

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

Minutes of a meeting held March 6, 2001

1. The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met at the Holiday Inn in St. George, Utah, on Tuesday, March 6, 2001 at 1:00 p.m. Those in attendance at the business meeting are listed on the roster attached as Appendix A to these minutes.
2. Vice Chairman Scott Truman called the meeting to order, welcomed those present and requested that everyone introduce themselves to the group. Marty Ott moved that the minutes of the last meeting be approved. The motion was seconded.
3. Financial report - John Williams distributed a financial report and reviewed the entries with the group. The funds have been audited and the audit has been filed with the Utah State Treasury. It was moved by Cary Peterson that the budget be approved. Clare Ramsay seconded the motion.

Scott said that notifications had been sent out requesting that yearly dues be paid and that a signature is required from each member of SUPAC. He read the list of groups who had not as yet paid last years dues.

4. Leigh von der Esch, Director of the Utah Film Commission, circulated copies of the new photographic essay of Utah which is updated about every six years. Movies filmed throughout the state of Utah have been quoted in this essay.

Meetings are now being held to discern methods whereby the State can provided the most "film" friendly venues prior to, during and after the 2002 Olympics. The Film Commission is requesting that promotional videos be filmed to help convey the spirit of our state to all visitors. Permitting filming on BLM land needs to be approved. Having worked in Washington, Leigh was involved in a campaign for national parks to be able to charge location fees. Senator Hatch and Senator Bennett's staff worked with her to testify before committees in Washington on Public Law #106-206 which allowed national parks to charge location fees as the BLM and Forest Service has for years. In addition, the recent legislative session adopted Resolution 13 urging the use of state property (lands and buildings) on a fee-free basis to the motion picture industry. Cost recovery would be allowed. The Film Commission was most anxious that this resolution would pass because we are losing film production in the state. We are losing it because other countries, states and provinces are recognizing that this industry represents a lucrative piece of economic development for a particular area. The Canadians have formulated payroll tax rebates to encourage film makers to use their country. Other states are

providing incentives where no sales tax is due on production. Money is the bottom line. This is a very competitive business field.

A video tape was shown to the group entitled "Utah".which presented a history of various films produced in Utah. Film-friendly environments are needed in our state and this is where the land agencies come in. Filming should not be at the expense of the resource. Sydney, Australia has put together a film facts book. We want to compile the same type of film facts book. The visitors entering our state during the Olympics will most likely be here less than three weeks and, therefore, will not be in the country long enough to follow the natural course of things to acquire their permits. Obtaining a filming permit needs to be done on an expedited basis. Also, many of these film makers are not used to paying fees to film, so this needs to be addressed. Agencies are now looking at areas that would be readily available to the film maker *now* because the NEPA has already been done for that area. If film makers have a difficult or impossible time getting any type of permit, they make bad press for years to come. Will it be possible to deploy additional people to come in to help with the natural resource areas and to facilitate the processing of permits? Jim Crisp commented that, as far as BLM lands are concerned, there is no reason the BLM could not come up with an "umbrella assessment" that sets criteria for facilitating the permit process. However, fees will probably still be a factor. Washington would have to take care of the fee issue. About 22,000,000 acres of land in Utah could be handled under such an "umbrella assessment." Gordon Topham related an unpleasant experience he had with movie companies coming in and getting all the permits/agreements they needed to film in the Dead Horse Point area (15 years ago). When the crews showed up, the person with the permits/agreements was no where to be found. The crew did what they wanted; there was no control. Leigh said that a code of conduct has since been signed to help eliminate these types of actions. The land manager needs to inquire if the film maker is working with the Film Commission. Producers have learned to talk with each other concerning film makers and how the film make has previously dealt with the areas in which they have filmed.

An estimated 10,000 people will be coming to the Olympics who will be accredited press. The State is looking at how to handle the 8000 unaccredited press. The unaccredited press are writers, but they cannot get inside the Olympic venues. In Australia, when the unaccredited press was bored, they dealt with aboriginal issues. Do we want bored press dealing with polygamy issues? We want them instead to look toward the culture, the heritage and geographics of our state. The question remains - how we can meet the need of the photographer? Utah recently lost a four-hour mini series on Marilyn Monroe to Sydney because of financial incentives offered by that country. Perceptions left in the minds of travelers remain intact for a long time. Nine months before and after the Olympics in Atlanta, there was a decline in filming because there was a perception that motel/hotel rooms were not available. Movies are seen by over 200 million people. They are tremendously important marketing instruments. "Rob Roy" and "Brave Heart" brought 70 percent more people to the areas in Scotland in which they were filmed.

Leigh said that they are trying to get articles published in the *Delta* magazine before the Olympics and she encouraged areas like St. George to submit stories for distribution.

Scott commented that this is an opportunity for the local communities to impart knowledge of themselves. Use these stories as feeders to the media. This is the first Olympics that will be video streamed (on the net). Jim Crisp, speaking as a citizen of the area, said that there is no way you will keep the media from bringing up Hildale and Colorado city. A plan should be in place to be as constructive as possible. Scott said that maybe this message should go to Colorado City and to Hildale and give them a heads-up, so to speak, to positively present their communities.

Gordon Topham informed the group that Iron County's Sesquicentennial Celebration will be showing some of the old movies made in Utah.

5. Natural Resource Coordinating Committee (NRCC) OHV Report from Bill Lamb - Since leaving the BLM, Bill has been working with Dave Terry on OHV use in the state of Utah. An MOU has been signed between Trust Lands, DNR, BLM and the Forest Service to get on top of the OHV issue and still provide for quality OHV use in the state. The NRCC took individuals and put together the Interagency OHV Partners, a Technical Committee and a Law Enforcement Team. An inventory has been taken noting all the "hot spots" in the state. A map has been produced showing ninety-six of these "hot spots" throughout the state. Since ninety-six areas are unwieldy to deal with, prioritization has narrowed the scope down to just twenty "hots spots." Three of them are within the SUPAC region. A slogan has been coined - "protect your privilege; stay on the trail." and stickers have been produced to distribute to users. Posters are available and have been disseminated. The Committee has been working with both media and users. Their goal is to put together some volunteer groups to work with OHV issues. Dealers have already purchased GPS equipment so that they can do inventory on the ground. Signage standards are in draft form. State organizers cannot make things happen on the ground; they can only lead. SUPAC has formed a group to do this. It is difficult to get groups to work together; however everyone has to work together in order to provide a quality experience for OHV users and still maintain the integrity of the land. SUPAC is taking the lead in the assessment of OHV use. An Assessment of OHV Use for Interagency Coordination has been drafted. A copy was distributed to the group and a summary was presented by Bill.

Tasks involved:

1. Identify OHV areas. Dealers have committed to help with this.
2. Hot Spots - these areas are getting concentrated use, some damage has occurred, and the agency is not in control. These areas are found in Iron, Garfield, Washington, and Kane Counties. These areas can be found on the Trust website.
3. Gather and conduct roads and trails inventories
4. Determine environmental impacts on water, wildlife, animal habitats, etc.

Social and economic issues involved:

1. Public demand, structures and facilities, culture of the area, dealers and services, noise and dust, conflicts with other users.

Management issues involved:

1. Organizing the group now established through SUPAC, task assignments, involve the public, coordination with all other areas.
2. Land status (designation/planning)
3. Areas suitability for OHV use
4. Available resources (personnel/skills, equipment/material, law enforcement, funding)
5. Resource needs (personnel/skills, equipment and materials, law enforcement and funding)

Are Interim Measures needed to protect an area?

An Assessment Form is available. It shows the status of travel planning, route inventory, signing, route maps, route system planning, volunteer involvement, law enforcement, monitoring, use education efforts, interagency coordination/cooperation, OHV management skills, resource issues, social issues, and management training.

Management skills will have to be developed. Training will be taking place in Richfield in May of this year. Public education on OHV impacts, responsible riding and safety issues will be provided.

In conclusion - information needs to be gathered to develop an OHV plan. The plan must be implemented, monitored and maintained. The overall process is never-ending. It will always be there.

This team should try to pull in the Arizona strip. Dale Grange suggested that user groups be involved in addition to the agencies. Bill agreed and said that volunteer groups are being organized at present. Environmental groups also want to be involved. Cary Peterson asked if private land is included in this assessment. Bill said that the groups would have to determine how to deal with that. The Paiute Plan involves EVERYONE. On a statewide basis, there needs to be resolution on which areas are open and which are closed. A web site would be helpful for people to garner this information.

6. Sand Hollow Reservoir Recreation Team Report and Recommendations - Gordon Topham distributed an issue development exercise to the group asking for their input. Dale Grange showed the group a map of the Sand Hollow Reservoir and explained the surrounding area. Dale informed the group of the existence of the Sand Hollow Recreation Planning Team which has been meeting since November of 2000 to develop a recreation plan. He summarized the user groups making up this team and the issues that have been discussed by the group. Gordon spoke about Sand Hollow being a wonderful source of recreation for this area. A lot is being done to avoid conflict among users. The Legislature did fund part of their portion of some of the operation money for this next official year. The team and the District has agreed that this should be a state park. Jim Crisp noted that the process being used is the same as that used with the HCP Plan and the Snow Canyon plan. Once the plan is compiled by State Parks, the BLM will do an EA. Jim said that three days after this plan is adopted you can bet that people will then have comments saying they have never been informed of the process or the public meetings.

State Parks is trying to do everything they can do involve EVERYONE. It is "not" officially a state park yet. There is a positive nod from the Legislature that they will not fight it becoming a state park. The people need to say they want it to be a state park. When State Parks and Recreation is involved, there *are* rules and fees.

7. Bryce Transportation and Shuttle System - Fred Fagergren made a virtual reality presentation to the group. The planning for this shuttle system began in 1992. There was no funding mechanism in place, but, through help from the Utah delegation, additional funds were set in place to get the dollars needed for the shuttle. The money was used for the staging area and to obtain a contract with Lewis Brothers through which the 15 buses which operate the system were provided.

There are three shuttle routes - staging area to visitor center; Bryce amphitheater, and the southern overlooks tour (all the way to the southern end of the park which runs four times per day). The busses are equipped with a handicap ramp. They have a capacity of 34 people (32 with wheelchairs). A patron can get on and off as they wish. This shuttle is a "voluntary" system. A car can be driven into the park. A fee of \$20 is charged if a person drives into the park. This includes use of the shuttle. A \$15 fee is charged if the shuttle is taken into the park. One of the main objectives is to reduce congestion in the parking lots. At one time there were four cars for every available parking spot.

One of the goals of this shuttle system is to become economically self sustaining. Over two hundred written and verbal complaints were recorded during the first day of shuttle use. People who had already paid \$50 for an annual pass figured this should have included even the shuttle. After this day, the fee was dropped for pass holders. The park planned on 2.5 million dollars in income from this service; it received 1.5 million. 68% of cars in the park were pass holders. Losses were recovered through a transportation fee, Washington assistance and a demo fee of \$10. The second goal is to enhance visitor experience. The Park received 1500 "report" cards and 90% plus were positive. We attribute the use of these comment cards to the fact that mailboxes were provided in each bus. A third goal is to reduce vehicle congestion. From July to September, 465,264 visitors came in cars and 62,000 of them came in on the shuttle. There are additional benefits of shuttle system. The parking lots were overcrowded only two days during the summer months, impacts to resources have been greatly reduced, emissions were lowered and \$500,000 in new wages came to the local economy (bus drivers receive 15 dollars per hour plus benefits).

Has this shuttle system been successful? Currently there are economic problems, but all benefits have been immediately realized. The busses are contracted and not owned as in Zion National Park. The National Park Service is being asked to be self-subsisting with the shuttle program. In the future, mass transit will be the ONLY conceivable way a national park can insure that it will always be *more national park than national parking lot*.

A question was asked as to the job description of the bus drivers - do they provide information? Fred replied that one hundred hours were spent training the bus drivers in

safety and in the history of the park. They do provide information. The Green Line will be offering a CD or a cassette to go with it. The road is too winding for the bus driver to be constantly talking.

8. Washington County Public Use Plan - Desert Tortoise Preserve: Jim Crisp - A Public Use Plan, which is an activity level plan, was put together by a Washington County planning team with a wide spectrum of public involvement. The public comment period closed on March 2, 2001. Several issues were brought forth in the comments received, *e.g.*, restrictions to trails, City Creek area being closed to trail use, etc.. Within the next couple of weeks these comments will be reviewed. We are waiting for the biological opinion on the plan. It is estimated that the plan will be finalized by mid-April of this year.
9. Virgin River Program Update: Henry Maddox from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Henry has been the Field Supervisor for about seven months now, but has worked on the Virgin River Program for quite some time. The River has been under the microscope from all sides. There are growing concerns about the River as population grows. The Recovery Program is a cooperative effort to (1) recover endangered fish and (2) develop water resources to meet community needs. The Program covers only the state of Utah, but is looking to expand to Arizona and Nevada. Participants in the program include FWS, Zions National Park, State of Utah, BLM, the Washington County Water Conservancy District and Grand Canyon Trust. Cooperative efforts are needed if the goals presented in the Virgin River Program are to be accomplished.

Various agencies are providing financial resources for this program. No single activity can recover these fish. This Program works on a "recovery banking" system. As good things are implemented for the fish, credits are added to the bank. When flows are impacted, credits are taken away from the bank. We work toward increasing the credits so that when a project comes along, Section 7 and ESA compliance are basically streamlined. Credits cannot be borrowed; the bank needs a positive account. The program operates through an Administrative Committee, a Technical Committee and a local Coordinating Committee (intended to be the cities/counties responsible for implementing the VRMP). The EA is currently being revised. Environmental compliance should be completed next month.

10. Other Business - Dave Terry informed the group that the Western States Land Commissioners Association would meet at Ruby's Inn. the last week of July.

Scott introduced Ray Spencer, a Kane County Commissioner. He is a new member to SUPAC. Ray expressed his appreciation of the group and the opportunity to serve as a member of SUPAC.

May 1st was set as the next meeting date of SUPAC to be held at the Holiday Inn in St. George at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda Items suggested for the next meeting:

- ◆ Congressional delegate to report SUPAC.
- ◆ Ron Thompson to talk to us concerning the Shivwits Water Rights Settlement
- ◆ Commission Gardner may be able to take us on a tour of the new wildlife museum.
- ◆ The Sand Hollow Recreation Plan should be finished and copies could be distributed to SUPAC members.

14. There being no further business, Jim Crisp made the motion to adjourn.

Secretary

APPENDIX A

Clare Ramsay
Cary Peterson
Dean Reeder
Jim Crisp
Marty Ott
Sherman Hoskins
Gordon Topham
Don Leavitt
Chris Blake
John Williams
Ray Spencer
Wayne Thomas
Rick Arial
Vane Campbell
Loren Webb
David Terry
Scott Munson
Jeannine Holt
Henry Maddux
Bruce Barrett
Karen Alvey
Bruce Richeson
Treva Barnson
Bill Lamb
Dale Grange
Scott Truman