

Bear Lake Regional Commission

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Minutes Bear Lake Regional Commission Garden City, UT April 24, 2024

Those in attendance:

Sim Weston - Board Chairman, Rich County Commissioner
Bradley Jensen - Board Vice Chairman, Bear Lake County Commissioner
Burdette Weston - Board Secretary Mayor of Laketown
Ken Brown - Rich County at Large
Dan Fisher, City Council of Montpelier
Albert Johnson - Bear Lake County at Large
Mitch Poulsen - Executive Director- Bear Lake Regional Commission
Christy Jensen - Bear Lake Regional Commission

Excused:

Mike Leonhardt - Mayor of Garden City
Roy Bunderson- Mayor of Bloomington
Ron Jensen – Recreation
Tami Leonhardt – Director Bear Lake Convention & Visitors Bureau

Also in attendance:

Jim Derito-Trout Unlimited/ N. Eden Creek Project
Jeremy Jirak-Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge/ carp reduction project
Dave & Claudia Cottle-Bear Lake Watch

Chairman Sim Weston conducted the April 24, 2024, meeting of the Bear Lake Regional Commission, the meeting started at 7:02 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Sim Weston asked for an approval of the agenda, The agenda was reviewed and approved.

- **Dan Fisher motioned to approve the agenda as amended.
Brad Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Jim Derito-Trout Unlimited/ N. Eden Creek Project

In 2018 the N Cisco Road was repaved, and Trout Unlimited was contacted by a landowner and asked to do something with the culvert and make it fish passable. This is where the N. Eden Creek project's conception started, and they are now ready to move forward. Jake Woodberry with Project River Structures, based out of Boise, is the project engineer.

Jim reminded the board of work that has been previously completed, starting in the late 1990's and early 2000's on the Westside tributaries such as the bottom of Swan Creek and in Fish Haven and St Charles, in terms of fish passage work; the ability to get fish out of the lake and into the streams to spawn. They have installed 15 fish screens, and 5 culverts, 3 fish ladders up on St Charles Creek and a couple habitat improvement projects, one on Swan Creek and one on Fish Haven Creek. From May to June the big adult fish head upstream to spawn, after hatching the juvenile fish will rear in the creeks for a half year up to one or two years before heading down to the lake, growing big and continuing the cycle.

The Idaho Fish and Game is working on one more screen in St Charles Creek, on the Wilward South diversion. The projects seem to be successful as the wild cutthroat fish population is improving. These improvements are due to the combined efforts of Idaho Fish and Game, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Landowners and Water rights holders.

The proposed solution for the large fish spawning on N Eden Creek is to replace the current 90' long 6' round culvert with a 10' wide bottomless arch culvert on the N Cisco rd. to establish a more natural streambed and leveling the grade through the area.

The next step in the process is to continue to work with Rich County Engineer and the project Engineer, working out a transportation plan, then hopefully getting a request for proposals out for construction in May, and be ready to take it to construction this fall.

Trout Unlimited has started working through Utah State University, which has received funding from the State of Utah through their Land Water and Air Institute. They were able to fund 11 projects, the North Eden project being one of those projects.

Jeremy Jirak-Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge/ carp reduction project

Sometime in the 1800's carp were stocked in the river or the lakes somewhere and they are now throughout the west, and they affect the bird refuge negatively. Carp root around and increase the turbidity so sunlight can't get to the bottom, this affects the growth of submerged aquatic vegetation.

The main reason the Birds use the refuge is to feed on this submerged aquatic vegetation.

The open pools in the marsh grow these plant species which the birds feed directly on, or the tubers, or seeds or the invertebrates that live on them such as bugs or snails.

Since 1968 managers have been doing projects, like building dikes, to keep carp out. Then, without river flow to the lake they could do more to control the carp, such as administering Rotenone poisoning. They could also dry out areas, or in controlled shallower water they could freeze them out. Fish screens were also installed to reduce carp coming into the Refuge.

In 1977 a dike was built which formed the Salt Meadow creating a 200-acre wetland unit.

In 1983 Rainbow Dike was completed creating a 2000-acre unit.

In 2001 Bloomington Dike was completed creating a 1900-acre unit.

In 2009 Bunn Lake Unit Dike was completed creating 2200-acre unit.

Jeremy reviewed some of their infrastructure projects since 2016 which have impacted 6630 wetland acres at a cost of approximately \$163,000. Completing the work in house most likely saved \$250,000.

11 new water control structures were built, installed 435 feet of pipe, 1000 feet of ditches created, and 975 feet of ditches cleaned and 8 new fish screens, one retrofitted for new style of water control structure, standardized water control structures for interchangeable boards and fish screens, switched to pre-cast concrete water control structures, and high-density polyurethane pipeline for increased service life & ease of installation. The regional office came up with \$81,527 of invasive species grant funds to help with these projects.

The 2023 Bunn Lake drainage pipeline & fish screening project was completed in November of 2023. It was designed for drainage of 2230 acre wetland unit. This project will operate best when the lake is 5915 or below. This was an 8-year project and the contracted cost fell in a bad year (2022), so it ended up costing \$496,000, significantly more than if the contracted costs had been completed a few years earlier.

Legislative Rendezvous/ update & discussion

Mitch updated the board on the preparations for the Legislative Rendezvous planned for June 13. Invitations have been sent out, one by email and one by United States Postal Service, with a fair number of responses. Mike Mower from the Utah Governor's Office is planning to attend. Mayor Mike Leonhardt contacted the Utah Legislators to confirm their attendance and Senator Chris Wilson and Representative Kera Birkeland confirmed they are planning to attend. Commissioner Brad Jensen agreed to follow up with Senator Harris and Representative Kevin Andrus. Commissioner Sim Weston will follow up with Executive Director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources Joel Ferry. The UT Parks and Recreation Director will not be able to attend but will send his assistant. Mitch presented the board with a rough outline of the meeting, which included, boarding the State boats at the marina, and traveling to the newly purchased Idaho State Parks property on the West side of Bear Lake, where Park Manager Andrew Stokes will explain their plans for this property. On the way back they will point out a patch of milfoil. Then they will stop at the USGS gauging station, where Serena Seawolf will give a short presentation on their monitoring work. Then a discussion of development patterns in the area from Commissioners Jensen, and Weston along with Mayor Leonhardt. Then Parks Manager Dreesbeke will give a short presentation on the marina expansion. After which the boats will return to the marina for lunch networking and a raspberry shake.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and approved.

- **Burdette Weston made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2024 meeting, Brad Jensen seconded the motion, motion carried.**

Bills & Payroll

The bills and payroll for the Bear Lake Regional Commission were reviewed, a motion was made to approve them.


- **Albert Johnson made a motion to accept and approve payment of the April 2024 bills and payroll for the Bear Lake Regional Commission, Dan Fisher seconded the motion, motion carried.**

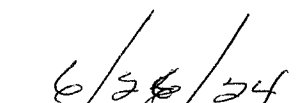
Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.

- **Ken Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Bear Lake Regional Commission Burdette Weston seconded the motion, motion carried.**

Minutes Approved:


Chairman


Date