

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, **November 20, 2014.**

Members present were:

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

Also present were:

Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP Administrator
Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nathan Brown noted a quorum existed and called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. October 9, 2014

Page 2, paragraph 1, sentence 1: changed,

From: “On the Beaver Dam slope they can do it on the ~~Blueberry~~ Hardy plot that is already fenced.”

To: “On the Beaver Dam slope they can do it on the Woodbury-Hardy plot that is already fenced.”

Page 2, paragraph 2, sentence 6: changed,

From: “She will refine the fuel breaks EA so it will encompass the maximum width of spray and put that into the Watershed ~~Initiate~~ program.”

To: ““She will refine the fuel breaks EA so it will encompass the maximum width of spray and put that into the Watershed Initiative program.”

Page 4, paragraph 3, sentence 4: change,

From: “Also, there are three volunteers from ACE coming to work with Ann on fencing at ~~Turkey Farm~~ walking east along the southern boundary of the reserve.”

To: “Also, there are three volunteers from ACE coming to work with Ann on fencing at Cottonwood Road walking east along the southern boundary of the reserve.

MOTION by Kristen Comella to approve the minutes as amended.

Seconded by Tim Croissant.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

3. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

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

The Technical Committee took a fieldtrip to Snow Canyon State Park to assess the area to be affected for the proposed shoulder expansion project. The road improvement proposal is to create a bike and hiking travel lane to be placed on both sides of the road as a shoulder, expanding the road 4 feet on each side. This new travel lane will allow safe travel to the top of the canyon off the main road, where cars pose a threat. This improvement will affect 1.5 acres of habitat. There is certainly a loss of habitat, however the current condition of this area is a safety concern for users. There was discussion concerning whether this is a project the HCP can vote on without needing mitigation. Kristen Comella mentioned how SCSP has restored and revegetated road shoulders from the south entrance of the park to Jenny’s Canyon and wanted to factor in some of the work they have previously done to designate parking, keep people off shoulders, and revegetate shoulders.

Nathan Brown expressed concern over voting and not applying the MOG principles across the board. Ann McLuckie agreed they do not want to set precedence. Because the area does not include any section 6 land Nathan believes that it could be up to a TC vote, however, he stressed how this was not a clear cut issue. Kristen suggested they do the MOG ratio to factor in the results. Cameron Rognan got the MOG formula to ensure they thoroughly complete the exercise. He read the MOG category requirements, and the TC discovered the MOG ratio is 4 to 1 which equals 6 acres. In order for clarification regarding if the HCP administration would need to be involved, Cameron read the Road Maintenance and Improvement Section of the HCP which states, “Maintenance and improvement work may be conducted without coordination with HCP administration on 1-15, Highway 18, Tuachan Road, Snow Canyon State Park Road, and Red Hills Parkway”. The TC discussed if this SCSP project would be considered more of an improvement project rather than expansion.

Ann asked if the funding is ready for this project. Kristen will pursue funding if the project is approved. She said this project has been on the Park’s priority list for years. There are more users bringing this issue up now, which may help secure the funding.

Cameron asked about putting this project out as a new trail and trying to secure grants and funding for it that way. Kristen does not think the possibility of someone to help fund later should play a part in the decision of the TC. Instead she thinks the TC needs to agree on a decision as a committee to say whether pursuing the improvement and expansion project further is approved or not.

The HCP clearly states the allowance of improvement projects on Snow Canyon State Park Road without HCP administration input. Kristen said this project certainly does improve the road, however she does not want to improve the road in the lower canyon as well. There are trails in the lower canyon, however, that give users safe access meaning a similar improvement is not needed there. The TC discussed options to fund the project however, Kristen reminded the committee that she will have to pursue funding later and right now they just need a vote on whether to move to the next step in the process or not. The TC agreed this is more of an improvement and safety project than an expansion and therefore can be put to a vote by the TC. Nathan and Cameron suggested Kristen modify the proposal to be a road improvement and emphasize the health and human safety issue. Kristen agreed to change the language. The committee agreed that this project is a road improvement project clearly identified in the HCP, and it should be allowed to move forward based on safety concerns for users.

MOTION by Tim Croissant to approve the road improvement project in Snow Canyon State Park due to human health and safety concerns for users.

Seconded by Cameron Rognan.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

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

The committee also assessed the restroom facility area while at Snow Canyon State Park. It is an existing infrastructure upgrade, and SCSP will minimize habitat impacts.

MOTION by Marshall Topham to approve the restroom facility improvement at Lower Galoot in Snow Canyon State Park.

Seconded by Ann McLuckie.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

c. Discussion of Eagle Rock drainage addition

Kristen updated the committee on the berm repair and possible extension in the Eagle Rock subdivision. She reported that Ivins City is only going to repair the existing berm but not extend it, due to budgetary restrictions. The extension will be put in the MOU but it will be funding dependent. Exhibit 3-c-1 showed a separate proposal to put in a drainage ditch immediately behind Dennis Greene's property in Eagle Rock. The addition of a drainage ditch about 24 inches deep, right up against the fence, will allow water to flow into a common space within Eagle Rock. This addition will cause a small habitat loss, but there is not a lot of vegetation along the wall. If there is vegetation that gets removed for the ditch they can replace it. The ditch will also be sloped to allow tortoises to get out if they get into the ditch. The TC decided to visit this area during the next meeting to assess the habitat loss.

MOTION by Tim Croissant to table the issue and visit the site during the next meeting.

Seconded by Cameron Rognan.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

d. Discussion of tortoise health assessment

Cameron mentioned there are 3 tortoises, which were showing signs and tested positive for upper respiratory tract disease (URTD), being held by the HCP that came from the Reserve. He would like clarification on what the policy is for a long term solution for these animals. Ann mentioned the current policy is that if they test Elisa positive they are not to be placed back into the Reserve, but to be placed into the captive tortoise program. Cameron asked if these three should be sent to the captive adoption program or put back into the Reserve. Ann preferred that these three tortoises be discussed between her and Nathan, and this issue not be brought to the TC. Kristen believed that Ann and Nathan were to come up with a modified standard because this is a recurring issue that needs to have a standard decided for all tortoises. This is not a TC decision and instead is something that Ann and Nathan need to confer on.

MOTION by Kristen Comella for UDWR and FWS to confer and develop a standard protocol for sick tortoises. These particular three tortoises will be kept in the temporary care facility pending the outcome of UDWR and FWS discussions.

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. None

5. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

- a. January 8, 2015

6. **ADJOURN**

MOTION by Cameron Rognan to adjourn.

Seconded by Tim Croissant.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.