

Minutes of the
Work Meeting/Public meeting
of the Daggett County Public Lands Advisory Committee
on Monday February 2, 2015.

Committee members present: Ross Catron, Jon Wilde, Chad Reed, David McDonald, Hank Gutz, Jack Lytle, Mike Musselman, Ryan Mosely, Matt Henry and Chuck Bennington (by phone). Members excused: Jerry Steglich. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Catron at 1:00pm.

Also present: David Allison, Jean Dickenson, Miles Hanberg, Troy Ostler, Boyd Pallesen, Floyd Briggs, Vance Broadbent, Charles Card, Carol Gardiner, Boyd Perry, Craig Collett, Woody Bair, Karen Perry, Joe V. Hickey and Maddy Liebing.

Ross stated that some members of the Committee had been able to voice their opinion of the proposal and others had not. He suggested that the committee continue in that direction. Jean asks if the public can be provided with a map of what Daggett County looks like now (Forest Boundaries, BLM, NRA). Ross said that they have done that. Jean says that we keep looking at the map of the proposal. Ross says that for the purpose of the committee the proposal map needs to be up. Dave says the map needs to be turned off, because we seem to be stuck on the map and it is apparent that no one on the committee agrees with the current proposal. Chad asks if the committee is just wasting it's time. Will anyone come back to the table to negotiate a new proposal? Ross states that the Committee has not agreed that it needs to start from scratch. He feels we need to go through it and see what we can keep and if we can't keep anything then we start over. Dave states that we have been informed by emails that if we are going to do any major modifications the environmental coalition will not come back to the table.

Hank discusses the proposal that was submitted by Daggett County to Bishop in August.

The committee goes back to the agenda. There is some discussion of the bylaws and that by missing three meetings; you would be off of the committee had been deleted. It is decided that if you miss three consecutive meetings, without a valid excuse, which is determined by the committee, you will be out. Hank makes the motion and Mike seconds it. All in favor, except Matt, motion carries.

Miles Hanberg, from the Utah Division of Wildlife, is introduced. He is based out of Uintah County, but his territory stretches into Wasatch. He is here to talk about wildlife habitats and how they are maintained. High interest species are: Mule Deer, Pronghorn, Mountain Sheep, Elk, Moose and the Flaming Gorge Fisheries. Sage grouse are also a high profile species.

Mule deer summer and winter habitat is discussed. Summer habitat is higher and mainly consists of grass. Winter is in the lower areas and they are dependent on a type of sagebrush.

Elk pretty much stay in the same areas. They stay higher, but will come down for preferable food. They stay more in Aspen habitat and open areas that contain grass.

Big horn sheep prefer rocky steep areas, but also open grassy areas to monitor predators.

Moose are in the High meadows and prefer grass.

Mountain goats are mainly above the tree lines.

Flaming Gorge fishery could be devastated by fire and runoff. So the area must be maintained to ensure that these types of things don't happen and risk the health of the lake. With both the lake and the river, there is always a concern of invasive species.

Sage grouse thrive on early to mid vegetation (Forbes, clovers and insects). They need the sagebrush to survive the winter.

Colorado cutthroat survive in many of our streams and they must be managed to continue that habitat.

Miles talks about the forest ecology. How after an area is disturbed it starts as grass, moves on as brush and then to juniper and pinyon pine. With conifer encroachment there is very little grass or brush that the native animal populations depend on.

Wilderness and NCA promote lack of management and that can lead to any of these things and also invasive species. There are no mechanical treatments in these areas. You need to be very careful when placing these designations on areas and study what the long term effects will be. Can wolves be introduced to the area because it's wilderness? It is determined that it could happen, but the designation doesn't make it more likely. Each type of mechanical treatment is named and none of them are conducive to Wilderness and we don't know if it will be allowed in the NCA.

The Watershed restoration project is also very active throughout Daggett County and this is a long term project that will be continuing.

Miles summarizes that the main economic drivers in Daggett County require habitat management. They have been playing catch up for years, but at this time the county is in pretty good shape. There are hopes that if areas go to Wilderness proper language can be implemented to continue with the maintenance. Wilderness usually leads to less wildlife and grazing permits.

There are updates on the PLI on Uintah and Summit County. Joe states that the environmentalists are asking for 27000 acres in Summit. There is a 1 ½ mile buffer zone by Spirit Lake. Some current Wilderness is going away. Discussion occurs about where Mountain Sheep and Domestic Sheep will be located. Summit County worked on firming up the rights for livestock, but not to try to keep hunters out. Joe felt confident the current plan would pass.

Jack reported that Uintah County had not yet reached an agreement.

15 Minute break.

Ross asks people to talk about what the committee would like to change. Ross says that the committee needs to decide what they want to see in this proposal. Ryan wonders what the ultimate goal of the

Commission is. Is it Clay basin and the income? Jack says the way he understands it – it's all on the table. Ross agrees that the Committee has been given the green light. Dave states that Bishop started this as a way to settle contentious land issues. Dave says that firming up the grazing rights should be a priority. Mike talks about how this proposal was set up for economic development and to gain revenue for the County. Mike says that if that is the case we could say that everything above 10,000 feet is Wilderness. Hank says he doesn't see how this is going to lower anyone's taxes or create more jobs. Those are the things we need out of this proposal. Jack says that from ten different places he can see issues that need to be addressed. He says that our County already has many areas that are roadless, that are already treated as Wilderness. We don't need the designation. He is comfortable with starting over. He doesn't feel that any private land owners or users should be negatively affected.

Jon thought this could work at first, but now he feels it is being shoved down our throats. Jon would rather see trading federal land to private and that would help tax base. Jon is open.

Chuck says that he struggles on the structure of the proposal. He doesn't just want to walk away from the current proposal. He doesn't understand on how to weigh the gets and gives.

Matt states that we need to go by the current proposal, so that we don't lose what we have. He would like to go through it piece by piece, throw out what we don't want and keep what we want. He doesn't want to open up new issues.

Jack says that we can learn from what other Counties are doing. We have a public lands policy that we need to follow and it hasn't happened yet.

Ross asks what the committee wants in this agreement. Dave says that we need to go back to the original intent of the bill and resolve land use issues. There are areas of the county that fit the Wilderness designation, what do we want or need to get for them. Make a ranking scale so that it is easier to prioritize what we want.

Ross asks if the majority of the committee is willing to trade Wilderness for other things. Dave goes through a list that he has compiled and given to the group. Roadless designations, RS2477 issues and grazing issues are discussed. Ross states that the entire greenbelt tax base is only \$15,000 a year. However, you have to look at how much other money is expended in the county by those businesses. Dave states that by making grazing a right not an allotment, it would be hard to ever look at putting some sort of Wilderness designation. Dave feels that the best area for development is the land surrounding Dutch John. Forest Service land in that area could be traded to SITLA for private development.

Jack discusses SRS funds and how they might be tied to this.

Ross asks if the committee wants to move toward economic development and roadless designations. He wants to know what can be done to cause this. There is time for public comment over this. Jean states that the public may have many of the answers they are looking for and is there going to be a time for them to make recommendations to the committee. Another comment is made about how our

economy is driven totally by tourism and we have a very short season to do it in. Another comment is about the importance of watershed management and water rights.

Mike addresses the amount of money that is spent by people coming to hunt and fish. A cow is valued between \$1000 – 2000, what is the value of the elk? How much money is brought in by the Sportsman?

Ross suggests the committee look at specific areas that would be best for economic development. Dave asks whether it would be beneficial to privatize some of the concession businesses. It is determined that it would be too expensive for the concessioners. No one seems to think the 6800 acres is what they want. Ross asks if there are other issues (roadless, SR2477) that could be resolved with this process. There is discussion about how the release of roadless could have economic value for ATV and bike trails. Dave discusses that the areas around Dutch John that could be developed in the next ten years. The only thing that could be an immediate benefit is the Clay Basin storage facility.

Jean states that we can find out the value of a deer, elk, etc. She again sums up all of the things that will be impacted by the lack of ability for management. Ross states that there are going to be tradeoffs. Jean states that you better know the repercussions of the tradeoffs before you make them.

Maddy Liebing addresses the committee about how Wilderness could affect Spirit Lake Lodge. They need to have camping to be allowed on either side of the road. Ross states that it is something that needs to be addressed. It would be nice to have the same buffer for Daggett County that Summit County is getting. Maddy states access is very important for the lodge as all of their heat comes from firewood. Ross asks if they can still have all of the camping and access, would Wilderness affect their business. Maddy doesn't think so, but they still need to be able to maintain trails and that requires using a chain saw.

Ross asks how they want to proceed. Dave suggests that each committee member make a list of what they see being a benefit to the county. There is discussion about how to solicit comments from the public. These comments can then be put into a list to start from. It is decided that a letter will be sent out by using the newsletter list to do this. Dave offers that every comment that comes in could be put to the litmus test of every get must be such that it is a broader benefit of the residents of Daggett County. Jean discusses the impacts that this has on others that don't live within the county. She also states that the grazers are putting together language to allow them to do what is necessary for their businesses. They need help with what has been signed on for roads and the RS2477 lawsuit. There is discussion over getting Mark Ward involved for help.

Ross states that he will put together a letter over the next few days to go out to the public. Time is of the essence. Ross says that the end of March is important, but it isn't the only thing to consider. Jack states that we need to set some dates so that the time line can be met.

Jack will see what information he can round up on RS2477.

Timelines are discussed. Dave offers that March is not the definite date. Casey has stated that Daggett County has a place holder and the proposal can change over the next six months. Jack asks is it important enough to continue with much more time? It is decided that it is.

It is decided that the committee will ask for public comment and then come back and discuss those comments. Public comments would be open for a limited amount of time and the committee would meet on February 23rd at 6:00pm to move forward.

Discussion ensued as to whether anything will happen due to the statement from the environmentalist. It is decided that the committee can at least try. Jean asks if the public can see the response from the environmentalists. Ross thought that copies had been passed out at the last meeting, but he could get her one today. The committee is not trying to hide anything from the public.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved: 2/23/15