

Utah Quality Growth Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 23, 2008, 10:00 AM,
GOPB Conference Room
Governors Office of Planning and Budget
Utah State Capitol
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Attending

Leonard Blackham
Jaren Davis
Laraine Swenson
Sally Elliott
Larry Ellertson
Mike Kohler
Brent Tanner
Reed Erickson
Justin Allen
Darrell Smith
Ken Mitchell

Staff attending

John Bennett
Evan Curtis

Visitors

Nicol Gagstetter, TNC
Gabe Epperson, Envision Utah
Val John Halford, WFRC
Jack Muller, UDAF
Wayne Martinson, Utah Vital Signs Project
Sandra McIntyre, Utah Vital Signs Project
Jill Meacham, Dept. of Community and Culture
Shauna Kerr, Trust for Public Land

1—Welcome and introductions—5 minutes

Chairman Jaren Davis welcomed all the visitors to the meeting. Visitors were asked to introduce themselves.

2—Public Comments—5 minutes

3—ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes from November 28, 2007 Meeting

Reed Erickson indicated that Mike Styler was not in attendance at the last meeting although he was listed as being in attendance. He also indicated that while he was introduced, he was not listed as being in attendance. Reed Erickson moved approval of the minutes as amended, Mike Kohler seconded the motion, the minutes, as amended, were approved unanimously.

4—SUPER Toolkit status—Planning Coordination Update: John Bennett, 15 minutes

John Bennett informed the Commission of the Planning Coordination meeting held by the Governors Office earlier in the month. This meeting was called by Mike Mower, the new State Planning Coordinator, to bring together all the organizations doing planning in Utah. The New Land Use Ordinance Library created by Evan Curtis with support from the Commission was unveiled to those in attendance at the meeting and was well received. Jaren Davis, Quality Growth Commission Chair attended the meeting representing the Commission. Mike Mower indicated that he wants to host a similar meeting at least annually, and maybe every six months. He wants to be sure to hold one before the next legislative session to coordinate legislative issues and strategies and funding priorities going into the session.

Evan Curtis indicated that the web address for that library has been set. It is www.planning.utah.gov/library.htm.

Mr. Curtis passed out some flyers about the library, and Mr. Bennett explained that the hope was to put up each piece of the SUPER tool as it becomes available with the final product being a single web portal for all the pieces of the SUPER tool. Jaren Davis indicated that he learned at the Planning Coordination meeting that the Land Use Library was Evan Curtis's Masters Thesis, and that no other state in the union has such a library. He indicated that Mr. Curtis's work reflected well on the Commission and we should be proud of the work he was doing.

5—Presentation: Utah Vital Signs Project

Wayne Martinson and Sandra McIntyre, 30 Minutes

Mr. Martinson and Ms. McIntyre presented the Utah Vital Signs Project to the Commission. The Utah Vital Signs project is designed to measure the ecological footprint of Utah. Utah is the first state to undertake an effort to map its ecological footprint statewide.

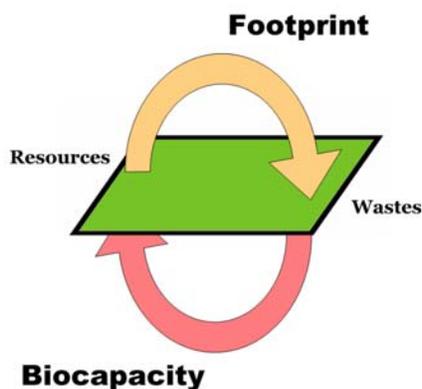
Mr. Martinson and Ms. McIntyre explained the findings of the project. A fact sheet appears below.

Living Beyond Our (Ecological) Means

A Fact Sheet from Utah Vital Signs

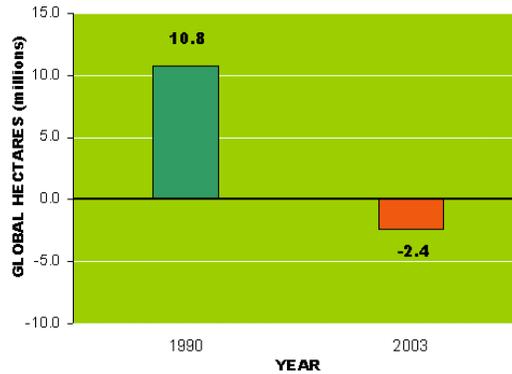
What is the Ecological Footprint?

- A leading sustainability tool that tracks the extent to which human demand on nature exceeds what planet Earth can regenerate
- An internationally recognized measure in use by governments, communities, and businesses to monitor resource balances and to plan for the future
- Uses a standardized methodology maintained by Global Footprint Network, www.footprintnetwork.com
- Expressed in terms of land area, given in global hectares (1 hectare equals 2 football fields without the end zones, or 2.47 acres)



We are part of the Earth's ecological cycle.

Utah's Ecological Surplus in 1990 and Ecological Deficit in 2003

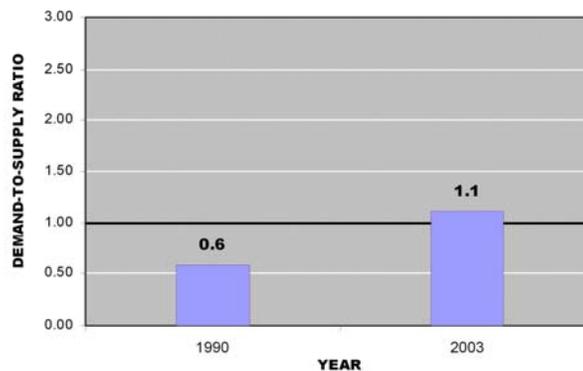


Utah went from a surplus in 1990 to a deficit of over 2 million global hectares in 2003.

What is the Utah Vital Signs Project?

- Utah is the first state in the country to gauge its Ecological Footprint
- Utah Vital Signs is a sustainability indicators project of the Utah Population and Environment Coalition.
- Utah Vital Signs empowers Utah citizens and key decision-makers to make better choices about their future by providing clear, well documented information about key indicators of environmental sustainability in Utah.
- Research project integrated data from many agencies and organizations to calculate Utah's Ecological Footprint for the state of Utah, for 1990 and 2003

Demand to Supply Ratio for Utah 1990 and 2003



What is Utah's Ecological Footprint?

- In 2003, the average Utahn needed 9.9 global hectares, about 20 football fields without the end zones, to support his/her annual consumption.
- There are only 8.9 global hectares per person available in Utah. World averages are lower.
- Utah's total footprint grew from 15.2 million global hectares in 1990 to 23.8 million global hectares in 2003.
- Utah's consumption of resources by 2003 had exceeded nature's renewable supply, creating an ecological overshoot. We went from having an ecological surplus in 1990 of 10.8 million gha in 1990 to having an ecological deficit of 2.4 million gha in 2003.
- How does your footprint compare with the average for Utah? For the United States? For the Earth as a whole? See the averages below.

Footprint	
2003 (gha/capita)	
Utah	9.9
U.S.	9.6
World	2.2

Biocapacity	
2003 (gha/capita)	
Utah	8.9
U.S.	4.7
World	1.8

Contacts

About Utah Vital Signs:

Website: www.utahpop.org/vitalsigns

Sandra McIntyre

Project Director

801-484-5308

smcintyre@utahpop.org

Helen Peters

Lead Researcher

801-560-5036

helenmpeters@gmail.com

Wayne Martinson

Chair, UPEC

contact@utahpop.org

www.utahpop.org

Following their presentation, Mr. Martinson and Ms. McIntyre took questions from the Commission. In addition, the Commission engaged them in a discussion of next steps, they indicated that they would be working on some additional sustainability indicators that they would share with the Commission at a future meeting. Chairman Davis thanked Mr. Martinson and Ms. McIntyre for their presentation.

6—War on Cheatgrass—Leonard Blackham, 15 Minutes

Commissioner Blackham walked the commission through a powerpoint presentation on cheatgrass and the current efforts to eradicate it in Utah and replace it with native plants, or more fire resistant forage plants across Utah. The highlights of the his presentation appear below.

Mitigation of Invasive Species “The War on Cheatgrass”

A Bill to Improve Land Health and Limit Catastrophic Wildfires

Cheat Grass and Wildfires

Cheat grass can take over a landscape and result in increased wildfires ... is this the future of Utah’s wild lands?

Scope of the Problem

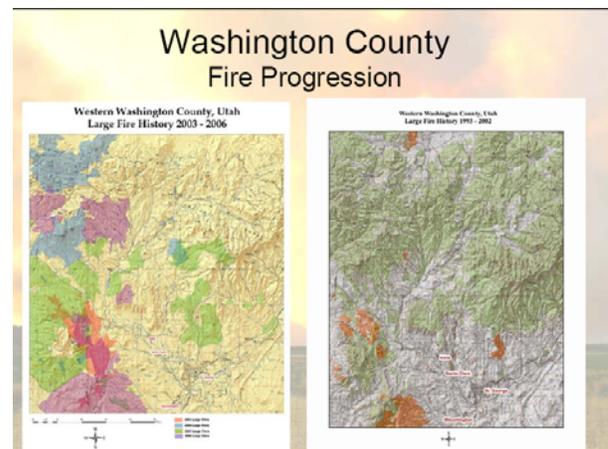
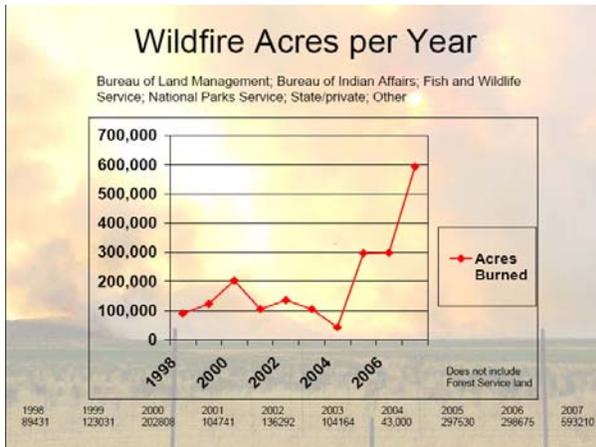
Size of Wildfires are Increasing, Resulting in Increasing Fire suppression and rehabilitation costs, Impacts to:

Air quality and public safety

The environment

Wildlife habitat

Agriculture and rural economies

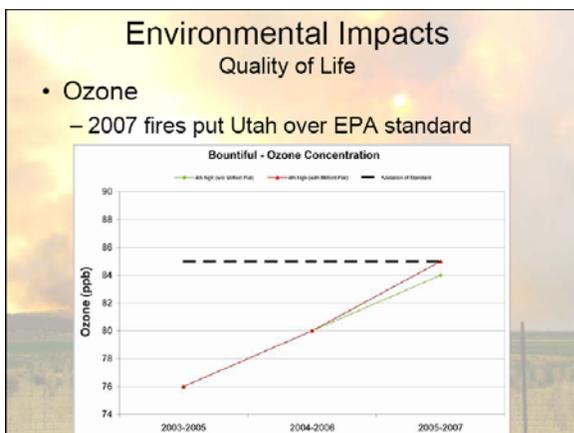
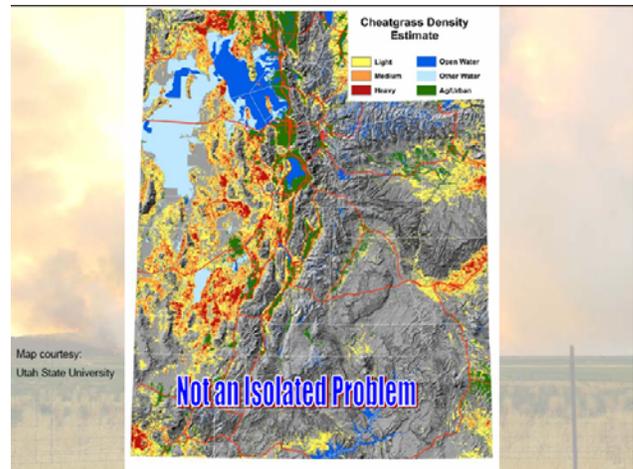
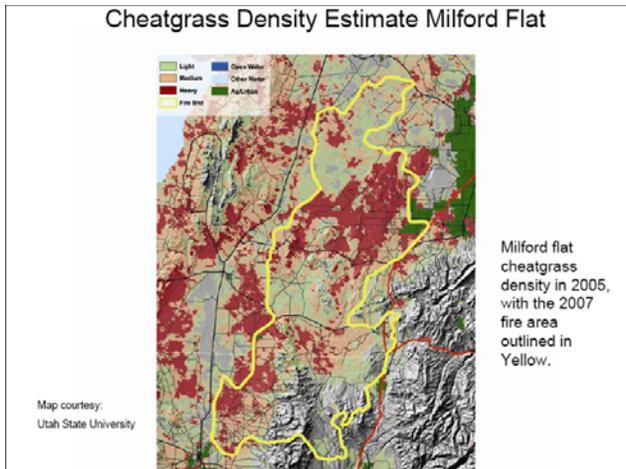


Fire Cycle How often will various landscapes burn?

Fire Return Interval

- Upland Steppe and Sage Brush: 27-40 years
- Pinion-Juniper: up to 100 years
- Cheatgrass Landscape: 2-3 years
 - After 2-3 burn cycles, the native grasses will not return.

Source: Sheldon Wimmer, BLM, Utah



Environmental Impacts PM10 and PM 2.5 Releases

2005—Wildfires statewide= 2,077 tons PM10
 2007—Milford Flat fire only= 3,267 tons PM10

PM 2.5 releases from the Milford flat fire = to 53% of total PM 2.5 releases from Utah's 2-million automobiles all year. It was like adding 1-million cars.

Other Impacts

Farmers and ranchers were negatively impacted
 Local businesses, including summer tourism negatively impacted
 Sage Grouse and other threatened species, loss of habitat

Is This Acceptable?

Ash and soil from Milford Flat fire being carried in the wind northward over I-15 and Wasatch urban areas

Solutions

To Conduct a War on Cheatgrass

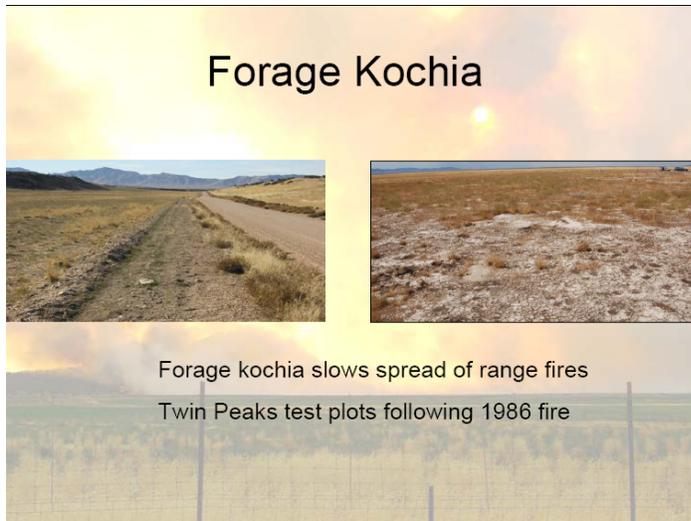
- Must make the 'War' a priority
- Must use the best plant materials & science
- Must be proactive by limiting size of future wildfires
- Must be an ongoing commitment

Some plants can establish and compete with cheatgrass

Case in point -- Asay, Horton, Jensen, and Palazzo. 2001. Merits of native and introduced Triticeae grasses on semiarid rangelands. Canadian Journal of Plant Sci. 81:45-52.



Photograph showing where the Milford Flat fire (2007) burned up to the forage kochia and stopped.



Range Management

Work to improve range management: Agencies, permittees, biologists, recreationists, etc.

Use existing tools, develop new ones where needed Infrastructure of the Utah PCD

- Grazing Improvement Program
- Watershed Restoration Initiative
- Federal Programs

The Cost of Doing Nothing

- Increase in air pollution and health impacts
- Increase in Cheatgrass dominated rangelands
- Increase in fire frequency and intensity
- Increase in fire suppression costs
- Increase in loss of property and impacts to ranchers and rural communities
- Increase the risk of federal listing of wildlife species; e.g, sage grouse

Priorities

1. Public Health and Safety
2. Environmental Benefits
3. Rural Economies

4. Livestock and Wildlife Habitat

The Necessary Arsenal

- Utah Conservation Commission/Utah Partnership for Conservation and Development Infrastructure
 - Inter-agency teams of experts
 - State, federal, local and private

Science and Technology

- Inter-disciplinary experts

Rangeland,

- wildlife,
- agronomy,
- administrative

- Funding?

Call to Arms

We must declare war on cheatgrass

Our current skirmishes are not sufficient

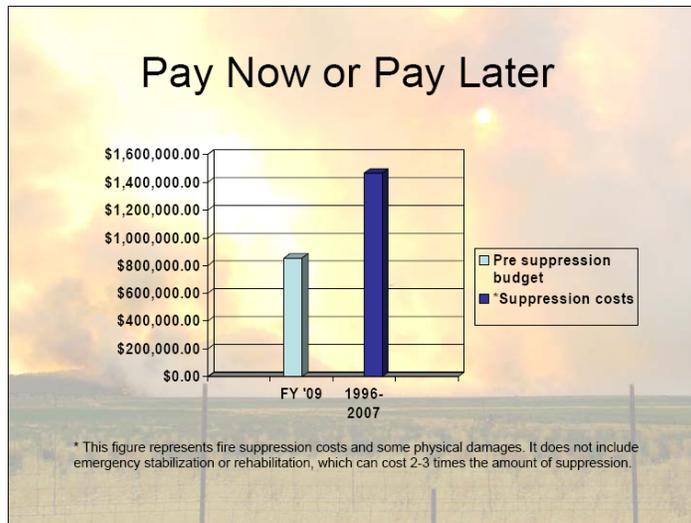
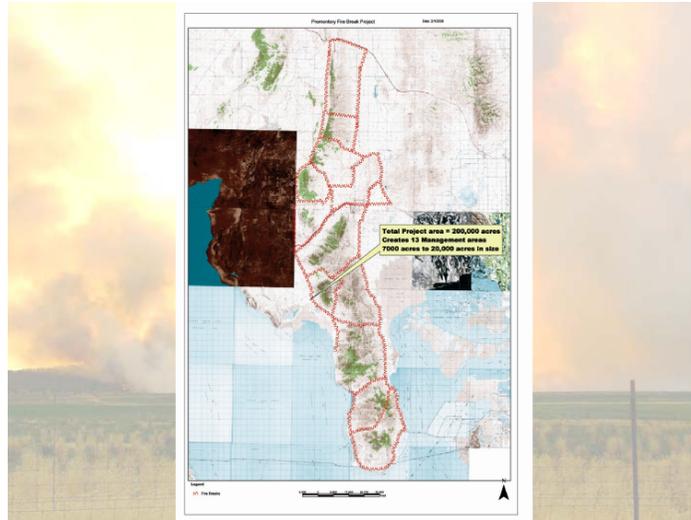
We must INVEST the necessary resources

SB 89 "Mitigation of Invasive Species" Dennis Stowell, sponsor

Promontory Project Example

Project planners and participants:

- DWR,
- NRCS,
- USFWS,
- UGIP, UACD,
- Fire and State Lands,
- Golden Spike,
- Thiokol,
- Scott Sandall,
- Frank Rees,
- Kellers,
- QRM,
- Fort Ranch,
- Youngs,
- Chournos's,
- Rattlesnake CWMU,
- Forestry Box Elder County,
- Box Elder County Fire Marshall



Additional Information

To view this presentation and additional information about the War of Cheatgrass, visit the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food website: www.ag.utah.gov

Following his presentation, Sally Elliott asked what the Commission could do to help. Commissioner Blackham indicated that he felt that with the new money available this year, that they didn't need money from the Commission, what they really needed was political support for the program as it makes its way through the legislature. Commissioner Blackham asked the Commission for its support to win needed appropriations for this effort.

ACTION ITEM: Motion to support the War on Cheatgrass.

Sally Elliott moved to ask staff to draft a letter or resolution expressing the Commission's support for the "War on Cheatgrass." Brent Tanner seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

7—Legislative Strategy Discussion, discuss legislative issues, and strategy for securing funding and support during legislative session, John Bennett, 20 Minutes.

---Planning Grants Funding

---McAllister Fund

John Bennett indicated that Mike Mower, the new State Planning Coordinator is pushing for ongoing funding for planning assistance.

Mr. Bennett distributed copies of the members of the two appropriations subcommittees that are responsible for our funding. He indicated that the Planning Grant funds go through the Executive Offices and Criminal Justice Appropriations Subcommittee, and that the LeRay McAllister Funds come through the Capital Facilities and Government Operations Subcommittee. He encouraged Commissioners to contact members of the subcommittees to express their support for these funds.

Mr. Bennett also passed around several copies of letters from recipients of the LeRay McAllister funds to their legislators. He indicated that he had asked recipients to contact their legislators to express their support for the fund, and these were early results from those requests.

Ken Mitchell asked how the planning grants would be used. Mr. Bennett explained that we would likely focus in two areas. First, support for regional planning efforts like Vision Dixie (two are in the works, one in Cache County, and one in Morgan County) and then small grants to assist small communities in the path of growth such as Corrine which has contacted us seeking assistance.

Commissioners asked staff to prepare the remaining one page summaries, and to break out the projects done by type, so that we would say this many acres of farms, forests, watersheds, etc. Staff agreed to do that. Create a values matrix.

8—Administrative Matters

Next meeting February 27, 2008, back here in the Capitol.