

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **AUGUST 21, 2008**, in the conference room at the Washington County Administration Building, 197 E. Tabernacle.

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:

Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Bob Douglas	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Ann McLuckie	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP

Members absent were:

Marshall Topham	Local Biologist
Todd Esque	USGS Biological Resources Division

Others present were:

Tom Webster	Washington County HCP
Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Brad Young	Washington County HCP

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kristen Comella noted that there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 11:38 a.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes from the meeting of July 3, 2008

The following changes were made:

(page 8, paragraph 2, sentence 2): changed,

From: "The members felt that there are tortoises on the east side of the road, but in low density."

To: “The members stated that there are tortoises on the east side of the road, but in low density.”

(page 8, paragraph 5): changed,

From: “There was discussion amongst the members about the best way to manage recreational activity. ~~They agreed that it is considered adaptive management because some activity is moved from Zone 3 into the new zone.~~”

To: “There was discussion amongst the members about the best way to manage recreational activity and best location for trail heads.”

MOTION by Renee Chi to approve the minutes of July 3, 2008, as amended.

Seconded by Ann McLuckie.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

(3) GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Assignment #051608 – Ivins Detention Dam - Discuss the field trip and restoration priorities** (i.e. locations, acreage vs. actions (formulating how something like fencing would translate into restoration acres)).

Field Trip - The five committee members met with Mr. David Glenn of Ivins City at the north end of 200 East in Ivins. Exhibit 3-a-1 TC – 082108 was distributed by Mr. Glenn and the members toured the area.

Meeting – Kristen, Ann, Renee and Bob Sandberg referred to the exhibit and discussed the properties’ potential as an addition to the reserve. Ann favors adding the properties to the reserve because it benefits tortoises and tortoise movements. Renee added that the land seemed relatively undisturbed. Bob agreed with Ann that adding the properties would benefit tortoise habitat. Kristen discussed possible impacts to this area from water overflow from the storage tank, and where there may be access required to service the overflow pipes. Kristen said this must be addressed before accepting the property.

Ann talked about fencing the properties. She favors placing the reserve boundary fence to exclude the trail – and the people and dogs that use the trail. Bob Sandberg also favors fencing along the north face of the dike. The members generally agreed that fencing along the dike has the most advantages, but what Ivins City may want to do must be considered. The members discussed cost sharing, which is an option. Ann and Renee agreed that it is better to fence so the trail is not inside.

Kristen summarized the members' agreement that the committee advocates for fencing north of the dike, if Ivins City is receptive and willing to work with them. Kristen also reiterated that the issue of overflow and the drainage pipes must be clarified and put into writing.

Bob Douglas joined the meeting.

The committee members discussed compensation acreage required to offset the permanent disturbance for constructing the detention dam. Ivins City is required to provide 6.12 acres for compensation. But the total area of the three parcels shown on the exhibit is 6.81 acres. Ann suggested that the excess (.69 acres) could be counted towards the restoration requirement for mitigating the temporary disturbance. The ratio of applying permanently added property in lieu of restoration was discussed. Would it be 1:1 or something different? Ivins City is required to restore 3.99 acres for the temporary disturbance. Bob Douglas suggested asking Ivins to fence in land for tortoise habitat that would not be technically part of the reserve. Bob Sandberg suggested a conservation easement to address the property ownership issue.

The members discussed the pros and cons of asking Ivins City to fence in property for tortoise habitat, and to reduce fencing costs and maintenance, in lieu of performing habitat restoration. Kristen made it clear that if Ivins rejected the idea, then the priorities for restoration have already been set. She also referred to an aerial photo emailed by Chuck Gillette and said that she wants to make sure there is no double-dipping.

Renee will contact Ivins City and propose that they transfer the 6.81 acres into the reserve and, in exchange for the 3.3 acres of habitat restoration requirement, add the area north of the dike to the reserve boundary.

The members then discussed the seed mix (Exhibit 3-a-2 TC – 082108). They generally agreed that it looked good. Bob Douglas advocated adding a yellow paper flower (species *Psilotrophe Cooperi*) to the mix. Kristen was not in favor of it since it hasn't been documented in Snow Canyon to date. Bob Sandberg questioned the amount of seed called for. He is going to check with JBR on the pounds/acre and find out why it is so high.

The issue of giving Ivins 'credit' for compensation for providing flood control was discussed. Kristen said that it is not addressed in the biological opinion. Ann advocated verbally acknowledging their feelings and efforts, even though it may not be biologically supported. Renee reiterated that there is insufficient data to show that tortoises benefit from building a retention dam.

No motion is necessary at this time. Renee will contact Ivins regarding the compensation for the permanent and the temporary disturbances.

b. Status report on the White Reef Park project – Bob Sandberg and Lynne Scott

Bob Sandberg discussed the draft environmental assessment from Alpha Engineering that was prepared by JBR. Lynne explained that JBR has surveyed only the new construction areas for biological issues. The members discussed the closing of RS2477 roads as approved by the county commissioners. Bob Sandberg explained that he has composed a draft EA for the Red Cliffs fence and the fence will actually be the mechanism that closes the roads.

Lynne and the committee members referred to a large aerial photo showing the Red Cliffs and White Reef area. They discussed the details of the parking areas and trail heads, and trail use by different user groups. Providing recreational opportunities were emphasized. Kristen asked about trails that form loops as opposed to up-and-back trails. Lynne discussed future concepts for additional trails in the area, and an alternate road to the campground that doesn't cross Quail Creek.

Additional status reports are expected as the project progresses.

c. Status of Miller Spring – Bob Sandberg

Bob Sandberg described the fifteen-foot deep rectangular box not far from the Chuckwalla Trail. The opening is approximately 3' X 9' and currently covered by a rebar grate. The problem is safety, and it is trapping wildlife. He has checked with the City of Santa Clara and learned that it is not one of their wells, they have no interest in it, and it may have been the water source for an old turkey farm. What to do with the problem was discussed. Bob Sandberg proposed removing the rebar grate and filling the hole with dirt. Lynne suggested that Bob Douglas check with Dawna because it may be on BLM land.

It was decided that Bob Douglas and Bob Sandberg will work out the details of filling it in.

d. Fire rehabilitation presentations at the August 26th HCAC meeting (Bob Sandberg)

Bob Sandberg talked about the next HCAC meetings scheduled for August 26, 2008. There will be presentations at the work meeting and at the regular meeting regarding post-fire restoration and rehabilitation.

Bob explained that Greg Sharp of JBR has other commitments so he (Bob) is going to provide some information on rehab efforts and plant species and amount of seed used and seed bed preparation. Bob added that Kim Leany (BLM) will discuss the BLM fire rehab plan, Neil Perry (UDWR) will discuss the Turkey Farm rehab efforts, Jason Vernon (UDWR) will talk about the Mill Creek study plots, and lastly at the work

meeting, Dr. Durant McArthur will relate the results of a study at Twist Hollow. Then, at the regular meeting, Dr. Jim Bowns (SUU) will present on the fire effects and rehab success in the blackbrush community and Dr. Howard Horton of the USDA's Agriculture Research Service will give a presentation on forage kochia (*Kochia prostrata*) and other potential species for use in reducing fire.

Renee suggested a future presentation or a field trip to see how Zion National Park has used Plateau in post-fire rehabilitation on the Kolob Terrace. Bob Sandberg said that he has talked with Cheryl Decker, the Zion NP fire ecologist, regarding their use of herbicides. Bob added that he is making arrangements for presentations on grazing affects and herbicide use at the September HCAC meeting.

Ann and Bob Douglas will attend the HCAC meetings on August 26th.

(4) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Status of the Grapevine well #1 (Bob Sandberg)

Bob explained that the pump had failed and it was necessary for HCP personnel to go in and assist in securing the fenced work area, provide tortoise awareness training, and check on the workers when they entered to remove the pump. The pump has been removed, repaired and was replaced on August 20. But, the work is not complete and should be finished today.

b. Status of the Mill Creek well #3 (Bob Sandberg)

The repair efforts on this well have not been successful. The well may need to be re-drilled. Repairs efforts will restart in November during the inactive season.

c. Translocations (Bob Sandberg)

There will be seven tortoises PIT tagged by Ann on Thursday, August 28, and then translocated to Zone 4 the following day. Brian Passy from *The Spectrum* will be present for the translocation.

d. Experimental grazing (Bob Sandberg)

Bob reiterated that he is making arrangements for presentations at the September HCAC meeting, and he has provided some cost estimates for fence repair and grazing various livestock along the Turkey Farm Road. Bob Douglas asked about the idea of livestock just grazing the lane. Bob Sandberg explained that there would be costs associated with fence maintenance to control the livestock as well as cattle guards and water sources. Bob Douglas will provide some information on goats and goat herders that might be possibly considered. The costs would be reduced because the goats would be controlled by the herders.

Ann suggested resurrecting the old document, a large table that identifies all the potential things that could be done in a fire situation. She will search for an electronic copy.

e. Road kills (Ann McLuckie)

Ann talked about road-killed tortoises. One was in Hurricane at the city facilities on 600 N. that was run over by a city truck. Ann and UDWR Conservation Officer Christopher Schultz went out and interviewed the workers and followed up on the incident. Fifteen city employees were provided with tortoise awareness training by Bob Sandberg and Tom Webster.

The members discussed the possibility that annual retraining may be necessary for some organizations. Kristen suggested that HCP annually recontact cities and provide them with tortoise awareness reminders and up-to-date contact numbers.

Bob Douglas added that the fence along 600 N. requires maintenance to prevent tortoises from leaving the reserve. Ann and Bob Douglas discussed culverts in the area that also should be addressed.

Ann said there was also a road-killed tortoise in Snow Canyon State Park and one near Twist Hollow and that fences in those areas should be checked closely.

f. Eagle Scout Project (Ann McLuckie)

Ann talked about a young man who needs to do an Eagle Scout project. Ann has talked with Justin Neighbor about doing something in Zone 4, but instead the scout is going to walk up and down Highway 18 and mend fences where necessary. Justin indicated to Ann that the county would provide materials. Ann added that she could take the scout out on weekends and do telemetry as well.

g. State Route 18 widening (Renee Chi)

Renee said the USF&WS has recently received a description of a project to widen SR 18 in the area of Twist Hollow. She added that the description includes an expectation that the HCP assure the fences along the right-of-way are adequate, correct according to a survey, and any necessary clearances in the area are performed.

h. State Route 18 widening – follow-up (Kristen Comella)

Kristen discussed the parking along the right-of-way to access the Black Rocks. She explained that this parking area may be lost during the widening. The members discussed the unapproved parking, and alternate routes to the climbing areas. There was concern about tortoise habitat if additional access trails or parking were proposed to replace the lost unapproved parking. Bob Sandberg said that he would follow up on the project.

i. Snow Canyon State Park Visitor Use Survey (Kristen Comella)

The State Park is beginning to craft two visitor use surveys – one for the main canyon and one for Paradise Canyon. Some of the things they wish to find out include frequency of use, where the visitor is from, and are there any violations observed. The surveys will be done during random times. The members discussed other possible questions that may be included in the survey. Kristen will work with Lynne to craft the in-the-field survey. Tom told Kristen the HCP had recently completed a telephone survey and some of the questions used in that may be helpful to her survey.

There was no other business to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.