

**MINUTES OF THE  
NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
January 16, 2008  
Room W130, West Office, Building, State Capitol Complex**

MEMBERS PRESENT:     Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chair  
                              Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-Chair  
                              Sen. Margaret Dayton  
                              Rep. Roger Barrus  
                              Rep. Jack Draxler  
                              Rep. Carl Duckworth  
                              Rep. James R. Gowans  
                              Rep. John G. Mathis  
                              Rep. Michael E. Noel  
                              Rep. Steve Sandstrom

MEMBERS ABSENT:     Sen. Mike Dmitrich  
                              Sen. John Valentine  
                              Rep. Kerry W. Gibson

STAFF:                   Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst  
                              Linda Service, Committee Secretary

**Note:**   A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Rep. Ferry called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. He welcomed legislators and agency personnel.

Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst, introduced the handouts he had distributed to the subcommittee which included: questions agencies would be expected to address in today's meeting, questions for budget reviews, and a Prior Year Funding Accountability report.

Michael R. Styler, Director of the Department of Natural Resources, gave a presentation of the Department's activities and responsibilities, which included pictures and video segments of the collapse at Crandall Canyon Mine, major fires in the state, and accidents in state parks. He was assisted by Dennis Carver, Financial Director. Questions of committee members followed.

#### A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE COAL PROGRAM

Rick Coleman and Kade Minchey of the Legislative Auditor General's Office, presented results of the Performance Audit of Utah's Coal Regulatory Program, along with recommendations for changes. He was assisted by Kade Minchey who distributed a handout.

#### DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

John Baza, Director, responded to the issues raised in the performance audit. He welcomed and accepted the findings of the audit. He was accompanied by Paula Dupin-Zahn, Financial Manager. Mr. Baza commented on the proposed federal Mine Safety Act and other concerns of committee members.

#### DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Mary Tullius, Director, presented requested information on the Division with accompanying handouts. She recognized a concern that the Division stay within current budget. Rep. Barrus expressed congratulations for the work done in the state parks.

#### DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Director Jim Karpowits gave a presentation, including a handout assisted by Greg Sheehan, Program Administrator. Mr. Karpowits mentioned a national award the Division received from the American Fisheries Society for work with sport fish at Strawberry Reservoir. He responded to questions and concerns of committee members.

#### UTAH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

John Kingsley, Associate Director of Development, assisted Director Rick Allis with a handout for the presentation. In addition to the information on the handout, Mr. Allis did comment on the challenge the Division is having filling vacancies.

#### DIVISION OF WATER RIGHTS

Dennis Carroll, Division Financial Analyst, assisted Jerry Olds, Director, with the overview of the Division. A committee discussion followed.

#### DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

Director Dennis Strong was assisted by Terri Jackson, Eric Millis, and Todd Adams from the Division. Director Strong reviewed the handout with the comment that they are proud of their planning efforts. A drought report that was published this last year received national recognition. Reports are well-done, timely and used. The committee had no questions for the director.

#### DIVISION OF FORESTRY, FIRE & STATE LANDS

Director Dick Buehler was assisted by Kevin Wells, Acting Deputy Director, and Roger Lewis, Administrative Services Director. Director Buehler expressed sincere appreciation to the committee for prior funding. He explained the information in the handouts briefly due to time constraints and offered to go into more detail at a later date. He commented on the three areas of responsibility - management of sovereign lands, management of fire on non-federal lands within the state, and assisting private landowners in managing and promoting conservation practices.

#### DIVISION OF FORESTRY, FIRE & STATE LANDS, LONE PEAK NURSERY

Director Buehler briefly mentioned the Lone Peak Nursery handout including plans for the future. The Division has made major efforts toward management improvement. Further discussion is expected in the budget hearing.

The meeting was recessed for lunch at 12:08 p.m.

Sen. Stowell called the afternoon meeting to order at 2:26 p.m.

#### A FOLLOW-UP PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF SITLA, OLAG

Maria Stahla, Audit Supervisor, Legislative Auditors Office, and Tim Osterstock, Audit Manager, reviewed the findings and recommendations of the July 2007 Follow-up Audit. They discussed the recommendations that had been implemented, along with those that had not been. There was a discussion by the committee.

#### SCHOOL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST LANDS ADMINISTRATION

Kevin Carter, Director, assisted by Michael Morris, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, presented results of expenses and revenues, including criteria, salary, and bonus guidelines of the organization and how these correlate with the private sector. There was committee discussion regarding the bonus program.

#### PUBLIC LANDS POLICY COORDINATING OFFICE

John Harja, Director of Public Lands Office, presented an overview of the office, concerns and responsibilities. The goal of the Governor's Office is to speak with one voice.

#### UTAH STATE FAIR

Lorin Moench, Jr., Chairman of the Board, was assisted in his presentation by Mike Porter, Fairpark Treasurer. Handouts were distributed and discussed and comments were made regarding increased attendance putting increased pressure on infrastructure. The fair was successful this year. There were no questions.

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Leonard Blackham, Commissioner, introduced Bill Rasmussen, President of the Association of Conservation Districts, and Gordon Younker, Utah State University, who discussed conservation districts and explained expenditures. Commissioner Blackham discussed several important projects the Department of Agriculture dealt with last year. The Department's focus is on: quality of life issues, economic development, agriculture education, and governance. The "war on cheatgrass" and the efforts to eradicate the Japanese Beetle were explained. Commissioner Blackham praised the residents of Orem who were so supportive in this effort. In regard to economic development, the Utah's Own program was mentioned as having been particularly successful. This program is expected to grow. Committee members expressed comments and concerns.

MOTION: Rep. Noel motioned to adjourn at 4:11 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

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Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-Chairman

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Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chairman