

SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES COUNCIL (SUPAC)

Minutes of a meeting held March 9, 2004

1. The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met at the Five County Association of Governments Building in St. George, Utah on Tuesday, March 9, 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 at 1:00 p.m.
3. Motion was made to change the order of the agenda due to the Water Conservancy Conference. Alan Gardner moved to allow Bob Morgan's Legislative Report and Randy Julander, Snow Pack/Water Situation present first. The motion was seconded by John Williams and passed unanimously.
4. Motion made by Alan Gardner to approve January 6, 2004 minutes, seconded by John Williams with an amendment that Bob Morgan be added as an attendant in Appendix A. Minutes approved unanimously.
5. SUPAC Annual financial report: John Williams reported that as of 12/31/02 we had a balance of \$1,356.41. We collected revenues of \$901.83 (including a \$1.83 in interest; \$900 in dues); and total funds available during 2003 - \$2,258.24. Our expenses were \$1,568.81. Our fund balance as of 12/31/03 is \$689.41. We had a number of partners who did not pay dues last year. John presented everyone who paid for 2003. Those that did not will be reminded by Kathleen at the URDC. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cannot pay by check. Kathleen will re-bill for dues and have them charge to a credit card. The URDC will then transfer funds to the AOG. Motion was made by Alan Gardner and seconded by Dennis Stowell to accept the Financial Report. The motion passed unanimously to approve the report as written.
6. Scott Truman shared that we have been able to keep the costs down by having in-house support provided by the various members of SUPAC. He said that Canyon Country Partnership charges \$1,200 in dues per year. They have costs that we do not. John Williams picks up accounting costs and other related expenses; Ron Thompson, Water Conservancy District picks up the secretarial support; and through the URDC mailings and secretarial support, SUPAC has a built-in staff. Scott said that we need to get dues paid to cover the costs for the meals. John Williams said that he is sure it's just an oversight on the part of the members who haven't paid. Kevin Carter suggested that we might look at increasing dues. John said that if everyone pays we wouldn't see this decline in funding.

7. Bob Morgan, NRCS, gave a legislative update. Natural Resources had approximately 30 bills that he watched rather closely. Compensation packages for State employees will be a 1% COLA increase first of the year and there will be a bonus 4-5% divided among the number of public employees. (It may equate to a \$200-300 amount.) The State employees will have an increase in co pays for health insurance. We didn't get any cuts. There were restored general fund monies for water rights. As far as legislation highlights there were 5 water bills (water reuse) which will go to an interim 2 year time study by a committee of the legislature. House Bill 146 was the County Cooperative Agreement in the State on Fire Protection (introduced by Chris Buttars) and it passed the House and Senate. It has requirements within the cooperative agreement that are standard but it is a no funding package. House Bill 88 (introduced by Rep. Johnson) was state land use management plan and many of the counties had looked at it. We wanted it as a state statute a multiple use type to fit in with all our uniform planning efforts throughout the state. The best thing that has happened is that the State is requiring that on the Resource Management Plans to get our comments, for counties in the cooperative agreement status, 20 days to comments on RMPs. There was a bill passed about Trespassing on state park lands. It's not cattle, but people who come knowingly onto State property for grazing for long periods of time. The statute is different for sovereign lands and trust lands. It is still a misdemeanor charge, but the fine has been increased. Bud Bowman's HB 211 (Off road vehicles): For those states that we don't have reciprocity with recognizing registration of the ATVs they will be required to register those vehicles in Utah. We have reciprocity with Colorado, Arizona, and Idaho. We don't have agreements with Wyoming, New Mexico or Nevada.

Also passed was HB211: Purchase of a fishing license will be effective 1/1/2005. When you purchase a fishing license (no matter what month) it will expire that same month the following year. There was another amendment for fishing and hunting: If you turn 12 years old within the calendar year of hunting season you may apply for a permit for small game effective 60 days from signing of the bill. Well-drillers have never been able to install a pump for the well. A master study will take place to determine if they can in the future. Alan Gardner asked if there was money for Sandhollow Park. There was none awarded specifically to Sandhollow. Mary Tullius, Director of Parks, reported that the State has put in \$2.3 million and said they're trying to get the Bureau of Land Management to put in \$2 million.

Kevin Carter reported that there was one other bill that affected State Parks, which allowed for the Park Board to increase the registration fee for in-State agencies. That money is used for maintenance of trails and park improvements. He also reported that if you are a private landowner and you want to fence your property, sharing a boundary line, the adjoining landowner is liable for ½ the cost of the fencing.

Wayne Thomas, DEQ said that all was quiet. He will have Bill Sinclair come to the next meeting with an update.

Scott Truman asked Bob Morgan about the water grab that is occurring in Nevada for Las Vegas will that impact us for the Virgin River, or the Santa Clara River? Bob said that it

won't affect us so much on the Virgin River, or the Santa Clara, but the area that it could affect is Snake Valley (Garrison Baker area). There is groundwater that comes out of eastern Nevada that moves back in to the Snake Valley and eventually goes to the Great Salt Lake area. More particularly, if it gets down into the carbonate aquifers it could affect some of the springs and wells. There is a lot of natural occurring groundwater up through there. So, the NRCS is keeping a close eye on them. Their Natural Resources Director, used to work for the Division of Water Rights in the NCRS Logan Office, so Bob knows him really well. He doesn't have jurisdiction over Southern Nevada Water Authority, but they do have to abide by the decisions of the State Engineer when they get out of that range area. We are watching closely anything that would be the taking of groundwater. The Santa Clara and the Virgin River are not ones to worry about. There is no concern for the Colorado River Pact either. Everything is still intact.

8. Randy Julander, NRCS gave a PowerPoint presentation on the snow pack report and the water situation. Randy takes snow surveys (measuring snow pack and converting that to water availability providing a projection for the summer months.) Southern Utah is at average or above in snow pack (historical average taken over a 30 year period). We made significant improvement from last year. In February 2004 (the last week) we were hammered with a phenomenal storm and basically we could consider it a million dollar storm. The nice thing about the lower elevation snow pack is well above normal in the south. We show 200% on the low elevation snow pack. Stream flows are what we need to watch. We will have low elevation snow pack stream flow. We're hoping that we'll get a kick early on and we'll see a rise in stream flows. We could expect 60 – 90% of average stream flows. There was a 4% average last year for the Virgin River. The Sevier River Basin is already above average and it will only take one storm to take it above a normal April 1 value. The Escalante is slightly above average and one good storm will take them above average. Southeast Utah is already at the average for April 1. Anything that happens from now is gravy for them. We are all looking at an average or better than average accumulation for an April 1. Taking all into account we are also looking at normal or below normal conditions. Indices are indicating that we are in extreme drought. Reservoir storage is where we are hurting. Southeast is at 35%, the Sevier is 25%, and Southern Utah is 45% of capacity, and there is actually stream flow making it to the Upper Enterprise Reservoir. Lower Enterprise Reservoir is at 20% capacity; Gunlock is 45%; Quail Creek is a 60% capacity; and Minersville is sitting just below 30%. The SWSI (surface water supply index) takes the reservoir storage over the years and measures stream flow with capacities in the reservoirs. Randy said it shows that in the tight years, communities are managing the water deficits well. We are showing a rebound in the reservoir storage. Northern Utah is still down 30% less on reservoir storage. Compiling all the indicators, Southern Utah has moved up to severe drought, instead of extreme drought. There is a seasonal outlook of dry and hot during the three months of summer. Southern Utah is in much better shape this year than last year.
9. Paul Roelandt, Superintendent of Cedar Breaks National Monument gave a report on conditions for the scenic drive rehab project. Cedar Breaks gets 700,000 summer visitors between May (Memorial Day) and the end of October. Cedar Breaks also has a winter season where they do snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling which starts

mid-November through mid-April. They work closely with the State Parks to keep visitors on the trails, protecting the trails and providing more enjoyment for the visitors. There was approximately 5.5 miles of road project including excavation and rebuilding of damaged portions of the road base and shoulders. They repaired and replaced a lot of the drainage structures which included cattle guards and guardrails; the new asphalt overlay; striping and curbing; and parking areas and scenic overlooks. The total cost of the project was \$1.8 million. They are at 95% completion and the contractor has some things to finish but essentially the project is finished. The work focused on sections of the road where the road base had failed and the federal highway engineers determined that the failure of the road was due to thaw weakening in the springtime. Paul showed pictures of the road and what spring thaw does to the road. The most significant cause of the damage to the road is when the moisture gets trapped in between the asphalt and frozen layer. Rather than percolating below in the ground, it saturates the asphalt. Two or three heavily loaded trucks on one spring day can cause the equivalent road damage during the spring thaw, as it does for an entire year of heavy traffic on a roadway. After damage in these saturated conditions, they have to excavate the base, lay a new base, and then put a new overlay on top. To protect the \$1.8 million project, they are recommending that there be a restriction on heavy loads during the spring thaw so they can avoid the damage. They believe this is a prudent thing to do. Mid-May begins the spring thaw. They have solicited input from everyone to find out if there is a good reason not to restrict the heavy load trucking (cement trucks, construction traffic, semi-trailers, loaded trucks, etc.). It takes about one week to plow the road of snow. Since 1987 the earliest the road has been plowed open is April 30th. The second earliest was May 2nd and on the latest side it was plowed June 15th and then June 6th. We are estimating that it will take four to six weeks for the road base to thaw and dry out. Based upon an average opening date of May 20th this would allow us to lift weight restrictions as early as mid-June. If we have a better than normal snow pack, it could lift mid-July. They buried sensors under key places in the road to determine the drying of spring thaw. This will allow them to know when they can lift restrictions. Paul said that they will be meeting informally with individuals. They are making presentations to UDOT about the restrictions to try and get input. They are doing a press release to talk about the issue. There will be an Open House at the Administrative office in Cedar City on Wednesday April 7th, both from 11 – 2 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. – 8 pm for better attendance. Newsletters will be going out to stakeholders to explain the issue. They have also been taking names off of trucks to mail information about weight restrictions and having a mail-back form to give comments.

UDOT is being supportive for the weight restrictions. The two signs by the junctions will show weight limitations. The first year of imposed weight restrictions, the forest rangers will be used to educate the people and not ticket them. If someone abuses it, they will be sent a letter.

10. Bevan Killpack introduced Gretchen Merrill, Forest Service, Public Service Staff Officer for the Dixie. Bevan reported on the OHV-TAG committee. Bevan produced an HDTA proposed map. The BLM had the miles placed on the map and where the HDTA is going. The OHV-TAG developed a steering committee and study team to look at the HDTA proposal. The steering committee became the OHV-TAG and they met in Cedar

City on 2/3/04. They developed a time line for the study team and asked that the study team provide a feasibility study of the resources from representatives of the three counties (Beaver, Iron, and Washington counties). Bevan said that another meeting is scheduled for 4/27/04 to discuss the scope and responsibilities the steering committee will have. Each steering committee member will have assigned tasks and will communicate with the BLM and FS with individuals having the same background resource. The meeting for 4/27/04 will be held at the Interagency Fire Center on Kittyhawk Drive, Cedar City, at 9:00 a.m.

Scott said that Randy Trujillo asked why Beaver County isn't involved with SUPAC. The origin of SUPAC just took in the Virgin River drainage and the counties and entities involved in that particular circle. Scott said that now with the OHV and the High Desert Trail Agreement, shouldn't Beaver be involved as they are a member of the Five County Association of Governments. A motion was made by Alan Gardner to invite Beaver County to be a member of SUPAC and seconded by Dennis Stowell. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Randy Trujillo, BLM, reported that this year the main operating budget for the BLM is \$904.84 million (compared to \$882.8 million last year); Wild land fire management account (preparedness, facilities, fuels programs) is \$244.3 million decrease of 15 %. Randy reported that one of things that have happened with the BLM is the cost of doing business for the BLM has increased \$25.3 million. Congress provided \$13.8 million to cover those increased costs but the BLM has spent baseline \$10.5 million for the increased costs of doing business. Utah BLM money has \$54.2 million compared to \$54.9 million last year (decrease of 1.3%). The Wild lands fire management account this year is \$17.3 million compared to \$27.3 million last year (decrease of 36.6%). All in the entire budget for BLM Utah is \$80.9 million and last year was \$91 million (decrease of 11%). Alan Gardner asked what percentage goes to litigation? The BLM is starting to track that and there are no figures right now.
12. Jeannine Holt, Senator Orrin Hatch's office said that due to the Ricin scare, that Senator Hatch was temporarily moved to the basement of the Dirksen Building. The mail is very slow and the FAX is the best way to communicate.

Craig Eustice, Senator Bennett's office, was substituting for Quinn Warnick and reported that if you have any line item appropriation requests for 2005 give them to Quinn Warnick. The 3rd Annual Rural Business Conference will be held on May 25, 2004 in Richfield.

Mike Empey, Congressman Matheson's office reported that he will be at couple of meetings on Saturday, March 13, 2004 in St. George. He will be at the Washington County school district office at 10:00 a.m. discussing scholarships, so if anyone knows of any high school seniors who need financing. At 2:30 p.m. at Dixie Center he is doing a town meeting on nuclear waste and the possibility of continued testing. Congressman Matheson is also concerned and is working on Utah's no child left behind.

Russ Hillman, represented Congressman Cannon's office, and reported that DeeDee Rose was here last month on the Minersville reservoir bill was "dropped" and Russ explained that the bill has been introduced. They are trying to get a committee assignment on the bill and they are working toward getting that bill passed before the end of the year so that the land will be transferred to the county.

13. Other Business:

Bevan Killpack reported that they issued the contract and started a shaded fuel break around the town of Central; which is listed in the high risk burn area for fires. It will be completed next month. Pine Valley will also have one and it will be completed in August because of the migratory birds they had to start later.

March 31st – April 2nd - Secretary of Interior, Department of Interior, a Tamarisk Removal Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico 3/31 – April 2.

A Department of Natural Resources representative will speak at the next SUPAC meeting following the symposium.

The members welcomed Ken Sizemore home from the war in Iraq. Ken reported that he was so happy to be home after 14 months. The SUPAC members thanked Ken for his service in our behalf in Iraq.

14. The next SUPAC meeting will be held Tuesday, May 4, 2004 at Five County AOG offices in St. George.

The agenda will include DNR follow-up on Tamarisk Removal; DEQ legislative issues; Ground water issue; Dennis Stowell tentatively Cedar Mountain and Cedar Valley; and Bevan will put together fuel break pictures for Central, Pine Valley, and New Harmony.

Please e-mail additional agenda items to Kathleen (mcdowell@suu.edu.)

Alan Gardner moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Dennis Stowell and unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kathleen McDowell

APPENDIX "A"
LIST OF ATTENDANTS
SUPAC 3-9-04

John S. Williams, Five County AOG
Kevin Carter, SITLA
Dan McGuire, Washington County Mayor's Association
Vane Campbell, NRCS
Bob Morgan, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Cordell Roy, National Park Service
Paul Roelandt, National Park Service
Kenneth Sizemore, Five County AOG
Brad Steggell, Utah Div. of Parks & Recreation
Gretchen Merrill, USDA Dixie National Forest
Rob Quist, State Parks & Recreation
Craig Eustice, Senator Bennett's Office
Douglas Messerly, Utah Division of Wildlife
Mary Tullius, Utah State Parks
Bruce Hamilton, Utah State Parks
Ron Wilson, Utah Division of Fire, Forestry & State Lands
Mike Empey, Congressman Jim Matheson
Russell Hillman, Congressman Cannon's Office
Dennis Stowell, Iron County Commission
Alan Gardner, Washington County Commission
Wayne Thomas, DEQ
Bevan Killpack, Dixie National Forest
Jeannine Holt, Senator Orrin Hatch's Office
Randy Trujillo, Bureau of Land Management
Henry Maddux, Fish and Wildlife Service