

# HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular meeting** of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held in the Washington City Council Chambers on **February 23, 2016**.

Committee members present were:

Chris Blake, Chairman	Environmental Organization
Chris Hart, Vice Chairman	Local Development
Henry Maddux	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)
Dawna Ferris-Rowley	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
Bob Sandberg	HCP Administrator

Absent and Excused were:

Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
John Bramall	Mayor's Association

Also present were:

Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP – Recorder
Cameron Rognan	Technical Committee (HCP)
Ann McLuckie	Technical Committee (DWR)
Julie Applegate	St. George News
Bob Brennan	Brennan Holdings
Jim Raines	Brennan Holdings
Bette Arial	St. George City Councilwoman
Brian Tritle	BLM
Rob Smith	Agricultural Research Service
Jack Staub	Agricultural Research Service
Matt Robbins	Agricultural Research Service

## 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chris Blake called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

## 2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the committee for approval. The consent portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any member wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

- a. **Approval of Agenda**
- b. **Review and Approve Regular Meeting Minutes**
  1. **January 26, 2016**

- c. **Next Meeting Date**
  - 1. **March 22, 2016**

**MOTION** by Chris Hart to approve the Consent Agenda.  
Seconded by Marc Mortensen.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- a. **None**

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

a. Chris Blake mentioned that Jodi Borgeson would be late to this meeting. The committee decided to amend the agenda and move item 4a to the end of the agenda after item 6-g-3.

**MOTION** by Marc Mortensen to amend the agenda by moving item 4-a toward the end of the agenda after item 6-g-3.  
Seconded by Chris Hart.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

b. **Agricultural Research Service Turkey Farm Presentation – Staub**

Jack Staub with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) presented exhibit 4-b-1. Jack explained how their mission is to provide plant materials and management alternatives for sustainable stewardship of rangelands and pastures in the western U.S., which is a long term process. The presentation showed photographs of recent results at the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve study plot at Turkey Farm and the Beaver Dam Wash study plot. It also mentioned the breeding work ARS has been completing, evaluation techniques they are using for plant improvement, and future work they will be doing.

Jack then discussed the need for funding to hire someone part time, three or five half days a week from May to August, to help with weed control and data collection at both the Turkey Farm plot as well as the Beaver Dam Wash plot. For someone three days it would cost an estimated \$3,000 and for someone five days it would cost an estimated \$5,000. After discussion it was determined they would like to start the employee at three half days a week and if that is insufficient ARS will come back before the committee to ask for the funding for two additional half days a week. Bob will check

with the County Attorney's office to make sure the HCP can fund the project, since it is for someone to work at both the Reserve plot as well as the Beaver Dam Wash plot.

**5. UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

- a. **None**

**6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- a. **Discussion of Turkey Farm field trip**

Overall the committee agreed the work being done by ARS is valuable and could make a significant difference in the future.

**MOTION** by Chris Hart to direct Bob to pursue a part time employee for three half days a week at an estimated \$3,000 cost to assist ARS with both the Turkey Farm and Beaver Dam Wash study plots.

Seconded by Marc Mortensen.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

- b. **HCAC member appointments & Chair/Vice Chair elections**

Bob mentioned the County Commission made the following HCAC appointments: Dawna Ferris-Rowley as the BLM representative, Chris Blake as the environmental representative, and Mayor John Bramall as the Mayor's Association representative.

Chris Hart nominated Chris Blake to remain as Chairman and John Bramall to serve as Vice Chairman.

**MOTION** by Marc Mortensen to appoint Chris Blake as Chairman and appoint John Bramall as Vice Chairman of the HCAC.

Seconded by Chris Hart.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

- c. **Update on land acquisition efforts – Bob/Dawna**

Bob updated the committee that the HCP is in the process of putting together a Section 6 application in hopes to receive money to help acquire lands inside the Reserve.

Dawna mentioned the BLM is providing comments back to the Environmental Services contractor on the Environmental Assessment that has been prepared on Long Valley.

The BLM has completed an application for Land and Water Conservation funding that has a specific emphasis on sportsman and recreation access to acquire, through funding, one of the in holdings near the Virgin River and Babylon Road.

The BLM also completed an evaluation of responses received from private land in holders interested in a purchase of some of their in holdings. Responses will be sent back to those individuals.

**d. Update on permit renewal - Bob**

Bob mentioned there is not much movement on this. The HCP is still working with FWS and providing information and comments as needed. Henry added, as part of the renewal, there is work on a land acquisition plan to acquire the private in holdings.

**e. Consideration of 2015 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and annual reports**

The committee agreed the reports look complete and accurate.

**MOTION** by Chris Hart to approve the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2015 and Annual 2015 reports.  
**Seconded** by Dawna Ferris-Rowley.  
**Discussion:** None.  
**Vote was taken:** All voted aye.  
**Motion passed.**

**f. Technical Committee Report**

Cameron updated the committee on discussions at the previous Technical Committee meeting. First, he mentioned the committee received the OPMA training. Then, the committee appointed Cameron Rognan as Chairman and John Kellam as Vice Chairman. Thirdly, he mentioned a boundary discrepancy in the Reserve boundary in the area of the Palisades development. Finally, John Kellam spoke with SUNCLF (Southwest Utah National Conservation Lands Friends) who is looking for restoration/conservation volunteer work in the Reserve.

**g. HCP Administrator's Report - Bob**

**1. Desert Tortoise Council presentation**

Bob mentioned he and Cameron attended the Desert Tortoise Council Symposium in

Las Vegas, NV this past weekend. At the symposium Cameron presented a 20 year review of the HCP permit. Ann McLuckie (DWR) presented an update on tortoise monitoring results and culvert monitoring, which she will be presenting to the HCAC in a future meeting. Henry asked how the desert tortoise seems to be doing range wide. Ann answered tortoise numbers have declined but are currently stable.

## 2. Utility project maintenance

Bob updated the committee on utility projects in the Reserve. Rocky Mountain Power is almost through with their pole replacement on the line that runs to the Winchester Hills and the Ledges Area. Their environmental consultant, Stantec, will be doing reclamation work on the impact area along the right of way.

St. George City and Washington City have both been working on well replacement. St. George City is still in the process of completing work on their well #2.

## 3. Pioneer Park fencing

The contractor has virtually completed the fencing at Pioneer Park.

Chairman Chris Blake mentioned Jodi Borgeson had not arrived so they would skip item 4-a-1 and move on to public comment.

## 7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

This item is reserved for items not listed on this agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this agenda item (three minutes per person).

**a.** Bette Arial asked if there is a goal to reach where the tortoise would be delisted. Bob mentioned the goal is to get it to the point where it could be delisted, but there is no date. The numbers will have to have an upward trend for 25 years. Ann McLuckie mentioned the tortoise numbers will have to have that upward trend across the range, not just in one specific area. Wildfires, increased by non native plant invasion, have had a big impact on declining tortoise numbers in southern Utah.

**b.** Bob Brennan thanked Dawna and Brian at the BLM office for their work on the Long Valley exchange. He believes it is a big step in helping resolve his in holding situation. He mentioned a couple previously discussed alternatives for acquiring the rest of his land within the Reserve.

Chairman Blake asked if the committee should wait and see if Jodi Borgeson made it to the meeting or continue that item on next month's agenda. Bob suggested that item get continued.

**MOTION** by Chris Hart to continue the OPMA training, item 4-a-1, next meeting.

Seconded by Henry Maddux.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**8. MEMBER REPORTS & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

a. Marc Mortensen mentioned the grand opening of the new Temple Quarry Trail will be March 19<sup>th</sup>. The trail is basically complete and was mostly done through volunteer labor.

b. Chris Hart would like to know if the Commission would like the HCAC to do anything regarding the land acquisitions. Bob said he would take that question to the Commission.

**9. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Marc Mortensen to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded by Dawna Ferris-Rowley.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.