

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, **October 09, 2014.**

Members present were:

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

Absent and excused:

Nathan Brown, Chairman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
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Also present were:

Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP Administrator
Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP Recorder
Dennis Greene	Citizen

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Kristen Comella noted a quorum existed and called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **August 14, 2014**

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. **Review projects for restoration grant proposals**

Ann McLuckie reported on the status of three previously discussed restoration grant proposals. She mentioned she met with BLM and Rhett Boswell from UDWR and they have formulated a game plan regarding when and what is needed for turning in the proposals. As for the removal of exotics, Tim Croissant can rewrite the EA. The previously written exotics proposal will stand as written although Ann would like to re-do the map to identify major washes in those areas. For the polygon restoration she mentioned they can do one polygon in the reserve that is on state land to avoid an EA.

On the Beaver Dam slope they can do it on the Woodberry Hardy plot that is already fenced. The EA on that one will be simple. She will rewrite restoration to just include those two plots. Finally, for the fuel breaks, she mentioned that EA has been completed previously for chemicals and grazing so they can use the existing EA for the Red Cliffs. She will refine the fuel breaks EA so it will encompass the maximum width of spray and put that into the Watershed Initiative program. Cameron questioned when the applications are due. Ann answered they are due sometime in January but should be in by the end of the year. She also stated there is a high chance of getting money due to threatened species and other species that would benefit.

b. Assess impacts of road expansion project in Snow Canyon State Park for potential recommendation to the HCAC

Kristen Comella expressed concern continuing with the Snow Canyon State Park discussions due to the absence of Nathan Brown. Ann suggested the committee discuss the proposals but not take action until Nathan can be present. Kristen showed Exhibit 3-b-1, which explained the current and proposed environments for a road shoulder expansion project in SCSP. Currently the paved 3-mile Whiptail Trail falls short of the top of the canyon by 1.5 miles. This creates a dangerous environment for walkers and cyclists, who are then forced to share the narrow road with cars as they head to the top of the canyon. In 1997 a route was identified that would run the length of the canyon, however, the last 1.5 miles were not constructed due to significant habitat disturbances and high cost. An alternative solution was to close the southbound lane to vehicles and convert it to a pedestrian/cycling lane, which was widely unpopular and never implemented. This proposal is to expand the road shoulders on both the east and west sides of Snow Canyon Drive from the Upper Galoot parking lot north to SR-18. The road ways would be expanded by 4 feet on both sides and would impact approximately 1.5 acres of habitat. Ann questioned why the road needs to be expanded on both sides. Kristen answered that she was told by the engineer it would need to be 4 feet on each side, yet, that is something that can be discussed further with him as the project proceeds. Kristen suggested the committee take a field trip to SCSP and look at the road in person during the next TC meeting.

c. Review restroom improvement project at Lower Galoot in SCSP for potential recommendation to the HCAC

Kristen showed Exhibit 3-c-1 which described the current restroom facility at Lower Galoot. This facility is a single vault restroom designed to handle 21,000 uses a year and is receiving well over capacity. The proposal is for a double vault restroom facility that would require approximately a 20' x 20' footprint. It would tie into an existing septic tank and leach field as well as existing on-site electric utilities. The project would be completed by July 2015. The committee agreed that a field trip to Snow Canyon next meeting will be beneficial to assess the area. Ann mentioned another meeting the committee members have on November 20th and suggested moving the TC meeting in order to combine those meetings to one day. The TC agreed to move the next regular

committee meeting to November 20th and meet at the Lower Galoot parking lot in Snow Canyon State Park at 9:30 am.

d. Discuss flooding and drainage problems at Eagle Rock – Dennis Greene

Eagle Rock resident, Dennis Greene, discussed the flooding in his backyard due to recent flooding on the Reserve. A few years ago Ivins city came and dug up the wall bordering the reserve and his back yard. They then used black tar to prevent water from seeping through the wall. It worked well for a while, but the last two flooding events have caused seepage into the yard. Dennis prefers to not do any damage to the Reserve so he suggested perhaps just redoing the tar or putting a drainage system along the wall, on the reserve side, which will allow the water to flow to a common area within Eagle Rock. Kristen reported that the problem Dennis is having has gone back to 2006. At that time, Ivins city built up a berm in the reserve that they are responsible for maintaining. After the second of the recent storms the berm breeched and funneled right into the corner at Dennis' property. The first thing that needs to happen would be to have Ivins go in and build back up that berm. Then, she will see if Ivins will come back in and redo the tar on the wall. The idea of a drainage system that would drain to the common area in Eagle Rock was not accepted in 2006 by the HOA. Dennis believes, if that is an option, he could convince the HOA to allow it. Kristen believes it is worth asking Ivins if they would be willing to engineer and install a drain for long term fix, if Dennis can get the HOA to agree to that solution. Ann recommended doing any work surrounding this issue during the inactive season, as not to disturb the tortoises.

e. Review Ivins City proposal to maintain the existing Eagle Rock flood control and diversion dike and make recommendation on proposal

Kristen Comella showed where the berm is located from the work that was done in 2006. The City of Ivins created a berm on an old existing road to protect Eagle Rock from flooding. It recently breeched in at least four spots. The committee discussed a few options to fix the flooding problem. Option 1 is to permit Ivins to come in, during the inactive window, and fix the berm. Option two is to permit Ivins to come in, during the inactive window, and repair the berm and extend it to the roadway. Some of the water is coming around the corner of the existing berm, which is causing buildup and continual fence rebuilding. The concern is that, over time, the walls of Vermillion Cliffs will be breeched due to the water and sediment build up. Kristen believes that, with the debris that has been built up, they can extend the berm to the road without bringing in outside materials. Ann asked if the berm is low enough for tortoises to cross. Kristen answered that it is about 1-2 feet high. She also mentioned they will probably need a back hoe to move the amount of debris that needs to be moved. Cameron suggested they use as much material from the site as can be used in order to limit the amount of material they have to bring in for the project. The committee also agreed, if a tortoise burrow is found, that area will be flagged and worked around to minimize tortoise disturbance.

MOTION by Ann McLuckie to extend the berm to the paved road and complete the construction during the inactive period while using as much materials on site as possible.

Seconded by Cameron Rognan.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

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

a. **Update on Southern Corridor Project**

Cameron Rognan reported the fencing issues are being completed now and should be done soon. Cameron, Ann, Nathan, and a few volunteers from UDOT are scheduled to be there clearing on Tuesday the 14th and possibly the 15th. If any live tortoises are found there will be additional days added to the clearance.

b. **Additional reports by the TC**

Cameron reported the contract for the SUU monitoring project is almost finalized. SUU will be in the reserve on the 24th and 31st of October, focusing on the Snow Canyon area. This year they have decided to focus on all Red Cliffs Desert Reserve trails west of SR-18. SUU will also be available to do a spring project. By November or December, the TC will need to identify a project or specific trails for which they feel would be best to have SUU focus their attention.

Ann reported on fencing needing to be repaired due to flood damage. She mentioned the damage to the Red Hills parkway area. Bob Sandberg reported that Justin Neighbor is taking prison crews out for maintenance the 14th and 16th of October. Also, there are three volunteers from ACE coming to work with Ann on fencing at Cottonwood Road east along the southern boundary of the reserve. Kristen mentioned a big fence blow out near Tuacahn as well. Bob mentioned that if he could get the prison crews for more days he will try and do so.

Tim Croissant mentioned a land auction of about 160 acres will take place on October 28th in the BLM office conference room. The proceeds from that auction will go to acquiring private land within the reserve.

Kristen Comella requested to have the TC go back to formal, written recommendations to present to the HCAC. That will make it easier to hand to the HCAC members so they know exactly what the TC recommends.

5. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

a. **November 20, 2014**

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 11:00 a.m.
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.