

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS' SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY WILDERNESS AREAS AND WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

(Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7 [File No. 63, *Statutes of Nevada 2003*])

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The fourth meeting of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands' Subcommittee to Study Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) for the 2003-2004 interim was held on Thursday, March 25, 2004, at 1 p.m. in the Western Heritage Interpretive Center, Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road, Reno, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's Web site at www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/72nd2003/Interim. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835).

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Dean A. Rhoads, Chairman
Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn, Vice Chairman
Senator Mike McGinness
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea
Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Senator Bob Coffin

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Scott Young, Principal Policy and Special Projects Analyst, Research Division
R. René Yeckley, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Gayle Nadeau, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Rhoads opened the meeting and reported that Nevada's Congressional Delegation will support county-by-county wilderness bills, but not a statewide measure.

- At the request of Senator Rhoads, Scott Young, Principal Policy and Special Projects Analyst, Research Division, LCB, Carson City, Nevada, provided a brief background on the Wilderness Act of 1964, which established the national wilderness preservation system of federal public lands designated by Congress as wilderness areas. Mr. Young explained the Subcommittee's statutory purview with the passage of S.C.R. 7 of the 2003 Session, and he stated the Subcommittee will submit a report with recommendations for consideration during the 2005 Session to the Legislative Committee on Public Lands at its final meeting, which is scheduled for August 27, 2004.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 6, 2004, MEETING IN ELY, NEVADA

The Subcommittee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

SENATOR MCGINNESS MOVED TO APPROVE THE "SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT" OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2004, MEETING HELD IN ELY, NEVADA. THE MOTION

REPORTS TO SUBCOMMITTEE

Historical Overview of Wilderness Legislation, Including Measures Addressing Nevada Wilderness Areas and Current Issues Involving Nevada Wilderness Areas

- Kevin Kirkeby, Rural Coordinator, Office of United States Senator John Ensign, Carson City, addressed the following areas during his presentation: (1) pre-wilderness history; (2) historical highlights of the Wilderness Act of 1964; (3) modifications and clarifications to the Wilderness Act; (4) national and Nevada wilderness statistics; (5) wilderness and WSAs in the Ely District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office; and (6) public lands legislation. Please see [Exhibit B](#).

Presentation of Native American Perspectives on Wilderness Issues

- Richard Harjo, Chairman, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City, after reciting a poem by Native American Luther Standing Bear (Chief of the Oglala, Lakota Tribe), reported on the Nevada Indian Commission's position on land management in Nevada and presented six recommendations to encourage that Native American cultural, traditional, and spiritual perspectives are considered in the study of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas as provided by S.C.R. 7. Please see [Exhibit C](#).

Presentation on Wilderness Issues Relevant to Nevada

- Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Reno, testified on wilderness issues relevant to Nevada and drew particular attention to the detrimental impact on Nevada's wilderness of illegally-created roads and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use during the hunting season. Ms. Netherton also commented on the Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Lincoln and White Pine Counties. Please see [Exhibit D](#) and [Exhibit E](#).

Presentation on Wilderness Issues from the Perspective of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association

- Joseph Guild, Board Member, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Reno, offered brief remarks regarding Nevada ranchers and the constraints on grazing operations in national parks and wilderness areas.
- Preston T. Wright, President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Elko, Nevada, noted that Nevada ranchers are not as vocal about wilderness issues as in years past for such reasons as: (1) there are fewer ranchers and cattle in Nevada; (2) many of the regulatory restrictions have not had the negative impact as once thought; and (3) the ranchers find themselves as allies with agencies trying to protect public lands from overuse by ATVs. Mr. Wright made the following requests on behalf of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association: (1) protection for prior existing rights and legal access to traditional lands for range improvements and maintenance; (2) disallow federally-reserved water rights in wilderness areas; and (3) ensure that any public lands released for federal, state, local, or private ownership and development include lands suitable for ranchers to acquire, not just low-value lands.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Senator Rhoads introduced two letters into the record from concerned citizens. The first letter ([Exhibit F](#)) regarding designation of wilderness areas in the state was received from Greg Loptien, Sparks, Nevada. The second letter ([Exhibit G](#)) concerning wilderness issues and historic markers in Nevada was received from John Johnson, Chico, California.
- Les Thrasher, resident, Las Vegas, Nevada, addressed concern about land acquisition through the "Biodiversity Treaty and the Wildlands Project." He urged the Committee to review his handout on this matter and convey its opinion to Nevada's Congressional Delegation. Please see [Exhibit H](#).
- Jonathan Brown, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, Nevada Mining Association (NMA),

Reno, presented wilderness and public land statistics relevant to Nevada. Please see [Exhibit I](#).

- Marjorie Sill, resident, Reno, noted that 2004 is the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and voiced support for preserving wilderness areas in Nevada.
- Christina Stover, resident, Reno, discussed marketing and promoting Nevada's outdoor recreation resources. Please see [Exhibit J](#).
- Valerie Anderson, resident, Reno, spoke in support of wilderness areas.
- Ann S. Carpenter, resident, Reno, supports minimizing wilderness designations to ensure access to the state's mineral resources. Please see [Exhibit K](#).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Nadeau
Senior Research Secretary

Scott Young
Principal Policy and Special Projects Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Dean A. Rhoads, Chairman

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the "Meeting Notice and Agenda."

[Exhibit B](#) is a PowerPoint presentation titled "Congressional Wilderness & Public Land Acts," provided by Kevin Kirkeby, Rural Coordinator, Office of United States Senator John Ensign, Carson City.

[Exhibit C](#) is a document titled "Position Paper for Legislative Committee on Public Lands Subcommittee to Study Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas (S.C.R. 7)," provided by Richard Harjo, Chairman, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City.

[Exhibit D](#) is the prepared testimony of Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Reno.

[Exhibit E](#) is a map titled "Environmental Assessment, CA-350-2002-04, Wilderness Study Area unauthorized route closure and reclamation, Dry Valley Rim WSA map of affected routes," provided by Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Reno.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter from Greg Loptien, Sparks, dated March 24, 2004, concerning designation of wilderness areas in the state.

[Exhibit G](#) is a letter from John Johnson, Chico, dated March 17, 2004, concerning wilderness issues and historic markers in Nevada.

[Exhibit H](#) is the prepared testimony of Les Thrasher, resident, Las Vegas, which also includes a document titled “Explanation of the Biodiversity Treaty and the Wildlands Project,” and a map titled “Simulated Reserve and Corridor System to Protect Biodiversity.”

[Exhibit I](#) is a document titled “Key Nevada Wilderness and Public Land Statistics,” provided by Jonathan Brown, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, NMA, Reno.

[Exhibit J](#) is a letter, dated October 26, 2003, to Utah Governor Mike Leavitt from Francis K. Hugelmeyer, President, Outdoor Industry Association, provided by Christina Stover, resident, Reno.

[Exhibit K](#) is the prepared testimony of Ann S. Carpenter, resident, Reno, which also includes a table of 39 minerals that the United States is 50 percent reliant on from foreign resources.

This set of “Summary Minutes and Action Report” is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library by [e-mail](mailto:www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm) (www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm) or telephone: 775/684-6827.