

HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular meeting** of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held at the Washington City Council Chambers on **July 23, 2013**.

Committee members present were:

Karl Wilson, Chairman	Mayors Association
Chris Blake, Vice Chairman	Environmental Organization
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
Bob Sandberg	HCP Administrator
Chris Hart	Local Development

Absent and Excused:

Henry Maddux	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Jimmy Tyree	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Also present were:

Amber Stocks	Washington County HCP – Recorder
Cameron Rognan	Washington County HCP - Biologist
Gary Webster	Congressman Chris Stewart’s Office
William Swadley	Senator Orrin Hatch’s Office
Ellen Schunk	Senator Mike Lee’s Office
William Jergins	Senator Mike Lee’s Office
Jodi Borgeson	Washington County Attorney’s Office
Ashley Gilreath	Citizens for Dixie’s Future
Mike Small	Citizens for Dixie’s Future
Lisa Rutherford	Citizen
Paul VanDam	Citizen

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Karl Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the committee for approval. The consent portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any member wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

- a. Approval of Agenda**
- b. Review and Approve Regular and Work Meeting Minutes**
 1. June 25, 2013
- c. Next Meeting Date**
 1. August 27, 2013
- d. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

MOTION by Chris Blake to approve the consent agenda.
Seconded by Chris Hart.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

a. None

4. **UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

a. None

5. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

a. **Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Map**

Bob Sandberg reported that the Reserve map supply is very low. The BLM continues to work on their map and it most likely won't be done until their next fiscal year. The BLM will decide if there will be a cost for the map and if so, what it will be. BLM staff discourages the HCP from putting together a stop-gap map, however, Bob felt that in the interim, the current outdated map should be reprinted or something else should be available for the public. Bob reported that Cameron Rognan has been working on a map with the County GIS to include updated information on trails, trailheads, land status, topographic features, etc. This map will be brought to the HCAC for input and discussion before finalizing.

Marc Mortensen felt there is a huge benefit for the public to have access to a map and the HCP should proceed to create a map until the BLM provides theirs. Marc encourages the BLM to get their map out as soon as possible. An accurate map is an important education tool and the interim map should include the same educational information as the current map.

MOTION by Marc Mortensen to proceed with an interim map. Marc can help facilitate printing costs with bids he has received for St. George City. Marc wants the HCAC to be able to give input on the BLM's map.
Seconded by Chris Blake.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

b. **HCP Review and Renewal**

Bob Sandberg submitted the comments he received on the HCP review to Larry Crist. Any further comments will also be sent to Larry. Chris Hart felt that the best approach is

to follow Chris Blake's idea of pursuing the renewal separate from the review. The issues raised in the review could be incorporated after the renewal via amendment. Bob replied this is a common vision held and he will check with Larry to find out if there will be a work meeting in August.

c. HCAC Meeting Time

The HCAC discussed the purpose of monthly meeting times. They felt that times could be adjusted to meet the needs of those who travel the furthest.

d. Technical Committee Report (Ann McLuckie)

In Ann McLuckie's absence, Cameron Rognan reported that the TC approved the 2014 budget with a recommendation to spend up to \$4,000 more for tortoise care to support the Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) adoption program (particularly tortoises with URTD). The TC felt it would be best to have the DWR outline direct costs for the HCP to pay when needed.

The TC discussed tumbleweed removal along Cottonwood Road. BLM firefighters felt that having piles of tumbleweeds would be problematic for maintaining a fuel break. The TC will start to figure out ways to remove tumbleweed systematically each year through herbicide, removal, or some sort of combination.

The TC then talked about the need for an updated translocation plan. The original plan was set up to last for five years and translocations have been continued successfully in zone 4. The TC wants a strategic approach where we can proactively recover tortoises in areas where populations might be low. The TC came up with a two-tier approach.

1. In the short-term, continue translocating to zone 4 in areas where there is room for more tortoises. Look at other locations within the Reserve for translocation, particularly in zone 3, the core of the Reserve.
2. In the long-term, find a way to boost tortoise populations in other nearby recovery areas such as the Beaver-Dam NCA. It is a much bigger obstacle to translocate that far away but ideally in the future it would be good to have that option.

The recommendation from the FWS is that tortoises be given a roaming distance of at least 6.5 kilometers. When tortoises are placed within about five miles of their home range they usually try to get back to their original den. If placed further away from their home range they will wander around for a year or two then set up a new home range.

Lastly, the TC reviewed the Snow Canyon State Park waterline replacement. The TC approved of the project as long as they follow the UDP and keep the waterline as close to the existing road as possible.

e. Administrator's Report (Bob Sandberg)

1. HCP revenues and expenditures report

Exhibit 5-g-1 shows the revenues and expenditures report along with the impact fees. Bob showed the impact fees spreadsheets and graph, giving a better idea of where revenues are. It appears that revenues will be higher than last year.

2. Submission of 2nd quarter report

Exhibit 5-g-2 is a submission of the 2nd quarter report.

3. Award of USFWS section 6 non-traditional grant

There have been news articles regarding a USFWS section 6 grant submitted by the HCP to purchase inholdings in the Reserve. The HCP applied for a \$4 million grant and was awarded \$1.4 million. Hopefully this helps make headway in purchasing the inholdings along with the BLM's Land and Water Conservation Fund money that was recently awarded for the same purpose. This grant is federal funding from the USFWS but comes through the state of Utah. The HCP will need to resubmit the proposal with more details and the money will need to be spent before they will reimburse the HCP. The DWR in Salt Lake has the official award letter and suggested having a conference call with the USFWS so that everyone involved knows what to do and when.

4. Draft Budget.

Exhibit 5-g-4 is a draft 2014 budget. The HCAC can look over the budget and discuss it as part of a work meeting next month. Chairman Wilson asked if salaries and wages are subject to change. Bob answered that the county clerk will adjust those amounts.

5. SUU human impact monitoring update

NAU has been doing human impact monitoring for the Reserve for many years. They were unable to come this year and SUU agreed to monitor. Cameron Rognan explained that SUU came in the spring to collect data experimentally and to determine what fits the Reserve's goals and objectives. They will help collect a better trail photo record and more spatial GIS data where impacts are found along trails. This will help to better analyze where impacts are occurring. SUU will be back for more monitoring in the fall. SUU has a good collaboration with Dixie State and because it is local we can meet with them more frequently. SUU and Dixie State will use students in the outdoor recreation programs to staff the monitoring crew. Cameron feels there will be more collaboration efforts with SUU and Dixie State to help students complete their projects and benefit the Reserve. The SUU Outdoor Recreation program has various courses associated with it. Monitoring the Reserve is a great benefit to SUU; they are excited to have the opportunity for their students to complete big projects and help the Reserve at the same time.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

This item is reserved for items not listed on this agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this agenda item. (Three minutes per person.)

Lisa Rutherford stated that “at several previous HCAC meetings, a new building for the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve has been discussed. The rationale offered to justify the need for a new building has been education of the public. The HCP indicates that education is important to the protection of the Reserve, and I support that. However, the way money is spent for protection of the Reserve is critical also. Some have argued that the existing downtown reserve building is not getting the word out sufficiently. As I recently drove by the building, it was easy to see why that might be the case. The side of the building facing busy Tabernacle Street has no signage at all to indicate what the building is. It’s a large, empty wall that could be used more effectively. Similarly, the front of the building has signage that is small and virtually unnoticeable. Additionally, there are no signs that I could see strategically positioned around the city and particularly downtown directing citizens and visitors to the Reserve office. It seems that little is being done currently to take advantage of existing opportunities to advertise the existence of the building and drive people to make use of it. At the recent tour of the property proposed for a new building next to the water district’s new “educational” river development, the comment was made by one in the tour group that education could be done there much more cheaply than building a new facility. I agree completely. I know that jobs are important and that ours seems to forever be a construction-based economy. However, building a facility when perhaps none is needed, adding more traffic to a road projected to not sustain the future traffic, while missing other opportunities and squandering money that could be used for other reserve-related needs seems unreasonable and unjustified.”

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Bob Sandberg mentioned that since the newspaper articles have come out regarding the recent grant explained in item 5-e-3, Mike Eager (who holds mining claims in zone 4) sent a letter to the County Commission similar to an earlier letter he sent to BLM. The BLM has put requirements on Mr. Eager’s mining operations to help protect the tortoise. Mr. Eager felt that if in-holdings, grazing permits, and such are being bought out then his mining rights should be bought out as well.

8. ADJOURN

MOTION by Chris Hart to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.
Minutes prepared by Amber Stocks.