

Final                      Final                      Final

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

**11 January 2014  
DoubleTree Hilton, Ontario, California**

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Palmer at 10:05 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, Chris Noddings, Ken MacDonald, Maggie Fusari, Bruce Palmer, Kristin Berry, Glenn Stewart, Tracy Bailey, Mike Bailey, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Dan Pearson, Ed LaRue. **Absent:** Mari Quillman. **Guests:** Michael Tuma, Scott Abella.

**A. Introductions:** Michael Tuma (candidate) and Scott Abella (observer) attended as prospective Board members. After an interview and vote, Michael Tuma was unanimously accepted as our newest Board member.

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

**C. Comments Regarding Responsiveness:** How responsive has the Board been to requests by various members? Ed LaRue indicated having feedback from a minimum of three members on EAC issues has worked very well. He has contacted Bruce Palmer on several occasions to have him intercede when there has been no response to requests, which also works well.

**D. Meeting Minutes of 26 October 2013:** Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes at the last Board meeting in Ontario, CA, which were distributed, reviewed, and were approved today as final with no changes. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Kristin Berry), and approved to accept the draft minutes as final.**

**E. Review of Board actions since last meeting:** On 19 November 2013, it was suggested that the Bylaws be amended as follows: Section 2 Article III: “Membership on the Board shall reflect the diversity of the general membership of the Council insofar as feasible. In addition, the Board shall appoint new members that broaden the Board’s range of competencies and backgrounds, assure an appropriate continuity and turnover of Board membership; and provide that new Board members will be willing to accept officer roles and tasks needed to support the Council and its functions.” A vote for formal adoption of this amendment will be presented at the Annual Business meeting.

The Board received announcements from Dan Pearson (11 December 2013) on his resignation from the Board following the Annual meeting, and from Heidi McMaster on her immediate resignation as of 12 December 2013. There was also a conference call on 16 December 2013 among six members to discuss prospective Board members.

## OFFICER REPORTS:

**F. Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Michael Bailey. As of 12/31/2013, the overall total is given as \$280,417.05 (including some 2014 Symposium income). Total Workshop income was \$43,269.85, which is much lower than recent years as only half the students attended in 2013 compared to previous years. Michael Bailey presented Joe Probst with all the Treasurer's materials from Ridgecrest. **Joe Probst will perform research on costs of a laptop to maintain all Treasurer materials and report back at the next Board meeting.** Once the Symposium is complete and Michael Bailey's term of office effectively ends, he will transfer remaining materials to Joe Probst in Palmdale. **Motion made (Becky Jones), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.**

**1. Transfer of Edward Jones account to Palmdale:** This "Rainy Day" account will be transferred from Michael Bailey in Ridgecrest to Joe Probst in Palmdale.

**2. Operation manual examples of quarterly and annual reports, audit, Symposium budget, Workshop budget:** Michael Bailey provided examples of these reports to Bruce Palmer.

**G. Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Council will need to establish a new post office box in Palmdale for Becky Jones, who is the incoming Corresponding Secretary. **Tracy Bailey will work with Becky Jones to transfer the post office box.** The Fall Newsletter was electronically distributed on 23 December 2013, and the next Newsletter will be sent out just after the Symposium. **The following Board members are asked to provide Sean Daly with information for photo contest winners (Joe Probst), award recipients (Glenn Stewart), and Workshop synopsis (Maggie Fusari).** Some of the regulatory information on our website is outdated. **Kristin Berry will work with Mary Cohen to provide links to current regulatory information rather than try to correct the information that is presently provided, and some of that will need to be removed.**

**H. Membership Coordinator's Report:** Bruce Palmer reported in Mari Quillman's absence on the status of Mail Chimp with Mary Cohen and other issues. Mari Quillman asked Sean Daly to contact all past Council members about renewing their membership, which has been done with the Newsletter database. **Mari Quillman will also send several announcements through Linked-In to invite Linked-In members to become Council members, and encouraged Board members to contact their links.** Chris Noddings reported that the Council has put out six "Tweets" (including one a minute ago) providing general information and encouraging Symposium attendees to register with the hotel.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**I. Awards Committee:** Glenn Stewart reported that he, Kristin Berry, and Becky Jones are the current committee members. Phil Medica will receive the Robert Stebbins Research Award. Glenn Stewart Service Awards will be presented to Mojave Desert Land Trust and Shelton Douthit Consulting, LLC. Glenn Stewart Service Awards will be presented to Sean Daly for the Newsletter and to Dan Pearson for his long-term involvement on the Board. The James St Amant Special Award will be presented to the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee for 40 years of tortoise protection. Glenn Stewart will present the award to Ron Berger, and **Kristin Berry will provide background information on the DTPC to Glenn Stewart.** The Pat von Helf Recognition Award will be presented to David Lamfrom, for his "Tortoise Through The Lens" publication and other education programs. The Kristin Berry Annual Award has been determined but the recipient will remain undisclosed.

Sara Valenzuela from the University of Juarez, Durango State, Mexico provided the only application for the David Morafka Memorial Research Award, concerning her investigation of Bolson tortoise burrow commensals in the Biosphere Reserve of Mapimi. Glenn Stewart and the other Morafka Selection Committee members (Ken Nagy and Bob Murphy) have agreed to ask Ms. Valenzuela to strengthen her proposal by providing supplemental information to present the project as a research project rather than a survey project. As the most recent recipient, Michael Tuma assisted the Morafka Committee in evaluating the proposal.

#### **J. Ecosystems Advisory Committee:**

**1. Soda Mountains Solar Draft EIS:** Discussion points were circulated with some feedback. Ed LaRue then attended the public meeting on 1/9/2014 where he reiterated Council concerns. He was surprised to find that none of Pete Woodman's 2013 surveys were reported in the Draft EIS. Final comments are due by 3/3/2014. **Ed LaRue will submit a formal mileage reimbursement request via email to Mike Bailey.**

**2. Searchlight Wind Farm:** A technical memo was provided to Scott Cashen with some Board input. There is also a formal letter from Sid Silliman on this project, dated March 2012.

**3. Fremont Valley Preservation Solar Project:** The Council has now been included as an affected party for this and future projects in eastern Kern County.

Chris Noddings indicated his interest in seeing if our recommendations are being followed, to keep track of how and if mitigations are being implemented. **When Mari Quillman returns, we should discuss how to get on mailing lists as affected parties.** • **This and other Board priorities will be discussed at the next meeting in June.**

#### **K. Grants Committee:**

**1. Preliminary discussion of sterilization techniques:** The proposal at this point is very preliminary, and we still need a more formalized proposal. Glenn Stewart was concerned that not all costs, such as travel expenses, were fully described. Nevada Department of Wildlife is taking the lead on this sterilization research proposal. Some of the earliest research has occurred at the University of Georgia. The proposal suggests practicing on captive tortoises at the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center. Bruce Palmer suggested that we develop a list of questions and concerns that should be addressed in a formal proposal. Several members expressed their unwillingness to support this type of program, particularly at this early stage. **This issue, among others, will be discussed at the long-term strategy session. Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Maggie Fusari), and unanimously approved to have a planning retreat with a facilitated discussion to consider the Council's Long-term Strategy Session.** • **Ed LaRue will distribute the minutes from the last retreat that was conducted in 1995.**

**L. Workshop Committee:** Maggie Fusari distributed her summary of the 2013 Workshop and the preliminary Workshop manual to Board members yesterday via email. Should we have one or two Workshops in 2014? Currently there is no waiting list of students for 2014 Workshops. We agreed to plan on two Workshops and publish that availability on the website.

Bruce Palmer reported that USFWS will no longer provide a health assessment workshop, for which they charged \$1,500. USFWS asked if the Council would want to perform this workshop, which we discussed. Kristin Berry felt strongly that the Council should do this. Bruce Palmer suggested we instigate a meeting at the Symposium with several USFWS biologists to discuss the health assessment workshop, which Maggie Fusari agreed to coordinate.

Bruce Palmer also discussed a workshop for the Morafka tortoise, which he would coordinate, and which is supported by Arizona biologists with whom he has talked. Maggie Fusari suggested that **specific proposals be written for each of the three workshops for health assessments (Kristin Berry with help from Pete Woodman), advanced techniques (Maggie Fusari), and Arizona workshop (Bruce Palmer).** These proposals should be presented at the next Board meeting in June 2014. Kristin Berry suggested an additional future workshop that focuses on habitat assessments.

**M. 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium Discussions:** The Symposium is scheduled for 21-23 February 2014 at DoubleTree, Ontario, CA.

**1. Meet with events coordinator, Deepti Menon at 1:00 p.m.:** Similar logistics and facilities as in 2010, with all rooms renovated in October 2013.

**2. Registration:** There are now 58 people registered for the Symposium, but we need to book 190 room-nights by 20 January 2014. Important that we need to fill in our block of rooms so we don't have to pay \$27,000 for the conference hall. There were about 200 people attending this facility several years ago. **Tracy Bailey and Kristin Berry will ask DoubleTree if we can get an extension, and Kristin Berry will contact speakers to be sure they are registered in time.** Need to send out urgent reminders to all attendees to avoid the exorbitant cost of the conference hall.

**3. Facilities, meals, schedules:** We have to purchase a minimum amount of food, and now have \$18,900 of the required \$23,000 in food costs based on feeding 150 people. **Tracy Bailey will arrange to have tables set up for evening sessions for book-signings.**

**4. Workshop and field trips:** Plan to go to DTRNA on Thursday, with support from Mary Logan and others. **Pete Woodman will provide a summary to Kristin Berry for the DTRNA field trip, and will contact Mary Cohen to announce the trip on the website.** Field trip attendees should contact Pete Woodman for carpool opportunities so the group can leave DoubleTree at 07:30 a.m. to make the two-hour drive. The field trip will start out at the Interpretive Center.

**5. Audio-visual support:** **Tracy Bailey will bring the hardware.**

**6. Volunteers:** Molly Peters, Par Singhaseni, Michael Bailey, and others will work the front desk. **Maggie Fusari will be responsible for producing the name tags. Dan Pearson will provide the 200 folders for the programs and other materials. Mari Quillman will volunteer several people to help with lights and other logistics.** Kristin Berry asked that **Chris Noddings and Ken MacDonald** make themselves available near the registration area to serve as the host committee and to usher people into the room on a timely manner.

**7. Photo contest:** The photo contest has already been announced on the website. **Joe Probst will oversee the photo contest, as usual.** He indicated that in 2013 almost all photographs were submitted *at the Symposium*.

**8. Raffle and auction:** **Tracy Bailey will acquire new raffle tickets to supplement the few tickets that we currently have available.** Mari Quillman continues to work on acquiring new raffle and auction items. She asked that the Board authorize expenditure to purchase and frame several photographs from local photographer, Walter Feller. Ray Butler will bring along tequila, etc. to be available during the Saturday evening program. Dan Pearson generally spends \$400 to \$500 for items, including a \$250 gift card and other materials. **Dan Pearson will coordinate with Mari Quillman to frame the Feller photographs. Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and approved to provide up to \$100 for the Walter Feller photographs and framing; and up to \$500 to Dan Pearson to acquire raffle and auction items.** Dan Pearson offered to continue to work on these things with the Council even though it would not be as a Board member.

**9. Vendors:** Chris Noddings has attempted to contact 26 different vendors, with only four responses, including three (Tucson Herpetological Society, Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, and Mojave Desert Land Trust) who will attend and one who will not. **Kristin Berry will provide Chris Noddings with Tim Shields current contact information, and Tracy Bailey will contact him about providing artwork. Chris Noddings will continue to contact several other environmental organizations to see if they will be vendors.** There is a link on the website for potential vendors. Please provide any new vendor contacts to Chris Noddings. Generally ask that vendors provide a \$50 donation and register; alternatively, may donate \$100 if they are not registered.

**10. Sponsors:** Tracy Bailey has arranged for one \$500 sponsor. We need more sponsors than usual, particularly this year.

**11. Flyers, marketing, announcements:** Will start at 7:00 p.m. in the Hunters Peak room on Thursday night to stuff programs into folders.

## **12. Program Committee:**

**a. Session topics:** The Symposium will start promptly at 09:30 a.m. on Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Kristin Berry is still waiting on about 16 abstracts at this late date. Topics include six presentations on golden eagles, headstarting at military installations, translocation, corridors and connectivity, disease research at DTCC, three papers on the Morafka tortoise, and raven studies. Kristin Berry is still trying to get abstracts from several conservation organizations. No student papers at this time.

**b. Agency session:** Becky Jones is overseeing this session, which will include California, but no one from Nevada or Utah identified at this point. Military involvement has been covered under the headstarting session.

**c. Poster session:** For now, only two posters have been identified. **Tracy Bailey is working with DoubleTree to ensure supporting materials are available.**

**d. Featured speakers:** Keynote speaker is Barry Sinervo on *Gopherus* and climate change, environmental effects of solar fields, Richard Casmier on Texas tortoise conservation, Phil Medica, Jim Wellingham on a new virus, and Laura Cunningham there to sign her book, "A State of Change." Scott Flint will also be present to talk about the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP).

**e. Tribute to Robert Stebbins:** Kristin Berry is planning to open the Symposium with a tribute to Dr. Stebbins. Anyone with photographs is encouraged to provide them to Kristin, and many are available online. Tracy Bailey suggested that we may provide photographs of some of Dr. Stebbins' artwork, perhaps on a computer, but nothing specifically resolved. Kristin Berry may have as many as 50 copies of Dr. Stebbins' work entitled, "The Matriarch," which could be used as auction items, may be framed, or offered for sale as is. **Dan Pearson indicated his willingness to work with Kristin Berry to determine framing costs.** Pete Woodman indicated he also has a small stack of signed Stebbins' field guides.

## **OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

**N. Board vacancies:** We have already lost one Board member and are about to lose three more. Although we've now gained Michael Tuma, we will still be short by three members.

**O. Officer nominations/Annual Business Meeting elections:** The nominations are currently Bruce Palmer as incoming Chairperson, Ken MacDonald for Chairperson-elect, Becky Jones for Corresponding Secretary, and Joe Probst for Treasurer. As Recording Secretary and this being an even year, Ed LaRue will formally conduct the elections. Annual Business Meeting will be 08:00 to 09:00 a.m. on Friday morning, February 21<sup>st</sup>.

**P. New Newsletter Editor:** Michael Tuma, our newest Board member, has indicated his willingness to serve as our Newsletter editor.

**Q. Executive Director:** Do we need an Executive Director or an Administrative Assistant to oversee the many Council functions, which would be a paid position? [Suggest this be added as a specific discussion point to the long-term planning strategy agreed upon today.](#)

**R. Bylaws amendment:** Of the 15 Board members, 7 are identified as officers (one of which is the Past Chairperson) and the remaining 8 are Board Members at Large. If there is no Past Chairperson available, the current wording of the bylaws prevents the Board from filling the 15<sup>th</sup> position with a ninth Board Member at Large. For this reason, Chris Noddings suggested new wording regarding appointment of a new Past Chairperson in Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws: "If the position of Past Chairperson is vacant, a ninth Board Member at Large may be appointed." **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and approved to add this wording to the Bylaws (opposed by Glenn Stewart and Bruce Palmer).** • Bruce Palmer will work with [Mary Cohen](#) to publish this amendment on the website within 30 days of the Symposium.

**S. Policy statements:** There are currently four outstanding policy statements. Ken MacDonald has drafted a partial letter documenting why closing the DTCC is a bad idea and needs more input from Board members. [Maggie Fusari and Peter Woodman still plan to draft a Council policy about translocating tortoises into the wild.](#) • [Maggie Fusari and Kristin Berry are still to draft a policy statement on releasing captive tortoises into the wild.](#) The final policy is considering the ramifications of removing the tortoise fence from the Long-term Study Translocation Site (LSTS), which has not been assigned.

**T. Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) funding priorities:** Much of DTRO's money had been provided from military funding and is currently provided from development project fees collected under Section 7 in Nevada, which are also used for line distance sampling and operating the DTCC. DTRO's future income may come from USFWS base funding, and may not be sufficient to maintain current operations in the long run.

**U. Archives:** Sid Silliman briefly visited and provided several boxes of archival materials, which Ed LaRue will take back to Wrightwood for storage. LaRue also has Glenn Stewart's materials in storage, which have yet to be entered into the database. Mari Quillman has put together a database of past officers, Symposia locations, etc., which is available upon request.

**V. Developing Council Power Point:** Preliminary feedback is as Kristin Berry suggested, folks want specific research to be presented. Ed LaRue does not plan on pursuing this issue further.

**W. Betty Burge Memorial:** There is new wording for Betty's memorial that is still being reviewed, and may serve as an announcement at the Symposium.

**X. DTPC's 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration on 25 January 2014:** All are encouraged to attend.

**Y. Operations Manual:** Bruce Palmer provided this previously, which is ongoing. **All members are encouraged to provide information for the following two subsections of the Operations Manual.**

**1. Duties of officers and board members:** Partially drafted, ongoing, and encourage all members to provide descriptions of their responsibilities.

**2. Symposium Manual:** Tracy Bailey has not recently looked at this manual, and maintains the latest version.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Board meeting will be the Annual Business Meeting in Ontario, CA at the DoubleTree Hilton, between 08:00 and 09:00 a.m., immediately prior to the Symposium, on 21 February 2014. We decided to have the long-term strategy meeting on Saturday and board meeting on Sunday, 7 and 8 June 2014, at a location to be determined.

**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.

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 11 January 2014**

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

### **1. Searchlight Wind Energy Project**

**11/7/2013** – Anonymous board member sends an email to Ed LaRue indicating a third party will soon contact him about concerns on this project. On **11/7/2013**, Ken MacDonald indicates he has worked on this project and recuses himself from further discussion. On **12/19/2013**, Scott Cashen (affiliation unknown) contacts Ed LaRue and sends several articles via email for review. LaRue reviews the SNEI document on **1/3/2014** and distributes his comment letter to the board for their feedback before providing it to Cashen. After receiving an inquiry from Cashen on 1/6/2014 and yes votes from five additional board members through 1/7/2014, LaRue sends the memo to Cashen on **1/8/2014**.

### **2. Fremont Valley Preservation Project**

**12/22/2013** – Tracy Bailey sends Daily Independent newspaper article to Ed LaRue, who receives it just after Christmas. On **1/3/2014**, LaRue drafts a letter to Kern County planning department expressing our interest to become an Affected Party for any additional environmental documents, which he distributes on 1/3/2014 to other board members for authorization to submit. After receiving feedback from seven board members, LaRue sends the letter to Lorelei Oviatt of Kern County on **1/6/2014** (she responds later in the day that the Council will be added to the county's distribution list).

### **3. Soda Mountain Solar Project – Draft EIS**

**12/2/2013** – An unidentified source provides an email and BLM link for the Final EIS for this project on which we commented in December 2012 during solicitation of scoping comments. Tracy Bailey provides Draft Plan Amendment and EIS/EIR on disc on **12/10/2013**. On **12/27/2013**, Seth Shteir of the National Parks Conservation Association sends an email asking if Ed LaRue can attend one of three public meetings scheduled for early January. On **1/4/2014**, LaRue spends about six hours reviewing the Draft EIS, making comments, and distributing the discussion points to the rest of the board. These internal discussion points, which are shared with Sid Silliman, will later serve as the basis for a formal comment letter. With concurrence from three board members and substantial input from one other member, LaRue attends the public meeting in Barstow on **1/9/2014**.

### **4. National Conservation Lands in the California Desert**

**12/16/2013** – Ed LaRue receives a BLM link from an anonymous source indicating that the Washington D.C. office of the BLM is soliciting research proposals for work on NCL parcels. Signed by Carl Roundtree, LaRue takes this opportunity to resubmit the nomination letter dated 10/11/2013 on 1/3/2014. Although this finalized letter already met with board approval in October 2013, LaRue distributes it to the board on **1/3/2014** asking to submit it to Roundtree if approved by the board. After receiving yes votes from seven board members, LaRue emails this letter to Roundtree on **1/6/2014**.



**Ecosystems Advisory Committee  
Summary Table from 26 October 2013 to 11 January 2014**

**Current date for this latest table revision is: 1/9/2014**

| No.      | Reference                              | Dates    |        |        |        | Board Member Responses                                                                                                                               |          |             |    |             |             |    |          |            |           |    |          |    |    |          |          |
|----------|----------------------------------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|----|-------------|-------------|----|----------|------------|-----------|----|----------|----|----|----------|----------|
|          |                                        | Rec'd    | Dist.  | Due    | Sent   | Codes: <b>Y</b> = Vote of Yes; <b>N</b> = Vote of No; <b>PI</b> = Provided input; <b>Blank</b> = No Response; <b>R</b> = Recused; <b>A</b> = Authors |          |             |    |             |             |    |          |            |           |    |          |    |    |          |          |
|          |                                        |          |        |        |        | BJ                                                                                                                                                   | BP       | CN          | DP | EL          | GS          | HM | JP       | KB         | KM        | MB | MF       | MQ | PW | TB       |          |
| <b>1</b> | Searchlight Wind Energy Project        | 11/7/13  | 1/3/14 | N/A    | 1/8/14 |                                                                                                                                                      | Y<br>1/7 | PI/Y<br>1/6 |    | PI/Y<br>1/3 | Y<br>1/7    |    | Y<br>1/4 | PI<br>11/7 | R<br>11/7 |    |          |    |    |          | Y<br>1/7 |
| <b>2</b> | Fremont Valley Preservation Project    | 12/26/13 | 1/3/14 | N/A    | 1/6/14 | Y<br>1/4                                                                                                                                             |          | PI/Y<br>1/3 |    | PI/Y<br>1/3 | PI/Y<br>1/3 |    | Y<br>1/4 |            | Y<br>1/3  |    |          |    |    | Y<br>1/4 | Y<br>1/4 |
| <b>3</b> | Soda Mtn. Solar Draft EIS              | 12/2/13  | 1/4/14 | 3/3/14 |        | PI/Y<br>1/6                                                                                                                                          | Y<br>1/6 | Y<br>1/8    |    | PI/Y<br>1/4 |             |    |          |            |           |    | Y<br>1/6 |    |    |          |          |
| <b>4</b> | National Conservation Lands Nomination | 12/16/13 | 1/3/14 | N/A    | 1/6/14 | Y<br>1/4                                                                                                                                             | Y<br>1/6 | Y<br>1/3    |    | PI/Y<br>1/3 | PI/Y<br>1/3 |    | Y<br>1/4 |            | Y<br>1/3  |    |          |    |    |          | Y<br>1/4 |

**BJ** = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **CN** = Chris Noddings, **DP** = Dan Pearson, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **GS** = Glenn Stewart, **HM** = Heidi McMaster, **JP** = Joe Probst, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **MB** = Mike Bailey, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **PW** = Pete Woodman, **TB** = Tracy Bailey