

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **March 3, 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
Christi Biniac	Citizens for Dixie's Future
Isaac Ison	D' Goat Ranch
Andy Langton	Disney Channel

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 9:34 A.M.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **February 10, 2011**

The following changes were made:

Page 2, paragraph 1, sentence 2: changed,

From: "Bob Sandberg had informally brought this proposal to the Technical Committee in July ~~2008~~."

To: "Bob Sandberg had informally brought this proposal to the Technical Committee in July 2010."

Page 4, paragraph 2: changed,

From: "The BLM representative commented that NEPA would have to be done and couldn't be done in time for this spring."

To: “The BLM representative commented that at 50 and 100 feet that NEPA would likely have to be done and couldn’t be done in time for this spring.”

MOTION by Kristen Comella to approve the minutes as corrected.

Seconded by Renee Chi.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

3. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

a. Presentation - D’ Goat Company

Member Rognan began by introducing Isaac Ison with D’ Goat Company. Member Rognan mentioned that during the last HCAC meeting TC members expressed consensus that they would like to reduce fuel on Cottonwood Road approving use of goats, weed whackers, or whatever method the TC can use to knock down fuel.

A PowerPoint presentation followed. The presentation is included in the record as, Exhibit 3-a-1 TC 030311.

Isaac started by discussing target grazing. Goats are contained by electric fences and are monitored in stages 24 hours a day by a certified sheep herder. Isaac discussed cheat grass affected areas along with fire hazards and precipitation. The large majority of fires are started by humans. D’ Goat Company bids to go on the right side of the road 50 feet, up the 5 miles. They would then turn around and come back 50 feet on the left side of the road the full 5 miles back. This would give a 150 foot fire break in the area. It would take around a month to do, each day covering 1/3 mile. D’ Goat Company will bring 120 goats, keeping them densely packed so they will eat everything in the area. The one concern is the creosote which they can fence around if the goats start damaging them. Their desire is to get all the fire fuels out of the area to prevent potential fires caused by sparks or cigarette buds. The brown strip will also provide a fire break due to natural causes.

D’ Goat Company has been in business for nine years. Isaac showed before and after pictures of past jobs. Member Rognan expressed concern for the creosote with fences put around them. 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. December is the only time goats will eat creosote, which shouldn’t be a problem right now.

Bringing the goats will increase public awareness. Isaac showed a sign which is placed on the fence for safety. The goats help people recognize that fires are real and are a hazard. If we can get people thinking about fire prevention before the fire is started then often times fires never start.

Andy Langton arrived at 9:50 A.M.

Bob Sandberg mentioned the most effective time would be April or early May.

Member Croissant discussed the current fence in the Reserve and said that he'll need to determine how far on the shoulder to go with the goats.

b. Discuss fuel reduction alternatives

The members discussed different options regarding fuel alternatives, depending on most effective time of the season. They discussed goats, mowing, weed whacking, and herbicides. A pre-emergent or post-emergent cannot be pursued this year; however, in future years it might be pursued.

Member Chi spoke with UDOT and mentioned they might potentially work to help with mowing along I-15. If certain areas can be identified which are concerning, recommendations can be provided depending on funding. Member Rognan also spoke with UDOT and mentioned that if we notice a serious problem to contact them and they might be able to accommodate us.

Isaac Ison noted that when goats are used in the fall, seed of a more fire hardy plant can be put down before the goats go through. The goats take out the invasive species and give the more fire hardy plant a head start for spring. In the future this might be an option to put in a plant that will hold up better against fire and hold its moisture better.

MOTION by Ann McLuckie for the BLM to pursue within EA the most cost-efficient effective alternative between either grazing via goats or the mowing or hand weed whacking.

Seconded by Renee Chi.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

c. Discuss marking the HIM trail intervals

Member Rognan has all the data from Pam Foti and will set up formulas for the rating system that the TC committee discussed in previous meetings. This year Pam and her students will give a score for each trail that we can utilize to make sure our ranking is working efficiently. Next month data on the trail rankings will be presented.

In the February TC meeting a discussion was made to consider using carsonite signs for dual purposes - to mark trail intervals monitored by NAU, and to inform hikers of the trail location and direction.

TC members discussed how Pam's students would still have to rely on UTM coordi-

nates. The HCP and its partners will continue to maintain the carsonite signs. Members discussed how human disturbances near the signs might affect the Human Impact Monitoring (HIM) data; however, the HCP could give Pam exact measurements of where to collect data at a specified distance away from the carsonite signs to minimize this problem. The Committee discussed the value of having Pam's data and how to evaluate the data over a specified period of time. The group decided to continue the discussion during the next meeting.

d. Discuss Disney commercial use proposal

Andy Langton from the Disney Channel described a children's film that will be broadcast in the fall. There will be two days of filming on April 7 - 8 in Pioneer Park. Andy explained the storyline, expressing a need to set up light towers for some filming at night. Paint ball guns will be fired without paint ball cartridges in them. Andy expressed a desire to create anchor points with guide wire at 4 different points into the rock. Disney has checked with professional climbers who know how to patch the rock after the anchors are removed. There will be 8 light towers with 4 anchor points per tower. Exhibit 3-d-1 TC 030311.

Filming for day work will be on the shoulder and gravel parking lot of Red Hills Parkway, on the West side of the Dixie rock. The night shot will be on the second pull out of the loop road. Filming will be mostly on rock and already disturbed trail. During the film one vehicle will be used on a very limited pathway into the filming frame. This might need to be done multiple times during filming and the vehicle will travel the same route every time. HCP staff has reviewed the site, and there would be no impact to vegetation or tortoises.

Member Comella asked if there is a need for HCP staff to be present during filming. Member Rognan said there would be an inspection done before filming and if appropriate HCP staff or a biological monitor can be there during the day shoot. The night shoot is not an issue.

The committee discussed safety of habitat and the ability of Disney to channel the public to designated viewing areas. Andy expressed Disney's ability to hire HCP staff or a qualified tortoise monitor to monitor the area while filming. Disney has personnel to work with the public who come to watch out of curiosity. They also have a crew to pick up garbage and cater the meals in the gravel pit area.

A tortoise monitor may be needed for filming taking place from sunrise until sunset. Disney will let the HCP know what to expect in regards to filming times.

MOTION by Kristen Comella to approve the shoot given that HCP staff will inspect for winter burrows and they will do another inspection prior to the shoot starting. Also that there will be a biological monitor on site from sunrise until sunset during the filming and Disney will coordinate any rock anchoring with the city of St George.
Seconded by Renee Chi.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Andy Langton departed at 10:26 A.M.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

a. MOG meeting March 10, 2011 in Las Vegas-Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs)

Rides were coordinated.

b. Tortoise Fence Down

Member Croissant brought to attention the tortoise fence in Paradise Canyon. Water flow has caused the ground to sink on the border of BLM and private land on the East side of halfway wash in Red Cliffs NCA. The committee discussed options on repairing the fence. Exhibit 4-b-1-TC-030311.

c. Fieldtrips

Law Enforcement will have a field trip to Babylon March 21st for a quarterly law enforcement meeting.

HCAC will have a meeting March 22nd and are looking for suggestions for field trips. Member Chi mentioned that it would be good to go to an undisturbed area. TC members decided that the newly created Gila trail in Snow Canyon would be ideal. Kristen volunteered to help guide the hike starting at 10 am from the north park entrance.

d. Budget Cuts to State Parks

July 1, 2011 State Parks will begin to have budget cuts. There will be a reduction of force statewide and law enforcement may be reduced in Snow Canyon State Park.

e. Potential Replacement

Renee Chi might bring a potential replacement for herself from the Forest Service in Cedar City. The replacement will come for five weeks.

5. NEXT MEETING DATES

- a. Thursday, April 14, 2011

6. ADJOURN

MOTION by Tim Croissant to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Renee Chi.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 A.M.

Minutes prepared by Amber Stocks.