

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **JUNE 11, 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)
Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) via conference phone

Absent and excused was:

Marshall Topham	Local biologist
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Also present was:

Brad Young	Washington County HCP
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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 9:34 A.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. May 14, 2009

The following changes were made:

(page 2, paragraph 5):

Add two new sentences: "Member McLuckie asked Brian about locating the poles farther away from the Reserve boundary so the anchors wouldn't be within the Reserve. Brian replied that the City of Hurricane did not want to move the power line five to six feet into their property because it would decrease the value of their property."

(page 3, paragraph 4, sentence 2): changed,

From: “Furthermore, the defined picnic and parking areas are already highly disturbed.”

To: “Furthermore, the defined picnic and parking areas are already highly disturbed, additional staging areas should be established at those points.”

MOTION by Bob Douglas to approve the minutes of May 14, 2009 with the additions and corrections.

Seconded by Renee Chi.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Continue development of the Habitat Management Plan and scope of work projects.

Member McLuckie introduced the subject and distributed a two-page draft Scope of Work: Green Stripping document (Exhibit 3-a-1 TC – 061109). The committee members discussed green stripping, and using maps, also discussed access points for firefighting personnel and equipment. Member Douglas used the maps to point out several access points for firefighting equipment. Member Douglas explained that established roads may be used for equipment access and that some foot-trails may be temporarily converted to accommodate firefighting equipment. The members discussed a legend on the map indicating gates with chains and locks where the chain may be cut by firefighters to gain access to the Reserve. The members discussed and marked the map showing additional truck access points. The members also discussed and identified improved roads within the Reserve that may be used by firefighting trucks. The primary roads are designated in black and the secondary roads are colored in red. The finished map will be ready next week. Members Douglas and Sandberg will distribute copies to the appropriate firefighting agencies. The members discussed designated Resource Advisors and others that may be consultants.

Member McLuckie referred back to the top ten priority tasks that had been previously identified by the committee and asked for an update on the progress of each. The table below was discussed and updated by the members.

Priority	Action Item	Status
1	Treat roadsides (paved)	In progress.
2	Update & distribute fire maps	Maps will be ready next week for distribution to firefighters.
3	Create islands of vegetation	Draft Scope of Work completed.
4	Maintain fire breaks (e.g., utility roads)	<p>Member Douglas mentioned that \$218,000.00 is available for fuel reduction in RCDR and must be spent before September 30, 2010. The members asked what the funds can be used for and if there are conditions on the funds. The funds are primarily for fuel reduction, and monitoring is included for up to two years. The members discussed the draft document (Exhibit 3-a-1). The members offered suggestions and changes which Member McLuckie will incorporate. A seed mix will be attached to the Scope of Work Plan as a table. It was noted that an Environmental Assessment must be completed. Methods and advantages/disadvantages of watering the green strips were also discussed. Augmenting natural precipitation was stressed.</p> <p>The Red Cliffs area was also talked about. The members discussed green stripping or brown stripping along the Red Cliffs Road. They also talked about seeding areas burned in the Red Cliffs fire. Member Douglas noted that the soil type is TC (Tobler class), and that this is some of the most productive soil in the county. Plant species and a possible seed mix for this soil type were discussed. Green stripping Mill Creek Road was also considered. A draft of the Scope of Work Plan will be prepared for the HCAC.</p>
5	Public education and information	HCP Administration will continue to coordinate outreach and education presentations and efforts.
6	Monitor treated areas	Monitoring Scope of Work has been completed and a contract has been awarded to Colorado Plateau Associates. The actual monitoring is in progress.
7	Research /Monitor Methodology (reduce fuel)	Continue to pursue. Will cooperate with Mohave Desert Initiative.
8	Control non-native species	Identifying nonnative plants of concern has been completed. BLM is preparing the map.
9	Soil stabilization (gully plugs, erosion)	Continue to pursue these efforts. Will cooperate with Mohave Desert Initiative.
10	Research non-persistent competitive species	

b. Review and discuss canyoneering in Snow Canyon State Park.

Member Comella related to the committee members that she has received three canyoneering proposals – actually four counting the route descending into Johnson Canyon described by Marshall Topham. She explained that canyoneering is not clearly addressed in the Public Use Plan (PUP). Canyoneering may include a combination of hiking and technical hiking, rock climbing and scrambling, rappelling, orienteering, and perhaps traversing water obstacles. Biking is not included.

Member Comella said that she has reviewed two of the four routes and is asking for input from the committee. One of the proposed routes that were reviewed is on top of Island in the Sky. Member Comella added that this proposed route is fairly technical and should be reviewed and rated by the Snow Canyon Climbing Advisory Team. Use of this route may be controlled by using a permit system. Furthermore, she wants the proponents to clearly specify the route(s). The routes should be mapped and GPSed.

Member McLuckie commented that the routes must be identified as a trail. Member Comella replied that the terrain is very rugged and a 'trail' is not feasible; the routes are largely determined by the terrain.

The second proposed route that was evaluated is the one that descends into Johnson Canyon. If approved, use of this route will chiefly be limited by the seasonal closure – March 15 through October 31. The routes and the activity have been occurring for considerable time, and either needs to be legitimized and controlled or removed entirely.

Member McLuckie suggested a field trip to evaluate the proposed routes. That is easier said than done. Accessing the beginning of the route is more practical. Additional discussion regarding the field trip will be an agenda item at next month's meeting.

Amending or modifying the PUP to address canyoneering was discussed. Extending the Gila Trail was also briefly talked about.

c. Discuss and develop a budget recommendation for the HCAC – Assignment #040709 (Exhibits 3-c-1, 3-c-2 and 3-c-3 TC – 061109).

Member Sandberg introduced the topic and explained the exhibits. He discussed the current status of revenues and expenditures. Exhibit 3-c-3 was specifically reviewed and discussed. Costs of printing a new map was discussed as well as reprinting the current map until a new map is created and ready for distribution.

The committee members discussed various line items and offered comments and suggestions regarding current spending and 2010 budgeting. Confluence Park management and funding, and other species programs were also discussed.

Budget discussions will be on next month's TC agenda with a recommendation readied for presentation to the HCAC at their meeting on July 28, 2009.

d. Pioneer Park

1. Desert Garden/Education Center (Exhibits 3-d-1 and 3-d-2 TC – 061109).

Member McLuckie introduced the topic and referred to Exhibits 3-d-2 and 3-d-2 TC – 061109. Member McLuckie noted on the exhibits that the natural trails shown in dashed red within the Reserve are contrary to the Technical Committee's recommendations. Member Comella stressed that the trails must be removed from the options. The members requested additional information on the primitive amphitheater concept shown in the upper right portion of each exhibit. And, additional detailed information is necessary on the proposed social garden area shown in the lower right portion of Option 2 because the proposed garden designates areas for Mojave and tortoises.

The committee members also discussed the best avenue to provide input to the botanical garden committee. Member Sandberg noted that the next garden planning committee meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2009.

2. Tower removal

Member Sandberg informed the committee members that Marc Mortensen wants to start the process for removing the communications towers at the overlook shown at the right center on Exhibits 3-d-1 and 3-d-2. Member McLuckie suggested that the Utility Development Protocols (UDP) be followed.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. Discuss human impact and limits of acceptable change.
 1. Human impact monitoring and offer to meet by Dr. Pam Foti.

Member McLuckie informed the committee members that a conference call with Dr. Foti has been scheduled for 10:00 A.M., Tuesday, July 7, 2009. The members agreed to incorporate the call into the next Technical Committee meeting rather than have two meetings two days apart.

- b. The next TC meeting date was set for Tuesday, July 7, 2009 beginning at 9:30 A.M. The meeting is scheduled to be in the Washington County Administration conference room, 197 E. Tabernacle, Saint George, Utah.
- c. Status of PacifiCorp's project: Expansion of the Middleton substation and the Red Butte to Saint George power line upgrade.

Member Sandberg informed the members that he just wanted them to be aware of this project and all of the work that is going to be done within the Reserve. He talked about the requirement in the Biological Opinion (BO) that work be performed during the inactive season, but yet work is scheduled to begin very soon. He noted that Greg Brown from JBR is trying to contact Renee Chi about starting the construction work before the inactive season. A re-consultation may be necessary. Member Douglas emphasized that this is a major project.

5. **ADJOURN**

There was no other business to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 1:28 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.