

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 **AUGUST 25, 2009**.

Committee members present were:

Chris Blake, Vice Chairman	Environmental Organization
Jeff Morby	Local Development
Jimmy Tyree	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP Administrator
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
Reed Harris	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)

Absent and excused were:

Karl Wilson, Chairman	Mayors Association
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Also present were:

Brad Young	Washington County HCP
Marreen Casper	Senator Hatch's office
Mike Empey	Congressman Matheson's office
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commissioner
Dallin Gardner	ELT Properties
Ann McLuckie	Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 P.M. Vice Chairman Chris Blake noted that at least five committee members were present and a quorum existed. Vice Chairman Chris Blake excused members Wilson and Crist.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of the agenda**
- b. **Review and approve minutes**
 1. July 28, 2009 work meeting
 2. July 28, 2009 regular meeting
- c. **Next meeting date**
 1. September 22, 2009

MOTION by Jeff Morby to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Marc Mortensen. Discussion: None. Vote was taken: All voted aye. Motion passed.

3. PRESENTATIONS

a. Gila Trail extension – Kristen Comella

Kristen distributed a supplemental exhibit showing the area west of the JEL Ranches. The exhibit consists of three 11" X 17" color aerial photos. The first photo shows two separate field trips scouting for an appropriate trail route. The two trips are shown in red and in blue. The numbered way-points are GPS locations. Page two of the exhibit shows the first trip in red and the third page shows the second trip in blue – up and back. The exhibit is identified as Exhibit 3-a-2 HCAC Reg Mtng – 082509.

Kristen updated the members on the history of extending the Gila Trail. This has been an on-going effort since August 2006. Kristen noted that the nature of the terrain restricts use of the extended trail to hikers only. The terrain is just not suitable for mountain bikes or horses. Kristen used the exhibits and explained the proposed route and added that the new trail will replace the spider web of unofficial trails and paths. The new trail will be about 3 to 3½ miles. From way-point 45 north, the trail will be about 1 to 1½ miles, and the terrain changes from mostly slickrock to typical Blackbrush and lava rock desert environment.

The Chuckwalla Trailhead in the south and the Snow Canyon Overlook in the north will provide access points. Access from the JEL Ranches subdivision is uncertain because of the private property ownership. All of the proposed trail extension is within the boundaries of Snow Canyon State Park.

Alan Gardner explained that the sewer line maintenance road north of way-point 01 is planned to be a public road connecting The Trails and The Ledges subdivisions.

The committee members briefly discussed public access possibilities from the south and from JEL Ranches.

4. UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT REVIEWS

None.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Review and discuss the presentation regarding the Gila Trail extension

Without further discussion the committee moved to agenda item 5-a.

MOTION by Marc Mortensen to make an assignment to the Technical Committee to evaluate the Gila Trail extension proposal.

Seconded by Jimmy Tyree.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

b. Review and discuss the 2010 budget work meeting

Bob Sandberg summarized the work meeting held this morning. The committee members discussed the big ticket items and the big line items in the proposed budget. The budget is significantly reduced from ~\$1.6 million to ~\$1.1 million due to reduced revenues. The committee supports Bob's reductions in Recreation Management (231), Fencing (435) and Land Purchase (710). The committee recommended no change to Law Enforcement (316), and further recommended adding \$50,000.00 to Other Species (319).

No additional work meeting is necessary.

MOTION by Jimmy Tyree to continue the 2010 budget discussion to the next meeting to allow opportunity for Chairman Wilson and Member Crist to participate.

Seconded by Reed Harris.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

c. Discuss the White Dome fencing proposal

Chris Blake explained that the issue was discussed in the morning work meeting, and granting the request is possible in the current budget. The committee's consensus was established last meeting by motion. HCP Administrator Bob Sandberg was directed to adjust the 2009 budget as appropriate and grant The Nature Conservancy's request.

d. Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 – Initiatives to acquire ELT properties (HCAC)

Jimmy Tyree said that the budget is being finalized to take the first group of parcels through the auction phase in 12 to 18 months. The funds required to assess the properties is not known.

e. Habitat Management Plan (HMP) development and scope of work projects – status and update – Ann McLuckie.

Ann McLuckie said that the Technical Committee (TC) has been working with Vicki Tyler on a proposed action to provide to potential contractors for development of an Environmental Assessment (EA). The proposed action will include creating fuel breaks. Fuel breaks will include chemical fuel breaks, removal of non-native plants, planting fire-resistant plant species, and establishing research plots with monitoring. Ann added that the Utility Development Protocols (UDP) will be followed on all ground disturbing activities within the Reserve to protect tortoises and habitat.

Bob Sandberg noted that the old turkey farm is not included because it is not BLM property. There are no state lands, private lands or Snow Canyon State Parks properties included. The TC is trying to create an overall plan for the Reserve and should include all ownerships, but the EA can only include those lands owned by BLM.

Chris Blake asked Ann if there were any other projects to report on. Ann talked briefly about the field trips to Snow Canyon State Park to evaluate canyoneering routes and to Pioneer Park to evaluate trails and the botanical garden development.

f. Review and accept the Quarterly Report – 2nd Quarter 2009

There were no questions or comments.

MOTION by Marc Mortensen to approve and accept the 2nd Quarter 2009 Quarterly Report.
Seconded by Jeff Morby.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken:
All voted aye. Motion passed.

g. Administrator's Report

1. Provide update and status of the HCP – *take* tortoises, *MitiBank* and *other species* expenditures

Administrator Bob Sandberg referred to Exhibit 5-g-1-a and explained the questions posed by the HCAC on July 28th and the corresponding answers. Ann McLuckie referred to the MitiBank Expense Credits report and the total number of take acres cleared and released and asked if the total included areas approved for development that are disjuncted from the Reserve. Bob explained that the report does not include those areas. Bob will meet with Ann later to clarify her questions and provide necessary specifics. Ann suggested updating the *take area* maps.

2. Botanical Garden and education/interpretive center – status.

Ann McLuckie talked about the field trip to the Pioneer Park area on August 20 and described the TC's recommendations listed in Exhibit 5-g-2-a. Ann talked about each recommendation listed in the exhibit.

Chris Blake suggested involving the Washington County School District to assure there is adequate parking, facilities and space to accommodate up to 100 students.

3. HCP biologist position – status

Bob informed the members that interviews of candidate are scheduled to begin August 26, 2009. The interviews will be conducted by Mayor Karl Wilson, Commissioner Alan Gardner and himself.

4. SR 18 widening project.

Bob informed the members that the project will likely last into late fall. The widening will not extend south all the way to the Snow Canyon Parkway intersection.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

7. **ADJOURN**

<p><u>MOTION</u> by Reed Harris to adjourn. <u>Seconded</u> by Jeff Morby.</p>
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The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.