

HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A regular meeting of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held at the Washington City Council Chambers on **FEBRUARY 22, 2011**.

Committee members present were:

Karl Wilson, Chairman	Mayors Association
Chris Blake, Vice Chairman	Environmental Organization
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP Administrator
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
Reed Harris	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS)
Jeff Morby	Local Development
Donna Ferris-Rowley	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Absent and excused was: Jimmy Tyree who was represented today by Donna Ferris-Rowley.

Also present were:

Renee Chi	USF&WS
Dave Kiel	BLM
Ann McLuckie	Utah Div. of Woldlife Resources (UDWR)
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commission
Cameron Rognan	Washington County HCP
Paul Van Dam	Citizens for Dixie's Future
Lisa Rutherford	Citizens for Dixie's Future
Kaye Reese	Temporary Minute Preparation

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wilson noted that at least five (5) committee members were present and a quorum existed. He also noted that Donna Ferris-Rowley would be taking the place of Jimmy Tyree for the BLM. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. Jeff Morby arrived at 2:07 p.m. and Marc Mortensen arrived at 2:20 p.m.

2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the Committee for approval. The Consent Portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any Member wishes to remove an item from the Consent Portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

- a. **Approval of the agenda**
- b. **Review and approve minutes**

1. January 25, 2011
- c. Next meeting date**
1. March 22, 2011

MOTION by Chris Blake to approve the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by Larry Crist.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

3. PRESENTATIONS

The presentation order was switched today.

b. Trail usage (D. Kiel)

David Kiel, Outdoor Recreation Planner with the BLM, used a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Recreational Use in the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area and the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve". The complete text of the presentation is attached to these minutes and marked Exhibit 3-b-HCAC-022211. He passed around an infrared trail counter for the Committee to examine.

The discussion following the presentation covered: sporadic trail use by commercial users other than the three (3) major area spas; coordinating the recreation use information presented today with the impact analysis; types of commercial uses – mostly hiking – mountain bikers are going elsewhere; information will continue to be collected; gathering information in areas outside the BLM; collecting information on the traffic in the Confluence Park; motion sensor cameras being employed in areas upon need; is there enough impact at Red Cliffs for a permit system – difficult to do and would create public backlash; concerns regarding income sources for management of the Reserve.

a. HCP review (R. Chi)

Renee Chi, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, with USF&WS made her final presentation today using a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan Review, Part 6 Unforeseen Circumstances: Fire and Rehabilitation Projects and Other species – Surveys and Proactive Actions". The complete text is attached to these minutes and marked Exhibit 3-a-HCAC-022211.

The discussion following the presentation covered: what else needs to be done; when does the Reserve get to be secure; is that achievable. The response: the resolution of fire impact issues. Discussion continued: tortoise reproduction rates are very low; passing along the original values of the HCP; focus on acquisition of the final 7700 acres; there are species which may live longer than the members of the HCAC;

recreation and land acquisition are the main focus; the value of Pam Foti's input; the HCP is living up to it's end of the bargain.

A final report will be forthcoming.

4. UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

None.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Annual elections of chairman and vice chairman

MOTION by Larry Crist for Karl Wilson to remain as chairman and Chris Blake to remain as vice chairman of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: Reed Harris called the question.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

b. Land (inholdings) acquisition efforts (HCAC)

Donna Ferris-Rowley reported there has been promising progress in dealing with inholdings. BLM has internally selected a realty specialist who will be focused primarily on exchanges, Shered Mullins. Jimmy Tyree and Shered have met with Bob Brennan who is interested in moving forward with an exchange involving the acquisition of 900 acres owned by Mr. Brennan. Jimmy is working on the financial support necessary to move forward with an exchange with Mr. Brennan. Mr. Brennan has been advised that the acquisition process will be convoluted and time consuming.

Larry Crist asked if this acquisition would take care of the full amount of Mr. Brennan's property. The response was in the affirmative. Another potential exchange was mentioned: a nine (9) acre Frei exchange, the appraisal for which must be accepted by Jim Doyle. The appraisal will not be valid in another ten (10) days.

All exchanges are based on appraisal/fair market value. Some adjustments are allowable; i.e., cash, acreage, etc.

c. BLM planning update (D. Ferris-Rowley)

Donna Ferris-Rowley reported on a February 8, 2011 Socio-Economic Workshop which was attended by about one hundred (100) people. The workshop was facilitated by a US Forest Service Enterprise Team. The data gathered goes into an Environmental Impact Study for land use planning. Public comment was taken regarding recreation,

wilderness, livestock grazing, rights-of-way and access and growth patterns in Washington County.

BLM was tasked with two (2) Wilderness Management Plans this year for Red Mountain and Cottonwood. Examples of non-permitted uses; livestock grazing, commercial non-motorized and non-mechanized such as guided hiking or trail rides; guided hunting.

d. Discuss the Management Oversight Group (MOG) meeting March 10, 2011 and the Recovery Implementation Teams (RIT) (HCAC)

Bob Sandberg said that Reed Harris had requested this item for the agenda. The meeting will target final revised recovery plans for the Mojave desert tortoise. Meetings will be held at the Springs Preserve in Las Vegas, Nevada. The question seems to be who is planning to attend and who is required to attend.

Bob said that the HCP staff will be represented. Larry Crist said the Regional Director for the USFWS will be attending and he is planning to attend. Renee Chi said that she will be attending and that those who attend will be taking notes and bringing back information for anyone who is not able to attend.

Bob read from an e-mail as follows:

“The primary topics of the meeting include rolling out the final revised recovery plan for the Mojave desert tortoise and organizing the regional Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs) called for by the revised plan. Details about RIT organization, structure, and function will be discussed at the meeting, and membership on each RIT will be limited to approximately 8-15 individuals, but we are soliciting interest for participation among the agencies and public stakeholders.”

Larry commented that anyone who has an interest could attend and will come back and report.

e. Technical Committee report (C. Rognan)

Cameron Rognan commented on Exhibit 5-e-1-a attached to the agenda which lists the overall goals and desired conditions for the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve and serves as planning tools for the HCP.

He reported on the Scott Hansen 2008 trail proposal which was reviewed and rejected at that time. No further action was taken by the TC.

A conference call with the HCAC regarding fuel reduction was not deemed necessary at this time. The TC favors the most cost effective method. The BLM NEPA process time factor and what actually can be done in a timely manner will affect decisions made. The two (2) timely, practical methods discussed were the use of inmates and/or goats.

Bob Sandberg said that if a conference call is necessary or a workshop is desired, everyone will be willing to participate.

Reed Harris said that seed better be in the ground right now for a green strip. He is willing to consider all open options.

Larry Crist spoke in favor of longer term planning, such as starting NEPA now for next year. Bob talked about the need to do something for prevention of fire fuels.

Ann McLuckie talked about looking at potential management options which are now being modeled by the Nature Conservancy to forecast success rates.

Donna Ferris-Rowley said that two (2) years ago a group from Cedar City reviewed and made recommendations at the Reserve. There were professional disagreements regarding non-native species, the use of chemicals and etc. Analysis was very difficult; and too many options were proposed.

h. Fire fuel reduction (B. Sandberg)

Bob Sandberg reported that he has talked to a goat herder who will make a presentation. His proposal includes a 24/7 goat herder and an electric fence for \$650 a mile for a 50' wide strip on either side of Cottonwood Road.

The other option is an agreement with the Washington County Sheriff's Office for an inmate crew of usually six (6) and a deputy. The crew is self-contained, including porta-potties, transport, lunch and etc. The HCP would supply weed eaters. The cost is \$300 per day per crew.

Within the right-of-way, either option is feasible. HCP staff is checking on right-of-way ownership, either county or St. George City or a combination of both for the eleven (11) mile area in question.

Jeff Morby said that if there is appropriate budget, go ahead.

D" Goat Ranch will make a presentation to the Technical Committee.

MOTION by Chris Blake to authorize Bob Sandberg to conduct fire fuel reduction using goats and inmates, unless the Technical Committee finds any reason not to combine the two options.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

f. Review and discuss the 2010 4th Quarter Report (HCAC)

Chris Blake asked if the reports for the benefit of the FWS are sufficient. The response was in the affirmative.

MOTION by Larry Crist to approve the 2010 4th Quarter Report.

Seconded by Reed Harris.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

g. Review and discuss the 2010 Annual Report (HCAC)

MOTION by Larry Crist to approve the 2010 Annual Report.

Seconded by Reed Harris.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

i. Administrator's Report (B. Sandberg)

1. Budget status report (Exhibit 5=i-1-a HCAC – 022211)

Bob Sandberg said it is early in the budget year at this juncture. There are funds available to cover the fire fuel reduction measures as previously discussed outside of the contingency fund.

Marc Mortensen asked if there is a map in the budget. Bob responded that there are funds available to help the BLM with printing and other associated costs. Marc concluded by saying that the most effective map is a free map.

2. Alan Layton property development

Bob Sandberg reported that the application for clearance is from a property owner near Tuacahn. The property is in a take area. It is forty (42) acres located south of Tuacahn. The owner wants to develop a resort which will fit well with Tuacahn. The property was formerly owned by Hyrum Smith. Bob has talked with Mr. Layton's representative about fencing before clearance. A step-over for a trail is located on Mr. Layton's property. He is talking about establishing trailheads on his property and would allow public access to the trails.

3. Washington City well work

Bob Sandberg reported that the work is being completed on Grapevine 1 and 2. It should be finished this week.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Lisa Rutherford spoke to the Committee, indicating her appreciation of the explanation regarding the Tuacahn property. She asked a question regarding private in-holdings in the Reserve. The response was that some properties are in the incidental take areas and were excluded from the HCP in the beginning. Other areas, such as the Turkey Farm, were purchased by the HCP and/or its partners. Mr. Layton's property is an island within the Reserve. Tortoises will be cleared from the area prior to development.

She went on to comment regarding public confusion regarding real estate issues and the need for more public relations type information going out to the public.

She asked about potential impacts on the Reserve which could be sustained by the proposed Disney filming in the area vs. potential revenue.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Larry Crist asked about scheduling hikes for the Committee. Bob said that staff will be glad to plan such activities for the future.

8. ADJOURN

MOTION by Larry Crist to adjourn.

Seconded by Chris Blake.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Kaye Reese.