

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMISSION FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS**

Thursday, August 20, 2015 – 8:30 a.m. – Room 450 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. David P. Hinkins, Chair
Rep. Keven J. Stratton, Chair
Sen. Jim Dabakis
Sen. Scott K. Jenkins
Rep. Joel K. Briscoe
Rep. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Ken Ivory

Rep. Michael E. Noel

Staff Present:

Ms. Tiffany A. Stanley, Policy Analyst
Ms. Cathy J. Dupont, Associate General Counsel
Ms. RuthAnne Frost, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Josh Weber, Legislative Assistant

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Commission Business

Chair Stratton called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Ivory moved to amend the minutes of the July 16, 2015 meeting by deleting the phrase “in the event of” and replacing it with the phrase “upon the” in the third paragraph under agenda item number two. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Rep. Brown moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Congressman Bishop's Public Lands Initiative

Mr. Casey Snider, Legislative Director, Rep. Rob Bishop, Ms. Kelsey Berg, Energy and Natural Resource Advisor, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Mr. Ryan Wilcox, Northern Utah Director, Sen. Mike Lee, Mr. Cody Stewart, Policy Advisor, Governor’s Office, presented "Utah Public Lands Initiative Update." They explained that the initiative is a joint effort between Utah's congressional delegation, Governor Herbert, counties, and other stakeholders to build consensus and designate certain lands in eastern Utah for conservation and development. They responded to questions from the commission.

3. Federal Water Rules and Directives

Mr. Randy Parker, Chief Executive Officer, Utah Farm Bureau Federation, distributed his presentation "Federal Encroachment"; “H.R. 1830 ‘Water Rights Protection Act’”; a letter addressing the “Proposed Rule to Define ‘Waters of the United States’ under the Clean Water Act; and “Threats to Grazing from Federal Regulatory Overreach.” He discussed the Forest Service Water Clause, the Ground Water Resources Management Directive, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s new definition of “Waters of the United States.” He explained the Farm Bureau’s concerns of federal overreach in each of these areas. Mr. Parker responded to questions from the commission.

Rep. Noel discussed his proposed resolution, "Concurrent Resolution on Waters of the United States" (2016FL-0350/007). He explained that the resolution would document the Legislature's disapproval of the expanded definition of "waters of the United States" and support Utah's attorney general in vacating the expansive rule.

The commission provided input on the resolution.

4. Update on Sage Grouse

Ms. Kathleen Clarke, Director, Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, distributed "2014 Annual Report – Implementing Utah's Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan and “Economic Analysis of July 2015 - Key Findings.” Ms. Clarke updated the commission on sage grouse conservation efforts and indicated that listing the sage grouse as an endangered species may be avoided, but the U.S. Bureau of Land Management sage grouse plans impose significant regulatory burdens.

Ms. Clarke responded to questions from commission members.

5. Carbon Sequestration

Ms. Nan Christianson, Deputy Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service read a prepared statement, “U.S. Forest Service Briefing,” regarding the Forest Service’s work related to carbon sequestration through biological processes. Ms. Christianson explained that the Forest Service is conducting research on these processes and distributed, “Rocky Mountain Research Station - Grassland, Shrubland, and Desert Ecosystems Program,” which provides an overview of this work. Ms. Christianson also reviewed some of the management practices the Forest Service is implementing to promote carbon sequestration and distributed, “Management Practices that Increase Carbon Sequestration.”

Ms. Christianson responded to questions from commission members.

Steven Rich, President, Rangeland Restoration Academy, distributed, “Carbon Sequestration Questions for Forest Service.” Mr. Kinsel stated that proper grazing is a necessary component for carbon sequestration in soils, but these practices are currently prohibited by certain Federal regulations on public lands.

Sheldon Kinsel, Director of Communications, Rangeland Restoration Academy stated that forest fires, largely occurring on federally managed public land, produce 90 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. Mr. Kinsel compared that amount to the amount of carbon emissions that the Obama Administration is seeking to reduce by 2025, which works out to 1.7 million tons of carbon per year, and asserted that the Federal government is not approaching the issue with enough urgency.

MOTION: Rep. Brown moved that staff prepare a list of Utah laws that address the transfer of public lands and invite the executive branch to provide an update to the commission on its efforts to implement those laws.

6. Learning from the Devolution of Canada's Northwest Territories

This agenda item was not discussed.

7. Other Commission Business/Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Dabakis, Sen. Hinkins, and Rep. Noel were absent for the vote.

Chair Stratton adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.