

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **APRIL 8, 2010** at the Bureau of Land Management Saint George Field Office, 345 East Riverside Drive, Saint George, Utah. The meeting was relocated to accommodate a GIS presentation by Lynne Scott. Supplemental public meeting notices announcing the change of location were posted at the Washington County Administration Building and at the HCP office.

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:

Renee Chi, Chairperson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS)
Cameron Rognan, Vice Chairperson	Washington County HCP
Tim Croissant	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Ann McLuckie	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)

Absent and excused:

Marshall Topham	Local biologist
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Also present were:

Brad Young	Washington County HCP
Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dawna Ferris-Rowley	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bob Douglas	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Renee Chi noted there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 1:07 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. March 4, 2010

The following changes were made:

(page 2, paragraph 3, sentence 3): change,

From: “The members discussed today’s ~~filed~~ trip to the Paradise Rim and Turtle Wall areas.”

To: “The members discussed today’s field trip to the Paradise Rim and Turtle Wall areas.”

(page 5, paragraph 1, sentence 1): change,

From: “Member Chi provided a detailed description of the Service’s petition review process, timelines and possible findings.”

To: “Member Chi provided a detailed description of the Service’s general petition review process, timelines and possible findings.”

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to approve the minutes of March 4, 2010, as amended.
Seconded by Kristen Comella.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Trail evaluation – Assignment #122909

1. Discuss the results of the field trip to the Toe trail

The members began the meeting day by assembling at 9:30 A.M. at the Johnson Canyon parking lot just south of the Snow Canyon State Park south entrance fee station for a field trip to the Toe trail. Attending the field trip were Bob Douglas and members Tim Croissant, Cameron Rognan, Renee Chi, Kristen Comella, and Ann McLuckie.

Member Comella began the discussion by saying that she knows what needs to be done on the Toe trail; it’s just a matter of getting it done. She explained that budget and staff constraints are the main factors in not getting the necessary work done. Member Comella added that the state park’s budget has been significantly reduced and she does not foresee funding being restored in the near future.

Member Chi talked about enforcement and presence on the ground once the needed work has been completed. Member Comella also talked about education as a component of resolving some of the problems. She further mentioned redistributing law enforcement funds to state parks and UDWR. Lynne Scott echoed her comments about shifting priorities as to where the money goes. Member McLuckie talked about possibly using dedicated hunters to assist, and she volunteered to submit the project application forms. Lynne commented on spending funds wisely and not just reacting to what is seen just in front of them.

Member Rognan talked about possibly using boy scouts or eagle scouts. The committee members discussed the pros and cons of using scouts and other volunteers. Member Chi discussed using the process to have the HCAC members see these areas so they can see for themselves and better understand the problems. Budgeting for recreation management was also discussed. Bob Douglas talked about sharing resources amongst the agencies. Member Chi spoke about long-term funding solutions and involving the NCA.

Lynne Scott talked about setting limits of acceptable change. Member Chi emphasized the necessity of allowing the HCAC to fully appreciate the changes and the problems. Dawna Ferris-Rowley asked if the NAU monitors have been taking photographs in the course of trail monitoring – no they have not. Bob Douglas suggested having Dr. Foti talk to the HCAC about the impacts caused by humans and recreational activities. The members discussed the degree of change that has occurred over time and the relationship between trail conditions several years ago and what the conditions are currently.

Member Comella referred back to the limits of acceptable change document and asked how the document can be made into more than just a framework. Dawna Ferris-Rowley talked briefly about the problems with setting limits of acceptable change for the variety of impacts to the variety of resources. The members discussed setting trigger points for implementing management actions. Member McLuckie spoke about the significant biological decline in the tortoise population. Member Chi talked about relating tortoise populations to recreational impacts using transects.

Member McLuckie attributed the tortoise population decline on a combination of factors that include habitat degradation, disease, drought, wildfire and human impacts. Members discussed a correlation, but no cause could be definitely determined.

Chairperson Chi suggested setting another meeting to gather the human impact monitoring data and other information to fully discuss the limits of acceptable change. The members also briefly discussed forming a subcommittee to evaluate the human impacts. A subcommittee will not be formed at this time. The members also talked about having a meeting with Dr. Foti, but it was noted that she resists becoming involved in management decisions. Bob Douglas suggested focusing on the Toe trail and resolving the problems; and Member Comella talked about using the public use process to address the issues.

Member Comella also noted that the HCAC needs to understand how recreation in the Reserve, and National Conservation Area, has impacted the tortoises. She added that the Reserve has been created as a park without the infrastructure, funding or personnel to manage it.

Member Croissant suggested asking each committee member to come up with their own suggestions and then come to a meeting to present their ideas. Member McLuckie suggested asking Dr. Foti if there are other places with similar issues that may be contacted and asked about their ideas and solutions. The members also discussed using short-term solutions – dedicated hunters and prison inmates were mentioned.

The group also discussed the next HCAC meeting and their field trip to the Toe trail. Bob Douglas mentioned the proximity of the three access points near the east end of the Toe trail (near point 3 on Exhibit 3-a-1-a TC – 040810). Member Comella explained that different user groups use the different access points. The members went on to discuss access points in general – some of which do not make sense. That discussion led to where the next field trip should be.

2. Plan the next field trip

The members considered hiking Bracken's Loop, Bone Wash, and/or Prospector trail, but they decided to meet at the Grapevine trailhead and hike Dino Cliffs and Grapevine.

b. Discuss adding, altering or eliminating trails for the new trail guide/map

Lynne Scott began by explaining that the process of revising and recreating a trail map and guide is taking longer than she wants. One of the delays is getting buy-in, from the Technical Committee for example. Lynne distributed Exhibit 3-b-1 TC – 040810 and explained that the objective of the discussion today is to evaluate the proposed changes to the trail map, specifically:

- Remove trails that do not exist,
- Remove trailheads with no parking,
- Rename separate trails (T intersections)
- Remove trails with access issues,
- Remove trails on private property,
- Add new trails, and
- Adjust trail location based on reality.

The trails, trailheads and locations discussed are circled in red and listed in the lower right portion of the exhibit. The yellow circles with black dots on the exhibit are access points. Lynne explained that *routes*, as opposed to *trails*, are typically steep, dangerous and unclearly marked. An explanation of routes will be added to the trail map for clarification.

Bob Douglas and Dawna Ferris-Rowley left the meeting at 2:25 P.M.

A detailed review of the proposed trail or trailhead changes advanced west to east beginning with the Red Mountain trail and the Hellhole and Fortitude (new) trails in the west and progressed easterly to Zone 5. The discussion included portions of Snow Canyon State Park. There were some minor adjustments on the Gila trail extension.

During the discussion on Sand Hollow Wash, Member Rognan used Exhibit 4-a-1- TC – 040810 to show a proposed access route to the Scout Cave trail from Snow Canyon Parkway. He explained that the cities of St. George and Ivins are discussing a possible trailhead on the south side of Snow Canyon Parkway that would permit access southerly into the cities' urban trail system and northerly into the Reserve. There were no objections to this proposal.

Member Croissant left the meeting at 2:57 P.M. A quorum still existed.

There were three of the changes that were notably debated by the committee members. The first concerned the area north and west of the Pioneer Hills trailhead. The group discussed the purpose of the pedestrian tunnel under the Red Hills Parkway approximately 500 feet north of the Pioneer Hills parking lot. The members questioned its purpose because it doesn't seem to go anywhere on the west side. Lynne explained that the underpass is intended to flip a future city-developed bike trail from the east side to the west side. Construction on widening the Parkway will begin in about a year and part of the project includes a bike path. The members discussed connecting the bike path to the City Creek trail using existing service roads to form a loop. But, the alignment will have to be determined later. The second concerned the Hell's Half Acre trail in Zone 4. The members talked about Zone 4 being Upland Zone and off-trail use is allowed, and the fact that the trail already exists and is primarily used by horse riders. The members agreed to leave the trail on the map. The members also briefly discussed modifying Zone 4 to be more restrictive than allowing unrestricted off-trail use. This may be brought up during the development of the NCA Management Plan. The last area discussed was Sandstone Mountain and where to locate the most suitable *route*. The members agreed that the most appropriate route is the one shown.

MOTION by Kristen Comella to accept the changes as discussed.
Seconded by Ann McLuckie.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

c. Gila monster update and sightings information form

MOTION by Cameron Rognan to continue this agenda item to the next meeting.
Seconded by Ann McLuckie.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Sand Hollow Wash – St. George City property

This item was discussed during the map changes review.

b. Red Butte to Middleton power line upgrade – reclamation/reseeding Fall 2010

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to continue agenda items 4-b through 4-e.
Seconded by Kristen Comella.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

- c. Grapevine trailhead - update
- d. Systematic clearances
- e. 2011 budget planning beginning at the May meeting
- f. Next meeting date – May 6, 2010

Meet at the Grapevine trailhead immediately north of I-15 Exit 13. Field trip to include the Dino Cliffs and Grapevine trails. Regular meeting will follow the field trip.

5. **ADJOURN**

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to adjourn.
Seconded by Cameron Rognan.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.