

# HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

for Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

**Regular meeting – November 25, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held at the Washington City Council Chambers on November 25, 2008.

Committee members present were:

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

Absent and excused was:

Jimmy Tyree	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
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Also present were:

Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Ann McLuckie	Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Dallin Gardner	ELT Properties
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commissioner
Marreen Casper	Senator Hatch's office
Mike Empey	Congressman Matheson's office
Greg Sharp	JBR Consultants
Clark Ronnow	Town of Leeds Planner
Reed Scow	PSOMAS
Jason Draper	PSOMAS
Scott Taylor	City of St. George
Renee Fleming	City of St. George
Tom Webster	Washington County HCP
Lauren Hunt	Washington County HCP
Brad Young	Washington County HCP

## 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Karl Wilson noted that at least five committee members were present and a quorum existed. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M.

## 2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. **Approval of the amended agenda**
- b. **Review and approve minutes**
  - 1. October 28, 2008
- c. **Next meeting date(s)**
  - 1. January 27, 2009

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to approve the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by Reed Harris.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

## 3. **PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## 4. **UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT REVIEWS**

- a. **Proposed Leeds to Harrisburg sewer pipeline** – Clark Ronnow, Leeds Planner.
- b. **Red Hill water line connection** – Scott Taylor, City of St. George Water Services Manager.

To conserve time and duplication, Chairman Wilson combined agenda items 4a and 5a, and items 4b and 5b.

## 5. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

- a. **Discuss and review the proposed Leeds sewer line project** (Exhibit 5-a-1).

Clark Ronnow began by introducing himself and explaining the reason the pipeline was necessary, and economically feasible at this time. Clark introduced Reed Scow, the PSOMAS engineer who will oversee the project.

Reed began the presentation and discussion by explaining the preliminary project drawing – Exhibit 5-a-1 HCAC – 112508. He described the gravity-fed line from the Town of Leeds to the lift station connection at Harrisburg. That portion of the pipeline proposed to be in the reserve will be approximately 1,379 feet in length. Clipping the corner of the reserve shown in the exhibit is necessary to maintain the gravity flow. Mr. Scow added that there is a possibility that they may elect to bore under the reserve area

to minimize disturbance, but cost is a significant factor. He explained that if they bore under the reserve, they will need to have five 40 sq. ft. manholes where the bore sights are placed. These areas will be revegetated. They prefer to dig the pipeline route, but will wait to see what the Technical Committee has to say.

Mr. Scow displayed to the committee members a full-sized drawing showing the corner of the reserve and two possible pipeline alignments (Exhibit 5-a-2 HCAC – 112508). Mr. Scow added that Alignment Option 1 is the preferred option.

Jeff asked about the pipeline depth. Ten to 19 feet was the answer. Reed Harris asked Ann McLuckie if there were fewer restrictions in Zone 4 than in Zone 3. Ann replied that utility protocols applied equally to both zones. Mr. Harris asked Mr. Scow about when they anticipated constructing the pipeline. Mr. Scow said early summer or late fall 2009. Ann explained the benefits of doing it in the winter.

Mr. Ronnow added that Leeds has a two-year contract with Ash Creek S.S.D. to get the work completed and doing it in the winter is doable.

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to assign the proposal to the Technical Committee for review, and assure conformity with the Utility Development Protocols.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: Jeff Morby asked about Alignment Option 2. Mr. Scow said that this option requires a lift station which is difficult, expensive, subject to breakdown and hard to maintain.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**b. Discuss and review the proposed Red Hill water line connection project (Exhibit 5-b-1).**

Scott Taylor introduced himself and the proposed project. Scott distributed a modified Exhibit 5-a-1. It is the same as the one prepared for the committee except that it includes an inset photograph showing the proposed pipeline route in the reserve. The proposed eight-inch connection line is between the Washington County Water Conservancy District Regional Pipeline and the Mountain Pipeline. Scott explained that the entire connecting line is approximately 538 feet long with approximately 100 feet of that inside the reserve. Scott anticipates the pipeline construction will take one to two weeks and they are prepared to begin anytime after December 1<sup>st</sup> (2008).

Marc Mortensen noted that the proposed pipeline route is already in a heavily disturbed area. Karl Wilson asked if this connecting line would have any impact on the conceptual desert garden that the members toured this morning. Although it is in the conceptual area, it will not interfere.

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to assign the proposal to the Technical Committee for review, and assure conformity with the Utility Development Protocols.

Seconded by Jeff Morby.

Discussion: Reed asked if the TC can handle it from here. Ann said they could and would report back. Larry does not want to hold up the project until the January meeting.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**c. Initiatives to acquire ELT properties (HCAC).**

Bob Sandberg said there was nothing new that he was aware of. He added that Jimmy Tyree was not here, but thought that BLM is moving through the hiring process.

**d. Discuss/review the field trip to the Pioneer Park area regarding a possible botanical desert garden (HCAC).**

Chris Blake began the discussion by stating that he is a firm believer in hard-surfaced trails so people know where and where not to go; he advocated clearly defined trails. Larry agreed with the clearly defined trails and added that a desert garden must be viewed as an educational experience; he advocates a strong educational component. Larry further added that federal funds may be available, and also supports private stewardship grants.

Reed Harris wants the Technical Committee involved in the planning process and wants to see an overall plan that includes partnerships, cost sharing, budgeting and a schedule. He added that there may be other partners, i.e. the Virgin River Program.

Chris asked that the area behind (northerly) the new WCWCD building be included, even if it is shown as an area being revegetated or in recovery. He reasoned that increasing use in some areas can be tolerated if it is planned that other areas are set aside.

Marc would like to see the possibility explored of having a structure for offices and an educational center. Reed asked for clarification about the building's use. Marc said that there would be an interpretive center with live-animal displays, kiosks, administration offices, with retail. Staff would man the center as they do now and possibly have volunteers man it during weekends. The discussion went on about when and how to replace the current HCP offices. Commissioner Gardner was asked about such plans. He said there is a long-range plan to convert the building to a parking lot and replace the county administration building, but nothing in the near future.

Jeff commented that all options should remain on the table and that this is an opportunity for a partnership with the City and the District. Budgets and timing are important but the infrastructure is there for a building and educational facility.

Larry suggested planning in phases allowing for a building in the future – depending on funding. Reed added that it makes sense to have the reserve offices in or near the reserve.

Chairman Wilson expressed support and foresees more planning and more budgeting. Larry foresees the HCAC being an active participant in the planning process. Bob Sandberg and the Technical Committee will continue being involved.

Bob Sandberg added that he, Tom Webster, and the Technical Committee will continue to be actively involved.

**MOTION** by Reed Harrison to continue being involved in the partnership forming and planning process for a desert garden.

Seconded by Chris Blake.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

- e. **Scope of work projects** (HCAC).
  - 1. **Living museum** (Chris Blake).

Discussed in agenda item 5-d.

- 2. **Fencing and clearances** (Karl Wilson).

Fencing projects are underway.

- 3. **New reserve map** (Marc Mortensen).

Marc had nothing new to report at this time. Bob Sandberg added that Tom Webster will be able to provide an update as part of the administrator's report – Item 5-j.

- f. **Status of the Fire Management Plan development** (TC).

Ann McLuckie said the TC is continuing to work on the recommendations. Specifically, Kristen is composing a draft document outlining the recommendations and management actions, and UDWR is composing a scope of work for rehabilitating and reseeding burned areas and monitoring the efforts. The products will be ready for the HCAC in January (2009).

Larry asked Ann how the Technical Committee was incorporating the plans of the Mojave Desert Initiative (MDI) into the reserve's fire management plan. Ann said that she sees continuing representation in the MDI's discussions. Ann went on to explain the similarities of the TC's envisioned projects and those of the MDI.

Bob Sandberg talked about possible joint projects with BLM on preservation of unburned areas and restoration of burned areas. Funding is possible in 2010.

Reed confirmed with Ann that the TC will have a recommendation in January (2009).

**g. Diagonal Street Cliffs rock climbing** (TC recommendation).

Kristen distributed Exhibit 5-g-1 and explained that the TC has examined current reserve boundary maps and determined that the boundary is at the top of the cliffs. She added that the TC has evaluated the biological impacts of proposed trail improvements and allowing rock climbing in the area. The TC has recommendations as follows:

- Remove any top anchors to reduce the potential for habitat impacts on top of the cliff. This would prevent 1) climbers from walking cross-country on reserve property and rappelling down the cliff face, and 2) climbers topping out and walking cross-country on reserve property.

Other considerations: (for St. George City)

- Annual seasonal raptor closure (similar to Zion National Park and Snow Canyon State Park) – February 1 through July 31 – to protect nesting peregrine falcons at this site.
- Archeological inventory and site protection plan.
- Identify centralized trail and work in coordination with local climbing community to stabilize trail.

Bob Sandberg noted that the reserve boundary in this area remains unclear. The cliffs may be in the reserve. Bob is trying to contact Lori Rose to acquire additional information.

Reed said even if the cliffs are in the reserve, we still don't want the habitat disturbed.

Marc suggested that the recommendations and considerations be provided to Kent Perkins at the City of St. George. Bob Sandberg will be responsible for making that contact.

Jeff said it seems that the liability for accidents or injuries rests with the City of St. George since it is their property. Marc clarified that the liabilities for cities has recently changed and the risks are borne by the climbers.

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to accept the recommendations and considerations presented by the Technical Committee and instruct Bob Sandberg to meet with St. George City officials.

Seconded by Larry Crist.

Discussion: None

Vote was taken: All voted.

Motion passed.

**h. Quarterly Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2008 (HCAC).**

There were no questions or discussion regarding the quarterly report.

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to accept the quarterly report.  
Seconded by Marc Mortensen.  
Discussion: None  
Vote was taken: All voted.  
Motion passed.

**i. Discuss funding the Nature Conservancy Endowment contribution  
(Bob Sandberg) (Exhibit 5-i-1)**

Bob Sandberg referred to Exhibit 5-i-1 and explained that the HCAC agreed to donate \$100,000.00 to the Nature Conservancy in late 2007. The intent was to donate \$50,000.00 in 2007 and another \$50,000.00 in 2008. But the first payment was made in March 2008 and it is now time to make the second payment. But there are insufficient funds in the T&E Plant Species – Southern Corridor account. Bob recommends paying the second payment from the Contingent Expense account.

**MOTION** by Chris Blake to accept the chronology and pay \$50,000.00 from the contingency account.  
Seconded by Larry Crist.  
Discussion: None  
Vote was taken: All voted.  
Motion passed.

**j. Administrator's Report (Bob Sandberg).  
1. FY 2009 budget**

Bob Sandberg informed the members that he has submitted the proposed 2009 budget. Jerry Rasmussen (Washington County Budget Officer) has indicated that if all of the proposed budget were spent, we will dip into the reserve fund for approximately \$500,000.00.

Larry said that he feels this is justified. He added that the projected revenue received and expenses budgeted would be helpful in future budget development. Jeff advocates caution in the future – 2010 and beyond. Marc and Reed both agreed.

**2. Washington City Well #3 – status**

Bob told the committee members of Washington City's intent to redrill Well #3 after December 1<sup>st</sup>. Major work on this well is necessary because of some equipment is stuck in the well. They will try to remove the equipment, and redrill the well if necessary.

### **3. SR 18 widening project**

Bob said that he has received notification that the work will commence in March. He added that HCP will be working closely with UDOT.

Commissioner Gardner said the project may be on hold due to budget shortfalls. Chris asked about the fence being on the right-of-way. Bob was uncertain but HCP will be working on fence integrity. Bob added that UDOT has no intent to go outside of the right-of-way except possibly for culvert work.

### **4. Outreach and Education**

Tom Webster talked about the progress on a new reserve map. The City of St. George Urban Trail System Map & Guide is being used as a model. Tom said he is working closely with Lynne Scott at BLM. Tom added that he wants to do the map right and that there are certain features on the map that must be fixed, such as the reserve boundary, trail heads and trails. But this will take time – possibly longer than the March target release date. Tom is considering an interim map, and he's working with ideas to reduce the cost of producing the map.

Reed asked about the March target date. Why March and not May? Marc explained that recreation use dramatically increases in early spring.

Tom also talked about outreach presentations. Presentations are currently down a little due to the animals being in hibernation. Tom added that there was an average of 22 presentations per year up to 2008. To date in 2008, there have been 62 presentations. Tom explained that target audiences are being addressed, especially the middle schools and the high schools. Tom cited the recent presentation at Pineview High School as an example.

Tom said the media plan is being developed according to the recent survey results. He explained that the focus is on *The Spectrum*, including *The Spectrum* on-line. The full media plan will cost approximately \$7,200.00.

Tom also told the members that he's working with BLM on a winter project to standardize signs and kiosks in the reserve.

Lastly, Tom talked about the volunteer program. There are 14 volunteers that have signed up. Of those, 12 are Trail Stewards.

Jeff asked about the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve website. Tom explained the homepage and the additional pages available to the public. Marc added that there is a link to the reserve's page on the St. George City site. Jeff also asked that we consider the Chamber Guide because it is a useful tool. Jeff and Marc also talked about information shared through blogging.



Reed commented that a published article is worth five times as much as an advertisement and it behooves us to maintain a good working relationship with the newspaper.

The committee complimented Tom on his excellent work.

## **5. Law Enforcement**

Bob talked about the recent quarterly law enforcement meeting (November 17). Bob explained that during the meeting there was discussion about using the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) to aid in law enforcement activities. CAP may be willing to assist in exchange for fuel money. Larry invited comment from Kristen. She said this was the first she had heard about this and her reaction is that the money may be better spent on putting law enforcement on the ground. Larry asked for more information about costs and benefits before fully supporting the idea. Marc also asked for more detail.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

There was no other business to discuss.

## **7. ADJOURN**

<p><b>MOTION</b> by Marc Mortensen to adjourn. <u>Seconded</u> by Larry Crist. <u>Discussion</u>: None <u>Vote was taken</u>: All voted aye. <u>Motion passed</u>.</p>
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The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.