

**WHITE PINE COUNTY PUBLIC LAND USERS ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, February 12th, 2019

6:00pm

**White Pine County Library Conference Room
950 Campton Street, Ely, NV 89301**

Present: Craig Baker, Chairman Jacob Carter, Alexa Mergen, Mark Tefft, Bill Wilson.

Also Present: Bill Miller, White Pine County Commission Liaison Steve Stork, Emily Willard (Secretary), James Woolsey (Great Basin National Park).

I. Call to Order

Jacob Carter called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions

Alexa Mergen introduced herself and stated that she sits on the school board that she sat on a school board formally and that she manages on Airbnb.

III. Public Comment

Bill Miller discussed the Senate Bill regarding land conveyance and stated that Senator Heller tried to push it through but it did not make it through the legislature. There are issues at McCoy Creek, the Boy Scout camp boundaries are within the Wilderness Area.

IV. *Discussion/Action – Approval of the January 8th, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Bill Wilson made a motion to approve the January 8th, 2019 meeting minutes, Craig Baker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Liaison Report

Commissioner Steve Stork apologized for his absences in the past and inquired what the PLU AC needs him to report on. Sherman Jacob Carter explained, anything that comes up in commission meetings, the lands act, Etc. Commissioner Steve Stork described the White Pine County Commission request to the BLM for a 60-day extension for the Silver State trail public comment period. Bill Miller and Alexa Mergen requested newspaper and radio advertisements. Discussion ensued on a new secretary and the hiring of a natural resource specialist for the county. Mark Tefft inquired if the advisory boards have any pull and how often the White Pine County Commission takes note of suggestions from the boards. Discussion ensued on meeting every other month versus every month. The issue is the BLM 30-day comment period.

VI. *Discussion/Action

A. *Discussion/Action – The Proposed White Pine County Silver State Trail

Chairman Jacob Carter thanked Commissioner Steve Stork for his time extension update. Bill Miller discussed the request made to the Commission to look at the White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan, stating that he did not see it on any of the Commission agendas. Jacob Carter discussed a motion for a recommendation made at the previous PLUAC meeting and read the White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan #17 on the OHV plan. Bill Miller discussed the South Steptoe Valley Management Plan, the Elk Plan, the White Pine County Sage Grouse Plan, etc., stating that these are run by steering committees, then put up for public comment.

Commissioner Steve Stork stated that the White Pine County Commission requested that the BLM readdress OHV use, people always ask, why can't we be like Utah? Jacob Carter stated that Utah has a serious OHV plan. People should be able to use OHV's on public land; we are concerned by the designation, especially on a 55 mile-per-hour road. This is not an OHV Trail. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that the BLM seems to be disingenuous about the plan and design and he will not be voting for it if we can't get more of our questions answered. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that this is not an exciting route, besides being dangerous, and does not even connect to Lincoln County.

Bill Wilson stated that it is important not to confuse problems with OHV's with problems that are specific to the Trail. Yes, they are going to drive too fast, they do this anyway, but with an OHV plan they will be everywhere. Bill Wilson stated that what most people say is, we don't want them to bother us.

Bill Miller discussed his experience with designation stating that the feds will have control of 230 miles of Road. His other concern is Sage grouse, there were other concerned counties, and 4 Mile circumference around Lex. Bill Miller stated that the number one issue is renewable resources; the second issue is designation and traditional uses. Bill Miller stated that he worked with various ranchers on the White Pine County Conservation and recreational development Act. Commissioner Steve Stork's question is, what is the big gain on designation? You can use it whether you designated or not. Bill Miller discussed funding for signs and maintenance. Mark test stated, we can promote the area as an OHV spot without the Silver State trail. Bill Miller stated that the plan specifies a North to South Route only. Jacob Carter stated that Loops are popularized via advertisement. Bill Miller stated, more time is needed. Jacob Carter stated, as Curt Leet might say, the BLM sat down, took out a map, and marked the most prominent north to south route without taking anything else into account, and chose Cave Valley Road.

Discussion ensued on designation. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that his concern is eventually they will say, oh this route is designated; now you can't ride anywhere else. Bill Wilson stated that he would like to hear from Lincoln County and the BLM on what the rationale is behind the BLM's decision? Jacob Carter stated, the rationale was to avoid as much private land as possible. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that he would like to have a public forum because the BLM public meetings are insufficient. Bill Miller stated that the December BLM meeting was not helpful and that a lot of unhappy people attended. Lincoln County Wide and all

of their roads to 60 feet and as a result the BLM required permitting of all Lincoln County's roads. Commissioner Steve Stork stated, our roads predate their agency and Nye County has done a great job mapping their roads. And counting natural resource person could handle this and then we would have some ammunition.

Commissioner Steve Stork stated that his perspective is, let's update the Environmental assessment and see where this may go. Bill Wilson stated that he would like to see the PLUAC be a part of this. Commissioner Steve Stork agreed. Mark Tefft inquired if the PLUAC has to agree to the trail to be a Cooperative agency. Commissioner Steve Stork and Jacob Carter stated, no. Brief discussion ensued on a 60-day extension for public comment. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that we should have an answer tomorrow.

B. Discussion – *2019 Western States Survey, New Bridge Strategy / FM3 Research, January 2 – 9, 2019*

Alexa Mergen and Jacob Carter discussed the demographic surveyed noting that it is mainly Urban and Suburban. Alexa Mergen stated that it is worth noting that opinions cross political boundaries, race, Etc. Raising awareness is vital on fire and water issues, but unfortunately OHV use was neglected in the survey. Alexa Mergen stated that this is important because this is what we will be hearing from when decisions are made. Alexa Mergen stated that she has mixed feelings about solar and wind power. Bill Miller stated that one windmill in Spring Valley is out of sync due to the pygmy rabbit population. Commissioner Steve Stork discussed the destruction of critical desert tortoise habitat off of Interstate 15 for the solar plant there. Brief discussion ensued.

Alexa Mergen stated that the question is, how to get the word out about other views and what goes on in White Pine County. She mentioned the US Senate Bill recently passed regarding public lands and stated that politicians know this is a hot-button issue; this is why we need a natural resource person. Commissioner Steve Stork inquired if anyone is aware of any OHV plans or any Utah research sources that we may contact for a copy of their OHV plan. Craig Baker stated that his brother is in contact with Milliard County Commissioners.

Discussion ensued on Clark County OHV plan. Alexa Mergen inquired, what money comes back to the county? Bill Miller stated that license fees funding collected our return to the state not to the county. Discussion ensued on allocation of funds. Alexa Mergen inquired if the county has a way to collect data on the use of the natural resources so that we can justify request for more funding and if Kyle Horvath might post a four question survey online, rather than relying on paper. Bill Wilson stated that Sports World would know. Mark Tefft suggested a survey be posted at Great Basin National Park.

C. *Update/Discussion/Action – Bureau of Land Management

Representative from the Bureau of Land Management was not in attendance.

D. *Update/Discussion/Action – U.S. Forest Service

Representative from the U.S. Forest Service was not in attendance.

E. *Update/Discussion/Action – National Park Service

James Woolsey mentioned the increase in visitation and stated that he had located statistics on Utah Parks which had the same pulse of growth, but Nevada has had a steeper curve. James Woolsey stated that people are becoming annoyed with the crowds at the parks in Utah. The design on Wheeler Campground is nearing completion and will be out to bid in March and April. The project should be completed in 3 years.

SNPLMA round 17 has stalled the Lehman Caves Campground renovation. The Lehman Caves electrical wiring is from the 1970s. A team is working on that as well as sidewalks which are blocking the natural water flow. This will be a four-year project, mainly winter work. Renovations are also being planned for Lehman Orchard, specifically Mr. Lehman's cabins; they are two years into a five-year project. The Strawberry Creek area is to be opened in May. The bridge has been reinstalled and needs to be inspected by the state.

Commissioner Steve Stork inquired about rehabilitation. James Woolsey stated that reseeding was last done last week. The treatments took on the Forest Service side but not on the BLM side; this is probably elevation related. Elk love it there due to the grass. Bill Miller inquired about the road to the Lexington Arch. James Woolsey stated that the BLM meeting was scheduled during the government shutdown and there has been no word from Mindy Seal. Bill Miller stated that this is a good access point for sportsman going onto BLM land, and inquired if it will be absorbed by the Park. James Woolsey stated no, that would take an act of Congress.

F. *Update/Discussion/Action – Nevada State Parks

Representative from the Nevada State Parks was not in attendance.

VII. *Discussion/Action – Updates, Issues Contained in White Pine County's Public Land Use Policies Including OHV Use, Energy, Minerals, Water, Land Sales, and Greater Sage-Grouse

VIII. *Discussion/Action – Committee Vacancies, Resignations, Appointments

Previously discussed.

IX. Next Meeting Time and Date Announcement

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12th, 2019 at 6:00pm.

X. Public Comment

None were made.

XI. *Adjournment

As there were no further discussion items for the committee, Jacob Carter adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.