

Final Final Final

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

**12 January 2019
Springs Preserve, Cienega Conference Room
333 South Valley View Boulevard, Las Vegas, Nevada 89107**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Michael Tuma 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: Peter Woodman, Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Maggie Fusari, Bruce Palmer, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Mari Quillman, Halle Kohn, Michael Vamstad, Larry LaPré, and Mark Peaden. **Remote Attendance:** None. **Absent:** Kristin Berry, Greer Dolby, Cristina Jones. **Guests:** None.

A. Introductions: Not applicable.

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

C. Meeting Minutes of 17 November 2018: Halle Kohn prepared draft minutes at the last Board meeting in Las Vegas, NV, which were subsequently distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final with no changes. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting:

a. Revised membership categories: These were discussed via emails and resolved. See discussion under Section K, below.

E. Proposed Changes to Bylaws: Two of the proposed changes are relative to committees, including changing the name of the introductory course (from “workshop” to “course”) and descriptions (from “the desert tortoise” to “desert tortoises”) to better reflect its purpose and function and change social media to “Media Committee.” **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to accept proposed Bylaws changes as given.** These Board-approved changes will be posted on the website so they are available to the membership for review for at least 30 days and will be introduced for acceptance at the Annual Business Meeting. **Michael Tuma will work with Sky Esser to post Bylaws changes on the website.**

F. Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be at the Annual Business Meeting in Tucson, AZ, between 6:00 p.m. and approximately 7:00 p.m. on 20 February 2019. The subsequent meeting will be 16 March 2019, likely at ECORP in Redlands, CA, pending confirmation by Mari Quillman.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Joe Probst. Total income for 2018 was \$127,428.87, and the Council's total assets as of today are \$217,450.11. **Motion made (Judy Hohman), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.** Joe Probst also provided the proposed 2019 budget, which is based on what we spent in 2018. The Health Assessment Training (HAT) course is planned for 2019 but not the Authorized Biologist (AB) course. The draft budget will need to be modified to reflect that the AB course is not being planned for 2019. Bruce Palmer pointed out that there is a \$500 contingency fee available to the Chair, which needs to be added to the budget. Joe will also need to modify the grant income to show income for Lockheed Martin and Morafka Awards, for total of \$2,000. Based on input, Joe will re-categorize the grants in the final budget [General, Travel, and Specific grants (Lockheed and Morafka)]. Several people indicated we need better information about proposed events and costs in 2019 for the Educational Outreach Committee, which will likely be different from 2018 expenditures. **Motion made (Ed LaRue), seconded (Mari Quillman), and unanimously approved to accept the 2019 Proposed Budget with the above changes as final.**

H. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones reported there have been a few emails, mostly about registration, changing the website, and pet tortoises. A \$4,000 donation was received from the California Turtle and Tortoise Club (CTTC). **Becky Jones and Michael Tuma will write a thank you note to CTTC for the \$4,000 donation.** Becky checked the Ontario, California DoubleTree, which has a \$150 room rental cost, box lunches at \$26 with a minimum \$400 food cost, plus \$75 for internet connection. These increased costs make ECORP that much more attractive for California Board meetings to minimize expenditures for Board meetings. **Mari Quillman will verify if ECORP is available for the March 16, 2019 Board meeting.**

I. Nominations Committee's Report: Bruce Palmer reported that positions needing nominations are Chair-Elect (Ken MacDonald), Recording Secretary (Ed LaRue), Membership Coordinator (Mari Quillman), and Bruce Palmer to rotate out of his current position as Past Chair and return as a Board Member At Large. Members in parenthesis have agreed to serve but do not need a formal nomination from the Board. After Bruce Palmer left the room, **the motion was made, seconded, and approved to vote Bruce Palmer in as a Board Member At Large.** In the future it may be good to revise the Bylaws to indicate that only existing Board members or officers are eligible for position as Chair-Elect. This change was suggested to ensure the Chair has experience with the Council's Bylaws, committees, programs and events.

J. Grants Committee's Report: Michael Tuma reported that there was one application for the Diversity grant (Lockheed-Martin) and two for Student Travel. **Michael Tuma will circulate a \$7,500 grant request from the Tortoise Group to keep wild tortoises wild and captive tortoises captive, so we can consider this via email and provide input.** The 2019 budget has line items available for grant requests (see Item G above).

a. Status of Morafka Award. We received six applications for the Morafka Award, which are being reviewed by the Grants Committee, so it is good that this award is being solicited after a few years of no applications. Bob Murphy is on the committee and is traveling, so there will be a slight delay in announcing the winner. The award is \$2,000, with \$1,000 provided by Sylvia Morafka, who has been informed of the number of applications, and \$1,000 from the Council.

b. Funding opportunity search. Mark Peaden presented some funding opportunities that he and Greer Dolby have been developing and pursuing. Mark's top three potential grant opportunities are California Grass Roots fund (max of \$7,500), Conservation Alliance (\$30,000 to \$50,000) which requires a nomination and land acquisition, and Cornell Douglas Foundation (up to \$10,000). The Council has not solicited these kinds of grants, so there is no template available; Mark will need to develop a grant request from scratch. **Judy Hohman and Larry LaPré indicated they are willing to help Mark Peaden review his grant applications and proposals.** • **Mark Peaden will forward the Conservation Alliance grant information to the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee.**

K. Membership Coordinator/Membership Committee's Report: Mari Quillman provided the report via email several days ago, which was discussed. The new membership categories and rates have been published on the website. The effective membership dates will be from January 1st to December 31st. Most memberships occur between December and February prior to the Symposium, but people do join in the middle of the year, and introductory course students become members in November. If someone becomes a member after August, they would effectively be a member for 18 months. **Maggie Fusari will send the Introductory Course list to Mari, which includes 77 students, who are all now members for 2019.** Students must complete the course to be considered as a member. As per Mari's report, she is pursuing several action items relative to registration.

With regards to swag, the pens have been ordered and will be delivered in time for the Symposium. **Mari Quillman will soon order t-shirts for both children and adults, and onesies (baby clothing).** • **Mari Quillman and Joe Probst will continue working to develop a Council electronic store.** Joe Probst is maintaining the swag items in our Palmdale storage shed. If we charge a different price for members versus non-members, we may want to do this electronically by providing a code to members that will result in discounts.

Mari Quillman and Judy Hohman provided a draft document identifying membership benefits. They proposed three general categories: General Member Benefits, Public Benefits, and Organization Benefits. Several groups have asked what the benefits are for member organizations. Feedback was provided to Mari and Judy to continue to develop benefits associated with member organizations. After extensive discussion (that was not captured in these minutes), **Judy Hohman and Mari Quillman will finalize the draft membership benefits document.**

a. Membership Committee Policy changes. Judy Hohman and Bruce Palmer both worked on the development of this policy and made suggestions. The changes basically result in empowering the committee chairs. **The motion was made (Larry LaPré), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to adopt the Membership Committee policy as presented, with several minor changes (remove "Social" from "Social Media").**

L. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: Ed LaRue reported that there were 11 projects reported and only three reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 11/18/2018 and 1/12/2019. Given Ed's workload he has not been able to write as many letters. For example, in the November to January period, 11 notices were received, two letters were written, and no letters were written for seven projects that would affect tortoises, including six in Arizona. Ed indicated work may allow him to begin writing again but really needs help from Board members in Arizona, where he does not understand protections of Morafka tortoises. [Ed recently distributed standardized paragraphs to all Board members asking for input to streamline consistent comments.](#) Although some projects did not affect tortoises, we wrote comment letters on only 39 of the 95 projects received in 2018, which compares to only 30 notices in 2017. Based on some feedback, it is appropriate to keep authors anonymous. So, we can maintain an internal version of the EAC report with authors but remove authorship from published minutes. It is still important to document recusals. We should all look for members outside the Board (like Michael Burroughs for Nevada) who can help review letters and perhaps attend public meetings.

M. Media Committee's Report:

a. Draft Media Committee policy: Halle Kohn has been taking the lead on drafting this policy, which will be emailed in the next few weeks. She used some of Chris Noddings' existing materials and will be sure the new policy format is consistent with other finalized policies.

b. Newsletter progress. Halle Kohn plans to publish the next Newsletter in March or April. Michael Tuma has been in touch with pertinent personnel about the status of the land acquisition grant to support Goode's thornscrub tortoise, which can be reported in the Newsletter. Halle plans to write articles that highlight committees, which may stimulate public participation. Larry LaPré, Mari Quillman, and Judy Hohman have not yet been highlighted (nor has Halle, Mark Peaden, or Michael Vamstad who are newer members). It would be good to publish a story on the results of the tortoise research in Anza Borrego State Park, for which we provided a grant. Good to have a column in each Newsletter to facilitate volunteer participation.

c. Social media posts. Halle Kohn shared that Instagram seems to be the most effective means of interfacing with the public in terms of the number of responses. Michael Tuma shared that the website is up and functioning, and Sky Esser is very responsive to posting materials.

N. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: Nothing to report in Cristina Jones' absence.

O. Mexico Coordination Committee. [Michael Vamstad thanked Judy Hohman for her input on his recently distributed work plan and requested additional review by Board members.](#) This is an ad hoc committee for now and Michael Vamstad will need to produce and the Board approve a policy statement for this committee in order to formalize it. Michael is working on coordinating with appropriate people in Mexico for partnerships and to introduce this committee and effort to them. [Michael Vamstad will produce an introductory letter for Mexican government diplomats \(with an English translation for the Board\) for distribution.](#)

P. Introductory Training Course: Maggie Fusari reported there are 30 people on the wait list for 2019. The facility can accommodate up to 110 people, with five field instructors already committed. Pete Woodman said 20 students per field instructor is the maximum, which means no more than 100 people. David Carr will provide audio-visual materials, including clip-on microphones, to be used at both the Symposium and Introductory Course.

Q. Advanced Training Courses: No specific discussion in Cristina Jones' absence.

R. Education and Outreach Committee Report: Maggie Fusari reported that 2018 events included Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) conference, Earth Day participation in Kernville, CA, Michael Tuma's and Ed LaRue's talks to CTTC chapters, and Kristin Berry, Ed LaRue, and Michael Vamstad's participation at Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree. Ed LaRue indicated that he and wife, Sharon Dougherty, are willing to attend the Western Section of The Wildlife Society meetings in Yosemite in early February. **Motion made (Ed LaRue), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to provide up to \$1,500 for Ed LaRue to be reimbursed for staffing a booth on behalf of the Council at The Western Section of The Wildlife Society in Yosemite in February 2019.** Other events planned for 2019 are TSA meeting in Tucson, AZ this year and national meeting of the The Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society joint meeting in Reno, NV. Both Judy Hohman and Joe Probst are willing to participate at this event in Reno, NV. The American Fisheries symposium in the end of September 2019 would cost \$800 for participating vendors. We should have potential new members fill in paper applications. **Motion made (Maggie Fusari), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and approved to provide up to \$2,200 for Board members to be reimbursed for staffing a booth on behalf of the Council at The Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society joint meeting in Reno, NV in September 2019.** We need not limit our participation to scientific symposia, and Board members are encouraged to look for new opportunities.

S. Annual Symposium Program Committee Report: In the absence of Kristin Berry and Cristina Jones and no opportunity to discuss logistics, we will need to talk about logistics via email. Maggie Fusari has been working with Tracy Bailey to coordinate vendors, nonprofit tables, and miscellaneous facilities use. David Carr is overseeing audio-visual logistics. Michael Tuma indicated that Kristin Berry is developing a policy for organizing the Symposium and putting the Program together. Four years ago, Bruce Palmer developed a document for organizing symposia. What can we do for federal employees, who are currently affected by government shutdown, in terms of registration? Tracy Bailey said we should be able to extend the registration period for rooms at Wyndham Grand Resort & Spa. **Mari Quillman will contact Tracy Bailey about accommodating federal employees and other logistics.** We recently found out a hunting license is required to attend the Gila monster field trip.

Tracy Bailey reported that as of now, 50 rooms are still available. The deadline for discounted rate for motel rooms is January 29, 2019. It sounds like Tracy Bailey has already contacted the Dixie Center in Utah for the 2021 event. **Mari Quillman will give the membership computer to Kristin Berry so she has that computer for immediate use.** There is an access problem where Kristin Berry cannot access her computer, where the Program resides, as long as the government shutdown persists. February 5 is the deadline for getting the Program and abstracts to the printer. Kristin Berry shared notes with Mari Quillman identifying many of the Symposium presentations and panels, which Mari forwarded to all Board members.

Mari Quillman talked about responses from Board members as giveaway items at the 2019 Symposium. All materials would have the Council logo on them. The lapel pins have already been ordered and would be one of the giveaway items. After discussion, we decided to purchase and giveaway water bottles, which cost \$5.00 each if we buy 288 units. We are anticipating 250 attenders. We should order more than the 288 and sell what we don't give away at a profit (\$10 was suggested). The water bottles will be shipped to Maggie Fusari's house in time for the Symposium. Mari Quillman is still looking for new donors and raffle/auction items. "Plumber cameras" can plug into your cell phone that will allow you to scope out burrows.

T. Awards Committee's Reports: Larry LaPré indicated there was a call last week, and all awards have been determined.

NEW BUSINESS

U. Discussion: How to get the most from volunteers? Lockheed Martin had recently asked Michael Tuma if we had volunteer opportunities. Some members have come forward in the past to sign up as volunteers but there was usually not good follow-up. It would be best to develop a list of specific volunteer tasks to publish. We probably need a volunteer coordinator. Need volunteers for Symposium, and Ed LaRue could still use volunteer help to organize Archives. **Each Board member should send Maggie Fusari suggestions for specific needs that can be addressed by volunteers.** This and other information can be used to develop a volunteer program.

V. Five-year strategic plan: Bruce Palmer has indicated the importance of reviewing our success in realizing goals from the last retreat in 2015 in Wrightwood, CA. We need to do an inventory to see what has been done and needs to be done. Ken MacDonald recently contacted Solutions Strategies International, Inc. to see if they'd be willing to moderate the upcoming event. Bruce Palmer agreed to chair a post hoc committee to begin planning for the next five-year strategic plan of 2020 to 2025. Mari Quillman will serve on the committee, specifically looking for a location in New Mexico for the retreat, in a June 2019 timeframe. This would be an added, unforeseen cost not envisioned in the 2019 budget. **Mari Quillman will contact Solutions Strategies International, Inc. to see if they will facilitate the retreat.**

W. Review of action items: Given that some key Board members are not here, **Ed LaRue will distribute these minutes in the next few days.**

X. New ideas:

a. Fencing roads. Judy Hohman developed a preliminary draft for how to proceed with this issue, which was commented on by two Board members. Judy would like to talk with Center for Biological Diversity about this issue and their suggestions. Last month, Ed LaRue responded to Caltrans that the Council wants to be involved in the programmatic plan for fencing roads in California. Judy will continue to gather data and proceed with this effort. **Mark Peaden agreed to read Judy's draft document on fencing roads before she distributes it to the entire Board.**

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Michael Tuma, at 16:00.

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



Edward L. LaRue, Jr.
Desert Tortoise Council, Recording Secretary

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 12 January 2019

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

1. Ten West Link Draft EIS (Tonopah, AZ to Blythe, CA)

9/2/2018/2018 – On **9/2/2018**, Ed LaRue receives the notice on the preliminary planning for a transmission line from Tonopah to Blythe, which Ed distributes to the Board on **9/7/2018**. Comments due by **11/29/2018**. Ed distributed a draft letter on 11/25/2018 that was approved and submitted to the BLM on **11/29/2018**.

2. Copperstone Gold Mine (La Paz County, AZ)

11/1/2018 – On **11/1/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link to environmental documents for the 120-acre gold mine in La Paz County, AZ, which Ed distributes to the Board on **11/5/2018**, with a deadline of **11/30/2018**. The deadline was missed; no comments submitted.

3. Omya Inc. Mine Acquisition of 70 acres of BLM Lands (Lucerne Valley, CA)

11/5/2018 – On **11/5/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link to environmental documents for the sale of 70 acres of BLM lands to the Omya, Inc. mine company in Lucerne Valley, CA, which Ed distributes to the Board on **11/5/2018**, with a 60-day comment period that would be approximately **1/5/2019**. The deadline was missed; no comments submitted. In an email on **1/6/19**, Larry LaPré indicated there were no tortoise issues for this project, so missing the comment deadline was not a problem.

4. Vulture Mountains Recreation Area (Maricopa County, AZ)

11/13/2018 – On **11/13/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link to environmental documents for a proposed Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act lease of a 1,046-acre parcel of public land in the Vulture Mountains, for recreation development by Maricopa County, which Ed distributes to the Board on **11/15/2018**, with a 30-day comment period ending on **12/16/2018**. The deadline was missed; no comments submitted.

5. Buckeye Hills Regional Park Distribution Line (Maricopa County, AZ)

11/13/2018 – On **11/13/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link to environmental documents for a proposed 4.65-linear mile distribution line on BLM lands in Maricopa County, AZ, which Ed distributes to the Board on **11/15/2018**. Although the “start date” of 11/1/2018 is given, the deadline date is not given, so unknown. The deadline was missed; no comments submitted

6. Caltrans Advance Mitigation Program Outreach Survey (California)

11/19/2018 – On **11/19/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link from Caltrans involving Caltrans Advance Mitigation Program Outreach Survey. Ed completed the questionnaire on **12/2/2018** and submitted it asking that he be informed of future opportunities to participate in this program. There was no formal comment letter, rather it was an opportunity to involve the Council, so the formal endorsement protocol was not followed.

7. Cottonwood Visitor's Center (Joshua Tree, CA)

11/26/2018 – On **11/26/2018**, Ed LaRue receives a link for the EA, which he distributes to the Board on **12/2/2018**. One of our Board members provides background information that demonstrates the project would occur in unsuitable tortoise habitat and there would be no benefit to provide a comment letter, so the project is not pursued.

8. Cuddeback Range EA (China Lake, CA)

11/26/2018 – Ed LaRue receives a notice from Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife on **11/26/2018** indicating that the Draft EA has been available for public review since November 9 with a deadline of December 10. Write a letter to the Navy requesting a 30-day extension since six days is insufficient time to comment, which Ed emails to Teresa Bresler of the Navy on **12/4/2018**. Ms. Bresler responds later that day that we are granted the extension until **1/4/2019**. With nine endorsements and two recusals, Ed emails the comment letter and previous scoping comments to Navy on **12/21/2018**.

9. Special Recreation Permit for Juan de Bautista de Anza RMZ (Sonoran Desert National Monument)

12/12/2018 – Ed LaRue received an eplanning link for the above-referenced project on **12/12/2018**, which he distributes to the Board on **1/2/2019**. It is not stated, but assume comments are due by **1/12/2019**. No letter submitted.

10. Public Land Lease to Pinal County for Proposed Regional Park (Gold Canyon, AZ)

12/13/2018 – Ed LaRue received an eplanning link for the above-referenced project on **12/13/2018**, which he distributes to the Board on **1/2/2019**. With a 30-day scoping comment period, the letter is due on **1/13/2019**. No letter submitted.

11. K Lazy B Range Improvement Project: Camp Well (La Paz County, AZ)

12/19/2018 – Ed LaRue received an eplanning link for the above-referenced project on **12/19/2018**, which he distributes to the Board on **1/2/2019**. With a 30-day comment period on the Draft EA, the letter is due on **1/19/2019**. No letter submitted.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 11/18/2018 to 1/12/2019**

Current date for this latest table revision is: 1/11/2019

		Dates (2018 unless otherwise noted)				Board Member Responses Codes: Y = Vote of Yes; N = Vote of No; PI = Provided input; Blank = No Response; R = Recused; A = Authors/Lead Board member; NA – Replied they were not able to respond by indicated date																	
No.	Title	Rec'd	Dist	Due	Sent	BJ	BP	CJ	EL	GD	HK	JH	JP	KB	KM	LL	MF	MP	MQ	MT	MV	PW	
1	Ten-West Trans. Line	9/2	9/7	11/29	11/29	R 12/9	R 11/26		PI/Y 11/27	Y 11/28		PI/Y 11/25	Y 11/26			PI/Y 11/28	Y 11/28					R 11/28	
2	Copperstone Mine	11/1	11/5	11/30	-	No comment letter submitted on this project in La Paz County, AZ																	
3	Omya Mine	11/5	11/5	1/5		No comment letter submitted on this project in Lucerne Valley, CA																	
4	Vulture Mountains	11/13	11/15	12/16	-	No comment letter submitted on this project in Maricopa County, AZ																	
5	Buckeye Hills Trans. Line	11/13	11/15	??	-	No comment letter submitted on this project in Maricopa County, AZ																	
6	Caltrans Mitigation	11/19	N/A	12/4	12/2				PI 12/2														
7	Joshua Tree Cottonwood	11/26	12/2	12/30	-	No need to comment due to lack of tortoise habitat being affected																	
8	Cuddeback NAWS EA	11/26	12/2	12/10 1/4/19	12/21	R 12/20			PI/Y 12/19		Y 12/21	PI/Y 12/13	Y 12/14	Y 12/21	PI/Y 12/21	PI/Y 12/21	Y 12/19					R 12/19	Y 12/21
9	Juan de Bautista RMZ	12/12	1/2/19	1/12/19		No comment letter submitted on this project in Arizona																	
10	Pinal Co. Park	12/13	1/2/19	1/13/19		No comment letter submitted on this project in Gold Canyon, AZ																	
11	K Lazy B Camp Well	12/19	1/2/19	1/19/19		No comment letter submitted on this project in La Paz County, AZ																	

BJ = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **CJ** = Cristina Jones, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **GD** = Greer Dolby, **HK** = Halle Kohn, **JH** = Judy Hohman, **JP** = Joe Probst, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **LL** = Larry LaPré, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MP** = Mark Peaden, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **MV** = Michel Vamstad, **PW** = Pete Woodman