

STATE LAND USE PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

January 29, 2016

**Lander County Courthouse/Administration Complex
Community Meeting Room**

50 State Route 305
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

Members Present

Lee Plemel, Carson City
Eleanor Lockwood, Churchill County
Jim French, Humboldt County
Jerrie Tipton, Mineral County
Austin Osborne, Storey County
Jeanne Herman, Washoe County
Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County (Chair) via phone
Nancy Boland, Esmeralda County
Harold Ritter, Lyon County
Tori Sundheim, NACO
Lorinda Wichman, Nye County (Vice Chair) via phone
Laurie Carson, White Pine County

Members Absent

Dr. Don Miner, Douglas
Randy Brown, Elko County
Varlin Higbee, Lincoln County (term pending)
Roger Mancebo, Pershing
Steven Stienmetz, Lander County
Nancy Amundsen, Clark County

Others Present

Art Clark, Lander County Commissioner
Charlie Donohue, Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL)
Skip Canfield, NDSL, State Land Use Planning Agency
Jill Ralston, US Forest Service
Sam Routson, Winnemucca
Tom Harris, UNR
Fred Steinmann UNR
Ron Mobley, BLM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:25am and self-introductions were made. The Agenda was amended to eliminate the "Desert Land Entries" item due to the inability for BLM staff to attend. **Skip Canfield** stated that this is an important topic and he will work with the BLM State Office to confirm a speaker at the next SLUPAC meeting. The amended Agenda was approved unanimously, motion by **Jerrie Tipton**, second by **Laurie Carson**. The Draft Minutes of the October 23, 2015 meeting in Carson City were also approved unanimously with a motion by **Jerrie Tipton** and a second by **Jeanne Herman**. Abstentions included **Harold Ritter, Eleanor Lockwood and Laurie Carson**.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

SNPLMA UPDATE

Ron Mobley updated SLUPAC on the current SNPLMA Round 15 and also provided a brief history of the 17-year SNPLMA program. Since inception, there have been 29,000 acres of BLM land disposed of and 32,000 acres remain. \$3.5 billion has been raised in sales and interest. There have been over 1,200 projects providing \$160 million to the State's education fund, \$314 million to the Southern Nevada Water Authority and \$2.7 million into the Secretary of the Interior's Special Account.

Round 15 included seven project categories, and those projects were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on January 6, 2016. Within those seven categories are a total of 43 projects that will utilize \$39 million from the SNPLMA account and \$3 million from the Special Account Reserve.

Categories:

Parks, Trails and Natural Areas: 5 projects.
Capital Improvement Projects (Federal only and limited to 25% of total SNPLMA allocation): 8 projects.
Conservation Initiatives: (Federal only and limited to 10% of total SNPLMA allocation): 7 projects.
Land acquisitions (statewide): 2 projects – 14,000 acres - Bentley Ranch Pinenuts and 10 acres – Lee Canyon inholdings.
Hazardous Fuels: 13 projects.
Environmental Landscape Restoration: 6 projects.
Multi-species Habitat Conservation Planning: (Clark County only) 2 projects.

Jake Tibbitts asked what type of NEPA, if any, is required for the Bentley Ranch Pinenuts acquisition since the area needs treatment for PJ encroachment in sage grouse habitat. He is concerned that ongoing treatment on the private property may now be slowed due to the acquisition by BLM. **Charlie Donohue** responded that a Phase One EA is required (hazardous materials). Commencement of project work would trigger specific EAs. **Jill Ralston** commented that an EA will be required to verify sage grouse habitat and cultural resources. **Jerrie Tipton** commented that the acquisition will reduce the tax base of Douglas County. **Nancy Boland** said that better management of the area is needed to address PJ encroachment and development pressures. **Charlie Donohue** asked if the 25% SNPLMA cap for the CIP category is round or flexible over time. **Ron Mobley** responded that it is flexible over time. **Laurie Carson** asked about caps on the other categories. **Ron Mobley** responded that except for the 10% cap on Conservation Initiatives, all the other categories compete for the total SNPLMA budget for that round. **Charlie Donohue** asked if the next round would be accelerated. **Ron Mobley** replied that the Secretary of the Interior would like the next round expedited and BLM is waiting for future direction in that regard. He said that although funding would be in place, there are BLM staffing concerns about expediting the process. He also mentioned that there is a bill in Congress that would authorize Douglas County access to SNPLMA funds for land disposals, similar to White Pine County. The bill would also modify the two existing Lincoln County land acts to add a fuels category and third, create a Pershing County land act, similar to White Pine's.

US FOREST SERVICE STATEWIDE PRIORITIES

Jill Ralston gave an update on statewide priorities for the US Forest Service. Access and Travel Management planning is completed as well as the Minimum Road System plan. Motor Vehicle Use maps are being fine-tuned. Over Snow Vehicle planning will begin soon. Tread Lightly statewide message outreach ongoing. Record of Decision for the greater sage grouse – September 2015 with a phased implementation plan. The joint Land Use Plan Amendment with the BLM - FEIS issued in February 2015, objection process ongoing with Record of Decision March 2016. There is a USFS MOU in place with the State to implement the sage grouse and bi-state sage grouse conservation credit system. Bi-State sage grouse 10-year plan ongoing. 2015 saw 16,000 acres of fuels reduction projects. Renewable energy exploration projects are occurring. 120 SNPLMA USFS projects over 17 year history total \$260 million with \$11 million in Round 15 (of that total, \$1.5 million for fuels reduction this round at Lake Tahoe). 2015 Nevada Cohesive Strategy Summit – wildland fire strategy – advisory group established. Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is in committee. Senate version is \$415 million over 10 years, House version is \$60 million.

“FIND” PROJECT

Fred Steinmann and Tom Harris presented the “FIND” (Future Industrial Needs Discovery) project, and the Lander County Sustainable Development Committee.

Presentation summarized:**1998 to 2013:**

- Gold 2000: approx. \$200 an ounce.
- Gold October 10, 2013: \$1,260 an ounce.

Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group (Elko County), November 2003:

- Lander County (Done by Elko)
- Humboldt and Pershing Counties (Done by Lander)
- Gold Belt Coalition (2005):
- The Northern Nevada Partnership (Elko, 2003)
- Lander County Sustainable Development Committee (2005)
- Humboldt-Pershing Sustainable Development Partnership (2007)

Gold Belt Coalition - in support of...

- Collaborative associations for educational and informational exchange.
- Coordinated local partnerships to explore post-mine uses (Future Industrial Needs Discovery or FIND).
- Promoting community capacity for engaging with public land agencies in Resource Management Planning (RMP) processes as they relate to community sustainability.
- Advancing synergies for community sustainability through activities such as recycling, developing healthy rangeland ecosystems, alternative energy projects, and others.

Gold Belt Coalition – Ambitious Goals...

- Benefits to individual mine projects through life cycle planning and permitting.
- Effective coordinated community and regional planning.
- Expanded collaboration between all who support viable partnerships.
- Defining opportunities for reuse of mine-site infrastructure to facilitate regional economic viability through the FIND project.

The Lander County Sustainable Development Committee’s mission is to facilitate sustaining Lander County community’s social, economic and environmental welfare.

Committee goals include:

- Maintain communication within the “Gold Belt Coalition” of Humboldt, Pershing, Lander, and Elko counties.
- Develop common goals for sustainable development within the Gold Belt Coalition.
- Maintain healthy collaboration with public and private agencies/organizations sharing similar missions goals and objectives.
- Develop a regional marketing strategy for post mining site infrastructure.

Key Outputs (Projects):

- Renewable Energy Development Feasibility Study
- Battle Mountain Business Enhancements Program
- Bridging the House Gap
- **Future Industrial Needs Discovery (FIND) Project**

Bridging the Housing Gap (2008)

- **Four Scenarios:**
 - Full Capture – Aggregate Housing
 - Partial Employment Capture, No Employment Vacancy, and Additional Uninhabited Units
 - Full Capture – Disaggregated Housing
 - Partial Employment Capture, No Employment Vacancy
 - “Without sufficient housing stock, rural counties in Nevada may find it difficult to compete for economic development. However, for many rural Nevada counties like Lander County, the variability of population and employment makes development of new housing stock difficult.”

Battle Mountain Business Enhancements Program (2011)**Battle Mountain Retail Sector Analysis (Six Tasks):**

- An overview of county-level, state, national retail sector trends.
- An analysis of the needs and perspectives of the Battle Mountain business operators and owners.
- An analysis of the needs and perspectives of Battle Mountain consumers.
- A trade area analysis of retail surpluses and leakages in downtown Battle Mountain.
- The development and suggesting of several different strategies for policy makers and economic developers in Battle Mountain and Lander County.

Renewable Energy Feasibility Study (2012)

- **Three Broad Categories:**
 - Geothermal Power
 - Solar Power
 - Wind Power
- “Of these, geothermal is the most cost effective and reliable, but can only be developed on a mine site if a geothermal source is adjacent to the site.”
- “Renewable energy development has potential in Lander County and provides opportunity for sustainable development on existing and reclaimed mine sites. In addition the reclamation of mines into sustainable energy sites, these projects could provide high paying jobs for the citizens of Lander County.”

The FIND Project (2008 to Present)

- A community-wide effort to reduce the dependence of Nevada’s rural economy on mining.
- Use of a community-driven methodology to attract and operate a business in Lander County.
- **Four Tasks:**
 - Provide an inventory of existing assets.
 - Develop and create a ranking system of these assets.
 - Develop a short list of compatible and desirable target industries.
 - Develop and create marketing programs.

Key Outcomes:

- The Importance of Regional Networked Development
- The Importance of Collaboration, Trust, and Reciprocity
- **The Importance of “Tool” Development and Data-Driven Policy, Program, and Project Development**

Impacts?

“Although these impacts are significant, they are still short-term in nature. Longer-term impacts that can be linked directly to the efforts of the Lander County Sustainable Development Committee, and more specifically the FIND Project, may not be realized for several years or several decades. Moving forward, the Lander County Sustainable Development Committee will also have to figure out how to exist and evolve among changing dynamics at the local, regional, state, and national level.”

Battle Mountain and Lander County Today

- New development and job creation (private-sector and public sector).
- Continued diversification of the economic base...‘adding to’ existing key industries (mining, agriculture, and tourism).
- Continued strategic economic development planning initiatives:
 - 2012 Economic Diversification, Community Business Enhancement and Marketing Plan
 - 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Lander County
 - 2015/2016 Branding Study for Austin and Kingston

Discussion:

Multiple SLUPAC members commented on the need to use closed mine sites for another activity, rather than completely reclaiming them. **Jake Tibbitts** said that current BLM resource management plans (RMPs) require the removal of mining infrastructure at time of closing. New policies should be developed that allow certain infrastructure to stay. Counties need to be involved and have a say in how mining infrastructure can remain at these closed mine sites and be used for other economic development purposes, “post industrial use policies”.

Eleanor Lockwood commented that data like in the FIND project is important, but it is more important how the counties can use such data. Churchill County has a huge sewer and water capacity but not enough demand yet. **Fred Steinmann** commented that the “build it and they will come” philosophy can be risky.

Laurie Carson commented on the interstate effect, and how the study compared to out of the way towns off the interstate.

Jeanne Herman said that City of Reno annexations are out of balance with Washoe County planning efforts.

SLUPAC ROLE IN WATER PLANNING

A discussion ensued on the level SLUPAC of involvement with the Legislative Subcommittee to Study Nevada Water Laws and tracking of AB 198 requiring the Legislative Committee on Public Lands to conduct a study concerning water conservation and alternative sources of water for Nevada communities. **Jake Tibbitts** said that SLUPAC can act as the “central hub” for resource planning outreach and engagement with Counties and the Legislative Committee on Public Lands and the Subcommittee to Study Nevada Water Laws. **Skip Canfield** was directed to write letters for the Chair’s signature to the two committees expressing SLUPAC’s interest in engagement with them.

RS 2477 ROADS

A discussion ensued on development of a legal protocol whereby a county may perfect its rights to and finalize title to an accessory road or a public road as a result of the passage of Senate Bill 456 in the 2015 Legislative Session. This is a primary role of SLUPAC, in coordination with Nevada Association of Counties and the Nevada Attorney General. **Jake Tibbitts** said the Utah platform presented to SLUPAC last time at the NACO office should be used to build on for a Nevada policy. It is important to establish a strong Nevada Attorney General’s office role. **Jerrie Tipton** asked what counties should provide and the consensus was that accurate maps to NDOT are most important. **Jake Tibbitts** said it is important for SLUPAC to move forward by identifying the checklist/steps needed to develop the policy, provide accurate maps, and complete the oral history, similar to Utah’s process. **Jeanne Herman** commented that it is important for counties to have the ability to amend the maps once they are submitted as new information comes available. **Tori Sundheim** mentioned that NACO had met with BLM (Director John Ruhs) and he said that BLM will work with the counties during travel management planning and review the relevant lists of roads with SLUPAC.

COUNTY PLANNING ISSUES

Due to weather and time constraints, this item was tabled until next time.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS/CHECK IN ON SLUPAC GOALS**

The SLUPAC members briefly reviewed and reaffirmed the Primary 2015-2017 SLUPAC Goals:

- RS2477 Roads Protocol (SB 456)
- County NEPA Consistency Review Assistance
- Public Land Policy Plan Update Assistance and Outreach
- SLUPAC and Counties Role and Inclusion in Development of a Statewide Water Management Plan (AB 198)
- ACEC Procedures (AB 144)

Next meeting will be May 13, 2016 in Tonopah.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Skip Canfield

/s/

Meeting Recorder

Please note that minutes should be considered draft minutes pending their approval at a future meeting of the State Land Use Planning Advisory Council. Corrections and changes could be made before approval.

The meeting was digitally recorded. Anyone wishing to receive or review the recording may call (775) 684-2723. The recording will be retained for three years.