

WASHINGTON COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Technical Committee of the HCP was held **SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**, in the conference room at the Washington County Administration Building, 197 E. Tabernacle, Saint George, Utah

The views expressed at this, or any other, Technical Committee meeting do not necessarily represent the positions or views of any particular federal, state or local governmental agency, division or department. They are solely the opinions of the individual members of this Technical Committee.

Members present were:

Ann McLuckie, Chairperson	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Bob Douglas, Vice Chairperson	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bob Sandberg	Washington County HCP
Kristen Comella	Snow Canyon State Park (SCSP)
Marshall Topham	Local biologist

Absent and excused was:

Renee Chi	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
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Also present were:

Lynne Scott	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dave Kiel	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dr. Pam Foti	Northern Arizona University (NAU)
Tim Carley	Business owner – <i>Recfusion.com</i>
Brad Young	Washington County HCP

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Ann McLuckie noted there were at least four voting members present, a quorum existed and the meeting was called to order at 9:34 A.M.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. August 20, 2009

The following changes were made:

(page 2, paragraph 2, sentence 2):

From: “The difference between rappelling and rock climbing was also talked about.”

To: “The difference between canyoneering and rock climbing was also talked about.”

(page 2, paragraph 5, sentence 2): changed,

From: “Member Comella replied that the Plan is ~~being~~ rewritten.”

To: “Member Comella replied that the Plan is due to be rewritten in 2010.”

MOTION by Bob Sandberg to approve the minutes of August 20, 2009 as amended.
Seconded by Marshall Topham.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Ivins Detention Dam – Chuck Gillette.

Chuck Gillette had emailed the HCP office this morning asking that this agenda item be continued to next meeting.

MOTION by Bob Douglas to continue this agenda item to October 13, 2009.
Seconded by Kristen Comella.
Discussion: None.
Vote was taken: All voted aye.
Motion passed.

b. Discuss human impacts and limits of acceptable change; and consider a proposed RC DR Impact Assessment with Standards Form.

Dr. Pam Foti began by offering the tables from the 2009 monitoring for review. She explained that she used the data to propose standards in new forms that will be used by future students conducting human impact monitoring (HIM).

Dr. Foti distributed the old form used in 2009 and some previous years (Exhibits 3-b-1-a through f). She explained that her objectives in redesigning the existing form are to, 1) Record the standards set by the TC, 2) Make the form more sensible to the students, and to decrease the number of choices the user has to select from. This will help in refining the data. Dr. Foti went on to talk about compiling the final report for the impact monitoring. She explained that when the students return to NAU from the monitoring each April, they have the responsibility to enter the data into the database. But it is near the end of the semester, final exams are looming and it would be much easier and more efficient if she could hire a data entry specialist to do the work. The cost is approximately \$400.00 to \$500.00 per year.

The committee members reviewed Exhibits 3-b-1-a through f and discussed the format and content of the forms, and how the data is quantified and recorded by the students. Dr. Foti distributed the new proposed form, Exhibits 3-b-2-a through e. The proposed format changes were discussed and evaluated.

The members discussed establishing trail width and depth benchmarks for the existing trails. Dr. Foti noted the difficulty in doing this with trails that are old roadbeds or in washes. Dr. Foti added that the objective is to record changes in trail conditions from human use, and that the standards, i.e. width and depth can be adjusted by the committee. The variable standards on page two of Exhibit 3-b-2-a were discussed and appraised by the members. The members also noted that the results of the worksheet (Exhibit 3-b-2-b) are summarized on the bottom of page two of Exhibit 3-b-2-a.

Dr. Foti talked about Exhibit 3-b-2-c. She explained that this form is the most used and is completed each ½ mile interval on the trail. Dr. Foti further explained that the standards suggested on this form are new. The members discussed them at length.

Lynne Scott talked about interpreting the results of the human impact monitoring, and defining the impact and how the impact affects the quality of recreation or wildlife habitat, and then what action is required. Bob Douglas noted on the white board which impacts affect habitat. The members listed those impacts as:

- Form 1 – Trail width,
- Form 1 – Trail depth,
- Form 1 – Crypto soil impacts,
- Form 1 – Off-trail impacts class 4 & 5,
- Form 1 – Recreation nodes,
- Form 3 – Vegetation impacts.

The members discussed how best to determine the worst impacts and then decide the most applicable course of action. The members asked about the existing data. Tim Carley explained that the data is available on-line and added that the existing data cannot be converted to the new standards. The members asked for copies of the descriptors which are provided to the students to help them determine the application of the standard. Dr. Foti did not have them available but will send them to the committee members.

The members, and Lynne Scott, discussed the use of the data. Dr. Foti explained that the (human impact) monitoring primarily records recreation impacts and not necessarily impacts to wildlife habitat. The data is used for recreation management and not tortoise habitat management. The members talked about setting standards that measure impact and trigger corrective steps – either for recreation management or habitat protection. Dave Kiel noted that the number of users on particular trails is absent. Dr. Foti explained that the HIM is just a snapshot of only what is occurring at that particular place and time and the monitoring cannot provide number of trail users over time. Dave further noted that trail counters could possibly be used.

The committee members talked about trying to convert the existing data to the new standards so trends can be determined. The members also talked about broad aspects of recreation management and habitat management.

Lynne Scott and Dave Kiel left the meeting at 12:46 P.M.

- d. Discuss Assignment #082509 and a possible field trip to evaluate the proposed Gila Trail extension route.

The members discussed the schedule and agenda for the next TC meeting. Member Comella urged continued progress in extending the Gila Trail. She would like to take a TC recommendation to the HCAC at the October HCAC meeting which is slated for October 27, 2009.

The members discussed a Gila Trail field trip and decided that it would take about 2½ hours. They also considered the Ivins Detention Dam agenda item. They tentatively scheduled the next meeting to begin at 8:00 A.M. on Tuesday, October 13, 2009. The first agenda item will be the Ivins Detention Dam followed by a field trip to Ivins if necessary. That will be followed by a field trip to the Gila Trail area, and reconvening the regular meeting after lunch.

- c. Discuss proposed 2010 budget issues.

1. \$50,000.00 for completion of the White Dome fencing project.

Member Sandberg explained that the HCAC has directed him to fulfill The Nature Conservancy's request using 2009 funds. He is working diligently to get an agreement approved and the funds encumbered by the end of the year.

2. \$50,000.00 for Other Species.

Member Sandberg explained that the HCAC has recommended that \$50,000.00 be placed in the 2010 Other Species line item. Member Sandberg further explained that there is no specific intent for these funds at this time; possibly to be used for continued nest surveys of the Southwest Willow Flycatcher.

3. \$5,000.00 for Utilities.

Member Sandberg explained that the county is requiring that HCP pay for some of the various utilities associated to the HCP administration building. For 2010 he has budgeted \$5,000.00 in the Utilities line item.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Next meeting date –Tuesday, October 13, 2009 as noted above.

b. Habitat Management Plan – update.

Member McLuckie informed the committee members that BLM has moved forward on the proposed action for the EA. The proposal has been sent out for comment.

5. ADJOURN

There was no other business to discuss.

MOTION by Bob Sandberg to adjourn.
The meeting adjourned at 1:03 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Brad Young.