

Final Final Final

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

**May 21, 2022
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, Peter Woodman, Judy Hohman, Cristina Jones, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Halle Kohn, Michael Vamstad. **Absent:** Ken MacDonald, Bruce Palmer, Ed LaRue. **Guests:** None.

A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions: None.

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

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2022: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes of the most recent virtual Board meeting, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final with one minor modification. **Motion made by Mari Quillman, seconded by Joe Probst, and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting: No actions were identified.

E. Special Discussion Items:

1. The Large Scale Translocation Site (LSTS) Update: Peter Woodman emailed the Board on May 20, 2022, to share an updated set of data on the status of tortoises within the LSTS. He reported that there are currently 13 tortoises being tracked at the LSTS: six male, six female (although two are missing), and one non-adult.

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 August 6th, with a tentative meeting scheduled after that for October 8th pending availability of absent board members.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Treasurer's Report: In an electronic version of the Treasurer's Report, Joe Probst shared that the Council's total assets are \$219,809.31. Joe suggests to the Board a change in bank and address for the purpose of operational efficiency. The new bank would be closer to Joe and will therefore allow for more timely deposits of payments made out to the Council. The Council would be paying

\$100/month for the change in address to an office space. The Board agrees that these changes are acceptable to assist with the Treasurer's workflow and organization. **Joe Probst will have mail forwarded from the current address to the new address to ensure a seamless transition.** The payment will be made to Joe, since the leased space is in his name, and will then be immediately used for the lease of the office space. Joe also proposed that we change our payment system from PayPal to Wild Apricot. **Joe Probst will discuss the details of the switch with Sky Esser (webmaster) before the Board makes a final decision and executes the transition. Motion made by Michael Vamstad, seconded by Halle Kohn to move the mailbox and bank; motion made by Pete Woodman, seconded by Judy Hohman to approve the expenditure of \$100/month; motion made by Maggie Fusari, seconded by Michael Vamstad to accept the Treasurer's Report as final; all motions passed unanimously.**

H. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones reports that she sent cards to a couple of members and coordinated replies to other correspondence with relevant Board members as needed.

I. Membership Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Halle Kohn shared that the Council has 2,651 contacts and 278 active members. The Committee is working on a revised Membership Coordinator/Committee Policy that will include Guidelines for Member Engagement and will also clarify the Committee/Coordinator's responsibilities. Halle is also working on a cross-committee content calendar to improve scheduling and outreach effectiveness.

J. Nominating Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Mari Quillman described the types of experiences that would make a meaningful contribution to the Council's Board of Directors. **Michael Tuma and Halle Kohn suggested a possible nomination to the Board, and will coordinate with Mari Quillman.**

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 18 reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 3/26/2022 and 5/21/2022. Judy Hohman presents the report at the Board meeting in Ed's absence.

L. Media Committee's Report: Halle Kohn reports that the Media Committee has a goal of achieving 1,500+ Instagram followers by the end of 2022. Organic growth of the Council's social media has been between 20-35% each year. Regarding the newsletter, **Mari Quillman will send Halle all the information that Heidi Brannon has transmitted regarding the illegal cannabis grow operations.** • **Halle Kohn will include links to resources in the newsletter as applicable for people to report an illegal operation, while highlighting a message that individuals should not engage the operation directly.** • **Michael Tuma and Halle Kohn will approach Media Committee volunteers to see if they can join a Board meeting around the time of the Council's next Symposium.** Featuring various committee members in the newsletter after this upcoming issue is a possibility since current Board members have been spotlighted previously.

M. Strategic Planning Committee's Report: Nothing to report in Bruce Palmer's absence.

N. Grants and Academic Funding Committee's Report: Michael Tuma reports that the Committee is reviewing a project proposal requesting funding, and will request support from other Board members in reviewing this new proposal.

O. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: Cristina Jones has nothing to report.

P. Mexican Tortoise Coordination Committee (MTCC): Michael Vamstad has nothing to report.

Q. Training Program Committee Report:

1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Maggie Fusari explains that the 2022 course offering will be a single hybrid program that includes the lecture series (virtual) and the field training (in person). Maggie is working with Sky on timing of outreach engagement regarding the 2022 Introductory Training Course. The cost of the upcoming course is a recommendation by Maggie and is not certain. There may be more discussion via email to make a final decision before the registration opens later this year.

2. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report: Cristina Jones has nothing to report.

R. Education and Outreach Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari is working with Halle Kohn on coordinating outreach. Joe Probst has indicated a willingness to attend the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) symposium in August in Tucson, AZ with swag, but was not present at the time of this discussion to confirm his attendance. [Mari Quillman will reach out to Joe Probst to check his availability for the event.](#) • [Cristina Jones will let the Board know when reservation/registration is available for exhibitors at TSA's symposium.](#)

S. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report: Kristin Berry did not generate a written report due to no action being taken since the last meeting. The Symposium may be in St. George, UT but the final decision will be made at the next (August 2022) Board meeting. [Mari Quillman will check with Joe Probst on the estimated costs associated with St. George.](#)

T. Fundraising Committee Report: Nothing to report in Ken MacDonald's absence.

U. Awards Committee's Reports: [Kristin Berry is sending an Award Letter to Linda Allison.](#) There is nothing else to report.

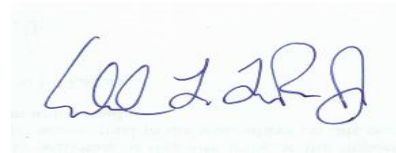
V. Ad Hoc Illegal Cannabis Grow Farms Committee Report: Judy Hohman reports on six objectives and corresponding tasks primarily focused on research and education. The Committee will plan for another meeting to formalize Committee structure and efforts. Maggie Fusari suggests that post-cleanup restoration is an important long-term project that the Council may want to support. This committee is brainstorming how to establish a new set of Best Management Practices/protocol to coordinate with other experts to recover and restore the affected areas. Lobbying may be another path forward.

NEW BUSINESS

W. Mojave Desert Tortoises in Joshua Tree National Park: Michael Vamstad shared a video about tortoises in the Park, which is not yet available but will be a great resource for education of visitors to the area. [Michael Vamstad will let the Board know when the video is publicly released so that it may be distributed through the Council's media channels.](#)

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Mari Quillman, at 11:45am PST.

Draft minutes were recorded by Halle Kohn in Ed LaRue's absence, later edited, distributed, and modified with Board member review and input, then approved in a formal vote, and now 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 21 May 2022

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

1. Cosign Defenders of Wildlife Letter to USFWS to Reassess Tortoise Recovery Plans (4 states)

1/4/2022 – On this date, Ed LaRue receives a draft letter from Jeff Aardahl of Defenders with the Council as a coauthor directed to the USFWS Regional Director in Sacramento requesting an update of the latest, 2004 formal assessment of the recovery plan. On **1/5/2022**, Ed provided comments on the letter, which is currently in draft form and will be distributed to the Board once Aardahl has received approval from Defenders' national office. As of **3/28/2022**, there has been no additional work on this, so it is a placeholder. Following an inquiry about the status, Jeff Aardahl indicates on **3/29/2022** that this item has been postponed pending progress on the lawsuit concerning the West Mojave Route project.

2. BLM Online Spring Land Sale in Las Vegas Valley (NV)

2/16/2022 – On this date, we receive a link for information for this land sale, with comments due by **4/4/2022**. Ed LaRue drafts and distributes the comment letter on **4/2/2022**. With eight endorsements, the final letter is submitted on **4/3/2022**.

3. Southern Nevada District Restoration Opportunities (NV)

2/23/2022 – A link to this project was received from a third party on the indicated date, was distributed to the Board on **3/12/2022**, with a due date of **4/8/2022**. The draft letter is circulated on **4/7/2022**, and with eight endorsements, was submitted to BLM on **4/8/2022**.

4. Connect Arida and Mohave Substations near Laughlin (NV)

3/2/2022 – A link to this project was received from a third party on the indicated date, was distributed to the Board on **3/12/2022**, with a due date of **3/31/2022**. The draft letter is distributed to the Board on **3/27/2022**, and with seven endorsements, is submitted to BLM on **3/29/2022**.

5. BIA Chuckwalla Solar (Moapa Indian Reservation, NV)

3/4/2022 – A link to this project was received from a third party on the indicated date, was distributed to the Board on **3/12/2022**, with a due date of **4/18/2022**. The draft letter is distributed on **4/14/2022**, and with six endorsements is submitted to the BLM and others on **4/17/2022**.

6. El Centro Mineral Exploration Project (CA)

3/4/2022 – A link to this project was received from a third party on the indicated date, was distributed to the Board on **3/12/2022**, with a due date of **4/4/2022**. The draft letter is written by an anonymous Board member and circulated to the Board on **3/30/2022**. With six endorsements, the letter is emailed on **4/3/2022**.

7. Mineral Withdrawal Adjacent to Barry M. Goldwater Range (Arizona)

3/9/2022 – A link to this project was received from a third party on the indicated date, was distributed to the Board on **3/12/2022**, with a due date of **6/7/2022**. Upon checking the environmental assessment, it indicated that Sonoran desert tortoise is not likely to occur, so no comments submitted.

8. California City Cannabis Farm (California City, CA)

3/21/2022 – Having heard about this project from Ron Berger of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee on **3/21/2022**, an anonymous Board member provided a draft letter for this project on **3/27/2022**, which was edited and distributed to the Board on **3/28/2022**, with a due date of **4/7/2022**. With six endorsements, the letter is submitted on **4/4/2022**.

9. Petition to Reform the USFWS Listing Program (National)

3/29/2022 – On this date, Stephanie Kurose of the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) asks the Council to sign a petition urging Martha Williams to take immediate action to reform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s process for listing species as threatened or endangered. With seven endorsements, Ed LaRue uses the available link (<https://forms.gle/hopaD39euNAQaPqVA>) to sign the petition on behalf of the Council on **3/30/2022**.

10. Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Piute-Eldorado Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan (NV)

3/21/2022 – On this date, the BLM provided a link to the DEA, with comments due on **4/19/2022**. With seven endorsements, the approved letter is submitted to the BLM on **4/18/2022**.

11. Vidal Solar Project (San Bernardino Co, CA)

3/24/2022 – On this date, a third party provides a link to this project, with comments due on **4/27/2022**. Even though it was three days late, the comment letter is submitted to San Bernardino County on **4/30/2022**.

12. Red Rock Canyon State Park Matcon Mine (Kern Co, CA)

4/8/2022 – On this date, we receive a petition from Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) asking the Council to sign a petition opposing a new mining lease in Red Rock Canyon State Park in Kern County. Ed LaRue distributes the petition to other Board members, but recuses himself as Matcon is a longtime client. With six endorsements on **4/8/2022**, Judy Hohman signs the petition since Ed LaRue recused himself.

13. Support for Congressman Grijalva on Rescinding Northern Corridor Decision (Utah)

4/20/2022 – After receiving a copy of a letter supporting Congressman Grijalva’s recommendation to rescind the Northern Corridor decision, Maggie Fusari writes a similar letter of support, which is distributed on **4/20/2022**. With eight endorsements and two recusals, the final letter is submitted on **4/28/2022**.

14. Nipton Communication Site (San Bernardino Co, CA)

3/31/2022 – The Notice of Intent was received on **3/31/2022**, with a deadline of **4/24/2022**, which was missed due to Ed LaRue’s schedule.

15. Toquerville Butte ROW Environmental Assessment (St George, UT)

4/4/2022 – This notice was received directly from the BLM on **4/4/2022**, with a due date of **5/3/2022**. The draft letter is distributed on **4/30/2022**, and submitted to BLM on **5/2/2022** after seven endorsements were received.

16. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area: Legacy Trail Phase 1 (Clark Co, NV)

4/7/2022 – The link to this project was provided by the BLM on **4/7/2022**, with a due date of **5/9/2022**. With six endorsements, the final letter is submitted on **5/7/2022**.

17. Bellefield Solar Energy Project (Kern Co, CA)

4/22/2022 – Information for this project was received directly from the USFWS on this date, and due on **5/25/2022**.

18. Greenlink West Transmission Project (Clark Co, NV)

4/29/2022 – Information for this project was received from a third party on this date, and due on **6/3/2022**.

19. Sunzia Southwest Transmission Project (Central AZ)

4/29/2022 – Information for this project was received from a third party on this date, and due on **7/28/2022**.

20. Mojave Trails National Monument land-use planning process (San Bernardino and Riverside Co, CA)

4/5/2022 – Information for this project was received from a third party on this date, with an unknown due date. On **4/30/22**, Ed LaRue sends an email to the BLM contact asking for additional information. There was no response from the BLM as of this report.

21. Protect Red Cliffs petition (St George, UT)

5/9/2022 – On this date, we receive a petition and letter from Conserve Southwest Utah (CSU), which is distributed the same date. With four endorsements, Ed LaRue lets CSU know on **5/9/2022** we are willing to sign the petition.

Ecosystems Advisory Committee

Summary Table from 3/26/2022 to 5/9/2022
Current date for this latest table revision is: 5/10/2022

		Dates (2022)				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	HK	JH	JP	KB	KM	MF	MQ	MT	MV	PW
1	DoW/DTC letter of recovery assessment	1/4	N/A	N/A	N/A	Removed on 3/29 as a result of the email from Jeff Aardahl (see above)													
2	BLM Land Sales in Las Vegas, NV	2/16	4/2	4/4	4/3	Y 4/3			Y/A 4/2	Y 4/3	Y/PI 4/2	Y 4/3			Y 4/3			Y 4/4	Y 4/2
3	Nevada Restoration Opportunities	2/23	3/12	4/8	4/8	Y 4/8			Y/A 4/7	Y 4/8	Y/PI 4/7	Y 4/8	Y 4/8	Y 4/8	Y/PI 4/7			Y 4/8	
4	Arida and Mohave Substations	3/2	3/12	3/31	3/29	Y 3/28			Y/A 3/27		Y/PI 3/28	Y 3/28			Y 3/28			Y 3/28	Y 3/28
5	BIA Chuckwalla Solar	3/4	4/14	4/18	4/17	Y 4/14			Y/A 4/14		Y/PI 4/14	Y 4/14						Y 4/15	Y/PI 4/14
6	El Centro Mineral Exploration Project	3/4	3/12	4/4	4/3	Y 4/1			Y/PI 3/30	Y 4/3	Y/PI 3/30	Y 4/1		Y 4/3	Y 4/1				Y 4/3
7	Barry M. Goldwater Range Extraction	3/9	3/12	6/7	N/A	Project not expected to affect tortoises													
8	Cal City Cannabis Farm	3/21	3/28	4/7	4/4	Y 3/29			Y/PI 3/28		Y/PI 3/27	Y 3/29	Y/PI 4/1						Y/PI 3/29
9	CBD petition for USFWS listing	3/29	3/29	4/1	3/30	Y 3/30			Y 3/29		Y/PI 3/29	Y 3/29			Y 3/30	Y 3/30		Y 3/29	Y 3/31
10	Piute-Eldorado ACEC	3/21	4/18	4/19	4/18				Y/PI 4/18	Y 4/18	Y/PI 4/18			Y 4/18	Y 4/18		Y 4/18	Y 4/18	
11	Vidal Solar Project	3/24	4/30	4/27	4/30	Y 4/30			Y/A 4/30	Y 4/30		Y 4/30			Y 4/30				
12	Matcon Mine in Red Rock Canyon SP	4/7	4/7	N/A	4/8	Y 4/8			R 4/8		Y 4/8		Y 4/8		Y 4/8			Y 4/8	Y 4/8
13	Support for Grijalva on Northern Corridor	4/20	4/20	N/A	4/28	Y 4/21			Y/PI 4/20	Y/PI 4/22	Y/PI 4/20	Y 4/21	R 4/21		Y/A 4/20		Y 4/21	R 4/21	Y 4/21
14	Nipton Communications Site	3/31	N/A	4/24	N/A	This deadline was missed due to Ed LaRue's schedule													
15	Toquerville Butte ROW	4/4	4/30	5/3	5/2	Y 5/1			Y/A 4/30	Y 5/1	Y 5/1	Y 5/1			Y 5/1	Y 5/2			Y 5/1
16	Red Rock Trail and Intersection – Legacy 1	4/7	5/6	5/9	5/7	Y 5/9			Y/A 5/6	Y 5/8	Y 5/7	Y 5/7	Y 5/9		Y 5/7		Y 5/7		Y 5/7
17	Bellefield Solar Project	4/22		5/25															
18	Greenlink West Transmission Project	4/29		6/1															
19	Sunzia Southwest Transmission Project	4/29		7/28															

20	Mojave Trails National Monument	4/5		??															
21	Protect Red Cliffs	5/9	5/9	5/11	5/9	Y 5/10			Y 5/9		Y/PI 5/9	Y 5/10			Y 5/9			Y 5/10	Y 5/9

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