

Moab Tailings Project Steering Committee Meeting

April 27, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC MEETING

Grand County Courthouse

125 East Center

Moab, Utah 84532

The following individuals were present via Zoom.

Committee Members

Mary McGann, Committee Chair, Grand County Commission
Jennifer Swenson, Grand County Office of Emergency Management
Abby Scott, Grand County Planning and Community Development
Kelly Thornton, Utah Department of Workforce Services
Rani Derasary, Moab City
Dana van Horn, Grand Water & Sewer Service Agency
Anthony (Tony) Mancuso, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

Staff Russ von Koch, Grand County UMTRA Liaison (non-voting staff for MTPSC)

Moab UMTRA Project

Russell McCallister (DOE, Federal Cleanup Director)
Chris Pulskamp (DOE, Project Engineer)
Honora Thompson (Pro2Serve, Public Affairs Manager, Technical Assistance Contract)
Barbara Michel (SKLS, Staff Support Specialist, Technical Assistance Contract)
Luke Mattson (Pro2Serve, Moab UMTRA Project Field Manager, Technical Assistance Contract)
Liz Moran (Pro2Serve, Senior Environmental Scientist, Technical Assistance Contract)
Katrina Lund (Pro2Serve, Revegetation Manager, Technical Assistance Contract)

Other Attendees

Jessica Thacker
Sarah Scoles
Debra Sigman

1. Call to Order – Chair

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Per Resolution 3198 at least seven committee members were present to constitute a quorum.

2. Introductions – Chair

The Chair called the names of those present via Zoom and asked if everyone had been acknowledged.

3. Review and Consideration of Minutes from the January 26, 2021 Meeting – Chair

The Chair asked the members about reviewing the minutes. No suggestions about revisions to the minutes were made.

Rani moved and Tony seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

4. Citizens to Be Heard – recognized by the Chair

No citizens asked to be heard.

5. Moab UMTRA Project Update – Russell McCallister, DOE Federal Cleanup Director

The Chair recognized Federal Cleanup Director Russell McCallister who provided an overview of work and progress at the Moab Project. Russell observed that operations have continued without any stoppages. The Project has been monitoring for Covid-19 on a daily and weekly basis and following White House and CDC guidelines. He stated that the Project has sent a Covid-19 mitigation plan to DOE headquarters for approval.

Russell reported that the Project has moved a total of 11.5 million tons of tailings to date, 540 thousand tons so far this fiscal year, and is on track to move 1 million tons this year by about October 20. He mentioned having another million tons celebration and that some new DOE people would like to visit Moab to learn more about the Project's work. Russell mentioned that two additional railcars had been delivered in the past and two more have arrived. Each railcar can carry four additional containers.

Russell informed the members that the Project had worked 1,700 days without a lost time injury or accident. He praised the crew for doing an excellent job with both regular and Covid-19 related safety measures.

Turning to the spring Colorado River flow forecast, Russell said that with the low snowpack this year, the Project continues to expect lower than normal Colorado River flows and drought conditions. No flooding at the Moab site is expected and they are ready to use an auxiliary pump if necessary to supply adequate water for dust control.

Russell then updated the meeting participants about the status of the alternative cover design for the Crescent Junction disposal cell. He noted that the 30% design has been presented to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and that a more formal presentation will be made for the 60% design around August. The following step will be submission of the formal 90% design. Russell explained that the alternative cell cover is expected to perform better and be less expensive than the current NRC-approved design.

Moving to the status of the potential revision of the Project's environmental air quality monitoring network, Russell said that he has looked at the proposal submitted by the Project's Technical Assistance Contractor and that the changes look good. He noted that the proposed changes should provide the Project and the community with better air quality data. Before moving forward with the changes, the Project is planning to provide an opportunity for public comment in a month or so.

Russell described another change to the air quality monitoring program. The Project has temporarily taken the monitoring station at Thompson Springs off line to prevent dust from nearby (non-Project) construction activity from clogging the collection filters. Russell noted that the station may be not be replaced as it has not provided useful information.

Russell concluded his presentation by reporting that Project staff had cleaned up trash along US 191 where the highway is bordered by DOE administered land. He then asked for questions from the members.

Mary asked if the 1,700 days without a lost time incident is a record. Russell was not sure. (It was later found that longer periods without a lost time injury at the site had been recorded).

Mary also asked for more information about the cover design. Russell explained that subsequent more detailed designs will have more specifics such as the thickness of the various layers, material types, and compaction rates.

6. Planning for Site Closure Update – Russell McCallister

Russell updated the members about the Project's progress towards defining the work that will be needed for Moab site closure. He noted that closure is on the horizon and that more than just tailings removal needs to be considered. Russell informed the members that the next remedial action contract will be the final contract. It has been advertised as a closure contract. He expects the company that wins the contract will contribute ideas about what it will take to close the site. Mary asked when the new contract will be awarded. Russell said that the award should be around mid-October.

7. Revegetation Activities at the Moab site – Russell McCallister and Luke Mattson, Moab UMTRA Project Field Manager

Russell introduced Luke Mattson, the Project's Field Manager. Luke manages various aspects of field work at Moab including revegetation work.

Luke presented a PowerPoint presentation that described the Project's revegetation efforts including its partnerships with other agencies and groups. He explained that the Project's goal for vegetation was to have a native, self-sustaining landscape. Luke then introduced Katrina Lund the Project's new revegetation manager.

Continuing his presentation, Luke described how the Project had worked with the National Park Service to salvage native grasses from a Canyonlands National Park construction site and how well they are growing. He then described the partnership with the local office of the US Geological Survey to establish 356 two meter square plots to test various seed mixes and watering schedules in different soil areas. The next partnership he described was a donation of seed from the Utah Division of Fire, Forestry, and State Lands sufficient to cover 12 acres. Other partnerships included receiving soil from Arches National Park to help condition a section of salty soil at the site, and sharing technical experience with Rim-to-Rim Restoration and the Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership.

8. Update on Local Government Efforts to Continue Funding for the Moab UMTRA Project – Rani Derasary

Rani initiated the update by stating that in past years, the local participants had travelled to Washington DC in February, but with Covid-19, that was not possible.

She informed the members that they have scheduled a briefing with the head of DOE Office of Environmental Management, Ike White, for mid-May.

Mary informed the members that Governor Cox has signed a resolution unanimously approved by both house of the Utah State Legislature. The resolution expresses the State's desire to have the Moab UMTRA Project completed in a timely fashion.

Mary stated that she has spoken with Senator Romney and Congressman Curtis. She related that they think future Project funding at the current or a higher level looks good. Mary also related that she spoke with them about future ownership of the Moab site following Project completion. In her conversation, she mentioned citizen support for transferring the site to the city and county and the desirability of having funding for site redevelopment as part of the transfer.

For future site use planning, Tony reviewed the status of the State's interest in Utah Sovereign Lands along the Colorado River adjacent to the Moab site.

9. Air Monitoring and Liaison Activities Status Update – UMTRA Liaison

The Chair Recognized Russ von Koch who presented the liaison's status update PowerPoint. Tonnage moved to Crescent Junction for the first quarter of 2021 was January 87 k tons, February 71 k tons, and March 82 k tons with about 71.4 % of total estimated tons now moved. Russ also reviewed Project operations and the long term annual progress towards transporting tailings from the Moab site to the Crescent Junction disposal cell. Russ reported that the tonnage transported in the January through March period was up 11.7% over the average for all of Federal fiscal year 2020.

In the PowerPoint, Russ showed several slides of Moab UMTRA Project workers preparing residual radiation material for conditioning and transport at the Moab site including the crushing of contaminated boulders. During the status update, he showed two slides that showed workers burning vegetation in a special "burn box". Luke Mattson clarified that the Project borrowed the box from the BLM. Russell McCallister observed that the photos must have been taken shortly after the burning was initiated as the amount of smoke normally rapidly diminishes as the burn progresses. Tony added that using the burn box is permitted for air quality and other environmental factors in a manner similar to prescribed burns.

In his presentation, Russ provided additional information about how well the Project has been doing processing and transporting tailings and other residual radioactive material to the disposal cell at Crescent Junction. He related how the tonnage transferred has increased every year starting in FY 2019. Mary added that the increased tonnage was a combination of both additional funding and management.

Russ then discussed the air quality monitoring data for the four quarter moving average through the fourth quarter of 2020. Overall, radiation levels for the moving average were down from the prior period. Of the 27 total measurements, four were up by 1 to 2 %, 13 were down by 1 to 7%, and 10 were unchanged. The four stations reporting higher measurements were the Arches Visitor Center and West Thompson which were up 1 % and 2% respectively for gamma radiation and the Moab Recycle Center and Kane Creek stations which were both up 1% for particulate radiation. The largest changes were at the Moab MEI station which dropped 7 % for radon and at station 129 NW of the mill site where particulate radiation fell 6 % and radon decreased by 5% from the prior moving average period.

All public access monitoring stations again reported radiation levels below the DOE's allowable limits for radon, gamma, and particulate radiation. For additional information about the liaison's presentation, please see the Liaison's Status Report posted on the Grand County's moabtailingsproject.org webpage.

10. Stakeholder Updates – Chair

The Chair asked the members to present any stakeholder updates to the committee. No updates were presented.

11. Future Agenda Items?

The Chair asked the members if they had any additional items to add to the committee's normal agenda for future meetings. The Chair noted that the Moab UMTRA Project normally presented its Annual Statement of Continued Compliance with Grand County's conditional use permit at the July meeting. No suggestions for additional agenda items were proposed.

12. Future 2021 Meeting Dates? – Chair

The Chair reminded the members of the dates for the July, and October meetings. All meetings are planned to be held on fourth Tuesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. For 2021, the remaining meeting dates are July 27 and October 26. The Chair then requested discussion about the meeting dates. No changes for the meeting dates were proposed.

13. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S/s Russell W von Koch, Grand County UMTRA Liaison

Approved



Mary McGann (Aug 18, 2021 20:54 MDT)

Mary McGann, MTPSC Chairperson

Date

Aug 18, 2021