across the board could be very expensive and hard to do. Bill Lamb said since the concentrated areas are easier to track but the dispersed use areas are hard to track for them he feels it would be wise if the agencies got together on this. Gordon Topham said on the visitation data we need to remember that the same visitor might be hitting Forest Service areas, BLM areas, etc. and so it is hard to calculate. Karen Sudmeier said if this is really important to our planning it could be done through surveys but it could be expensive. Hugh Thompson said it would be nice to have this information but he did not

feel it was that important. Don Falvey indicated they just finished a year long survey as part of their general management plan that they obtained a lot of data from and which could be contributed.

Bill Lamb asked if Karen Sudmeir could visit with Utah State University and see if they could come up with a process for this and how much it would cost. \*\*Karen indicated she would talk to USU about this and bring the information back to the council.

11. Jerry Meredith gave a brief update on the Monument. A mailing was sent out between the last meeting and this one. It was Update #6. It has a diagram of the process they are moving through. The management strategies is something they added. They took the seven issues that came out of their scoping and went back through public comments and meetings and came up with strategies for dealing with each of those issues. They asked for comments by May 8. Their next step is to come up with alternatives and then send out short descriptions of those alternatives in terms of management scenarios. He said they would still take ideas or comments. In early June they will send out Update #7 which will give brief descriptions of alternatives. They are still on schedule.
12. Bill Lamb reported on the Utah Schools and Federal Land Exchange. He passed out an information sheet on the exchange. The federal government received 177,000 acres of state land which was trust land exchanged out of the government; 80,000 acres in National Parks, 47,000 acres of trust land within Indian Reservations; 70,000 acres in the forest that were moved out; 2,560 acres from Alton Coal Field Tracts previously designated unsuitable for mining for a total surface acreage to be received by the federal government of 376,739 acres. The State of Utah receives \$50,000,000 in cash payment for school children of Utah; \$13,000,000 additional funds to be generated from the sale of unleased coal, more than 160 million tons of coal, 185 billion cubic feet of coal bed methane resources, approximately 139,000 acres of land and minerals in nine counties and other minerals. Bill said there were some very complex issues in the trade. It was signed on May 8, 1998.
13. Scott Truman said the next meeting date would fall on the first Tuesday in July which would be July 7. Lunch will be at noon with the meeting to start at 1:00 P.M. Scott said he would really appreciate receiving RSVP's on who is coming to lunch or guests that are coming so that they can get a fairly accurate count to the Holiday Inn people.
14. Possible agenda items for July's meeting include:
  - Ron Thompson - Lake Powell Pipeline study update
  - Ron Thompson - ESA mitigation program update
  - Update on Condor transplant
  - Iron Co. HCP report
  - Presentation on Dixie Resource Area Management Plan

Karen Sudmier - update on what she finds out from Utah State University  
Transportation - Update from UDOT

Bill Lamb said he would like to hear a report on what is happening Southern Utah with development, industry and growth. \*\*John Williams was asked to have somebody come to the July meeting that could present this information.

\*\*Ron Thompson will also ask Natalie from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget to come and speak about growth projections.

Chris Blake suggested perhaps we might want to try and find a cooler place for the July meeting than St. George. Brian Head was suggested. Scott will let the council know if there will be a change in location for that meeting.

15. There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned.

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Secretary

***ACTION ITEMS:***

1. Karen Sudmier will talk to USU about coming up with a process for visitor tracking and the costs associated with it and bring the information back to the council at the next meeting.
2. John Williams was assigned to have someone come to the July SUPAC meeting to discuss industry, growth, etc. in Southern Utah.
3. Ron Thompson will ask Natalie from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget to speak to the council about growth projections at the next meeting.

**List of attendees:**

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