

SOUTHWEST UTAH PLANNING AUTHORITIES COUNCIL
Minutes
September 3, 2008
Bryce Canyon National Park Visitor's Center

Welcome: At 12:55 p.m. Wes Curtis called the meeting to order and welcomed all to the meeting. Thanks to all those who assisted with the tour this morning in Tropic. Tropic is quite a vibrant town and our hats are off to them. The Bryce Canyon City planning meeting was very informative and educational this morning. Wes thanked Bryce Canyon National Park for hosting this meeting for the SUPAC.

Bryce Canyon National Park: Kathleen Gonder represented Park Supervisor, Eddie Lopez who was called to New Orleans to assist with hurricane clean-up. Kathleen is the administrative officer for the park. They have a new shuttle stop which was finished this past May. The shuttle program is running very well. They are running 56 – 59 people into the park per hour which is way above expectations. They are also doing trails maintenance and the re-dedication for the trails will take place in the latter part of the year. Their visitor count is up. Their summer astronomy festival went very well and astronaut Story Musgrave was a key note speaker. (Story helped repair the Hubble Space Telescope). Jock Whitworth said that visitations to the national parks have been flat elsewhere but Bryce's count was up.

Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument: Wes introduced Rene Berkhoudt, the new BLM manager of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM). Rene came from Santa Fe, New Mexico and now lives in Kanab. Currently, the monument has a legislative bill before the Senate. It's a permanence bill. It was the first monument under the BLM for management. The bill will establish a national conservation system. He's working on the Grazing Environmental Impact Statement as Grazing was never addressed in the original EIS. It should be out by the end of September. They are also working on the equestrian trailheads project and are seeking funding partners to encourage more use of the trails. There is a temporary suspension for re-seeding at the moment. There isn't a permanent closing of grazing permits. Grazing permits can still be applied for with the BLM. He reported that Kane County removed their signage and that Kane has stopped maintaining the roads in the GSENM. Rene said the BLM is trying to get Kane County back into discussions. The decision of the district court doesn't preclude Kane from maintaining the roads, although the county is interpreting the ruling from the court this way. The BLM can repair a washed out road, but can't take over maintenance of the roads. He is trying to open discussions with the county again. One of the GSENM issues is that the socio-economic study done by SWCA is missing some data. The monument advisory committee charter has lapsed and they are waiting for a new charter to come out. It went to Washington in July for approval signature.

Garfield County Local Planning: Justin Fischer reported on planning initiatives he's working on from Panguitch to Ticaboo. Garfield County has parts of 3 of the 5 national parks which constitutes a large portion of federally owned land. Its area is 5,208 square miles. There are 5000 residents and it may be closer to 6,000 now. There are more people than prairie dogs – But there are more cows than people. It has 9 incorporated communities. Bryce Canyon City is the youngest having been incorporated one year ago today. There are no planners on staff for these rural cities/communities. Justin described the circuit rider program which provides planning services to rural towns and unincorporated areas. The person is a "jack of all trades." The circuit planner partners with USU Extension, SUU Regional Services, SUU GIS Lab, and the Five County Association of Governments to make the programs work. He gave examples of how planning can go awry by pointing out the Panguitch Lake Resort – The developer spent \$10 million on a restaurant, RV spaces for sale; pool, community center, etc. The development came to halt as the proper planning approvals had not been given. Justin commented there are

times when developers find it easier to ask forgiveness than permission. Or they misconstrue the generally friendly nature of rural staff as approval. Also there are many seasonal residents who will not notice things posted in newspapers of “general circulation” and complain about development. This particular development is on a cease and desist order. Rural planners make sure that people are following everyone’s expectations.

He related a Tropic subdivision issue: The ordinance allows an exception to subdivision processes for agricultural lands. Confusion arises over agriculturally zoned land versus the land use of same. Enforcement of agricultural growth zoning can only be ensured by a deed restriction. A would-be sub divider claims she cannot afford the required improvements for a regular subdivision zoning on her agriculturally zoned land.

Ticaboo is experiencing new life as two mines and a mill re-open. Ticaboo is remote (Boulder is about half way) and the entire area (including Bullfrog Marina) is currently powered by diesel generators. The power costs around \$0.40/kwh. Nearest power to hook into is Boulder – and Capitol Reef National Park is in between the two. They are looking at transmission options. A renewable power option for Ticaboo was just put out for bid through a Request For Proposal (RFP). The RFP opened two weeks ago and can be found at <http://garfield.utah.gov> website.

The economic development office for Garfield County has a business expansion and retention project in partnership with SUU regional services. SUU has business survey software available to communities for business expansion and retention.

Wes Curtis extended an invitation to participate also in the SUU Business Resource Center.

Scenic Byway 12 Projects & Funding: John Holland is the Scenic Byway Coordinator for the National Scenic Byway Highway 12. John is responsible for planning, projects, and funding. In 1988 the Dixie National Forest designated Highway 12 a Scenic Byway. In 1990, the State of Utah entered into partnership declaring it a scenic byway; and it became a National Scenic Byway and All American Byway in 2002. The partnership was established in 2001. They created a corridor management plan with land management agencies. There are 24 members (22 voting) including UDOT, all small cities and communities along Highway 12. They received initial funding from FCAOG. They meet bi-monthly with each community along Highway 12. A challenge for them is sustainable tourism development in maximizing the benefits while minimizing costs and developing planning and management approaches that are socially acceptable to our communities.

Goals:

- Protect and enhance quality of life and economic vitality of local communities
- Protect and enhance the integrity of the intrinsic qualities within the byway corridor
- Provide a safe driving experience for the diversity of plan

The corridor management plan is 6 years old now – They are trying to get funding to revise and update the plan. Signage and interpretive master plan calls for replacing the interpretive signs along the highway. This is being done.

Annual Scenic Byways Grant Program - \$125,000 funding over 5 years plus \$31,250 local match. The 2008 request for \$25,000 is pending.

They received an Interpretive Planning grant from the BLM for \$30,000; this documents interpretive themes and stories for gateways, pull-outs, waysides and town kiosks; a Panel Design grant from National Scenic Byways for \$62,800; \$15,700 matching funds from NPS, BLM, Dixie NF Garfield County; and Bryce Canyon NP History Association for Output Interpretive Panel Manufacturing and Installation. They are hoping to have this completed by the end of November which is Phase I. For Phase II they received \$51,300 Nat’l Scenic

Byways; and \$12,900 matching funds Bryce Canyon NP; BLM; Dixie NF, Garfield. A total of \$93,000 funded to towns on Highway 12 since its designation; a total of \$2,014,500 in transportation grants for road maintenance of Highway 12; and a total of \$203,000 funding for NSB designation. The total funded projects is \$2,310,800; and \$95,400 is pending. John said the bottom line is tourism is important to byway economies; byway tourism is important to Utah; and byway designation enhances travel through Utah rural communities.

Dixie National Forest: Kenton Call, Dixie National Forest's Public Information Officer said he's pinch hitting for Gretchen Merrill. Wild land fire funding provides for controlled burns – The forest service has 3 going now. The straits, south end of the Paunsagunt is a 170 acre burn; a new start on the Cedar City 5 bridge fire just past Design Overlook which is less than an acre; and the Forsyth Ridge which has been burning about 5 acres – They manage the controlled fire burns within certain parameters. Regarding oil & gas leasing – An EIS was done in 12/2006 to develop a draft to look at leasing on the Dixie. It will be released in mid-October. There will be 3 public meetings for comment. The document is 900 pages long. Five County AOG will do a more in-depth meeting on it. The possibility of finding oil and gas has been gauged by Forest Service and likely to be in the Pine Valley, Escalante and Boulder ranger districts. Kenton said the motorized travel plan was finished in July and the EIS the public comments were made. The vast majority of comments came from state of Utah. Rob MacWhorter will make a decision in January 2009. There is a system of designated routes and/or closed to cross country motorized vehicles travel plan. Come out this fall – 6 forests are coming out with wild & scenic rivers recommendations. They started with 86 river segments and are down to 10 river segments for suitability recommendations.

60 Second Round Table:

Justin Fischer mentioned the Fuels for Schools Program. SUU is doing a feasibility study to take a look at providing two boilers which are fueled by wood products. USFFL has this program for rural school districts too.

Rene Berkhoudt announced that GSENM grazing EIS will be a very important legislation and is pending before the Senate.

Bryce Canyon City's Town Hall Heritage Center is built and they'll have an open house soon;

John Chartier, DEQ, announced they have Retrofit money available for diesel changeovers on school buses.

Evan Curtis reported that the GOPB has set-up a website of maps and tools for communities.

<http://planning.utah.gov/super>

Gary Zabriskie, FCAOG announced that Darren Janes at the FCAOG is a regional planner and marketing specialist; regional loan money is available for business and planning; workforce housing is an issue and he's working on this too. St. George is considered a metropolitan area now. For more information on planning in the Five County area go to www.fcaog.state.ut.us.

Alma Adams announced that Iron County has hired a circuit planner. Parowan has a new senior center.

Don Willden, Beaver County reported that First Wind (renewable energy company) has moved forward in Beaver County stockpiling their transmissions; Razor Quality has two rigs on sight drilling; a \$100 million loan was given to the new copper mine; Delta is drilling for oil also.

Bryan Thiriot – Senator Bennett will be in session for 3 weeks. The main focus is to work on a

resolution to keep the country funded. Washington County land bill is sitting at 50-50 chance of passing this session due to being an election year.

Mike Empey reported that not much will be happening because of the election year.

Larry Gray, State Parks reported that visitations have been flat but there is an increase this past quarter. The Intergovernmental Internship Coordination program with SUU is working well. They've placed a graduate student in employment at Lake Powell and have interns working the parks seasonally. The office is on 4/10 work week. He wants to know if there is a negative impact to the work week.

Rob MacWhorter, Dixie National Forest Supervisor reported that the past 2 years has given the Dixie a new cash crop – The DEA eradicated large marijuana gardens. They have 20 million board feet for timber sales. He thanked Garfield County in helping with the prescribed burn and they are working on air quality issues for when to burn. The new regional forester is Harve Forsgren. They've also selected a new forest ranger in Panguitch.

Jock Whitworth, Zion National Park Supervisor, announced an Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative (IIC) Agency Coordinator (GS 11/12) will be hired by the NPS to work in partnership with SUU. Cedar Breaks celebrated their 75th anniversary; visitation is flat for a 7th place for the most visited in National Parks. Zion is 100 years July 31, 2009. They had the opening of the Zion art exhibit in St. George. There were 68 winners. (Six of which were local artists.) Also there were 80 historical paintings depicting Zion and its area. They are rehabilitating the grotto landing building. It was built in 1926 – They use it for artists in residence and as a research facility. The celebration is July 31st at the Grotto landing building. August of 2009 there will be a tunnel walk. They are doing a rehab of Mt. Carmel Road which has been slumping for years. For more information go to <http://www.nps.gov/zion>

Kevin Carter, SITLA announced that the energy resource issues happening in Beaver County on SITLA land are doing well. The inability to move natural gas in the Intermountain West is an issue. SITLA wants a cut of the revenue produced on a portion of their land for the marijuana farm bust reported earlier.

Jim Crisp, has volunteered and is working on the SUU Outdoor Initiatives for SUU Regional Services.

Wes Curtis announced the SUU Business Resource Center. It will be a one-stop resource for businesses to work with the SBDC, SWATC Custom Fit, and SUU's Business and Engineering departments to gain practical information and funding ideas for their businesses.

Brian Cottam reported on activities of SUU Regional Services with the Outdoor Initiative and announced the partnership with NPS for a shared position of an Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative Agency Coordinator.

Next meeting for the SUPAC will be held November 4, 2008 (election day) in Beaver. Location will be announced later.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen McDowell, Secretary

APPENDIX "A"
Attendants

Wes Curtis, SUU Regional Services
Brian Cottam, SUU Regional Services
John Holland, Executive Director Scenic Byway 12
Larry Gray, Utah State Parks
Rob MacWhorter, USDA Dixie National Forest
Donald Willden, Beaver County Commissioner
Kenton Call, Dixie National Forest
Gary Zabriskie, FCAOG
Alma Adams, Iron County Commissioner
John Chartier, State DEQ
Randy Taylor, State DEQ
Evan Curtis, State GOPB
Jim Crisp, SUU Regional Services
Justin Fischer, FCAOG
Bryan Thiriot, Senator Bennett's Office
Mike Empey, Congressman Matheson's Office
Clare Ramsay, Garfield County Commissioner
Lowell Mecham, Mayor of Tropic
Rene Berkhoudt, BLM Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument
Terri Driedonks, Paunsaugunt Wildlife Museum
Kevin Carter, SITLA
Jock Whitworth, Zion National Park