

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, 111 N. 100 E., Washington City on **SEPTEMBER 28, 2010.**

Committee members present were:

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

Absent and excused:

Jimmy Tyree	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large

Also present were:

Brad Young	HCP
Cameron Rognan	HCP
Marreen Casper	Senator Hatch's office
Kai Reed	Citizens for Dixie's Future
Ann McLuckie	UDWR

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Karl Wilson noted that at least five committee members were present and a quorum existed. He called the meeting to order at 1:03 P.M. Chairman Wilson noted that Jimmy Tyree is excused and that Dawna Ferris-Rowley is sitting in for him. Marc Mortensen is also excused.

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. Work meeting – August 24, 2010
 2. Regular meeting – August 24, 2010

Approved HCAC regular meeting minutes – September 28, 2010

c. Next meeting date

1. October 19, 2010

Marc Mortensen had called Bob Sandberg earlier and asked that he be excused from today's meeting because he was hosting a Utah Public Safety convention in St. George. Marc also explained that there may be a conflict with the next HCAC meeting scheduled for October 19 because the Corps of Engineers is hosting a mitigation bank meeting on that day. Bob explained that October 19 instead of October 26 (fourth Tuesday of the month) was selected because it provided the HCAC with one more opportunity to review and discuss the 2011 budget before being submitted to the county auditor.

The members discussed setting the meeting for October 26, but because most members were available that day and because Brad Young would not be, chose to set the meeting for October 19.

MOTION by Chris Blake to approve the Consent Agenda as is.
Seconded by Reed Harris.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

3. PRESENTATIONS

- a. **HCP review** (R. Chi)

Larry Crist explained that Renee Chi was not available today because her infant daughter had suffered a leg injury. Chairman Wilson excused Ms. Chi.

MOTION by Larry Crist to continue this agenda item to the next meeting.
Seconded by Reed Harris.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

4. UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT REVIEWS

None.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. **Land acquisition efforts**

Chairman Wilson called on Dawna Ferris-Rowley to report. She said that there had been no progress on acquisition efforts since Jimmy Tyree reported last. Bob Sandberg referred to Exhibits 5-f-1-a and 5-f-1-b and explained that the letters had been sent to

Interior Secretary Salazar. Marreen Casper added that J.J. is also working on a letter. She explained that Congress is in session but their schedule is uncertain and that an adjournment date has not been set.

There were no other questions or comments and the chairman moved the agenda.

b. BLM planning update

Dawna Ferris-Rowley reported that BLM is within about a week of releasing two scoping reports that summarize the issues and comments that were received from the public during the comment period from May 10 through July 19, 2010. The reports will be provided to the cooperating agencies which include Washington County, Utah, Mojave County, Arizona, and the State of Utah. The agencies will receive the report on about October 5. Meetings with the agencies will follow. The reports will then be posted on BLM's website; hard copies and electronic copies on CD will be available to interested parties.

Dawna explained the reason there are two reports; she said that there are two distinct planning tracks. The first track is the development of two new Resource Management Plans (RMP); one is for the Red Cliffs NCA and the other is for the Beaver Dam Wash NCA. The second track is a focused amendment to the St. George Field Office RMP (1999). The focused plan amendment will address new Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) nominations, area designations for off highway vehicle (OHV) use, and a northern transportation route. All of these were mandated in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009.

Dawna added that the route designation for the comprehensive travel management plan will not be released for public review until the record of decision has been signed. That may be in about two years.

Dawna also spoke about the upcoming NLCS summit in Las Vegas in mid-November. It is planned to be a four-day 'vision questing' conference for the NLCS program. Bob Sandberg, among others, will be attending.

There were no other questions or comments and the chairman moved the agenda.

c. Review and discuss the 2011 HCP budget (HCAC)

Chairman Wilson explained that the committee met in a work meeting this morning and that there was one suggested change to the proposed budget shown in Exhibit 2-a-3 HCAC – 092810. The suggestion is to add \$100,000 to the land acquisition facilitation line item (#711) to fund some of the potential land acquisition costs.

Jeff Morby said that the committee had an excellent discussion regarding the proposed budget this morning. He added that HCP income in 2011 will likely be about the same as 2010.

MOTION by Jeff Morby to approve the proposed budget with the addition of \$100,000 to the land acquisition facilitation line item and recommend to the county commission that the proposed budget be adopted.

Seconded by Chris Blake.

Discussion: Reed Harris noted for the record that the additional funds in the land acquisition facilitation line item are intended to help facilitate land exchanges to resolve the former ELT Properties issue. Chairman Wilson added that the additional funds will be shown in the contingency column.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

d. Technical Committee (TC) report

Technical Committee Vice Chairman Cameron Rognan provided the TC report. He related the following:

- The TC made a field trip to the Red Hills Parkway area to evaluate how the roadway expansion will impact some of the Reserve trails. The TC has continued the discussion on some of the items until Lynne Scott can provide some input.
- The TC has reviewed the connection between the Rusty Cliffs trail and the City Creek trail and has chosen the most appropriate connection. Users will have to loop around the bike trail to connect. This is the only safe and practical route to make the connection due to the steep terrain.
- Cameron discussed two access points to the bike trail that may be constructed on the south and west sides of the parkway. One access point is near the Brooks Nature Park, and the other will connect to the City Creek trail. Discussion on these access points will be continued when input from Lynne Scott is available.
- The TC has reviewed options for connecting the Pioneer Hills trailhead to the Owens Loop and City Creek trails. Most TC members favor not adding a new trail to make the connection but rather using an existing disturbed route. Again, Lynne Scott's input is necessary.
- Limits of acceptable change is another issue that the TC is discussing. The issue is so important that the December 9th TC meeting will be dedicated solely to it. Hopefully, the latest human impact monitoring data will be available at that time from Dr. Pam Foti of Northern Arizona University.

Jeff Morby asked about the timing of the Red Hills Parkway expansion. The construction project will begin after the Ironman Competition the first week of May 2011 and be completed in time of the 2012 competition.

Jeff also asked about the old apartment building in the area south and east of the intersection of Bluff St. and Red Hills Parkway. Bob Sandberg said that St. George City owns the property and structure and that any area not used for on-ramp construction will be fenced inside the Reserve. The apartment building will be demolished and the area restored.

There were no other comments or questions.

e. Recovery Implementation Teams

Bob Sandberg reminded the members that Cat Darst from the USF&WS had asked for the contact information for the HCAC members as possible participants on a Recovery Implementation Team (RIT). Bob said that Renee Chi had contacted Cat about using TC members as well. Renee learned that Cat was unaware of the TC and the member's biological education background, and that there will be a Management Oversight Group (MOG) meeting this winter. The RITs will be formed after the MOG meeting.

Larry Crist noted that the RIT needs representation from the TC as well as the HCAC. Reed Harris asked how the RIT operate. Larry explained that the teams are a result of the Recovery Plan and monitor recovery progress in their respective recovery unit. Larry added that not all of the recovery units have the organization that this unit has. Reed asked about Recovery Teams and the MOG. Larry explained that the Recovery Implementation Teams would be subunits of the Recovery Team and that there will likely be overlap between the Recovery Team, the MOG, and the Recovery Implementation Team. Larry added that the HCP covers nearly all of this recovery unit.

The committee members discussed participation on the RIT, the advice the RIT may provide to the Recovery Team, the role and responsibilities of the Recovery Team, the possible role of the RIT, and how often the RIT may meet. Members also discussed possible overlap and redundancy of the Recovery Implementation Team, the Technical Committee, and the Recovery Team. Reed Harris asked about the recovery unit and delisting a distinct population segment (DPS). Larry said that may be possible but only if the DPS had been listed by itself. The Mojave Desert tortoises in Washington County are not a distinct population segment. He was uncertain if a delisting could be done by recovery unit alone. Larry stressed the value of using local expertise and talent to manage individual recovery units.

MOTION by Chris Blake to continue this agenda item to the next meeting.

Seconded by Larry Crist.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

f. Administrator's Report – Bob Sandberg

1. LWCF funding request support – Senator Hatch's letter

Bob noted that this agenda item had been previously discussed under item 5-a. See pages two and three above.

2. Tortoises translocated to Zone 4

Bob informed the members that HCP and UDWR staff had translocated six tortoises to Zone 4, and one tortoise was returned to Zone 3 and another returned to Zone 5. All of those had blood tested negative for URTD. There are six additional tortoises that are scheduled for blood testing tomorrow (September 29, 2010). Of those six any that test negative will also be translocated to Zone 4. Bob added that not counting the last six, there have been 403 tortoises translocated to Zone 4 during the life of the permit.

Chris Blake asked about the survivability of the translocated tortoises. Ann McLuckie said that UDWR feels like there is good long-term survivability. She added that there are deep burrows and only a few shell remains have been found – although that may change due to the upper respiratory tract disease (URTD). Chris asked about tortoise reproduction. Ann said that hatchlings and juveniles have been observed. She further added that translocations now are to areas further away from Babylon Road because that is where tortoises with URTD seem to be concentrated.

3. GRAMA request

Bob said that the individual allegedly responsible for blading the access roads for mining purposes in Zone 4 has submitted a request for public documents. The request is for documents that show any compensation paid to cattlemen, ranchers, land owners, and mining claim owners as a result of the creation of the Reserve. The Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA) request will be processed accordingly. Bob added that the August court date for the violation was continued to November.

4. Confluence Park grants

Bob explained that Washington County has been awarded two grants for improvements at Confluence Park. The first has been awarded by the State of Utah Department of Natural Resources through the federal Recreation Trails Program for nearly \$52,000. This grant is for construction of a parking lot and trailhead on LaVerkin Creek. The second grant is an offshoot of the irrigation line grant application. The Utah Quality Growth Commission has awarded the county \$30,000 from the LeRay McAllister Fund for restoring riparian zone in Confluence Park. This will involve removal of tamarisk and Russian olive trees and replanting with cottonwood trees. The irrigation line project has been set aside until the Ash Creek Special Services District decides to resume their project of installing a new sewer line.

Chairman Wilson commented, as the mayor of LaVerkin, that he appreciated all the hard work by Kathleen Nielson and Bob Sandberg and the HCP staff in securing the two grants. Each project will be beneficial to the park and provide an enrichment opportunity to the area residents.

There were no other questions or comments and the Chairman moved the agenda.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

This item is reserved for items not listed on this agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this agenda item. (Three minutes per person.)

Chairman Wilson invited the public to comment or request future agenda items.

Kai Reed came forward and asked Dawna Ferris-Rowley for clarification on the timeline that she spoke about. Ms. Reed asked when the scoping reports would be available on-line. Dawna replied that it would be as soon as possible after October 5th. Ms. Reed asked what documents pertaining to the new ACEC nominations, OHV plan, and northern transportation route would not be released. Dawna explained that the plan amendment for the St. George Field Office RMP includes ACEC nominations for Priority Biological Conservation Areas, the large polygons closed for motorized travel, and the northern transportation corridor. The scoping report will be released after October 5th but the route designations will be made in the second lower-tiered planning effort after the records of decision are released. BLM will then release a draft travel management plan that includes motorized and non-motorized public use modes. This process will take about two years. Dawna added that BLM will continue to take public comments through-out the process. Ms. Reed thanked Dawna for the clarification and added that she understands the process better.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

a. None.

8. ADJOURN

MOTION by Chris Blake to adjourn.
Seconded by Jeff Morby.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.