



Utah Quality Growth Commission
C/O Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
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Utah Quality Growth Commission

*Flint Richards, Chair
JT Martin, Vice Chair*

John Bennett, Executive Director

MEETING MINUTES
Friday August 13, 2010, 2:00 PM
Rondthaler Board Room, Hunter Conference Center
Southern Utah University
Cedar City, UT

Commission Member Present

Larry Ellertson
David Mansell
Mike Styler
Laraine Swenson
Reed Erickson
Mike Kohler by Telephone

Staff Present

John Bennett

Commissioner Larry Ellertson conducted the meeting in place of Chairman Richards and Vice Chairman Martin.

- 1. Welcome and Introductions, 5 Minutes**

Each person present introduced themselves

- 2. Public Comments, 5 Minutes**

There were no public comments

- 3. Approve Minutes from June 2010 Meetings, 5 Minutes**
ACTION ITEM: Approve Minutes

A quorum was not present, so the minutes could not be approved. They will be held over and approved at the next meeting.

- 4. LeRay McAllister Program Report**
- **Report on Site Visits**
 - **Schedule Subcommittee Meeting**
 - **Discuss possible rating and ranking revisions**

John Bennett, 30 Minutes

Site Visit Report

John Bennett reported that all the site visits had been completed. He indicated that Larry Ellertson had

attended all of the visits, and that David Mansell had attended 5 of the 7. Mr. Bennett quickly reminded the subcommittee members of which site visits had occurred and the dates when they were completed. They were reported as follows:

Green Canyon Ranch (Blacksmith Fork), and Bear Lake Gateway on July 29, 2010
Jordan River acquisition and Weber Pathways on July 30, 2010
Zion Chamberlain Ranch and East Zion Meadow on August 12, 2010
Confluence Park Restoration on August 13, 2010

Commissioners discussed the projects. They spent some time discussing Tamarisk Beetles which were observed at work by the visitors to the Confluence Park project. They also discussed the other project in a limited fashion. The subcommittee will meet in September to make a recommendation to the Commission about these projects, and the full discussion of these projects will take place then.

Schedule Subcommittee Meeting

After this discussion, the Commissioners present took up the question of when the subcommittee should meet. Since a quorum was not present, they made recommendations that would be implemented by the chairs and the staff. The date that was chosen was September 9, 2010, at 3:00 PM at the Department of Natural Resources Building.

Rating and Ranking Criteria Revisions

John Bennett indicated that he had had discussions with some of the Conservation organizations about the rating and ranking process. They had expressed some frustration about how the process has been operating. Particularly they mentioned frustration that projects which rank relatively high not getting full funding, and other projects not getting ranked as high as they possibly should because the process has too much subjectivity in it, in their view.

Mr. Bennett wanted to discuss this with the commission and propose some possible changes to the rating and ranking system as discussion points. He indicated that these could be used in the current cycle, or discussed further and implemented in a future round. He suggested that the commission could go through the regular rating and ranking system, and then award additional points for specific issues they want to stress such as high leverage, or a project in a county where the commission has not worked before, protecting or providing public access, and others. Mr. Bennett went on to describe how public access might be rated based on the type of access provided, for example, an angler access that is permanent might score higher than intermittent hunter access through a CWMU.

For agricultural projects, we could look at prime soils, whether the project supported the family, whether it was critical to the agricultural industry in the county or other similar issues. Mr. Bennett also indicated that the commission could look at contiguous parcels. Where parcels are contiguous, that expands the scale of the conservation and perhaps should be encouraged. Additional points could be awarded when a parcel is contiguous to other conserved lands.

Laraine Swenson indicated that she felt that some of these issues are already covered by the rating and ranking system. She feels that the system allows her to score projects that she feels are more important in a way that allows them to receive more points.

David Mansell stated that the process is not arbitrary and asked if the subcommittee or the commission strived for consensus. John Bennett indicated that they did, and that the current system has a 100 point scale that is used to rank the projects.

Mike Styler indicated that it is probably too late to change the rating and ranking for this year, and because of the additional funds available, it is probably unnecessary. But he indicated that access, especially for fishing is becoming a big deal given the recent legislative actions, and we may want to look for projects that provide additional access. John Bennett indicated that additional points could be

provided or the criteria could be revised for each year to reflect the priorities.

Mike Styler indicated that the legislature is feeling a little apologetic for restricting stream bed access in the last session. He feels the legislature wants private property rights to be restricted, but if we can purchase easements that allow access they might facilitate that. He feels we ought to bring this up with the legislature and see if they would increase funding to the commission to be used for increasing public access.

Larry Ellertson asked if we had a friend in the Legislature who would push this idea of additional funding for access. Mike Styler indicated that Senator Dennis Stowell would push it, Kay McIff might push it, and the angler community would push this. Even Mel Brown, who has been a critic of the commission might soften his stance if access was a part of the equation.

Commissioners discussed this idea. They indicated that they wanted to be sure that they had the flexibility to respond to many different projects. Mike Styler indicated that we would need to be careful how we ask for the money. John Bennett indicated that we would want to look for projects that had multiple benefits as we do now, but if we could include public access—not just streambed access but also other public access—that would make some additional funding available. Commissioners agreed that it makes sense to approach the legislature about this, but we need to have clear strategy as we go forward.

5. LeRay McAllister Fund Outstanding Grants -- Status Report John Bennett, 10 Minutes

There are two outstanding grants that have not closed. One is the Elkhorn Ranch which has been extended until the end of the year, and may need more time beyond that. The second is OW ranch which must close by the end of August, but has some appraisal issues. We may need to extend this one for an additional month to ensure that they close.

6. Finalize Governors Quality Growth Awards Nominations, John Bennett, 10 minutes

The Commissioners present recommended Butch and Jeanie Jensen, of the Tavaputs Ranch winners of the Aldo Leopold Award. Or Queststar for the Green River acquisition.

7. Outline of Legislative Report, John Bennett, 10 Minutes

The commission discussed the outline of the report.

8. Administrative Matters: Next meeting scheduled for September 23, 2010, State Capitol