

**SOUTHWESTERN UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES COUNCIL
(SUPAC)
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
MARCH 6, 2007 AT 1:00 PM IN
THE FIVE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
CONFERENCE ROOM
ST. GEORGE, UTAH**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Scott Truman, Vice-Chair, convened the meeting at 1:00 pm. He welcomed those attending and asked each to introduce themselves to the group. Scott also thanked Ken Sizemore for arranging the lunch. He also noted that Roberta from the Washington County Water Conservancy District had asked to be excused. Ken Sizemore took notes of the meeting.

Scott distributed copies of the newest MOU for signature of each official member attending. He will compile a master copy of the MOU with the original signatures. He also distributed dues invoices for those who had not yet paid. The annual dues of \$60 cover the lunch costs.

2. Approval of the minutes of the November 7, 2006 meeting

Copies of the minutes from the November 7, 2006 meeting were sent to all members by email, and copies were also made available at the meeting. Scott noted that the January 2, 2007 meeting did not occur because of the national day of mourning for former President Gerald Ford that took place that day.

KEVIN CARTER MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2006 MEETING BE APPROVED AS WRITTEN. CLARE RAMSAY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Zion National Park Issues

Jock Whitworth, Superintendent of Zion National Park, presented information regarding a number of issues. He began by noting that visitation at Zion National Park has remained steady. It is the 7th most visited national park unit in the nation. Zion is one-fourth the size of Yellowstone, but experiences a similar visitation load.

The shuttle system at Zion has been very successful. Visitors enjoy the ability to visit the interior canyon stops such as the Temple of Siniwava without fighting for parking spaces. The bulk of visitation remains on the front country stops. Back country uses are limited by group size restrictions. Zion is the first park service unit to implement an on-line permits system. The FY 08 budget looks good in terms of financial support for urgent needs at Zion.

As is the case with many national park units, an emerging concern is the development on private lands adjacent to the national park. Zion is experiencing a surge in peripheral development on

many fronts, much in a volatile wild land fire interface that threatens both the private lands and park system lands. The recent Kolob fire is an excellent example of the threat. One major post-fire effects is the spread of cheat grass into burned areas. Superintendent Whitworth presented a PowerPoint show regarding the Kolob fire rehabilitation efforts. The fire was human-caused and burned more than 10,500 acres in the park. Much of the pinyon-juniper vegetation base was destroyed, and is susceptible to invasive exotic plants such as cheat grass. The application of joint fire science efforts resulted in the evaluation of nine types of treatment. On-the-ground testing of the treatments resulted in a focus towards the application of herbicide in the fall, followed by seeding. The entire presentation is attached.

4. Lands Bills status reports

Brad Shaver of Senator Bennett's office reported that the Senator is waiting for new committee assignments and issues to be cleared out before reintroducing the legislation. The Vision Dixie process is also well underway, and federal, state and local leaders want to see the outcomes before pressing ahead with legislation. Mike Empey of Congressman Matheson's office concurred. He noted that the congressman still supports a comprehensive approach in cooperation with the entire delegation.

Reed Erickson noted that Iron County officials will be convening a meeting of that county's working group in April to determine how to proceed. Commissioner Dalton stated that the Beaver County effort has been put on hold, awaiting the results of the Washington County efforts.

5. BLM Reports

Jim Crisp reminded the group that Kathleen Clarke has left her post, resulting in the typical reorganization shuffles. The recent efforts to reorganize BLM administrative structure to a "two tier" system are being re-addressed. The agency will likely return to a "three tier" system. The biggest unknown in Utah is how Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument will fit into the structure.

The Dixie Field Office motorized planning efforts postponed in the past is slated to be combined with the FY 2009 Cedar Resource Management Plan process. Many local municipalities are taking advantage of the Recreation and Public Purposes provisions to locate eligible uses on BLM lands that can eventually be patented to the community. Examples include a ware yard in Washington City and a golf course near Sand Hollow.

Todd Christensen reported that the new focus on BLM lands in the region is "energy...energy...energy". The windmill complex in Beaver and Millard counties is proceeding. There is extensive interest in oil and gas leases across Iron County in what is considered low potential geology. The high potential geology underlies the Dixie National Forest. It is a matter of time before the interest spreads to the forest lands. The high geothermal potential in the region is also generating renewed interest. Kanarrville has also obtained a R&PP lease.

6. Governor's Office Report

Lieutenant Governor Gary Herbert arrived from a speaking engagement at the Utah Water User's conference, and was warmly welcomed and invited to give a report to the group. He noted that the December 2006 state unemployment rate was 2.3 percent, an unprecedented figure in recent history. The state's economic engine is generating new job creation and prosperity at never before seen levels. He reminded the group that this trend cannot last indefinitely. Our challenge as leaders in the state is to keep this record-setting prosperity from declining into the proverbial "bust". The state is poised to build on a solid base that will allow steady, sustained prosperity over the long term.

Legislation from the recent session was highlighted, including the rural fast track allocation of industrial assistance funds, rural broadband access, use of mineral lease funds, state trust lands mineral lease funds to counties, and the injection of significant funds for treatments on agricultural lands. The Governor's Rural Partnership Board will now receive per diem compensation for their travel costs. The Lieutenant Governor encouraged the group to participate in the deliberations of the Rural Partnership Board.

7. High Desert Trail TAG Report

Ken Sizemore reported that the Topical Advisory Group met on March 1, 2007. He was assigned to report to SUPAC today. He provided a brief overview of the High Desert Trail proposal, noting that citizen groups have asked that an Off Highway Vehicle route similar to the Paiute Trail in central Utah be designated. The trail traverses the western portions of Beaver, Iron and Washington counties. Much of the system is located on existing roads and trails, and is already in use. Official designation will allow for improvements such as staging areas and interpretive sites, as well as consistent signing.

The Forest Service and BLM do not have the staff or budget to undertake the necessary evaluation, resulting in a cooperative effort to establish a feasible route and undertake the necessary environmental analysis.

The High Desert Trail Study Team has completed its objectives. A core route and associated loop system have been identified and evaluated by the same consultant that has evaluated routes on the Dixie National Forest and Arizona Strip. The State of Utah Division of Parks and Recreation funded the evaluation process. Four alternatives were displayed to the group. Ken expressed his appreciation for the involvement of the BLM GIS staff, who have facilitated the mapping and graphic presentations. He also noted that the Forest Service has allowed its staff to lend invaluable technical support. Over the past two plus years, the team has completed a rigorous process of evaluating each segment of all routes. The maps show each route segment that was evaluated, even those that were not included in the final alignment. Ken then asked for formal acceptance of the alternatives. CLARE RAMSAY MOVED THAT THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES AS DISPLAYED BE ACCEPTED. JOHN WILLIE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Ticaboo Power Report

Scott Truman noted that uranium demand is increasing across the globe. The interest includes the uranium mine and mill at Ticaboo in eastern Garfield County. The growth in visitation at Bullfrog marina and development on private lands is generating renewed demands for a reliable commercial electricity source in the area. Fuel costs to generate electricity on-site are also creating a demand for commercial power. A group of business and government officials met in November 2006 to initiate the process to bring commercial power to the Ticaboo area.

The group determined that a feasibility analysis must be prepared that will lead to a request for service from all potential electricity providers. The Permanent Community Impact Board has approved funds for a feasibility analysis. State Trust Lands and the Park Service have pledged matching funds.

Scott Truman and Ken Sizemore have made some preliminary contact with individuals who have expertise in power line projects, in order to determine the most effective way to proceed with the analysis. Their intent is to avoid unnecessary feasibility analysis, and to focus on what power providers need to provide solid estimates for delivering power.

A preliminary scope of work is being prepared, and should be available before the end of March 2007.

9. Congressional Updates

Mike Empey reported that Congressman Matheson is pleased with the cancellation of the Divine Strake test. The congressman's new committee assignments were reviewed.

Bryan Thiriot noted that the 6th annual Rural Business Conference will take place on May 30-31, 2007 in Logan. Friday, March 9 is the deadline for appropriation requests.

Marreen Casper also stated that appropriation requests are due on March 9, 2007. Senator Hatch's Seniors Conference will occur on April 2, 2007.

10. Other Business

State Senator Dennis Stowell was present, and provided a short report on activities and legislation that impact the group. He emphasized allocations for conservation efforts on both private and public lands and noted that the Public Lands Policy Coordinating office is receiving funds that will allow state involvement in grazing issues.

Todd Christensen stated that the recent legislative session was one of the best in recent memory. The southern Utah delegation did an excellent job for their constituents and the state. HE MOVED THAT A LETTER COMMENDING EACH MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION FOR THEIR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF RURAL UTAH BE PREPARED AND DELIVERED.

COMMISSIONER BILLIE DALTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 1, 2007 at 1:00 pm at the Five County Association of Governments in St. George. Lunch will be served at Noon.

APPENDIX "A"
SUPAC ATTENDANCE LIST
MARCH 7, 2007

Scott Truman , RLF Stewardship Center
Clare Ramsay, Commissioner Garfield County
Kevin Carter, SITLA
Todd Christensen, BLM
Jim Crisp, BLM St. George
Brian Cottam, GOPB
Bruce Barrett, Bureau of Reclamation
John Willie, Commissioner Washington County
Bill Dalton, Beaver County
Rob MacWhorter, USDA FS Dixie NF
Reed Erickson, 5 County AOG, Iron County
Randy Taylor, Utah DEQ
Marreen Casper, Senator Orrin Hatch
Bryan Thiriot, Senator Bennett
Mike Empey, Congressman Jim Matheson
Donald Willden, Commissioner Beaver County
Brad Shafer, Senator Bennett
Ken Sizemore, Five County AOG
Jock Whitworth, NPS
Gary Herbert, Lieutenant Governor, Utah