



NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS
(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.510)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The first meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Public Lands was held on Friday, January 12, 2018 at 9 a.m. in Room 4401, Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3138, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The "Summary Minutes and Action Report," "Meeting Notice and Agenda," meeting materials, and video or audio recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's website at [Legislative Committee on Public Lands](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/LCB/Committee/Pages/SummaryMinutes.aspx). In addition, copies of the audio or video record are available through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's (LCB) Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835) and may also be available on <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Granicus/>.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair
Senator David R. Parks
Assemblyman William McCurdy II
Debra March, Mayor, City of Henderson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Donald (Don) G. Gustavson, Acting Chair
Senator Julia Ratti, Vice Chair
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Assemblyman John C. Ellison
Assemblyman Al Kramer

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Alysa M. Keller, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division

Heidi Chlarson, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

Erin Sturdivant, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

Natalie J. Pieretti, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.

AGENDA ITEM I—CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Gustavson opened the meeting and asked the secretary to take roll call.

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Acting Chair Gustavson called for public comment; however, no testimony was presented.

AGENDA ITEM III—ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Acting Chair Gustavson explained that NRS 218E.510 requires the Chair to be elected from one house and the Vice Chair from the other house.

MOTION: Senator Parks moved to nominate Assemblywoman Swank as Chair of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman McCurdy II and passed.

MOTION: Senator Goicoechea moved to nominate Senator Ratti as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Ellison and passed.

Acting Chair Gustavson turned the meeting over to Chair Swank.

AGENDA ITEM IV—OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Thanking the Committee, Chair Swank discussed procedural matters and asked members to introduce themselves, after which she introduced staff members.

AGENDA ITEM V—OVERVIEW OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS

Alysa M. Keller, previously identified, provided a brief overview of the Committee's duties and responsibilities pursuant to NRS 218E.510. She reported: (1) Nevada has more federally managed land than any other state; (2) the 2015–2016 Summary of Recommendations and legislation approved by the 2017 Legislature; and (3) ten bill draft requests may be recommended by the Committee ([Agenda Item V A-1](#)) ([Agenda Item V A-2](#)) ([Agenda Item V A-3](#)).

AGENDA ITEM VI—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY

John J. Entsminger, General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) shared a presentation detailing major responsibilities of the SNWA including: (1) regional water supply planning; (2) conservation programming; (3) water quality; (4) managing and protecting environmental resources; and (5) regional facility construction and operations ([Agenda Item VI](#)).

He discussed the drought impact on the Colorado River System and noted that since the turn of the century, elevations in Lake Mead have experienced more than a 30-foot drop in water levels. Mr. Entsminger explained SNWA has responded aggressively by: (1) banking water resources with states around the region and Mexico, which has been successful in recharging water into the aquifer along with an excess of eight years of current water demands in banked resources; (2) negotiating with other states for flexibility in river operations; (3) promoting SNWA's conservation program; and (4) building infrastructure to ensure reliability of water supplies in southern Nevada. He pointed out that since the 1999 inception of SNWA's Water Smart Landscape Program, 183 million square feet of turf has been removed in the Las Vegas Valley, resulting in water usage decline since 2002 despite an increase in population. Mr. Entsminger reported that the completion of a Drought Contingency Plan agreement between Arizona, California, and Nevada leading to the states' voluntarily reducing water amounts removed from the Colorado River is hopeful by calendar year end. He concluded the SNWA Board approved agreements with the country of Mexico in a combined effort to sustain the Colorado River for the next eight years.

Committee members and Mr. Entsminger discussed the following:

- The Drought Contingency Plan and climate change;
- The return-flow credit program for new construction versus older construction; and
- SNWA's water resource plan looking toward future water demands.

AGENDA ITEM VII—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION OF NEVADA

Jayne Harkins, P.E., Executive Director, Colorado River Commission of Nevada (CRCNV), presented an overview of the CRCNV's roles and responsibilities for acquiring and managing Nevada's share of water and hydropower resources from the Colorado River. She touched upon: (1) CRCNV's power delivery project; (2) hydropower benefits which include Hoover Dam, Parker-Davis Dam, and Glen Canyon Dam; (3) federal hydropower contracts; (4) the state contractors and how wholesale utility contractors will be the most impacted with the passage of The Energy Choice Initiative (ECI); (5) the Hoover Hydropower contract; (6) Hoover and Salt Lake City Area Integrated Project (SLCAIP) hydropower allocations and

contracts; (7) the Western Area Power Administration's Final Power Marketing Plan; (8) the SLCAIP post-2024 federal contract; (9) SLCAIP post-2024 state contracts; (10) the Parker-Davis Project allocation; (11) the passage and monitoring of the ECI and specific legislation required to address CRCNV customers; (12) the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (LBDCP); (13) the proposed LBDCP; (14) Minute 323 implementation; and (15) environmental program participation ([Agenda Item VII](#)).

In relation to the allocation of hydropower, Senator Goicoechea and Ms. Harkins discussed the ramifications with the potential passage of the ECI. Ms. Harkins explained that language contained in the Hoover contract, as well as the Salt Lake City contract, allows hydropower and hydropower allocation to be transacted in a market. She said any benefits from that transaction will return to the allocated entity in Nevada.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, IN NEVADA

Tim Smith, Southern Nevada District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior, provided a brief overview of the BLM's history and organization. He described the BLM's multiple-use mission as set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and identified six major use areas as:

- Livestock grazing;
- Management of cultural resources;
- Mineral development;
- Wildlife habitat;
- Lands, realty, rights-of-way; and
- Recreation.

Mr. Smith stressed the importance of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's priorities and orders for restoring the BLM's multiple-use mandate, focusing on the restoration of trust and good neighbor policy along with striking a regulatory balance, recreational access, and energy development ([Agenda Item VIII A-1](#)).

He provided a report on several BLM programs and areas of management including: (1) mining; (2) fire and aviation; (3) grazing; (4) wild horses and burros; (5) nonrenewable energy (oil and gas); (6) national monuments, national conservation areas, and wilderness; (7) renewable energy (solar, wind, and geothermal); (8) resource advisory councils; (9) special legislation; (10) the southern Nevada district; and (11) wildlife habitat. He emphasized that

funds received from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA) are being reinvested back into the community.

Committee members and Mr. Smith held a question and answer session on:

- The impact of tourism and recreation on local economies of federally managed lands;
- BLM's current funding and manpower to adequately address the needs of the federally managed lands to ensure regulatory processes are addressed in a timely fashion;
- Public input opportunities;
- Efforts to strengthen BLM's relationship with stakeholders for the benefit of rural communities and economies; and
- Overcrowding of national parks and the impact to parks in Nevada.

Subsequent to the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Smith submitted a report in response to Mayor March's question regarding the impact tourism and recreation have on federally managed lands ([Agenda Item VIII A-2](#)).

AGENDA ITEM IX—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THROUGHOUT NEVADA AND IN THE SPRING MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (HTNF), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), reported the HTNF comprises most of the National Forest System lands in Nevada with a total of 6.3 million acres. He provided a brief overview of the USFS, noting significant savings with the use of volunteers and partnerships to manage the HTNF. Mr. Dunkelberger stressed authority is delegated to district rangers so that decisions are made locally and with community input ([Agenda Item IX A-1](#)) ([Agenda Item IX A-2](#)).

He provided an update on the following USFS programs and projects: (1) land management for multiple use; (2) recreational opportunities; (3) wildland fire; (4) forest health and fuels reduction; (5) insect and disease treatment in several areas; (6) partnerships; (7) sage-grouse conservation and collaboration; (8) Good Neighbor Authority Master Agreement; (9) wild horse and burro management; and (10) SNPLMA.

Mr. Dunkelberger shared:

- The USFS is conducting an analysis for the lease of lands west of the Ruby Mountains and a request for public comment would be forthcoming;

- The USFS is working with the BLM and the State to pilot the use of the State of Nevada Conservation Credit System in an effort to develop successful projects on national forest lands; and
- Through SNPLMA, several HTNF projects will be funded.

Several members and Mr. Dunkelberger discussed affordable housing projects through SNPLMA. Vice Chair Ratti requested LCB staff assistance in locating affordable housing projects prior to 2008.

Several members and Mr. Dunkelberger discussed the following topics:

- Fire prevention preparedness;
- Relationships with the rural communities;
- Biomass power generation projects;
- Roads in the USFS system; and
- Plans for an increase in grazing allotments to target fuel load reduction.

Donn Christiansen, Area Manager, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA), USFS, USDA, gave a presentation on resource accomplishments in the SMNRA. The following projects were highlighted: (1) fencing projects for wild horse and burro management, as well as other wildlife, in spring areas; (2) partnerships; (3) spring monitoring submitted for SNPLMA funding; (4) defunct fence removal and fence repair; (5) seed collection; (6) the Lee Canyon ski area master development permit; (7) fuels projects; (8) hazard tree removal; (9) Lovell Canyon restoration and planning; (10) cultural heritage; and (11) Crystal Springs land acquisition ([Agenda Item IX B](#)).

Committee members and Mr. Christiansen discussed:

- Adequate resources to remove the fuel loads in the SMNRA; and
- Heritage programming and tours.

AGENDA ITEM X—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Bradley Crowell, Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (SDCNR), reported on the following SDCNR divisions, their programs, and future plans ([Agenda Item X](#)):

- The Division of State Lands;
- The Division of Environmental Protection;
- The Division of Water Resources;
- The Division of Forestry;
- The Division of State Parks;
- Office of Historic Preservation;
- Nevada Natural Heritage Program;
- Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program;
- Off-Highway Vehicles Program; and
- Conservation Districts Program.

Discussion ensued between several members and Mr. Crowell regarding: (1) conservation camps; and (2) staffing and funding issues.

James R. Lawrence, Deputy Director, SDCNR, described how the resource bond programs, funded through the sale of general obligation bonds backed by property tax revenue, were significantly impacted by the economic downturn, making the State's ability to sell the bonds to fund the programs severely limited.

Mayor March asked whether there was an improvement in the ability to sell conservation plots with the economic recovery.

Mr. Lawrence said the SDCNR is hopeful that the debt capacity will start to recover in 2019.

Chair Swank congratulated Kacey KC on her recent appointment to State Forester.

Senator Goicoechea voiced concerns that unless removed, fuel loads left on the ground will create wildland fires.

AGENDA ITEM XI—DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE AND SCHEDULING OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Chair Swank announced tentative meeting locations and dates for Battle Mountain, Laughlin, Hawthorne, Pioche, and the Committee's work session scheduled in Carson City with videoconferencing to Las Vegas.

AGENDA ITEM XII—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Swank called for public comment.

Patrick Donnelly, Nevada State Director, Center for Biological Diversity, was heard in support of Nevada's public lands and the Gold Butte National Monument. He encouraged the Committee to look at the consequences surrounding regulatory rollbacks and continued prioritization of conservation in public land management.

Bevan Lister, President, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, discussed several areas of concern for the agricultural community: (1) wild horses; (2) water availability; (3) road accessibility; and (4) the publicly funded SNWA.

AGENDA ITEM XIII—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie J. Pieretti
Senior Research Secretary

Alysa M. Keller
Principal Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	WITNESS/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item V A-1	Alysa M. Keller, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB)	Federal Land Ownership Map
Agenda Item V A-2	Alysa M. Keller, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB	Select Natural Resources and Public Lands Legislation Approved by the 2017 Legislature
Agenda Item V A-3	Alysa M. Keller, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB	2015–2016 Summary of Recommendations
Agenda Item VI	John J. Entsminger, General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII	Jayne Harkins, P.E., Executive Director, Colorado River Commission of Nevada	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VIII A-1	Tim Smith, Southern Nevada District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Department of the Interior (USDOI)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VIII A-2	Tim Smith, Southern Nevada District Manager, BLM, USDOI	Report
Agenda Item IX A-1	Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (HTNF), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX A-2	Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, HTNF, USFS, USDA	Report
Agenda Item IX B	Donn Christiansen, Area Manager, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, USFS, USDA	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item X	Bradley Crowell, Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation

The “Summary Minutes and Action Report” is supplied as an informational service. Copies of all meeting materials are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or (775) 684-6827.