

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **April 14, 2011**, in the Public Works conference room at the Washington County Administration Building, 197 E. Tabernacle, Saint George, Utah

Members present were:

Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS)
Cameron Rognan, Chairperson	Wash Co. Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
Ann McLuckie	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Tim Croissant, Vice Chairperson	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Absent and excused was:

Marshall Topham	Local biologist
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Also present were:

Bob Sandberg	HCP
Amber Stocks	HCP
Chris Hart	Ivins City Mayor
Judy Gubler	Ivins City Manager
Chuck Gillett	Ivins City Engineer
Benny Sorensen	Ivins City
Chris Blake	HCAC

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Rognan noted there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **March 3, 2011**

The following changes were made:

Page 2, paragraph 6, after sentence 4: added,

From: "Isaac mentioned it would be fairly easy to place the fencing in order to preserve the creosote bushes."

To: "Isaac mentioned it would be fairly easy to place the fencing in order to preserve the creosote bushes. A secondary concern was raised about fuel build up around creosote and trying to find the balance between protecting them and getting the fuel out."

MOTION by Renee Chi to approve the minutes as corrected.

Seconded by Kristen Comella.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Presentation – Ivins City

Mayor Hart began by explaining the flood control study which has been worked on over the last ten years in Ivins City. The Detention Basin Dam was selected because it was the best flood control alternative. Many feel a structure of this nature may not be the ideal thing for the City, the State Park, or anyone. Ivins City has spent nearly \$500,000 in engineering and staff time on the preliminary preparations for the dam. The City is now exploring the possibility of abandoning the detention dam and its 7.88 acres of property purchased for the dam in exchange for a hardened trail along the already existing Toe Trail.

Ivins City Council has authorized these city members to talk with the HCAC and TC, to discuss proposals but has not yet granted authority for any definitive property exchanges. The reason Ivins City Council has allowed these city members to speak with the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) and the TC about property exchange is because 1) no one that the City is aware of is in favor of the dam, 2) the City has purchased the property and put together the approvals through HCAC, TC, and others, 3) the Detention Basin Dam will happen if funding is secured. Many wonder if it is the best alternative for the habitat, Ivins City, or for the public. Ivins City will either pursue what has been decided in the last ten years or there will need to be a way to get to a new solution rather quickly.

Judy Gubler explained when a city has property that it is going to get rid of or dispose of in any way, there needs to be a public hearing to justify the return since it is taxpayer property. As needs have been looked at, Ivins City Council agreed that a connecting paved trail would be a real asset to their community. A trail is something to sell to the community and the City Council. A trail might be justifiable in exchange and in value of return.

Exhibit 3-a-1 shows Ivins City municipal parks, paved trails and other information regarding the Detention Basin Dam and construction of a hardened trail. Chuck Gillett proposed that a paved trail be installed on the portion of Toe Trail which would connect to Tuacahn Drive.

The trail ideally would be ten feet wide but could be a minimum of eight feet wide. A hardened trail could be concrete, asphalt, a spray down which acts as glue, or whatever

the TC decides on.

In response to the questions asked by the TC, Chuck Gillett explained that the trail does not affect water flow. The trail would be compensation for property and work that has already been done on the Detention Basin Dam. The flooding concerns still exist and will be addressed when the property exchange occurs. Without the Detention Basin Dam the culverts on Center Street are not big enough and may need to be upsized. The homes that line the wash below Center Street could be threatened without the Detention Basin Dam and the City will reconsider flood control alternatives if the Detention Basin Dam is not constructed.

Chris Blake noted that in the Ivins area there is meandering off trails beyond an acceptable level. There are many tourists who come to the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve to see a tortoise. If this trail is constructed it could include information on the tortoise and designated viewing areas to help keep people from meandering. Land exchanges can be cumbersome. Chris Blake suggested that a Cooperative Maintenance Agreement could be a cleaner transaction. The HCP would maintain the Detention Basin Dam property and Ivins City could maintain the trail. There could also be speed limits and seasonal closures on the trail if necessary.

Chris Blake noted that Ivins City should not take the lead on building the trail but could potentially assist with design and funding through grants. The responsibility for trail construction should rest on the HCP. Mayor Hart noted that the HCP is in the best position to make necessary decisions in trail building.

Member Comella and members from Ivins City discussed the portion of Toe Trail being inaccessible for horse use. Since equestrians rarely use this section of the trail it may not be a big issue to disallow horse access on the proposed paved trail, however this needs to be further discussed.

The TC members discussed funding and preliminary trail building construction costs with Ivins City members. Judy noted that a commitment from HCP is what they are looking for. They will take whatever the HCP proposes back to Ivins City Council.

b. Review alternatives to the Ivins Detention Basin

The TC members discussed the biological tradeoffs to having a Detention Basin Dam versus a hardened trail. They discussed the biological impacts of abandoning the dam and building a trail and what the potential trade off would be if they decide to accept the proposal. They talked about the flood control issue and how it would be revisited five to ten years from now if there is a big flood and the whole issue comes up again.

The committee discussed State Parks Section 6 property regarding paved trails and also how HCP money should go toward recovery of the tortoise. Discussion was also made as to what the benefit is to the tortoises of the 7.88 acres.

The committee talked about the following: 1) The 7.88 acres inholdings purchased for Detention Basin Dam, if Ivins City citizens approve to release the property would be donated to somebody, most likely Snow Canyon State Park. 2) In exchange for the donation Ivins City would like to have a hardened surface trail built 1,800 linear feet by ten feet wide on Snow Canyon State Park property with a cooperative agreement in place that Ivins City would manage or co-manage it.

Renee Assignment: find out if the lands that were acquired with Section 6 money and managed by Snow Canyon State Park (where the Toe trail goes west from Snow Canyon Drive to Tuacahn Drive) would allow the existing earthen trail to be developed into an eight to ten foot wide trail (partially hardened and partially elevated) for pedestrians and bikes. In exchange, the HCP would acquire a 7.88-acre private parcel that is North of the trail and landlocked with state park property instead of the Ivins Detention Basin Dam development on the 7.88 acres.

Cameron Assignment: figure out linear feet of the section of Toe trail that could be potentially eliminated if the paved trail was developed.

Committee moved to continue discussion.

c. Discuss NAU trail monitoring data

Chairperson Rognan presented data on trail rankings from NAU monitoring shown with Exhibit 3-c-1. He explained how to analyze the data. Members discussed the formulas and scores set up for the trail rating system. Chairperson Rognan stressed the importance of finding data that is of concern and going to that area to check out the issue.

Ann McLuckie left at 11:37.

The committee members debated back and forth the data, the variables, and the weight on certain variables. They discussed whether or not to keep specific information. They talked about whether or not the data model fits what is actually seen on the trails and whether or not the data is reflective of impacts.

Ann McLuckie returned at 12:07.

Chairperson Rognan agreed to re-organize some of the data and variables and present it to the committee in the next meeting for additional review.

d. Discuss information from MOG meeting and RIT formation

March 10, 2011 Ann attended the MOG meeting and expressed her views of the meeting to the TC members as follows. The Recovery Implementation Teams (RIT's) are expected to go from a planning to an implementation stage from 1 - 1 ½ years. The purpose of RIT is to create a localized five-year recovery action plan and to track

implementation and threat reduction as well as to examine the correlation between management action and tortoise recovery.

There will be three main RITs: 1. California Mojave 2. North East Mojave which includes the Beaver Dam Slope 3. Upper Virgin River.

There will be 8-15 individuals on each RIT, including agencies, NGOs, and other stake holders. They may include persons from the following: local developers, natural resources, recreation, conservation organization, scientific committee, earth science committee, local government, Fish and Wildlife, state government, wildlife management, land management, and BLM.

This area's RIT could be made up of some HCAC members as well as TC members. Members are appointed by the USFWS and are expected to serve on the committee for five years.

The recovery plan should be out by May 2011. The RIT group will report to the MOG annually.

e. Discuss field trip possibilities

Members agreed to visit Toe Trail May 11th on Snow Canyon Parkway at 9:15.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Change May's meeting date to Wednesday May 11th.

b. Layton Property

The Layton property is fenced now. The clearance is scheduled for the week of April 18th. Member Comella read a letter from John Ibach with Red Mountain Resort and Spa, located to the South and East of the Layton property. The Resort residents used to hike on the Toe Trail, including the section on the Layton property, and on up to the Padre Canyon Trail.

John's proposal, now that the Layton property is closed, is to open the Padre Canyon Connector Trail (portion of trail which is currently closed between Johnson Canyon Parking Lot and Tuacahn) and make it accessible permanently, or at least until the Layton property becomes accessible again.

The Padre Canyon Connector Trail is closed between March 15th and November 14th annually. John would like to see the seasonal closure dates be changed from Nov 1st through March 14th to have the same open access that Jenny's Canyon has, June 2nd through March 14th. Kristen will request additional details before any decisions are made regarding this matter.

5. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

- a. Wednesday, May 11, 2011

6. **ADJOURN**

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Kristen Comella.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Amber Stocks.