

Final Final Final

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

**25 August 2012
DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, California**

The meeting was called to order by Dan Pearson, Chairperson at 09:58 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: Dan Pearson, Kristin Berry, Pete Woodman, Sid Silliman, Tracy Bailey, Mike Bailey, Ed LaRue, Maggie Fusari, Bruce Palmer, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, and Glenn Stewart. **Absent:** None. **Guests:** Mary Cohen, Mickey Quillman, Mari Quillman.

A. Introductions: Mari Quillman (ECORP Consulting), Mickey Quillman (Resource Branch Chief for BLM, Barstow), Mary Cohen (proposed as new webmaster) introduced themselves. As a prospective board member, Mari described her interested in joining the Council board. She is willing to help out with corporate sponsorship, addressing environmental issues (on EAC), serving as a Council officer, etc. Mari Quillman, Mickey Quillman, and Mary Cohen then left the room for the executive session to consider Mari's election to the board. **Motion made (Bruce Palmer), seconded (Joe Probst), and unanimously approved to elect Mari Quillman to the board and to the officer position of Membership Coordinator.**

B. Review Agenda: Several new issues were added and incorporated below.

C. Meeting Minutes of 14 April 2012: Pete Woodman recorded the minutes in Ed LaRue's absence, who later edited Pete's notes and prepared minutes for the April board meeting, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved with minor changes. **Motion made, seconded, and approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.** Ed LaRue will use full names in these and future minutes. • Minutes need to be posted within 60 days after approval of final minutes, so Ed LaRue would provide these to Mary Cohen as the new webmaster. • Ed LaRue and Maggie Fusari will work on the workshop section for a few modifications.

D. Reports:

1. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was distributed. Mike Bailey indicated that about \$12,000 have since been added to the \$248,321.32 overall total shown on the Net Worth page. After the symposium, his records were off by \$80, which he added to miscellaneous expenses. There is a \$1,500 credit on our credit card. **Insurance will soon be due, to be paid by Mike Bailey when the invoice is received.** Rainy Day Fund is currently making money. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Glenn Stewart), and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final, after Mike Bailey's name is added to the report.** Ray Butler recently sent the draft audit report to Joe Probst and Mike Bailey, which needs to be formally approved. **Mike Bailey will ask Ray Butler for a signed copy of the draft audit report then distribute it to all board members.**

2. Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report: The EAC report was distributed by Sid Silliman, and has been attached to these minutes.

a. Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs): Maggie Fusari is the RIT representative for Northeastern Mojave, including Utah and Arizona (see second page of EAC report for more information). Kristin Berry is on the California Mojave – West Mojave RIT, and Becky Jones is on the California Mojave – Northeast Mojave RIT as agency representatives. The list on page 2 of the EAC report identifies 27 action categories, including a top 10 list, which include restore habitat, remove grazing, ... (down to) manage disease in wild populations. She is concerned that if grazing is relinquished, for example, what other types of uses, in a multiple-use context, may replace grazing? Kristin Berry was concerned that the make-up of her RIT section includes agency personnel, for example, and not enough tortoise experts. She emphasized that addressing mortality factors should be the highest priority. RITs are designed to provide input to support five-year plans that do not necessarily identify how the management actions are to be implemented. [Any comments, recommendations should be to Maggie Fusari by 29 August 2012.](#)

b. DRECP: The initial recommendations of the Independent Science Panel were released yesterday, 24 August 2012, saying that the current approach is not scientifically defensible. The panel identified a half-dozen specific ways that the DRECP should be adjusted. It is important to read this August 2012 panel document so that it can be referred to in public comments. Some of the covered species are depicted as occurring where they do not occur. Council is concerned that the development focus areas (DFAs) have been determined without any scientific basis. Most DFA alternatives include existing mitigation acquisition parcels that would be open for development if those alternatives are selected. Although the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area was withdrawn from mineral entry and grazing 32 years ago, that withdrawal was supposed to be renewed 12 years ago, and is not getting needed attention. DRECP planners expect to identify the preferred alternative by December 2012. Environmental groups collectively have expressed their concern that conservation goals have not been identified.

c. Solar PEIS: The final EA has been published, so now is the protest period; the Council does not have standing as we did not comment earlier. Western Land Trust is commenting, but the Council is not contributing because issues are much broader than tortoise.

d. MCAGCC 29 Palms Base Expansion: Comments are due in two days, on 27 August 2012. Concern that expansion into Johnson Valley Open Area may shift use from this designated area into important tortoise habitats. The Council will not be able to comment on this project due to time constraints. Ed LaRue could not review and comment due to his involvement with the base.

e. Nevada BLM Tortoise Relocation EA: [Comments will be sent to Ed LaRue so that he can put together a Council letter by the 14 September 2012 comment deadline.](#)

f. Moapa Solar Energy Center, Clark County: Peter Woodman indicated the biological opinion has already been issued, and clearance surveys are due in the fall. The translocation site would be several miles from the impact area, which is a concern.

g. Future Functions of EAC: Sid Silliman has indicated that he is stepping down as chair of the EAC as of today. His tenure as board member ends in October and he will not stand for re-election. He will still serve on the EAC as a regular Council member, but not board member or chair. He has been frustrated that there is a lot of work often without any noticeable results. Dan Pearson has contacted a few consulting firms about contractual work, but they are currently working on some of the projects of concern. EAC needs to know when projects occur and determine the priorities for commenting. How can the Council perform more practical, empirical conservation actions on behalf of tortoises? Suggestions included pursuing lawsuits, purchasing habitat, and practical conservation actions, such as habitat restoration.

E. Discussions:

1. Archives Sorting Party: Ed LaRue found a copy of the 501c nonprofit corporation letter, which he forwarded to Mike Bailey several months ago. The sorting parties in March and June resulted in about a dozen boxes containing archival materials, excluding important materials belonging to Glenn Stewart, Kristin Berry's materials in Truckee, among others. Ed LaRue is in the process of going through the materials page by page, eliminating redundancies, and creating an electronic table of contents for all the materials that will eventually be scanned. Dan Pearson asked [Mari Quillman](#) to begin to assemble a list of all board members and all award recipients over all the years.

2. 2013 and 2014 Symposia: Dates are 15-17 February 2012 at Sam's Town, Las Vegas, Nevada, which is our last contracted symposium with the casino. [Kristin Berry](#) will send an announcement for a call for papers to [Mary Cohen](#) so the speaker schedule is complete by [December](#). Kristin Berry is considering a Saturday morning session on predators, and has been in touch with Andrew Walde. She is also considering sessions on captive tortoises (the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center in Las Vegas may be closed in October due to lack of funding), the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), Asian turtle trade (Chris Sheppard, Brian Doyle), etc. She may consider last year's Morafka Award winner to return as a session chair. [Kristin Berry](#) will contact [Kim Field](#) for potential field trips in 2013, which could include the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center. Thursday is preferred to Monday for the field trip.

The Council needs to determine a symposium location for 2014. Tucson was identified as problematic, particularly with regards to the airport. [Bruce Palmer](#) will look into logistics in [Phoenix, Arizona](#) for future symposia. [Tracy Bailey](#) will check with [DoubleTree Hilton](#) about the availability of 21-23 February 2014. Mike Bailey indicated the Council broke even when the symposium was in Ontario several years ago. Potential 2014 field trips include San Diego Zoo, The Living Desert in Palm Desert, and local botanical gardens. [Tracy Bailey](#) and [Bruce Palmer](#) will provide feedback via email on potential 2014 locations.

3. Awards: Glenn Stewart is working with Ken Nagy and Bob Murphy, other members of the Morafka Award Committee. Letters of recommendation are to be submitted to Glenn Stewart electronically. The information for the Morafka Award and application for nominations have been posted on the web page for about six weeks, and are being announced elsewhere. Awardees will be determined by early January. Glenn Stewart, Kristin Berry, and Becky Jones are on the awards committee for other awards, and would appreciate any nominations. The special award is currently referred to as the "Jim St Amant Special Award," and the annual award is the "Kristin Berry Annual Award." Glenn Stewart recently tried to contact Jim St Amant by phone and letter, with no success. [Becky Jones](#) will try to contact him.

4. Grant Proposal Guidelines: Dan Pearson has taken the lead on drafting the grant proposal guidelines, which were last revised in January 2012. Should the Council identify an upper limit for the grant? Council will consider proposals up to \$5,000, which can be increased on a case-by-case basis. An overall annual budget for grants of \$25,000 was discussed, but would not be published. Important to include a schedule ensuring peer-reviewed publications are produced. We may also include additional categories for education, research, conferences, etc., which should be included in the draft guidelines. If matching funds are available, that should be identified in the grant proposal. Funding to hire someone for environmental review will be handled separately. **In the next week-or-so, board members are asked to provide Dan Pearson with any new suggested modifications. He will then distribute the final policy for a vote.**

There has been a recent proposal for IUCN to reclassify Agassiz's desert tortoise as critically endangered, which the Council fully supports. The Council would be receptive to receiving a grant proposal to support this reclassification. **Motion made (Sid Silliman), seconded (Bruce Palmer), and approved for the Council to review IUCN proposals for grants supporting desert tortoise research, assure consistency with Council guidelines, and we retain the right to fund, or not, proposals on a case-by-case basis. • Motion made (Sid Silliman), seconded (Bruce Palmer), and approved to provide a one-time contribution of \$5,000 to Turtle Survival Center in South Carolina.**

5. Web Site Discussion with Mary Cohen: Mary Cohen showed us the current 1997 Council web site and a temporary mock-up of how the new web site could look. The mock-up will be available until September 8, which will serve as a deadline for comments (**Mary Cohen, Maggie Fusari, and Tracy Bailey will see that the board gets the temporary website address**). She indicated the current site is resource rich. Mary recommends changing the navigation system to be more complete and user-friendly. Would be run by *Java script*, using drop down menus (one problem is some people disable this function). She then made a detailed presentation of how the new site could function.

Discussion: Good to add things like grants policy, awards descriptions, be sure Council logo is prominent on home page, Council activities schedule, copies of minutes, announcements tab, etc. Everyone would need to provide information, feedback, and materials once Mary Cohen is contracted. As Corresponding Secretary, Tracy Bailey would serve as contact person to forward information to Mary Cohen. **Dan Pearson asked that Mary Cohen email the board with what she has done and what she proposes, and board members would provide feedback, being sure to carbon copy all other members.** Mary's email address is tor2ga@iinet.com. Will need to get budget quotes from Mary, and when chosen, would replace Mike Connor as our webmaster in about a month-or-so. **A formal contract (no one identified) would need to be developed and given to Mary.**

6. Board Operations Manual: Bruce Palmer has taken the lead on developing this manual and distributed a draft operations policy manual for review today. There have been numerous formal and informal policies over the years, but no central location for these. The manual would include individual policy statements, referencing back to the Bylaws. The current draft mostly includes policies given in the Bylaws relative to each of the officers and board members at large. Policies should include grants, reimbursement policies, donation acceptance, audits, etc. An approval date would be assigned to each policy. Bruce Palmer began to develop a policy for accepting new members to the board. Eventually, these policies could be maintained in a three-ring binder (and electronically) to facilitate modifications. **Bruce Palmer will send an electronic version of the draft policy manual to receive feedback from each board member over the next month. • Dan Pearson will begin developing a format to provide a structure for existing and future policies.**

7. Symposium Manual: Tracy Bailey is developing a manual to govern symposia, which is currently 65 pages. She needs input from **Glenn Stewart** regarding student papers, from **Kristin Berry** on schedule lay out, and **Bruce Palmer** for his programmatic comments (including specifically, vendor contacts). • **Tracy Bailey** will develop timelines associated with certain duties. • **Mari Quillman** will help develop guidelines for accepting donations and soliciting sponsors. The manual already includes sections on budgeting and recent symposia costs.

8. Workshop:

a. Status of 2012 Workshop: Maggie indicated that the two sessions are currently full, with 110 students in each session. Expect to turn away more than 100 prospective students. **Pete Woodman** will be meeting with the new water district manager in the next few weeks. We will continue to provide event insurance for the district's facility. Can we perform a third session this year? Certain rooms at Cerro Coso may accommodate more than 100 students. Kerr-McGee Center can accommodate up to 2,000 in a gymnasium-like setting. We may perform concurrent sessions in both the field and classroom, but too much overlap with instructors. Can we compensate fieldworkers and audio-visual staff? Need to (1) ask if speakers can attend a third session; (2) see if existing facility or another one is available; (3) see if audio-visual staff can attend a third session; (4) ask Jeremy Mack if he, maybe with assistance, can grade 100 more tests. If a third session is added, the three workshops would be 3 - 8 November 2012.

b. Workshop Manual: **Tracy Bailey** will send **Maggie Fusari** a copy of the **symposium manual** (see Section 7 above), which she will then use to help develop a workshop manual, which is currently about 12 pages. **Pete Woodman** will provide feedback regarding the field portion of the workshop.

c. Workshop Policies: Next year's registration will be fully electronic and simpler. Council may still need to consider reimbursement policy, particular if a third session is pursued. Can we extend the student rate to "early-career jobless" individuals? (Laughter) With whom can we share test scores? For now, students get a letter with their score, which they can personally provide to whomever they choose. There has been an announcement during the workshop that the scores are available to agencies, upon request. The Council could provide a policy statement (most likely on the test, website, etc.) stating that the test results will be available to employers, potential employers, agencies, etc. unless students indicate in writing that they do not want the results to be provided. Maggie strongly disapproves providing test scores to anyone other than the students. **Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded, and approved to announce at the workshop that test scores will be available to government agencies, employers, etc. upon request; that a place be provided on the test where the students can indicate they do not authorize this release; and the Corresponding Secretary serves as the point person for release of test scores.** Maggie Fusari was opposed; Sid Silliman and Bruce Palmer abstained.

d. Desert Institute Workshop in Joshua Tree: Ed LaRue recommended that the Desert Institute work with Copper Mountain College to conduct a one-day or half-day workshop in Joshua Tree. Ed LaRue agreed to work with Dr. Paul Delaney of the college to pursue this. He asked that Kristin Berry provide her Power Point presentation used at the workshop for his use, representing the Council, which she agreed to. **Ed LaRue** should encourage **Kevin Wong of the Desert Institute and Paul Delany of Copper Mountain College** to attend our workshop to help them design their workshop.


e. Discussions with Roy Averill-Murray: Maggie Fusari has been communicating with Roy Averill-Murray to help coordinate between the Council's workshop and workshops conducted by USFWS Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (generally more technical approaches, like blood work, health assessments, etc.). He has also asked the Council to draft a letter stressing the importance of not closing the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center in Las Vegas. **Dan Pearson will send an invitation to Roy Averill-Murray, along with a list of discussion items, inviting him to the next board meeting to coordinate Council and USFWS programs.**

9. Newsletter: Sean Daly published the spring newsletter in July. Bruce Palmer noted in the recent newsletter that the officer titles need to be changed, which is something Maggie Fusari has already pointed out to Sean.

F. Next Meeting: The next business meeting of the board will be at the DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, California between 10:00 a.m. and approximately 4:00 p.m., on 20 October 2012.

G. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Dan Pearson, at 4:05 p.m.

These final minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary.

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

Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Report
DTC Board Meeting – August 25, 2012

Cadiz Valley Water Conservation Project

June 5 – Sid attended a meeting of the University Club of Claremont to raise questions with the invited speaker Scott Slater, Cadiz President and General Council.

DRECP

April 25 – Sid called in to the DRECP Stakeholder meeting for the Electric Transmission Planning Overview and Update presentation by Dennis Peters of California ISO. An outline is accessible at http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2012-04-25-26_meeting/presentations/

The final April 16 report from the Transmission Technical Group Report is accessible at http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2012-04-25-26_meeting/background/Transmission_Planning/

The Office of Governor's paper for the April 2012 DRECP meeting is accessible from http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2012-04-25-26_meeting/presentations/.

July 25 – Sid attended the DRECP Stakeholders Meeting to better understand the DRECP Alternatives developed by the Renewable Energy Action Team. REAT plans to complete the Draft EIR/EIS in December 2012.

August 6 – Ed attended the DRECP Transmission Working Group meeting, and secured a series of five oversized maps that show the DRECP Alternatives

August 8 – Ed prepared and submitted to the CEC a letter of commentary with respect to the likely effects of DRECP Alternatives on important desert tortoise habitats, especially the DTNRA. DTC comments were posted August 9th at http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2012-07-25-26_workshop/comments/ See William Condon's August 17 email response to Ed (forwarded to the Board)

Desert Tortoise National Wildlife Refuge

June 7 – Sid contacted Bob Williams (retired USFWS) regarding the possible designation of a desert tortoise wildlife refuge through legislation entitled the "Nevada National Wildlife Refuge Boundary Modification and Lands Act." The refuge would be created through the transfer of BLM-administered lands to USFWS. The transfer would include the 11,000 acres of the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center and Bird Springs Valley to the west of the Center.

Moapa

July 24 – Sid received a telephone call from Ian Zabarte of Moapa Band of Paiutes inquiring about training for desert tortoise handling for the solar power project at Moapa.

Recovery Implementation Team

August 20 – Maggie is a member of the NE Mojave - UT/AZ RIT as a DTC representative. Kristin Berry is on the CA Mojave - West Mojave, and Becky Jones is on the CA Mojave - NE Mojave in their respective professional capacities. Maggie reports: We have held two Webinars, one to describe the RIT process and the second to go over the model elements and urge us to enter comments well before the face to face meetings. My group meets in mid October, the others in December. We are all to submit comments on action elements prior to September 15. The Priority areas listed are:

THE 10 TOP

- 1) Restore Habitat
- 2) Remove grazing (close allotments)
- 3) Environmental Education
- 4) Decrease predator access to human subsidies
- 5) Targeted predator control
- 6) Restore roads (vertical mulching-roads)
- 7) Increase law enforcement
- 8) Sign and fence protected areas
- 9) Install and maintain human barriers (preserves)
- 10) Manage disease in wild population

LOWER RANKED ACTION TYPES

- 11) Sign Designated Routes
- 12) Install and maintain human barriers (wildland-urban interface)
- 13) Install and maintain tortoise barrier fencing
- 14) Fire management planning and implementation
- 15) Manage disease in captive population (permitting)
- 16) Restore habitat (toxicants/unexploded ordinance)
- 17) Designate and close roads (travel management plan)
- 18) Speed limits
- 19) Connect habitat (culverts/underpasses)
- 20) Control dogs
- 21) Withdraw mining
- 22) Restore habitat (garbage clean up)
- 23) Minimize wild horse and burro impacts
- 24) Restrict OHV events
- 25) Land acquisition
- 26) Landfill management
- 27) Install and maintain tortoise barriers (open OHV areas)

At the DTC Board of Directors meeting on Aug. 25 we should discuss what the Board believes to be the most productive comments that might be submitted into the RIT process at this time.

The models the DTRO is using are accessible at:

<http://www.spatial.redlands.edu/dtro/modeexplorer/default.aspx>