

(Draft - Awaiting Formal Approval)
**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**
September 10, 2013
Kanab, Utah

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. David P. Hinkins, Co-Chair
Sen. Margaret Dayton
Sen. Ralph Okerlund
Rep. Jerry B. Anderson
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Susan Duckworth
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Jon E. Stanard
Rep. Larry B. Wiley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sen. Jim Dabakis
Sen. John L. Valentine
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell
Rep. John G. Mathis, Co-Chair
Rep. Mike K. McKell, Vice Chair
Rep. Brian M. Greene
Rep. Ken Ivory
Rep. Lee B. Perry

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

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.leg.utah.gov.

Co-Chair Hinkins called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and introduced subcommittee members.

1. Follow-up on the 2012 Agriculture In-Depth Budget Review

Ms. Jill Flygare, Budget Analyst, Governor's Office of Management and Budget, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Department of Agriculture - Budget Issues Follow-up." Issues resulting from the review were as follows:

- Current member representation of the Utah Conservation Commission (UCC) gives a majority of votes to the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD); the recommendation is that the Commissioner of Agriculture find ways to revitalize UCC and make it more relevant.
- UACD's report to the subcommittee in FY 2013 showed that money was going to UACD without sufficient oversight and meaningful performance measures; the recommendation is that funding to districts should be based on outcomes.
- Policies made and implemented by UACD reduced their reserve balance prior to FY 2013, and now the organization is in a structural imbalance. The recommendation for

UACD is as current staff retires to make changes and possibly combine zones that are not productive or efficient. Additionally, there should be an in-depth look at the system to find capacity and utilization.

- Over the last year, the Grazing Improvement Program (GIP) has improved transparency and accountability by updating their website and implementing a new database, which was a recommendation of the “2012 Agriculture In-Depth Budget Review.”

2. Grazing Improvement Program and Watershed Restoration Initiative Program

Mr. Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst, LFA, presented the Issue Brief, "Report on GIP and Watershed, 2013 Interim." The purpose of the document is to provide background information about GIP and the Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI), in preparation for the program managers' report required by legislative intent language from the 2013 General Session stating:

The Legislature intends that the managers of the Grazing Improvement Program and the Watershed Restoration Program present to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee by November 2013 a plan to improve the coordination and collaboration between the two programs. The Legislature further intends that each program identify performance measures that track and report the public benefits from their projects.

The brief included programs' description identified major similarities and differences, provided a funding flowchart, and included lists of all projects where the two programs have shared equipment over time.

Rep. Noel asked if the \$69,663,800 (found on p. 5) included the partners' administrative staff contributions. Mr. Djambov clarified that this number represents cash only and did not include any in-kind contributions. The administrative staff provided by WRI partners was in addition to the cash contributions and was not identified on the chart.

Sen. Okerlund wanted to know the amount money spent on of fire pre-suppression projects vs. funding for projects after fires. Mr. Djambov responded that this information could be provided but it was not available at the moment.

Rep. Barrus asked if the number on p. 5 (representing the contributions from the federal partners) included the costs of federal agencies to manage public lands in Utah or if the number on p. 5 was in addition that. Mr. Juan Palma, State Director, Bureau of Land Management, responded by saying that the number in the chart is from one-time contributions that were not included in the operational expenditures reported by federal agencies.

Mr. Troy Forest, GIP Manager, Department of Agriculture and Food, reported that an agreement with Mr. Alan Clark, WRI Director, Department of Natural Resources, has been established with a plan to improve coordination and collaboration between the two programs. The GIP mission is to improve the productivity and sustainability of rangelands and watersheds resulting in a healthy industry.

Mr. Mike Styler, Director of the Department of Natural Resources, distributed a handout titled "2013 Black Mountain Fire," showing the benefits of post fire rehabilitation efforts. He also expressed his support for the collaboration and cooperation plan and noted how important both programs are to livestock, wildlife, and the good health of the land.

Mr. Clark agreed with Mr. Forest in stating how well the two programs work together. In an effort to respond to the second concern of the intent language, "identify performance measures that track and report the public benefits from their projects," he listed five new performance measures proposed for WRI. They are to report the following data: 1) acres of catastrophic fires prevented or limited; 2) acres restored after fires to functioning watersheds; 3) additional forage produced; 4) additional water yield in streams, well, and springs; and 5) water quality improvement.

3. Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining Report on Sage Grouse Funding

Mr. John Baza, Director of the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, provided a report required by legislative intent, on how the division will use the \$500,000 appropriation from the 2013 General Session to help prevent the listing of Sage Grouse as endangered species in Utah. In an effort to accomplish this mandate, the division entered into an agreement with the Office of Public Lands Policy Coordination Office (PLPCO), to use the funding to pay for PLPCO expenses to prevent the listing of Sage Grouse.

Ms. Kathleen Clarke, PLPCO Director, expressed her appreciation for the positive working relationship with regard to the funding and the opportunity for the two agencies to collaborate. Funding was committed to the following:

- Sage Grouse habitat enhancement or establishment,
- Predator control,
- Assembling and publishing information from studies conducted over the last 15 years by Utah State University,
- Improved GIS mapping, and
- Disturbance monitoring to verify effectiveness of the conservation plan and methods.

MOTION: Sen. Dayton moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Hinkins adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.