



STATE OF UTAH

OLENE S. WALKER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY
84114-0601

GAYLE F. MCKEACHNIE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

February 27, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to send you a Joint Resolution agreed to by the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development. This partnership represents 15 federal and state land managing agencies and private grazing land managers.

By signing the resolution, the partners recognize the severity of Utah's shrub-steppe rangeland condition and commit to cooperating in order to develop a common shared vision, improve communication and cooperation among partner members and stakeholders, leverage technical and financial resources and develop innovative approaches to problem solving.

The resolution will eventually affect many watersheds within the state. This action will maximize efforts to restore watershed health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olene S. Walker".

Olene S. Walker
Governor

OSW/rlm:fs

JOINT RESOLUTION
**THE UTAH PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**
**REGARDING THE NEED FOR INCREASED EFFORTS IN
MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION OF SHRUB-
STEPPE AND GREAT BASIN SAGEBRUSH
ECOSYSTEMS**

The Utah Partners for Conservation and Development understanding the threat of ecological conversion of the shrub-steppe and Great Basin sagebrush ecosystems (hereafter referred to as shrub-steppe rangelands) by noxious weeds and other invasive species, have agreed to the following resolution to recognize the severity of Utah's shrub-steppe rangeland condition and to commit to cooperating in order to develop a common shared vision, improve communication and cooperation among partner members and stakeholders, leverage technical and financial resources and develop innovative approaches to problem solving.

Be it resolved by the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development:

WHEREAS, although the federal and state land managing agencies and private grazing land managers have historically coordinated and carried out rangeland restoration activities in Utah, the effort has not kept pace with dynamic changes that are occurring on public and private lands within the shrub-steppe ecosystems;

WHEREAS, many of the productive shrub-steppe rangelands have been replaced by cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) or dense stands of pinyon-juniper woodland;

WHEREAS, many of Utah's livestock enterprises, and wildlife species of conservation concern, particularly those listed or petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA,) are dependent on healthy shrub-steppe ranges for their survival;

WHEREAS, noxious weeds and invasive annual grasses are pervasive on many of these shrub-steppe ranges, setting the stage for an unalterable increase in the frequency of fire and the subsequent loss of productive rangelands for livestock and wildlife;

WHEREAS, vast areas within these ecosystems no longer function to provide healthy watersheds, diverse wildlife habitats and/or productive grazing lands;

WHEREAS, healthy rangelands are essential in reducing sediment and other pollutant loading to waters of the state;

WHEREAS, watersheds dominated by noxious weeds, other invasive species and closed-canopied, pinyon-juniper woodlands lack sufficient herbaceous plant cover to protect soil health and trap, store and slowly release water to springs, streams, lakes and reservoirs;

WHEREAS, prolonged drought has contributed to more than 600,000 acres of sagebrush-steppe die-off and has the potential to cause long-term effects to ecosystems and economies;

WHEREAS, natural recovery is no longer possible in many areas due to loss of seed reserves in the soil, and the introduction of noxious weeds and other invasive species;

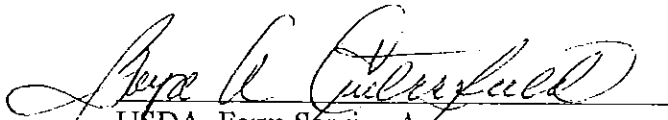
WHEREAS, a well-planned, long-term restoration and management program is necessary to prevent the large-scale conversion of diverse, productive rangelands to non-desirable plant species or dense stands of pinyon-juniper woodlands, depending on the fire regime;


WHEREAS, rangeland health is a unifying goal that cuts across all economic, social and political boundaries and is important to the quality of life for all in Utah:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development will work together and take cooperative action as partners with federal, state and local agencies, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations, private livestock operations and other affected private landowners, communities, and stakeholders to define a common vision and goals for these rangelands; coordinate and leverage technical and financial resources; set priorities for management and restoration; strengthen efforts for monitoring and assessment; develop innovative approaches to problem solving; and develop and implement outreach and educational efforts.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to partner members' field offices, county commissions, non-governmental and private livestock agricultural oriented organizations involved in conservation efforts in Utah and members of Utah's congressional delegation.

PARTNER SIGNATURES:

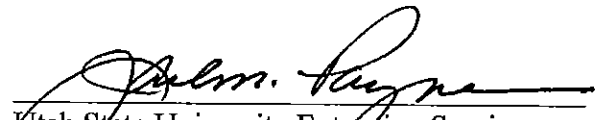

USDA, Farm Service Agency
Utah State Director

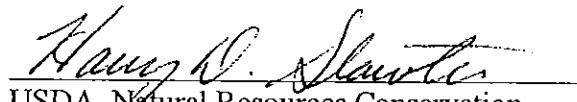

Utah Department of Agriculture & Food
Chair, Utah Soil Conservation Commission

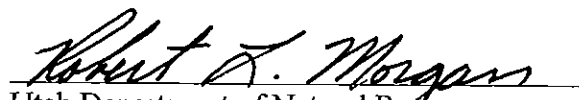

USDA, Farm Service Agency
State Committee Chair


Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Executive Director

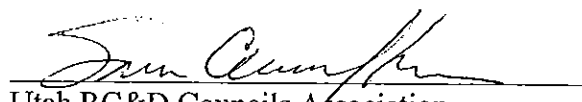

USDA Forest Service
Intermountain Regional Forester



Utah State University Extension Service
Vice-President


USDA, Natural Resources Conservation
Service, Utah State Conservationist



Utah Department of Natural Resources
Executive Director

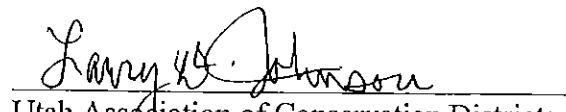

USDI Bureau of Land Management
Utah State Director

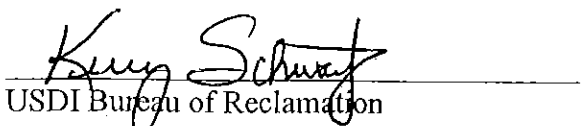

Utah RC&D Councils Association
President


USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
Utah Field Supervisor


School and Institutional Trust Lands
Administration, Director


USDI National Park Service
State Coordinator


Utah Association of Conservation Districts
President

for 
USDI Bureau of Reclamation
Provo Area Manager