

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

**Minutes of a meeting held November 10, 1998**

**\*\* denotes action items**

**The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met on Tuesday, September 1, 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 those present.
2. The minutes of the meeting of September 1998, were reviewed by the committee. Jeannine Holt made a motion to approve those minutes as written. Hugh Thompson seconded the motion and all voted aye.
3. Calendaring report - A calendar for November/December 1998 was circulated. Scott Truman said Ray Milner of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget will be working on calendaring and date gathering. He was unable to attend today's meeting. Scott Truman asked if there were additional items from the council to be placed on the calendar:

Howard Roper said that on November 17 at 6:30 P.M. in Panguitch there will be a Coordinated Resource Management Planning meeting regarding issues and concerns related to natural resources on the upper reaches of the Sevier River.

The transportation committee will meet on Friday, November 20 in Hurricane at 9:00 A.M.

At Ruby's Inn on November, 17 at 11:00 a.m. there will be a community economic development council meetings. One of the items on the agenda will be community education centers and funding, etc.

4. The first item on the agenda was the Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument Draft Management Plan. Kate Cannon of the Bureau of Land Management said that they just got their first copy of the draft plan from the printer today. It will be going public today. She said she would give a brief overview of this draft plan. This is not the final plan. This draft plan includes five alternatives for management of the land inside the monument. There will be a three month comment period which will start now until February 12, 1999, after which they will consider comments and produce a proposed plan that will come out early next summer. She briefly reviewed the five alternatives in an overhead presentation. Anyone that wants to receive the draft on CD or hard copy and have not already requested one, can give their name and address to her. She discussed the following alternatives:

**Alternative A** - The no action, leave it like it is alternative. Continue managing as presently managed. Accommodate uses, minimizing impacts and changes to land.

**Alternative C** - The research alternative. This alternative emphasizes science and protecting scientific values. Involvement with schools and public interpretation and education would be involved. She showed a map of the zoning under Alternative C.

**Alternative E** - This is the recreation alternative. It emphasizes recreation and the monument would be zoned so different kinds of recreation could be accommodated. This alternative uses a complicated series of zones including scenic highways, rural, back country, foot and hoof, primitive, etc. A zoning map for this alternative was also shown.

**Alternative D** - This is the remove alternative. This alternative emphasizes the primitive nature of the monument. It has the most strict limitations on the travel corridor and visitation. It would have three zones: enhanced, rustic and remote. A map of zoning under this alternative was shown.

**Alternative B** - This is the preferred alternative. Kate said this was the preferred alternative because it balances the needs and interests of the stakeholders better than the other alternatives and it maintains lands like they are but accommodates uses with resource protection. It locates facilities and services in communities outside the monument. It has a BLM directed science program and a strong public education component. This alternative makes use of a science advisory council. There would be four zones: Front country - concentrate visitor use here such as hiking, etc; Passage zone - this would be the more primitive roads into the interior of the monument; Outback zone - a zone with opportunity for motorized recreation; and Primitive zone - a non-motorized (foot) recreation zone.

Many of the crucial issues are dealt with in the “management common to all” section of the draft. Grazing management and honoring valid existing rights are two examples of areas covered in this section of the draft. There are no alternatives on these crucial areas because of the directives of the proclamation. Also collections, fish and wildlife, wildfire suppression, and wilderness study areas are covered in the management common to all.

Kate indicated that she has just given a quick overview and people need to review the draft carefully and then comment. The BLM will be revising the alternatives in response to comments.

There will be a series of public meetings in December and January. A copy of the meeting schedule for those meetings is attached to these minutes for reference. Questions were answered. A question was asked about why the meetings are not set on tribal lands. Kate

explained that they tried to set meetings at general locations that best served the public. Scott Truman asked what the best way to respond to the plan was as far as organizing comments. She said that people can respond to each alternative or just to one item. The comments must be in writing and can be e-mailed, delivered, or taken to public meetings and turned in. There will be responses to all comments and they will be incorporated into the plan.

5. Dale Peterson from UDOT gave a transportation update. He indicated he would talk about recent events and then turn some time over to Ken Adair who will give the status of specific projects. He has the third edition of their User Guide with him today and a few available copies if anyone is interested. They are in the process of getting input from various government agencies and the public to put together recommendations for most pressing transportation issues in Region 4. He also attended a conference recently on a new kind of leadership called Transportation 21 which involves environmental leadership. He read the objectives of this program to the council. They are going to implement this process into their program and they are training their people on it.

There will be a transportation meeting Friday in Hurricane. The North Cedar interchange will be on the agenda for that meeting. They need and appreciate public input on these transportation issues.

There are four project managers in Region 4. Ken Adair is responsible for Washington County and Tom Christensen for Iron County.

Ken Adair discussed projects in this area. The North Cedar Interchange reconstruction will involve relocating it to the North for better safety and better crossing angle. They are waiting for approval from federal highway department on the environmental document.

They recently met with the consultant and got an agreement for a study to do the southern corridor or Atkinville interchange. This is just north of the port of entry on I-15 and would serve the communities of St. George, Hurricane, Washington and later Santa Clara, Ivins and that area. The study will look at going east from Atkinville Wash out to Warner Ridge and north up Wardner Ridge to SR9 to about where the bowling alley is on SR-9 (3400 West). A consultant has been selected to do this study which will take about 18 months. It will probably be about five years to complete the study and do the project.

They are also doing a study on the Hurricane Bridge. They were proposing to tear it down and build a new one but they are studying it to see if the bridge could be modified and reused for another 15 to 20 years. They have two proposals. One is replacing the bridge deck and widening and the other one is to see if it is structurally capable of adding two arches and making it into a four lane highway.

There are also lots of local projects. There are bike paths at Snow Canyon and Santa Clara. They are working on other projects with various communities. There is a rehabilitation project from Harrisburg to Anderson Junction. They let the bid out a

couple of months ago. They are redoing surface and widening shoulders.

6. Hugh Thompson gave a short synopsis of the Forest Service's statewide application. They need to amend all the management plans for the national forest in State of Utah to recognize fire's role in the environment. Their last plan was done in the mid 80's and didn't include the values of fires in forest land. There have been an increase in prescribed fires. There is about 725,000 acres that they need to start burning in the next five years on forest lands. In the Dixie National Forest they have been burning 12,000 to 14,000 acres a year and they need to triple that. He explained that scoping letters have been sent out on this and they are accepting comments through the middle of next week. There has been a task force appointed to do this on a state wide basis.

Hugh also discussed the Northern Goshawks. The environmentalists had great hope on the Northern Goshawk and the possibility of it being like the next spotted owl to shut down timbering activities. It was proposed for listing but the USFWS declined to list it but the fact remains that it is a sensitive species. This past summer biologists across the state started looking at Goshawk habitat throughout the state and found that the habitat was in good condition. There is still a need to assure that quality habitat exists. The Forest Service devised a strategy on this since they are habitat managers. Now they will go back and look at all their forest plans and make sure they are in line with this strategy. They may have to modify some of their plans but he said he thinks they can avoid it being listed. They will be looking for support for implementing this strategy. This is very important to the state. If they can keep the Goshawk from being listed and from being a negative impact to the timber program it will mean more money back to schools.

7. A break was taken.
8. The next meeting will be the first Tuesday in January which is January 5 at 1:00 p.m. Lunch will be at noon for council members with the meeting to start at 1:00 p.m. Please call Scott's office for lunch count.
9. Howard Roper discussed the agricultural activities in the SUPAC area. He said there are five soil conservation district boards within the SUPAC area. These boards are authorized by the state constitution of Utah as elected bodies. They are in charge of soil and water conservation issues on private lands and they have an important role in natural resource management.

In 1974 a MOU was signed between the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, BLM, Department of Interior and state agencies that identified a process called Coordinated Resource Management Planning. In the northern part of the state they have been successful in identifying watersheds and issues at hand. They have drafted up plans and are getting funding from various agencies and grants. This process is picking up momentum in Southern Utah. There will be a Coordinated Resource Management Planning in Panguitch next Tuesday, November 17. This meeting will be on issues and concerns on natural resources as it relates to the upper reaches of the Sevier River.

He urged council members to get involved in this process and become familiar locally with these people. Commissioner Carroll of Kanab urged council members to find out the times and locations of these meetings and become involved and be available to serve on these boards.

Kane Co. meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at their County Courthouse.

Dixie meets the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the Federal Building.

Sevier Co. is meeting in Panguitch this next Tuesday. Howard will get information on the meeting schedules to Scott Truman for inclusion in the SUPAC calendar.

Howard Roper also discussed the Farm Bill and reviewed different aspects that have an application in our area.

10. Reed Harris gave a Condor information update. There are 14 now in the Vermillion Cliffs area. Nine more were introduced in October. They are in two groups now so they are not competing for food.

There will be a soft release taking place next week Wednesday, November 18 at 9:00 a.m. The birds can leave if they want to. They will just open the pens and let them decide. This will be at the base of the Hurricane Cliffs. The media will be invited and invitations will be sent to governor, mayors, tribes, special interest groups, etc. Contact Bette Arial at the BLM for additional information.

There has been discussion of expansion of the 10J rule. This provides an alternative way for Fish & Wildlife to manage a non-essential experimental population and sets up special rules to deal more directly with local people that might be effected by the species such as the condors in this instance. They are in the process of modifying the 10J area to cover areas where the condors could conceivably go. It has been hard to identify how big of an area they need to include. This process of getting the 10J rule expanded will take some time. They have to put it in Federal Register, do an environmental compliance, etc. Reed said that up to this point the birds have not caused any big problems and it has been a scientific treat for the biologists to study them.

11. Gordon Topham gave an update on the Coral Pink Sand dunes lawsuit. There are 2,000 acres in state park and 1,500 acres in BLM area. They are in the process of trying to manage the tiger beetle through a conservation agreement entered into to protect habitat. Through this process they have realized that they need to work together with the State and the BLM to manage the dunes. In the process of implementing the agreement two off-road vehicle groups filed lawsuits to try and force BLM to no longer allow off-road vehicles in their portion of the dunes. The BLM is in the process of updating their management plan. The public comment period was extended until 11/27/98. The state is in the process of writing a management plan for their part. They will try to have common threads with the BLM management plan even though their management plans are very different.

12. Jim Crisp gave a report on the Dixie Resource Area Management Plan. The final comment period ended on October 17, 1998. They received 19 comments. There were extensive comments from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Sierra Club. Also Washington County and the Washington County Water Conservancy District submitted a large amount of comments. Several of the communities in Washington County submitted letters referencing the water district's comments. He said he would try to summarize the nature of the comments. There was also many comments from various off road vehicle interests. The county and water district comments mostly revolved on RS2477 and wild and scenic river issues. The BLM will have teams of people coming from Washington D.C. and Salt Lake City to review the comments and try and respond. The record of decision should be out by February or March.
13. Ann King, U.S.D.A. Forest Service gave an update on the Visitor Monitoring that has been discussed at the last few meetings. They have found that this is a complex issue but they have tried to gather as much information as possible. There are some commonalities between the Forest Service and BLM and what kind of information is gathered through permits to keep track of dispersed recreation. There are also many inconsistencies between agencies. This information could prove very valuable for local economies and also in assessing resource impacts on lands managed. They have found that unless there is a fee and toll booth set up the requirement of a special use permit asking specific information there is no good way to monitor the people coming into these areas and what they are doing. This isn't a top priority with most agencies and they don't have the money to do it. The other problem found between BLM and Forest service and within districts or areas within agencies is actual inconsistency in information gathering

Their recommendations include:

- ◆ Establishing the need for collecting this information --- do they really need it and what will it be used for.
  - ◆ Establishing some kind of consistency between agencies -- the agencies need to sit down and decide what they can tackle in incremental steps.
  - ◆ Establishing some consistency in survey questions and methodologies of information gathering.
  - ◆ Going to universities and getting help with surveys and monitoring systems.
  - ◆ Developing a volunteer base to observe counts at trails heads and key routes and accesses
  - ◆ Other ideas could include postcard questionnaires on windshields; inserting questionnaires inside travel maps, counting cars in parking lots, having volunteers do surveys; and conducting car counts at trail heads.
14. Kathleen Clarke said there will be a scoping conference in Salt Lake City on January 13. The details are still being assembled. She will make sure invitations get sent to SUPAC council members.

15. Scott Truman called for additional items of business. There being none the following agenda items were reviewed for the January 1999 meeting: 1) water quality and clean water act; 2) forest management issues. Contact Scott Truman with additional agenda items.
16. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Secretary