

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

Minutes of a meeting held January 4, 2000

**** denotes action items**

1. The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met on Tuesday, January 4, 2000, 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.
2. Vice Chairman Scott Truman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.
3. The minutes of the meeting of November 2, 1999 had been e-mailed or mailed out to committee members. Marty Ott made a motion to approve those minutes as written and Dave Terry seconded the motion. All voted aye.
4. John Williams indicated he would give a financial report at the next meeting.
5. Calendars were distributed. Scott Truman asked for additional calendaring items. Don Falvey said Zion Park's first meeting in a series of meetings on their General Management Plan will be this Thursday in Cedar City. There will be additional meetings after that. A copy of a news release with those meetings was distributed. They are scheduled as follows:

January 6	Cedar City	Sharwan Smith Center, SUU 351 West Center St.
January 10	Springdale	Town Offices, 118 Lion Blvd.
January 11	Kanab	Kanab City Library, 374 N. Main
January 12	St. George	Interagency Office/Information Center 345 East Riverside Dr.
January 13	SLC	Department of Natural Resources 1594 West North Temple

Don also passed out a press release that set forth the park's new fee schedule. He reported that the new shuttle system should begin in May 2000.

Louise Liston said that they are having a Millennial program in Garfield County on January 22 from 3 p.m. to midnight.

Scott indicated for informational purposes that the first day of the Legislature is January 17 and the last day is March 1.

There was some discussion of the next SUPAC meeting. The regularly scheduled date would be March 7. This would be the week after the Legislature is done. There was some discussion of holding that meeting in another area as the Holiday Inn is fully

booked for other conventions. There will be further discussion later in the meeting.

6. The next item on the agenda was a land and water conservation fund legislation update given by Bruce Richesen of Senator Bennett's office. He said this legislation took effect in January of 1965. It has been one of the principal sources of funding for acquiring new recreation lands. It was initially set up as a revolving fund but has been very inconsistent. It reached nearly five million during the Carter administration. Bruce said he has a list of projects in the state that have been funded by this. The senate bill is really going nowhere right now. There are a number of cosponsors in the Senate but no one seems willing to take the lead. It doesn't look like anything will be happening in the immediate future. Senator Hatch, Congressman Hansen and Senator Bennett are supportive of it.

7. Ron Thompson of the Washington County Water Conservancy District (WCWCD) and Reed Harris of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) discussed critical habitat for the Virgin River. Reed Harris explained that years ago the environmental community sued USFWS for failure to designate critical habitat on Virgin River. When they do listings they are supposed to designate critical habitat. The Court has given them a time frame in which to designate critical habitat. They started last spring with initial work and doing NEPA compliance document, putting the rule in the Federal Register and making it public. They developed an environmental assessment and a finding of no significant impact with that designation. The final Environmental Assessment (EA) was sent out in November. They have to have it designated by January 22 and they are on schedule. The final EA has gone through the 30 day period and they have had very little comment. The fish are protected under Section 7 of ESA and they don't envision any additional requirements put on users by this critical habitat designation. The final rule should be in the Federal Register very soon and the Virgin River will be designated critical habitat from the confluence with La Verkin Creek almost to Lake Mead. Reed indicated that when they do Section 7 consultations they will include critical habitat.

Ron Thompson asked what activities can occur in the floodplain that don't require Section 7 consultations on private property. Reed Harris indicated that the only time critical habitat becomes a factor is when there is a federal permit or lease. When they evaluate critical habitat they evaluate on the basis of whether that action will have an adverse action on fish. Reed said there won't be any extra protection on the 100 year floodplain above what there is now. Ron also asked about trail systems on private property -- will they be required to go through Section 7 consultations. Reed said if it doesn't materially effect the river and where there is no significant take there shouldn't be a problem. If somebody wanted a permanent structure in the 100 year floodplain that would effect or alter the river or present adverse impact, that would be different.

Ron Thompson said the water district's only concern with designation is whether it is consistent with their broad based river management plan. If so, it should have very nominal impact in our county.

Reed explained, as an example, they designated critical habitat on 1500 miles of the Colorado River. The critical habitat hasn't been a major problem with respect to

developments along the Colorado River. The only thing he can think of that might cause concern is oil & gas development in the floodplain

8. The next item on the agenda was a report on the Coral Pink Sanddunes RMP by Gordon Topham. He passed out a table of comparison of the proposed alternatives. Alternative 5 is preferred by the environmental community but would be devastating for the state park. Alternative 1 is no change and would leave things the way it is and that isn't working. Alternative 3 is the only one that makes sense for them. He showed a map of Alternative 3, which is the preferred alternative and is Zoned Recreation Use. The area adjacent to the Coral Pink Sanddunes State Park was put into the Moquith Mountain WSA and they will continue to use this as it has been used in the past. There was a lawsuit brought by the environmental community that degradation was taking place to wilderness values so the BLM was required to make an emergency temporary closure and then to make a determination whether to keep closure in place. They came to the Division of Parks and Recreation and they got involved in the planning process. The sanddunes were divided in half. One half in state park and one-half in wilderness study area. They implemented a survey and found out that 80 to 85% of people who came into the park are non-motorized vehicle users. The camping is closer to 50%. This gave them an idea of who their customers were. They fenced off 25 acres with a boardwalk so people can get to sanddunes. They closed the area to motorized vehicles to satisfy that need of those who didn't want to hear sound of the motorized vehicles but the complaints still continued. Alternative 3 is the alternative that the BLM supported and which State Parks supports. They don't know if this will resolve the conflict. It does mean that one access to the dunes will not be available. This is the proposal that they are recommending. He will keep the SUPAC committee updated on this from time to time.

Jerry Meredith indicated that Kane County and USFWS have helped in this too and it has been a great partnership effort between County, State and Federal agencies. Safety concerns, threatened and endangered species and wilderness study issues have all played a part in this proposal. Jerry also indicated that the entire dunes would be managed under the same rules so people aren't confused as to which side they are on. There will be the same user fee for the whole dunes also.

10. Roger Taylor gave an update on the proposed Parashont National Monument. He passed out copies of a map showing the monument boundaries. He said the last time he spoke to this group it was being called the Shivwits monument. In December Secretary Babbitt went to the President and requested action. The President held a press conference and announced that he was taking the Secretary's proposal to create a national monument under consideration. They are now looking at a proposal of about a million acres instead of 600,000 or so as originally proposed. 400,000 acres has been added to the northern part of the proposal. Roger pointed out that on the map passed out at the bottom where it indicates 804,000 acres of the land is managed by BLM it should say 9,000 acres is privately owned property, rather than 18,000. The proposed boundary follows the watershed between Virgin River and the watersheds that run directly into Colorado River or Grand Canyon. The rationale for the expansion of the proposed boundaries is that they tried to include the entire watershed of the Grand Canyon or

Colorado River. He said they are just waiting now but he believes it is inevitable and just a matter of time before it will take place and the President will sign a proclamation. The Park would continue to manage their lands and BLM would continue to manage their lands so it would be jointly managed but the overall management would be under the management of the field manager for the Arizona BLM. The biggest change would be that the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry.

11. The next item on the agenda was a Grand Canyon Access Committee Report by Karen Alvey. In December a group of people from Arizona and Utah got together to look at access to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and to access other points in the proposed monument and other areas in the park. They felt it was very successful. Both states were represented as well as five counties (two from Arizona and three from Utah) and the two Governor's offices along with state and federal agencies.

She read the mission statement of this committee. This was the first time this group of people had ever met together and so this was a very good first step. They established subcommittees that are working on certain areas. They are looking at what they can do to open this area up a little more since it has an economic impact on them. Vic Knox added that he felt it was a very good discussion on how to create a more sustainable tourism industry in Kanab and the Arizona strip area. The next meeting of this group is March 21 in Kanab where they will have committee reports from the assigned committees.

A break was taken.

12. Mary Wagner of the Forest Service discussed the Dixie Forest - Upper Sevier Watershed Protection Plan. This project was selected for Dixie National Forest as it has great potential for collaboration in Southern Utah. Only 12 projects out of 60 were chosen for watershed improvement conditions in large scale watershed. The Upper Sevier River Region was also chosen in Utah. This is a very large watershed area. She passed out copies of a map that show preliminary tentative focus areas in watershed restoration project. There are a lot of groups focusing time and energy in the Sevier watershed. There are different planning groups, water quality teams, etc. that involve local and state agencies. She said they are hoping to partnership with those people and compliment their efforts. The type of work they are looking at doing is watershed assessments, monitoring, vegetative management, riparian restoration, stream side restoration, access management and prescribed fires to treat pinion junipers in some areas. This Thursday they will have a meeting with partners and potential partners. This will probably be the first in a series of meetings. If anyone is interested that hasn't already been invited, in private or government sector, please get ahold of Mary and she will make sure they get involved. The meeting will be at the Hunter Conference Center at Southern Utah University at 9 a.m. in the Charles Hunter room.
13. Jim Crisp reported on the Washington County HCP Public Use Plan Report. Jim indicated he asked Bill Mader to make a presentation on the status of the HCP plan. The 1994 plan called for the BLM to prepare an activity plan within five years of the

signing of the plan. That signing took place in February of 1996 and so that activity plan is being prepared now. Washington County is taking the lead in that with a team comprised of a wide spectrum of people who are working on this. The county is using impact fees that come from the desert tortoise funding. It is a very innovative planning effort. Bill Mader is the HCP Administrator and has been involved in development of that plan. Bill Mader spoke next. He indicated that Lori Rose has been the facilitator of this project but she is sick today and unable to be at this meeting. Bill said they have tried to outreach and meet with as many groups and people as possible. When the HCP was signed off it did three things. It set up over 1200 acres of tortoise habitat that could be taken or developed under federal permit. It also set up a 61,000 acre reserve and specified some recreation activities that could occur inside the reserve but the HCP was unable to specify how and where those activities could occur, so it was decided to do this activity plan. The county initiated it and it has been very successful due to the team effort. They wanted this to be a more grass roots effort so they came up with a very diverse group of nine people. There are some past commissioners, biologists, rock climbers, geologists, mountain bike people, etc. They have been going through this process for over a year. Where it now stands is that they have designated 120 miles of multi use trails for hikers, rock climbers, mountain bikers, horses, etc. You can now travel from north to south in the HCP. One can actually go from Hurricane to Ivins on horseback. In the lower elevations of reserve the plan calls for staying on the trails. In the up land area of the reserve (1/3 of reserve) you can go off trail. Throughout the reserve there is 120 miles of multi-use trails. They still need to deal with whether the trailhead parking should be inside or outside the reserve.

There will be another public use plan meeting tomorrow at noon at the County Commission Chambers. There is a Habitat Conservation Planning Commission meeting January 25 at noon at Washington City offices. A question was asked about the flexibility of changing the plan if they find certain areas need to be amended after they try it. Bill said they can do this.

14. Scott Truman discussed the present meeting format and making efficient use of everybody's time. Scott asked the council for any suggestions to make meetings more efficient. One suggestion was made that informational presentations perhaps could be made during lunch. Several suggested that a lot of business really takes place in the interaction at breaks and lunch and so these are important times to let that happen. Louise Liston said she felt it would be unfair to a presenter to have to make their presentation during lunch. She also felt the lunch time is valuable for the visiting and interaction that takes place at that time. Jerry Meredith suggested that announcements of general things could perhaps be made or passed out during lunch. Jeannine Holt said that presenters may need to bring more handouts so that there is more than just enough for council members.

Scott indicated that they have tried to condense the meeting schedule and asked if it is working all right for everybody – especially those traveling from Salt Lake City. All agreed it was working well and it was decided to continue as it has been done.

15. The next meeting will be March 7 at the Interagency Building office building - 345 E.

Riverside Drive. Lunch will be at noon with the business meeting to start at 1 p.m. **Due to conflicts, the March 7th SUPAC meeting has been canceled, and the next meeting will be held on May 2 and Zion's National Park.** The transportation system will be near enough to completion that the SUPAC council could have a shuttle ride. Don Falvey soon after that and it will be a good chance to say good bye and thanks to him. Don Falvey said he would be happy to host the meeting at Zion. He suggested they may want to start this meeting earlier if they are going to do a tour of Zion. It was decided to start at 10 a.m. with lunch at noon followed by business meeting at 1 p.m.

16. Jerry Meredith announced that Kate Cannon has been selected as the new manager of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. She officially takes over the end of next week and Jerry indicated he would be moving back to their Cedar City office this week
17. Scott reviewed items to be included on the March agenda:
Jerry Meredith- report on final plan for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
Ron Thompson & Bruce Barrett - Discussion on Colorado River water items
John Williams - Financial Report
Gordon Topham - Management Plan for Kodachrome
Roger Taylor - Report on new monument.

Suggested for May meeting - Dale Peterson could give a report on new study "Good Roads Cost Less" for informational purposes.
Also for May meeting - Lin Alder could give a Grafton project update.
18. The council was reminded that notices for annual dues will be mailed out sometime in the next week.
19. There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary

Appendix A

Don Falvey
Don Leavitt
John Williams

Chris Blake
Alan Gardner
Reed Harris
Jerry Meredith
John Willie
Dennis Stowell
Travis Parashonts
David Terry
Jeannine Holt
Louise Liston
Mary Wagner
John Harja
Bruce Richeson
Jim Crisp
Roger Taylor
Pete Rowley
Bill Lund
Justin Quigly
Dianne Nielson
Ronald Thompson
Bruce Barrett
Karen Alvey
Scott Munson
Vic Knox
Marty Ott
Gordon Topham
Trena Barnson
Vane Campbell
Mike Small
Wayne Thomas
Lin Alder