

**HABITAT CONSERVATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A regular meeting of the Habitat Conservation Technical Committee (TC) was held in the conference room of the Washington County Administration Building, **March 5, 2015.**

Members present were:

Kristen Comella, Chairperson	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Cameron Rognan, Vice Chairman	Washington County HCP
Ann McLuckie	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Tim Croissant	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Absent and Excused was:

Marshall Topham	Local Biologist
Nathan Brown	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Also present were:

Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP Administrator
Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP Recorder
Wayne Pace	Sons of Utah Pioneers
Art Partridge	Dixie Encampment Chapter
Richard Kohler	Washington County Historical Society

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Kristen Comella noted a quorum existed and called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a. February 12, 2015**

**MOTION** by Cameron Rognan to approve the minutes.

Seconded by Tim Croissant.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**3. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion of SUU future projects**

Cameron mentioned a project that was recently done with BLM on the Halfway Wash trail. Some of the trail was rehabilitated, illegal trails were obliterated, and signs were fixed. He suggested a good project for SUU may be a continuation of that project at

Chuckwalla. The Chuckwalla and Beck Hill areas are two good areas that need erosion fixes and social trails obliterated. Cameron envisions a project that will fix issues long term, such as water bars or fencing. The SUU crew is planning on a project that will occur over two work days, but they may be able to do a longer project. Chuckwalla parallel to Halfway Wash is a priority. Tim will talk with Dave at the BLM to discuss if the BLM has a specific fix they would like to use in that area. There is an old access road to get materials in if they decide to work on the eroded areas. A second priority, in case the Chuckwalla area does not work with the BLM, includes obliterating social trails in the Toe Trail area.

**b. Discussion creation of fuel breaks**

Tim sprayed all of Cottonwood Road, yet there were some small isolated areas that were too rocky. The areas untreated could be grazed by a small group of goats or weed whacked by a prison crew. It is not a large area so it may be more efficient to use weed whackers as opposed to bringing in a group of goats. Cameron also suggested, if the workers on the crew are not busy weed whacking, they can be used to fix any remaining holes in the tortoise fencing. The crew could also be used to remove tumbleweed. Bob Sandberg suggested the work begin in about 3 weeks due to the weather and current rains possibly causing unusual germination. Bob will speak with the Sheriff's office and ask about getting the inmate crew scheduled.

**MOTION** by Cameron Rognan to treat areas not previously sprayed with the prison work crew using weed whackers. The HCP will work with BLM to allow for the crew to also conduct tumbleweed removal. Once the HCP discovers the costs and time line for obtaining the prison crew, they will reassess this option. If it is more economical, the second option of a small group of goats will be pursued.

Seconded by Ann McLuckie.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**c. Discussion and possible action on proposed Quarry Trail**

Wayne Pace (National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers), Art Partridge (Dixie Encampment Chapter), and Richard Kohler (Washington County Historical Society), presented exhibit 3-c-1 proposing a new trail to the St. George Sandstone Quarry. The proposed trail would begin near the Red Hills Golf Course maintenance shed on 700 West. It would follow an existing path east and head south 1/6<sup>th</sup> of a mile toward the quarry. Exhibit 3-c-2 shows the actions they would like the technical committee to make including:

1. Marking the boundaries between City property and HCP property.
2. Designating a member of the Technical Committee to select a point in the fence where an opening would be created for those on the pathway to cross the fence from the City property onto habitat property.

3. Authorize the Sons of Utah Pioneers to prepare a primitive pathway from the north boundary of the reserve, along the north boundary and south to the quarry, an approximate distance of 1/6<sup>th</sup> of a mile.
4. Authorize the Sons of Utah Pioneers to erect a Monument to the Quarry made out of local sandstone.
5. Authorize the Sons of Utah Pioneers to erect five informative plaques to serve as markers on a self-guided tour of the quarry. Examples of the plaques the group wishes to have made and located throughout the trail are also included in Exhibit 3-c-2.

This proposal has previously been brought to the committee. Cameron mentioned constructing a new trail and mitigating tortoise impacts was going to cause a lot of effort so they settled on the monument at the end of the Owen's Loop trail. Wayne mentioned that did not meet the group's ultimate objectives.

Kristen suggested the committee follow protocol and first take a field trip to the site in order to assess potential habitat loss or other potential trail options. The Technical Committee will meet at the end of 700 West near the maintenance shed at 9 am prior to the April 9<sup>th</sup> committee meeting.

#### **4. OTHER REPORTS FROM TC MEMBERS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**a.** Cameron mentioned there were many discussions about ravens at the recent tortoise symposium. He is going to make an effort to evaluate if the Reserve has a raven predation problem by figuring out where the ravens are and what they are doing. If the committee members see raven nests or roost sites he asked that they let him know.

**b.** Ann mentioned the first culvert on the left side of Red Hills Parkway headed toward SR-18 has a lot of debris backup due to summer storms. It may become impassable for tortoises due to the debris build up. Ann wanted to know who would be responsible for maintenance on the culverts. Bob answered UDOT was involved with the construction but St. George City may be responsible for maintaining the culverts. Ann thinks the material just needs to be redistributed and can be done by a few workers or prison crew. The other culverts on Red Hills are in decent shape so the only one needing serious labor is the first one. Bob said he would call Eric Hansen and see what he could find out about the responsibility on those culverts.

**c.** Ann reported to the committee that the habitat restoration project will most likely be funded by the Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI). There has been no official word yet, but it is a high priority project for WRI. Tim mentioned the BLM put in a parallel report, as a backup plan, that may get funded as well. The BLM also put in for interns through the Seeds for Success program. That could be an option for obtaining a portion of the local seeds needed for the upcoming UNLV habitat restoration project.

**d.** Bob mentioned the fence along the Ivins dike has been completed. He

asked Kristen if the HCP needs to put a lock on the gate. Kristen said normally they do use a County lock. Bob will make arrangements for the county lock to be put on the fence.

e. Bob reported that Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is in town planting locally collected seed including galetta and sideoats grama at Turkey Farm.

f. Ann communicated that the DWR has hired eight people to monitor tortoises. They will be starting March 23 with a field trip to the Temporary Care Facility (TCF) to meet with Justin Neighbor.

5. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

a. **April 9, 2015**

6. **ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Ann McLuckie to adjourn.  
Seconded by Tim Croissant.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.