

# WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **MARCH 12, 2009**, in the conference room at the Washington County Administration Building, 197 E. Tabernacle, Saint George, Utah

**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.**

Members present were:

Ann McLuckie, Chairperson	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Bob Douglas , Vice Chairperson	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP
Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Marshall Topham	Local Biologist

Absent and excused was:

Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
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Also present were:

Brent Gardner	Alpha Engineering
Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Brad Young	Washington County HCP

## 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Ann McLuckie noted there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M.

## 2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. February 12, 2009

The following change was made:

**(page 5, paragraph 1 - Motion by Ann McLuckie), sentence 1):** changed,  
**From:** “**MOTION** by Ann McLuckie to recommend exchanging Parcel A with Parcel B, providing that Parcel B be reshaped with a linear design and with less exterior to interior ratio.”

**To:** “**MOTION** by Ann McLuckie to recommend exchanging Parcel A with Parcel B, providing that Parcel B be reshaped with a linear design and with less exterior to interior ratio.”

**MOTION** by Bob Sandberg to approve the minutes of February 12, 2009, as corrected.

Seconded by Kristen Comella.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

b. February 18, 2009

The following changes were made:       None.

**MOTION** by Kristen Comella to approve the minutes of February 18, 2009.

Seconded by Bob Douglas.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

### 3.     **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### a.     **Assignment 020909 – New Kayenta water storage tank.**

Member Sandberg introduced Brent Gardner from Alpha Engineering. Mr. Gardner distributed Exhibit 3-a-1 TC – 031209 which shows a new proposed water tank site – outlined in blue. The proposed three-million-gallon tank will be fully buried with two feet of topsoil on top to accommodate revegetation. The tank will be 120' by 220' and 20 feet higher than the nearby metal tanks. Mr. Gardner explained why the rectangular shape will reduce the hillside cut and scarring. All excavated soils will be used on-site for topsoil and a 2:1 slope and fill in front of the tank. This site is preferred over another site on BLM property because that site is within an ACEC. It is anticipated that there will be just over ½ acre of permanent disturbance for the water storage tank. The members discussed the amount of topsoil to be placed on top of the tank for revegetation purposes. There was discussion about 24', but the committee members will accept 18" or 16".

The members reviewed a larger drawing of the proposed tank and site. They discussed scarring, erosion, soil stabilization, and visual impacts. The committee will suggest a seed mix for revegetation.

The members then discussed an access and maintenance road to the tank site. There will be approximately 50 feet in width for temporary disturbance and 25 feet in width of permanent disturbance. There will be 2 – 30" water lines – one in and one out. The water lines may be routed up 200 West, up and around the detention dikes above the high-water line to the new tank. The members discussed alternate routes that may have less impact to the Reserve habitat.

The special development status of Zone 1 was mentioned by Mr. Gardner. The committee members discussed this issue. They agreed that mitigation and off-setting impacts requires clarification by the USF&WS. Member Sandberg related to the group that the HCP (Section 3.3.2.1) says that Zone 1 can be developed at a ratio of one unit per acre without mitigation, and that it is not known if any mitigation has ever been done for development in Zone 1. Member Sandberg read the management responsibilities from page 27 of the HCP. The members agreed again that clarification from the USF&WS is necessary.

The members further discussed alternate pipeline routes. Member Douglas asked about the cost differences. The proposed boundary adjustment, Parcels A and B, discussed on February 12, 2009, was again discussed by the members because one of the alternate pipeline routes may go through Parcel B. The preference of the members is a water line route outside of the Reserve as much as possible to minimize habitat disturbance. JBR Environmental will be doing the Environmental Assessment (EA) once they are told where the tank will be situated and the water line routes. The project is being funded by SRS federal funds which triggers the EA requirement.

The Assignment (#020909) was reviewed and a determination made that a recommendation from the Technical Committee will be prepared for the HCAC meeting scheduled for March 24, 2009. A revised grading plan will also be prepared for presentation.

Overflow from the tank was briefly discussed. The overflow will drain into the nearby detention basin. Revegetation and rehabilitation was also discussed. A seed mix will be sent to Mr. Gardner.

**b. Assignment 021209 – Zone designation for the White Reef (Harrisburg) addition.**

The members discussed the Habitat Conservation Plan which identifies five zones, and they discussed the habitat within the addition. Lynne Scott distributed a four-page handout (Exhibit 3-b-1 TC – 031209) excerpted from the Red Cliffs Addition Boundary Fence Environmental Assessment. The members identified two needs – a biological zone and an upland/lowland zone designation. The addition has a very low tortoise population, but a high population of listed plant species and critical habitat.

Treating the addition as part of Zone 4 was discussed, as well as treating it as an extension of Zone 3. The merits of each idea was discussed and debated. Member Douglas advocated simplicity.

**MOTION** by Kristen Comella to include the addition in Zone 3 with a lowland designation, and that the area be included in the Public Use Plan and managed with consideration given to threatened and endangered species.

Seconded by Marshall Topham.

Discussion: Motorized vehicle use within the addition was discussed and debated. BLM advocates closing the area to motorized use, and the three existing roads, to protect critical habitat and the Shivwits Milkvetch. Emergency motor vehicles would be allowed.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The members discussed an official name designation for the addition. It will hereafter be referred to as the Harrisburg addition.

**c. Continue development of a Fire Management Plan for the Reserve –**  
Action items and scope of work documents.

Member Comella distributed a draft Fire Management Plan (FMP) that she had revised from the meeting of February 18, 2009. Member McLuckie distributed a draft introductory document for the FMP. The members discussed these handouts. They reemphasized that the FMP must be habitat-based.

The members discussed a variety of plant species that may be utilized in fire prevention and habitat rehabilitation. Member Douglas briefly talked about using Yerba Santa. The discussion went on to non-native plant species, colonizers, and invasive plant species.

The committee members reviewed and discussed a second handout, a *Restoration Polygons* draft scope of work plan, provided by Member McLuckie. Revisions, strategies, and action items were suggested. Consideration was given to the Northern Arizona University (NAU) Human Impact Monitoring (HIM) study. The merits and characteristics of trails as fire breaks were discussed. A glossary was also suggested and debated. Plant species for green-stripping and soil stabilization was also discussed.

The expectations of the HCAC were also reviewed. The members agreed that the FMP is ready for presentation after Member Comella makes a few revisions. Member Douglas talked about possible funding sources for some of the projects being discussed and considered.

The draft introductory statement for the FMP was discussed again and suggestions were made to refine it. Emphasis was on being clear and concise. Focus was also on integrating and coordinating with the Mojave Desert Initiative (MDI).

Member Comella noted that she had communicated with Todd Abbott from UDOT about roadside treatment to prevent and impede fires. She also told the members about the Roadway Fuel Reduction Questionnaire that she had sent out. The query is intended to determine who is doing what along I-15, Red Cliffs Recreation Area Road, Cottonwood Road, Red Hills Parkway, SR 18, and Tuacahn Drive. Responses to the questionnaire, and conclusions, are incomplete at this time.

The members recessed for lunch at 12:20 P.M. and planned to reconvene at approximately 1:30 P.M.

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The committee reconvened at 1:37 P.M.

Attending were:	Ann McLuckie	Marshall Topham
	Bob Douglas	Kristen Comella
	Bob Sandberg	Brad Young

The members discussed strategies and tasks for the top priorities in the table shown on page 2 of the February 18, 2009, TC meeting minutes. The priorities are:

- 1- Treat Roadsides – Updated by Member Comella before lunch.
- 2- Updated fire information and maps – Member Douglas will provide starting point maps to Member Sandberg. The maps will be refined and distributed. The maps will be ready by next TC meeting. Also, a contact sheet will be ready for review.
- 3- Create Islands of Vegetation (or Restoration Polygons) – Member McLuckie referred back to the earlier draft scope of work handout that she had distributed. She needs to acquire cost estimates for establishing revegetated areas. Member McLuckie will present a draft scope of work to the HCAC at their March meeting.
- 4- Fuel Breaks – Members clarified that this Strategy/Task is establishing and/or maintaining fire breaks. They agreed that the amount of accomplishment may depend on the amount of funding and that partnerships in funding will enhance the success.
- 5- Public Education and Information – Members agreed that this is an on-going effort to make the public aware of the hazards and consequences of fire. Efforts to accomplish this strategy include, installing *Smokey Bear* signs, develop and install standardized fire awareness information on kiosks and at trail heads, and produce and distribute fire awareness publications relative to the RCDR. Member Topham pointed out that it is important to have local media coverage before and during the fire season to encourage fire hazard awareness and to provide regular announcements on current fire hazard conditions. This task may be included in Section 3.2.1 of the FMP. Marshall Topham and HCP administration will coordinate to accomplish this task.
- 6- Monitoring of treated areas – Member McLuckie indicated that the scope of work for monitoring eight reseeded polygons was presented to the HCAC at their January meeting. The only question remaining is when can it be implemented? The cost is approximately \$16,000.00. The members agreed that monitoring is an important part of establishing research polygons.
- 7- Research/monitor methodology (reducing fuel) – No discussion.
- 8- Control non-native species – The members discussed continuing to pursue projects and coordinate with the MDI. A map will be developed for identifying areas of undesirable plants and other non-native species. The map will be prepared by Member Douglas and ready for the next TC meeting.
- 9- Soil Stabilization (gully plugs, erosion fabric) – No discussion.
- 10- Research/monitoring non-persistent, competitive species – No discussion.

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **a. Budget reductions.**

Member Sandberg talked about the 5% budget cuts required by the County Commissioners. Member Sandberg detailed the line items that he has identified for reductions totaling \$78,000.00. He will be presenting the reductions at the next county department head meeting next week.

**b. Education/Interpretive Center.**

Member Sandberg talked about the conceptual site for an interpretation/education center in the Pioneer Park area. The members discussed the various ideas proposed by the WCWCD and the Saint George City Council. Possible funding sources, partnerships, and long-term and short-term plans were discussed.

**c. Northern Arizona University Human Impact Monitoring.**

The committee members reviewed and discussed the list of trails that will be monitored for human impact by the students from Northern Arizona University. The annual monitoring is scheduled for April 1-5, 2009.

The members want to make sure that Buckskin Wash remains on the list, and they wish to add Cottonwood Wash to the list.

**d. Next meeting date**

The next TC meeting date was set for Thursday, April 16, 2009. The meeting is scheduled to be in the Washington County Administration conference room, 197 E. Tabernacle, Saint George, Utah beginning at 9:30 A.M.

**5. ADJOURN**

There was no other business to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.