

Friends,

Sometimes it pays to take one's own advice! As I have urged others to do, last Wednesday I read down the list of meetings scheduled in our local Box Elder County (Utah) "News Journal."

Notice for Feb. 22nd: "County Commission special meeting to adopt Amendments to County General Plan regarding Non-Wilderness Quality Lands proposed by Environmentalist Groups for Wilderness Management and Designation"

Oops! Did the Greenies get to our Planning Commission and the County Commissioners? So next morning I headed to the Courthouse, ready to do battle with SUWA and their \$20 million budget. What a relief – quite the opposite was underway. Our rural county is preemptively staking out its' opposition to the "Red Rock Wilderness" and Secretary Salazar's order #3310 "Wild Lands" grab. In a well-written document they have spelled out their legal responsibilities to plan for and protect our ranches, mines, wells, search and rescue, recreation (specifically mentioning Rockhounds), from unwarranted and unrealistic "Wilderness" in the west end of the county. If it isn't multiple-use, forget it!

The County Commissioners I spoke to were very knowledgeable on the issues and people involved. And delighted that a knowledgeable local citizen cared enough to find out what was going on. They were glad that I took the time to carefully review their proposal; even spotting a couple typo's and glitches. I was urged to come to the meeting today (Feb 22nd) and speak during the time for Public Comment. I did; and started by briefly explaining who I was (a Rockhound Activist representing 50,000 club members over the USA), and had lived in the county for 42 years of collecting, hunting, and fishing. That it was my opinion that they were on exactly the right track, for which they certainly earned an Atta-Boy! That the planning document was very well done, and covered all the important factors. There were about a half-dozen other people in attendance, but nobody spoke in opposition. Apparently I had said enough, and the ranchers let me carry the ball.

A representative from Sen. Orrin Hatch's office did speak to the subject, but not specifically the County Plan. All of Utah's Congressional delegation is hard-over in opposition to the Obama administration's wilderness proposals. They are trying to educate their colleagues on how much impact will be felt here in the Intermountain West. The best bet to stop SUWA and their allies appears to be through amendments to the Federal Budget to deny funding.

The County Commission then proceeded to pass the proposed amendments and the resulting updated General Plan. So - - friends, by reading a local paper and watching the boring list of public meeting for anything involving our hobby; I was able to move fast and get our position known right at the start. *"Go and do likewise."*

Evan Day, Utah Director

American Lands Access Assn.