

DRAFT

**Desert Tortoise Council – Board of Directors Meeting  
Saturday April 9, 2011 Anthem Country Club, Henderson, NV**

Attendees: Maggie Fusari, Dan Pearson, Mike Bailey, Tracy Bailey, Kristin Berry, Sid Silliman, Bruce Palmer, Glenn Stewart, Peter Woodman, and Becky Jones

Guests: Bob Turner, Ray Saumure, and Joe Probst

Meeting opened at 9:50 am

Moment of silence for remembrance of our friend and colleague Pat von Helf.

Introduction of our guests.

Agenda: Several items were added including a grant proposal to the DTC, the 29 Palms Marine Corp land expansion, and a succession plan for the future of the board.

Meeting Minutes: Draft minutes for the February annual board meeting were reviewed. Maggie will make the suggested changes and distribute them to the board. **Glenn Stewart moved to accept the meeting minutes as amended, Kristin Berry seconded, unanimous approval.**

Treasurer's Report: Mike Bailey reported that we made money at the symposium this year. Linda Cayot has not received reimbursement for her expenses yet. Maggie will have Linda send a new copy of the expenses to Mike. \$5,000 will go into the rainy day fund. Since we are about to exceed our board travel expenses for the year, **Mike Bailey moved that we increase the board travel expense item to \$6,000 for 2011, Dan Pearson seconded, unanimous approval.**

Tracy Bailey expects to receive a grant request from Carolyn Jones of the Red Rock Interpretative Association. They'd like to maintain pens and enhance their educational program. They have two tortoises on site for educational purposes; they have the requisite permits. Kristin Berry noted that they should submit a budget and a full proposal for the project.

There was discussion on adding a donation category to the budget and that we should establish an amount that the Council will plan to give on grants and/or donations annually. It was agreed that we need to draft criteria for accepting grants. Dan Pearson will draft language on how to deal with grants/donations and how much we should set aside each year for them. \$10,000 per year was suggested as an amount for grant and project funding.

**Dan Pearson moved to accept the treasurer's report, Glenn Stewart seconded, unanimous approval.**

Awards Committee: Glenn Stewart said we are looking for recommendations for nominees for next year's awards. There was discussion to have a new special recognition award that would be named in honor of Pat von Helf. This would be used for people who have made significant contributions of time and effort to the Council now and in the past. There may be more than one awarded each year or there may be none in a particular year. **Dan Pearson moved that this award be established, Mike Bailey seconded, unanimous approval.**

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Symposium Committee: According to several board members the symposium went very well this year. The student help worked out very well and was much appreciated. Mike and Tracy Bailey handled the registrations; having a single point for registration worked well for keeping the data organized. The student papers (with one exception) were in need of better mentoring on content and style. Dr. Scott Abella had told Dr. Berry that his student had refused his advice.

There was discussion on how to get people to stay for the Sunday afternoon session. Shortening the last day so it ends at 12:00 was discussed, but how to do this without impacting the number of sessions could be a problem. Friday and Saturday could be made longer by starting earlier and ending at 5:30. We could have the annual business meeting on Thursday night so we could start earlier on Saturday. If we offered food and drink after the evening board meeting we might get more people to attend. We might also be able to have some of those people registered early so there is not the big rush on Saturday morning. Some ideas for the next special session include: Bats, horned lizards, and raptors. Mike Bailey and Joe Probst offered to work the registration table next year.

Location for the 2013 symposium: To assess the possibilities for Arizona, Bruce Palmer (Phoenix) and Maggie Fusari (Tucson) will look at possible venues. We need to consider transportation costs (symposium and individual), available facilities, and overall acceptability of each possible place.

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report: Sid Silliman presented a summary of all the recent activities undertaken by the committee (attached). The board commended Sid for the excellent job on the City of Twentynine Palms litigation. DTC submitted comments in March in response to the NOI for the Mountain Pass Lateral Project. We have received no response from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the February letter sent on the draft Translocation Guidelines; the expected final guidelines have not yet been released.

Sid Silliman attended the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group meeting where the USFWS Regional Director discussed the Revised Recovery Plan. He requested opinions as to whether the revised plan should address alternative energy projects before being released. A letter was sent to the USFWS Regional Director stating that the plan needs to include the most current large-scale planning challenges in the species range.

The names of Bruce Palmer, Tom Egan, and Dan Pearson were submitted by DTC to the USFWS for the Regional Implementation Teams. Kristin Berry, Sid Silliman and Maggie Fusari submitted their names separately.

Sid Silliman also attended the March 31, 2011 BLM Listening Session for Ivanpah Valley. He spoke briefly and in a subsequent letter to the conservation participants argued that we should be trying to maintain existing habitat in the Ivanpah Valley as a significant step toward recovery of the Mojave Population of the desert tortoise and not losing it piece by piece to poorly placed development projects.

The question of coordination with other conservation groups was discussed. Should we sign on with coordinated letters or should we do our own? Pros and cons were discussed. The prevailing opinion was that each decision should be made depending on the issues involved and the scope of the projects. Sometimes we should work jointly and other times we should work independently.

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DTC Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises During Construction: Peter Woodman has reviewed the new USFWS guidelines and said they were very similar to the old guidelines that we published and there was little recognition given to the Council in the document. Peter Woodman will work with Ed LaRue to review and work on the guidelines and present their results at the next board meeting.

Tortoise Handling Workshop: There are 140 people so far on the invitation list for 2011. The evaluations have been reviewed by most of the presenters of last year's workshop. It was discussed that we should coordinate with USFWS on the workshop. Bruce Palmer will check with Roy Averill-Murray as to how we can better coordinate with USFWS in promoting and presenting the workshop. It was also suggested that a workshop on the Arizona tortoise would be a good addition.

Maggie Fusari, working with Kristin Berry, Glenn Stewart, Becky Jones and Tracy Bailey, will evaluate the online test and recommend changes if there can be shown to be improvements in clarity and ease of grading. We will ask Jeremy Mack if there were any questions that seem to pose particular problems.

There was discussion as to whether we should get a Facebook page that might increase our membership and publicity. This discussion was tabled until a later date, while board members evaluate Facebook as a medium for the Council.

Board membership: Raymond Saumure, having expressed interest in joining the board, attended the meeting and was asked several questions about his background and what he thought he could bring to the Council if elected to the board. After he answered questions and left the room, there was discussion of his qualifications. Dan Pearson moved his acceptance as a board member, Kristin Berry seconded, unanimous approval. There was also discussion of Ed LaRue, who had also expressed interest in becoming a board member. Glenn Stewart moved to elect Ed to the board, Becky seconded, unanimous approval. Tracy was nominated to serve as the Corresponding Secretary by Dan Pearson, seconded by Kristin Berry, unanimous approval (and thanked for taking on this task).

Bylaws: Bruce Palmer handed out a copy of the Bylaws of the Desert Tortoise Council with comments and some proposed changes (appended). It was decided that Bruce should go ahead and draft changes in the Bylaws for review at the next board meeting. The proposed changes will be voted on at the next annual business meeting.

Miscellaneous: The topic of a succession plan was discussed, for when Kristin and other senior board members decide to retire from the board. There was no final determination on what the board should do, but at the moment the symposium is under control; more people will be brought in to learn the procedures, and the board will continue to discuss its future.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be June 25, 2011 in Ontario, CA. Sid Silliman will see if we could use the library there again and plan for a lunch venue.

**Adjourn: At 4:00 pm Glenn Stewart motioned to adjourn the meeting, Becky Jones seconded, unanimous approval.**

Draft minutes were reviewed by the board on 25 June 2011 and revised accordingly by Ed LaRue, incoming Recording Secretary.