

HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular meeting** of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held in the Washington City Council Chambers on **August 26, 2014**.

Committee members present were:

Chris Blake, Chairman	Environmental Organization
John Bramall, Vice Chairman	Mayors Association
Henry Maddux	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Chris Hart	Local Development
Jimmy Tyree	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
Bob Sandberg	HCP Administrator

Also present were:

Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP – Recorder
Cameron Rognan	Washington County HCP – Biologist
Doreen Bowers-Irons	Washington County Planning and Building
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commissioner
Jodi Borgeson	Deputy County Attorney
Jim Raines	Land Development Consultants
Eric Holt	Stantec
Bette Arial	Senator Lee's Office
Lisa Rutherford	Citizen
Paul VanDam	Citizen
Barry Blake	Washington City Leisure Services

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chris Blake 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 Meeting Minutes**
 1. **July 22, 2014**
- c. **Next Meeting Date**
 1. **September 23, 2014**
- d. **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

MOTION by Chris Hart to approve the consent agenda.
Seconded by Marc Mortensen.
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. **Discussion and possible action on 2nd quarter report**

MOTION by Chris Hart to accept the 2nd quarter report.

Seconded by Jon Bramall.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

b. Land Acquisition update (Bob Sandberg/Jimmy Tyree)

Jimmy Tyree asked who was awarded the cultural contract. Bob Sandberg reported there were 13 proposals on the cultural resources inventory for potential land exchange parcels. The County HCP has been trying to assist the BLM with gaining information needed in order for them to complete their EA. The proposal selected was the BYU Office of Public Archeology, they were the successful and apparent low bidder. There is a plan for Bob to get together with them on the 8th of September, and they will get to work that week.

Larry Crist raised a question of the overall timeline. He asked if there are any major stumbling blocks expected in the process. He stressed it is important to get the land acquisitions done as soon as possible. Jimmy Tyree answered that the period of performance for the county's cultural contract will go until December 8th. From those results and the reports that come back, information will be used to come up with the final boundaries that would be proposed to take into the land exchange. If there are strong cultural issues, parts of the potential exchange parcels may need to be cut out. The next four to five months will be used to determine the configuration of what parcels will be taken into the process. After those decisions are made, an environmental assessment will begin and we will start working on the plan amendment, which will then go through public involvement.

c. Discussion on SCSP road/trail improvement & bathroom replacement

Kristen Comella stated she had two proposals to address. The first proposal was the road shoulder expansion in Snow Canyon State Park. There is a need for walkers and cyclists to get to the top of the canyon without competing with cars. Currently, the

Whiptail Trail is paved but ends at the Upper Galoot parking lot. In 1997, a route was identified for off road travel but the last 1.5 miles was not a viable option due to habitat impact and expense. The proposed solution, after speaking to the engineer, was to extend the shoulders on both the east and west side of the road four feet to facilitate walkers and cyclists for the last 1.5 miles of the trail, impacting 1.5 acres of habitat.

Henry Maddux questioned as to why just one side of the road could not be expanded as opposed to both. Kristen answered that the engineer came back and said both sides of the road had to be done, but that is a good question and she will look into it. There is a possibility, once they conduct more research, they may come back with a suggestion that doesn't involve both sides of the road being affected. John Bramall stated from an engineering viewpoint, they may suggest shouldering both sides because the road will hold up much longer.

MOTION by Larry Crist to assign the road shoulder expansion proposal to the Technical Committee to negotiate habitat effect.

Seconded by Jon Bramall.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The second proposal made by Kristen Comella was in regards to the Lower Galoot restroom facility replacement. Currently, the picnic area uses a single vault compost toilet that was installed in 1999 and was intended for 21,000 uses a year, which is exceeded. They are trying to secure a double flush facility for the site that will be tied into existing septic. Funding is pending. The existing unit is 8x5 and the new one will have a 20x20 footprint so there is an additional area impacted. Marc Mortensen questioned the general location. Kristen commented it will be in the same general location relative to where the current septic is. The exact location has not been identified yet. A short discussion regarding the restroom facilities occurred.

MOTION by Chris Hart to assign the Lower Galoot restroom facility replacement proposal to the Technical Committee.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

Chris Hart commended Kristen on the way she has worked with the committees and citizen groups and the progress they've made.

d. Technical Committee Report (Nathan Brown)

Nathan Brown reported the TC has gone over the restoration project grant proposals. They will be sending 1-3 proposals this year for funding consideration. He mentioned that Cameron Rognan is working with SUU on the trail impact monitoring proposal. Cameron will keep working with SUU to incorporate some monitoring as well as restoration work in localized spots on the Reserve.

e. Discussion and possible action on the Green Spring trail access change

Exhibit 5-e-1 was presented showing the proposed development and the proposed Green Springs Trailhead area. There was discussion last meeting regarding possible options for trailheads in this area. Nathan Brown reported there is only one public road that will remain once the development surrounding the current trailhead is completed. There is potential people will park on the street, instead of at the City Park where they should park. This could create an illegal trail access to avoid walking through a neighborhood where they might feel unwelcome. He feels the better place for an access point is on the public street and not where the public has to park a half mile away and walk through a neighborhood.

Marc Mortensen believes the solution for a trailhead in the development is better than others he has seen, such as Paradise Canyon. However, he believes the proposed trailhead does not address the full problem. People will still have to park at the City Park, get out, and walk through a private community up to the trail head. Using the public street, would be more convenient and better utilized by the public.

Chris Hart asked what would happen if the decision were made to put the trailhead off the public street. Nathan responded that decision would be fine. Kristen Comella then reported that area is right up against a wash which does not accommodate cyclists. Having a trailhead in the wash would reduce the use to only hiking, since it is not cyclist friendly. Cameron suggested utilizing the trail that connects to the Ice House, which is another preferred route. He added how difficult it would be to connect a new trail from the wash to the Ice House trail because of the steep topography. He suggested following the existing old road because it is the best route.

A discussion regarding parking areas occurred, which included parking on the shoulder of the public road. Jim Raines, developer said the city will not allow parking on the public road. Jim mentioned they will put 4-6 parking stalls wherever the trailhead is located. John Bramall also mentioned the need for a place to stage fire trucks in case of fire.

Chris Hart mentioned the potential problems residents of the development might have is trail users walking by their homes. He has an issue with creating a trailhead where people feel like they are trespassing to get to it. Marc's opinion is to place the trailhead

near the public street to allow for public access. Jim Raines stated with the new proposed solution, he still cannot foresee and solve any possible future HOA issues. Jim thinks access to the Reserve is a plus to the development. They will accommodate any 1 or all 3 of the trailheads, if needed, in order for there to be a trailhead within the development.

The new trail access that is being proposed in the development (#3 on exhibit 5-e-1) is at an old road, but it is still heavily used by the public as a trail. The current Cottontail trail is not heavily used, is sandy, and is not conducive to cyclists or equestrians.

The HCAC then considered the option of accepting both trailheads #1 and #3. Both trails already exist and would likely continue to get used in the future. The TC initially only offered one access site to reduce habitat impacts, but the HCAC felt that if you have public trails you should have public parking to go with it. Jim Raines said the development would prefer both access points if possible. He believes that they would be valuable to the development and they are willing to put public parking stalls at both locations if necessary. Larry Crist mentioned that the purpose of the Reserve is to protect habitat for desert tortoises first and that recreation is a second consideration.

MOTION by John Bramall to install 4 or 5 parking spaces at access #1 and #3.

Seconded by Chris Hart.

Discussion: Question for the technical committee regarding the habitat impact concern they have with having two accesses.

Kristen Comella stated the TC's original proposal was to create access #1 and not have two access points to reduce habitat impact. Cameron Rognan agreed but said that trail usage will increase in the area as the development goes up and having two options to alleviate the illegal usage could be helpful. Bob agreed that it may keep more people on the existing trail rather than creating their own trails. It does provide a loop if there are two access points.

MOTION by John Bramall to have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 parking spaces at both access #1 and #3. There will also be a firefighter gate installed at option #3.

Seconded by Chris Hart.

Discussion: None

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

f. Discussion and possible action on the Winchester South trail and access

Bob showed Exhibit 5-f-1 which was a map highlighting the Winchester South trail access. He explained that the trail shown in green is what shows on the current visitor map. Bob believes, when that was chosen, it was chosen in error. The green trail does not really exist and the terrain there is steep and not user friendly. The Winchester North trailhead is on private property and they do not currently allow public parking. The proposal is that the trails in green will disappear and the trail in red, which is currently used and existing, will be the new one shown on the new visitor map. Bob has been working with the BLM, land owners and developers to provide public access to the trail. Current access is dangerous and difficult and people don't feel comfortable about using it.

MOTION by John Bramall to delete green trail and incorporate red trail into the new map.
Seconded by Marc Mortensen.
Discussion: None
Vote Was Taken: All voted aye.
Motion Passed.

A 5 minute recess was declared by John Bramall at 2:10 p.m. The committee reconvened at 2:18 p.m.

g. Discussion and possible action on HCP draft budget 2015

Bob showed Exhibit 5-g-1, draft budget, and mentioned little has changed from the last meeting. Under the professional and technical category, \$10,000 was added to line item 310 as a contingency for the Take Permit renewal. In a previous meeting, expenses related to renewing the permit was discussed and if there are was going to be enough funds to cover any additional cost to the Take Permit. This is just a contingency in the event additional funds are needed.

MOTION by Henry Maddux to forward the 2015 draft budget to county officials for their review and approval.
Seconded by John Bramall.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

h. HCP Administrator's report (Bob Sandberg)

1. Administrative Assistant Introduction

Bob Sandberg introduced the new HCP Administrative Assistant, Lacey McIntyre, and thanked Doreen Bowers-Irons for stepping in to help with minutes for this meeting.

2. Maintenance activities in the Reserve

Bob Sandberg reported the HCP worked with St. George City to repair a city water line break, which was located on Reserve land. The HCP also recently worked with Washington City to get a city well back up and running which was also located in the Reserve.

3. Washington County Fair Booth

Bob reported that, though he did not have the exact numbers, but a high percentage of the 45,000 people who attended the county fair stopped by the HCP booth, which was manned during the fair open hours. The booth included a live tortoise as well as a gila monster replica. The HCP staff was successful in handing out several posters, stickers, pens, bookmarks, maps and website information. Overall, the staff believed it was a great use of time and effort.

4. Update on take permit renewal

Bob updated the Committee on the Take Permit. Currently, we are working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the person contracted by the state who is working on the permit renewal and review of the HCP. That will continue to be ongoing. Larry added the person working on the renewal is Mark Capone. He will be meeting with Mark Thursday August 28th to discuss and move forward. As we go into the permit renewal, the land acquisition activities we are working on should be pressured to be completed. There is an option for a land owner to withdraw from the Reserve, but if withdrawal happens during the renewal process that would be very problematic for the renewal.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

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 commented on a recent note about possibly painting a mural on the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Visitor's Center building outside wall. She made contact with an educator she knows and they are very excited about the possibility of this project and a team of their students doing a mural. She also had a few mural examples the group had done. No costs were pursued until she knew if this was something the committee was interested in pursuing. Bob asked Lisa to get him the contact information and to work with Cornell Christensen, HCP Outreach Coordinator, to put something together. He asked her to also find out about costs and thanked her for her input and work.

Jim Raines said that Bob Brennan had asked him to thank everyone for their efforts. He said Bob is willing to work with the HCAC and strongly stressed the need for a plan in

place for the land exchange. He mentioned Bob is willing to accept less for the exchange. He knows there are a lot of issues but feels it is time to get something hammered out. John Bramall will talk with his city council and see what he can do. Larry Crist then reiterated how important it is for this to get taken care of before the permit is up in 2016. Bob Sandberg mentioned that it should be on record and acknowledged that the County and BLM have put forth great effort towards completing the land acquisitions.

7. **MEMBER REPORTS & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No items were discussed.

8. **ADJOURN**

MOTION by Chris Hart to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Henry Maddux.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.