

HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
Work meeting – JULY 28, 2009

A work meeting of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held in the Conference Room at the Washington County Administration Building, 197 E. Tabernacle St., on July 28, 2009.

Committee members present were:

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

Absent and excused:

Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
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Also present were:

Brad Young	Washington County HCP
Justin Neighbor	Washington County HCP
Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dawna Ferris-Rowley	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Elaine York	The Nature Conservancy

SYNOPSIS: The purpose of this work meeting was to identify questions and issues relating to the development of the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area management plan. No motions or decisions were made.

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 9:16 A.M. Jeff Morby joined the meeting at approximately 10:52 A.M.

2. DISCUSSION ITEM

- a. Identify questions and issues relating to the development of the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area management plan.

Jimmy Tyree began the informal discussion by explaining that he had talked with Commissioner Alan Gardner in May about budget and NCA management. He added that the purpose of this meeting is to create a laundry list of questions and issues relating to the development of a management plan for managing the Red Cliffs NCA.

Dawna Ferris-Rowley explained that there are actually two management plans being developed, one for the Red Cliffs NCA and one for the Beaver Dam Slope NCA. Additionally, BLM is developing a comprehensive travel and transportation plan and amending the Resource Management Plan (RMP). Also, management plans will be developed for the wilderness areas and the wild and scenic rivers. Dawna added that an environmental service contractor will be selected soon to facilitate the development of the plans. According to the land bill (Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009) the plans must be ready in three years (from March 2009).

Jimmy talked further about the additional staff that BLM intends to hire, and noted that office space in the current building is an issue considering the additional anticipated staff.

Reed Harris asked about the management of properties purchased for state ownership. Jimmy replied that nothing has changed and management will remain the same.

The members discussed the size of the Red Cliffs NCA, approximately 45,000 acres, and how that relates to the size of the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, approximately 62,000 acres. Jimmy explained that the county's permit is based on the Reserve's current landbase, and that the NCA will be managed by BLM but there will not be a *taking* of SITLA, UDNR, municipal or private lands.

Larry Crist asked about cooperative management and cross-commissioning law enforcement officers. Jimmy explained that the officers are currently cross deputized and that cooperative management is clearly intended. Jimmy added that there is a management process in place with the Technical Committee, the HCAC and HCP administration and that there are no significant changes planned.

The members discussed the future of the county's incidental take permit and whether it will be renewed, revised or changed to a cooperative management agreement.

Reed talked about critical habitat designation and protection and collaborative management between federal, state, municipal and private land managers. Long-term planning and Vision Dixie were also discussed. Long-term budgeting was also talked about. Eventually the HCP's funding source will diminish or die out and alternative funding will be required. Jimmy explained that additional federal monies will be available to BLM for county-wide staff, not just Red Cliffs NCA staff. National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) funding is separate from general BLM funding. Jimmy talked about not eliminating options and even perhaps a cooperative agreement with the county to manage both NCAs.

Jimmy asked about the number of acres in the take areas cleared for development. Bob Sandberg explained that the exact number is uncertain because HCP staff is updating the Mitibank records.

Members discussed the purchase and management of in-holdings. Jimmy explained that BLM is creating a list of the first public properties to be sold or exchanged.

Reed introduced Elaine York and explained The Nature Conservancy's role in the White Dome habitat protection. Elaine will be presenting a proposal to the HCAC at their regular meeting this afternoon.

Members briefly discussed Ken Anderson's offer to sell some of his property near Confluence Park. The asking price is cost-prohibitive at this time. Karl Wilson noted that Confluence Park is managed through a cooperative agreement between the county and the cities of LaVerkin, Hurricane and Toquerville. Members briefly discussed the scope and objectives of a possible cooperative agreement for the management of the NCA(s).

The members also briefly discussed a northern transportation corridor and complying with the provisions of the land bill, which requires the development of possible alternatives. BLM is not in the highway construction business and will be consulting the Federal Highway Administration (U.S. Department of Transportation). Larry Crist made it clear that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is eager to participate in any discussions regarding a northern route within the Reserve.

Bob Sandberg distributed a one-page handout (Exhibit 2-a-1 HCAC Wrk mtng – 072809) that is a list of questions or issues for discussion purposes. Jimmy led the discussion on almost all of the questions – some had already been discussed.

Boundary adjustments and inconsistencies between the RCDR boundary and the NCA boundary were discussed. Changing any part of the NCA perimeter boundary will require federal legislation. The name was also talked about. Is it Red Cliffs National Conservation Area or Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, or both? The NCA is within the Reserve, as is Snow Canyon State Park. It is important that the management of each and both remain consistent. Signage for the NCA and the Reserve was talked about next. It is important that signage be carefully managed so that the public not become confused.

The members then consulted a large map provided by Dawna Ferris-Rowley. The map showed major landowners and designated uses in Washington County. The members noted that the NCA boundary and the Reserve boundary are not that much different. The NCA boundary includes BLM lands, SITLA lands, private lands and municipal lands – with the intent to eventually acquire the non-BLM properties. The NCA is approximately 45,000 acres because that is what BLM owns, but the boundary is nearly consistent with the RCDR boundary.

Long-term budgeting was briefly discussed. Members then continued to discuss the questions listed on Exhibit 2-a-1. The question or issue was talked about and clarified. Overall, the majority of the current HCP processes will remain – there are no significant changes on the horizon. Expanding the role of the Technical Committee to include recreation interests, archeological interests, etc. for both NCAs was talked about. Members stressed cooperative management and working relationships between all of the landowners and managing entities.

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Purchase of the ELT properties was briefly mentioned. Lastly, the members talked about the \$50,000.00 in the current HCP budget for assisting BLM in funding the Realty Specialist position – the monies may not be necessary.

There were no other presentations or items to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 A.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.