



QUARTERLY REPORT

First Quarter 2015
 To the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee
 From the Habitat Conservation Plan Administrator
 April 28, 2015

Introduction:

Quarterly reports are due in January, April, July and October of each year. Page 107 of the Habitat Conservation Plan cites what information will be included and which agency or entity (Washington County, USFWS, BLM, UDNR, & Ivins) will provide it.

The first segment of this Quarterly Report deals with general items not associated with clearing and removing tortoises while the latter half will provide details on these and related items.

RESERVE MANAGEMENT

Administration:

- HCP staff remained involved in the Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) process for the Beaver Dam Slope and the Upper Virgin River recovery units by participating in webinars and conference calls as well as responding to information requests and submitting project proposals for consideration.
- The HCP staff worked with the County Commission to complete an application to USFWS for the renewal of the HCP and associated incidental take permit during the quarter.
- Staff accompanied the County Commission to the Quad State Local Governments meeting.
- Staff and County Commission met with BLM to discuss the BLM travel management plan and RMP planning issues.

Fire Management:

- HCP staff assisted Agricultural Research Service out of Logan, Utah with spring planting for their study of restoration methods and provided support when they installed automated weather stations at the plots.

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- HCP staff attended the Lower Virgin River Fire Council meetings to ensure Reserve involvement in fire related issues.
- HCP staff met with ARS, DWR, and BLM to determine a course of action for developing vegetation islands at the Turkey Farm that could provide information on reclamation/restoration of that area as well as other areas of the Reserve.

Utility Projects

- HCP staff completed a walk-thru and follow up with UDOT and the contractor at the completion of the SR-18, Red Hills Parkway, and Snow Canyon Parkway intersection project.
- HCP staff continued involvement with the entities participating on the Ivins Dam maintenance project and berm reconstruction in Snow Canyon State Park.
- HCP Staff trained and monitored road construction crews for improvements on Indian Hills Drive.
- HCP staff monitored well and waterline repair work at Mill Creek and Grapevine in Washington with both the water and power departments.
- HCP Staff worked with St. George City to facilitate repair of a waterline break on the T-Bone tank line.
- Staff completed tortoise awareness training for OSMOS, a subcontractor for Rocky Mountain Power, for pole maintenance inspection work.
- HCP staff attended the Transportation Expo in St. George.

TORTOISE CLEARANCES, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Clearances Requested:

- Kayenta Wash – Ivins City
- Springdale Take Area – Home Reconstruction

Surveys Conducted:

- Kayenta Wash - Ivins City was planning to repair the culvert for Kayenta Wash at Highway 91. This area is outside of HCP take areas, but required a survey since the project received federal funding. No tortoises or sign were observed.
- Springdale - a home adjacent to the Springdale take area was undergoing significant reconstruction and they requested a survey prior to their work. We did not find any tortoises or sign in the area.

Removals Conducted:

- No tortoises or new sign were observed during any of the surveys; as a result, no tortoise removals were required.

Take animals:

- There were no captive tortoises recovered during the quarter.

- There were no "take" tortoises recovered during the quarter.
- There were 4 untested and 2 retest take animals at the TCF as of March 31, 2015.

*Attached is a report showing all tortoises processed or handled by HCP staff during the quarter.

Blood Work:

- There were no tortoises tested during the 1st quarter.
ELISA Positive: 0
ELISA Negative: 0
ELISA Suspect: 0

Translocation:

- No tortoises were translocated during the 1st quarter.

Adoption & Captive Tortoises:

- There were no tortoises placed in the DWR adoption program during the quarter.
- As of 03/31/15 there are 8 tortoises awaiting adoption at the TCF.

EDUCATION

Outreach and Education:

- Staff made 8 presentations to 328 people during the 1st quarter.
- Staff completed 7 Tortoise Awareness Training classes for 115 people. These trainings were for the southern corridor, Indian Hills Drive, and the RMP - Power Poles.
- Staff met with and responded to various requests from media for information about the Reserve.
- Continued plans with local instructors to have students paint a desert tortoise and scenic mural on the south side of HCP building. This project should begin in May.
- An infomercial was placed with Megaplex theatres in St. George and Cedar City to inform the public of the importance and use etiquette for the Reserve. The Megaplex management represented the viewership would be 80,000 per month. The commercial was also placed with the independent theatre in Hurricane.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Trails and Trailheads:

- HCP staff participated in a community project involving the Paradise Canyon HOA, Southwest Utah National Lands Friends (SUNCLF) and BLM to clean up and repair the Halfway Wash trail.

Trail stewards:

We currently have 23 active trail stewards operating on the ground. This quarter the volunteers donated a total of 299 hours of time on trail monitoring, trail maintenance, and visitor contact within the Reserve. They documented 99 visits in reporting their work, observations, and recommendations for improved management. They monitored 62 trails or areas during the quarter. All Zones of the Reserve were visited during the quarter by trail stewards. The stewards have reported instances of sign removal and replacement.

Additional Volunteer Work:

- During the quarter, 34 hours of trail steward volunteer program administration were contributed. Total Volunteer time for the quarter amounts to 333 hours.

Signage:

- The biologist installed new signs or improved signage at the following trails within the Reserve: Halfway Wash, Cottonwood Hills, Spanish Wash, Paradise Rim, Rusty Cliffs, Pioneer Rim, Cottontail, Middleton Powerline, Mill Creek, Grapevine, and Prospector.

Human Impact Monitoring:

- Continued plans with SUU to conduct a trail restoration project this spring at Paradise Canyon - Chuckwalla, Paradise Rim, and Halfway Wash are top priorities.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- During the first quarter, Washington County deputies made 831 vehicle contacts, 220 person contacts, issued 3 citations, and 5 warnings.
- HCP staff met with law enforcement personnel to review activities that have been happening in the Reserve.
- Sheriff's department detailed report is attached.

FENCING

Boundary Surveys completed:

- None

Fence Constructed:

- HCP worked with Ivins City to complete fencing of the mitigation property included in the Reserve required for the Ivins flood control dam.
- Red Mountain Estates boundary fencing was completed.

Planned Fencing:

- Ledges West boundary fencing
- Pioneer Park fencing

Vandalism:

- There were 9 occurrences cutting the fence or damaging stepovers and gates. All issues were repaired.
- The Chuckwalla restroom was damaged when interior lining was pulled from the restroom wall.

Maintenance:

- Maintenance was ongoing throughout the quarter with work being done to complete repairs due to earlier flood damage as well as vandalism and general maintenance requirements.
- Damage was noted at the Chuckwalla Trail Head where vehicles had run into the rail fence, and the restroom door was damaged when a visitor locked themselves in the restroom.

RESERVE ACQUISITIONS/BOUNDARY ISSUES:

Section 6 Acquisitions:

- The DWR is continuing to work on the acquisition of two parcels of property with USFWS Section 6 funds and have agreements with property owners for purchase. They have completed surveys of the parcels and are in the final stages of the purchase process.

BLM Acquisitions:

- BLM continues working thru their process on potential exchange parcels and gathering information needed to complete NEPA evaluations. The HCP funded cultural survey on these parcels has been completed. Several discussions have been held with the parties involved resulting in some changes in parcels being considered in the exchange. BLM is currently moving forward with the Long Valley parcel with the anticipation that it is in the best position to be completed.
- The cultural survey of the Leeds addition parcel was completed and accepted. This parcel was added to the potential exchange list after the initial cultural contract had been started. All survey data for all the parcels has now been provided to BLM to help them with the exchange decision process.

Boundary Issues:

- A small boundary issue was discovered with the survey of the DWR Sec. 6 acquisition of the Middleton property.

RESERVE MONITORING

UDWR biological monitoring

- UDWR trained a new field crew for the 2015 season and began monitoring during

the last week of March.

- Cooperative agreements with DWR for tortoise monitoring funding, SWFL monitoring, and fencing were approved by the Commission and returned to DWR.

OTHER SPECIES

- Confluence Park
- Work was completed on Center Street and SR 9 trail access into Confluence Park, and Hurricane City is working on design of the Main Street trailhead in an effort to complete the projects included in the Confluence Access Points grant.

Attached reports:

HCP staff training received
Tortoises processed by HCP Staff
Outreach and education presentations
Tortoise awareness training provided
Trail steward volunteers
WCSO quarterly summary
UDWR report