

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

Honors Think Tank

Student Exhibits

12-5-2019

Playing the Public Lands Game- HONR 3020: Engaging Utah's Public Lands

Libbie Anderson
Utah State University


Zach Archibald
Utah State University

Tessa Burrows
Utah State University

Corinne Clarkson
Utah State University

Connor Coles
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/honr_thinktank

 Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)
Utah State University

Recommended Citation

See next page for additional authors

Anderson, Libbie; Archibald, Zach; Burrows, Tessa; Clarkson, Corinne; Coles, Connor; Dougher, Colten; Edwards, Taylor; Hales, Emily; Hallock, Emma; Hansen, Ivy; Harward, Chase; Herron, Michael; Hoopes, Hayden; Keller, Kollin; King, Nicole; Lapp, Jordan; Lueckler, Sarah; Nelson, Clarissa; Owens, Eliza; Randall, Kinzie; Richards, Mariah; Rodgers, Nicholas; Rolfe, Emmalee; Sykes, Daniel; Tirrell, Justin; and Oliver, Alicia, "Playing the Public Lands Game- HONR 3020: Engaging Utah's Public Lands" (2019). *Honors Think Tank*. Paper 7.

https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/honr_thinktank/7

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Exhibits at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Think Tank by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



Authors

Libbie Anderson, Zach Archibald, Tessa Burrows, Corinne Clarkson, Connor Coles, Colten Dougher, Taylor Edwards, Emily Hales, Emma Hallock, Ivy Hansen, Chase Harward, Michael Herron, Hayden Hoopes, Kollin Keller, Nicole King, Jordan Lapp, Sarah Lueckler, Clarissa Nelson, Eliza Owens, Kinzie Randall, Mariah Richards, Nicholas Rodgers, Emmalee Rolfe, Daniel Sykes, Justin Tirrell, and Alicia Oliver

PLAYING THE PUBLIC LANDS GAME

HONR 3020: ENGAGING UTAH'S PUBLIC LANDS

*How to get involved with
public land issues and learn
what's at stake.*

Join us as students present a guide that teaches how to locate, navigate, and participate in the various government and public processes for engaging in public lands debates.

December 5 | 9-10 am | Lib 154
Refreshments to be served



MOUNTAIN WEST CENTER
for REGIONAL STUDIES
College of Humanities & Social Sciences
UtahStateUniversity.

Sponsored by the USU Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, the Honors Program, and the departments of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology and English.

Table of Contents

NEPA: The Foundation for Understanding Public Lands Issues.....	1
Getting Involved in the NEPA Process: Scoping and Pubic Comment.....	6
The Federal Register.....	9
Government Committees and NEPA: Roles, Impact, and How to Get Involved	12
Public Lands Interest Groups: Their Role and How to Get Involved	26
State of the State: Current Public Lands Issues in Utah.....	33

NEPA: The Foundation for Understanding Public Lands Issues

The purpose of this section is to give you an understanding of what NEPA is, how it operates, and why it was formed. We will also discuss important terms and acronyms used with NEPA in order to better understand how it operates. We hope that after reading this section, you will feel comfortable with reading NEPA material and understanding the processes behind which NEPA decisions are made. It is our hope that you will ultimately understand why NEPA exists, and what effect it has on environmental policies in today's society.

Key Terms

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act. This is a law made with the intent to protect the environment and is explained more fully in depth in the "Context of Creation" section.

CEQ: Council on Environmental Quality. This was the council that was created in conjunction with the NEPA in order to oversee its regulation. It is a division of the Executive office of the President.

CatEx (or CX, CE, Exclusion): Categorical Exclusion. This is a type of project that an agency excludes from detailed NEPA review because it has little potential for impact.

EA: Environmental Assessment. This is submitted when a project does not meet the requirements of an agency's Categorical Exclusion from NEPA.

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment. This is the procedure that should be carried out by the planning team before planning permission can be legally granted.

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement. This is the statement that must supplement the application for planning permission. There are multiple types of EIS as shown below.

DEIS: Draft

FEIS: Final

LEIS: Legislative

PEIS: Programmatic

SEIS: Supplemental/Supplementary

FONSI: Finding of No Significant Impact. This is done when the EA results in the conclusion that the project's impacts will not be significant, so no EIS is required.

MFASAQHE: Major Federal Action Significantly Affecting the Quality of the Human Environment. This must be considered to determine whether an action will impact the environment enough to require an Environmental Impact Statement.

ROD: Record of Decision. This is a concise public document that records a federal agency's decision concerning a proposed action for which the agency has prepared an EIS.

What is NEPA?

Context of the Creation

NEPA was signed into law on January 1, 1970 and was created with three very simple intentions: encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between people and their environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of humanity. The creation of NEPA represented a shift in the United States' effort to protect the environment and nature as a whole. NEPA was followed swiftly by other acts but is described essentially as the Magna Carta of Federal Environmental Laws.¹

The Council on Environmental Quality was set in motion along with NEPA and put in motion various acts such as the Clean Air Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and many more. The benefits of NEPA spread quickly and assisted in the decision making of energy businesses. "Thank goodness for NEPA because there were so many pressures to make a selection for a technology that might have been forced upon us and that would have been wrong for the country," stated James Watkins, the Secretary of Energy back in 1992.²

NEPA fueled the fire for environmentalists to help regulate environmental damage being caused by oil drilling companies, the Atomic Energy Commission as well as a large amount of Federal Agencies. Not only was NEPA being interpreted to prevent the direct effects of projects but also the indirect ones. The perfect example of this was the design for a John F Kennedy library which was put on hold when it was determined that the construction of the library would increase congestion and air pollution.³

Examples such as this have occurred year after year leading into the present day as NEPA continues to fight to protect public lands and the environment.

Context of the Now

Many of the same policies governing NEPA are still in practice today. Every agency has different specific policies on how their agency will comply with the rules and regulations of NEPA as governed by the Council on Environmental Quality. The CEQ continues to provide an annual report on the state of the environment to the president, oversees the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) by federal agencies, and acts as a regulator when agencies disagree on those assessments. As the CEQ is part of the executive office of the president it also works to further the human and natural environmental agenda of the presidential administration.

Today the NEPA process is under review as agencies, politicians, and citizens have complained of the time frame that it takes for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to go from the issuance of a notice of intent to a record of decision. From 2010 - 2017 the average

¹ Katz, Diane. "Time to Repeal the Obsolete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)." The Heritage Foundation. Accessed December 2, 2019. <https://www.heritage.org/government-regulation/report/time-repeal-the-obsolete-national-environmental-policy-act-nepa>.

² "1988 Article on NEPA: Past, Present, and Future." EPA. Environmental Protection Agency, October 4, 2016. <https://archive.epa.gov/epa/aboutepa/1988-article-nepa-past-present-and-future.html>.

³ Council on Environmental Quality. "Environmental Impact Statement Timelines (2010-2017)." *Council on Environmental Quality*, Executive Office of the President: Council on Environmental Quality, 14 Dec. 2018,

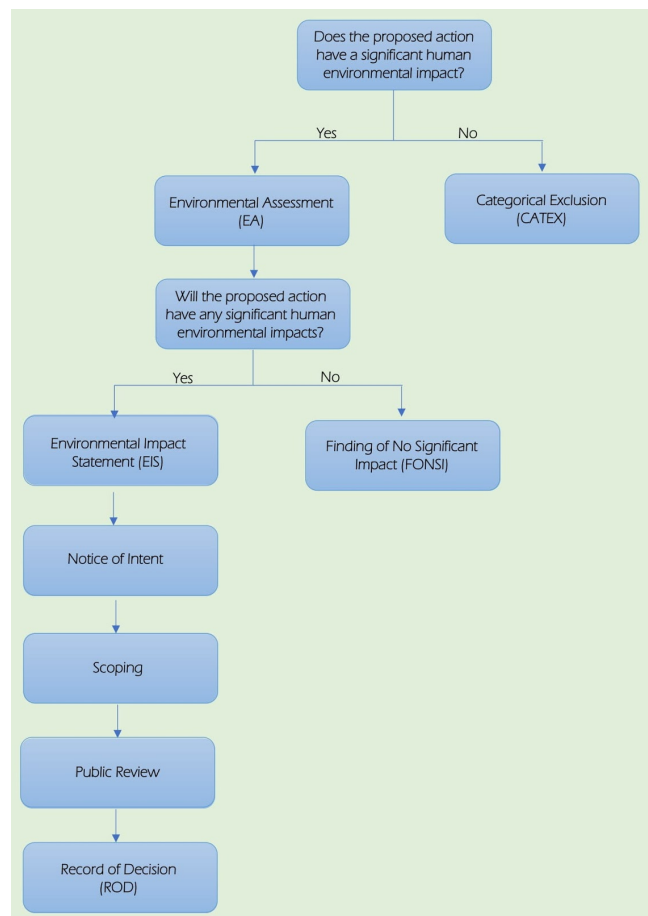
time for an EIS to go through this process took 4.6 years.⁴ Some politicians are claiming that this lengthy process bears too high of a cost for any proposed project and therefore should be reformed to allow for a shorter review period. Others are arguing that the time it takes to go through the process of an EIS is the proper amount of time to fully understand the effect a project could have on the natural and human environments and to receive proper input from citizens.

Other issues include: the susceptibility of the CEQ to bend the rules for those that are ideologically aligned with the presidential administration and block those that are opposed, the deep complexities of following NEPA (“The NEPA Book: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Comply with the National Environmental Policy Act” is almost 500 pages long), and Congress has little say in the NEPA process though it impacts many federal actions.⁵

Operational Procedures

NEPA functions through the use of a series of operational procedures. NEPA procedures are slightly different for each federal agency, but they generally follow these steps. The NEPA process begins with the development of a proposal for a major federal action. If the action won’t have a specific impact on the human environment, it can bypass the Environmental Analysis that would normally follow. This is known as a Categorical Exclusion (CATEX). However, if the proposed action will have a significant impact on the human environment, the proposal then goes through a detailed Environmental Assessment (EA).

The EA includes determining the need or purpose for the proposed action, creating alternative courses of action, evaluating the environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons that were



⁴ Council on Environmental Quality. “Environmental Impact Statement Timelines (2010-2017).” *Council on Environmental Quality*, Executive Office of the President: Council on Environmental Quality, 14 Dec. 2018, https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/nepa-practice/CEQ_EIS_Timelines_Report_2018-12-14.pdf; United States Government Accountability Office. “National Environmental Policy Act.” Government Accountability Office, United States, Apr. 2014, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/670/662543.pdf>.

⁵ Katz, Diane. “Time to Repeal the Obsolete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).” *The Heritage Foundation*, The Heritage Foundation, 14 Mar. 2018, <https://www.heritage.org/government-regulation/report/time-repeal-the-obsolete-national-environmental-policy-act-nepa>.

consulted in the process. If through this EA process it is determined that the proposed action will not have any significant environmental impacts, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be published which will state the reasons why it has been determined the proposed action will not have a significant environmental impact. Alternatively, if the agency determines the proposed action will have a significant human environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be created.

During the EIS process, the agency will create a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register which will inform the public about the environmental analysis that will occur and encourages them to participate in the EIS process. The Notice of Intent starts the scoping process as the public and federal agency work together to determine the issues and alternatives to the proposed action. After a draft of the EIS has been created, it is released for public review for at least 45 days. Following this public review process, a final EIS is published along with a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD explains the decision that was made, the considered alternatives, and in some cases, the plan for monitoring and reducing the potential environmental impacts the proposed action will cause.⁶

Utah Equivalent

The state of Utah has its own local state department dedicated to ensuring that actions taken in Utah have minimal impacts on the overall environment, as NEPA does. This equivalent to NEPA is the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ. The DEQ's main goal, as stated on their website, is to preserve and improve the air, water, and land resources through constant regulation.⁷ To accomplish this goal, the DEQ has six different boards that focus on different aspects of the resources, in order to maximize efforts focused on these specific areas. Two of these boards are focused on air quality, another two on water, with the last two being dedicated to waste management and emergency responses to hazardous chemical spillage.⁸

The Utah DEQ places a heavy emphasis on the planning of projects before they are enacted. The whole department takes part in the planning process, as planning retreats are held every year. At every retreat, members of the DEQ make assessments of the present conditions of resources, and identify issues based off of the results of these assessments. Individual divisions and whole departments then collaborate to decide upon what strategies and decisions need to be made about these issues, setting goals to achieve.⁹

More information about Utah DEQ can be found here: <https://deq.utah.gov/>.

⁶“National Environmental Policy Act Review Process.” *EPA*, Environmental Protection Agency, 24 Jan 2017, <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/national-environmental-policy-act-review-process>.

⁷“Home.” Utah Department of Environmental Quality. Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 2019. <https://deq.utah.gov/>.

⁸“Boards.” Utah Department of Environmental Quality. Utah Department of Environmental Quality, January 4, 2019. <https://deq.utah.gov/boards/boards>.

⁹“Strategic Planning.” Utah Department of Environmental Quality. Utah Department of Environmental Quality, August 27, 2019. <https://deq.utah.gov/general/strategic-planning#quality-management-plan>.

Concluding Points

- There are many agencies that utilize NEPA, most of which have variation on the general NEPA operating procedures to determine the potential environmental impacts of a proposed federal action.
- Current issues with NEPA include: the prolonged time required to take an EIS to a ROD, susceptibility to partisan favoring, and the generality of the act allowing for variation throughout government agencies.
- The NEPA process follows a general flowchart of procedures in handling current proposed action.
- The Utah Equivalent of NEPA is the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. The DEQ highly prioritizes the planning process, ensuring a thorough inspection has been completed before projects are carried out.

Getting Involved in the NEPA Process: Scoping and Public Comment

Public participation is critical when federal agencies propose projects that could have positive or negative effects on the environment. This section will help you identify many ways in which you can have your voice and opinions be heard through the scoping and public commenting process.

Key Terms

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

EA: Environmental Assessment

CEQ: Council on Environmental Quality

NOI: Notice of Intent

Scoping

According to NEPA, all federal agencies must produce either an EA or an EIS when proposing a project that will significantly impact the environment. This process begins with the publication of an NOI in the federal register. The NOI will describe “the agency’s proposed scoping process, including any meetings and how the public can get involved.”¹ The scoping process is the first way that the agencies involve any stakeholders in the proposed project. Scoping is a vital part of NEPA because the conversations that occur during the scoping process shape how the agency will address issues in the EIS.

What is a Scoping Meeting?

A scoping meeting is a public forum held by agencies conducting scoping processes. The agencies hold the meetings with the purpose of hearing the public’s thoughts about their projects, and what alternatives and environmental impacts should be considered when the agency conducts its Environmental Impact Evaluations and publishes an EIS. These evaluations are analyses the agency conducts to assess the potential impact of a proposed development project on the natural and social environment. Scoping is required by law 40 CFR § 1501.7, which outlines the entire scoping process.² Generally, as stated in the scoping law, meetings happen more commonly when the proposed projects are affecting small and specific areas. Agencies who hold scoping meetings should conduct them early on in the scoping process.³ Scoping meetings range from formal to informal, depending on the agency conducting them. Some will choose to simply inform surrounding citizens and then provide them with alternative ways to

¹ Council on Environmental Quality. A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard. (Washington D.C.: Executive Office of the President, 2007), 13.

² Govinfo. Accessed November 30, 2019. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title40-vol37/pdf/CFR-2019-title40-vol37-sec1501-7.pdf>

³ “What to Expect at a Scoping Meeting,” ct.gov, accessed November 30, 2019. <https://www.ct.gov/ceq/cwp/view.asp?Q=249028&ceqNav=>.

submit their thoughts about the issue. Other agencies choose to conduct their meetings much like Q&As, where they can receive public opinion at the moment.

To find out when, where, and what your local scoping meetings are about, visit the Federal Register. For help navigating the Federal Register, refer to Chapter 3 of this document.

Pros and Cons:

Scoping meetings are helpful because they allow the public to address leaders in the agency proposing a project directly. They also allow the public to hear others' concerns about the project and allow the public to get answers to questions directly and immediately. The meetings are a great way to become informed on a topic or to hear others' thoughts on the proposed project when you might not have any of your own.

The cons of scoping meetings include the fact that not all people might be able to make it to a one-time meeting at a specific location. The meetings can also be intimidating for people who do not feel comfortable speaking aloud. Another con is that scoping meetings do not guarantee that any changes will be made the project. The purpose of a scoping meeting is to hear the public's thoughts on an issue, but there is no requirement to change the project based on the feedback given. This can seem discouraging to some but coming to a scoping meeting informed and ready to give constructive feedback is the best way to have your concerns heard.

Best Practices

There are many different scoping processes. Depending on the agency and the agenda set by the agency, there will be a different process followed. The main scoping process includes identifying decision points, relaying information to the public, getting the public involved, and interpreting the information from the public. Although not all agencies follow this exact layout, most agencies prefer to stick to a similar system in order to effectively develop an EIS.

The most well-known processes to the public include public meetings, meetings with staff from various agencies, sharing data, providing invitations to open houses, etc. Among these, the most common practice, used 96% of the time⁴, for engaging the public includes inviting the public to open houses and public meetings. The best practice for engaging other agencies involved hosting private meetings with staff from other agencies. The least preferred option for public scoping, used 34% of the time⁵, was providing the public with opportunities to review and comment on draft scoping documents as well as opening public surveys.

⁴ Slotterback, C. S. (2008, August 18). Stakeholder involvement in NEPA scoping processes: evaluating practices and effects in transportation agencies. Accessed November 11, 2019, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09640560802211060>.

⁵ Slotterback, C. S. (2008, August 18). Stakeholder involvement in NEPA scoping processes: evaluating practices and effects in transportation agencies. Accessed November 11, 2019, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09640560802211060>.

Public Commenting

After the NOI and scoping meetings, the government agencies will use the information that they have gathered to define the scope of the project. The agencies will then draft and publish an EIS or an EA. If the agency prepares an EA, “the CEQ regulations require the agency to involve the public to the extent practicable, but each agency has its own guidelines about how to involve the public for EAs.”⁶ If the agency drafts an EIS, then it is released to the public for comment for a minimum of 45 days⁷. The way that the public give their feedback will vary from agency to agency and even from project to project. There might be an in-person meeting that looks like a scoping meeting, but more commonly feedback is given online through emails and electronic forms⁸. Since the ways of providing feedback are so variable, the best strategy for someone looking to get involved is to check the [EIS database](#). The database provides a list of all the projects that are open for public comment, the date that public comments are due, and who to contact if you have any questions⁹. The database will update regularly, so it is important to check back often.

There are many ways to get involved in the projects and policies that will potentially affect the environment around you. In this section, we covered the NEPA sanctioned processes of scoping and public commenting. For your convenience, we have provided some key take-away points and resources to help you get involved below.

Actions to Take

- Remember that scoping is the part of the NEPA process where government agencies define the scope of a project by gathering information from the public stakeholders.
- Give your feedback by attending scoping meetings in your area.
- Check the [EIS database](#) for projects that are open for public comment and provide your feedback.



Learn more about scoping



The EIS Database

⁶ Council on Environmental Quality. A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard. (Washington D.C.: Executive Office of the President, 2007), 26.

⁷ “How Citizens Can Comment and Participate in the National Environmental Policy Act Process.” EPA. Environmental Protection Agency, February 6, 2017. <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/how-citizens-can-comment-and-participate-national-environmental-policy-act-process>.

⁸ “How Citizens Can Comment and Participate in the National Environmental Policy Act Process.” EPA. Environmental Protection Agency, February 6, 2017. <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/how-citizens-can-comment-and-participate-national-environmental-policy-act-process>.

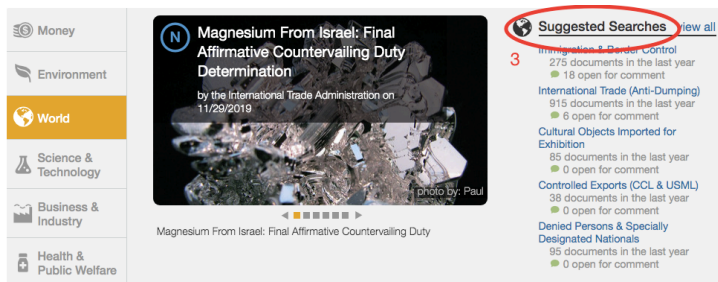
⁹ “Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Database.” EPA. Environmental Protection Agency. Accessed November 30, 2019. <https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-II/public/action/eis/search>.

The Federal Register

The Federal Register is a daily publication that contains information about current issues active in the many government agencies. It includes summaries of each issue, cross-references to related policies, and contact information for each agency involved. Using the Federal Register, stakeholders can become informed about current issues and submit comments in hopes of convincing policymakers to take one action or another. The Federal Register website is a particularly useful tool to those who wish to advocate for change through commenting.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/> is an easy useful site that will help you navigate the Federal Register.

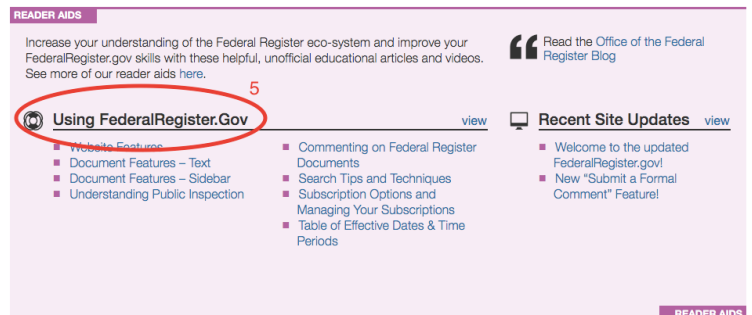
1. Sign in or sign up.
2. View the current issue, click on notices, presidential documents, proposed rules, and rules.



3. Suggested searches of popular topics.
4. Popular documents from proposed rules, to notices, to presidential documents to new rules.



5. Links to how to learn how to navigate the website and where to comment on proposed rules.
6. Where to search for proposed rules that are open to comment.





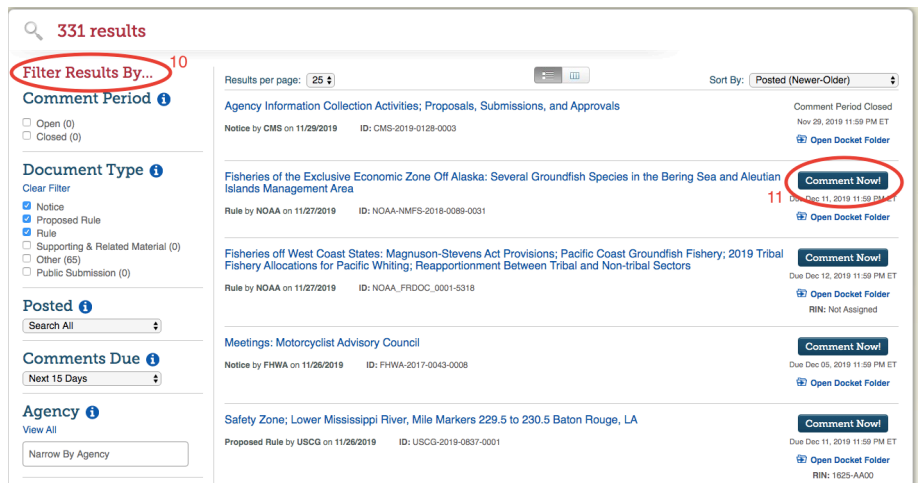
7. What's trending is where popular proposed rules are that many people have commented on. <https://www.regulations.gov/>

8. Documents that are closing soon for comments.

9. New documents that were just opened for comments.

10. Once you click on one of the closing or newly opened documents it takes you to this page where you can filter out the documents you are finding.

11. Press here and you can comment on a proposed rule.



Understanding how to use the Federal Register is a very important tool when looking to get involved in political issues. Before the Federal Register, current information regarding government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices was difficult to come by. Subsequently, the availability of information, prior to the Federal Register, was a substantial hindrance for citizens looking to become involved in the political process. In modern day, thanks in large to the Federal Register information regarding government agency activities is more accessible than ever. Allowing for citizens to become more educated on the political process and thereafter more involved. Therefore, despite the Federal Register's complexity and difficulty to initially navigate, it is vital that anyone looking to become involved in the political process learns how to use it. Understanding the Federal Register will greatly enhance your ability to get involved in political issues relevant to you and your community.

Actions to Take

- Visit the Federal Regulation Website.
- Investigate and view what's trending, proposed rules, or interesting policies.
- Get involved and comment on important policies and rules.

Government Committees and NEPA: Roles, Impact, and How to Get Involved

When it comes to promoting NEPA legislation, both the federal and state governments have to delegate this responsibility among many smaller organizations. These smaller organizations—usually referred to as committees—handle a variety of issues, and nearly all environmental legislation will have to go through one of these committees at some point in their creation. That is why understanding how these committees work, and knowing how to reach out to representatives is so important, because these committees lay the framework for environmental policy. Additionally, nearly all government committees provide internship programs, meaning that those who wish to get involved can be a part of the environmental legislative process.

Key Terms

Committee Chair: A member of the majority party in a committee that leads that committee.

Committee Ranking Member: A member of the minority party in a committee that helps the chair in leading the committee.

EA: Environmental Assessment

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

PLPCO: Public Land Policy Coordinating Office

RDCC: Resource Development Coordinating Committee

UDOT: Utah Department of Transportation

Federal Level

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources¹

Purpose of Committee

The Energy and Natural Resources committee oversees Legislative actions and responsibilities relating to National Energy Policies. They also address various national issues through multiple subcommittees, including Energy, National Parks, Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, and Water and Power. These subcommittees handle different sources and technology of energy production, the National Parks system and its multiple branches, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Services, and irrigation and water power processes.

NEPA Involvement

The 116th Congress (2019-2020) has introduced multiple bills and has many committee reports addressing NEPA regulations and analyses prior to government land use. They have

¹ More information can be found at <https://www.energy.senate.gov/public/>

proposed that NEPA land analysis be given a stricter timeline and page limits, which may impact how in depth NEPA analyses may be. Previously, 115th Congress (2017-2018) introduced multiple bills and acts that seek to protect and manage forests, rivers, and other land more closely. Near the end of their term, they introduced Bill S. 33 “To provide for congressional approval of national monuments and restrictions on the use of national monuments, to establish requirements for the declaration of marine national monuments, and for other purposes.”² This means that the declaration of a National Monument would be authorized by Congress and follow necessary NEPA guidelines. Currently, the President can declare land a National Monument without approval from NEPA or Congress.

Note: When a Bill is introduced, it has not been formally voted on, it has simply been read aloud in a session of Congress. Although many of these mentioned acts and bills have been introduced, they have not been passed.

Important Committee Members

- Chair: Senator Lisa Murkowski - Republican from Alaska
- Ranking Member: Senator Joe Manchin - Democrat from West Virginia
- Representative from Utah: Mike Lee - Republican

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 224-4971	Mailing Address Energy & Natural Resources Committee Office 304 Dirksen Senate Building Washington, DC 20510
Fax Number: (202) 224-6163	

Senate Committee on Appropriations³

Purpose of Committee

The United State Senate Committee on Appropriations is in charge of assigning discretionary federal funds to various government agencies and organizations. This committee is divided into twelve smaller subcommittees, each overseeing different areas of government responsibility. Each subcommittee is in charge of helping draft and propose spending plans of any organizations underneath them.

² Bill S. 33 - <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/33>

³ More information can be found at <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/>

NEPA Involvement

Each year, this committee puts out a report entitled “DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, [insert year]”. This report explains in detail which organizations will receive how much discretionary funds. In both the 2019 and 2020 reports, the “Planning and Consultation” funding has increased. NEPA falls into this category, as lands must be analysed by NEPA to meet certain use and potential pollution regulations before a section of land can be designated for government use. These reports also occasionally mention ongoing projects under review by NEPA and possible actions taken based on NEPA land reports. Often these are only mentioned in regards to their discretionary funding impact.

Subcommittees

- Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- Defense
- Energy and Water Development
- Financial Services and General Government
- Homeland Security
- Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
- Legislative Branch
- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
- State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
- Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Important Committee Members

- Chairman: Senator Richard Shelby - Republican from Alabama
- Vice Chairman: Senator Patrick Leahy - Democrat from Vermont
- Representative from Utah: None

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 224-7257	Mailing Address Committee on Appropriations Room S-128, The Capitol Washington, D.C. 20510

Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works⁴

Purpose of Committee

The formal purpose of the U.S. Senate Committee on Public Works is to “be referred all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to...” things such as all types of pollution, environmental aspects and effects of toxic substances, research, and development, flood control, waste disposal, government buildings, and other resources. This committee’s purpose is to review documents pertaining to these areas and ensure that whatever project or issue proposed will not do any unnecessary or critical harm to the communities involved.

NEPA Involvement

This committee works to propose and act on various bills and projects that impact human reactions and uses of the environment. One recently introduced Bill, S. 2645, proposes that NEPA regulations not apply when the Federal government is working to connect with and restore communities impacted by natural disasters. The Environment and Public Works committee has made many proposals surrounding transportation and environmental issues, calling for NEPA regulations to help manage transportation and emissions through certain areas.

Important Committee Members

- Chairman: Senator John Barrasso - Republican from Wyoming
- Ranking Member: Senator Tom Carper - Democrat from Delaware
- Representative from Utah: None
- Other Important Members: Bernard Sanders - Democrat from Vermont

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 224-6176	Mailing Address 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs⁵

Purpose of Committee

The US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs manages any problems or proposals of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, including land management, trust responsibilities,

⁴ More information can be found at <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/>

⁵ More information can be found at <https://www.indian.senate.gov/>

education, healthcare, and more. Federal Native American Reservations must abide by tribal and federal laws and regulations. However, the state that they are located in does not hold any jurisdiction. The Indian Affairs committee acts as an intermediary between Reservations and the Federal Government.

NEPA Involvement

Because tribal land is under the jurisdiction of the Federal government, NEPA reviews must be completed before roads, energy plants, and other projects begin on any Reservation land. Bill S. 1776⁶, introduced by the 114th Congress (2015-2016) allows for certain exclusions of transportation projects on Reservation land to allow for more progress to be made. There have also been reports and introduced bills addressing forest and wilderness land on Reservations and how these lands should be monitored under NEPA. NEPA and other federal regulations can cause controversy on these tribal lands, as both the tribe and Federal government feel a responsibility towards the land's use and management.

Important Committee Members

- Chairman: Senator John Hoeven - Republican North Dakota
- Ranking Member: Senator Tom Udall - Democrat New Mexico
- Representative from Utah: None

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 224-2251	Mailing Address United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs 838 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510
Fax, Majority Party: (202) 224-5429 Fax, Minority Party: (202) 228-2589	

House Committee on Natural Resources

Purpose of Committee

This is arguably the most important committee within the House of Representatives or US Senate regarding NEPA and Public Land in terms of the sheer number of bills introduced through this committee when compared to the others. The House Natural Resources Committee is involved in legislation about American **energy production, mineral lands and mining, fisheries and wildlife, public lands, oceans, Native Americans, irrigation and reclamation.** Its various subcommittees handle these different areas.

⁶ Bill S. 1776 - <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1776/text>

NEPA Involvement

To an even greater extent than the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, NEPA is involved in much of what this committee does in regards to either utilizing bills that bolster or reduce NEPA regulations (depending on the majority party at the time). During the 115th Congress, Ranking Member Rob Bishop of Utah emphasized with the committee that NEPA was mostly a way that the Obama Administration used to justify pushing through climate change policy. In the 116th Congress with a Democratic Majority, much of the work being done is opposite to the 115th in that they work alongside NEPA as a way to get things done.

Subcommittees

- Energy and Mineral Resources
- National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
- Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States
- Oversight and Investigations

Important Committee Members

- Chairman-Raúl M.Grijalva - Democrat from Arizona
- Ranking Member and Representative from Utah-Rob Bishop - Republican from Utah
 - Rob Bishop is one of the heaviest influencers of public land policy in the Federal Government.

Contact Information	
Committee	Rob Bishop (DC Office)
Main Phone Number: (202) 225-6065 Email: nrdems@mail.house.gov	Phone Number: (202) 225-0453
Mailing Address 1324 Longworth House Office	Mailing Address 123 Cannon Building Washington, DC 20515

House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Purpose of Committee

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce is able to legislate on matters ranging across **telecommunications, consumer protection, food and drug safety, public health research, environmental quality, energy policy, and interstate and foreign commerce**. There are multiple cabinet-level departments as well as outside agencies that interconnect with this

committee such as the Departments of Energy, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Transportation, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Federal Communications Commission.

NEPA Involvement

This committee involves NEPA most specifically in regards to when legislation is being considered about various sources of energy or resources that might potentially impact the environment, thus requiring environmental impact assessments under NEPA. The most recent example of this would be in H.R. 2910 in which NEPA review is necessitated for natural gas pipeline construction and approval.

Subcommittees

- Communications and Technology
- Consumer Protection and Commerce
- Energy
- Environment and Climate Change
- Health
- Oversight and Investigations

Important Committee Members

- Chairman-Frank Pallone Jr. - Democrat from New Jersey
- Ranking Member-Greg Walden - Republican from Oregon
- Representative from Utah-none

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 225-2927	Mailing Address 2125 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Purpose of Committee

This committee legislates on matters regarding to **all modes of transportation as well as all aspects of national infrastructure projects**. In addition, the Transportation Committee has broad jurisdiction over the Department of Transportation, the U.S. Coast Guard, Amtrak, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and others. The Committee

also has jurisdiction over federal buildings, which includes the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts⁷(transportation.house.gov).

NEPA Involvement

Funds are allocated for various infrastructure projects and policies within bills only if they have been granted environmental categorical exclusion, a finding of no significant impact, or a record of decision under NEPA. This is seen prominently in bills like H.R. 2741 that was introduced as an outline for Congressional infrastructure policy.

Subcommittees

- Aviation
- Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
- Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
- Highway and Transit
- Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
- Water Resources and Environment

Important Committee Members

- Chairman-Peter DeFazio - Democrat from Oregon
- Ranking Member-Sam Graves - Republican from Missouri
- Representative from Utah-none

Contact Information: Chairman Defazio	
Phone Number: (202) 225-6416	Mailing Address 2134 Rayburn Office Building Washington, DC 20515

House Committee on Agriculture

Purpose of Committee

This committee deals particularly with legislative matters regarding **agriculture, food, rural development, and forestry**.

NEPA Involvement

The most direct involvement that this committee has within the realm of NEPA is in regards to legislation like H.R. 3668 (the SHARE Act). This bill revises existing programs and

⁷ More information as well as more descriptions can be found at transportation.house.gov

establishes new programs to expand access to, and opportunities for, hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands⁸. NEPA obligates federal agencies to ensure that in creating these new programs and opportunities, the environmental impact is still being assessed.

Subcommittees

- Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research
- Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit
- Conservation and Forestry
- General Farm Commodities and Risk Management
- Livestock and Foreign Agriculture
- Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations

Important Committee Members

- Chairman-Collin Peterson - Democrat from Minnesota
- Ranking Member-Michael Conaway - Republican from Texas
- Representative from Utah-none

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 225-2171 Fax: (202) 225-8510	Mailing Address 1301 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Email: agriculturedemocrats@mail.house.gov	

The Cabinet

The United States Cabinet is an institution comprised of State officials with the purpose of providing advisement for the president. The cabinet doesn't technically have committees, but it does have select councils, and other organizations, which are essentially committees in all aspects except for their names. The Cabinet council of interest in regard to NEPA is the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). An additional organization that is important to mention here is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA isn't technically an institution of the cabinet, but the administrator of the EPA is given a cabinet ranking.

Council on Environmental Quality

Purpose of Council

The Council on Environmental Quality was established to ensure that federal agencies meet their responsibilities under NEPA. The CEQ does this through issuing guidance and

⁸ More information on H.R. 3668 can be found at congress.gov

interpreting regulations, handles NEPA related disputes between various federal agencies and promoting environmental policies to the President.

NEPA Involvement

Essentially all NEPA related legislature will pass through this council in one way or another. Being as the CEQ was created through the NEPA act, it is single handedly the most important cabinet entity in regards to environmental legislation. This organization is essentially the NEPA overseer, making sure that all government entities act in accordance with environmental law. The CEQ also is pivotal in promoting environmental policy to the President of the United States, and then developing the approved policies. As the President is a critical member of the policy making process, having an environmental advisement board is imperative for NEPA implementation.

Important Council Members

- Chair: Mary B. Neumayr

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 395-5750	Mailing Address 730 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20503

Environmental Protection Agency

Purpose of Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mission is to provide American's with clean air, water, and land. To do this, the EPA interworks with government agencies developing and enforcing environmental legislation, similar to the CEQ. Additionally, a large portion of this agency's responsibility is to study environmental issues and publish research on these issues. But the EPA alone can't handle all of the responsibility. That is the EPA also focuses a major component of its resources to sponsoring environmental partnerships, and educating the youth to fight for the environment.

NEPA Involvement

Much like the CEQ, the EPA is an institution whose sole function is to handle NEPA related activity. The EPA is much like a police force for environmental police, ensuring that no individual or organization violates environmental law. Not only this, but the EPA is also a major component of environmental policy creation. Everytime an environmental bill passes through

congress, the EPA writes regulations for the bill. The EPA frequently sets the national standard for environmental policy that all tribes and states must follow. Furthermore, the EPA allots a major component of its budget to give grants to various organizations. These grants can be used to fund research, orchestrate community cleanups, or even funding school and non-profit environmental programs. The EPA is absolutely essential to upholding NEPA doctrine, and all environmental policy.

Important Agency Members

- Administrator: Andrew Wheeler

Contact Information	
Phone Number: (202) 564-4700	Mailing Address 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20460

State Level

Although NEPA is a Federal Law, it is applied to any major project that involves federal funding, work performed by the federal government, or permits issued by a federal agency. With this in mind, the Utah Government is often involved in the NEPA process; especially with projects related to Public Lands and Highway Construction.

The Utah Legislature *As of Nov. 2019*

The Federal Government certainly has considerable influence on the NEPA process, but one should not underestimate the Utah Legislature. With Committees focusing on federalism and state's rights', the Legislature is always seeking to increase its influence. Furthermore, smaller constituencies allow more citizen input and easier contact. The Utah Legislature meets for approximately 45 days a year beginning on the fourth Monday in January.

Influential Members of the House	Influential Members of the Senate
Representative Brad Wilson Speaker of the House (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-538-1029 Email: Not listed	Senator Stuart Adams President of the Senate (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-593-1776 Email: jsadams@le.utah.gov

Representative Francis Gibson House Majority Leader (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-491-3763 Email: fgibson@le.utah.gov	Senator Evan Vickers Senate Majority Leader (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 435-817-5565 Email: evickers@le.utah.gov
Representative Brian King House Minority Leader (D) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-560-0769 Email: briansking@le.utah.gov	Senator Karen Mayne Senate Minority Leader (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-232-6648 Email: kmayne@le.utah.gov
Representative Keven Stratton Chairman of the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 801-836-6010 Email: kstratton@le.utah.gov	Senator Ralph Okerlund Chairman of the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee (R) <u>Contact Information:</u> Phone: 435-979-7077 Email: rokerlund@le.utah.gov
Find your State Representative Here!	Find your State Senator Here!
NOTE: These individuals often give out their personal contact information in order to promote transparency and civil conversation. Do not use this information to harass members of the Utah Congressional delegation. This would result in members revoking their contact information, making future contact difficult.	

Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee:

Within the Utah Legislature, the main committee tasked with carrying out initiatives related to the management of public lands is the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. This committee exists in both the House and Senate, with a joint committee meeting in the case of a discrepancy in legislation within the House and the Senate. The chairs of this committee are arguably the most influential individuals in the Utah Legislature in respect to the NEPA process.

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committees enjoy broad jurisdiction and handle the majority of NEPA projects within the State Legislature. Its member list is updated every year on the Utah Legislature Website.

Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee:

This committee is comprised of members of the House and Senate, and is co-chaired by the current chairs of the House and Senate Committees under the same title. Interim Committees meet when the legislature is not in session and prepare recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. The decisions made by this committee are vitally important in ultimately deciding what will be on the agenda in the upcoming year.

Utah's Executive Branch

Headed by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. This branch contains all of the agencies that carry out federal and state legislation. The main groups that this section will focus on is the Governor's Office, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and the Public Land Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO).

The Governor's Office

As the representatives of the entire state, the Governor and Lt. Governor have substantial influence over nearly any matter that occurs within the State of Utah. Compared to members of the legislature, the Governor and Lt. Governor are difficult to directly contact. However, the Governor's Office has a substantial number of staff members that oversee certain policy areas. Since each administration appoints policy advisors at their own discretion, it is best to directly call the Governor's Office to receive help with any inquiries.

- *Note: You can reach the Governor's Office at 801-538-1000.*

Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)

At the beginning of 2017 (Under 23 U.S. Code § 327), UDOT was tasked with overseeing the NEPA process for all highway related projects within the State of Utah. This means that UDOT is responsible for managing all public comments, environmental assessments (EAs) and environmental impact statements (EISs) on all highways being constructed with Federal Assistance.⁹ UDOT is currently led by Executive Director Carlos Braceras and Deputy Directors Jason Davis and Teri Newell.

- *Note: UDOT's main phone line is 801-965-4000.*

Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO):

PLPCO is an executive agency that is responsible for carrying out tasks given by the legislature and the governor. This agency carries out a variety of duties, so for simplicity, this summary will only focus on its direct relation to the NEPA process.

The Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC) is a branch of PLPCO that is responsible for reviewing and coordinating technical and policy actions that may affect the

⁹ All of UDOT's official responsibilities can be found at <https://www.udot.utah.gov/main/uconowner.gf?n=32909717366180880>

physical resources of the state. The RDCC facilitates the exchange of information among state agencies and other levels of government. In many cases, the RDCC is responsible for clearly presenting the position of the Utah State Government or certain portions of it thereof.

NEPA Involvement

The RDCC coordinates the review of many proposed public land planning and development projects, including:

- forest health and watershed improvement plans
- wetland reviews
- use of public range resources by livestock operators and wildlife
- oil and gas and mining development
- use of public lands by off-road vehicles and other recreational opportunities

Contact Information:

- PLPCO's main phone number is 801-537-9801.
- RDCC's coordinating office can be reached at 801-537-9193

Conclusion

It's hard to see how to make an impact as an individual in local and national legislation processes. The most important thing as a constituent of these elected officials is to know how to make one's voice heard, to connect with the representatives. Be it through voicing opinions or reaching out and applying for an internship within these institutions, understanding how these governmental entities function and the means of reaching out is the foundation for getting involved in the environmental legislative progress.

Actions to Take

- Reach out to committee members and those offices on any issue they have jurisdiction over so that you can help them to understand what you want to see happening. These elected officials have phone numbers and emails for a reason. They want to hear from YOU!
- For a committee or agency that you want to see change happening in-call or email so that you can ask about setting up an internship! This is a great way to really understand some of the issues in public land debates.
- Talk to your friends, family, and coworkers about these committees and help them to understand that this committee process as well as reaching out to any agency or committee is more straightforward and

Public Lands Interest Groups: Their Role and How to Get Involved

Public lands interest groups are important for citizens to join to make their voices heard in public land issues. Knowing how to find and join existing groups, and how to form your own group, is integral to further exercising your power as a citizen to influence public lands issues.

Key Terms

Non-profit: A group organized for charitable purposes other than generating profit and where no organizational income is used to pay to its members, directors, or officers.

Not-for-profit: Similar to a non-profit, but a non-for-profit is a group organized to aid the community and does not primarily generate profit or distribute their income to members, directors, or officers that is not necessarily charitable.

For-profit: A group organized to aid the community but also with the intent of generating profit, and the organization distributes its income to pay its members, directors, or officers.

Lobbying: A process intended to influence state or federal policy on behalf of an organization. Lobbyists work with the government in presenting research, talking to the media, and drafting legislation.

Franchise: A business or group of businesses established or operated under an authorization to sell or distribute a company's goods or services in a certain area.

Chapter: A local branch of an organization such as a club or fraternity – while these examples are not-for-profits, this also includes non-profits.

Affiliate: A person, organization, or establishment associated with another as a subordinate, subsidiary, or member; a branch organization.

Role of Public Lands Interest Groups

Many people interested in influencing the government will form or join groups in an effort to make their voices heard. Some groups are large, well established, and work on a national level with multiple states, such as the Sierra Club. Other groups are local and are formed to advocate for or against local bills. No matter the size, interest groups are a valuable way of engaging in the public sphere and meeting like-minded people.

Public lands interest groups are a way for citizens to make their voice heard. This is especially useful when they feel that their elected representatives are not listening or when they want to bring attention to an issue they feel is underrepresented.

One example of a public lands interest group is the Bear's Ears Intertribal Coalition. This is a group that was formed by several Native American Tribes in the Four Corners region to get the government to provide additional protection to what is now Bear's Ears National Monument. They came together, discussed issues, lobbied, and were successful in getting the protections they wanted, despite opposition.

Groups like these can have significant impacts on public opinion and policy.

Joining an Existing Group

An interest group is a means of representing people and serve as a link between those people and the government. Their primary goal is to influence decision makers and public policy through advocacy on behalf of members. An interest group can be very broad or very specific. The important part is that there are groups for nearly every interest.

Another goal of interest groups is lobbying. Lobbying is a process intended to influence state or federal policy. Interest groups will elect or pay someone to go to the state/federal government on behalf of the organization. A lobbyist can contact these governments either directly or informally. They assist in presenting research findings, talking to the media, and occasionally drafting legislation. Lobbyists, on behalf of interest groups, are also allowed to testify in congressional hearings. Interests groups are always looking for lobbyists, and this can be a great way to become highly involved in your organization, both locally and nationally.

Interest groups come in both for-profit and non-profit organizations. While both serve a purpose, it is important to choose the organization that best suits your passions.

Once you have found your interest group, getting involved is simple. Listed below are a few roles you can serve as a member of an interest group:

- Actively promote the organization's agenda (lobbying)
- Work to increase membership in the group
- Raise awareness in the community of issues that the group finds important, including holding information sessions and educating the public
- Organize rallies

Different interest groups have different methods of joining. Below are various ways of how to join an interest group:

- Joining an interest group online. The group's website will have a join now tab or button that you can click on. This will take you to a page where you will be prompted to enter some personal information (name, address, email).
 - You will also be asked to give a donation – usually the donation amount is flexible
 - There are also often perks to joining a group (monthly magazines, discounts on merchandise, automatic connection to your local chapter)
 - Becoming a member can also mean invitations to boards, committees, and conferences
- Political involvement in interest groups. This is for groups that might not have a local chapter.
 - You can sign a petition, write your elected officials, or donate to the cause
 - You can also organize your own fundraiser or partner your business with the organization
- Email lists. This is a good way to stay involved on what the organization is doing or current problems that they are trying to solve.

Finding an existing group to join can be overwhelming. But with today's technology, there are numerous resources that may assist in the process. Below are some of those resources available to help in finding a group to join:

- Social media. Using Facebook/Twitter you can search for issues that are important to you and get involved with organizations that support those issues.
- Stay up to date on the news. Oftentimes, when there are issues relating to the subject you're interested, news stories will mention different stakeholders involved.
- [The US Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) has a list of public interest groups on their website.
- [Votemart.org](#) has a list of interest groups according to the subject that they are related to. However, this website is not currently up to date.

Existing Groups

There are already a multitude of groups dedicated to public land issues throughout the nation. These groups focus on a variety of issues, from national policy down to local politics of managing land use. And while there are categories that these groups can fall under, the complex issues surrounding public lands mean that each group has a mission that could fall under multiple categories.

Conservation

Conservation groups largely maintain that there needs to be more transparency and communication between the government and the people about the use of public lands.

- [Conserve Southwest Utah](#)
- [Archaeology Southwest](#)

Preservation

Preservation groups call for a removal of human presence from wilderness and nature so that the land may be preserved in its natural state for the future.

- [Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance](#)
- [Utah Division of State History](#)

Anti-Regulation

Anti-regulation groups believe that local ownership of the land should be final and that the government has no claim to what locals may do with the land.

- [American Lands Council](#)
- [Friends of Cedar Mesa](#)

Pro-Regulation

Pro-regulation groups believe that the oversight from national parks services and the government is the most efficient and effective way of determining the uses of public land that will benefit the local community and nation as a whole.

- [Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership](#)
- [Public Land for the People](#)

Climate & Health Crisis

Climate crisis groups have interests in preserving public lands and using them to reduce the impact of human development on the world as a whole – they largely oppose fossil fuel use and modification of the land that would disrupt the natural ecosystem.

- [Breathe Utah](#)
- [Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah](#)

Energy Lobbyists

Energy lobbyists have interests in using these public lands to generate profits from the extraction of fossil fuels, valuable materials, and generation of energy through a variety of – largely – non-renewable methods.

- [American Mining Rights](#)
- [Minerals and Mining Advisory Council](#)

Wildlife

Wildlife groups have concerns with the continued use of land for hunting, ranching, and grazing but also for the continued existence of threatened species.

- [Sportsmen's Access](#)
- [Backcountry Hunters & Anglers](#)

Native American Groups

Groups led by Native American tribes focused on ensuring that they have a say in the decisions surrounding the land they have a spiritual and cultural connection with that spans generations.

- [Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition](#)
- [SLC Air Protectors](#)

Recreation

Recreation groups largely believe that nature should be preserved for the enjoyment of the public, that is to have paths through forests and permits for aquatic recreation on lakes, for what is the point of nature if not to be in awe of it.

- [Utah Outdoor Partners](#)
- [Outdoor Industry Association](#)

Starting Your Own Group

Why would you start a group of your own?

Starting a group of your own can be important to ensure that the issues you care about are being addressed. Before doing this though, it is important to explore what groups already exist, and to decide what sort of organization you would like to create. Your options are broad, and might include creating your own non-profit, for-profit, or not-for-profit (among other variations between them), and making a branch, franchise, or affiliate of a statewide, national, or international organization.

What should you consider when starting an organization?

Determine a focus-issue to address. Pick something you are passionate about, and work to build awareness about the topic at hand. Ask people in your area what they think of the idea. Check the organizations in your area, either to prevent redundancies, or to network with others who care about topics tangential to your own. They can also help you to understand the process of creating a non-profit from the legal side of things. Decide what kind of organization you would like to run. Would you like it to remain a small-business that allows you to gain an income doing something you love, or would you like to grow it into a larger business? Who would you like to collaborate with, start a company with, or hire? Would one structure or another suit your purposes better?¹

¹ “How to Start a Small Business,” wikiHow, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Small-Business>.

What makes a non-profit v. a for-profit v. a not-for-profit?²



How do you start a university club?

Although regulations will differ from one school to another, generally you will be required to provide a statement of purpose, criteria for membership, and multiple members with leadership positions should be provided. Some schools will also require a faculty mentor, and each institution will have a different form to fill out³. Depending on various factors, you may or may not be able to gain access to funds through student affairs, grants, etc. Student led groups on the USU Logan campus currently include the Student Organization for Society and Natural Resources ([SOSNR](#)) and the [Sustainability Club](#).

² Joanne Fritz, "What Is the Difference Between For-Profit and Nonprofit?," The Balance Small Business, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-is-a-nonprofit-different-from-for-profit-business-2502472>; "Non Profit vs Not for Profit | Top 10 Differences (with Infographics)," *Wallstreet Mojo* (blog), January 4, 2019, <https://www.wallstreetmojo.com/non-profit-vs-not-for-profit/>; "The Restriction of Political Campaign Intervention by Section 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organizations | Internal Revenue Service," accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/the-restriction-of-political-campaign-intervention-by-section-501c3-tax-exempt-organizations>.

³ "Office of Student Affairs - Procedures for Starting a Club | University of Pennsylvania," accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osa/manual/startclub>.

How do you start a chapter of a national organization?

Where large for-profits have franchises, non-profits have affiliates and chapters. This either works by linking you to a local non-profit that already exists, or by opening a licensing agreement with the national or international body. Some benefits of this are that you can more easily gain tax-exempt status and you are less likely to fail (as opposed to starting your own). Similarly, you will have access to resources and information and guidance that is vital for doing well. Whether starting a chapter or an affiliate or a franchise, your first steps will be to get on an email list with the organization, and start conversing with them about how to get involved⁴.

Conclusion

Public participation is an important part of government. No matter what you believe in, you can join or form a group to fight for what you think is important.

If you choose to join a group, it may be important to research whether the group functions as a for-profit or nonprofit. Make sure to join a group that fits your values. Try to get involved in a way that works with your talents and passions.

If none of the existing groups are working on issues that you are passionate about, go ahead and start a new group. Chances are, other people are interested in similar issues. University and college clubs are relatively simple to form. Community and local groups may take some work but can be very rewarding.

Public lands interest groups have a long history of being a space for concerned citizens to make a difference in influencing government policy and decisions. It is possible to make a significant difference, especially if you join a group and magnify your own voice.

No matter whether you join a large, well established group such as the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance ([SUWA](#)), or form your own to fight for local issues that you care about, you can make a change in your community.

Actions to Take

- Find a group that focuses on public land issues you care about
- Join an existing group to make your voice heard
- Form a new group when there are not any groups that focus on your concern

⁴ “How Do I Start a Local Chapter of a National Nonprofit?,” accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-do-i-start-a-local-chapter-of-a-national-nonprofit-2501892>.

State of the State: Current Public Lands Issues in Utah

Based on the previous sections' information about the purpose of NEPA, the use of the Federal Register, public scoping, and how citizens can be involved in public land policy, the goal of this section is to provide you with opportunities to apply that information to situations in Utah. We have provided information on the Dingell Act, which was passed in 2017 and made many new land designations in Utah, to give you a look at what has been occurring with Utah Public Lands in recent years. We have also provided descriptions of several current issues that are open for public comment, with the intent of showing you different situations where you can take action and make your voices heard. This section will allow you to look to the future and see where you can be involved moving forward.

Key Terms

Environmental Impact Statement: A government document that discusses the possible environmental impacts of a proposed action or project.

Resource Management Plans: An outline of how resources will be used and controlled

The Dingell Act:

What does the Dingell Act do for New Wilderness Areas?

At the beginning of 2019, President Trump signed the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act.¹ Signing this act reauthorized “the Land and Water Conservation Fund, along with over 100 individual bills that benefit every state in the country”.² The new law is the “largest public lands bill” Congress has passed in a decade, adding “1.3 million acres of new wilderness and permanently reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund”.³ As a result, The Dingell Act designated 700,000 acres of new wilderness areas in Utah and protects the thousands of acres of public lands from “development and resource extraction”.⁴ Although this act serves to conserve public lands, it also created a lot of controversy between stakeholders because conservation limits the economic use of the land. Although this act has already been passed, it serves as an example of an issue that had both pros and cons that had to be weighed, and that the public could comment on.

¹ Geisel, Hunter. “Dingell Act Protects Utah's Natural Beauty.” KUTV. KUTV, October 26, 2019. <https://kutv.com/news/local/photos-dingell-act-protect-utahs-natural-beauty>

² Wade. “What The Dindell Act Means For Public Lands And Outdoor Recreation.” Intrepid Daily. Intrepid Daily, March 12, 2019. <https://intrepiddaily.com/what-the-dingell-act-means/>

³ Superville, Darlene. “Trump Signs Major Public Lands, Conservation Bill into Law.” AP NEWS. Associated Press, March 12, 2019. <https://apnews.com/8adbf18aaf2e4c8cbdfa0cbd8c378b9c>.

⁴ Wade. “What The Dindell Act Means For Public Lands And Outdoor Recreation.” Intrepid Daily. Intrepid Daily, March 12, 2019. <https://intrepiddaily.com/what-the-dingell-act-means/>



Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness. (Bureau of Land Management)

New land added to the State of Utah as a result of the Dingell Act.

The roughly 700,000 acres of new wilderness area Utah has obtained includes much of the public lands surrounding Emery County. This includes roughly 660,000 acres along the Green River, the San Rafael Swell, and through the Labyrinth Canyons.⁵ The Dingell Act has also allowed Utah to introduce new, protected lands in the form of a new National Monument. The new Jurassic National Monument will consist of 2,500 acres near the Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, which has “yielded over 12,000 bones since it was discovered in the 1920s”.⁶ Despite the controversy, the new age of the Dingell Act has enabled Utah to continue to protect resources and foster outdoor recreation and tourism.



Photo by Veronica Krautman, BLM of the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry of Jurassic National Monument.

⁵ Borunda, Alejandra. “10 Places That Will Be Protected by Congress's New Public Lands Bill.” National Geographic. National Geographic , February 27, 2019.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/02/10-new-protected-places-congress-public-lands/>.

⁶ ibid

The BLM ePlanning Service:

The BLM provides an online database that allows users to search for NEPA projects by geographical location. The website is useful in that it allows you to learn about different projects, comment on them, and read what others have commented. Although this site contains a lot of useful information, it can be difficult to navigate, so it will take some time and patience to be able to use it effectively. The following public lands issues were found on the BLM ePlanning Service

Finley Resources Inc. FD Federal Wells (EA):

Finley Resources Inc. has proposed to drill ten new oil wells in the Vernal, Utah area. In order to do this, they propose to open three new well pads for drilling and to expand the drilling on one existing well pad. This project is still being considered, and a public commenting period will continue to be open with regard to this project until November 29, 2019.⁷

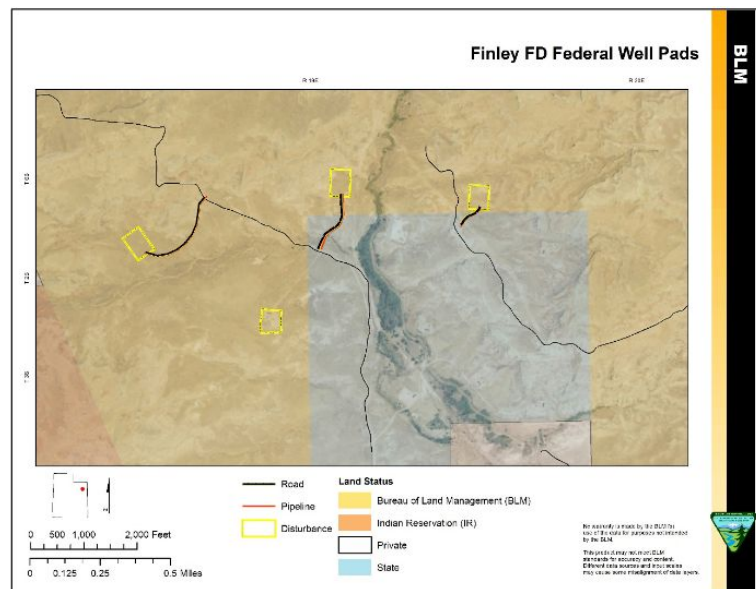


Figure 2-2. Proposed Well overview

Utah Land Being Leased to Oil and Gas Development (EA):

One of the roles of the Bureau of Land Management is to promote the development of oil and gas in the public domain. This role is being fulfilled by leasing parcels of land to corporations from which they can extract resources. These parcels can be nominated by the public, the BLM, or other government agencies. 24 parcels of nominated Utah land are scheduled to be leased on December 13, 2019. These land parcels occupy land in 7 Utah counties, making up a total of 13,422 acres of land. During this project, an Environmental

⁷ United States Bureau of Land Management. "Environmental Assessment: Finley Resources Inc. FD Federal Wells." November 14, 2019. https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/nepa/123973/20008196/250009707/Draft_DOI-BLM-UT-G-010-2019-0068-EA_Public_Comment.pdf

Assessment (EA) was performed by the BLM. Projects which produce Environmental Assessment documents often take time to process. Projects undergoing EA review often allow more periods for public involvement as well. This particular project allowed for a period of public comment from August 29, 2019 through September 30, 2019. The project also accepted written protests until November 25, 2019.⁸ The BLM warns that protest documents must be explicit in describing which points of their protest apply to which land parcels. Protests or protest points are dismissed if specific land parcels are not referenced.

Kokopelli Bicycle Relay Event (DNA):

Each year Endurance Utah LLC requests a special permit to hold a bicycle relay race in Southern Utah which goes through sites such as Bears Ears National Monument and the Mule Canyon Developed Site. The relay race is 528 miles long, requiring 45-50 support vehicles. A volunteer crew performs site-cleanup after the race. This permit has been granted to Endurance LLC for the past 9 years, and it was granted once again this year. Previously the bicycle race has been known as the “Rockwell Relay” and the “Vision Relay”. The permit specifically requests permission to use two BLM sites as transition stations for the race. These areas have a few portable toilets, some volunteers, a canopy, and a trash can. The transition areas are the locations at which relay teams switch riders.⁹

The Kokopelli Bicycle Relay event requests a Special Recreation Permit (SRP). This type of request produces a Determination of NEPA adequacy (DNA) document, which summarizes how the Bureau of Land Management office determined whether or not the proposed activity conforms to the approved public land uses for the area in question. While information about permits being granted for bicycle races are available to the public, the public comment period is shorter for these events.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Environmental Impact Statement:

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument recently underwent the NEPA review process, developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This provides us with a good opportunity to see how the different sections covered in this handbook can be involved in the management of public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted this Environmental Impact Statement to analyze the effects of the different Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for each of the three Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument units - Grand Staircase, Kaiparowits, and Escalante Canyon - as well as the rest of the land excluded from the monument by Presidential Proclamation 9682. This allows the BLM to determine how the land should be managed. For more information on NEPA and Environmental Impact Statements, see the NEPA section.

⁸ United States Bureau of Land Management. “December 2019 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale.” August 29, 2019.

https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/nepa/123688/20002533/250003004/2019-08-29-Dec19-DOI-BLM-UT-0000-2019-0005_Other-NEPA-EA.pdf

⁹ United States Bureau of Land Management. “Determination of NEPA Adequacy: Bicycle Tour Special Recreations Permits—2019.” September 11, 2019.

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/nepa/1501032/20004702/250005562/Bicycle>

To help define the issues that the EIS would cover, the BLM opened a scoping period for public comment beginning on January 16, 2019. In response the BLM received 120,061 comment submissions, 8,437 being individual comments, 111,532 form letters, and 92 duplicate submissions from the public (BLM, 2019). Additionally, the BLM hosted two open house public meetings for discussion between the BLM staff and the public and had a total of 197 attendees. These submissions and open houses presented an opportunity for public voices and opinions about what to do with the land be heard by the BLM. For more information on Scoping Meetings and Public Comment, see the Talking Stick Section.

During the planning for the EIS, the BLM invited 11 state and federal agencies, as well as 8 native tribes to participate in coordination of the EIS process, of which 5 agencies and 2 tribes agreed to help with. The plans that were considered as part of the EIS ranged from conservation to recreation, as well as emphasizing resource extraction, such as mineral extraction and grazing. Local, State, and Federal committees influence these plans, and a great way to make your voice heard is by getting in touch with the committee members directly. To learn more about how to do this see the Committee Committee Section.

Several times throughout this process the BLM had to publish notices in the Federal Register. These publications included a Notice of Intent, letting the public know about the BLM's intent to conduct an EIS, a Notice of Availability, letting the public know that the period of public comment was open, and a Notice of Error, letting the public know that the period of public comment had been extended after getting feedback on and making changes to the initial plan for the EIS. To learn more about the Federal Register and how to use it, see the Federal Register section.

The BLM also notified several interest groups about the scoping period to allow them to have their members comment on the EIS. These groups help organize the public and help their voices be heard by making sure that they receive information about the issues that matter to them. interest groups can also influence the policy that surrounds the EIS through lobbying. To learn about joining and creating interest groups, see the Interest Groups section.

The final plan that was settled on allows for resource use and management flexibility into the future. The BLM opened the second round of public comment for review of the modified plan, and, using the final version of the EIS, comment ended on November 18, 2019.

It should be noted that all of these controversial plans were, or are, open to public debate and protest. Public comment sections and informative documents are available on the NEPA site; however, the system is quite hard to navigate. The step-by-step guide provided in this handbook is key for stakeholders to understand how to participate in these conversations to ensure that their opinions and concerns are heard.¹⁰

¹⁰ United States Bureau of Land Management. "Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Kanab-Escalante PlanningArea ProposedResource Management Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statement." October 18, 2019. https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/94706/20005728/250006731/01_GSENM-KEPA_modified_Proposed_RMPs-Final_EIS_Executive_Summary.pdf

Actions to Take:

- Look at the Dingell Act to see examples of how people have been involved in past issues
- Learn to navigate the BLM ePlanning website
- Read about and understand current issues such as the ones listed above. Find issues that matter to you and take action to make your voices heard by those in governmental positions

Conclusion:

Public lands in the West are tied to many different stakeholders and will always be an issue. Utah, with all of its diverse landscapes and rich history, has land that often gets thrown into economic and political battles. There are concerns about federal overreach, water rights, Native American rights, and environmental effects. These issues are complex, and there is rarely a right answer. Despite the complexity of public land issues, you, as citizens of Utah, should have a say about how the land in your state is being used. This handbook has provided you with the resources to learn about public lands, reach out to people in positions of power, and join together with other concerned individuals. This gives you the power to state your opinions and get involved. Let your voices be heard!