

Final Final Final

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

**13 May 2023
Zoom Online Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Mari Quillman at 10:01 a.m. (PST) **Action items are in blue, with responsible parties in red. Motions made, seconded, and approved (or not) are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Kristin Berry, Judy Hohman, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Halle Kohn-Levine, John Kalish, Mary Lane Poe, Peter Woodman, Luke Basulto. **Absent:** Ken MacDonald, Michael Vamstad, Max Havelka, Bruce Palmer. **Guests:** None.

A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions: None.

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

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 3/26/2023: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes of the most recent virtual Board meeting, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Judy Hohman), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting:

1. Contribution to Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee (DTPC): On 4/5/2023, Mari Quillman shared an email from Ron Berger of DTPC announcing a matching donation program for April. **On 4/6/2023, Ken MacDonald made a motion for the Council to donate \$5,000, which was seconded by Michael Tuma on the same date and unanimously approved on 4/10/2023 by 16 of the 17 current Board members, with Kristin Berry recusing herself.**

E. Special Discussion Items: None.

F. Next Meeting Date: The next virtual meeting of the Board of Directors will be on Zoom, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (PST), on 7/8/2023, pending feedback from absentee members. **Mari Quillman will send out an email with this date, with July 29 as an alternate if there are absentee members who cannot attend.**

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Treasurer's Report: In an electronic version of the Treasurer's Report¹, dated 5/1/2023, Joe Probst shared that total income through May 1, 2023 was \$88,390.66, total expenses have been \$85,483.08, with total assets of \$287,107.94. **Motion made (Maggie Fusari), seconded (Ed LaRue), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.** Joe then shared the screen summarizing our portfolio, which showed a major loss in 2022 in the Edward Jones account but an 8% increase since then, who recommended that it is inadvisable to remove any funds from our various accounts. We are currently cash-heavy and will likely want to put money into CDs after we pay our insurance of about \$6,000 in late summer.

H. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones reported there were three National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents received, questions about pet tortoises, and requested identification for a found tortoise, which Michael Tuma identified. Becky sent a thank you letter acknowledging receipt of a \$500.00 donation from the Ventura California Turtle and Tortoise Club.

I. Membership Committee's Report: Halle Kohn-Levine reported that among the 913 present and past members, 309 are active, 601 renewals are overdue, with 3 pending renewals. Otherwise, there is nothing new to report since the March 2023 Board meeting. **Halle Kohn-Levine will soon instigate a committee meeting to discuss various issues.** • **Halle Kohn-Levine will use Wild Apricot to invite delinquent past members to renew their membership.**

J. Nominating Committee's Report: There was nothing to report in Ken MacDonald's absence.

K. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: In an electronic version of his report (see attachment), Ed LaRue reported that there were 21 projects identified and 11 reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 3/26/2023 and 5/13/2023. Thanks to Judy Hohman and John Kalish, no deadlines were missed while Ed was on vacation and in the field, and the remaining comment letters are scheduled to be drafted on time. John Kalish indicated there is a major BLM rule changing effort due on June 20 on which we should comment. Western Watersheds recently invited the Council to discuss Sonoran desert tortoise conservation but the date has not been finalized. **When that date is determined, Ed LaRue will let Maggie Fusari and others know about the call.** • **Judy Hohman will help Maggie Fusari to draft a letter to cosign with the Tucson Herpetological Society.** Judy thanked Kristin Berry for her recent literature submittals, and invited other Board members to keep us informed of new literature. Judy also drafted a preliminary EAC handbook that she and the EAC will continue to develop. Mari was recently contacted by a USGS biologist who is using a genetic marker to determine tortoise ages. She introduced them to California Turtle and Tortoise Club members to facilitate identifying tortoises of known ages.

L. Media Committee's Report: Mary Lane Poe reported that as of 5/12/2023, there were 1,708 Instagram followers, 3,017 Facebook followers, 349 Twitter followers, and 234 LinkedIn followers. We participated in #EarthDay2023 on Instagram, which was a great opportunity to engage with other social media platforms from our members, partners, and non-profits. Followers and other groups tag the Council in their content that allows us to share it to our stories and create a reel of content for our followers to view. It helps us boost engagement, impressions, and reach,

¹ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nio198q985m1ie5/5-10-23%20Treasurer%20Report.xlsx?dl=0>

as well as network with the community. We made two other posts on Instagram and Facebook that both received very high engagement. Overall, Instagram receives the most viewed content across all our platforms, with Instagram stories bringing in the highest number of total views, reach, and impressions. We have been brainstorming some ideas for an Instagram giveaway since we are only 300 followers away from 2k. If anyone has ideas or if there is Council swag available that could help us with a nice push, that would be great; maybe a few of the new buffs? We would also love to do a virtual photo contest this year but that will be time dependent.

M. Strategic Planning Committee Report: There was nothing to report in Bruce Palmer's absence.

N. Grants Committee's Report: Michael Tuma shared that we received a grant request from Arizona State University (ASU) last week to study culverts. [Maggie Fusari will work with Michael Tuma to review this ASU grant request, which is for \\$9,100.](#) Transitions Habitat Conservancy (THC) recently submitted a report on their work last year for the Southern California Edison (SCE) international restoration grant. Michael Tuma is working with THC for a new \$9,000 grant to implement restoration in tortoise hot spots in the West Mojave. The Travel Grant is \$500 per grant for two grants, so annually it is an expenditure of \$1,000.

The Morafka Award is currently at \$2,500, with a \$1,000 commitment by Sylvia Morafka and \$1,500 from the Board. **Motion made (Maggie Fusari), seconded (Joe Probst), and unanimously approved to increase the Morafka Award to \$3,000 with \$1,000 from Sylvia Morafka and \$2,000 from the Council.** The Linda Allison Memorial Award is currently \$2,500, which will remain at that level for a few years. To answer Maggie's question, Michael Tuma responded that we currently charge 10% indirect costs for the SCE grant described above. [Michael Tuma will work with Bruce Palmer to determine a Council policy for indirect costs.](#)

O. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: Nothing to report.

P. Mexican Tortoise Coordination Committee (MTCC): Nothing to report in Michael Vamstad's absence.

Q. Training Program Committee Report:

1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari continues to organize the Introductory Course and plans to open registration by the end of July. She plans to use the same rates as last year. Maggie has almost completed a draft handbook on "How to run the Introductory Course."

2. Advanced Training Courses (ATC) Committee's Report: [Mary Lane Poe will be working with Cristina Jones to begin discussing and planning for future ATC events.](#) • [Mari Quillman will contact Cristina Jones to initiate discussions.](#) Handling tortoises, health assessments, biosecurity, telemetry, etc. are a few of the skills that we can teach in focused modules. Pete Woodman shared that we may focus on training Biological Monitors (versus Authorized Biologists) on how to move tortoises out of harm's way, for example. [Mary Lane Poe will develop a list of proposed modules for future ATC events to bring back to the Board for discussion.](#) There was a group consensus to have Mary Lane Poe serve as the new Chair for the Advanced Training Courses Committee. Pete Woodman reported there is a new contact, Corey Mitchell, with the Larger-scale Translocation Study Site (LSTS) to follow up on Linda Allison's research. There are eight males and four or five females, and they want to have 12-15 males and 12-15 females, which will be available for training and education.

R. Education and Outreach Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari shared that the postings for the cannabis session will be available when Heidi Brannon provides introductory information. She is also nearly ready to provide the recordings to paid attendees at the Symposium.

S. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report: Kristin Berry asked the Board to help identify special speakers, panels, and topics. We expect that for the foreseeable future our Symposia will have a hybrid component, which gives Kristin latitude to invite foreign speakers to share virtually.

T. Fundraising Committee Report: Ken MacDonald and Judy Hohman recently provided a draft request for proposal to identify and hire a professional fundraiser to raise funds for the Council. This would be in lieu of hiring an employee that we pay by the hour. It will be important to identify specific tasks to be completed, and clauses for deliverables and what happens if they are not received. The partial scope of work for this person is to assess the Council's current fundraising procedures, to develop a multiple-year fundraising plan targeting \$150,000 income annually, to implement one or more fundraising events in 2023 and 2024, etc. A proposed fundraising plan is targeted to be available for discussion in August 2023. It was suggested that the fundraiser's pay could be a commission, so they would receive a percentage of the income they generate. For the record, the Go Fund Me funds have been received. The "Drink Beer, Save Tortoises" event is scheduled for next Saturday in Redlands, between 12:00 and 4:00 p.m. A number of nonprofit groups will be there with exhibits. We ordered 500 Buffs with a nice tortoise image and the Council's logo. Matt Patterson is the artist who has given us permission to use his art for free in the first production. **Halle Kohn-Levine will eblast the recent announcement again next midweek and Mary Lane Poe will post the event on social media.** • **Mari Quillman will contact our swag person to facilitate our payment.** There was agreement that we should conduct a "Drink Beer, Save Tortoises" event at the next Symposium.

U. Awards Committee's Reports: After the last Symposium, Kristin Berry will likely present a Pat von Helf award in 2024 to several researchers working on roads. The Awards Committee has already identified prospective award recipients for 2024.

V. Master Calendar: Judy Hohman instigated the production of this calendar, with input from the Board. It is a tool for the Board to use, as a reminder of actions that need to be taken to meet recurring events and their deadlines. Some of the specific items were discussed and several resolved (see example in the second paragraph above under the Grants Committee).

NEW BUSINESS

W. Confidential Session: The Board entered a confidential session not included in these minutes.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Mari Quillman, at 1:13 p.m. (PST)

Draft minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted for approval to all Board members on 13 May 2023 by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary, and these final minutes encompass feedback from Board members.



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

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 13 May 2023

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

1. Draft Staff Report, Land-Use Screens for Electric System Planning (CA)

10/5/2022 – The notice for this project was received from the California Energy Commission on this date, distributed on **10/14/2022**, with an unknown due date.

2. Red Rock Canyon State Park Draft General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report (Kern Co, CA)

2/21/2023 – On this date, we receive a letter from State Parks with links to the draft general plan and final EIR, which was adopted on 3/3/2023. There are no issues in the draft general plan or final EIR that warrant comment, so no additional actions were needed for this project.

3. Middle Gila South Access Transportation Management Plan (Pinal, Pima, Cochise, and Gila Co, AZ)

3/1/2023 – The notice for this project was received from the BLM on this date, with a due date of **4/3/2023**. The draft comment letter is circulated on **3/31/2023**, and with six endorsements, submitted on **4/1/2023**.

4. Helendale Fuel and Convenience Center (San Bernardino Co, CA)

3/2/2023 – The notice for this project was received from the County of San Bernardino on this date, with a due date of **4/3/2023**. The draft comment letter is circulated on **3/30/2023**, and with 12 endorsements, submitted on **4/1/2023**.

5. Red Cliffs Warner Valley Land Exchange (Washington Co, UT)

3/17/2023 – The notice for this project was received via regular mail on this date, with a due date of **4/19/2023**. The draft comment letter is circulated on **4/16/2023**, and with 10 endorsements, submitted on **4/18/2023**.

6. Mosey Solar Project Land Segregation Notice (Clark & Nye Co, NV)

3/21/2023 – The notice for this project was received from BLM via email as a press release on this date, with no due date. BLM will segregate the roughly 5,200 acres under consideration for two years, allowing for the timely consideration of Mosey Solar's application. Segregation means this acreage is removed for two years from appropriation under the public land laws, including location under the Mining Law, subject to valid existing rights, but not the Mineral Leasing Act or the Materials Act. There is no need to comment on this project at this time, although there may be a future opportunity if a project develops.

7. Joshua Tree Campground (San Bernardino Co, CA)

3/20/2023 – The notice for this project was received on this date via email, with a due date of **4/21/2023**. The draft comment letter was circulated on 4/19/2023, and with seven endorsements and one recusal, submitted on **4/21/2023**.

8. Washington City Water Tank and Pipeline (Washington Co, UT)

3/17/2023 – The notice for this project was received via email on this date, with a due date of **4/16/2023**. The draft comment letter is circulated on **4/13/2023**, and with 12 endorsements, submitted on **4/14/2023**.

9. Letter of Support – Chuckwalla National Monument (Congressman Ruiz)

4/5/2023 – The notice for this project was received from Luke Basulto on this date, with a tentative due date of **4/28/2023**. The draft letter is distributed on **4/26/2023** and received 10 endorsements and one recusal by 4/27/2023, when Ed LaRue sent it to be posted and provided it to Luke as the final letter that he can hand-deliver as planned.

10. BLM Conservation and Landscape Rule (nationwide)

4/3/2023 – The notice for this project was received from a third party (Richard Spotts) on this date, with a due date of **6/20/2023**.

11. Reno to Las Vegas Fiber Optic Project – Scoping Period (Nevada)

4/3/2023 – The notice for this project was found on **4/7/2023** when searching BLM press releases and not from BLM, with a due date of **5/2/2023**. With 11 endorsements, the final letter was submitted on **5/2/2023**.

12. Letter of Support – Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee OHV Grant Application (CA State Parks)

4/10/2023 – The documents for this grant were received from the DTPC on this date, with a due date of **5/1/2023**. With eight endorsements, Ed LaRue submits the final letter on **4/29/2023** and asks Judy Hohman to send the letter to the system set up to receive the letters.

13. Muddy Mountains Travel Management Plan – Scoping Phase (BLM NV)

4/12/2023 – The notice for this project was received from BLM on this date, with a due date of **5/12/2023**. The draft letter is circulated on **5/9/2023**, and with 10 endorsements and 1 recusal is submitted to the BLM.

14. Herbicide Use on Public Lands – DEIS (BLM nationwide)

4/21/2023 – The notice for this project was received from a third party on this date, with a due date 45 days after 4/21 – estimated to be **6/4/2023**.

15. Western Rock Products Sorenson Pit Mineral Sale EA (St George, UT)

4/18/2023 – On this date the BLM provides the Council with a 10-day time period for comments and a due date of **4/28/2023**. The draft letter is circulated on **4/27/2023**, and submitted to the BLM on **4/28/2023** with 12 endorsements.

16. Letter of Support for Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Council (MGSCC) grant proposal to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

4/30/2023 – On this date, an anonymous Board member drafts a letter on behalf of the DTC, which endorses the grant application by the MGSCC to the WCB to fund research on the life history of Mohave ground squirrels, with a due date of **5/3/2023**. With one recusal and nine endorsements, Judy Hohman provides the final letter to Kathy Simon, chair of the MGSCC, and the Wildlife Conservation Board on **5/3/2023**.

17. Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Five-Year Plan (Arizona)

4/13/2023 – On this date, we receive a notice from ADOT, with a due date of **6/1/2023**.

18. Lake Mead National Recreation Area Cottonwood Cove Road Improvements (Lake Meade, NV)

5/3/2023 – On this date a third party provides a link to the notice, with comments due by **6/1/2023**.

19. Proposed Golden Currant Solar Project (Clark Co, NV)

4/25/2023 – On this date, the BLM contacts us with links to this proposed project, with a due date for scoping comments on **6/9/2023**.

20. Dixie Power Overhead Distribution Line to the Scrub Peak Radio Tower (Utah)

4/28/2023 – The BLM contacts us on this date with a comment deadline of **5/28/2023**.

21. Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Ongoing and Future Military Training, Support Operations, and Resource Management at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (San Bernardino Co., CA)

4/28/2023 – On this date, the Marines contact us directly with the opportunity to comment, which has a due date of **5/31/2023**.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 3/26/2023 to 5/13/2023**

Current date for this latest table revision is **5/10/2023**

Dates (2022 or 2023 as indicated)						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																	
#	Title	Rec'd	Dist	Due	Sent	BJ	BP	EL	HK	JH	JK	JP	LB	KB	KM	MF	MH	MP	MQ	MT	MV	PW	
1	CEC Planning	10/5	10/14	??																			
2	Red Rock Cyn GP	2/21	3/2	N/A	N/A	No need for comment																	
3	Middle Gila TMP	3/1	3/2	4/3	4/1	Y 4/1				Y/PI 3/31			Y 4/1		Y 4/1	Y 4/1		Y 4/1			Y 4/2		
4	Helendale Center	3/2	3/30	4/3	4/1	Y 3/31				Y/PI 3/30	Y 3/31	Y 3/31	Y 3/30		Y 3/30	Y 3/31	Y 3/31	Y 4/1	Y 3/30	Y 3/30		Y 3/30	
5	Red Cliffs Warner Val	3/17	4/16	4/19	4/18	Y 4/17				Y 4/17	Y/PI 4/16	Y 4/17				Y 4/17		Y 4/18	Y 4/17	Y 4/16	Y 4/18	Y 4/18	
6	Mosey Solar	3/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	No need for comment																	
7	Joshua Tree Campground	3/20		4/21	4/21	Y 4/20			Y 4/22	Y/PI 4/19	Y/PI 4/21	Y 4/19			Y 4/19	Y 4/19		Y 4/21	Y/PI 4/21	Y 4/21	R 4/21		
8	Wash City Water Tank	3/17	4/13	4/16	4/14	Y 4/13			Y 4/15	Y/PI 4/13		Y 4/14	Y 4/15		Y 4/14	Y 4/14		Y 4/16	Y 4/14	Y 4/14	Y 4/16	Y 4/14	
9	Chuckwalla NM Letter	4/5	4/26	4/29	4/27	Y 4/27		Y/PI 4/26		Y/PI 4/25	R 4/28	Y 4/27	R 4/26		Y 4/26	Y 4/26		Y 4/26	Y/PI 4/27	Y 4/26	R 4/28	Y 4/27	
10	BLM Rule	4/3		6/20																			
11	Reno-Vegas Cable	4/7	5/2	5/2	5/2	Y 5/2			Y 5/3	Y/PI 5/2	Y/PI 5/2	Y 5/2			Y 5/2	Y 5/2		Y 5/2	Y 5/2	Y 5/2	Y 5/2		
12	DTPC Grant App	4/10	4/27	5/1	4/29	Y 4/28		Y/PI 4/27		Y/PI 4/27		Y 4/28		R 4/29		Y 4/27				Y 4/27	Y 4/28	Y 4/28	
13	Muddy Mountains	4/13	5/9	5/12	5/10	Y 5/10		Y/A 5/9		Y/PI 5/10	Y 5/10	Y 5/10	Y 5/10		R 5/9	Y 5/9		Y/PI 5/10	Y/PI 5/10	Y 5/9	Y 5/11		
14	Herbicide Use	4/21		6/4																			
15	Western Rock EA	4/18	4/27	4/28	4/28	Y 4/28		Y/A 4/27		Y/PI 4/28	Y/PI 4/28	Y 4/28		Y/PI 4/28	Y 4/27	Y 4/28		Y 4/27	Y 4/28	Y 4/27	Y 4/28	Y 4/28	
16	MGSCC support	N/A	4/30	5/3	5/3	Y 4/30		R 4/30	Y 5/3	Y/PI 4/30		Y 5/1			Y 5/1	Y 5/1				Y 4/30	Y 5/1	Y 4/27	
17	ADOT 5-year Plan	4/13	5/7	6/1																			
18	Cottonwood Cove Road	5/3	5/7	6/1																			
19	Golden Currant	4/25	5/7	6/9																			

20	Dixie Power	4/28	5/7	5/28																	
21	29 Palms Training	4/28	5/7	5/31																	

BJ = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **HK** = Halle Kohn-Levine, **JH** = Judy Hohman, **JK** = John Kalish, **JP** = Joe Probst, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **LB** = Luke Basulto; **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MH** = Max Havelka, **MP** = Mary Lane Poe, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **MV** = Michel Vamstad, **PW** = Pete Woodman