

**NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
HELD AUGUST 15, 2023 IN THE WHITE PINE COUNTY
LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM**

Committee Members:

Cody Odgers, Chairman (absent)	Mark Tefft
Jacob Carter, Vice Chairman	Gary Perea (via Zoom)
Dave Baker (via Zoom)	Danny Reed
William R. Wilson	Frederick Partey (via Zoom)
Ross Rivera (absent)	Dana Johnson (absent)
Alt. Craig Baker (absent)	Steven Carter (via Zoom)
Alt. Robin Peterson (absent)	Secretary, Nichole Stephey

White Pine County Representatives:

Jeremy Drew, RCI via Zoom	Laurie L. Carson, County Commission Vice Chairman
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Also Present:

George Chachas from George Town Media; Superintendent James Woolsey representing Great Basin National Park (GBNP); Samantha Elliott, City Councilwoman, on Zoom; William Miller



Vice Chairman Jacob Carter brought the meeting into session at 5:32 p.m.

1. 5:30 P.M. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Secretary Nichole Stephey apologized for the pop-up box on the Zoom screen that kept appearing.

George Chachas addressed the Chairman stating that he submitted public comment on April 17th, resubmitted it on May 16th, again on July 24th, and did so during the meeting. He didn't read the comment but asked for answers to the questions contained within. He then referenced a County Commission Meeting held August 9th and agenda item 1C1 which was a tracking list from RCI containing wind and solar applications. He advised that he read different articles regarding different cities' solar projects and concerns with their water usage leading to dried up wells, dust suppression issues, etc. He listed the projects as being in CA, AZ, and NM. He wanted to know if this Committee shared the same concerns. He noted the February 21st County Commission Meeting where the Golf Course well proposal became an issue and stated that the well needed to stay on City-supplied water and the County needed to pay their fair share. He continued to rant about the limited acreage of water owned by the County, the fact it is allotted for industrial growth, and his concern that the water rights could be revoked by the State if the County kept leasing them out for uses other than industrial growth. Time was called.

- *3. Discussion/for Possible Action: The Committee will review the Nevada Division of Water Resources Monthly Report for water right filings made in July 2023. The Committee may take action to recommend County review and/or involvement in any application that may affect the County's water resources or related interests. Jeremy Drew, RCI**

From Zoom, Jeremy Drew from RCI advised the Committee that there were no filings last month, but this month there were two filings: one through Trough Spring by Lear Ranch at 1.72 duty for stock water and one for milling and mining in Green Springs by Halstead-Forsgren Ranches at 4 duty. From Zoom, Gary Perea noted that he used to get water application reports from surrounding counties. Mr. Drew advised that he will add those for Elko, Lincoln, Eureka, and Nye counties in the future and Mr. Perea volunteered to look into how to obtain reports from nearby Utah counties.

- 4. Discussion/Update from White Pine County**

Commission Vice Chairman Laurie L. Carson advised the Committee that a closed listening meeting was had with Senator Rosen and her staff and the Department of the Interior (DOI) with DOI Secretary Ms. Daniel concerning the proposed National Monument in Spring Valley. She stated that it was well attended by stakeholders and she listed attendees as being the Ely Shoshone Tribe, the Confederated Goshute Tribes, Spring Valley Wind, Jeremy Drew from RCI, Mike Wheable from the County, State Director Jon Raby from BLM, Shadrach Robertson from White Pine County Chamber of Commerce, Caroline McIntosh from Tourism and Recreation Board, Monte Sanford who is the National Monument Director, Arevia Power, and others. She requested a tour to be held for the County. Things that were discussed were existing rights, whether they were permitting hunting, firearms, concerns in regard to the National Park running it, transmission lines, and the overall size of the monument. She noted that it all sounded very positive; that much that was being requested could be accommodated. More concerns were noted such as the area that stretched across the highway, signage around the monument, pull-outs, etc. She added that the meeting was invitation only and was very productive.

- 5. Discussion/Update from various agencies and organizations:**

a. Bureau of Land Management

No one was present.

b. U.S. Forest Service

No one was present.

c. National Park Service

Superintendent James Woolsey passed out a hand-out and advised that he will email a copy after the meeting. He announced his retirement that will take effect later this month and other vacancies at the park. Anita Hansen will be the acting Superintendent until his position is filled. Lehman Caves and Great Basin Visitor Centers are still open, but hours are being reduced beginning September 5th. They will start to rehab the electrical and lighting in the caves next winter and that will impact tours. The Lower Lehman Campground rehab began yesterday, and it will be finished next year, he reported. The Upper Lehman Campground and Wheeler Campgrounds were recently

rehabbed and are looking really good. The Round 20 SNPLMA cycle opened up and projects are due in September; they plan to submit a project for the Strawberry Creek area that was previously burned. The Wheeler Peak scenic road is open to the top and the Lexington Arch Road is fixed and open. Snake Creek Road is also open. Superintendent Woolsey provided some GBNP statistics from 2022 and 2023: it had 150k recreational visits, it contributed \$9.1 million to the local economy, and there were 9k participants in the astronomy programs. They continue to partner with the Northern Nevada Railroad to host Star Train Programs on Fridays. They also offer three astronomy programs per week that are well attended throughout the summer, he added. October 14th is the date for the eclipse and they are planning to have thousands of people come for the event. He talked about the high elevation archeology survey and touched on their research project on bats. He then went on to discuss the Lehman historic restoration project which will restore the orchard and the cabin. He updated the Committee on the SNPLMA project that will upgrade the electrical and plumbing infrastructure in Lehman Caves that is nearly completed with the first phase and will begin the second phase this winter. They plan to restore Bonneville Cutthroat Trout to Baker Lake and Johnson Lake; they conducted DNA tests there and they came back as having no fish. GBNP has partnered with the US Forest Service to conduct studies of 40 caves in the area geared around preservation. They received \$4.5 million in funding to rehabilitate the water and waste water systems that were installed at Lehman Caves through a mission 66 movement and he added that they may need to ask for more money. The Great Basin fire and landscape management plan was implemented, and it includes mechanical treatments and what could be the first prescribed fire in Great Basin National Park. He described slash piles as you enter the Park and stated that the Lake Mead fire crew planned to burn them.

In response to a question from Mark Tefft, Superintendent Woolsey explained that they have already gone out to bid for the rehabilitation of the infrastructure of Lehman Caves and he spoke more about what will be done with that project. He added that a new employee was hired at the Western National Parks Association, Gary Perea.

d. Nevada State Parks

No one was present.

e. Department of Wildlife

No one was present.

f. Resource Concepts, Inc.

From Zoom, Jeremy Drew with RCI advised that he met with Department of Wildlife regarding the Cave Lake Dam which should be completed in November and they will fill the lake next spring. This Committee was cc'd on the comment letter on BLM's proposed rule for renewable energy development that the BOCC recently passed; Mr. Drew gave kudos to everyone for working on the energy section on the Public Lands Policy because it came in handy on that letter. He mentioned the Proposed National Monument in Spring Valley and the invitation-only session by Senator Rosen as it was a good discussion, he felt, and he added that they were supportive of the proposal and the

stakeholders were not shy of indicating their concerns. What ended up on a map or on a proclamation was important such as size, conflicts, drawing attention to an area that was previously under wraps, and what those unintended consequences might mean were all discussed. He stated that the DOI representative echoed what Mr. Drew presented and agreed that all details matter. Also, this National Monument is early in the process and no one has a clear sense of time on how long it will take to be approved. Regarding sage grouse, the County is still a cooperating agency and Mr. Drew is participating in bi-weekly meetings that are not public at this time. Bald Mountain has a notice of intent pending for a draft EIS for the expansion for the Juniper Project that will be coming out at the end of the week with a public meeting. A comment letter on the Eliza Mineral Exploration Project came out from the County Commission and this Committee was copied. The County is a cooperating agency for solar programmatic EIS with the BLM and he attends bi-weekly meetings. The White Pine Pumped Storage Project gave a presentation to SLUPAC that they are moving forward with the hydrogeological study and they have formed a wildlife working group on which the County has 2 seats. Greenlink North, Crosstie, and SWIP North has about 12 to 13 pre NEPA applications for ground water and water impacts that will require further analysis when in a formal NEPA process, but none are at that stage yet. BLM has provided him some mapping Shape files to help him determine where those application are at. Mr. Drew noted other projects that have been filed with the PUC of Nevada, but they may not move forward. There will be a Sagebrush Ecosystems Council Meeting tomorrow and Mr. Drew advised that he will listen in on a couple of projects that are on their agenda; Pumped Storage and Stagecoach Wind. Mr. Wilson asked for more information about the Eliza Mineral Exploration Project and noted how important the Hamilton Mining District was for Nevada. Mr. Drew noted it was located south of Hamilton with 12 bore holes and he pulled up a map. There was further discussion on that.

Vice Chairman Carter noted that regarding the wild horse gathers, some had a stay issued against them, but a judge said they had done everything right and the stay was lifted.

***6. Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of minutes from the July 18, 2023 Natural Resources Advisory Committee Meeting**

This item was left as discussion only due to a lack of quorum.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

***8. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Jacob Carter adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Approved this 19th day of September 2023.


Cody Odgers, Chairman

ATTEST:


Nichole Stephey, Secretary