

Final Final Final

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

**1 June 2013
DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, California**

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Palmer at 10:10 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: Pete Woodman, Maggie Fusari, Bruce Palmer, Glenn Stewart, Kristin Berry, Mari Quillman, Tracy Bailey, Mike Bailey, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue. **Absent:** Dan Pearson, Heidi McMaster. **Guests:** Mary Cohen, Chris Noddings, Ken MacDonald.

A. Introductions: Each of the board members introduced themselves to the two prospective board members, Chris Noddings and Ken MacDonald.

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

C. Interview Board of Directors Nominees: Chris Noddings and Ken MacDonald were asked to leave the room while we reviewed background information about them. The board looked briefly at our draft nominations policy (more focused review of this later), which intends to ensure geographical representation and specific skill sets. The nominees were brought in separately and asked a series of questions regarding their backgrounds and intended functions on the board. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Tracy Bailey), and unanimously approved to welcome Ken MacDonald and Chris Noddings as new board members.**

D. Meeting Minutes of 12 January 2013: Ed LaRue prepared minutes of the last board meeting at Sam's Town, in Las Vegas, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved with minor changes. **Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

E. Annual Business Meeting Minutes of 15 February 2013: Ed LaRue prepared minutes of the annual business meeting at Sam's Town, in Las Vegas, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved with minor changes. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Tracy Bailey), and approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

Officer Reports:

F. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was prepared and distributed by Mike Bailey. Taxes have been filed. Our overall total as of today is \$268,129.14. The Symposium brought in \$964.22, thanks to Mari Quillman and income associated with the auction. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Becky Jones), and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.** There was a general consensus that we not post the Treasurer's Report on the website. Bruce Palmer has already started on a travel reimbursement policy; Mike Bailey would like to have reimbursement receipts within one month of spending the funds.

G. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Tracy Bailey typically checks the post office weekly and sends environmental information to Ed LaRue for potential EAC comment. The Council received a letter from Desert Institute acknowledging a \$300 donation from Paul Delaney and Ed LaRue relative to the April workshop in Joshua Tree. Tracy Bailey has the latest contact list for board members, including spaces for Ken MacDonald and Chris Noddings to add their contact information.

H. Membership Coordinator's Report: Mari Quillman has purchased the computer, and Sean Daly has imported 1,270 members, but this list differs from the list that Tracy Bailey maintains. Unfortunately, Sean's data base does not have any zip codes. Mari has several volunteer student interns updating the data base, and they are about half way through. How do we get a current email list? At work, Mari uses software called, "Constant Contact" that distributes information and provides immediate feedback on email changes. "Mail Chimp" is similar software that is provided free to nonprofit groups. Sean Daly could use Mail Chimp software to import and distribute newsletters, which would provide immediate feedback about functional and nonfunctional email addresses. Maggie Fusari indicated this may also be a means to contact and coordinate Workshop attenders. We may use this software to contact currently inactive members. **Mari Quillman will work with Mary Cohen on how best to use Mail Chimp (or other) software for managing and corresponding with our current membership.**

Committee Reports:

I. Awards Committee Report: Glenn Stewart indicated that the Morafka Award was made available electronically last year, and applications and letters of recommendation were submitted in pdf format. He will advertise availability of this award in Herpetological Review and Center for North American Herpetology, assuming Sylvia Morafka will continue to partially fund the award (\$1,000) with our matching contribution of \$1,000. Glenn has recently completed a partial policy statement concerning awards, which was sent out a few days ago. **With regards to student papers, there is no official evaluation process; Glenn Stewart and Maggie Fusari will formulate one and add to the policy.** There are separate subcommittees for the Morafka Award and the Best Student Paper Award. **Glenn Stewart will continue to work on the awards policy and add sections dealing with the Morafka and Best Student Paper Awards.**

J. Ecosystems Advisory Committee (EAC) Report: Ed LaRue distributed the EAC report (which is attached) with all comment letters and projects the board has addressed since January 2013. He has followed through with his intent to document all activity and inactivity relative to all projects that come to the Corresponding Secretary or through other contacts. He has rigorously followed the requirement to get feedback from at least three board members before submitting comment letters. **Ed LaRue will begin to provide all final, formal EAC letters to Mary Cohen so they may be posted on the website.** With board consensus, Bruce Palmer formally appointed Ed LaRue as Chairperson of the Ecosystem Advisory Committee.

1. **DRECP:** **DRECP planners have not posted the Council's comment letter from April 2013, which Ed LaRue will ensure is posted. Ed LaRue will also forward the recently revised maps to all board members.**

2. **Congressman Paul Cook's Letter:** Maggie Fusari and Ed LaRue co-authored a letter offering Tom Egan's "View from the Road" to the congressman. It's important that Johnson Valley Open Area be maintained as is, and that recreation outside open areas be restricted to designated routes. **Ed LaRue will send the letter to the congressman and distribute it, along with "View from the Road," to all board members.**

3. **BrightSource National Geographic Interview:** Fritz Faerber's interview with Ed LaRue on 5/2/2013 is supposed to be available on the website in early to mid-June. Ed LaRue will distribute the link when available.

4. **Translocation of Captive Tortoises in Southern Nevada:** Ileene Anderson met with regulatory personnel in late April 2013, and offered to provide her notes if we wanted them. Tortoises are now being translocated into Trout Canyon in Nevada. Some concern that USFWS' translocation protocols are being accepted without critical, third party review. There was a policy statement crafted in the 1970's by the Council that we strongly oppose release of captive tortoises into wild tortoise populations.

5. **Ecosystems Advisory Committee Policy Statement:** All board members review and comment on this policy. Ed LaRue will begin putting dates on both draft and final letters so the board can keep track of versions. Chairperson is responsible for maintaining a complete list of all draft and final comment letters, which are to be published on the website.

6. **29 Palms Granite Construction Mine:** The proponents have applied for both state and federal incidental take permits to expand this existing mine.

K. Introduction to Desert Tortoises and Field Techniques (Workshop): Maggie Fusari, chairperson of the Workshop Committee, recently distributed a report for the 2012 Workshop, which included suggested changes to the field exercises by Paul Frank and Rachel Woodard. There will be two sessions in 2013, with a new title: "Introduction to Desert Tortoises and Field Techniques." The draft workshop handbook is complete and will be distributed by Maggie Fusari in a few weeks. • Although there is already an *ad hoc* Workshop Committee, Maggie suggested the Workshop Committee be elevated to a "standing committee," which will require an amendment to the Bylaws that can be proposed at the next Annual Business Meeting. Online reservations are scheduled to open on July 8. Maggie is out August 19 through October 7, 2013.

In Arizona, Christina Jones and Jeff Servoss of the USFWS indicated to Bruce Palmer that they would like a Sonoran desert tortoise workshop in the summer of 2014 in Arizona, hosted and conducted by the Council. Kristin Berry suggested that Bruce Palmer contact Taylor Edwards to support this new workshop. Good that Bruce Palmer, who will likely coordinate the effort on behalf of the Council, lives in Arizona.

In Joshua Tree, California, Ed LaRue indicated he expects to participate in the Desert Institute's workshop in Joshua Tree next March, so as to avoid the tortoise field season. Thanks to Kristin Berry and Pete Woodman for providing their talks.

L. Review of 2013 Symposium: Not discussed.

M. 39th Annual Symposium – 20-23 February 2014, Ontario, CA: Kristin Berry expects that the guest speaker expenses may be in excess of \$5,000 in 2014, as she already has many out-of-state speakers committed. Mari Quillman will provide flyers (specifically to Ed LaRue) on both the Symposium and Workshop so that they can be distributed at upcoming talks. Kristin Berry already has a full panel of six or seven scientists presenting on golden eagles. Several have committed to reporting on their head-starting programs. There are potential papers on tortoise translocation. A new book on *Gopherus* is forthcoming and may serve as a book-signing opportunity for several of the editors. Potential field trips, coordinated by Pete Woodman, may include Jeff Lovich's site near the Whitewater wind farms, DTRNA, Joshua Tree, and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens. Joe Probst will help with registration and running the photo-contest. Mari Quillman will help with raffle and auction items, and consider new ways to avoid a prolonged session after the banquet.

N. 2015 Annual Symposium: Bruce Palmer has not been able to find reasonably priced hotels in Arizona. It was agreed that Sam's Town in Las Vegas be booked for both 2015 and 2016. February 19 to 22, 2015 are the dates to be scheduled for the 40th Annual Symposium. February 18 to 21, 2016 will be the scheduled dates for the 41st Annual Symposium.

O. Newsletter: Bruce Palmer has been working with Sean Daly on dates to issue the next two newsletters. Information will need to be provided by August 15 for publication on 1 September, and 15 November for publication by 1 December. Sean Daly makes the final decision as to what is in the newsletter, and would appreciate any materials we can provide.

P. Website: Ed LaRue will be sure that pdf's of all final meeting minutes are provided to Mary Cohen for posting. Kristin Berry feels strongly that we need to make the Proceedings available on the website and to be interactive, so for example, users can search key words. Mary Cohen will post pdf's of all Proceedings abstracts so viewers can access them through our website. We still need to place an announcement on the website that will explain how general members can attend board meetings. Mary Cohen has not received the latest newsletter, so we need to be sure that Sean Daly begins sending these directly to her. Kristin Berry will work with Mary Cohen to update the "Answering Questions about Desert Tortoises" document so that it addresses both desert tortoise species and updates the veterinarians list. Pete Woodman will provide Kristin Berry with photographs of both Agassiz's and Morafka's desert tortoises.

Old/New Business

Q. Board Membership: Mike and Tracy Bailey have recently indicated their intention to vacate the board, effective following the 2014 Symposium, which will affect the officer positions of Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary. Joe Probst indicated he is willing to serve as the Treasurer if Bruce Palmer is willing to stay on as Chairperson for 2014, which met with overwhelming support. Becky Jones indicated she will consider the position of Corresponding Secretary, to be discussed at a later time. Tracy's leaving will also leave the Host Committee Chair open, and many supported Ken MacDonald as a possible replacement, to be discussed.

R. Letter of Support for Desert Tortoise Conservation Center: A letter may still be warranted given the release of so many captives into the wild. Bruce Palmer will work with Dan Pearson to see if anything is needed here.

S. Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) Updates: There was a preliminary report sent out in March 2013, which were simple tables of priorities.

T. Betty Burge Memorial at Springs Preserve: Hope to have the memorial completed by spring 2014. Kristin Berry is assisting them with the wording for the memorial plaque. Mike Bailey will send a \$10,000 check to the Springs Preserve to help fund the project.

U. Archival Responsibilities, Inventory, Status, Policy, etc.: Chris Noddings indicated he can take electronic pdf scans to render them as searchable texts. Maggie Fusari provided us with electronic copies of all Proceedings abstracts, excluding 2004. Ed LaRue will develop a flyer soliciting materials from past board members for materials and send it to Mary Cohen.

V. Operations Manual: Bruce Palmer recently distributed the draft operations manual to board members that is intended to work as a “how to guide” for new, incoming board members. The manual would embody the various policies that are currently being formulated. Important to develop write-ups for the Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary to capture Mike and Tracy Bailey’s input, respectively, before they depart.

W. Grants Policy: Bruce Palmer provided a track-change version of this policy to board members in attendance. Existing policy is inadequate in addressing tortoise and turtle species other than Agassiz’s and Morafka’s tortoises. Kristin Berry suggested adding “tortoises and turtles” to an appropriate part of the text; she would also like to develop an objectives section; may also consider a grants committee (standing committee or different people based on their expertise) to address each grant request; be sure research will promote or benefit species recovery. Should there be a ceiling? Kristin Berry suggested, and Glenn Stewart agreed, \$500 to \$10,000 as an appropriate range. It was suggested we replace the 60-day response time with a reference to “within 60 days of an upcoming board meeting,” “four times a year,” on an emergency basis, etc., when a particular grant request can be evaluated and awarded. Committees should be responsible to ensure that complete applications and methodologies are defined and refined before being presented to the entire board. We may begin to make and provide a list of projects for which we provide grants. Chris Noddings suggested that we determine an upper limit in annual budgets to be available for grants; \$20,000 per year was discussed as an example but not formally adopted. There should be a formal contract for each awarded grant and a section added to the policy that indicates what will happen if they fail to meet the stipulations of the contract; indicate percentages of the grant provided upfront, upon delivery of the product, etc. The board should establish priorities on an annual basis to be added to section 6, and section 7, example projects, should be removed.

X. Current Grant Request: There is a \$15,000 request to fund laser technologies to deter ravens from sensitive areas (“Raven No Fly Zone Laser Testing: Phase 2”). Tracy Bailey recused herself from voting on this particular issue, since she is one of the scientists promoting this research. After providing brief input, she and Mike Bailey then left the room while the grant request was discussed in executive session. **Glenn Stewart agreed to review this proposal as the Committee Chairperson with assistance from Kristin Berry and Maggie Fusari.** Kristin and Glenn will talk to Tracy Bailey after the board meeting about some general concerns.

Y. Conflict of Interest and Recusal Policy: Bruce Palmer provided a track-change version of this policy to board members in attendance. Although many issues are financial in nature, there are also confidential and proprietary information that cannot be shared.

Z. Next Meeting: The next two business meetings of the board will be at DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, between 10:00 a.m. and approximately 4:00 p.m., 17 August 2013 and 26 October 2013.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Bruce Palmer, at 4:00 p.m.

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.



Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 1 June 2013

Public Hearing on Boulder City Bypass Project

1/20/ 2013 – Ed LaRue receives an email and attached announcement on this project from Heidi McMaster on 1/15/2013. Being in the field through the evening of 1/18, Ed did not receive this announcement until 1/20, for the event that was held on 1/16, so no action taken.

Maricopa Solar Project

1/31/2013 – Ed LaRue receives this announcement from Tracy Bailey, and forwards it to all board members to see if the project will affect tortoises and if the Council should comment. Second announcement, this one a letter, was sent to the board on 2/1/2013. Receive feedback from Heidi McMaster (2/2) and Maggie Fusari (2/2) but no clear indication if tortoises will be affected. Follow up on Maggie's recommendation and send a letter (Marisol.2-3-2013) asking that we be included in future scoping meetings. After receiving confirmation from Glenn Stewart (2/3), Maggie Fusari (2/3), Joe Probst (2/3), Mari Quillman (2/3), Pete Woodman (2/3), and Bruce Palmer (2/3) Ed sends a single-page letter to Marisol on **2/3/2013**. Bruce Palmer indicates no likely conflicts (3/5); also hear from Heidi McMaster (3/5).

BLM Tortoise Translocation EA for Southern Nevada

2/13/2013 – Ed LaRue receives email link to the signed Environmental Assessment, ROD, and FONSI from the BLM, but there does not appear to be an opportunity to comment, as the EA is signed and final. Ed responds by email on the same day, with a cc to the board, asking if Amelia Savage of the BLM is soliciting comments or if this is just for our own information. Ed's interpretation is that we have until 2/28/2013 to appeal the decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) or let it go.

2/16/2013 – Ileene Anderson with Center for Biological Diversity contacted Ed LaRue during the Council Symposium in Las Vegas to ask if the Council feels strongly enough to confront BLM on this issue. It was unclear if this would be an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) or intent to sue. Ed spoke with most of the 13 board members during the Symposium to alert them to this issue. On **2/18/2013**, Ed received an email from Ileene asking if the Council was interested in joining them on this action. Ed responded with an email that was circulated to all board members asking for more specific information. Ed attached three comment letters (Council's, Western Watersheds Project, and Center for Biological Diversity) and asked for board review so they would be prepared to vote on whether the Council should partner with the Center or not.

2/19/2013 – Ileene Anderson responds to Ed LaRue's email, carbon copying all board members, stating that the Center for Biological Diversity has not finalized its intent and will let us know when they have done so.

2/26/2013 – Ed LaRue receives email from Ileene Anderson indicating that the Center for Biological Diversity's lawyers are still reviewing what they intend to do, and should have a determination by tomorrow.

3/20/2013 – As of this date there has been no follow-up from CBD. Since the appeal had to be made by the end of February, Ed LaRue assumes that CBD did not pursue either the appeal or the law suit.

5/6/2013 – Receive email from Ileene Anderson that CBD met with BLM, USFWS, and others on 4/29/2013, that tortoises are now being translocated, that the protocol has been improved, and that she has notes from the meeting she is willing to share.

Washington County Parkway

1/22/2013 – Ed LaRue receives email from anonymous source including an article written by Mike Small (Citizen's for Dixie's Future) entitled, "Highway Should Be Rejected." Although Ed reads this information, no action is taken, such as distributing it to other board members. It is available as an email document upon request.

2/14/2013 – Ed LaRue returns Christi Wedig's (Citizens for Dixie's Future) phone call (435-773-7031) from several days ago. Christi asked that the Council cooperate with her group, which is an outspoken opponent of the parkway. Ed asked that she draft a letter to the Council outlining how this partnership would function and what they hope to get from our board. She indicated that several of their membership would be at the Symposium and would like to meet with Ed. Ed told her he was willing to meet and get more information, but that he would not be an official representative of the Council. He plans to talk with Bruce Palmer about this potential "alliance" during the Symposium.

2/16/2013 – Ed LaRue meets with Ann McLuckie, Mike Small, and several other members of Citizens for Dixie's Future at the Council symposium. No formal agreement was reached during this 15-minute introduction and discussion, wherein Ed indicated that the board would continue to review materials as they become available. As of **5/18/2013**, there has been no additional correspondence, including the letter Ed requested at the Symposium.

29 Palms Casino

2/20/2013 – Pat Flanagan of 29 Palms forwards EA and consultant's report for the proposed 29 Palms casino on tribal lands. Ed LaRue produces draft comments and sends them to all board members. The comments are due by 2/27/2013.

2/21/2013 – Ed LaRue visits with Pat Flanagan, Paul Smith, and Jane Smith at the 29 Palms Inn to discuss the project. The site is already being developed, with a bladed fenceline, tortoise fence, and gates being constructed onsite, which Ed drives by on the way to the Inn. Receive email comments from Maggie Fusari, Becky Jones (this project is not under CDFW's jurisdiction), Joe Probst, and Heidi McMaster.

2/23/2013 – Ed LaRue revises the document based on input from particularly Maggie Fusari and Becky Jones, and redistributes the comment letter to the board as an email. As of noon on 2/24/013, Maggie is the only person responding with new input. Ed revises the letter, accepting all of Maggie's (mostly editorial) comments.

2/25/2013 – After receiving additional input from Tracy Bailey and Bruce Palmer (by phone) today, Ed LaRue emails comment letter to ESA contact, with carbon copies to Pat Flanagan, Ray Bransfield, and Ileene Anderson.

2/27/2013 – Ed LaRue receives confirmation from Jennifer Wade of ESA that our comments have been received and will be addressed in the final EA.

4/23/2013 – Ed LaRue receives additional documents from Lisa Belenky (lawyer for Center for Biological Diversity) regarding casino and comments from local activist, Pat Flanagan. Ed then provides Lisa with a copy of the Council letter drafted on 2/25/2013, along with a few persisting concerns about the project; and also responds to Pat’s questions about pallet burrows.

29 Palms Marine Corps Expansion Final Record of Decision

2/20/2013 – Receive via email the final ROD on the expansion of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at 29 Palms, San Bernardino County, California. There is no opportunity to respond to this final ROD, which is more for our information.

Scientific paper modeling potential habitat for Mohave ground squirrel

2/23/2013 – Ed LaRue receives a link (<http://www.int-res.com/abstracts/esr/v20/n1/>) from Jeff Aardahl for the following scientific paper: “Is there room for all of us? Renewable energy and *Xerospermophilus mohavensis*.” Richard D. Inman, Todd C. Esque, Kenneth E. Nussear, Philip Leitner, Marjorie D. Matocq, Peter J. Weisberg, Tomas E. Dilts, Amy G. Vandergast. The link was forwarded to all board members on **2/24/2013**.

New BLM Management Plan for Arizona’s Ironwood Forest National Monument Will Hurt Endangered Species, Quiet Recreation

2/26/2013 – Ed LaRue receives this Center for Biological Diversity newspaper article, and distributes it to all board members. The management plan allowing off-road vehicle recreation in wilderness-quality habitats has already been issued, so there appears to be no opportunity to provide feedback to the BLM on the plan.

Lower Las Vegas Wash Flow Regulation Environmental Assessment

3/4/2013 – Ed LaRue receives web link to the NPS site with the above-referenced EA. A quick review on 3/10/2013 revealed that the project is located in a wash and would not affect tortoises. Ed distributed the link in an email to the entire board on **3/10/2013** and indicated there would be no follow-up unless another board member felt we should do so. Get response from Joe Probst (3/11), no one identifying the need to follow up.

Cottonwood Cove Katherine Landing notice of public meetings

3/4/2013 – Ed LaRue receives web link to the NPS site with the above-referenced EA. After review of available information on 3/10/2013, Ed found no evidence that tortoises were mentioned in the same-named EIS of 2008. Ed distributed the link in an email to the entire board on **3/10/2013** and indicated there would be no follow-up unless another board member felt we should do so.

Omya Sentinel and Butterfield Quarries Expansion Project

3/15/2013 – Upon returning from the field, Ed LaRue finds the notice for this project in the mail. On 3/17/2013, Ed drafts a two-page comment letter and distributes it to the board for comment. The deadline for comment submittal is 4/1/2013. Receive concurrence from Maggie Fusari, Joe Probst, Mari Quillman, and Becky Jones on 3/18 and Glenn Stewart on 3/19 that recommending focused tortoise surveys is warranted and the letter may be sent as written. Having received comments from five board members, Ed sends the comment letter via email to both the consultant and US Forest Service on **3/20/2013**.

5/14/2013 – Tracy Bailey sends Ed LaRue a notice that the comment period for this project is extended through 6/7/2013. There are a few additional documents, but our comments stand unchanged, so no action was taken at this time.

EA for Katherine Landing Road Rehabilitation at Lake Meade National Recreation Area

3/23/2013 – Ed LaRue receives NPS notice of the Draft EA from Tracy Bailey. After reviewing the Draft EA, Ed drafts a comment letter on **3/27/2013** and distributes it via email to the entire board for comment. Ed also sends an email to Ray Bransfield, Ventura USFWS, asking him about the need for formal or informal consultation for a species that is currently only petitioned for federal listing as endangered. Hearing no comments by **4/9/2013**, Ed redistributes this email to board members for a second solicitation. Receive comments from Maggie Fusari (4/9), Glenn Stewart (4/10), and Joe Probst (4/10). Those comments are addressed, and the finalized comment letter was emailed to Mike Boyles of NPS on **4/11/2013**. On **4/12/2013**, Ed receives response from Mike Boyles that comments were received, will be considered, and we will receive the record of decision.

Westlands Solar Park Master Plan and Planned Transmission Corridors in Central California

3/20/2013 – Ed LaRue receives notice on this project from Tracy Bailey, but does not act as the site is located in Kings County in the Central Valley, and therefore outside tortoise habitat.

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

4/9/2013 – Ed LaRue receives an email and follow-up phone call from Seth Shteir of the National Parks Conservation Association asking him to attend a meeting on 4/16/2013, which is a briefing of county supervisors and an opportunity to make a public testimony. Ed sends an email to all board members asking for their input so that his testimony represents the entire board. Receives comments from Maggie Fusari (4/9), Kristin Berry (4/10), Glenn Stewart (4/10), and Joe Probst (4/10). On 4/11 Ed begins to put together a memo of Council concerns. Also on 4/11, Ed sends an email to Ileene Anderson asking for any comment letters the Center for Biological Diversity may have that we can use for our memo.

4/12/2013 – Ed LaRue receives an email from Ileene Anderson with some information to craft our comment letter. After review of the MGS biological goals released on 4/10, on 4/12 Ed sends the document to Phil Leitner and asks him for input. Later on 4/12, Ed distributes the 6-page comment letter to the board for their review and comment. Receive feedback from Joe Probst (4/12), Glenn Stewart (4/14), Phil Leitner (4/14), and Mari Quillman (4/15; has not been able to respond due to emergencies with her mom). As of 4/15, Glenn is the only person with editorial comments, so cannot send the letter until we receive approval or modification from three members.

4/16/2013 – Ed LaRue attends the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisor’s briefing on the DRECP. The room is too full to make public comments, so Ed presents five hard copies of our comments, having received the necessary endorsement from Glenn Stewart, Maggie Fusari, and Joe Probst. Minutes of that briefing were distributed to all board members on 4/16/2013.

4/18/2013 – Ed LaRue provides the Council’s comment letter and personal minutes of the meeting to Mary Logan (DTPC), Ileene Anderson (CBD), April Sall (Wildlands Conservancy), Stephanie Dashielle and Jeff Aardahl (Defenders of Wildlife), Seth Shteir (NPCA), Ann Garry (Save Our Deserts), and Margaret Adam (Morongo Basin tortoise biologist), with a carbon copy to Bruce Palmer to maintain transparency. The comments are sent to the CEC on **4/19/2013**.

5/5/2013 – Seeing that the Council’s comments do not appear on the latest list of comments distributed on 5/3/2013, Ed LaRue resends the comments, originally sent on 4/19/2013, to CEC.

5/13/2013 – Receiving another comment letter to the supervisors on the Morongo Basin, Ed LaRue reiterates to the DRECP that Council comments have still not been circulated.

BrightSource Ivanpah Valley Solar Project

5/2/2013 – After receiving copies of comment letters from Kristin Berry and Dan Pearson, and talking to Sid Silliman and Pete Woodman, Ed LaRue provides a 30-45 minute interview with journalist, Fritz Faerber, who is producing a video documentary on BrightSource. Thanks to receiving feedback from these people, Ed was able to say the Council opposed the project from the beginning and later called for reconsideration of USFWS’ jeopardy opinion when many more tortoises were found than estimated in the first biological opinion. The documentary is due to be aired by National Geographic on their webpage sometime in early June 2013.

29 Palms Marine Corps Expansion

5/8/2013 – Maggie Fusari provides board with information on the expansion of 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, and additional information about Congressman Paul Cook’s proposal to co-use the area with OHV recreationists. Over the next several days recusals are received from Ed LaRue, Pete Woodman, and Becky Jones. Mari Quillman (5/8), Dan Pearson (5/8), Heidi McMaster (5/8), Kristin Berry (5/9, 5/12), and Joe Probst (5/9) all comment but nothing firm has been decided by 5/10, Friday afternoon.

5/14/2013 – Ed LaRue distributes the first draft of the letter for Paul Cook, receiving comments back from Maggie Fusari (5/15, 5/16), Glenn Stewart (5/16, 5/20), Joe Probst (5/17, 5/20), Kristin Berry (5/19). **5/18/2013** – Ed LaRue sends an email to Maggie Fusari turning the letter over to her for finalization. **5/20/2013** – Tom Egan informs Ed LaRue that the “View from the Road” document may be used however the Council chooses without needing permission from other environmental groups financially supporting the project.

5/20/2013 – Maggie Fusari distributes her latest version of the letter to the congressman. Receives concurrence with or without comments from Joe Probst (5/21). Ed LaRue slightly modifies the letter on **5/30/2013**, including adding his signature to the letter.