

Public Lands Committee

June 11, 2019 | 8:00 am - 9:30 am

311 3rd St. S. | Nampa, ID | Home Federal Room

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

Chair Butts called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Approval of the February 2019 Minutes (Action Item):

Minutes to be approved at next meeting.

Introduction from the BLM Director | John Ruhs, BLM

John Ruhs introduced himself. He has been on the job for about 3 months. Prior, he was the director of BLM Fire and Aviation. He graduated from the University of Idaho. Has not yet established a set of priorities for himself, but that is a work in progress. He believes in the BLM mission, and his priorities will be built on them. In March BLM signed the Idaho Greater Sage Grouse Record of Decision. Livestock grazing is a major activity in Idaho. There has been a lot of conflict and litigation over livestock regulations. BLM has recently been revising its livestock regulations. BLM is predicting a “normal” fire season, which means that there are still going to be a lot of fires. BLM fire suppression training in Idaho has reached more than 300 fire protection associations. BLM has transferred a lot of equipment to the FPAs. BLM is working hard to mitigate the impacts of wildfires through the construction of fuel breaks and other precautions on large, medium and small scales. BLM is working on proposals to expand existing, and develop new phosphate mines. He is looking for nominations for BLM RACs which have openings in all 4 of their RACs, the deadline is June 14th.

Use of Conservation Funds | Craig Quarterman, U.S Rep Mike Simpson’s Office

Craig Quarterman spoke on Senate Bill 47 Natural Resource Management Act. The Bill reflects the bipartisan Senate-House agreement. The bill will help improve public lands management, protect treasured land space, and increase public lands access for recreation while protecting private property rights. Also included in the bill is a permanent reauthorization of the deposit

**PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES | JUNE 10, 2019**

function of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Not less 40% will be allocated to state programs. One of the LWCF has three functions is the acquisition of land by the Federal Government. There are several grant programs granted through the LWCF. Kathy Muir has volunteered to help anyone who wants to start an application. It is a possibility that larger plots of land can be purchased and or developed. A shooting range could be a possibility.

Private Timber Land Purchasing | David Groeschl, IDL

Dave gave an explanation of what endowment lands are. The Idaho Constitution states the purpose of IDL is to maximize long term revenue to the endowments to which they were granted. When Idaho became a state, the federal government granted 3.6 million acres as trust lands to the state. Today there are only 2.4 million acres. 1.2 million acres were sold to private land owners. Why is IDL looking to acquire timber lands today? When land is sold, IDL has 5 years to reinvest the money either into new land, or into the permanent fund to be invested into stocks and bonds. A consulting company recommended that IDL buy timberland or farmland that meets certain requirements, if not able, move the money to the permanent fund. The largest beneficiary of the fund is K-12 education public schools. What are the benefits to the public? Increased distributions to the local school districts. Endowment land revenues generate funds better than property taxes do. Long time certainty of ownership is another benefit. Dave doesn't know what the Land Boards purchasing strategy going forward due to new administration. The new subcommittee will determine how the Land Board will work with county governments. The subcommittee doesn't have a schedule yet. The frequency of meetings is also unknown.

Conservation Easements | Jim Roscoe, Lemhi Regional Land Trust

Jim Roscoe gave a background on the Lemhi Regional Land Trust. It is based in Salmon, ID. It's service area is Lemhi and Custer counties. The organization is small with only 4 staff. Their mission is to conserve landscape and lifestyles in Central Idaho. It was formed in 2005 by 4 ranchers than were concerned about the Land and increasing loss of open space and agriculture. The Land Trust gave ranchers an option besides subdividing. Lemhi Regional Land Trust is working on keeping ranches together, to be passed down to the next generation of ranchers, and strategically restoring salmon habitats. The Land Trust works with the national organization called the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) which provides continuity and accreditation. There are over 400 land trusts as members of LTA. The Land Trust holds 13 easements on approximately 13,500 acres, and have fee titles on 4 properties totaling about 650 acres which were all donated to the Land Trust. Many people have stated that when they pass they want to donate their land to the Land Trust, which was unsolicited and unexpected. A conservation easement allows people to stay on their land. The first step is for the land to get appraised. Then they look at limitations that the owner wants to put on their property, and those are subtracted from the value of the property. The next value is the value of the conservation of the easement. The easement is on the property in perpetuity. A conservation easement does not affect property taxes.

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES | JUNE 10, 2019

Washington County Ordinances | Kirk Chandler, Washington County

Kirk Chandler gave an update on the ordinances in Washington County. There are over 125,000 acres of Forest Service, and 225,000 acres of BLM in Washington County. The Forest Service is not following the laws that were passed by Congress that they claim to follow. The laws state that local governments have jurisdiction over the federally managed lands in their counties, so that means the county should have some say on how those lands are managed. In 1909 the government decided to do split estates on federal lands. Ranchers were deeded the grass and the water rights, the federal government retained the mineral rights and the timber rights. Ranchers own the grass and water on federally managed lands not the federal government. As County Commissioners we have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, which includes private property rights. Washington County has created a burn ban, and an ordinance to cite those who don't follow the ban. Washington County made 5 ordinances that are based on federal and state laws that protect the private property rights and safety of the citizens of Washington County. No one has ever told them that they cannot legally do what they are doing.

The Committee adjourned at 9:30 am.

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES | JUNE 10, 2019

MEMBERSHIP

Members Present:

Chair: Wayne Butts, Com.

Vice: Mark Bair, Com.

Adams: Mike Paradis, Com.

Adams: Viki Purdy, Com.

Boundary: Dan Dinning, Com.

Caribou: Bryce Somsen, Com.

Clark: Greg Shenton, Com.

Clearwater: Rick Winkel, Com.

Fremont: Jordon Stoddard, Com.

Fremont: Lee Miller, Com.

Gooding: Ron Buhler, Com.

Idaho: Skip Brandt, Com.

Jefferson: Scott Hancock, Com.

Owyhee: Kelly Aberasturi, Com.

Twin Falls: Jack Johnson, Com.

Washington: Kirk Chandler, Com.

Members Absent:

Benewah: Sara Sexton, Tr.

Blaine: Dick Fosbury, Com.

Blaine: John David Davidson, Tr.

Bonner: Jeff Connolly, Com.

Bonneville: Dave Radford, Com.

Cassia: Dwight Davis, As.

Clearwater: Dawn Erlewine, Tr.

Custer: Lura Baker, Cl.

Elmore: Josh Dison, As.

Lemhi: Brett Barsalou, Com.

Lemhi: Rick Snyder, Com.

Lincoln: Rebecca Wood, Com.

Lincoln: Ann Youts, Tr.

Owyhee: Toni Gruenwald, As.

Owyhee: Jerry Hoagland, Com.

Owyhee: Joe Merrick, Com.

Shoshone: Jerry White, As.

Shoshone: Ellen Masterson, Tr.

Teton: Bob Heneage, Com.

Teton: Cindy Riegel, Com.

Teton: Billie Jean Siddoway, Pr.

Teton: Beverly Palm, Pr.

Others Present:

Timothy Hibbard, IAC

Roy Hubert, Lincoln

Roger Clark, Jefferson

Lisa Collini, Washington

Henrienne Westberg, Latah

Mike Ryan, Clearwater

Dave Groeschl, IDL

Jim Roscoe, Lemhi Regional Land Trust

Craig Quarterman, Rep Mike Simpson

Richard Ellis, Lincoln

Nick Hillman, Clark

Macoy Ward, Clark

Jennifer Jones, BLM

John Ruhs, BLM

Wally Cossairt, Boundary

Lauren Baily, OPE

John Smith, Clearwater

Denis Duman, Idaho