

**WASHINGTON COUNTY  
HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
January 17, 2008**

A Meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held January 17, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. in the conference room at the Washington County Office, 197 E. Tabernacle St.

**The views expressed at this, or any other, Technical Committee Meeting do not necessarily represent the positions or views of any particular federal, state or local governmental agency, division or department. They are solely the opinions of the individual Members of this Technical Committee.**

Technical Committee Members present were:

Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park
Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Bob Douglas	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bill Mader	Washington County HCP
Ann McLuckie	Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Marshall Topham	Local Biologist

Technical Committee Members absent were:

Todd Esque	USGS Biological Resources Division
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Others present were:

Brad Young, Recorder	Washington County HCP
Tom Webster	Washington County HCP
Mike Bradshaw	Alliance Consulting
Lester Dalton	Washington City

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

It was noted there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 9:12 a.m.

**(2) BUSINESS**

- **ASSIGNMENT #102307 WASHINGTON CITY/CORAL CANYON WATER TANK**

Mike Bradshaw of Alliance Consulting distributed copies of Addendum #2 which consists of:

- a. One-page description of the Grapevine Tank Site Proposal,
- b. Tank Site Requirements Summary (two pages),
- c. Black and white schematic of the proposed tank and full bury tank options (two pages),
- d. Public Law 107-188 – June 12, 2002 – TITLE IV – DRINKING WATER SAFETY AND SECURITY (six pages),
- e. Security Vulnerability Self-Assessment Guide for Small Drinking Water Systems Serving Populations Between 3,00 and 10,000 – by Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) and National Rural Water Association (NRWA) (30 pages),
- f. EPA – Water Security – Security Product Guide – Fences (seven pages),
- g. Section R309-545 1 through 22 (nine pages),
- h. 11" X 17" colored site plan showing the Location for Proposed Water Tank, and
- i. 11" X 17" colored site plan showing the Location for Proposed Water Tank with Ditch.

Mr. Bradshaw explained that their plan is to minimize impact to the site. He added that they had originally asked for an acre, but after construction is completed the site can be reduced. They need 1½ acres during construction. The stockpiled topsoil will be retained within the 1½ acre construction site.

There was discussion about the specific location of the tank site. Placing the tank down in the draw would reduce the elevation by about 40', but will also reduce the available water pressure. Bill Mader asked about placing the tank near the Grapevine well site (Well #1); but this would create too much water pressure. Bill suggested that placing the tank near the Grapevine well, and with the associated costs, may still be beneficial because of the costs of mitigation. Lester Dalton explained that the proposed site is still the optimum location, but other possible sites have not been fully investigated.

Discussion continued about fencing – galvanized or powder-coated. Mr. Dalton said that the fence around the Washington City tank above Washington Dam is powder-coated and may be seen as an example.

Additional discussion continued regarding the after-construction site size. Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Lester said the site can be reduced to approximately .85 acres after construction. Maximum protection for tortoises was emphasized.

Visual impact was discussed by Chairperson Comella and Mike Bradshaw. The need to minimize impact to soils and vegetation was stressed.

The overflow from the tank was also discussed. There is a potential for up to 250 gpm overflow. Mr. Lester said that this was a worst-case scenario and that overflow was avoided at all costs. Chairperson Comella asked about flushing the tank. Mr. Lester explained that every three years the tank must be flushed and that six to ten thousand gallons of water is drained. There was concern about overflow water and flushed water impacting surrounding soil and vegetation. To minimize this, Mr. Bradshaw explained that Option #1 was to bury an eight-inch, drain pipe two feet deep down to the bottom of the draw. Option #2 is to rip-rap or gravel-bed the drainage ditch. Mr. Mader articulated that this may be another reason to relocate the water tank nearer the Grapevine well and then have the overflow and drain into the nearby lava rock.

Ann McLuckie arrived.

The discussion regarding the overflow and drain pipe continued. Chairperson Comella emphasized the importance of minimizing the impact of the pipe burial. Mr. Bradshaw said that they planned to bury the pipe in or along the access road to minimize impact.

A partially buried tank was also discussed. Eight to ten feet of the tank could be buried. Washington City preferred to have a fully buried tank with 12" – 18" exposed.

Mr. Lester restated that the stockpiled topsoil would be reused or replaced on site; fencing, for security, must be all the way to the ground, and noxious weed control inside the fenced area will be by mechanical means.

Ann McLuckie questioned how long will there be weed control. Mr. Lester said, forever.

Again, the post-construction site size was discussed. The Committee felt that .75 - .85 acres was reasonable.

When asked by Kristen Comella, Mr. Lester said that weed control will continue for two years on all of the disturbed areas.

A compensation ratio of 1:2 was discussed. The Technical Committee will have to conduct the compensation exercise based on, 1) the permanence of the tank and 2) for the temporary disturbance. Mr. Mader discussed possible mitigation options of adding land to the Reserve. Kristen Comella reminded the Committee that in previous discussions, three possibilities were explored and preliminarily prioritized as: (1) Millcreek, (2) Grapevine, and (3) the site of a future educational facility. Bob Douglas and Ann McLuckie talked about how to mitigate based on prior discussions and how much is temporary disturbance and how much is permanent. Ann suggested setting the ratio based on exactly how much impact there is at the final site. The ratio of mitigation for the permanent site would likely be 1:5 or 1:5.5, and for the temporary site a ratio of 1:3.5 or 1:4 was discussed. Bob said that sometimes cities have been allowed to go into the Reserve and restore other areas to mitigate the temporary disturbance. Between

four and five acres will likely be required for mitigation, however the Technical Committee will have to go through the MOG document. Mr. Bradshaw said that this is definitely something to consider and that the site is SITLA ground and they'll have to have negotiations with them. Mr. Dalton reiterated that this project is funded by the Washington City and by private funds and that no federal funds are involved.

Bob Douglas explained that the next step for the applicant is for them to specifically define and identify, by GPS coordinates if necessary (including elevation), their optimum site and any alternate site(s). A site visit may be necessary.

- **ASSIGNMENT – BROOKS POND TRAIL**

Chairperson Comella explained that the City of St. George has constructed a new city park that is immediately adjacent to the Reserve. (The park is located at Main Street and approximately 500 North. The City has named it Brooks Nature Park.) The task for the Technical Committee is to determine the best place for a trail connecting the city park and the Reserve, including the possibility of a lookout trail above the nearby water tank.

Bill Mader suggested a site visit because it is close by. Bob Douglas also suggested that Lynn Scott be invited to attend because she can offer valuable insight.

Tom Webster explained that the site has been officially named the Brooks Nature Park. It has been commonly known as Brooks Pond or Cox Pond. Tom further explained that the City has created a water feature, which the pond is the source of, that begins near the Opera House (at Main St. & 200 N.) and flows down Main St. and ends at the new Town Square. The City wishes to create an educational nature walk from the Opera House to the park with informative brass plaques along the way. Tom added that the park is a perfect place to install a kiosk (near the amphitheatre) providing information about the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. Tom further added that there is an unofficial trail connecting to the Owen's Loop Trail. Tom stressed that the City wishes to partner with us for mutual benefit. Tom emphasized the opportunity for us to work with the City and create a positive educational experience.

Marshall Topham arrived.

Chairperson Comella asked about expectations and a due date. Bill Mader explained that there is no specific due date, it is just something to be working on. This issue can go on to the next agenda.

- **ASSIGNMENT #010407 BUCKSKIN WASH TRAIL**

This issue has been discussed at the last meeting and at other previous meetings. Kristen Comella explained that, as she recalls, there were three tasks assigned by the HCAC. They are:

1. Looking at the boundary – where we would adjust the boundary to,
2. Evaluating and assessing the possibility of trail location(s), and
3. Fencing – relocating the fence and possible cost sharing.

There was discussion about the western boundary of the Reserve and the eastern boundary of *The Trails* subdivision. Ann McLuckie asked about where to locate the fence. Bill Mader suggested, just to clarify, that the original assignment should be re-read and then make a recommendation(s) that works for the Reserve as well as the developer.

Kristen Comella summarized the task. She referred to the HCAC meeting of October 23, 2007, in which the motion was to refer the south Winchester Hills boundary clarification issue back to the Technical Committee to look at an overall resolution in adjusting the HCP boundary to conform to the no-disturbance line as well as the proposed open space area on the east side of *The Trails* and also to evaluate the possibility of a trail as a recreational opportunity and evaluate the possibility of a cost-share of the fencing removal and use of tortoise mesh in specified areas instead of the current fence.

A small diagram of *The Trails* subdivision was discussed – specifically the eastern portion and the no-disturb zones. Renee Chi explained on the map where a new boundary is proposed, and added that a site visit may be helpful in making a recommendation.

There were comments about how this issue has been discussed and re-discussed. Kristen Comella said that it comes down to whether or not to allow a trail, and is it biologically defensible in this area? And, Kristen said that originally the boundary bisected the Wash and that we won't fence out the Wash in exchange for the trail. Renee Chi agreed. Kristen explained how Renee brought to the attention of the Technical Committee the discrepancy regarding what the HCP says and where the boundary is. Ann McLuckie, Kristen Comella and Marshall Topham discussed that, due to confusion about the new identified boundary, the Technical Committee must begin anew because of the boundary discrepancy issue.

Bob Douglas pointed out that a trail will centralize use and minimize impact by people. Ann McLuckie suggested listing the pros and cons on the white board.

<b>BIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF A BUCKSKIN WASH TRAIL</b>	
<b>PROS</b>	<b>CONS</b>
Centralize use of trails	Trails must be created outside the Wash
Ability to define location and use of trail (control)	Trail may give people an opportunity to 'explore' the heart of the Reserve which is undesirable because of the sensitivity of the desert tortoise habitat
Concentrated use	Loss of habitat
	Difficult terrain

Chairperson Comella questioned if there should be a trail in this area according to the Public Use Plan (PUP). Members of the Technical Committee discussed the overall question of the necessity of a trail, its biological impact, or impact by non-centralized use. The discussion also included access to the west side of SR 18 from *The Ledges*, and into Snow Canyon State Park from *The Ledges*. The discussion continued regarding access from *The Ledges* and *Paradise Canyon* and how best to cope with growth. Kristen said that opening trails and then later imposing restrictions hardly ever works. Marshall Topham argued that loosening restrictions is also never done. He explained that he hasn't ever seen it (work). Committee members discussed the merits of imposing restrictions and relaxing them, or imposing restrictions in response to problems after the problems have manifest themselves. Ann McLuckie stressed how adaptive management requires responsiveness to changing needs and impacts, and being responsive to both sides.

Bob Douglas asked if the trail was necessary to eliminate the boundary fence going across the Wash? Ann McLuckie stated that the HCP document identified Buckskin Wash as in the Reserve. Bob asked about possible trailhead locations within *The Trails*.

Committee members, led by Ann, discussed the pros and cons that are listed in the table shown at the bottom of the previous page.

Marshall Topham emphasized the necessity of having a trail out of the northern portion of *The Trails* subdivision. Committee members had a general discussion about trail access, legal access points and parking. Bob Douglas and Kristen Comella talked about these issues, and Marshall discussed it with Renee and Ann.

Ann McLuckie said that there are two fundamental differences. She explained that we (the Technical Committee) should, (1) not necessarily provide a trail to accommodate the developers and local residents, and (2) the tortoises must be intensely managed to ensure a population for perpetuity.

Marshall Topham asked about general enforcement of restrictions and penalties. Ann McLuckie replied that right now, not much penalizing occurs. Emphasis is on education

and warnings. Marshall argued that enforcement will lead to reduced public support. He emphasized education.

Chairperson Comella brought the discussion back into focus by asking, where are we at? Where should a trail be allowed? Marshall Topham said that he does not favor a north/south trail along the east side of *The Trails*. The Committee clearly agreed that they did not favor a trail in Buckskin Wash, but were willing to hear alternatives.

The basic issues of people management for the benefit of wildlife resources were discussed.

Chairperson Comella proposed, (1) Presenting to the HCAC that we're restarting the assignment and are willing to sit down with the developer (Stacy Young) to discuss alternatives, and (2) Discussing a boundary adjustment. She asked if there will be an acreage disparity between what the actual boundary is and what the boundary might be if we bring it to the no-disturb zone? Renee Chi and Ann McLuckie agreed that in doing so, there may be a benefit to desert tortoises. Kristen added that moving the boundary to the no-disturb zone line is something the Technical Committee could recommend based on biological reasons, but the fence cost-sharing issue is non-biological and is beyond the Technical Committee's authority.

Bob Douglas emphasized the part that a relocated fence and a possible future trail must be considered. He suggested a trail along the northern portion of *The Trails* beginning at the lookout along the west side of the Reserve fence. A general discussion about the best location for the trail followed. The Committee, again, clearly agreed that they did not want a trail in Buckskin Wash.

### **(3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the meeting of December 13, 2007, were reviewed and the following changes or corrections were made:

**(page 3, paragraph 4, sentence 7):** changed,

From: "Ann McLuckie reminded that the premise behind developing a trail was to acquire property on the southeast of the development and to prevent fencing of Buckskin Wash."

To: "Ann McLuckie reminded that the premise behind developing a trail (to acquire property on the southeast of the development and to prevent fencing of Buckskin Wash), has changed."

**(page 3, paragraph 6, sentence 3):** changed,

From: "Marshall Tortoise . . ."

To: "Marshall Topham . . ."

There were no further changes or corrections. A Motion was made by Renee Chi, second by Bob Douglas to:

**Approve the Minutes of the meetings of December 13, 2007, as corrected.**

There was no discussion, vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed.

**(4) OTHER BUSINESS**

• **IVINS DRAINAGE ISSUE**

Chairperson Comella discussed an on-site meeting with, Chuck Gillette (Ivins City), the Eagle Rock HOA, and Dennis Green (homeowner) regarding a possible solution. There was a meeting, but did not result in an agreement, and another meeting will be necessary.

**(5) DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)**

The next Technical Committee meetings will be:

Thursday, February 14, 2008 @ 9:30 AM,  
Thursday, March 6, 2008 @ 9:30 AM,  
Thursday, April 10, 2008 @ 9:30 AM, and  
Thursday, May 8, 2008 @ 9:30 AM

There was no other business to discuss and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young