

**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Room 25 House Office Building

February 21, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. David Hinkins, Co-Chair
Rep. John G. Mathis, Co-Chair
Rep. Mike McKell, House Vice Chair
Sen. Jim Dabakis
Sen. Margaret Dayton
Sen. John L. Valentine
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell
Rep. Jerry Anderson
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Susan Duckworth
Rep. Brian Greene
Rep. Ken Ivory
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Lee B. Perry
Rep. Jon Stanard
Rep. Larry B. Wiley

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sen. Ralph Okerlund

STAFF: Mr. Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst
Ms. Angela Oh, Economist
Ms. Linda Service, Committee Secretary

Note: A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Vice Chair McKell called the meeting to order at 3:17 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Stanard moved to approve the minutes of February 7, 2013. The motion passed unanimously.

1. UTAH LAKE CARP PROCESSING PLANT, Rep. McKell

Mr. Reed Price, Executive Director, Utah Lake Commission, distributed a handout titled, "Utah Lake Fish Meal." The Utah Lake Commission was established in 2007 by the Legislature. The 17-member board consists of state agency directors, Utah County mayors, and other local representatives. The vision statement of the Utah Lake Master Plan states: "Utah Lake is a focal point of natural resource systems that contribute to the environmental health, economic prosperity and quality of life of area residents and visitors. Through collaborative restoration, protection and sustainable use efforts, the lake and its multiple-use amenities are fully recognized and enjoyed by current and future generations."

The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands works closely with the Utah Lake Commission to accomplish goals and objectives of both entities, especially to eradicate invasive species from the lake and create a better recreational fishery. A study has estimated the lake-wide population of carp at 90% of the fish biomass in the lake. Mr. Price suggested removal of 75% of the carp within six to seven years should enable the lake's ecosystem to begin to heal itself.

The commission is seeking a \$3 million legislative appropriation to build a state-of-the-art fish meal plant and to cover the estimated \$500,000 annual removal cost shortfall for the first two years. Production of fish meal from carp removed from Utah Lake will offset some of the removal costs.

2. GARFIELD COUNTY PRAIRIE DOGS, Sen. Okerlund

Sen. Okerlund introduced Mr. Brian Bremner, Garfield County Engineer, who discussed the Prairie Dog Program. Several different land management interests, including Garfield County, U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM, began to look at the overall program. Three main interests were identified as being central to getting the prairie dog delisted: (1) Treat the prairie dog for plague; (2) Trap prairie dogs on private land and move them to federal land; and (3) Count the prairie dogs on federal land. Over the past several years significant strides have been made. Mr. Bremner is requesting an appropriation of \$35,000 to hire two to three college students to perform all the work. He responded to questions.

3. WOLF RE-INTRODUCTION, Sen. Okerlund

Sen. Okerlund introduced Mr. Don Peay, Founder, Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife, who discussed efforts to make sure wolves are not re-introduced into the state of Utah depleting wildlife and livestock herds. Mr. Peay mentioned the success of getting wolves removed from the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expects to delist the Northern Gray Wolf in all of Utah and the rest of the lower 48 states. There is now preemptive work being done to keep the Mexican Spotted Wolf from entering the state. Mr. Peay is requesting an appropriation of \$300,000 for complex legal, political, and grass roots efforts. He responded to questions.

4. HUNTINGTON CREEK MITIGATION, Sen. Hinkins

Sen. Hinkins introduced Mr. Kyle Ekker, Emery County Sheriff's Office, and Mr. Kevin Boardman, Vice President of Governing Affairs, Rocky Mountain Power and PacifiCorp. Energy. Mr. Ekker reviewed a presentation informing the subcommittee of the impact the June 2012 Seeley Fire and subsequent debris flows had on Emery County, and particularly SR 31 and Huntington Creek.

To mitigate the damage, it is proposed to create a series of debris basins upstream from critical infrastructure to catch debris and slow flood waters. Another phase of the project is to clear sediment and debris from the creek channel within Huntington City limits. The estimated cost of debris basins is \$2.9 million. Estimated cost of debris removal and bridge protection within Huntington City limits is \$834,000. There is a request for an appropriation of \$1.6 million for mitigation purposes.

Mr. Boardman commented on the importance of Huntington Creek as a water source for the PacifiCorp Huntington Power Plant. Debris and sediment in the water is tremendously impacting the power plant and compromising their ability to store an adequate supply of operating water.

5. INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT MODEL, Rep. Wiley

Rep. Wiley introduced Mr. Leland Meyers, Chair, Great Salt Lake Advisory Council. The council was formed to advise state government on issues related to sustainability and beneficial use of the Great Salt Lake. Economic and ecological viability of the lake is the primary objective of the Integrated Water Resources Management Model which should provide a decision support tool that managers can use to address issues related to future water supply, lake level, and economic value.

The council is requesting \$400,000 over two years in order to begin the Integrated Water Resources Management Model. The health of the lake and the economics of the lake are connected. The model

development will be important to the future maintenance of the Great Salt Lake area.

6. UTAH YOUTH TURKEY SHOW, Rep. Menlove

Rep. Menlove introduced Mr. Lyle Holmgren, Box Elder County, and requested a \$10,000 ongoing appropriation for the Utah Youth Turkey Show. It is a program held in Box Elder County that involves youth from throughout the state. Mr. Holmgren commented on the turkey show indicating that at the present time there are approximately 250 youth from nine counties involved in the raising, processing, and marketing of turkeys. Rep. Menlove and Mr. Holmgren responded to questions.

7. AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION BUDGET RESTORATION, Rep. Menlove

Rep. Menlove introduced Mr. Spencer Holmgren, Northern Utah Conservation District, Box Elder County. The district has received cuts but is hoping to maintain the same level of service that has been provided in the past. Mr. Holmgren noted monies have become tighter over the last few years. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has requested the district participate 50% in an employee profit sharing program. The request is for \$100,000 to enable the district to participate in the program.

8. SNAKE VALLEY MONITORING WELLS, Rep. Mathis

Rep. Mathis made a request for \$100,000 one-time funding to help support monitoring wells in the Snake Valley. Mr. Mike Styler, Director, Department of Natural Resources, responded to questions stating the amount requested is for monitoring of wells and air quality.

9. OTHER

Rep. Perry notified the subcommittee that the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands has a need for increased dispatch services and that further information will be forthcoming. In addition, there are cities in the state who are delinquent in paying for services in fighting past fires. He suggested that a letter be sent under the signature of the subcommittee chairs encouraging the division to get the Attorney General's Office involved in requesting the delinquent cities pay the monies owed. Director Dick Buehler responded to questions regarding this issue.

MOTION: Rep. Wiley moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. Vice Chair McKell adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Sen. David Hinkins, Co-chair

Rep. John G. Mathis, Co-chair