

## Guiding Principles for the Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands

Prepared by the Chairs of the Commission

**WE** recognized our duty to taxpayers and future generations to ensure our precious resources and lands are managed properly to ensure conservation and fiscal responsibility.

**WE as** a bipartisan commission firmly believe it is in the best interests of all Utahns and Americans across the country to preserve and protect these lands while balancing responsible access and use. It is the intent of this committee, supported by both sides of the aisle, to determine once and for all what level of government has both the authority and capability to best manage our lands. We acknowledge and applaud the collective efforts of the Democrat and Republican members who have made preservation and balanced multiple use of these resources one of their top priorities.

**WE resolve to apply** the following principles to guide our work in evaluating who and how these lands can be best managed.

- We acknowledge our **stewardship** to the present and future generations of Americans to preserve, protect and conserve **treasured** areas for future use.
- We recognize that much of Utah's public land contains unique global treasures, including the state's national parks. The Federal Government has historically been responsible for these lands, which we believe rightly belong to all Americans. We further believe these tribal lands, national parks, and pre-1995 national monuments should remain under the careful stewardship of the Federal Government. The creation of any new national parks, **monuments, or other designations** should only be done after exhaustive input from all stakeholders and a rigorous environmental and economic analysis has been conducted.
- We believe it is the proper duty of government, local, state and federal, to secure, preserve and protect the rights and interests associated with public lands nationally for all Americans. We interpret this principle to mean that Americans should not be denied access to these **unique treasures**, nor should these areas be sold off to private entities or individuals.
- It is government's duty and obligation to manage a wide variety of public lands and resources in a responsible way, preserving wildlife habitats, and balancing recreation and tourism, hunting, grazing, oil & gas, mining and timber.
- We believe our charge of stewardship is to properly balance the responsible use of public lands with appropriate conservation.
- The management of each parcel of public land should be the responsibility of the governmental agency that can best ensure:
  1. These public places are managed effectively and responsibly.
  2. The lands are managed in the most fiscally sound way possible, using tax dollars responsibly.
  3. Proceeds from the lands are used in the most fair and equitable manner to fund schools giving our children the best, world-class education they deserve.
  4. There are consistent and environmentally sound management plans strictly adhered to that will maintain the delicate ecosystems of our unique wilderness while balancing public access and use.
- We are committed to ensuring that responsible use of valuable natural resources on state government-owned Utah land will result in increased funding for our schools, which crucially provides our children with the best education possible.
- We believe that the Utah state government is the best and most appropriate steward for much of the Utah land currently controlled by the U.S. federal government. Accordingly, the right and

proper course of action is for the State of Utah to proactively pursue a course of **transferring** these lands to state control.

It is our hope that this effort will serve as a guide and precedent for other states, particularly in the West, to evaluate the most responsible management of public lands within their boundaries.