



# Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

## Monument Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Meeting format:** Zoom

**In attendance:**

**MAC:** Shea Owens (State Government), Hank Stevens (Tribal Interests), Joel Pederson (Education), Sarah Bauman (Conservation), Jacqualine Grant (Public at Large), Nathan Waggoner (Outfitters and Guides), Sheriff Glover (Kane County), Christa Sadler (Geology), Kevin Ballard (Grazing permittee)

**BLM:** Joe Mendez (BLM Utah Associate State Director), Christi Judd (BLM Utah Communications Director), Artemisia Turiya (Paria River District Planning and Environmental Coordinator), David Hercher (BLM Utah Public Affairs Specialist)

**Media and Members of the public:** KSL Assignment Desk, Julie Brugger, Hillary Angelo, Wendy Lessig (Recreational Aviation Foundation), Dave Stevenson, Liam O'Malley, Steph Wacha (Grand Canyon Trust), Simone Griffin (BlueRibbon Coalition), Don Heyse (CSU), Kyle Wilson (Senator Mitt Romney), Patrick McKay (Colorado Offroad Trail Defenders), Laura Welp (Western Watersheds Project), Robert King, Kya Marienfeld (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance), Mike Popejoy, Rob Torres (FOX13), Dale Mahoney, Taylor Glover (Kane County), Clayton Cutler, Marc Coles-Ritchie (BLM), Brandie Hardman (Boulder Mountain Guest Ranch), Hayden Ballard (PLPCO), Patrick Jacolenne, John Holland (GSEP), Brian Murphy (Utah Luxury Tours), Theresa Pasqual (Acoma Tribal Historic Preservation Office), Moyle Johnson (Willis Creek Ranch), Jessica Lowrey, Valerie Amerkhail, Danielle Tilley, Y Lee (Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc.), Lincoln Dalton, Paula Crockett, Dee Leggett, David Kiesel, Sam Van Wetter (Rural Utah Project), Dick Hingson (Sierra Club), Patty Weicht, Jane Stewart (Great Old Broads for Wilderness), Bryan Bates, Lura Snow (Wildland Trekking Company).

**Meeting agenda review:**

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
9 a.m. (5 minutes)	Virtual meeting logistics	<i>Alli Yamnitsky</i> , EMPSi
9:05 a.m. (10 minutes)	Welcome and introductions	<i>Greg Sheehan</i> , BLM Utah State Director  <i>Harry Barber</i> , Paria River District Manager

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9:15 a.m. (30 minutes)	MAC chairperson nominations	<i>Harry Barber</i> , Paria River District Manager
9:45 am (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call to Order, Remarks by Advisory Chair</li> <li>• Official vote for approval of meeting minutes from June 27, 2023</li> </ul>	MAC Chairperson
10 a.m. (10 minutes)	Resource Management Planning update	<i>Artemisia Turiya</i> , Paria River District Planning & Environmental Coordinator
10:10 a.m. (10 minutes)	Science Sub-committee determination update	<i>Harry Barber</i> , Paria River District Manager
10:20 a.m. (40 minutes)	MAC open-topic discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss 2024 meetings and schedule.</li> <li>• Propose Agenda Topics</li> </ul>	MAC Chairperson
11 a.m. (10 minutes)	10-minute break and reminder to public about registration if they wish to speak during public comment period	MAC Chairperson
11:10 a.m. (50 minutes)	BLM presentation Science Plan Content: A Deeper Dive	<i>Artemisia Turiya</i> , Paria River District Planning & Environmental Coordinator
12 p.m. (30 minutes)	30-minute lunch and reminder to public about registration if they wish to speak during public comment period	MAC Chairperson
12:30 p.m. (30 minutes)	MAC discussion and Q&A regarding science plan presentation	<i>Artemisia Turiya</i> , Paria River District Planning & Environmental Coordinator
1 p.m. (30 minutes)	MAC discussion related to draft RMP/EIS	MAC Chairperson
1:30 p.m. (45 minutes)	Scheduled public comment period	Members of the public. Sign-up provided for those interested in providing oral comments.

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2:15 p.m. (60 minutes)	MAC open discussion continued	MAC Chairperson
3:15 p.m. (30 minutes)	MAC formal recommendations	MAC Chairperson
3:45 p.m. (15 minutes)	Final thoughts and wrap up. Identify future MAC agenda items and meeting dates.	MAC Chairperson
4 p.m.	Adjourn	All
*The public comment period scheduled to commence at 1:30 p.m. and is scheduled for 45 minutes or until all public comments have concluded, whichever occurs first.		

### Welcome and introductions:

Bureau of Land Management Utah Associate State Director Joe Mendez  
Paria River District Manager Harry Barber

### Opening remarks:

- Welcomed MAC members.
- On Wed., Sept. 6, 2023, the Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland appointed three new committee members and re-appointed one committee member. Welcomed the following new members: Sheriff Tracy Glover (representing Kane County interests on the monument); Dr. Kevin Ballard (representing grazing interests on the monument); and Nathan Waggoner (representing outfitters & guides interests on the monument).
- Welcomed back Commissioner Tebbs, who has been reappointed to represent Garfield County interests on the monument.
- Committee now has a total of 12 members. There are a few other nomination packages awaiting action but status unknown at this time.
- Thanked public for their attendance, and reminded attendees about time for public comment period at 1:30 p.m. MT.
- Clearer definition of a quorum and guidance on subcommittee guidance & regulations.

### Recap of planning effort:

- Aug. 11, 2023, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Draft Resource Management Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement published (Draft RMP/EIS).



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### Recap of planning effort continued:

- Publication of Draft RMP/EIS initiates a 90-day public comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS; proposed target shooting closures, in accordance with the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management; and proposed areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) designations.
- Public comment periods are intended to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about the Draft RMP/EIS and will be accepted through Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023.
- On Wed., Sept. 6, 2023, GSENM held the first of six public comment periods.
- Dates, times, and locations for the remaining public comment periods may be found on the [GSENM MAC webpage](#). Link also provided in meeting chat.

### Additional discussion:

- Brief discussion of how BLM would postpone nomination of a chairperson until the next MAC meeting.
- June 27, 2023 meeting minutes approved, certified and posted to MAC meeting webpage.

### Committee discussion:

- Citizen science (data collection and continued monitoring) – Committee discussed formal recommendation to establish a citizen science component that would:
  - Encourage a citizen science component to all research on the monument where that would be possible.
  - Create programs that go to local schools of all levels to get the students involved in citizen science
  - Have specific C.S. programs for children
  - Encourage service projects with outfitters and guides.
  - Encourage citizen science programs between tribes and others.
  - Maintaining a digital science journal subscription service

### BLM presentation: Resource Management Planning update:

Presented by Artemisia Turiya, Paria River District Planning & Environmental Coordinator

- Provided a review of current status of Monument RMP/EIS planning process and next steps.
- Discussed planned public comment period/meeting open house format.

### MAC member questions:

Jacqueline Grant: There were quite a lot of partners listed in all these discussions, and I'm wondering what exactly you expect the role of the MAC moving forward? Our role as the MAC is to provide advice and provide scientific input. If we could get some clarification that'd be wonderful.



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Harry Barber: In terms of the MAC, you are correct that the MAC's purpose is to provide advice, read through the Draft RMP/EIS and become familiar with it. I think you're right on both accounts and we have set aside time later in the agenda to discuss.

David Hercher: Reiterated the importance of having the MAC help develop future meeting agendas.

Joel Pederson: Asked why the MAC is not listed as official participants in the planning process, and if the MAC has any special venue to submit comments outside of doing so as individual members of the public.

Harry Barber: Reiterated the need for a chairperson. A need for the MAC to bring a formal recommendation to the BLM and vote on that recommendation, and that meanwhile MAC members can submit comments as individuals.

Sarah Bauman: Asked if there is a legal mandate, a mechanism for the MAC to be included, similar to a cooperating agency.

Artemisia Turiya: Responded that the MAC is an advisory committee. That cooperating agencies are designated by law; advisory committees are not.

David Hercher: When there's a chairperson, then the MAC can make a formal recommendation; the MAC is an advisory committee, but this committee does not have special status like a cooperating agency or government-to-government body does.

Joel Pederson: Pointed out that with the addition of the new members appointed on Sept. 6, 2023, that the committee now has a quorum but no chairperson.

Harry Barber: As having a quorum and the group elects to make a formal recommendation, we can take a vote (as Harry is acting chairperson for the day) and then we move forward based on the vote. Otherwise, we wait for the next meeting, but you'll miss that opportunity.

Collectively, MAC members discussed the need for another meeting before the end of the calendar year or at a minimum early 2024, preferably January or February.

Artemisia Turiya: A recommendation from the MAC is not the same as a public comment. A MAC recommendation is not tied into the law and regulation of NEPA, so we are really talking about two different things here. But with an EIS the comment period ends when the comment period ends.



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Artemisia Turiya: December through February is when comments analysis will certainly be done, but it doesn't mean that if there was something vitally important that it wouldn't be heard. But I, strongly, as a planner, recommend that if people have new information that it be submitted during the comment period.

Sarah Bauman: Asked about the likelihood of having another MAC meeting before the end of the calendar year.

David Hercher: Discussed the requirement of the Federal Register process, stating that there is no time to schedule another public meeting in that short of a timeframe. Recommended that the MAC submit agenda items and ideally, he should receive those within the next month so agenda items can be developed and included in the next Federal Register package for the upcoming calendar year.

Hank Stevens: Discussed the need to reevaluate the planning timeline as it hinders the Tribes' ability to participate in the process. Asked for opportunity to have a Tribal presentation included on a future MAC agenda.

Harry Barber: In keeping with the agenda timeline, transitioned the conversation to the topic of initiating a science subcommittee as this was included on the agenda based upon previous MAC meeting discussions. Reiterated that per FACA regulation, a science subcommittee is held to the same regulations as the MAC, and as such, must be held as a public meeting.

David Hercher: Reiterated that the 15-days outlined in the regulations is for public notification only (i.e.: when the news release would publish) but that the entire Federal Register process still applies; a process that is approximately 120 days, which is why it would not be possible to have another meeting before the end of the calendar year.

Nathan Waggoner: Discussed the need to consider a recreation subcommittee and inclusion of SRP relationships into a future agenda. the Monument agenda topic.

Shea Owens: Recommended the MAC consider a grazing subcommittee.

Kavin Ballard: Agreed that a grazing subcommittee would be important to consider, as well as a recreation subcommittee and recreation subcommittee. State that the MAC consider limiting the number of subcommittees to three or four.

David Hercher: Asked the group to consider the BLM's capacity and cost associated with having multiple subcommittees in addition to the regular MAC meetings.



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Christa Sadler: Expressed frustration that the MAC spent a year meeting but felt like the progress was not being made. Science is the underpinning of everything we are trying to do. Made the motion to establish a science subcommittee.

Shea Owens: Asked the group who should be proposed to serve on a science subcommittee.

Christa Sadler: Recommended an ecologist, archaeologist, paleontologist, tribal representation, climate scientist; recommend scientists from outside this core group.

Shea Owens: Added that the MAC consider we have representation with respect to traditional ecological knowledge.

Joel Pederson: Commented that he too supports a science subcommittee and to consider including representative from state agencies and academia, as well as a tribal subcommittee, and that the MAC also consider a recreation subcommittee and wildlife-grazing subcommittee at a future meeting. Also recommended that future meetings be in-person. Also mentioned that we don't want subcommittees to become similar to what we already have; to avoid having a "Mini-MAC," and to ensure that this does not happen, subcommittees should be distinct.

David Hercher: Again, cautioned the group to consider the BLM's capacity and cost associated with having multiple subcommittees in addition to the regular MAC meetings.

Nathan Waggoner: Added that too many subcommittees negate the need for a MAC. Recommended sticking to having only three. That the MAC gather information, bring it forward and decide how to best approach moving forward.

Further discussion resulted in several committee members expressing the need for the following subcommittees: science, recreation, tribal, travel management, livestock grazing, and multiple use.

Sheriff Glover: As a new MAC member, commented that he is not yet comfortable voting in favor of subcommittees.

Shea Owens: Asked what direction MAC members plan to give to subcommittees; what level of direction do we want to provide as a committee? There should be an objective, rather than creating subcommittees for the purpose of creating subcommittees.

Christa Sadler: Commented that subcommittees need to be looking further into the future. For example, in terms of grazing, a subcommittee might look 20 to 30 years into the future and as things



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change, questions arise, or situations change over time, there may be specific needs or broader issues that a subcommittee can address. I'd like to see experts from outside the MAC advise us.

Shea Owens: Expressed his concerns that right now the scope is too broad. Recommend narrowing the scope by asking subcommittee members to investigate specific questions the MAC may have in order to be more productive. Recommended defining the purpose of a subcommittee prior to voting on establishing one.

Artemisia Turiya: Reminded the MAC that GSENM is a NLCS unit that supersedes multiple use in the usual sense under FLPMA. Meaning if considering something like livestock grazing, we need to consider that the BLM looks at science in two ways – monitoring and research, which means that for the purposes of the proclamation science could supersede multiple use but that we also do the best job we can to ensure grazing management is done where it is compatible to do so.

DRAFT