

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMISSION FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS**
Wednesday, October 29, 2014 – 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. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Ken Ivory
Rep. Michael E. Noel

Members Absent:

Rep. Joel K. Briscoe

Staff Present:

Mr. Leif G. Elder, Policy Analyst
Ms. Tiffany A. Stanley, Policy Analyst
Ms. Cathy J. Dupont
Ms. RuthAnne Frost, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Tim Barber, Legislative Secretary

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 8:39 a.m.

MOTION: Sen. Hinkins moved to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2014 meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Stakeholder Reports and Updates: The Future of Utah's Public Lands

Dr. Jeffrey McCarthy, Professor, Honors Program, University of Utah shared his prepared testimony on the balance between the necessity of economic uses of public lands and the necessity of wild places. The professor indicated that Utah's public lands can accommodate some development, but that decisions about development should be shaped by local communities and balanced by the need to retain the lands' primeval character with minimal human impact.

Commission members questioned Dr. McCarthy about how much development he considers to be appropriate in public lands, the merits of Utah's federal lands transfer legislation, and the benefits and shortcomings of renewable energy sources.

Dr. McCarthy replied that he believes that the proper amount of development will vary from different areas but will emerge through a process that weighs ecological and biological insights while also considering what will help communities thrive economically and will provide a blueprint for the future and that a balanced approach to development, fossil fuel production, renewable energy production, and preservation will be best.

3. Federal Delegation Member Reports and Updates

Congressman Bishop discussed his goals for the next session and his Public Lands Initiative, which seeks to build consensus among stakeholders in Utah to designate lands for both conservation and development. He stated that land management decisions should be made by the legislature as opposed to the judicial branch. He also stated that state officials are competent to manage the lands and they can do so better and more efficiently than federal officials. He indicated that he plans to take action to change the Antiquities Act, because it is being abused for political purposes.

The commission asked Congressman Bishop what action might be needed from the Legislature on his federal legislation and the likelihood of the designation of another national monument in Utah. Congressman Bishop responded that it is currently unknown whether any of his legislation will require corresponding action by the Legislature and that he takes the Obama administration at its word that no current action is being undertaken to designate any land in Utah as a monument under the Antiquities Act.

Mr. Ron Dean, Natural Resources State Director, Senator Orrin Hatch, noted the current work being undertaken by Senator Hatch regarding public lands, including land owner issues relating to the desert tortoise habitat, improvement of the sage grouse habitat through a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for the pinyon juniper, land owner issues related to the Scofield Reservoir area, the purchase of Y Mountain by Brigham Young University, state fracking issues, and Payments in Lieu of Taxes issues.

4. Work Plan for Commission

Rep. Ivory presented "Proposed Commission Work Plan". Rep. Ivory studied several neighboring states' approaches to studying and offering solutions in public lands policy and recommended that the commission pursue a similar course of action. Rep. Ivory also recommended a number of public lands policy experts whose contributions could be utilized by the commission.

5. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Noel moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Stratton adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.