

Final

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Desert Tortoise Council Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

**23 March 2025
Zoom Online Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Mari Quillman at 10:00 a.m. (PDT). **Action items are in blue, with responsible parties in red. Motions made, seconded, and approved (or not) are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Board members: Kristin Berry, Peter Woodman, Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Ed LaRue, Max Havelka, Rick Applegate, Mary Lane Poe, Luke Basulto, and Operations Manager: David Hedrick. **Absent:** None. **Guests:** Ryan Lopez, Ben Delancy, Vita Sheehy, Debra Hughson, Maribel Lopez, Melissa Merrick.

A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions: Debra Hughson and Vita Sheehy attended the meeting as prospective Board members.

B. Review Agenda: New issues were incorporated as needed. Elections were added to the Nominating Committee report.

C. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of 1/11/2025 and the Annual Business Meeting of 2/25/2025: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes of the most recent virtual Board and Annual Business meetings, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final. Need to change “Kristen” to “Kristin” in the January Board meeting minutes. **Motion made (Becky Jones), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to accept the draft Board meeting minutes as amended to be final. • Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Kristin Berry), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes of the Annual Business Meeting as amended to be final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting:

1. Donation to the Wildlife Society: On 1/13/2025, Vanessa Lozano representing The Western Section of The Wildlife Society asked the Council if we would like to donate a free registration for the Introductory Course to their 2025 annual meeting in February. Although there was no formal motion, in email responses 8 of 14 Board members endorsed this donation, so a quorum was achieved. In an email from Maggie Fusari, she indicated that the donation to The Wildlife Society was sent out on 1/19/2025 and included one full registration and six audit registrations to the 2025 Introductory Course.

2. Motion to adopt the revised Bylaws: The Board of Directors recommended several revisions to the Bylaws of the Desert Tortoise Council on 1/11/2025. These revisions included clarification of the authorities of the Board Chairperson and various corrections to grammar and phrasing. **Bruce Palmer provided the revised Bylaws on 1/15/2025 and made the motion, seconded by Mary Lane Poe, that the revise Bylaws be adopted, which was endorsed by seven additional Board members, so a quorum was reached on 1/21/2025.** The proposed revisions were approved by the general membership at the Annual Business Meeting, 2/25/2025. The revised bylaws are available on the Council's website.

3. Motion to adopt the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan: Having discussed changes to the 2020 five-year strategic plan at the 1/11/2025 Board meeting and received additional comments subsequently, on 1/15/2025, **Bruce Palmer provided the draft 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and made the motion, seconded by Mary Lane Poe, that the latest draft strategic plan be adopted, which was endorsed by six additional Board members, so a quorum was achieved on 1/17/2025.**

E. Special Discussion Items: None was identified.

F. Next Meeting Date: The next virtual meeting of the Board of Directors will be on Zoom, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (PDT), on 6/1/2025.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Treasurer's Report: In the absence of a Treasurer, Mari Quillman provided the treasurer's report, which is included in the footer¹. Our current assets are California Bank/Trust - \$111,479.87, US Bank - \$39,794.43, Edward Jones - \$358,584.18, for a total of \$509,858.48. Our taxes are due by May 15 and financial documents are to be submitted to our accountant by May 1. The Internal Revenue Service has discontinued its audit of our finances. The accounting for the 2025 Symposium is not yet complete and the numbers probably won't be determined until after the 2024 tax return is submitted. The Financial Planning Committee includes Ken MacDonald, Rick Applegate, Ray Butler (because of his audit history with the Council), Mari Quillman, and David Hedrick. **Ken MacDonald and Rick Applegate will meet with Edward Jones' representative Will Gonzalez whose phone number is (661) 269-0726. Motion made (Ed LaRue), seconded (Judy Hohman), and unanimously approved to accept the treasurer's report as submitted.**

H. Corresponding Secretary's Report: In her electronic report dated 3/23/2025, Becky Jones shared that we received a letter from the IRS saying they decided not to conduct an audit², she addressed a question about an unregistered person listening in on the Symposium, and the usual solicitations.

I. Membership Committee's Report: In the absence of a chairperson, in a report dated 3/20/2025³, Mari Quillman reported that our contact list contains 3,581 names (current and past members), which is almost 100 more contacts than in January of 2025. We currently have 330 active members and 736 members with overdue renewals. We do not have a chairperson for this committee, which is comprised of Mari and Judy Hohman, so we will need to find someone to take this position. It would be great if someone who is currently on the Board would take the position but if that doesn't happen, then we will need to look at bringing a new person onto the Board as committee chair.

¹ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/0xo0eagg32payz39ltn3i/DTC-Treasurers-Report-3-23-2025.docx?rlkey=dxzj32jfbuis5cczoieggxd4r&dl=0>

² <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/xh1b783mxupbdnw9jmmf/IRS-letter-dropping-2025-audit.jpg?rlkey=3dbuvs383oaqjihbq2yiqykrf&dl=0>

³ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/tb9o12lx82m4big6vc7wc/DTC-Membership-Committee-Report-3-20-2025.docx?rlkey=df7pzlatnqc9h06amohf2865e&dl=0>

J. Nominating Committee's Report: Following the Symposium, there were numerous members who expressed an interest in joining the Board. Ken MacDonald and Luke Basulto have been working on organizing information for prospective Board members, including the guests that joined us today. **Luke Basulto will solicit letters of interest from prospective Board members so there can be follow-up interviews and eventual selections.** Letters of interest are not required for committee members. Mari recently shared resumés and letters of interest submitted by Debra Hughson and Vita Sheehy as prospective Board members, which will be considered in an executive session at the end of this meeting. Ken emphasized that we need to focus on membership, fundraising, social media, etc., as most of the current Board members are biologists. We currently have 14 Board members and six available positions for a total of 20 members.

In his report on the strategic plan, Bruce shared that seven Board Members At Large, including himself, Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Pete Woodman, Kristin Berry, Maggie Fusari, and Michael Tuma have not been re-elected as per the three-year term period of rotation requires. **Motion was made by Ken MacDonald, seconded by Rick Applegate, and unanimously approved in a vote by acclamation to approve Bruce Palmer, Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Kristin Berry, Maggie Fusari, Pete Woodman, and Michael Tuma as Board Members At Large.** • Bruce asked that all Board members review his recently distributed spread sheet listing Board members to be sure it is accurate. • Judy Hohman will add the re-election of Board Members At Large to the Board's planning calendar.

K. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: In an electronic version of his report (see attachment), Ed LaRue reported that there were 18 projects identified and 12 reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 1/11/2025 and 3/23/2025, with five projects outstanding. No deadlines were missed.

L. Media Committee's Report: Chair position is open. David Hedrick has been taking the lead on social media in the absence of a chair. Bruce shared that we need to associate dates with website postings so that we can take down old materials, and be careful of using words like "old" and "newly released" on the postings. Bruce would like to see a tab on the home page that would lead visitors to the Bylaws, Awards, Strategic Plan, and various other documents. Bruce was frustrated that he could not copy blocks of information off the website. **Michael Tuma will systematically review the website to identify problems and suggest remedies.** • **Kristin Berry will look specifically at the awards portion of the website.** • **After these reviews are complete, David Hedrick will work with Sky Esser to remedy problems.** • **These reviews and suggested remedies will be due to David Hedrick by April 15.** We are currently not producing a formal newsletter, which has been a traditional part of the Council. Michael Tuma suggested that we may want to circulate a pseudo newsletter as an email. **David Hedrick will produce an eblast to acknowledge Symposium sponsors.** • **David Hedrick will let Ed LaRue know when a list of donors including those purchasing auction items valued at more than \$200 is available so that Ed can write acknowledgement letters.**

M. Strategic Planning Committee's Report: In his report dated 3/19/2025⁴, Bruce Palmer reported that the strategic plan was formally adopted on 1/17/2025, as described above in D.3. The purpose of the plan is to focus activities of the Council and Board on critical tortoise conservation issues. A summary of the current plan was presented to the membership during the Annual Business Meeting on 2/25/2025. This plan is available on the Council's website. We may need to revise policies related to the Treasurer to reflect how we currently operate. Maggie Fusari would like us to anticipate and plan for changes likely to result from the current presidential administration, which need to be considered as part of focused strategic planning efforts.

⁴ https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/owonah2rldew6pe825ytg/Strategic-Planning-Committee-and-Parliamentarian-report-2025_03_19-1.docx?rlkey=4wb6zghw6d7obexndte4fwvzb&dl=0

N. Grants and Academic Funding Committee's Report: Michael Tuma summarized the function of this committee for the new members joining us today. On 3/21/2025, Michael Tuma provided a detailed grant request for \$9,529.81 from Mamoudou Issoufou Ibrahim⁵ that was submitted to us through our Regular Grants Program and that was evaluated by the Grants and Academic Funding Committee. Committee members, chaired by Michael Tuma and including Maggie Fusari, Alice Karl, and Max Havelka, found that this grant request lacked a rigorous scientific perspective, likely written by laypersons. In its native habitat in Niger, the African spurred tortoise ("sulcata"), which is the focal species of the grant request, is listed as "Vulnerable" under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list, which falls beneath the imperiled status that we generally require for grant funding.

The committee suggests that only a part of the study may be funded to help determine the distribution of the species, which would be about \$2,500 of the total amount. **Michael Tuma would like to receive feedback from all Board members on this grant proposal so the committee can make an informed decision.** • **Michael Tuma will circulate a letter to the Board drafted by Alice Karl that suggests partial funding of the grant request.** Maggie said this is more of a conservation project than a rigorous scientific study, and has merit in that respect. We also recently received a grant application for the Linda Allison Memorial Grant that the committee will consider. **Michael Tuma will work with David Hedrick to announce the availability of the Southern California Edison and Leeward Energy grants.**

O. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: There is no chairperson for that committee. Ed LaRue finalized the minutes from the 1/16/2025 meeting between seven Council members and three USFWS biologists, which are included in the footer⁶. There was also a coordination meeting on 3/3/2025 between six Council Board members and Kristina Drake of the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office to discuss coordination. **Ed LaRue will provide the minutes of this meeting to all Board members.** There was general discussion about augmenting USFWS efforts by outside entities. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is the only way to transfer outside money directly to the USFWS. The L.A. Times published that the lease for the Palm Springs office of the USFWS is being revoked by the current administration.

P. Mexican Tortoise Conservation Committee (MTCC): **Michael Tuma will be visiting Mexico in May 2025 and knows of a Mexican biologist he may invite to serve on the committee.** We want to provide funding for travel of Mexican biologists to future Symposia and audits to the Introductory Workshop. We can also work with Mercy Vaughn and Alice Karl to coordinate among Mexican biologists. Pete Woodman shared that about 40 biologist, half Mexican and half from the United States, worked together in Mexico in the fall of 2024. Max Havelka shared that there will be two more Bolson tortoise releases of 15-20 animals in April and May 2025.

Q. Training Program Committee Report:

1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: In her report dated 3/23/2025, Maggie Fusari reported we are planning for the full course, including lectures and a field day. The website has all of the basic information. The dates are October 24 and 25 for the lectures and either November 2 or 3 for a field day in Ridgecrest. Note that the field days will be a Sunday and a

⁵ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/77j9pk9m2uf437xvtzy4o/MAMOUDOU-ISSOUFOU-Ibrahim-TURTLE-PROJECT-Niger.pdf?rlkey=z9nelrp8p4lw8ew4q5xy5r4c&dl=0>

⁶ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/aj3125kp2aexxdnst29uv/USFWS-DTC-Final-Coordination-Minutes.1-16-2025.docx?rlkey=6hv7shv559mv3q81zhkuqpg&dl=0>

Monday this year. Rates are unchanged. Audits of lectures will be encouraged. She and David Hedrick recommend that two free registrations be extended to several tribal members and that an unlimited number of audits be available to Mexican researchers. Various policies allow committee chairs to make decisions without consulting the entire Board, which may include the need to accommodate a few federal employees if they are otherwise unable to attend. Mari recommended that Maggie find an understudy to begin learning her role as the Introductory Course facilitator. David Hedrick is planning to be onsite at the Introductory Course this year. Pete said that several of the 3-D tortoises were stolen in 2024 so he will need to purchase six replacements, which will cost \$35 a piece.

2. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report: Mary Lane Poe shared that we are actively working to provide more training and education, and currently provide that through the Introductory Course and advanced courses. About 50 biologists who had attended previous Health Assessment Training (HAT) classes gathered on the evening on 2/26/2025 at the Symposium to discuss HAT issues. Draft minutes of that meeting are included in the footer⁷. A virtual module was discussed that could be available this fall, pending USFWS involvement.

R. Education and Outreach Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari will instigate a meeting of this committee the week of May 18. Ed volunteered to transport merchandise from Palmdale to events including the Introductory Course.

S. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report: In her report dated 3/23/2025⁸, Kristin Berry shared that the program was composed of 19 sessions with 57 presentations on 3.5 days, included two plenary speakers, one featured speaker, and six posters. Entertainment and supper was provided on three of the four nights. Board members spoke about the Council as part of five presentations with gave two additional presentations commemorating Larry LaPré and Joe Probst's contributions to the Council. Kristin had several positive emails about the quality of the Symposium/Program and from new people excited about doing more (presentations, etc.) from both Texas and Arizona. The new book and art work added to the Symposium excitement and fun. David Hedrick is considering a dedicated volunteer to understudy the audio-visual function at Symposia and Introductory Courses, with David Carr being a logical candidate. Starting this fall, Kristin would like to have a volunteer to help her solicit and prepare professional abstracts in October and November after the call for papers is released in September, which will be sent to former speakers and presenters. She would also like someone to help write-up the Program in a professional manner. Becky Jones has previously coordinated government sessions and would like to relinquish that responsibility now that she is retired. David Hedrick and Luke Basulto are looking for potential venues for the 2026 Symposium in Palm Springs, CA.

T. Fundraising Committee Report: David Hedrick shared that the California Turtle and Tortoise Club is interested in helping with a Drink Beer, Save Tortoises event in the Van Nuys area, and he will plan one in Ridgecrest coinciding with the Introductory Course. Ken MacDonald shared that a professional grant writer is contracted to produce eight grant applications this year, including an imminent one with Park Foundation. The Fish and Wildlife Foundation has a grant program with a million dollars available that would be dedicated to desert tortoises, with fencing being their highest priority. The grant writer has prepared a request for \$200,000 to fence roads, perhaps along I-40 or I-15. This request includes \$40,000 to draft a categorical exclusion, unless the NEPA analysis already exists, and hiring a biological monitor for fence installation.

⁷ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/uvl4ijyh3t12ouc66wyx0/Health-Assessment-Training-Refresher-Course,2-26-2025.docx?rlkey=m6g9is587bdp29761jcbuolgl&dl=0>

⁸ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/plztb2fgbu3wr6h38y1t7/Reports-from-the-Program-and-Awards-Committees.docx?rlkey=32gsblhlqs9gful0wozkdob8s&dl=0>

U. Awards Committee's Reports: Kristin reported that awards included the Kristin H. Berry Annual Award to Judy Hohman; Robert C. Stebbins Research Award to Kenneth Nussear; Glenn R. Stewart Award to Molly Peters, Par Singhaseni, and David Hedrick; James St. Amant Special Award to Christiane Wiese and Scott Hillard; Implementation of Conservation Action Award to Jeff Aardahl and Pamela Flick; Power of Persistence Award to Lisa Belenky; and Lifetime Achievement Award to Kristin Berry, which was an unprecedented award. **Kristin Berry will work with Sky Esser to post the award recipients to the website.**

V. Operations Manager Report: David Hedrick shared that we sold \$4,408 in merchandise. His report⁹ provides a list of needed items and items that are not so popular, which could be discontinued. The photo contest awarded \$2,000 to the photographers. The venue expenses were \$114,717.47. Sponsorships totaled \$57,600, with \$30,000 from Vita Sheehy. Registration income was \$113,841.00. Although the net gains or losses are not available, David feels we either broke even or just above expenses. More detailed information is included in the report in the footer.

W. Calendar: Judy continues to update the Board's calendar, including specific additions related to several award and grant opportunities. She will also add re-elections of Board Members At Large and the schedule for David's annual performance evaluation to the calendar, as per an action item given above in Section J and below in Section X.

NEW BUSINESS

X. Personnel Review – Dave Hedrick (In progress): Mari shared that the evaluation is nearly complete, and thanked Judy for assembling the evaluation comments from Board members. **Mari Quillman will meet with Bruce Palmer, Ken MacDonald, and David Hedrick to discuss his evaluation on 4/8/2025.** • **David Hedrick is encouraged to provide feedback to us to see how we can help him implement his responsibilities.** Part of the evaluation will be to consider a salary increase. **Judy Hohman will add the schedule for the annual personnel review to the Board's calendar.**

Y. Development of an Employee Manual: Not discussed.

Z. Position Handbooks and Committee Handbooks: Not discussed.

AA. Executive Session to Consider New Board Members: At 13:30, we went into executive session asking all guests except Debra Hughson and Vita Sheehy to leave so that we could discuss them as potential new Board Members At Large.

Debra shared that Judy Hohman invited her to consider joining the Board. After early work on the Yucca Valley Test Site, she recently retired from the National Park Service (NPS) where she worked for 25 years. She likes being involved in pragmatic solutions, like head-starting and preventing road-killed tortoises along roads at the Mojave National Preserve (Preserve). She is a technical person who has GIS and mapping skills, and wants to look at tortoise conservation on larger scale than just the Preserve where she has focused her attention. She is a writer and has editorial skills that she has used for the NPS website for many years. She would likely be a good candidate for helping Kristin with the abstracts. She might be a good candidate for the chair of the Agency Coordination Committee.

⁹ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9z724y6bp4ngrispnzv95/Operations-Manager-Report-Mar-2025.docx?rlkey=mtmqd5jft30l0t8bagf6qlpow&dl=0>

Vita has worked in technology for more than 20 years, retiring about a year ago as Sr. Director and Chief of Staff to the Chief Information Officer for the Oracle Corporation. She is not a wildlife biologist, has a home in Las Vegas, where she fell in love with the desert, and owns a large parcel in San Bernardino County just south of the Nevada/California state line. She has been working with Tim Shields with Hardshell Labs, now OrniLogic, with his business model. She wonders at the lack of land owner participation in Council activities. Her passion is to leave things better than she found them. She might be interested in assisting the Board with budgeting and financing, fundraising, operational base such as membership, etc. She would likely be a good person to serve on the Financial Planning Committee.

Debra and Vita were then asked to leave at 14:02 so that the Board could vote on their inclusion on the Board. **Ken MacDonald motioned to nominate Debra Hughson (seconded by Judy Hohman) and Vita Sheehy (seconded by Rick Applegate) to join the Council as Board Members At Large, which was unanimously approved by the 12 Board members in attendance.** • Ken MacDonald will invite Vita Sheehy to join him and Rick Applegate on the conference call with Will Gonzalez of Edward Jones. • Becky Jones will update the Board contact information and circulate it to all 16 Board members.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Mari Quillman, at 14:15 (PDT).

These draft minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted for approval to all Board members on 3/23/2025 by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary and finalized with Board approval on 6/1/2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed LaRue", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

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

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 23 March 2025

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

1. Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project (La Paz Co, AZ)

On **1/10/2025**, we receive a notice from the project consultant, with a due date of **2/28/2025**. On **1/11/2025** Ed registers for a virtual public meeting that is scheduled at 5 pm on **2/5/2025**, which was cancelled on **1/30/2025**. The draft letter is distributed on **2/22/2025** and submitted to the BLM with nine endorsements on **2/28/2025**.

2. Overnight Solar Project (San Bernardino Co., CA)

On **1/17/2025**, we receive notice from USFWS asking us to comment on the HCP, with comments due on **2/20/2025**. The draft letter is distributed on **2/17/2025** and submitted to the USFWS on **2/20/2025** with eight endorsements.

3. Petition to State-list the burrowing owl (CA)

On **11/14/2024**, Roger Dale of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee sent us a notice where CDFW is soliciting information for this species, due **2/15/2024**. Given the overlap of burrowing owls with tortoises, this seems like a project worthy of comment. The draft letter summarizing findings of Circle Mountain Biological Consultants, Inc. is distributed on **2/4/2025** and submitted to CDFW on **2/11/2025** with nine endorsements.

4. Purple Sage Energy Center (aka Golden Currant Solar Project) (Clark Co, NV)

On **11/15/2024**, the BLM informs us of a notice of this project, which is due on **2/13/2025**. The draft letter is distributed on **2/6/2025** and submitted on **2/11/2025** with five endorsements and one refusal.

5. Eagle Eye Solar Project scoping comments (La Paz Co., AZ)

On **1/10/2025**, Ed discovers a letter from the BLM to the Council, dated 12/12/2024, in a packet of information provided by Becky Jones, which has a due date of **1/11/2025**. The draft letter is distributed on that date and submitted on **1/11/2025** with six endorsements.

6. Big Bend Irrigation Line and Access Roads Right-of-Way (Mohave Co, AZ)

On **1/13/2025**, we receive this notice from the BLM announcing a 15-day scoping comment period for this project, which is on **1/28/2025**. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on **1/21/2025** and submitted to the BLM on **1/26/2025** with seven endorsements.

7. Morongo Valley proposed cell tower (Riverside Co, CA)

On **1/26/2025**, we receive a petition from a resident in the Morongo Valley asking the Council to sign a petition informing the BLM that we do not support constructing this tower on BLM lands with the potential for tortoise occurrence. With six endorsements, two refusals, and one vote of no, on **2/1/2025** Ed signs the petition in the name of the Council

8. Petition to urge democrats to take stronger action against Trump (National)

On **2/7/2025**, We receive a request from Stephanie Kurose of Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) to sign a petition that she characterizes as “The letter attempts to characterize the Republicans as negatively as possible and be as constructive with our Democratic allies as possible, but they must be stronger than they have been thus far.” The petition is circulated on **2/7/2025**, and with one endorsement and five negative votes, on **2/11/2025** Ed let CBD know that the Council would NOT be signing this petition.

9. Grace Solar Facility (Riverside Co, CA)

On **2/7/2024**, we receive a notice from the BLM inviting us to attend a Zoom meeting on **3/7/2025**. Since no date for comments was published, Ed sent an email to BLM on **2/15/2025** asking when the comments deadline is. We receive a response from the BLM on **2/19/2025** that no deadline for comments has yet been identified. See email on **3/7/2025** from the BLM for power point.

<file:///D:/Downloads/Grace%20Solar%20Project%20Preliminary%20Letter.pdf>

10. Petition to oppose the nomination of Brian Nesvik as USFWS Director (National)

On **2/27/2025**, we receive a request from the Center for Biological Diversity asking the Council to sign a petition opposing the appointment of Brian Nesvik as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since we have a policy statement that the Council neither endorses nor opposes political candidates or appointees, there was no call for a vote and we took no action on this issue.

11. Cosign petition to oppose the Best In The Desert competitive OHV event (Lincoln and Nye Cos, NV)

On **2/28/2025**, we receive a request from Jimmy Rodriguez, Sr. to join in his opposition to a competitive OHV (BITD) event in tortoise habitats in Nevada where his son died in 2022 during the event and a half dozen other human deaths are documented. On **3/3/2025**, he provides a day-by-day accounting of tortoise habitats that would be affected. With nine endorsements, we send an official statement to BLM, EPA, USFWS, and others cc'd on the **2/28/2025** email formally opposing the event.

12. Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians Development in Yucca Valley (BIA)

On **3/14/2025** we were contacted by a third party about the subject development and additional proposed development. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on **3/16/2025**. With eight endorsements, the letter is sent on **3/18/2025** to the BIA's regional director, Pacific Region, via email and certified mail.

13. Letter to BIA Regional Directors advising them that the Council is an Affected Interest for NEPA actions

On **3/15/2025**, a draft letter was circulated to the Board that advised the regional directors of three BIA regions that the Desert Tortoise Council is an Affected Interest and requests notification of actions that require NEPA compliance and are in the range of desert tortoises. With eight endorsements, the letters are sent via certified mail and email on **3/17/2025**.

14. Arnold & Beloit Grazing Allotment EA (Maricopa Co., AZ)

On **3/13/2025** we were contacted by BLM about the availability of the subject EA. With a due date of **3/20/2025**, the draft letter was circulated on **3/19/2025** to the Board. With five endorsements, the letter was sent on **3/20/2025**.

15. Rogers Mine Placer Operation (Maricopa Co., AZ)

On **3/16/2025**, Judy discovers an EA for this project on a BLM AZ website with a due date of **3/30/2025**.

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2032342/570>

16. Draft 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (CA)

On **3/6/2025**, Jeff Aardahl sends a notice for this project. Ed asks Aardahl to allow us to coauthor this letter that is due on **3/31/2025**.

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/SWAP>

17. Sapphire Linear Facility Routes Project - Final Environmental Assessment (Riverside Co., CA)

On **3/14/2025**, we receive a notice from the BLM making the final EA available. Since no due date was identified, Ed asks the BLM on **3/21/2025** for a due date.

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030262/510>

18. Sign on: FWS and NMFS funding for FY26 (National)

On **3/21/2025**, the Center for Biological asks the Council to cosign two letters concerning funding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, with a due date of **4/4/2025**.

Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 1/11/2025 to 3/23/2025

Current date for this latest table revision is: 3/20/2025

Dates are for 2024 or 2025						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	JH	LB	KB	KM	MF	MH	MP	MQ	MT	PW	RA
1	Ranegras Plains	9/11	2/22	2/28	2/28	Y 2/22		A 2/22	PI/Y 2/22			Y 2/26	Y 2/21		Y 2/26		Y 2/22	Y 2/21	PI/Y 2/21
2	Overnight Solar - USFWS	1/17	2/17	2/20	2/20	Y 2/18			A 2/17			Y 2/17	Y 2/17		Y 2/19		Y 2/17	PI/Y 2/17	Y 2/18
3	BUOW listing petition	8/14	2/4	2/15	2/11	Y 2/5		A 2/4	PI/Y 2/4			Y 2/5	Y 2/4		Y 2/5		Y 2/5	Y 2/5	Y 2/4
4	Purple Sage Solar	8/15	2/6	2/13	2/11			PI/Y 2/7	A 2/6			R 2/7	Y 2/7		Y 2/11				Y 2/6
5	Eagle Eye Solar	1/10	1/11	1/11	1/11	Y 1/12		A 1/11	PI/Y 1/11			Y 1/11	Y 1/11		Y 1/14		Y 1/11	PI/Y 1/12	Y 1/11
6	Big Bend Irrigation	1/13	1/21	1/28	1/26	Y 1/22		PI/Y 1/14	A 1/21			Y 1/22	Y 1/22				Y 1/22	Y 1/21	
7	Morongo Valley tower	1/26	1/26	N/A	2/1	Y 1/29		Y 1/26	PI/Y 1/28	R 1/28			Y 1/28		R 1/28		N 1/29	Y 1/28	Y 1/29
8	Anti-Trump petition	2/7	2/7	2/12	2/11	N 2/7		N 2/7				N 2/7	Y 2/7			N 2/7		N 2/7	
9	Grace Solar Facility	2/7		N/A															
10	Oppose USFWS director	2/27	2/27	N/A	N/A	We took no action on signing this petition so there was no need for a vote													
11	BITD OHV event	2/28	3/2	ASAP	3/5	Y 3/4		A 3/2	Y 3/2	Y 3/3		Y 3/3	Y 3/4				Y 3/3	Y 3/4	PI/Y 3/2
12	Tribal development in Yucca Valley	3/15	3/16	3/18	3/18	Y 3/17			A 3/16			Y 3/16	Y 3/16		Y 3/17	PI/Y 3/17	Y 3/17	Y 3/18	
13	Letters to BIA regional directors	3/11	3/15	N/A	3/17	Y 3/16			A 3/15				Y 3/15		Y 3/17	Y 3/17	Y 3/17	Y 3/18	Y 3/17
14	Arnold & Beloit Grazing EA	3/6	3/19	3/20	3/20	Y 3/20			A 3/19			Y 3/19	Y 3/20				Y 3/20		Y 3/19
15	Rogers Mine Placer	3/13		3/30															
16	Wildlife Action Plan	3/6		3/31															
17	Sapphire Facility EA	3/14		??															
18	USFWS, NMFS finances	3/21	3/21	4/4		Y 3/23		Y 3/22					Y 3/22						Y 3/22

BJ = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **JH** = Judy Hohman, **KB** = Kristin Berry, **KM** = Ken MacDonald, **LB** = Luke Basulto, **MH** = Max Havelka, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MP** = Mary Lane Poe, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **PW** = Pete Woodman, **RA** = Rick Applegate