

Final Final Final

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

**26 August 2017
DoubleTree Motel, Ontario, California**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Palmer at 10:03 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, Judy Hohman, Peter Woodman, Ken MacDonald, Cristina Jones, Bruce Palmer, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Larry LaPré, and Chris Noddings. **Absent:** Mari Quillman (son's wedding) and Maggie Fusari. **Guest:** Greer Dolby.

A. Introductions: Greer Dolby was introduced to the group. She is performing post-doctoral work at Arizona State University, with a PhD from UCLA in evolutionary biology.

B. Review Agenda: New issues included discussion of archives.

C. Meeting Minutes of 10 June 2017: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes at the last Board meeting in Ontario, CA, which were distributed, reviewed, and were approved today as final with three minor changes. **Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Joe Probst), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

D. Review of Board Actions Since Last Board Meeting: None was identified.

E. Next Meeting Date: Bruce Palmer indicated there was a recent change with the airlines that now requires an overnight stay in Ontario before returning to Arizona. **Motion was made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ed LaRue), and approved that the next business meeting of the Board will be at Ken MacDonald's office (3265 North Fort Apache) in Las Vegas, NV, between 10:00 a.m. and approximately 4:00 p.m., on 28 October 2017.** • Kristin Berry will let Tracy Bailey know the pre-Symposium meeting will be 6 January 2018 at Sam's Town in Las Vegas, NV.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

F. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Joe Probst. Our total assets as of 25 August 2017 are \$260,515.88. Note that Joe moved \$50,000 from the money market account into checking, which he shows as "Total accumulated income for 2017" in his Treasurer's Report. **Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Cristina Jones), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.**

G. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones shared there was little to report either as postal mail or email. She recently sent a notice to Ed LaRue about the Ord Mountain grazing allotment.

H. Membership Coordinator's/Membership Committee Report: Mari Quillman could not be here so the membership report was not available for this meeting. Bruce Palmer shared that we continue to discuss various membership statuses, and that completing this exercise has become a priority.

I. Awards Committee Reports: Kristin Berry reported that potential awardees have been discussed but no consensus at this time (Committee members include Kristin Berry, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, and Ed LaRue). Michael Tuma is overseeing the Morafka Award. **All Board members are asked to identify potential awardees to Kristin Berry.**

J. Nominations Committee Report: Michael Tuma is working with Larry LaPré in considering an anonymous millennial Board member. Need to consider ways to get students involved. It would be good to solicit professors who have experience in habitat restoration and biologists from Mexico, (e.g., involved as Board members or serving on an international committee) with input from Pete Woodman who agreed to help Michael.

K. Ecosystems Advisory Committee (EAC) Report: Ed LaRue reported that there were nine projects reviewed by the Board and actions taken in the reporting period between 6/11/2017 and 8/26/2017. These projects are summarized in the attachment at the end of this report. **Ed LaRue will follow up with BLM in Barstow to be sure that we receive a copy of the Draft EA on the intent to increase cattle grazing in the Ord Mountain allotment. • Ed LaRue will contact local desert environmental groups to have them primed to contact the BLM about cattle grazing in the Ord Mountains.**

L. Grants Committee Report: Michael Tuma reported that he has been working with Glenn Stewart to announce availability of Council grants in various venues. **Michael Tuma will coordinate with Chris Noddings to announce grant availability in various social media outlets and our next deadline of November 1st.** Michael is also working with a contact from Lockheed-Martin to establish and provide an annual student award of \$1,000 through the Council.

M. Information, Outreach, and Social Media Committee Report: Chris Noddings reported there has been about one post per month, which is relatively low. **If anyone on the Board has anything to add, please contact Chris Noddings.** The Council has a new phone number that will remain undisclosed and is being managed by Chris. This number is part of what we need to pursue the Google grant mentioned in previous minutes. **Chris Noddings will work with Ken MacDonald to provide a Council t-shirt to someone recently requesting one.**

N. Newsletter Editor's Report: Michael Tuma reported that he is very close to completing the next Newsletter. Several newspapers have made it difficult (costly) to publish their articles in our Newsletter. **Michael Tuma will send a list of questions to Joe Probst so he and Becky Jones can be highlighted in the next Newsletter.** Michael would like each Board member to consider candidates to replace him as the Newsletter Editor since he will soon become the Chairperson. **Judy Hohman said she would willingly work as liaison with the incoming Newsletter Editor. • Larry LaPré will contact a recent employee of a Riverside newspaper to see if he is interested. •**

If an editor is not found soon, [Chris Noddings](#) will coordinate with [Mary Cohen](#) to eblast a request for Newsletter Editor to the membership via social media and the website, respectively.

O. Web Master's Report: Kristin Berry recommended that more photographs be added to the website, which she otherwise really likes. Michael Tuma recommended that all submissions of photographs for the Symposia photo contests be assembled so they are available for the Newsletter and website. [Michael Tuma](#) will contact [Molly Peters](#) for digital photographs submitted for photo contests at Symposia. • [Joe Probst](#) will bring hard copies of photographs to the next Board meeting and provide them to [Michael Tuma](#) to be scanned.

P. Agency Coordinating Committee: Cristina Jones reported that she has not been able to review the list of agency contacts in California that were provided by Judy Hohman. Given her current workload, the next agency coordination meeting would be late this year, in November or December. It would be appropriate to highlight Ken MacDonald's Terms and Conditions BMP and the Bren School habitat restoration plan. The next MOG meeting will be on December 7th 2017 (rather than December 5, as reported in the June MOG minutes). The Large Scale Translocation Site tortoise monitoring in Jean, Nevada is ongoing as scheduled. The Recovery Implementing Teams have been setting up small working groups, but nothing to report at this time.

Q. Basic Workshop: There are 27 registered students at this time. The Workshop is now scheduled for Veterans Day weekend, which is 11 and 12 November 2017. [Chris Noddings](#) will work with [Maggie Fusari](#) to contact local school districts to invite pertinent teachers or administrators to participate in the Basic Workshop free of charge. Future workshops should be scheduled a week earlier to avoid the Veteran's Day holiday.

R. Health Assessment Training: Cristina Jones indicated there is nothing to report at this time.

S. Authorized Biologist Training: Cristina Jones and Peter Woodman led the discussion. The event has been moved from Whiskey Pete's to Primm Valley Resort. There were 35 applications, of which 31 have been approved, and 21 have already paid. Twenty-six (26) applicants have attended the Basic Workshop. Most of the presenters have provided pdfs of their talks. We have exam questions from about a third of the instructors. [Instructors](#) need to provide all final materials (talks and questions) to Cristina Jones by September 1, 2017. • [Cristina Jones](#) will provide all students with a list of required reading by 29 August 2017.

T. Symposium:

a. Planning 43rd Symposium in 2018: Kristin Berry has confirmed that Jim André has agreed to serve as the banquet speaker. With regards to the Saturday morning session on sensitive species, burrowing owl, kit fox, and Mohave ground squirrel are good candidates and will produce good speakers. Other species may include LeConte's thrasher, Bendire's thrasher, loggerhead shrike, and perhaps raven impacts on these species. Speaker compensation depends on the person, and may range from no compensation to full travel reimbursements. We would like speakers to remain for the Symposium, which can be encouraged but not required. We may also want to include special status reptiles in a session, such as Gila monsters, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, common chuckwalla, desert iguana, and various snake species. The session may be limited to about nine papers. [All Board members](#) should submit ideas for speakers to Kristin ASAP.

b. 2019 Symposium in Arizona: The 2019 44th Symposium is planned for Westward Look Resort in Tucson, AZ on February 20-23, 2019, which is Thursday through Saturday, with field trips before and after the Symposium. The contract has been signed and Joe Probst sent the \$6,700 deposit already. Since Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) has its conference in August 2019 in Tucson, Cristina Jones will work with TSA to have a session focusing on their function and presentations. We need to let attendees know as soon as possible that attending this Symposium will cost a bit more. **Cristina Jones will work with Mary Cohen to post an announcement on the website and also put a blurb in the Newsletter.**

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

U. Board member candidate – Greer Dolby: Dr. Dolby has been invited to pursue her potential interest in becoming a Board member. She has not previously served as a Board member for similar organizations. She would like to work on getting more student involvement at Symposia and other Council functions to better understand practical conservation issues. She also has experience with nonprofit funding and grants proposals, both writing them and reviewing them. She is in her second year of a five-year post-doctoral term at ASU. She expects to be local for the foreseeable and working with the tortoise community. **Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Judy Hohman), and approved to have Dr. Greer Dolby join the Council as a Board Member At Large.**

V. How to attract student members: This issue has been addressed in several other items.

W. Communications equipment: Chris Noddings shared that he has researched ways to facilitate attending meetings remotely. He found a speaker phone that connects to many different devices, including cell phones, which costs about \$600. A laptop with Bluetooth would provide for the visual component of the connection. Chris would like the Council to have its own wireless connection via hotspot or alternatively use someone's personal account (Ed LaRue volunteered his). **Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and approved (with Ed LaRue voting no) to provide up to \$800 to purchase the devices described above to facilitate communications.**

X. DTC Table at The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting: Mari Quillman will attend this meeting as a Council representative. **Bruce Palmer will contact Mari Quillman to produce a table-sized banner announcing the Desert Tortoise Council. Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Cristina Jones), and unanimously approved to provide up to \$500 to produce this table banner and flyers (described below).**

a. Brochure/handout materials: Michael Tuma and Judy Hohman have been working on a marketing-type flyer that can be distributed. **Michael Tuma will provide the flyer prototype to the Board for approval to be used at The Wildlife Society (TWS) meeting at the booth to be operated by Mari Quillman. Michael Tuma will contact his brother about producing this flyer in time for next month's TWS meeting.** There will be a printing expense of about \$200 but no cost to design the flyer.

b. SWAG sales: Mari will need to receive these items from Ken MacDonald and Pete Woodman. Joe Probst said it is best to sell items for cash and check, and **Joe Probst will work with Mari Quillman to provide for credit card sales and to provide receipts.**

Y. Bren School project status: Chris Noddings distributed the restoration plan from Bren School, which is dated April 2017, and can be used by the Council since we funded it. The estimated cost to implement the plan is about \$50,000. Funding sources are still being identified and there are no firm commitments at this time. Some agencies (USFWS) provide year-end funding for projects. The Recovery Implementation Team process has identified restoration as their number one priority with proposals to be submitted to the DTRO (Desert Tortoise Recovery Office) by September 30, 2017.

In addition to the Restoration Plan itself, the students also prepared a “Guidance Document” that provides a discussion of how to use “the science of ecological restoration to guide habitat restoration for the Mojave desert Tortoise” as well as a Site Assessment Tool. The Guidance document is provided as Appendix D of the Bren School plan, and the Site Assessment Tool is a stand-alone Microsoft Excel file. Both of these documents were designed as a product (e.g., similar to our BMPs) that can be provided to land managers to help them perform restoration. **Chris Noddings will provide the Excel file to the Board so that it can be finalized and distributed to land managers.**

Z. Best Management Practices:

a. Translocation BMPs: Michael Tuma and Kristin Berry have produced an outline and Michael has assembled a number of papers, which Maggie Fusari is helping to organize. **Greer Dolby has agreed to review, in particular, those portions of the BMPs that pertain to genetics.** It may be a year before the draft Translocation BMPs are available for review.

b. Terms and conditions BMPs: Ken MacDonald recently distributed the latest version of these BMPs, which are intended to be distributed at the Authorized Biologist Workshop. **All comments must be submitted to Ken MacDonald by close of business on 29 August 2017.** • **Once these comments are received, Ken MacDonald will solicit a formal vote of approval to indicate that the BMPs are fully endorsed by all Council members.** The final version of the BMPs would be posted on the website.

AA. Bolson Tortoise Report: Bruce Palmer shared a recent report from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation by Turtle Conservancy, dated July 17, 2017, which acknowledges the Council’s \$20,000 donation.

BB. Betty Burge memorial: **Ken MacDonald is working on this issue.**

CC. How do we increase our effectiveness? How do we become more effective in implementing actions that support recovery? The ultimate definition of effectiveness is recovery of the tortoise, which is not happening with unsustainable declines of 10% each year. The Strategic Plan does a good job of outlining our goals and objectives, many of which have been implemented; e.g., Bren School project, Ken MacDonald’s fundraising efforts, producing restoration and terms & conditions BMPs, agency coordination meetings, increasing social media outreach, Authorized Biologist Workshop, expanding and diversifying the Board, etc. Concern was expressed that the RITs are focusing on habitat restoration as their primary goal when minimizing mortality is more important. It is important during agency coordination meetings to discuss how to implement (or help agencies implement) Section 7.A.1 of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

We lose momentum by having four Board meetings spread out through the year with large gaps in between. We may consider more conference calls, most of which are typically focused on a particular topic. Each committee may consider having coordinated conference calls among committee members between Board meetings. We have not done a good job of using the skills of our membership. It is important that we help state and federal resource agencies that are overloaded with work. Ed LaRue indicated that the EAC would be more effective by getting onto more mailing lists, by talking to other environmental groups to identify these lists, and by getting invited to collaborative meetings among pertinent desert-active conservation groups.

DD. Archives: Working on the Archives has been on hold since October 2013. However, Tina Erway recently contacted Ed LaRue volunteering to sort through materials so Ed can later categorize them and ultimately scan them. **Kristin Berry** will provide all her archive-worthy materials to Ed LaRue in pdf format. • **All Board members** are encouraged to bring hard copy materials to Ed LaRue to be archived; **Joe Probst** will provide previous Treasurer materials.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Bruce Palmer, at 16:15.

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", 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 26 August 2017

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

1. Spectrum opinion piece on Northern Corridor through Red Cliffs Desert Reserve

9 June 2017 – Ed LaRue receives an email from an undisclosed source asking the Council to provide a rebuttal to a recent news article in the Washington County, Utah Spectrum claiming the Northern Corridor would benefit the Red Cliffs Reserve. Ed forwards that request to the Board asking if they would like him to produce a draft letter (op-ed) to be submitted to the newspaper. On **6/10/2017** there was consensus that Ed drafts this letter, which was drafted and distributed for comment on **6/12/2017**. On **6/16/2017** send draft letter to Cameron Rogen of Washington County to check for accuracy. After getting good input from Cameron Rogen of Washington County, send letter to The Spectrum on **6/20/2017**.

2. Center for Biological Diversity letter opposing “Trump’s Infrastructure Plan”

12 June 2017 – On **6/12/2017**, Ed LaRue receives request to have Council sign onto CBD letter opposing “Trump’s Infrastructure Plan,” which would according to the cover letter “gut our environmental laws,” which he immediately circulates to the Board. Deadline is **6/16/2017**, which was met.

3. Green Planet EA for St. Philip Placer Mine – El Paso Mountains, Kern Co., California

6/2/2017 – Ed LaRue receives notice of this proposed project from the Ridgecrest Field Office (Randall Porter) on **6/2/2017**, which he immediately distributes on **6/3/2017**. Complete and distribute the draft comment letter on **6/13/2017**. Circulate revised letter with Jeff Aardahl changes on **6/16/2017**. Send a third draft of the letter on **6/20/2017**. Distribute 4th draft incorporating Judy Hohman and Larry LaPré’s comments on **6/24/2017**. With six endorsements, the letter was submitted on **6/28/2017**.

4. Current administration’s dismissal of national monuments established since 1995

6/10/2017 – In May 2017 there was a proposal out of Washington D.C. to eliminate national monuments established since 1995. Ed LaRue was unable to attend an environmental grass roots meeting on 6/6/2017 in Redlands. At the Board meeting of **6/10/2017**, Michael Tuma was identified as the lead to draft a letter on this issue. Having little to go on, Ed sends an email to Seth Shteir and David Lamfrom of National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) on 6/12/2017 asking for anything they may have written on the issue. Lamfrom responded later that day indicating he will send materials to Ed. There was a deadline in early July that was missed.

5. Council participation in the Management Oversight Group (MOG)

6/13/2017 – In order to facilitate Council participation in tortoise recovery issues, Cristina Jones and Becky Jones (as representatives of their Departments), Ken MacDonald, and Ed LaRue attended the MOG meeting on **6/13/2017**. Ed provided the Board with final minutes of the event on **6/16/2017**.

6. Letter to Secretary Zinke asking to oppose the Cadiz Water Pipeline

6/19/2017 – Ed LaRue receives a letter from David Lamfrom of National Parks Conservation Association on **6/19/2017** asking the Council to cosign a letter opposing the Cadiz Pipeline. I add a sentence mentioning impacts to desert tortoise and forward to the Board on **6/20/2017** soliciting input. Recirculate letter on **6/26/2017** to get a final resolution. With four recusals, four yes votes, and one no vote, Ed informed Dave Lamfrom that the Council endorses the letter and may be added as a cosigner on **6/28/2017**.

7. Ord Mountain Solar Project

6/26/2017 – On **6/26/2017** Ed LaRue receives a letter from Lorrie Steely (Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative) asking the Council to endorse their letter. Rather than do that, Ed drafts a letter and immediately distributes it to the rest of the Board.

8. San Bernardino County Draft Renewable Energy and Conservation Element of the General Plan

7/6/2017 – On **7/6/2017**, Ed LaRue receives notice from Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife that comments on the county's draft renewable energy plan are due on **7/25/2017**, which he distributes on **7/7/2017**. Ed attends a public meeting on **8/8/2017** where he gave an oral presentation to County Supervisors.

9. RB Inyokern Solar Project

7/17/2017 – On this date, Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife sends a notice of preparation for this 273-acre project in Inyokern. Ed distributes the NOP from Kern County to the Board on **7/19/2017**, indicating that he has worked extensively on this project and will be unable to comment. No one took the lead on this issue following Ed's recusal.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 6/11/2017 to 8/26/2017**

Current date for this latest table revision is: 8/20/2017

		Dates (2017)				Board Member Responses Codes: Y = Vote of Yes; N = Vote of No; PI = Provided input; Blank = No Response; R = Recused; A = Authors/Lead Board member; NA – Replied they were not able to respond by indicated date													
No.	Reference	Rec'd	Dist	Due	Sent	BJ	BP	CJ	CN	EL	JH	JP	KB	KM	LL	MF	MQ	MT	PW
1	Northern Corridor article	6/9	6/9	ASAP	6/20	Y 6/20	R 6/22		Y/PI 6/13	A/PI 6/12		Y 6/12			Y 6/16	Y 6/13	Y 6/13		
2	CBD Trump Letter	6/12	6/12	6/16	6/16				R/PI 6/12	PI 6/12		Y 6/12		Y 6/15	N 6/15	Y/PI 6/12		Y 6/16	Y 6/15
3	BLM EA on Green Planet	6/2	6/13	6/30	6/28					A/PI 6/13	Y/PI 6/23	Y 6/21			Y/PI 6/23	Y 6/24			Y 6/25
4	National monuments issue	6/10	N/A	No action		No action on this issue													
5	MOG participation	N/A	N/A	6/13	6/13					A/PI 6/13									
6	Cadiz Pipeline Opposition	6/19	6/20	N/A	6/28	R 6/20				R 6/20	R 6/28	Y 6/21		Y 6/27	N 6/23	Y/PI 6/21		R 6/24	Y 6/21
7	Ord Mountain Solar Project	6/26	6/26	6/30						A/PI 6/20	Y/PI 6/28	Y 6/26			Y/PI 6/26				
8	San Berdo Co Renewable Energy	7/6	7/7	7/25	7/20	R 7/11				A/PI 7/8	Y/PI 7/9	Y 7/10		Y/PI 7/11	Y/PI 7/7-24	Y/PI 7/9			
9	RB Inyokern Solar Project	7/17	7/19	8/10		Ed had to recuse himself and there was no additional action													

BJ = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **CJ** = Cristina Jones, **CN** = Chris Noddings, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **JH** = Judy Hohman, **JP** = Joe Probst, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **LL** = Larry LaPré, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **PW** = Pete Woodman