

**SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES
COUNCIL (SUPAC)
Minutes of a meeting held May 4, 2004**

1. The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) met at the Five County Association of Governments Building in St. George, Utah, on Tuesday, May 4, 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 minutes of the meeting of March 9, 2004, were moved for approval by Kevin Carter. Jeannine Holt seconded the motion and all voted aye.
4. Scott Truman recognized Jeannine Holt and her many years of service to Orrin Hatch's office and also on the SUPAC council. A special plaque in appreciation of her service was presented to her.
5. Ron Wilson discussed the issue of Tamarisk removal. He recently attended a big conference regarding this in New Mexico. There were 19 states and 16 organizations represented at the conference. Tamarisk is a big problem in the western United States. There is 1.6 million acres of infested acres of tamarisk. Tamarisk first came into this country from Asia in the 1820's as an ornamental plant on the east coast. However, since that time it has taken over and has become a real problem. The Virgin River and Colorado River systems are full of it. It is very flammable and burns very easy. It also takes out some wildlife habitat. The tamarisk has also widened the floodplain by clogging up streams. Salt leaches from the tamarisk which hurts the other plants. The worst part of the tamarisk is that it is a terrible water thief. It is robbing the west of millions of acre feet of water per year. Studies have shown that the tamarisk uses 1 ½ a.f. for every acre of tamarisk. Some studies even show it as high as four acre feet for every acre of tamarisk. A video was shown from New Mexico that discussed in more detail some of the problems caused by tamarisk and also some of the ways to eliminate or extract it. Some of those methods are extraction which is used in areas where there are other desirable plants so they don't want to clean out the whole area. They chop it down, put the trunks through a chipper and then put the chips back down. There is also a stump cutting method where it is cut down to the stumps and then the stumps are treated with an herbicide so it won't grow back. The rest of the trunk can be cut into firewood. They have also found that goats will eat the tamarisk if put in an area where there is tamarisk. There is also a method of biological control which is a beetle from China. This beetle has been tried in 10 spots throughout west one of which was in Delta, Utah. They have had very good success with this.

Ron emphasized that this is a problem that we've got to work on. It is obviously going to take some time to get rid of this invasive species. The area we are most interested in is the Virgin River Drainage for all of the above reasons plus it presents a threat of wildfire to cities and town. Ron said they are going to put a plan together to begin work on this problem. They want to actually get going and get something done on the ground. They will need partners for this. Please let him know if your agency is interested in participating in this.

Henry Maddux indicated that the Virgin River Program is interested in this and has set aside some money to work on this issue. US Fish and Wildlife is also supportive of this effort. Ron Wilson said this hasn't been declared a noxious weed on a state level yet but they would like to see that determination made.

6. Bill Sinclair from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) gave a PowerPoint presentation in which he reviewed the 2004 legislative session. He said there was no legislation proposed by DEQ during the 2004 session. Some legislation (HB 13 and HB 145) was proposed as a result of a task force study.

Solid Waste Bills (passed)

SCR 1 - Green River - Solitude landfill (commercial municipal waste)

SCR 2 - Saratoga Springs - Peck landfill (commercial construction and demolition)

Hazardous waste/radioactive waste bills (passed)

HB 13 - HW and NSHW Fee/Tax Amendments

HB 145 - Approval for Radioactive waste disposal

HB 123 passed - Drug Lab Cleanup and Disclosure (passed)

This has to do with meth labs and clean up and reporting.

Water bills (passed)

HB71 - Water conservation plans

HB 232 - Water Well Amendments

HB 247 - Task force studying water issues

He indicated there were lots of water bills that failed or were referred to study.

Radiation bills (passed)

HJR20 - resolution regarding Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

7. Wayne Thomas also gave a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed Cedar Mountain Groundwater & Soil Suitability Study which was a joint effort of Southwest Utah Public Health Dept. & DEQ. The purpose of the study was to determine the vulnerability of groundwater to contamination from onsite waste water systems. Wayne reviewed and gave the following information on development on Cedar Mountain: Duck Creek Village 1615 lots; Strawberry drainage 1675 lots; Swain Creek drainage 890 lots; Mammoth

Creek 190 lots and Panguitch Lake area 870 lots. He showed pictures of the development throughout the Cedar Mountain area. They also learned from the study that most of the water was found to be one year old which means the water is moving fast and is vulnerable. The samples were taken from wells and springs in the Duck Creek area, Strawberry, Swains Creek and Mammoth Creek areas. Some of the recommendations from the study are:

- use innovative and alternative systems
- additional surveys by the UGS and NRCS
- counties require the evaluation of centralized system
- centralized system to serve the Duck Creek Village Area
- notify soil testers of added oversight
- additional inspections of onsite systems
- the state evaluates new innovative systems and look at reuse alternatives

8. Commissioner Dennis Stowell gave an update on Cedar Mountain/Valley. The forest is dead on Cedar Mountain and a fire would be terrible. There is still a lot of logging going on. There has been a lot of cooperation but there is still a lot of dead wood they are concerned about.

He also reported that Iron County has an active trail committee now. They are having a meeting a week from Thursday. They would like to get some trails so there is a place for OHV people to use. They would eventually like to tie into the Paiute trail.

9. Fuel Break Pictures and Community Fire Plan Update was the next item on the agenda. Bevan Killpack introduced Cindy who is a fuel specialist for the Pine Valley District for the Forest Service. She explained the Wildland Urban Interface Fuels Project. They do fuel projects for ecosystem restoration and also because a lot of homes are being built in wildland areas. They have done work in the Central and New Harmony areas. She showed pictures of the Mesa Verde fire and the Sequoia Fire of 2002 and the consequences of fuel work done before those fires. The Color Country Interagency Fuels Committee covers 14 million acres and is an interagency committee which consists of USFS, BLM, NPS, BIA and Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands. They are presently working on 129 acres in Pine Valley, 90 acres in Central, and 134 acres in New Harmony. The cost is approximately \$800 to \$900 an acre on these projects. She showed before & after pictures in some of these fuel project areas. Cindy said that some projects that will be coming up are in the following areas: Pinto Junction, Old Iron Town, and Pine Valley Recreation Area.
10. Bevan Killpack gave an OHV TAG report. The group met this morning. He reported on the High Desert Trail feasibility work. They had a meeting in Cedar City on April 27 with a study team they identified from various agencies. Jim Crisp has suggested hiring a Southwest Utah OHV coordinator and using that person to be a liaison between all the agencies, counties, etc. to work through various issues. The NRCC held a meeting in Richfield called an OHV summit.

Noelle Meier was introduced. She is the team leader for the Forest Service on Motorized Travel Planning. Their goal is in keeping with national direction, to designate a system of motorized routes and areas, eliminating cross-country travel on the Dixie National Forest.

Their approach is to use comprehensive planning to best meet public and administrative needs. Their methods include: collaboration with public to develop a proposed action; starting with a complete inventory and moving to designated routes and areas and utilizing phases for different levels of analysis. They are planning to send out a proposal plan in late November. This does not include snowmobiles and over-the-snow vehicles.

11. Scott Truman asked Commissioner Gardner to report to the committee on his involvement with the Governor on the Washington County wilderness proposal. Commissioner Gardner reported that it is more a land use bill but wilderness will be an important part of it. It will be patterned after what Clark County did using land exchanges, power corridors, water corridors, any land use issues that they can get wrapped into this bill. They are shooting to have their first meeting the first week of June and they are optimistic that they can come up with something that will be useful. This will become a prototype for other counties to follow. The Lt. Governor will be at the initial meeting and Randy Johnson from the Governor's office will be working with the County.
12. Congressional reports were next on the agenda. Jeannine Holt from Senator Hatch's office said that Senator Hatch introduced the Minersville Reservoir Conveyance Bill. There will be a hearing tomorrow in Washington D.C. Commissioner Mark Whitney will testify on behalf of Beaver County. Senator Hatch will also testify. She also said that Senator Hatch is the Western State Coalition Co-Chair with Senator Baccus requesting full funding for PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes).

Mike Empey representing Congressman Jim Matheson gave a status report on the transportation bill. It has passed the house now. They hope Utah projects will stay intact as it works its way through the system. Congressman Matheson will be in Iron County on May 28 and 29.

Peggy from Congressman Cannon's office said that Congressman Cannon is also involved in the PILT funding bill. She also distributed an updated (April 27, 2004) Federal Land and Buildings Ownership handout to the committee. This shows the total amount of land owned by the federal government nationwide and also the states with the largest percentage of federal land ownership. For Utah it shows 66.5% federal land ownership. She also said the Western State Caucus has met with stakeholders to discuss ways to conserve the species and keep it from being listed.

13. Scott Truman said Randy Trujillo, BLM, asked him to announce a planning concepts meeting that is going to be held at the Hunter Conference Center tomorrow, from 8 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call Randy at (435)590-5709.
 14. The next meeting for SUPAC was scheduled for July 13 (instead of July 6) because of 4th of July holiday. The time and place of the meeting was discussed. It was suggested that it be held on Cedar Mountain. The Cedar Mountain Fire Center was suggested as a possibility. It was decided to hold it on Cedar Mountain at the Fire Center on Tuesday, **July 13** at noon for lunch with the regular meeting to start at 1:00 p.m. There will also be an OHV TAG meeting at 10:00 a.m. that day. Meetings for the remainder of the year were discussed for calendaring purposes. **September 14** will be the next meeting after the July meeting and that will be at the Five County AOG Building. The November meeting will be on **November 2** even though that is Election. Those traveling to the meeting can always vote absentee if necessary.
 15. Agenda items for the July meeting were discussed. Some items proposed for the agenda were:
 - Forest Service presentation on forest plan revisions.
 - Report on OHV use
 - Field trip on Cedar Mtn.
 - Report on Condor situation & 10 J ruling
 - Wilderness report from Commissioner Gardner
 - Conservation Easements
 16. Hugh Thompson told the council that the Governor has asked their office to be the natural resource policy center. Give Bob Morgan or Hugh a call if you have opinions of where the state should be on any particular natural resource policies or issues.
 17. There was no further business to come before the council and so the meeting was adjourned.
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