

Daggett County Public Lands Advisory Committee
December 8, 2014
6:00 PM at the Daggett County Courthouse
Meeting Minutes

Members Attending: Chair Ross Catron, Hank Gutz, Ryan Mosely, Jack Lytle, Jon C. Wilde, Chuck Bennington, Dave McDonald, Matt Henry

Members Excused: Chad Reed, Jerry Steglich

Public Attending: Casey Snider (Congressman Bishop's Office by phone), Ryan D. Wilcox (Senator Lee's Office by phone), Wade Garrett (by Phone); Craig Collett, Joe V. Hickey; Thompson Davis, David Orr, Troy D. Ostler, David Potter, David Potter, Jr. Allen Young, Clyde Slauch, Rowdy Muir, Bruce Erickson, Jesse Jackson, Charles Card, Glen Tinker, Mark Kot, David Allison, Jean Dickinson, Tanner Davis, Woody Bair, Kevin Ashby , Brian Raymond

- 6:00 PM **Welcome and introductions:** Ross welcomed new committee members. Review last meeting notes.
- 6:10 PM **Approve bylaws following discussion:** Ross proposed some changes to bylaws as distributed last week including one person allowed on board that is not a resident, but has an economic interest in the County. David Allison questioned the word usage of "multiple use". Motioned carried to accept the bylaws as proposed by Ross.
- 6:15 PM **Letter from Conservation District** to Rob Bishop and CC'd to a bunch of people. They voiced their concerns about Conservation District not being involved sooner. Asked to get the Commission to meet with district and that was declined. Environmental groups do not have the best interest of the county and there are concerns with the PLI as it stands. They asked for specific statics. The Conservation District asked to be involved in all future dealings with the PLI.
- 6:20 PM **Specific components of the current Public Lands Initiative discussion:** How do we start this process when everything is tied together and how things affect each other. Chuck Bennington stated that it was his understanding that at this time there is no specific language and it is all just a proposal. Casey stated that this is correct. Dave McDonald questioned whether the proposal could be modified or if we would have to start all over. Casey stated that the proposal is what was agreed upon by all of the different groups and if large scale adjustments are made it would have to be with the consent of all of the different groups. Small adjustments

can be made with language. The gives and takes were brought up and Casey stated that it has never been broke down point by point, it is a total package. One thing is not tied in particular to another.

Bruce Ericson was introduced by Ross and given time to introduce himself as a ski resort professional with over 35 years of experience in the industry, and the thoughts behind the idea of winter recreation in the 6800 acres. The County requested that he and Denzel Rowland, another Ski Professional with 40+ years of ski resort experience, look at the possibility of a ski resort/winter recreation area in Daggett County. This was looked at from the perspective of private industry doing the development, so the County did not have to be in the resort industry. He felt that Daggett County needs to set aside some land for future development. The plot we are asking for is bigger than White Pine in Pinedale and about the same as Pine Creek in Cokeville. Since we don't know exactly what the resort wants we've allowed for extra space.

Jack asked why this kind of opportunity would be denied if it was to remain Forest Service. Bruce addressed this by talking about the nature of how the area is currently listed (mainly road less). Comparisons were made between this area and Beaver Mountain; our area would have beginning slopes. Questions were raised about snow making. How much water would be needed (900 AF)? Bruce said you need ½ AF for 100 A. The practicality of pumping out of the Gorge was discussed. Were other sites looked at? Yes, there were many sites looked at, but this one was chosen for its location and terrain. What kind of population is needed to support this kind of operation? Different areas were discussed along with their history. It was determined that there is always a risk with this kind of business. The question was asked, what would SITLA do with the land. Would this be a lease or sold. Brian stated that it was the intent of the agreement for SITLA to offer the land for private development. Would the resort be subsidized by real estate? Bruce did not think that was a good idea.

Bruce said it is simply a question of providing an area for the private sector to develop in the future or walking away and not planning for that future development. If the ski area turns out to not be feasible, what could be done with the land? What had to be given up to get this as part of the proposal? SITLA will be here at the next meeting to discuss the mechanics of this deal. Much discussion ensued concerning what Daggett County would be giving up to gain this land. Bruce agreed that this was a valid question and that this development would not occur in the next two years, maybe more like five. Casey reminded everyone that it was all of the gives with all of the takes. This one chunk of land was not the entire deal. Dave McDonald stated that 6800 A is a lot of land and that all of it would not be needed. Bruce conceded that not all of the acreage was useable. Dave Allison stated that the county is only getting a tax base. Hank stated that 50% would come to the county and split with the school district. There was also a question as to how the infrastructure would be provided to this land. A discussion ensued as to how this would be provided and that some would have to go across Forest Service land. It would take a lot of money to provide infrastructure to this land. Jack suggested that the bill ask that the road less designation be lifted.

Wilderness Area Forest Service

Ross states that it is approximately 49,000 acres. There are at least four grazing units in this area. The sheep creek canal is in this area. Rowdy says there may be future harvesting in this area, but if it is turned to Wilderness that cannot happen. There are watershed issues with this being road less and Wilderness. Conservation Districts and permit holders have been trying to work out issues with counties concerning timber, vegetation and watershed. Ross states that it is a very expensive process when dealing with NEPA and moving forward with such a proposal. Rowdy brought the crowd up to date that there is some harvest interest in the area. Casey did state that they were looking at language of other states that might allow for harvest in Wilderness. Rowdy stated that most of the areas that were being looked at were in the vicinity of Spirit Lake. Discussion occurred about giving up even more rights to the government and they become even more entangled in how the area can be used. It just seems that we are making it more difficult for any kind of use. How can the canal be protected if this is designated Wilderness?

Ross discussed the idea of presenting the Commission with alternatives. The question was asked if the Federal government is on the march for Wilderness in this area. The answer is no. The question was brought up as to why this area was not considered for Wilderness in 1984. Someone answered that it did not qualify for Wilderness. Casey corrected this assumption with the fact that in 1984 neither the Daggett Commission nor Uintah Commission chose to participate in that study. Casey also clarified that in 1984 only the Forest Service was studied; the BLM was not looked at. There were some comments that maybe Wilderness is inevitable and if that were to happen maybe the parameters should be no more road less and the corridors for roads are a ½ mile on each side. Dave McDonald suggested that this deal is not just attached to Daggett County. Casey stated that this proposal only deals with Daggett County. Someone asked is there any portion of this that is win/win? Ross said we are trying to work through each portion of this to determine that. Someone wanted to know if there were any positive aspects of this. Ross stated that the Ski resort and the gas storage facility were positive. Jean wanted to know if there would be a time that research that has been done on these areas can be provided to the Committee in writing. Ross stated that if Jean was willing to provide it, the Committee would like it at any time.

Ross started a discussion of what the Committee's time line should be. Consider having a meeting on December 15th and then break until after the new year and when the new Commissioners take office. Meet until they have a recommendation to the Commission.

800 Acres in Rifle Canyon near Dutch John

This land is proposed to be used under the Recreation and Public Purpose Act. Casey stated that this area was identified as a potential site for a public transfer to accommodate a rifle range, an electric plant and a land fill. Ross asked who would be responsible for a fire on this property. Casey stated that the county would be responsible. Jean asked if the county would have to be responsible for the hazardous waste that is currently in this area.

Rowdy said the Forest Service would go out and assess the hazard and go from there. Ross stated that this would have to be included in the language of the initiative. Ross asked what the likely hood would be of this being developed for Public Purpose. Dave McDonald did not feel that we were a big enough county to have two landfills or cover both of those expenses. Wouldn't it make more sense to haul Dutch John's to the Manila one and work on expanding that? Rowdy and Ross both commented that even with the seven new acres the Manila landfill has limited capacity. There was some discussion about the proposed ATV trail from this canyon to Brown's Park and whether the sage grouse would affect that.

Ross stated that this area would be the responsibility of the county and have limited ways of being developed in the future. Ross asked Casey if the uses could be changed in the future. Casey stated that there probably was some flexibility as long as it was public use. How was the boundary determined? It was determined that it was the ridgeline. The SITLA land was not included because it could be privately developed. Rowdy stated that the parcel that is being looked at is land locked for the Forest Service and that there are benefits for both parties(this comment was made in reference to the Manila dump).

9:00 PM Ross suggested that they meet on Monday at 6:00 to hear from SITLA and look at that parcel. Jack suggested that they also look at the other pieces on the east side of the county of wilderness and a Conservation Area. All agreed that they would try to do this. Jean stated that the 2477 issue would have to be addressed. The committee agreed. Ross suggested that there may need to be another meeting to consider all of the other issues. Maybe the first meeting in January will need to be on the 5th. Ross would like to do it in a timely manner so that the recommendation can be made to the Commission. Then if the Commission wants the committee to do more work it will give some time to do that. Dave McDonald asked if there was a Daggett County Public Lands Policy. It was stated that there was one at some time but no one can find it. The state's or other counties can be used if needed and one can be put together from that.

Meeting was adjourned.