

Final Final Final

**Desert Tortoise Council
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**

**23 August 2014
DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, California**

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Palmer at 09:35 a.m. **Action items are in blue, with responsible parties in red. Motions made, seconded, and approved (or not) are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Kristin Berry, Glenn Stewart, Pete Woodman, Ken MacDonald, Michael Tuma, Cristina Jones, Jason Jones, Maggie Fusari, Chris Noddings, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue. **Absent:** Scott Abella. **Guests:** None.

A. Introductions: No guests were in attendance at this Board meeting.

B. Review Agenda: New issues were incorporated as needed.

C. Meeting Minutes of 8 June 2014: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes at the last Board meeting in Wrightwood, CA, which were distributed, reviewed, and were approved today as final. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Glenn Stewart), and approved to accept draft minutes as amended to be final.** Mari Quillman will check with Tracy Bailey to ensure thank you notes went out for 2014 Symposium.

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Meeting: Each of the following issues was handled through email correspondence, and are discussed herein for the record.

1. Funding of Western Pond Turtle Grant Request: Grant of \$2,403 was approved and paid to Dr. Jeffrey Lovich on 7/15/2014, with field work to begin on 8/25/2014.

2. Purchase of Wild Apricot: This software, which enables us to electronically manage and coordinate our membership, cost \$1,015.71, which represents a 10% reduction over the \$1,200/year cost because we purchased an entire year rather than a monthly service.

3. Purchase of North American Tortoises: We purchased 250 copies of *North American Tortoises* for \$9,983.30, which is \$39.94 per book. One group is charging \$65/book. There are Pay Pal fees associated with purchases, which should be considered in how much we charge for the books. We may want to put it on the website, have people pay in advance, then pick up the book at the Workshop or Symposium. Kristin Berry brought them for distribution. **Motion made (Michael Tuma), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to sell the books at \$45/book for members and \$50/book for nonmembers; shipping will not be provided.**

E. Officer Reports:

1. Treasurer's Report: Joe Probst distributed the Treasurer's Report. As of 8/22/2014, the Council's total assets are reported as \$273,898.94. This includes 43 Workshop students at \$285/student. Including \$1,745 for retreat expenses and \$2,500 for Board travel expenses, the total strategic retreat cost was \$4,639.92, which is great because several bids we received for facilitators, alone, exceeded \$5,000. **Motion made (Glenn Stewart), seconded (Maggie Fusari), and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final. • Second motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved to pursue "cube" technology for credit card transactions.**

Financial Reimbursement and Reasonable Cost Policy revisions were circulated, which were revised in part to accommodate our new mailing address for Joe Probst in Palmdale. Suggest combining "gas receipts or mileage" as equally valid options for travel reimbursement. **Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Maggie Fusari), and approved to accept the revised Financial Reimbursement and Reasonable Cost Policy with suggested changes.**

2. Membership Coordinator's Report: This report was circulated by Mari Quillman, which included numbers of active versus inactive members and other status information for members provided by the Wild Apricot software. This reveals there are 483 total members, including 472 that are active. There are 1,017 additional individuals that were identified as being affiliated but not currently considered members. Wild Apricot also identifies nonfunctional emails and will serve to distribute newsletters. A few glitches continue to be addressed by Mari Quillman and Mary Cohen. **Kristin Berry suggested that we produce a "comp list" as a membership category that includes people who would not pay for certain events, which needs to be discussed at a future board meeting. Motion made (Pete Woodman), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to grant Glenn Stewart Lifetime Membership status without charge.**

3. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones received four membership renewals and the grant request for funding the *Desert Report*. She received a request on June 23rd for an interview concerning the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center, which was forwarded to Ken MacDonald. She sent out *Tortoise Through the Lens* to the Texas children who wrote letters.

F. Committee Reports:

1. Awards Committee Report: Glenn Stewart is still seeking nominations for awards to be presented at the 2015, 40th Annual Symposium. The Morafka selection committee has posted the availability of this award in several places. Bruce Palmer suggested a few specific people to be given Service Awards, which are not reiterated herein so as not to reveal candidates until final selection. **Kristin Berry will provide Glenn Stewart with a list of deserving researchers.**

2. Ecosystems Advisory Committee: Ed LaRue distributed the latest EAC report a few days before the Board meeting. There are differing levels of recusal, but all are encouraged to provide feedback representing their expertise. The functional "Committee" represents all Board members, and on a case-by-case basis, the individuals most involved.

a. Stump Springs Translocation Plan: One of the best reviewed and commented on projects in recent years, we made the deadline, and later received BLM's response that they are going on with the project anyway, addressing our comments in a formal response letter.

b. DRECP: Ileene Anderson indicated the latest estimated time to release the draft DRECP document may be shortly after Labor Day. Review and comment will require a coordinated effort with full Board member input. We may also want to coordinate with other environmental groups. Expect there will be a 45-day comment period by the state and 90 days for the federal comment period. **Ed LaRue will contact Jeff Aardahl (Defenders of Wildlife) and Ileene Anderson (Center for Biological Diversity) among others to coordinate comments, and later to provide them with our draft letter(s) to ensure we are being thorough and comprehensive.**

3. Grants Committee: Bruce Palmer asked that **each Board member review our website for pertinence of information currently provided relative to the Grants Policy and that Glenn Stewart coordinate this effort.**

a. Habitat Restoration Best Management Practices Grant Request: The following discussion was in response to a proposal from Board member, Scott Abella, to prepare habitat restoration BMPs for the Council. How does the Board feel about funding projects like this one where a Board member is reimbursed for services? The question is about volunteering one's time versus being reimbursed for their time. Most felt this was a special case, where there is a need, and one of our Board members has the expertise, which requires an effort beyond what would be expected of a volunteer. In general, there should be policies and consistency in the approach so there is no favoritism. Requests such as this one may also be considered outside the structure of the Grants program. Habitat restoration BMPs have been an outstanding need and we now have an expert capable of producing a document. Who would own the document? Proposal indicated there would be two products, one a journal article to be published and a second one a synthesis of existing practices that would serve as a BMP document that we could submit for projects requiring restoration.

Scott Abella then joined us via cell phone to discuss the technical merits of the proposal: (1) Can the journal article appear under Scott Abella's name and the BMPs be cited as a Desert Tortoise Council product? Abella responded it could be both, based on Council recommendations. (2) Important to use the synthesis of existing materials to develop BMPs that address specific impacts, such as pipeline, mine, and new road impacts versus how to improve existing habitats that need restoration but are not newly impacted. (3) Would the document help us evaluate existing habitats for their value as tortoise habitat? This is something USFWS would like to see to evaluate habitats for their suitability to receive translocated tortoises, for example. Abella would commit to that being a key part of his product. (4) How can BMPs be focused to ensure they are practical? Abella has already decided to focus on the Mojave Desert, which should be clarified in the title and text. (5) The product would be something the Council can submit to the agencies that include the methods to be implemented to reclaim and revegetate new impacts such as pipelines, including monitoring methods and success criteria. (6) Important that the synthesis of the literature review lead to specific management prescriptions and recommendations regarding the four sections given on page 5 of the proposal (Critical requirements for tortoise forage and vegetation cover; effects of human activities; restoration of recovering habitats; and accommodating climate change).

(7) Need to clearly state the question(s) to ensure the resulting answers are expressed as management prescriptions that will be pragmatic and useful to land managers. (8) Will “gray literature” be included in the literature review? Kristin Berry felt strongly that gray literature should be excluded from the study. (9) Can the effort be accomplished in the 320 hours given in the proposal? Abella felt that the topic required more work than could be accomplished on a volunteer basis, and that 320 hours (160 hours funded and 160 hours provided as matching time) would likely be enough, with his willingness to complete the work if it requires more time. (10) Some expressed a concern with paying up front before the deliverables; suggesting paying 50% now and 50% upon delivery.

After discussion, agreed that we need (1) to revisit the existing Grants Policy or create a new one about volunteerism and grants versus contracted work, and (2) consider the technical aspects of the proposal to give feedback to Scott Abella. **Bruce Palmer will revisit the Grants Policy and the Board member responsibilities descriptions to address this and future internally contracted work and will then poll the Board for acceptance or modification of his revised proposal.** • **Michael Tuma and Ken MacDonald will draft a bulleted list of changes and clarifications to be presented to Scott Abella, and Bruce Palmer will poll the Board for acceptance or modification of his revised proposal.**

b. Desert Report Grant Request: Sierra Club has asked that the Council continue to financially support the quarterly *Desert Report*, which has been \$3,000/year. They have requested that we provide \$12,000 to support the next four years of the *Desert Report*. **Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Joe Probst), and unanimously approved to provide Sierra Club \$12,000 to support publication of the newsletter, at the rate of \$3,000/year, for the next four years.** We will request that each current Board member receive a complimentary copy of the newsletter over the next four-year period. **Glenn Stewart will contact Sierra Club and ask that they work with Joe Probst to facilitate annual payment and mailings to Board members.**

4. Nominations Committee: Ken MacDonald indicated that the following Board members’ terms end in 2014: Ed LaRue (Recording Secretary), Pete Woodman, Mari Quillman (Membership Coordinator), Maggie Fusari, Glenn Stewart, and Kristin Berry. As such, at the January 2015 meeting we will need a slate of Board members and officers nominated for reelection in 2015. **We will need to nominate a Chair-elect to replace Ken MacDonald when he becomes Chair.**

5. Newsletter Editor’s Report: Michael Tuma has received positive feedback from the general membership about the newsletter format, and expects to have the next newsletter out in mid-September. He has also received permission to reprint several copyrighted articles. **Maggie Fusari will provide a review of the *North American Tortoises* book that we just purchased.** It was suggested that we include an article celebrating the California Turtle and Tortoise Club’s 50th anniversary this year (**Kristin Berry and Michael Tuma will work on this piece**). **Pete Woodman and Ed LaRue will be featured in September as two Board members supporting the Workshops, who will provide Michael Tuma with brief write-ups of their involvement.** Kristin Berry and Glenn Stewart would be featured in the newsletter during the 2015 Symposium. After that, we may highlight Bruce Palmer as Past Chair and Ken MacDonald as incoming Chair; Becky Jones and Joe Probst are also a natural pair for a future newsletter.

6. Web Master's Report: Bruce Palmer spoke with Mary Cohen, who indicated Maggie Fusari and Mari Quillman have been very helpful in her work. **Mari Quillman will generate a list of opportunities to be published on the website for how the general membership may get involved.**

7. Social Media and Messaging Committee: Should plan on revisiting the Bylaws to make necessary changes to accommodate this new committee, which will affect the responsibilities of the Corresponding Secretary, in particular. This committee consists of Chris Noddings, Cristina Jones, Jason Jones, Mari Quillman, and Michael Tuma, with significant support by Bianca Cirimele. The next step is to transform the "Pre-Plan" discussed below into a formal plan that may be implemented as early as February 2015.

a. Social Media Plan: Chris Noddings provided a Social Media "Pre-Plan" (Plan) that was distributed in time for this meeting. One goal is to produce a formal mascot for this Plan; may solicit unique art in a newsletter request. The Social Media Strategy is listed on page 2 of the Plan, which includes milestones. Chris Noddings hopes to have the Plan finalized by October 2014 and full implementation to be ready by the 2015 Symposium. We must engage both our existing general membership and resource managers; social media may be the way to increase our membership. Eventually may also want to target science teachers.

b. Messaging Protocols, Format, and Review: The main formats we are now using or want to develop include newsletters, email, Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and a blog.

c. Social Media and Messaging Coordinator/Designer: The Plan currently recommends that Ms. Cirimele be hired on a "...part-time, as-needed basis [to] oversee the launch of the DTC's Social Media Program." At this time, Ms. Cirimele has not responded to how much it would cost to complete this plan, or responded with a specific proposal. Several people felt strongly that such a coordinator should be familiar with tortoises and turtles so that the content will be scientifically correct. The Board agreed that the coordinator position should be a volunteer position that would hopefully be filled by someone from our existing membership.

i. Blogging: Ms. Cirimele indicated that blogging may be our best untapped resource. There are existing materials, such as EAC comment letters, that are readily available for blogs.

ii. Email Formatting/Preparation: See draft Social Media Plan.

iii. Website Review: **Chris Noddings will provide the Board with some recommended changes to information included on the current website.**

d. Proposal to Modify Bylaws' Goal to a Mission Statement: **Michael Tuma has drafted a vision statement for the Council that he will distribute for Board consideration.** There was some resistance to changing the word "goal" to "mission" in the Bylaws.

e. Video Opportunities: This may be realized using the YouTube format.

8. Workshop Committee:

a. Introduction to Desert Tortoises and Field Techniques: There are 80 people registered, including 40 for each session. If by the first week of October we still have only 50 students per session, should we cancel one and combine them? The room will only accommodate 110 students, so that will likely drive this decision. Although Maggie Fusari will be out of country for the next month, everything is in place. There has been some discussion about taking this Workshop into Nevada, having Ken MacDonald and Jason Jones help coordinate the effort. When students finish the Workshop, they will become members for one year, and Wild Apricot will help keep track of new members and the lengths of the memberships.

b. Workshop Development:

i. Arizona: We realized we cannot have a workshop in September 2014, so spring 2015 is now being discussed and considered. **Joe Probst will help pertinent Board members develop a budget for this workshop.**

ii. Advanced Techniques: Maggie Fusari would like to talk to instructors at the Ridgecrest Workshop to discuss an approach to advanced techniques workshops. Maggie re-circulated an outline for the workshop and Ed LaRue provided input prior to this meeting.

iii. Health Assessment: Pete Woodman and Kristin Berry have discussed this workshop: location, class size, audience, subject matter, USFWS-required models, modifications, etc. They have discussed summer 2015 as a targeted date for the workshop. It will be important to develop a consensus approach of techniques that will and will not be taught. It is still important that we produce a program that will be acceptable to the USFWS, and will likely include a few more techniques than have been presented in previous workshops.

9. 40th Annual Symposium:

a. Local Host Committee: Ken MacDonald is the Host Committee Chair, and has talked to Sam's Town so that a block of rooms has been identified. We have until January 2015 to determine the menu. They have said that the conference room will accommodate 300 people. The costs are comparable to those of 2012, which is the last time we were at Sam's Town. **Chris Noddings has agreed to oversee vendors again this year, and to begin contacting them sooner rather than later.** • We ask that local Board members, **Ken MacDonald and Jason Jones, help Chris identify potential local vendors.**

b. Program Committee: **Kristin Berry will contact Ken Nagy about reporting on their latest research on nutrition studies.** There is a major session on ravens; Mercy Vaughn is coordinating research results performed in Mexico; Cristina Jones is helping coordinate a session on Arizona research; and there will be a government session, which Becky Jones is overseeing. In addition to highlighting the Council's accomplishments, should also focus on profiles of people who have helped the Council function. Last year, a BLM employee offered to oversee a session on solar development, which could compliment the status of the DRECP as of early next year; **Bruce Palmer will work with Kristin Berry to pursue this potential solar session.**

c. Special Anniversary Events: Michael Tuma revealed the 40th anniversary logo that will be used on cups, hats, t-shirts, and other “swag” that is still to be developed, which will be revealed in emails. Joe Probst indicated he could have t-shirts developed in a week’s time.

G. Discussions of Old and New Business:

1. Policy Statements/Issues/Best Management Practices:

a. Habitat Restoration Best Management Practices: See extensive discussion above under item F.3.a. for a discussion on this BMP.

b. Habitat Connectivity Best Management Practices: Chris Noddings reiterated that he will still draft this policy statement, but not likely until after the Symposium.

c. Translocation Best Management Practices: Kristin Berry continues to work on the following policy statements: (i) Translocation of Tortoises within the Wild; (ii) Removing Fences at the Long-Term Translocation Site; and (iii) Release of Captive Tortoises to the Wild.

d. Disease Best Management Practices: We need to determine the best science to assess the health of a given tortoise, and to have this reflected in the Disease BMPs. Kristin Berry is also working on this policy statement.

e. Terms and Conditions Best Management Practices: Pete Woodman has already begun collecting federal biological opinions to begin working on these BMPs, and will also solicit similar terms and conditions from state agencies.

H. Review and Implementation of Strategic Planning Retreat: Several days prior to this meeting, Bruce Palmer distributed documents that summarize the findings of the retreat. Board members are asked to review these draft documents and provide Bruce Palmer with any comments, so he can respond to the facilitators who will finalize the documents. • Mari Quillman will frame a copy of “The Matriarch” as a gift to thank the moderators that supported our June retreat.

I. Policy/Operations Manual:

1. Ecosystems Advisory Committee Policy Revision: After discussion of some of the suggested changes (respecting all Board member input, resolving conflicts, signatories, etc., there was a **motion made (Ed LaRue), seconded (Glenn Stewart), and unanimously approved to accept the latest revision of the Ecosystems Advisory Committee Policy.**

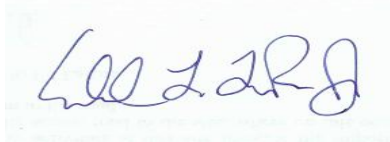
2. Reimbursement Policy Revision: This policy was discussed under the Treasurer’s Report, above, where the motion was made and unanimously approved.

J. Next Meeting: There are likely to be a number of issues that will be decided by email before the next meeting. Please do not change the subject line of the transmission and respond to all members when you vote. Bruce Palmer will give everyone 48 hours to provide input and vote their conscience.

The next business meeting of the Board will be at the DoubleTree Hilton in Ontario, CA between 09:30 a.m. and approximately 4:00 p.m., 15 November 2014. We will then meet at Sam's Town in Las Vegas, Nevada on 10 January 2015 for the last Board meeting prior to the Annual Symposium.

K. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Bruce Palmer, at 16:10.

Draft minutes were recorded, later distributed and modified with board member review and input, then respectfully submitted as this final version by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed LaRue, Jr.', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Edward L. LaRue, Jr.
Desert Tortoise Council, Recording Secretary

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 23 August 2014

Note: The table attached to this report on the last page follows the **bold red** numbered outline given below.

1. Interstate 11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study

6/11/2014 – Ed LaRue receives a notice of public meeting on this project, scheduled in Tucson, AZ on 6/18/2014. He forwarded the notice to Maggie Fusari, who emailed back that she plans on attending.

2. Exploratory Drilling of the Dragonfly Placer Claims by Glacial Minerals, Inc.

6/2/2014 – Chris Noddings receives email from Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding exploratory activities at the proposed gold mine, which he forwards to Ed LaRue. Lisa Belenky with CBD provides background information to Chris and Ed on 6/3/2014. On **6/12/2014**, Ed drafts a comment letter that he distributes to the Board. The letter was emailed to the BLM on **6/16/2014** with three endorsements.

3. Closure of Desert Tortoise Conservation Center in Las Vegas

6/23/2014 – Becky Jones circulates a request from Environmental Energy & Publishing requesting an interview on the DTCC. Ed LaRue and Ken MacDonald respond that Bruce Palmer is likely the best Council representative to discuss this issue. On **6/24/2014** Ed sends recent final comment letters on the closure to Ken.

4. Coolwater-Lugo and North Peak Windmills

6/25/2014 – Michael Tuma forwards a request to Ed LaRue from Bob Howells with a group called “No on Windmills,” or “NOW.” Ed responds to both Michael and Bob later that evening with several emails, including our 2012 formal letter to Southern California Edison on Coolwater-Lugo, asking Bob if there are any environmental documents we can review for the proposed North Peak windmills. Ed LaRue speaks with Bob Howells on **6/27/2014** and sends an email about the proposed North Peak project, ccing the entire Board, on **6/29/2014** indicating he would have to recuse himself but that the Board is still available when the time is right for submitting comments.

5. Petition to establish Gold Butte as a National Monument

6/26/2014 – Ed LaRue receives Center for Biological Diversity petition to transfer Gold Butte area, including tortoise critical habitat, from BLM to National Park Service management as a new National Monument. The article and petition were distributed to the Board on **7/2/2014**, for individual action rather than a formal Board action (unless otherwise instructed).

6. Stump Springs Proposed Translocation

7/7/2014 – Ed LaRue receives the proposed translocation plan from Ileene Anderson on 7/7/2014 and immediately distributes it to the Board the same day. The deadline for comment is 7/28/2014. Ed distributes draft comment letter on **7/18/2014**. After receiving comments from Kristin Berry, Glenn Stewart, and Maggie Fusari, Ed distributes the second revised draft on **7/22/2014**. A second draft is distributed at 10:00 p.m. on **7/22/2014** after Ed incorporates substantial new information from Chris Noddings. Fourth version sent out on **7/23/2014** to capture revisions from Chris and Glenn. The final version of the letter was sent to Roy Averill-Murray of USFWS and various other environmental groups on **7/27/2014**. Receive response to comments from BLM along with their notice of intent to proceed with the release in fall 2014 on **8/19/2014**, which Ed distributes to all Board members that day.

7. Eldorado Translocation Project

7/24/2014 – Ed LaRue receives a direct notice from the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) that they denied the appeal and stay of effect submitted by Western Watersheds Project and Defenders of Wildlife in March 2014 to translocate 600 tortoises from DTCC into Eldorado Valley, which is in critical habitat. The Council had submitted a letter supporting the appeal, so we were formally included in the distribution list for this decision, which was issued on 7/24/2014, the day it was received. It was promptly distributed to the Board.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 6/9/2014 to 8/23/2014**

Current date for this latest table revision is: 8/23/2014

No.	Reference	Dates (2014)				Board Member Responses														
		Rec'd	Dist.	Due	Sent	Codes: Y = Vote of Yes; N = Vote of No; PI = Provided input; Blank = No Response; R = Recused; A = Authors; NA – Replied they were not able to respond by indicated date														
						BJ	BP	CJ	CN	EL	GS	JJ	JP	KB	KM	MF	MQ	MT	PW	SA
1	Interstate 11/ Intermountain Study	6/11/14	6/11/14	6/18/14	N/A					PI 6/11						PI 6/11				
2	Glacial Minerals proposed drilling	6/2/14	6/12/14	6/17/14	6/16/14				Dist. 6/2-3	PI/A 6/12	NA 6/13		Y 6/13		NA 6/13	PI/Y 6/14	NA 6/13			Y 6/13
3	Desert Tortoise Conservation Center	6/23/14	6/23/14	N/A	N/A		PI 6/23			PI 6/24					PI 6/23					
4	Coolwater-Lugo and North Peak Windmills	6/25/14	6/25/14	N/A	N/A					PI 6/25								PI 6/25		
5	Petition to list Gold Butte as National Monument	6/26/14	7/2/14	N/A	N/A					PI 7/2										
6	Stump Springs Translocation Plan	7/7/14	7/7/14 7/18/14	7/28/14	7/27/14	Y 7/24	Y 7/24	NA 7/22	Y/PI 7/21 7/22	PI/A 7/7 7/18	PI/Y 7/21	R 7/7	Y 7/21	R 7/22	PI/Y 7/23	PI/Y 7/7 7/23	Y 7/22	PI/Y 7/25	PI/Y 7/22	PI/Y 7/7 7/22
7	Eldorado Valley IBLA Notice Denying Appeal	7/24/14	7/24/14	N/A	N/A	Distributed to Board on 7/24/2014 for their information; no outstanding action required														

BJ = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **CJ** = Cristina Jones, **CN** = Chris Noddings, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **GS** = Glenn Stewart, **JJ** = Jason Jones, **JP** = Joe Probst, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **PW** = Pete Woodman, **SA** = Scott Abella