

Bear Lake Regional Commission

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Minutes Bear Lake Regional Commission Garden City, UT November 18, 2021

Those in attendance:

Bradley Jensen- Board Chairman, Bear Lake County Commissioner
Sim Weston, Board Vice Chairman, Rich County Commissioner
Burdette Weston - Board Secretary, Mayor of Laketown
Mike Leonhardt - Mayor of Garden City
Roy Bunderson, City Council of Bloomington
Ron Jensen – Recreation
Albert Johnson, Bear Lake County at Large
Ken Brown - Rich County at Large
Mitch Poulsen - Executive Director- Bear Lake Regional Commission
Christy Jensen - Bear Lake Regional Commission

Also in attendance:

Scott Tolentino – Division of Wildlife Resources - Bear Lake Fisheries Biologist
Chris Penne – Division of Wildlife Resources -Regional Aquatics Manager for Utah Northern Region
Carson Watkins - Regional Fisheries Manager-Idaho Department of Fish & Game-Pocatello Office
Jim Parker- Bear Lake Translator District

Excused: Dan Fisher - City Council of Montpelier

Chairman Bradley Jensen conducted the November 18, 2021, meeting of the Bear Lake Regional Commission, the meeting started at 7:02 pm.

Approval of Agenda

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

- **Ron Jensen motioned to approve the agenda.**
Ken Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Bear Lake Fisheries Discussion (Utah & Idaho)

Carson Watkins - Regional Fisheries Manager-Idaho Department of Fish & Game and his Utah counterparts Chris Penne the Northern Utah Region Aquatics program manager and Scott Tolentino the DWR Bear Lake Fisheries Biologist wanted to check in with the Regional Commission Board and discuss some of their programs that involve Bear Lake Fisheries. Including expanding Fishing on Bear Lake and the States proposed lake trout study and transfer to Central Idaho for lake trout.

The Idaho Director of Fish & Game, Ed Schriever received a letter of concern about this transfer of fish from the Bear Lake Regional Commission and one from the Bear Lake County Commission. Carson Watkins and Director Schriever held a roundtable with local state legislators in southeast Idaho including, Senator Harris, Representative Gibbs, and Commissioner Rasmussen to update them on this proposed transfer project. The original project was to move 400, 18 inch and larger, of an estimated ten thousand current sterile lake trout to another location in Idaho to establish a lake trout fishery there. The program was put on hold until more public meetings can be held to involve the public in this project. This outreach with the public will postpone this project at least a couple of years and possibly indefinitely if public buy in cannot be reasonably reached.

The beginning of last year Utah and Idaho cooperated in a study to learn more about trout population in Bear Lake. Some information was concerning, and it dovetailed with interests to learn more about how the lake trout stocking program was working over the past twenty years. A major overhaul to the stocking program was made around 2001-2002 there is a need at this time to review this and see how well it is working and how current management actions are standing up and if they are providing a good lake trout fishery. This study coincided with a desire from another region within the state to get some adult sterile lake trout as donor stock for another fishery. In April or May of this past year, the planning phases of this program were going forward, and some public information was released to inform the public of the "what and whys" of this program. This information was met with a fair bit of unexpected opposition. The actions of this proposed project (the lake trout transfer) are fairly routine things that are done to manage and establish different fisheries in other places. Due to the general angst from local anglers and the letters from the Regional Commission and the County Commissions the project has been put on hold rather than cause this kind of discontent. The Fish & Game is planning to do more public outreach and hope to see a more favorable outcome to be able to accomplish fishery goals with buy in from the public, with better communication and education between everyone. Carson Watkins explained that transplanting animals is a common practice in the state and between other states as well. These projects are always sensitive to the diminished hunting and fishing experiences for the donor populations.

Discussion and questions between the board and Scott, Chris and Carson lead to an interesting dialog, and a better understanding of the fish and the management practices of the states. Lake trout often displace the native or endemic species of fish and cause imbalance. Scott educated the Board about the unique attributes of Bear Lake and the sterilization program for lake fish.

Since 2002 the stocking program for Bear Lake has been sterile fish produced by a pressure method used to sterilize Artic Char, a species similar to Lake Trout, by a hatchery up in the Yukon, to which Scott was fortunate enough to run across in his conversations with the manager. The success with lake trout sterilization is unique to Bear Lake. One of the key objectives of the study they want to do is looking at how many sterile fish verses fertile fish are in the lake. And are the lake trout out there producing to some extent, and if so, how much?

The IDWR and Utah Fish and Game are planning a public open house to begin general dialog with the public, not specific to the transplant program but more just to share information and explain fishery goals and practices. They would also like to present information and updates with the Regional Commission on a more regular basis.

Jim Parker/ Translator Discussion

The Bear Lake Translator District interchanges with Laketown and some improved coordination between the states is needed to improve the signal. The Translators get their parent signal from

Farnsworth Peak which is in the Oquirrh Mountains down out of Salt Lake. From there it goes to Lewis Peak out of Wanship, Crawford Peak to Laketown, to South Hill in Bear Lake. If the signal goes down in Laketown the signal is gone in Bern. Steve Kunz is the Bear Lake Translator District technician, and he has connections in the Fish Haven and Randolph area that can inform him of their reception which lets him know which transmitter is down. The lack of a technician in Rich County is making it difficult to keep things up and running. Ron Titcome from Channel 7 would occasionally come to do work on the Rich County translators, typically only if Channel 7 had a problem. Unfortunately, he has since passed away leaving few current options for help. Commissioner Weston said they have a man out of Heber City that comes to services Rich County Translators when they go out.

Bear Lake is a translator district, Rich County does not have a translator district, so it falls on the County. Bear Lake Translator District pays a \$100 monthly fee to use Rich County signals, and just wants to connect with Rich County and explain the problems and attempt to get a little better communication going which might be able to come up with some ideas to improve the situation. Discussion of the possibility of training someone local was discussed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and approved.

- **Ron Jensen made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting. Burdette Weston seconded the motion, motion carried.**

Bills, Payroll

The bills and payroll for the Bear Lake Regional Commission will be reviewed and ratified at the next meeting as the earlier date of this meeting did not allow time for all the bills to come in.

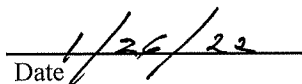
Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

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

Minutes Approved:


Chairman


Date 1/26/22