

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

Minutes of a meeting held September 5, 2001

1. **The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah, on Wednesday, September 5, 2001 at 10:00 a.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 and welcomed those present.**
3. **The minutes of the meeting of the July 10, 2001 meeting were moved for approval by Alan Gardner. John Williams seconded the motion and all voted aye.**
4. **Scott Truman asked everyone to be sure and sign the roll and include their e-mail addresses because they have lost all the e-mail address data and phone numbers on their computer.**
5. **The first item on the agenda was a report by Vic Knox of the National Park Service on visitation.** He distributed a handout of recreation visits as of July 2001 in national parks in Utah. Visitation is down at almost all parks in Utah except Cedar Breaks. Statewide the number is down about 6.5% from 2000. This seems to be a trend in the Western United States. Economic instability and gas prices may be a few of the reasons for the decreased visitation. Vic reported that National park Service is hosting a two-day conference at Ruby's Inn and they will be talking about tourism, decreased visitation, and how the parks and businesses can work together better and discuss changes in tourism, etc. They will discuss what things they can be doing to be better partners and work better together and keep dialog open between national parks and businesses around them. He indicated when they get the date for that conference they will get it on the SUPAC calendar and send out invitations.
6. **Mary Wagner introduced Steve Robertson and Larry _____ to discuss the National Fire Plan.** The National Fire Plan was developed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior last year to respond to severe wild land fires, reduce their impacts on rural communities, and assure sufficient fire-fighting capacity in the future. Five key points of the National Fire Plan are: Firefighting, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Hazardous Fuel Reduction, Community Assistance and Accountability.

He explained some of the things that have been done in each of these areas with funding received. In the Dixie National Forest a hot shot crew was brought on to fight fires. They are a highly trained elite crew to fight big wildfires. The agencies have also

picked up two fire prevention specialists, NEPA coordinators and a Zion helicopter crew based out of Cedar City. As far as rehabilitation and restoration they have team leaders trained in rehabilitation and are familiar with practices in the land management plans. They also have a fairly aggressive program with hazardous fuel production. They are reducing fuels near Central, and working in other areas also that are listed on the handout he distributed. On Community Assistance they are applying for grant money in four areas: Brian Head; Dixie Deer (Central); Duck Creek and Elk Meadows. As part of this community assistance they are doing education on things people can do to mitigate threat.

The Accountability part of the plan establishes adequate oversight and helps them result monitoring. Next winter they will go to each county throughout the State and discuss ordinances and other ideas.

They answered various questions regarding the national fire plan, removing diseased trees, etc.

7. **The next item on the agenda was University Resources: Working with Circle Four Hog Farms.** Richard Dotson, a professor at SUU was introduced by Scott Truman. He explained that one year ago they were approached by Circle Four Hog Farms asking for assistance to try and get some grant funds to look at gas emissions from their lagoons, specifically ammonia emissions. They did receive a grant for this and he has been working with Dr. Lawy Harper, at a USGS lab in Georgia who is a expert on emissions of gases from sewage lagoons. They have been collecting data and have made a computerized model. They collect physical parameters and plug those into a computer program and it will tell the emissions on a 30-day rotation. They have data loggers in 16 different lagoons and they test the lagoons and record the temperature every 15 minutes. They take water samples which are sent to labs in Nebraska to have analyzed for ammonia content and other things. They also have meteorological stations where they collect wind data, temperature and humidity. They will take the final sample this week. They are in the process of analyzing the data. So far their preliminary data analysis shows little difference from emissions in the humid east.

The second study they are doing at the hog farms is an odor study. They are comparing three different treatments at the farms. Circle 4 has regular anarobic lagoons which is a system called biocap with floating a cap on the lagoon and as the gasses go through the membrane then they are digested and metabolized reducing odor. They are looking at some other systems. They are comparing different lagoons to determine if there is a different threshold. He also pointed out that the lagoons are maturing and the odor is going down. They are now calculating their data on the odor study. He indicated that the Circle Four Hog Farms have been very easy to work with and cooperative and are doing all they can to find affordable ways to solve these problems.

8. **Jerry Meredith gave an update on BLM posting of NEPA notices.** He said they are proud of their NEPA notification process. They are the first BLM office in Utah to post every single NEPA document on the Internet where anybody can look at them. He passed out a handout that showed what the introductory page looks like when you visit

the site on the Internet. The website address is: <http://www.ut.blm.gov/spotenb.html>

The first page on their site is the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board. The next page is where you make your choice of what you want to look at and click on it. You can search data for your county or you can put in the township, range, etc., look at a public meeting schedule, the National Environmental Policy Act or other related sites of interest. If you do a search it will sort through and give you only what you are interested in. Jerry said there are currently 1,146 environmental documents so it is important to limit the search. You can also click on "What's New" for new projects updated in the last two weeks of on specific document types which gives you specific information for that project or document including a complete history with the last entry. There are some changes being made to the system. The Arizona office of the BLM opted to participate in this program. Also. The Bureau likes this process so well they are trying to set up a turbo NEPA program that will have information for the entire nation. He gave an example for the Cedar City area. There are presently 47 documents for the Cedar City area. Anything that requires any kind of NEPA is on there and that is why it is important to sort. You can sort by subject such as "water projects in Washington County." He suggested this is probably what a person would want to do because there is so much information that you probably aren't interested in that you need to limit it some way. This information is updated daily and it is automatically updated every time an entry is put in.

Jerry also gave an update on the BLM roadless areas and the quiet title lawsuit. He said he really can't say much for two reasons and that is that he doesn't know too much and because settlement negotiations are involved. They are still moving forward and the BLM is working with the State of Utah and the Attorney General's office and the Solicitors office. There are a lot of issues involved. Each county was asked by the Attorney General's office to select 20 routes within their county that they wanted to test in the quiet title lawsuit. That has been done. Three counties were selected as test cases. Those counties are Beaver, Wayne and San Juan. He has been working with beaver county on their 20 roads. Another area they are working on is trying to decide the best way to document decisions once they are made and how they should be delivered. The State just gave the BLM a list of 27 routes across the state that have been selected to help look at these issues and to be test cases. So they are making progress but it is slow. Everybody is concerned about ramifications and legal precedents that will be set. He reminded the council that this is really not a lawsuit yet, it is a notice of intent. He answered various questions.

9. **Henry Maddux, Fish & Wildlife Service, was next on the agenda and discussed plant species listing under the Endangered Species Act.** The Secretary reached an agreement with environmental groups to reach final decisions on 14 species, propose eight other species for listing and take actions on four citizens petitions for listing. The ones that effect Utah are the Homgren Milk Yeltch and the Shivwits Milk Yeltch which are both in Southern Utah. They were proposed for listing in April of 2000. He passed out a map showing where the two species are located. There is a small amount on

private property, a lot on BLM land and some on Shivwits Indian Reservation. They are pretty small populations that grow only on certain types of soil so they are fairly isolated. They are working with the BLM to protect some of these areas. The plants are not protected on private property and the property owner can remove the plants without penalty. Henry said these two species have been around and considered for listing for a long time. There was a petition to list in 1996. They were proposed in April 2000 for listing as endangered. The final rules should come out in the Federal Register in 30 to 60 days.

Henry said on the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout the decision is purely biological. The 12 month finding will come out in the next 60 days. It will make a decision whether or not this listing is warranted. Henry said Utah is generally very aggressive in trying to keep species off the endangered list. He said that species is doing very well. Utah has put a lot of effort into that.

10. **Scott Truman asked for any other business. There was none.**
11. Scott indicated the next meeting would be held on November 6 in St. George at the Holiday Inn at noon for lunch with the meeting to begin at 1 p.m.
12. Agendas items for the next meeting:

Report on Sand Hollow Reservoir - Washington County Water Conservancy District Watershed Plan - Ron Thompson
13. Please call Scott with additional agenda items or calendaring items.
14. **Ron Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned.**

Secretary