



QUARTERLY REPORT

Third Quarter 2015
To the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee
From the Habitat Conservation Plan Administrator
October 27, 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 and technical committee have worked to develop agreements and provide funding to UNLV as participants of the RIT project to develop vegetation islands within burned habitat inside the Reserve and on Beaver Dam Slope.
- HCP staff participated in meetings with the Quad State Organization.
- HCP biologist, Cameron Rognan, attended USFWS Desert Tortoise Health Assessment Training in Phoenix, AZ to stay current with the latest techniques in determining tortoise health.
- Work is continuing with the efforts to renew the permit in coordinating with the contractor and responses for information and clarification of items.
- Significant amounts of staff time have been spent working on the land acquisition efforts to assist in facilitating those.

Fire Management:

- HCP staff continued to work with and support the DWR and Agricultural Research Service in their study of restoration methods and adapted plant species at the Turkey Farm.

Washington County HCP
Quarterly Report
3rd Quarter 2015
October 27, 2015

- HCP staff continued its involvement with the Lower Virgin River Fire Council, Washington County Emergency Management, and County Fire Warden to stay coordinated on fire related issues. Fortunately, no fires have occurred in the Reserve thus far this year.
- The Kolbs Company completed its contract to create a fire break along portions of Cottonwood Road using goats to eat the vegetation. This was an experiment to see if the goats would reduce the tumbleweeds, which they did a good job with.

Utility Projects

- Rocky Mountain Power completed soil test boring adjacent to the Middleton Substation in preparation of line upgrades.
- Monitored repair of St. George City water leaks at Middleton and Kachina Cliffs.
- Trained construction crews for road repairs on Telegraph Street, Washington.

TORTOISE CLEARANCES, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Clearances Requested:

- None

Surveys Conducted:

- None

Removals Conducted:

- None

Take animals:

- There was 1 captive tortoise recovered during the quarter.
- There were 5 "take" tortoises recovered during the quarter.
- There were 2 untested take animals at the TCF as of September 30.

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

Blood Work:

- There were 6 tortoises tested during the 3rd quarter.
 - ELISA Positive: 2
 - ELISA Negative: 2
 - ELISA Suspect: 2

Translocation:

- There were 2 tortoises translocated during the 3rd quarter.

Adoption & Captive Tortoises:

- There were 0 tortoises placed in the DWR adoption program during the quarter.
- As of 09/30/15 there were 2 tortoises awaiting adoption at the TCF.

EDUCATION

Outreach and Education:

- Staff made 8 presentations to 3,774 people during the 3rd quarter.
- Staff completed 9 Tortoise Awareness Training classes for 81 people. These trainings were for Indian Hills Drive, Southern Parkway, St. George City wastewater, and Telegraph Road.
- Staff met with and responded to various requests from media for information about the Reserve.
- The project to paint a desert tortoise and scenic mural on the south side of the HCP building was finished during the quarter and a new Red Cliffs Desert Reserve sign was also installed next to the mural.
- Staff set up and operated a booth for four days at the annual Washington County Fair. Estimates indicate there were nearly 45,000 attendees to the Fair.
- MRW Design developed a draft site plan at Pioneer Park for a possible site for a new education center / office space for the HCP.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Trails and Trailheads:

- A challenging proposal for a trail to a historic rock quarry near Red Hills Golf course was evaluated by the Technical Committee, presented to the HCAC, and ultimately approved with modifications and conditions.

Trail stewards:

We currently have 19 active trail stewards operating on the ground. This quarter the volunteers donated a total of 205.5 hours of time on trail monitoring, trail maintenance, and visitor contact within the Reserve. They documented 66 visits in reporting their work and observations. They monitored 62 trails or areas during the quarter. Zones 1-4 of the Reserve were visited during the quarter by trail stewards. Observations and concerns included signs being down or moved, off trail use, trail maintenance needed or completed, and dogs on and off leash.

Additional Volunteer Work:

- During the quarter, 24.5 hours of trail steward volunteer program administration were contributed. Total Volunteer time for the quarter amounts to 230 hours.

Signage:

- The biologist installed new signs or improved signage at the following trails within the Reserve: Prospector, City Creek, Owen's Loop, Brook's Nature Trail, Dino Cliffs, Chuckwalla, Rusty Cliffs, and Bone Wash.

Human Impact Monitoring:

- HCP staff is working with SUU to schedule the monitoring of specific trails this fall as part of the ongoing monitoring effort.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- During the third quarter, Washington County deputies made 284 vehicle contacts, 227 person contacts, issued 4 citations, and 7 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:

- None

Planned Fencing:

- Ledges West boundary fencing
- Pioneer Park fencing

Vandalism:

- There were 7 occurrences of cutting the fence or damaging stepovers and gates. All issues were repaired.

Maintenance:

- Maintenance is an ongoing issue created from sources such as washouts from heavy rain storms, another vehicle leaving the roadway and going thru the fence near Pioneer Hills Parking area, or vandalism as noted above.

RESERVE ACQUISITIONS/BOUNDARY ISSUES:

Section 6 Acquisitions:

- The HCP administrator met with UDNR and UDWR representatives to determine how to most effectively use the remaining funding from the 2013 Sec. 6 grant in meeting the goals of the HCP.

BLM Acquisitions:

- BLM Director approval was received on the proposed Long Valley exchange, which allowed work to proceed on that very important project.

Boundary Issues:

- None

RESERVE MONITORING

- UDWR completed tortoise monitoring in the Reserve for the 2015 season in June. The information will now be compiled and a report issued in 2016.
- HCP intern, Mark Draper, was a great help assisting the biologist in monitoring raven nest and roost sites within the Reserve. Mark completed his internship and returned to school during the quarter.

OTHER SPECIES

- Confluence Park
- Work on the Main Street Trail Head in Hurricane City continues to progress. Work is nearly complete on the restroom and the information panels have been delivered. Some informational signage is still being worked on and the parking lot should be completed soon.
- Alpha Engineering submitted a draft irrigation line design for review by the County and partners in the Confluence Park project.

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

