

Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC)

MINUTES - 5 May 2009

1. **Welcome and Introductions** - Wes Curtis, SUU VP of Government Relations and Regional Services, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The group met in the morning and had a presentation by Eric Mills, Deputy Director of Utah Division of Water Resources, and others about the Lake Powell Pipeline Project. They then traveled to see projected pipeline sites near St. George. Wes thanked Brian Cottam for putting together such a great tour and meeting agenda.

2. **2009 Utah Legislature Review**

Wes reported that higher education took a 17% cut in budget. Federal "stimulus" monies backfilled one-time so the cut was 9% total for the coming fiscal year. We're hoping that we'll have additional revenue next year or the 17% cut will be in effect. SUU is receiving a federal earmark and bonds to build the new Gibson Science Center.

SITLA did not experience the budget cuts that others did. There were bills introduced which were broad brush and affected everyone. SITLA is involved in renewable energy projects in Washington County (e.g. solar, wind, etc.) which cut into all local, state and federal agencies.

Forestry, Fire & State Lands did fairly well with the budget. They lost the Lone Peak nursery. They are negotiating with private enterprise to purchase and operate the nursery. They were fortunate to receive some funds and had to go competitive for the southwest in grants for \$300K to work on Virgin River (removing tamarisk) and most of the money will be used for revegetation. They received another \$300K to work on Cedar Mountain to stimulate Aspen growth. An additional \$150K will be used along the Virgin River to take out the fuels in cooperation with St. George & Santa Clara. Water Conservancy District at Quail Lake will have hazardous fuels removed. They also received \$250K for removal of hazardous fuels along I-15.

Randy gave DEQ update. They lost 19 positions across DEQ. They received stimulus money to distribute. Water Quality drinking water projects received \$20 million. WCWCD \$40 million for the storage; Cannonville received \$333K; Dixie Special Service District \$370K; Ticaboo \$502K for pipeline; \$364K Minersville drinking water. There is \$4 million available for green project wastewater; \$512K for Parowan on the lagoons; Air quality \$1.7 million for diesel retrofits; and underground water \$2 million available. The Legislature passed reauthorizations of all the acts for DEQ and rules for use of industrial by-products were approved.

GOPB – Evan reported on stimulus funds being used for healthcare, alcoholic beverage laws, renewable energy, economic incentives, bonding authority for transmission transportation, and incentives for new home buyers. Governor vetoed rural subdivision changes. Go to the Utah APA website for additional information on planning-related legislation www.apa.utah.org

UDOT – Transportation has done well. Residents will be billed an increase in car registration fees of \$20. They received stimulus money for projects in St. George of \$415 million, which is allocated for roads.

3. **Federal Stimulus/Recovery Act Funds & Projects**

USFS – Dayle Flanigan said additional funds were received to improve campgrounds including Cascade Falls trail funding they wanted. Stimulus funds were received for Pine Valley guard station. Most of the FS stimulus money went to Idaho and Montana.

BLM – There were 9 categories for stimulus money. Utah did better than the rest receiving \$31 million for maintenance, roads, and construction. \$4 million to Color Country District; \$4 million for Canyon Country District; \$12 million for West Desert; \$6 million for GSENM; \$6 million is being held at the State office. They will determine where the \$6 million will go for much needed projects.

NRCS “were not stimulated by funding.” They have projects going on in Washington County. They’ve applied for additional funding as the new Farm Bill calls for an Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) which requires manpower.

NPS – Bryce Canyon received \$371K to replace stations; Canyonlands \$160K for rehab; Capitol Reef \$190K for energy efficiency improvements; Cedar Breaks received \$140K for trail work; Dinosaur received \$13 million for the visitors center reconstruction; Glen Canyon received \$1 million for arsenic control potable water system; Hovenweep \$110K maintenance; Natural Bridges \$460K; Timp Cave \$196K; Zion \$196K for renewable energy; Zion \$190K for trails, and they are trading vehicles in for hybrids.

4. **S 22 “Omnibus Public Lands Bill” and Washington County Growth & Conservation Act:** Commissioner Gardner was unable to attend due to a death in the family. He worked long and hard on this bill which started about 6 years ago. Mike Empey and Bryan Thiriot presented. The public process started in 2004. The first draft of the bill was done in Spring 2005. The Washington County bill had to be put into the larger omnibus bill. It passed House and Senate on March 30th. Specifics can be found on the website on how it will affect the National Conservation Area; 14 designated wilderness areas, and 19 miles of Wild and Scenic River segments. The Federal agencies need to get management plans done in the next 3 years for the NCAs, Wilderness & WSAs. There are 20,000 new acres of in-holdings for SITLA. In terms of process for setting precedence, Utah did well. The stakeholders were able to do something and it proves that these partners can work on a process for Wilderness designation. Beaver County is ready to go on lands bill and an energy corridor bill.
5. **High Desert Trail** – Bevan Killpack, Pine Valley District Ranger, said the project was started 5 years ago and as planning progressed SUPAC determined that it should go from Beaver Co. to the southwest border of Utah. The FS & SUPAC didn’t have money or manpower to do the planning. Commissioner Gardner put it in the bill to do NEPA and implementation plan. Dixie Forest has done their motorized plan and it’s signed and ready. During the feasibility study to be a motorized trail, Enterprise wanted it and Pine Valley didn’t. There is a campground for ATV users at Enterprise Reservoir. There was 16 miles of trail and it is rebuilt and fixed. Bevan said it’s time to regroup with the High Desert Trail TAG subcommittee and he will contact Ken for support.
6. **Round Table Updates –**

GOPB is working on trails database, which is inter-jurisdictional. McAllister Fund received \$410,000, applications due June 15, go to: www.qualitygrowth.utah.gov

Zion had their fun run; 26 artists came in from all over; Earth day was great; tunnel walk is in August and there are only 300 slots to participate. Go to Zion website for all the Centennial info. Jock Whitworth and Wes Curtis are going to Mt. Danxiashan Park in China in May. They want to be a sister park to Zion.

Don Willden updated everyone about Beaver County energy projects. Governor went and signed

the transmission authority. Raser is producing at 2 megawatts and is transmitting to Anaheim. We are prioritizing the public land bill for Beaver Co. and are going to open communications with Piute County about a joint approach.

Gaylord Robb reported that the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah will be having their annual Pow Wow at the end of June and that they received stimulus funds of \$500K for road repairs.

Color Country BLM reported that the recently completed RMPs will be doing some amendments but the plans are done. They have most of the renewable energy projects in Color Country out of Beaver. The last few months they have been developing strategies and staffing needs. They have been working with the State and Washington D.C. to move forward on the plans resulting from the omnibus bill. They are working on motorized travel management planning.

Jim Crisp briefed everyone on the completion of the Zion Canyon Corridor Study funded by SUU Regional Services. For the final report go to www.springdaletown.com.

Mike Empey reported there is a Climate Change Bill in the works and Matheson was summoned to the White House. The utility bill could increase bills annually by \$1400 a household.

Senator Hatch wrote a letter regarding the new Supreme Court Justice to be appointed – Senator Hatch spoke to Obama and said he would appoint a pragmatist and not a radical. Sessions will be the new ranking member on the judiciary committee. Marreen distributed a copy of a letter to Ken Salazar, the new Secretary of the Interior (attached). They are moving to new offices at 77 N. Main Street in Cedar City, which is the new SUU Business Resource Center, in mid May.

Iron County is receiving the monies for fees charged on the belt route around the west and north corridor. They received \$184k in grant money for energy projects. These will be for shelf ready projects. The CICWCD has hired a shared position with USU Extension to focus on water conservation. Scott is also working with SUU and others in Iron County interested in water conservation.

The fire season should be about normal, though eastern Garfield Co. is very dry.

Doug Heaton reported the Kane County Southwest Mental Health building is being constructed and will also house the Public Health Department. They have a new Emergency training facility and UDOT worked on the projects. Kane County Commission has opted out of pursuing stimulus money.

RC&D is working in St. George on a safe harbor agreement. UPDRIP (prairie dog program) to move under one umbrella. They are using conservation credit easements to leverage for development. Kane County is having a CEBA event on May 15th & 16th to develop small businesses. It will be held at the middle school.

The Utah Rural Summit is August 5-7, 2009. A field trip to Beaver Co. renewable energy sites is planned for the afternoon of August 5th and there will be a “mock planning commission meeting” that evening featuring Cedar City elected officials and planning commissioners. Regional Services is developing a Resource Management Plan for the SUU Mountain Ranch. On campus entities as well as the DFFSL and USFS have been participating with the plan preparation. A wildfire protection plan for the Ranch and surrounding properties is being done through the DFFSL. We hope to work with NRCS on a range and grazing component of the RMP. Regional Services is working on Zion National Park’s Centennial activities using SUU Outdoor Initiative

funds. The Zion historic photos display is now hanging in the Sherratt Library, and a Centennial DVD using SUU and Zion photos was recently developed by SUU for use by Park staff. The Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative, a program of Regional Services, has youth work crews this year in partnership with USU's Utah Conservation Corp program. The two crews will be working throughout the summer at various agencies. Through a partnership developed by Wes Curtis we have opened the "one stop" SUU Business Resource Center.

Mike Worthen, Iron County is working on the County Resource Management Plan. The UPDRIP planning group is looking at hiring a coordinator to manage the program. They applied for Endangered Species Mitigation Funds to hire a coordinator through SUU.

Rene Berkhoudt reported that scientists are coming from around the world as they have one new Tyrannosaurus discovery which may be the oldest in the world.

Senator Bennett has a hold on everyone in the Dept of Interior.

7. Other Business – None.
8. Calendar Next Meeting (no July meeting) – The next meeting of the SUPAC will be September 1, 2009. The location will be announced later.
9. Wes thanked the Washington County Water Conservancy District for hosting the SUPAC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen McDowell
SUU Regional Services

APPENDIX "A"

Attendants

Kevin Carter, SITLA
Todd Christensen, Color Country BLM
Gaylord Robb, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
Donald Willden, Beaver County
Jimmy Tyree, BLM
Evan Curtis, GOPB
Bruce Barrett, Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Crisp, SUU Regional Services
Corey Cram, Washington County Water Conservancy District
Charlie Frear, NRCS
Ron Wilson, UFFSL
Kevin Williams, NRCS Color Country RC&D
Bryan Thiriot, Senator Bennett's Office
Mike Worthen, Iron County
Rene Berkhoudt, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Brent Bluth, SITLA
Todd Stowell, Iron County, FCAOG
Alma Adams, Iron County Commissioner
Scott Wilson, Central Iron County Water Conservancy District
Brian Cottam, SUU Regional Services
Wes Curtis, SUU Regional Services
Ken Sizemore, Five County AOG
Marreen Casper, Senator Hatch's Office
Mike Empey, Congressman Matheson's Office
Rick Torgerson, UDOT
Dayle Flanigan, USFS Dixie NF