

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **OCTOBER 13, 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)

Absent and excused was:

Marshall Topham	Local biologist
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Also present were:

Chuck Gillette	Ivins City
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 8:11 A.M.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. September 10, 2009

The following changes were made:

**(page 4, paragraph 6, sentence 1):**

From: “Lynne ~~Seøet~~ talked about a continuum of progressive management actions based on the documented impacts.”

To: “Lynne Scott talked about a continuum of progressive management actions based on the documented impacts.”

**Approved Technical Committee meeting minutes — October 13, 2009**

(page 4, paragraph 7: changed,  
From:

1	2	3	4	5
Education	Everything else	Seasonal closures/ Permits		Trail closures

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To:

1	2	3	4
Education	Everything else	Seasonal closures/Permits	Trail closures

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**MOTION** by Kristen Comella to approve the minutes of September 10, 2009, as amended.

Seconded by Bob Sandberg.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

### **3. GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **a. Ivins Detention Dam – Chuck Gillette.**

Chuck Gillette provided a brief update on the Ivins detention dam. He explained that since his last meeting with the Technical Committee, he has been working on a property exchange with Susan Zarekarizi because the proposed dam structure is very slightly outside the city's property boundary.

Chuck added that the problem is the spillway. He explained that according to the state engineer, the dam structure must be of concrete if the spillway is over the top of the dam. Constructing the dam of concrete will be very expensive. The other option is to relocate the spillway off to the side, but this option has difficulties because of the amount of extra land required. The cost of the extra land and the resulting mitigation may cause the project to be cost prohibitive.

Chuck further explained that Ivins City is going to try to work with the state engineer on constructing the dam of 'soil cement.' This is a process of adding cement to the soil to achieve soil stabilization. But the state engineer is not convinced that this will work in this case.

Ivins City has missed the upcoming construction window; they'll try for the next window.

**b. Discuss the proposed Gila Trail extension route and Assignment #082509.**

Member Comella began the discussion by relating some of the history of the proposal to extend the Gila Trail. She then used Exhibit 3-a-2 HCAC Reg Mtng – 082509 to describe the property boundaries, access points and possible trail routes. She added that the full extent of the extension will be most suitable for hikers, and not mountain bikers or equestrians due to soil and terrain

The meeting recessed at 8:40 A.M. for a field trip to the Gila Trail area.

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The meeting reconvened at 11:54 A.M. Present were all of the committee members that attended the earlier session. Discussion resumed regarding the proposed Gila Trail extension route and Assignment #082509.

Member Comella used Exhibit 3-a-2 HCAC Reg Mtng – 082509 to illustrate to the committee members the approximate trail route from its current northern end to the beginning of the SCSP fee area. Member Sandberg expressed support for extending the Gila Trail to provide recreational opportunity. Member McLuckie said that extending the Gila Trail would create a redundancy of trails paralleling SR18; the other trail being the Rusty Cliffs Trail. She suggested extending the Gila Trail and removing the Rusty Cliffs Trail. She explained that there would be a small net gain for trail length but this would be offset by removing a trail from sensitive tortoise habitat. The members discussed this proposal and possible impacts to The Trails subdivision. By not removing the Rusty Cliffs Trail it would provide a southern route out of the subdivision all the way south to the Red Hills Parkway. The members debated the pros and cons of extending one trail and eliminating another.

Member Sandberg suggested contacting the City of St. George to determine what their plans are for the unfinished pedestrian culvert. The unanswered issues include the unfinished pedestrian culvert, pedestrian traffic across the SR18 overpass to The Trails subdivision and continued development of The Trails.

Member Comella talked about uncertain access points to the proposed Gila Trail extension and their short term and long term benefits, and the possibility that they may require removal at a later date.

The committee members discussed reviewing trails on a regional basis, including the Gila Trail extension, the Rusty Cliffs Trail and a possible Buckskin Wash Trail.

Member Douglas voiced support for extending the Gila Trail. Member Chi added that she has no objection to extending the Gila Trail and explained that it may take some pressure off Paradise Canyon. Member Comella reiterated her concerns regarding existing and future access points to the Gila Trail. The members discussed potential

uses for the extended Gila Trail and the possibilities for mountain biking and equestrian use – which are nearly non-existent due to terrain and topography.

Member McLuckie talked about the south end of the Gila Trail and suggested that the trail follow the existing road as much as possible to reduce additional disturbance. She added that she is not ready to make a decision until the answers to the other issues are known.

Member Comella asked the members about their preference concerning the area of the 'party shelter.' Members agreed to avoid the shelter.

The committee members discussed the assignment – Assignment 082509. Member McLuckie advocates removing the Rusty Cliffs Trail in exchange for extending the Gila Trail. She made it very clear that she is firmly against any trail that negatively impacts tortoises. The members again discussed closing the Rusty Cliffs Trail and the possible impacts to The Trails development.

Member Sandberg will contact the City of St. George and find out what they have included in their recreation plan concerning the areas being discussed.

Member McLuckie wanted to revisit the Gila Trail extension issue. She reiterated her position that there must be no negative impact to tortoises, this includes any new proposed trails on the east side of SR18 and specifically any proposed Buckskin Wash Trail, and that the south end of the trail follow the existing road as much as possible. TC members felt that extending the Gila Trail northward would not impact tortoises or tortoise habitat because it was at the upper elevational edge of where tortoises exist.

**MOTION** by Kristen Comella that the Technical Committee recommend approving the Gila Trail extension with the provisions that State Parks completes the boundary fence, provides access at the existing points which are Chuckwalla, Snow Canyon overlook and the Snow Canyon Drive/SR18 parking lot, and assess future access at the bore hole gate pending future developments and easements .

Seconded by Renee Chi.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

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

- a. Next meeting date – Friday, November 20, 2009, at 9:30 A.M.

5. **ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Ann McLuckie to adjourn.  
Seconded by Bob Douglas.  
The meeting adjourned at 12:54P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.