

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **SEPTEMBER 11, 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)
Bob Douglas	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Ann McLuckie	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP
Marshall Topham	Local Biologist

Members absent were:

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

Tom Webster	Washington County HCP
Brad Young	Washington County HCP
Lauren Hunt	Washington County HCP
Bill Mader	Washington County HCP
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commissioner
Kathy Abbott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Larry Blake	Southern Utah Title Company
Frank Jackson	Property owner, Leeds, UT

(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 9:38 A.M.

(2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes from the meeting of August 21, 2008

The following changes were made:

(page 2, paragraph 7, sentence 5): changed,

From: “Kristen discussed possible impacts to this area from water overflow, and where there may be access required to service the overflow pipes.”

To: “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.”

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

From: “She favors placing the fence to exclude the trail – and the people and dogs that use the trail.”

To: “She favors placing the reserve boundary fence to exclude the trail – and the people and dogs that use the trail.”

(page 2, paragraph 8, sentence 3): deleted,

~~“She suggested a signature fence at the north end and added that not all of it would have tortoise mesh.”~~

(page 2, paragraph 8, sentence 4): changed,

From: “Bob Sandberg favors fencing along the dike.”

To: “Bob Sandberg also favors fencing along the north face of the dike.”

(page 3, paragraph 5, sentence 1): changed,

From: “Renee will contact Ivins City and propose that they transfer the 6.81 acres into the reserve and ~~provide habitat restoration for 3.3 acres, and they would be using the old road beds.~~”

To: “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.”

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

From: “Bob Douglas advocated adding a yellow paper flower (species *Psilotrophe*) to the mix.”

To: “Bob Douglas advocated adding a yellow paper flower (species *Psilotrophe Cooperi*) to the mix.”

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

From: “Ann advocated verbally acknowledging their feelings and efforts, ~~but it is not~~ biologically supported.”

To: “Ann advocated verbally acknowledging their feelings and efforts, even though it may not be biologically supported.”

(page 4, paragraph 2, sentence 5): changed,

From: “Lynne discussed futuristic concepts for additional trails in the area, and an alternate road to the campground that doesn’t cross Quail Creek.”

To: “Lynne discussed future concepts for additional trails in the area, and an alternate road to the campground that doesn’t cross Quail Creek.”

(page 6, 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.”

(page 8, paragraph 6, sentence 2): changed,

From: “Ann has talked with Justin Neighbor about doing something in Zone 4, but instead the scout is going to walk up and down ~~Twist Hollow~~ and mend fences where necessary.”

To: “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.”

(page 8, paragraph 8): add,

“Bob Sandberg said that he would follow up on the project.”

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to approve the minutes of August 21, 2008, as amended.

Seconded by Marshall Topham.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

(3) GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. **Assignment #010407 – Buckskin Wash Trail** – Explore any new options or suggestions and consider a field trip at the October 9th meeting.

Kristen clarified that there is no assignment. The Buckskin Wash assignment has been completed by providing the HCAC with a recommendation. The Technical Committee is waiting to hear from Stacy Young about any new options or ideas.

Bob Sandberg discussed the HCAC’s action of tabling the issue until there is a new proposal.

Stacy Young was not present. The Technical Committee took no action on this item.

b. Assignment #051608 – Ivins Detention Dam - Discuss the compensation for the permanent disturbance and the temporary disturbance.

Kristen said that Renee did email Chuck Gillette requesting what the additional acreage would be (between the boundary and the dike), and that Chuck replied back that Ivins City was interested, but did not give any details on the additional acreage, Exhibit 3-b-1 TC – 091108. Kristen added that she would follow up with Chuck and get specifics on the acreages if Ivins City is receptive.

Kristen will determine:

1. What the acreage would be between what they are proposing and the dike and how much that would bring into the reserve and if that would take care of their restoration requirements, and
2. She'll try to get Chuck at the next meeting to discuss overflow from the tank, possible future construction of pipes going to the tank, and a maintenance access easement.

Bob Douglas suggested options for how to handle the property and ownership issues.

Kristen will invite Chuck to the next meeting, with maps.

c. Assignment #090408 – Frank Jackson trespass – Examine information on the trespass issue and present alternatives for resolution. Consider a field trip following the meeting.

Kathy Abbott joined the meeting to provide information from the BLM perspective.

Kristen said that the TC's assignment was to consider proposals, evaluate the biological impacts, determine the biological value of the properties and proposals, and make an appropriate recommendation. All this should be done while keeping in mind that it is BLM property that has been trespassed upon.

Larry Blake referred to Exhibit 3-c-1 HCAC Reg Mtng – 082608 and explained how there is an old waterline that crosses the BLM property being discussed. Mr. Blake proposed that a section of BLM property be removed from the reserve and later purchased from BLM, then Mr. Jackson would donate a parcel of land to the BLM. The committee members, Kathy Abbott and Larry Blake examined and discussed an aerial photo provided by Kathy. The trespass parcel is shown in red outline on Exhibit 3-c-2 TC – 091108 and 3-c-3 TC – 091108. Mr. Blake proposed a 1:1 purchase/ donation.

Bob Douglas commented that he has been out in the area and is familiar with the soils and vegetation of both areas being discussed. He added a proposal to fence the new boundary line at Mr. Jackson's expense because of the difference in habitat. Mr. Blake agreed and added that there is no question that they would do that.

Kristen talked about a compensation ration higher than 1:1. She cited *The Cliffs* trespass as an example. Ann mentioned the Highway 18 exchange as an example of a 1:1 ratio exchange.

The members discussed and debated the presence of tortoises in the area and the value of the habitat to tortoises.

Bob Douglas, Marshall Topham and Ann McLuckie favor a 1:1 ratio exchange. Bob Sandberg agreed. Most of the committee members favor a 1:1 ratio because the replacement property is undisturbed. Ann reiterated that any new property line must be fenced because tortoises are being translocated into Zone 4.

It was agreed to make a site visit and determine the location of the replacement property, then have it surveyed and a description and map produced.

Larry made it clear that the donation of the property is contingent on the purchase of the offending parcel from BLM. The appraisal costs must be borne by Mr. Jackson.

At 10:35 AM the meeting recessed for a field trip to the Jackson property in Leeds. Attending on the field trip were: Frank Jackson, Ann McLuckie, Bob Douglas, Bob Sandberg, Bill Mader, Kathy Abbott, Marshall Topham, Kristen Comella and Alan Gardner.

At 1:10 PM the meeting reconvened. Attending were: Ann McLuckie, Bob Douglas, Bob Sandberg, Marshall Topham and Kristen Comella.

Kristen summarized the field trip results:

- Mr. Jackson will outline a straight boundary line at least 25 feet east of the Leeds irrigation line. This will insure that all of the irrigation line comes out of the reserve and into private property ownership.
- Mr. Jackson proposed that the entire hillside that he owns will come into the reserve.
- The property to be donated will be added to the Land Bill (Washington County Growth and Conservation Act of 2008).
- Mr. Jackson will be responsible for fencing the purchased property only with range fence with tortoise mesh.
- Kristen added that during the field trip the members discussed the biological values of the disturbed property and that which is proposed for donation. Ann stressed that if the reserve boundary is changed, the biological impact must be considered, and there must be no loss of biological value. Ann added that there is no biological loss because the land proposed for removal has been disturbed.
- Impacts to reserve design are neutral.
- Gain/Loss: There is a gain in that tortoise fencing will be constructed.
- Gain/Loss: There is another gain in that there will be property coming into the reserve in a ratio greater than 1:1.

There was no motion at this time. Kristen will provide a briefing at the next HCAC meeting (September 23, 2008).

d. Develop a Fire Management Plan for the reserve.

Ann explained that she has written up all of her notes of the many presentations that were given at the last HCAC meeting (August 26, 2008) and will email them to all of the (Technical Committee) members.

Ann referred to Exhibit 3-d-1 TC – 091108 and explained how the Technical Committee members had previously discussed each issue in the fire management plan. Ann also referred to the Priority Actions: 2006 in Exhibit 3-d-2 TC – 091108 and further explained how some of the action items have been accomplished and that some are still in progress.

Bob Douglas talked about Jim McMahan's son who did a study on reptiles in burned areas. Ann has the details on this study and can forward them to the members if they wish.

Kristen restarted the discussion on this item after the Frank Jackson field trip. She summarized the assignment from the HCAC as:

- Discuss alternatives,
- Consider costs,
- Discuss partnerships,
- Long-term plans,
- Short-term plans,
- Priority actions, and
- Priority areas.

Bob Sandberg clarified that an overarching fire management plan is necessary, but he understood the HCAC assignment was more to deal with the reclamation aspect and that they wanted it quickly. Ann agreed. Bob added that a comprehensive fire plan will take more time and involvement than what the HCAC expects in the short term. Ann said that the Technical Committee is more responsible to develop strategies for restoration and fire prevention, but not fire suppression.

The members discussed and defined the objective. Based on previous work, they will continue with prevention and restoration. Suppression will fall to the bottom of the list. And, they discussed integrating and being in concert with the BLM and state fire plans. There is also the Mojave Desert Initiative to consider and their #1 goal to protect all unburned desert tortoise habitat. Their #2 goal is to restore burned habitat.

The members agreed to focus on fire prevention and fire restoration and to use Exhibit 3-d-1 TC – 091108 as a launching pad.

From the Exhibit, the members discussed Goals #1 and #2 and how best to accomplish the management actions. The members discussed various elements of fire prevention, post-fire habitat restoration and temporary emergency augmentation of habitat. The committee members also assigned the various goals in Exhibit 3-d-1 to the categories of protection of unburned habitat, restoration of burned habitat, emergency augmentation of habitat and monitoring (assessment) of fire impacts. The assignments discussed and made were:

	Protect unburned habitat	Restore burned areas	Emergency augmentation of habitat	Monitoring (assessment) of fire impacts
GOAL#	6 & 7	1,2,4,5,7,10,11 & 12	3	8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18
Notes	Protect unburned area	Restore islands of vegetation		
	Break the fire cycle	Stabilize soils		
		Reduce habitat fragmentation in burned areas		
		Repair infrastructure damage, assess & control recreation use		

At 1:55 PM the meeting moved to the HCP office where the discussion and goal assignments continued. Attending this session was: Kristen Comella, Ann McLuckie, Bob Douglas and Bob Sandberg.

Exhibit 3-d-3 TC – 091108 is a photo of the white board at the HCP office showing the assignment of the goals.

Lastly, Bob Douglas suggested a Section 7 consultation with U.S.F&W.S. just to get these items aired out.

(4) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Invasive Weed workshop

Kristen announced that there will be an Invasive Weed workshop at the BLM office on Tuesday, September 30th. The workshop will provide information and updates on weed identification, recent law changes, Tamarisk control, the use of herbicide(s), and the management of annual grasses. The workshop is part of necessary continuing education. Bob Sandberg expressed interest in attending.

b. SR 18 widening project

Bob Sandberg introduced Exhibit 4-b-1 TC – 091108. It is a project location map showing the beginning and ending points of the widening project. Bob explained that he understands that the designated section of SR18 will be widened to accommodate the addition of a passing lane near Twist Hollow, and some culverts will need to be extended – all within the existing right-of-way.

Bob Sandberg added that Bill Mader is working with Paul West (UDOT biologist) on details regarding clearances and fence maintenance prior to construction. Bob Douglas asked if there is a federal nexus attached to this project. Bob Sandberg replied that there was and that UDOT has been in contact with Renee Chi.

c. Powerline pole removal near Bluff Street and 1250 North in St. George

Bob Sandberg introduced Exhibit 4-c-1 TC – 091108. It is an aerial photo of the project areas showing seven powerline poles that the City of St. George wishes to remove. Bob explained that the powerline has been upgraded and the unnecessary poles are scheduled for removal. The city wants to go in during the winter months and remove the powerlines and guy wires, then cut the poles off at ground level. The poles will then be cut into small, manageable sections. Vehicle access will be necessary to accomplish the task. Bob has indicated to the city that they simply need to follow established protocols.

The members discussed how best to manage vehicle access into the area of the poles. A bigger map and more details were requested. Bob Sandberg indicated that the city is willing to contract with JBR. Bob Douglas said that if the removal of these poles is part of the larger powerline upgrade, then the city can get approval from himself, Renee Chi and Bob Sandberg – who will coordinate with JBR. The Technical Committee need not be involved.

It was decided that Bob Douglas, Bob Sandberg and Renee Chi need to coordinate with JBR and get more details, and if necessary, have the TC look at it.

d. Powerline upgrade

Bob Sandberg said that Rocky Mountain Power is upgrading their line near Central coming south to the substation near Middleton. The wood poles will be replaced with steel poles. Rocky Mountain Power does not anticipate being in the reserve area until December 2009.

Bob Douglas commented that this project is Phase II of a larger project that has already been through the TC. He added that the EA and the Section 7 has been done. The coordination will be between Rocky Mountain Power, Renee Chi and Bob Sandberg.

Ann advocated that these types of project be done aerially.

e. Red Hills Parkway

Bob Douglas asked if there was anything new regarding the Red Hills Parkway expansion project. No one had anything to contribute.

(4) ADJOURN

There was no other business to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.