

SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES COUNCIL (SUPAC)

Minutes of a meeting held January 6, 2004

1. The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met at the Five County Association of Governments Building in St. George, Utah, on Tuesday, January 6, 2004, 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 and conducted the meeting. He welcomed those present and called for introductions.
3. The new State Park and Recreation regional manager, Bruce Hamilton, was introduced by Gordon Topham. Gordon Topham has been promoted to Associate Director for State Parks and Recreation in Salt Lake City. Randy Trujillo, BLM, also introduced Ty Christensen as the new field manager for Cedar City BLM. After those introductions all present introduced themselves. Senator Robert Bennett was recognized as a special guest at today's meeting.
4. The minutes of the meeting of November 4, 2003, were moved for approval by Alan Gardner. Vane Campbell seconded the motion and all voted aye.
5. Scott Truman gave a brief history of SUPAC for the benefit of Senator Bennett and then turned the time to Senator Bennett for a legislative update.
6. Senator Bennett said the legislature is in recess until after the State of the Union Address on January 20. He is taking this recess time to travel around the state and meet with people. He discussed some of the issues that they have been dealing with in Washington D.C. that would affect us most directly. The Healthy Forest Initiative passed with the help of the California wildfires. Senator Bennett said he is going to try and follow through on the sustained yield designation in Utah. Senator Bennett indicated that the omnibus budget bill which was supposed to get passed the last day the senate was in session did not happen. He said he suspects it will be brought up and passed when they reconvene. Senator Bennett answered questions from council members regarding various issues including the energy bill, transportation bill, land exchange, recreation user fees, funding for replacement airport and Iraq.
7. Bevan Killpack gave the council an update on the OHV-TAG (Off Highway Vehicle Technical Advisory Group). He explained that Ron Wilson who has been giving the updates is now working for the State and so he was asked to take over. The TAG committee had a good meeting this morning. Bevan indicated they put together some information for the High Desert Trail Feasibility Study. The MOU agreement is now signed which says the parties agree to work together and do a feasibility study on the

this trail proposal. They discussed in their meeting the possibility of developing a web page for this project to save money on mailings, and to allow people to check on the progress of the project. He said the TAG committee is going to be the steering committee with the exception of the commissioners from Garfield and Kane Counties. They set a meeting for February 3 for the steering committee at the Interagency Fire Center. At that time they will develop a charter for how they are going to handle this project. Scott Truman will extend an invitation to Beaver County to have a representative on this committee.

8. The next item on the agenda was a report from UDOT on the Mile Marker 13 schedule and design. The UDOT people were not present so Kurt Gordon from State Trust Lands offered to give what information he had on this project. Kurt said that UDOT has the Washington Park interchange project out for bid now and the bids are due in next week. The project will take about a year. State Trust Lands is partnered with the City of Washington to build the road to connect the new interchange with Telegraph Road.
9. Ron Thompson gave a brief update on the progress of the Draft Watershed Plan. He said the District has been working on this for two or three years and it falls under the umbrella of the Virgin River Management Plan. He hoped to have a draft to hand out today but it is not back from the consultants yet. Ron said the new governor has made watershed one of her initiatives. The plan primarily looks at the Utah portion of this watershed realizing that it includes some part of Arizona and Nevada. The watershed is 5% Iron County, 19% Kane County, 76% in Washington County. Ron said he hopes that this watershed plan will provide a comprehensive look at the watershed and how to deal with it. Ron said he hoped those interested will give comments and input on the plan. Ron said some of those entities involved are the BLM, Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Forest Service, Washington and Kane Counties.

Ron was also asked for a brief status report on the Lake Powell pipeline project. Ron said the District just finished a study which looked more closely at some of the technical problems of the Cocks Comb and Hurricane Cliffs portion of the pipeline project. The State has set aside an allotment of water out of Flaming Gorge for this project. The District will keep this project on the radar screen and continue planning for it even though we probably won't need it for some time.

10. Kitty Roberts, Park Supervisor for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, was next on the agenda. She said she would like to talk about the economic impacts of the low levels at Lake Powell and also the planning efforts on the upper portions of Lake Powell. She said she will also give an overview of what they did in 2003 to maintain access to Lake Powell and what they intend to do in 2004. She gave a brief history of the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area telling the council that in 1972 Congress authorized the Glen Canyon National Recreation area. On their up lake planning effort they have contracted with e2M from Lakewood, Colorado. They will hold public scoping meetings and do one environmental assessment for all the upper lake areas. The public scoping will begin in February with open houses in Bullfrog, Utah and Grand Junction, Colorado. They expect

to have a draft out in June with another public comment period to follow and then the final plan out in August 2004. Some of the planning issues they will address are fluctuation in lake levels; assess needs for land-based facilities and services at each location and providing recreational opportunities for various user groups. Some of their accomplishments in 2003 were ramp extensions at Wahweap, Bullfrog, Antelope Point, and Stateline. They also had to find a place for the ferry on Lake Powell to launch in 2003 due to low water levels. Right now they are launching at a temporary location on Hobby Cat Beach at Bullfrog and the main ramp at Hall's Crossing.

She told the council the current lake level as of today is 3596. This is the lowest since 1973. They expect it to drop another 10 feet by March. They predict that average snow pack conditions this year will only result in 75% of average snowfall.

For the year 2004, the plan includes \$2.75 million of improvements lake-wide such as ramp extensions, up lake planning efforts, extending utilities and walkways and visitor parking.

She also answered various questions from council members including that they had around two million visitors in 2003.

11. NRCS gave a presentation next. Vane Campbell explained that NRCS came into existence in the 1930's to support soil conservation efforts that grew out of the dustbowl. Soil conservation districts were established in 1937 with over 3,000 districts today throughout the nation. One of their charges is to provide a soil map of the nation. This is in different degrees of completeness throughout the nation. There are two soil scientists with him today from NRCS who have been working on this. He introduced Kent Sutcliffe and Cory Meyers of the Soil Survey Program. Kent Sutcliffe is the project leader in Cedar City and he did a PowerPoint presentation regarding NRCS and their soils data and showed the resources that they have that are available to use in planning processes.

His presentation explained that NRCS administers many programs such as the Snow Survey which monitors precipitation and temperature and gives runoff predictions); Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which is financial and technical support for producers to implement conservation practices; Emergency Watershed Protection to relieve imminent hazards to life and property; Conservation Reserve which encourages people to convert high erodible land to vegetative cover, such as native grasses, trees or riparian buffers; Soil & Conservation Assistance with payments to producers for adopting better management practices; Grassland Reserve which is their newest program and helps restore, protect and enhance grassland, pasture land, rangeland and shrub land; and the Soil Survey which is an inventory of physical and chemical soil properties. They also help with rangeland improvement, assisting farmers and ranchers with salt management, water conservation, reducing ag sources of water pollution, and wildlife habitat improvement on private land. Their name was changed in 1994 from SCS to NRCS to better reflect these added responsibilities.

Kent discussed the soil survey next. He said NRCS is mandated to map soil on all private lands across the country. The soil surveys are the basis for predicting how soils behave under alternative uses, potential erosion hazards, groundwater contamination issues and suitability for crops, trees, grasses and identifying sources of soil. These applications are used for fire rehabilitation, urban planning, hydrologic modeling, erosion control and management, recreation management, range management, weed invasion, range health assessment, management of threatened & endangered species and wildlife habitat improvement. The soil survey is a map of delineated soil types with accompanying data for each soil unit. All soil units are delineated based on soil type, vegetation cover, climate, parent material and topography. Currently all published surveys are available for use in GIS. They are also developing software to display and use soil data by the casual GIS user. All NRCS soil and geographic data will soon be on a central server. Utah has some areas without a published survey. More partnerships with other federal agencies will be required to complete the mapping of the State. Their website is <http://www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov>

12. Scott Truman called for other business and reports from the various agencies.
13. Bob Morgan, Dept. of Natural Resources, gave a legislative update as it pertains to natural resources. The state legislature starts in two weeks. There are at least five different bills relating to water and one of those deals with water reuse. They will be following these bills closely.
14. Mike Empey from Congressman Matheson's office said the Congressman would be in Southern Utah tomorrow to speak at St. George Chamber of Commerce. He said Congressman Matheson has been in Southwest Utah at least once a month.
15. DeeDee Rose from Congressman Cannon's office said one of his legislative priority issues is Minersville Reservoir. Congressman Cannon went to Milan, Italy before Christmas with other senators and congressmen to discuss global warming in regard to economic development and sound science.
16. Scott Truman said the 2004 MOU for SUPAC agencies to sign will be mailed out soon and will include a billing for 2004 dues.
17. The next SUPAC meeting was set for March 9 at noon for lunch, 1:00 p.m. for the meeting to start and an OHV TAG meeting at 10 a.m.
18. Henry Maddux, USFWS reported on two recent news releases – one from American Lands Alliance News Release on December 22, 2003 announcing that conservation organization petition to list greater sage grouse under ESA. The other by Fish and Wildlife Service on January 5, 2004 announcing they determined that petition as not-warranted and determining the sage grouse not eligible for listing under the ESA.

19. The following agenda items for the March SUPAC meeting were suggested:

Update from OHV tag
Utah Legislative Update
Ground water study - Cedar Mountain
Budget 2004 for BLM
Water situation
Snow pack report - NRCS

20. There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary

APPENDIX "A"
Attendants SUPAC January 6, 2004

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