Final

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Desert Tortoise Council Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Final

26 March 2023 Zoom Online Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Mari Quillman at 10 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: Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Halle Kohn-Levine, Michael Vamstad, Max Havelka, and John Kalish. Absent: Kristin Berry, Michael Tuma, Peter Woodman. Guests: Luke Basulto and Mary Lane Poe, both as prospective Board members.

A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions: None.

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

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 1/7/2023 and Annual Business Meeting on 2/23/23: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes of the most recent virtual Board meeting and Annual Business Meeting, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final. Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Judy Hohman), and unanimously approved to accept the two sets of draft minutes as amended to be final.

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting:

1. 2024 Annual Symposium at South Point, Las Vegas, NV: During the 2023 Symposium and a few days afterwards, Ed LaRue and Joe Probst secured the South Point facility and signed a contract for February 20-24, 2024. Mari Quillman will contact Sky Esser to announce the 2024 Symposium on the website.

E. Special Discussion Items:

1. Luke Basulto as Prospective Board Member: Luke Basulto, from Joshua Tree, CA, joined the meeting at about 10:15 to introduce himself as a prospective Board member. After about 30 minutes sharing his experience and answering our questions, Luke signed off. The motion was made (Halle Kohn-Levine), seconded (Maggie Fusari), and unanimously approved to have Luke Basulto join the Board as a new Board member. • Mari Quillman will inform Luke of his new position and ask for his contact information.

2. Mary Lane Poe as Prospective Board Member: Mary Lane Poe, from St. George, UT, joined the meeting at 11:00 am to introduce herself as a prospective Board member. After 25 minutes sharing her experience and answering our questions, Mary Lane signed off. The motion was made (Joe Probst), seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to have Mary Lane Poe join the Board as a new Board member. • Mari Quillman will inform Mary Lane of her new position and ask for her contact information.

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 13 May 2023.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Treasurer's Report: In an electronic version of the Treasurer's Report, Joe Probst shared total income is \$87,678.45, total expenses of \$76,618.58, and total assets of \$351,965.88 as of 3/22/2023. Motion made (Ken MacDonald), seconded (Halle Kohn-Levine), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final. For the Symposium recap, total expenses were \$69,556.24 and total income was \$104,038.67, for a total profit of \$34,482.43. With regards to the multi-year audit, Joe shared that he and Ray Butler recently completed the audit for three years, including 2019, 2020, and 2021. Ray suggested that money market accounts be minimized and no new ones initiated. Bruce Palmer indicated that recommendations from Ray would be submitted to Joe Probst, who would later bring recommendations to the Board for consideration. Joe Probst will talk to our financial advisor, Edward Jones, for advice as to how our investments may be maintained or redistributed. Ray also recommended that we continue to have hybrid Symposia. Motion made by Maggie Fusari to approve the 2019, 2020, and 2021 audits, which was seconded by Judy Hohman, and unanimously approved by the Board. • Ed LaRue received the financial paperwork from Ray Butler yesterday, and will transport it to Joe Probst as soon as possible. The 2022 audit will be conducted in the next month-or-so.

H. Corresponding Secretary's Report: In her electronic report of 3/26/2023, Becky Jones reported we received questions regarding pet tortoises – adoptions, rehoming and care; about the Symposium; regarding refunds and changing from in person to virtual; companies looking to hire biologists; questions about the workshop; asking if we had an online store; a reporter wanting to talk to someone about energy development in Nevada; a sympathy letter sent to Cheryl Pearson; and a letter sent to donors and sponsors for the Symposium.

I. Membership Committee's Report: In her electronic report of 3/26/2023, Halle Kohn-Levine reported 912 total present and past members, 305 active, 604 with overdue renewals, and 8 pending renewals. The Council's contact list contained 2,926 names (current and past members), which is an increase of 67 since the 2022 Annual Membership Committee Report presented at the 2023 Annual Business Meeting.

J. Nominating Committee's Report: Ken MacDonald indicated there is no new activity, and room for three additional Board members. We are still looking for academic- and research-oriented members. Mari Quillman will send a letter to Cristina Jones thanking her for her time on the Board, and each of us should remove Cristina's email from the Council's distribution list.

K. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: In an electronic version of the EAC report (see attachment), Judy Hohman reported that there were 19 projects identified and 12 reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 1/7/2023 and 3/26/2023, with the remainder pending. Between field work and conferences, Ed LaRue has been unable to write any letters in the month of March. Thanks to the efforts of Judy Hohman and John Kalish, no deadlines were missed. It is also precedent that Max Havelka instigated a comment letter on behalf of the Bolson tortoise, which is appreciated. Judy Hohman will maintain the EAC tables in Ed LaRue's absence between March 28 and April 21, while he is in the Galapagos, and will provide the latest version to be included in these minutes.

L. Media Committee's Report: In her electronic report dated 3/26/2023, Halle Kohn-Levine reported the following social media statistics since December 2022: Instagram followers: 1,512 to 1,658 = 146 new followers; Facebook likes: 2,774 to 2,800 = 26 new likes; Facebook followers: 2,983 to 3,000 = 17 new followers; Twitter followers: 339 to 352 = 13 new followers; and LinkedIn followers: 175 to 223 = 48 new followers. She expects to distribute the next newsletter in May 2023. Halle Kohn will contact Luke Basulto to see if he will help coauthor the newsletter. Halle, Max Havelka, and John Kalish are the only three Board members (excluding Luke and Mary Lane) who have not been spotlighted in previous newsletters. We may also introduce the new Board members in the May newsletter. Judy Hohman suggested that Halle continue to remind us to provide newsletter articles.

M. Strategic Planning Committee Report: Bruce Palmer referenced an update on the success of the strategic planning effort that was highlighted at the Annual Business Meeting. He indicated our Interagency Coordinating Committee is one of the primary shortfalls in planning, which needs a new chair since Cristina Jones left the Board. Mari Quillman will share Bruce Palmer's status on the successes and failures of current strategy planning.

N. Grants Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari indicated that we may want to solicit money from the Wildlife Conservation Board but would need to identify a project. Ken MacDonald has been working with a group who is willing to solicit a grant focusing on getting water to habitat. Maggie suggested that restoration would be a good project, suggesting restoration of evacuated cannabis farms. The Board is asked to help Ken MacDonald identify projects. Mari Quillman will reach out to Wildlands, Inc. to see if they know of any restoration projects to be funded. • Ken MacDonald and Mari Quillman are currently reviewing the final report for the restoration grant that the Council awarded to Transitions Habitat Conservancy. • Someone will reach out to Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT) to possibly fund fencing at the Palisades Ranch, which MDLT manages.

O. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: This committee needs a chair, and there is nothing to report at this time.

P. Mexican Tortoise Coordination Committee (MTCC): Michael Vamstad shared that he spoke with Alice Karl at the Symposium, but nothing more to report at this time.

Q. Training Program Committee Report:

1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: Maggie Fusari reported we are in a holding pattern, starting registration in early July. Maggie Fusari will begin to train Ed LaRue and perhaps some of the newer Board members on Wild Apricot once registration begins.

2. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report: No new activity on this committee. Mari Quillman will contact Cristina Jones about her interest in this committee. **R. Education and Outreach Committee's Report**: Maggie Fusari shared that we are in the process of excerpting the cannabis session from the Symposium that can be posted on the website. Maggie Fusari will work with Sky Esser to make recorded sessions available to paid Symposium participants. At the request of DTPC, Ed LaRue attended the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee on 3/25/2023.

S. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report: Kristin Berry provided the following synopsis: "The 48th Annual Symposium, held in St. George, Utah, was attended by 165 people in person and 69 virtual, total = 234 (as per Molly Peters). Considering the weather conditions in the region, attendance was exceptional and bodes well for the future. The two field trips, held the day before the meeting, were well attended. The list of sponsors continued to grow! (Thank you, Mari)." Joe Probst asked for the Board's permission to purchase a portable printer to have at the registration table, which was granted. Maggie Fusari made the motion to provide up to \$250 to purchase a printer, which was seconded by Ken MacDonald, and unanimously approved. Mari Quillman did a wonderful job as the host committee chair, but made it clear she is unwilling to serve in that position in 2024. Mari recently sent thank you notes to the cannabis grow panelists. Mari Quillman will send thank you notes to pertinent volunteers.

T. Fundraising Committee Report: Ken MacDonald will review the latest version of the fundraiser job description to see if Board comments were added. ● Mari Quillman will recirculate the fundraiser job description to the Board. Joe Probst shared that we have received the outstanding funds from the Go Fund Me project initiated by Greer Dolby. May 20, 2023 is the date for "Drink Beer, Save Tortoises" in Redlands, CA.

U. Awards Committee's Reports: There was no report in Kristin Berry's absence.

V. Master Calendar: Judy Hohman and Mari Quillman recently spoke to Sylvia Morafka about raising money for the Morafka Award, and will ensure she is involved in future decisions affecting that award. All Board members are asked to provide input into the calendar and to let Judy Hohman know if it is helpful, and if not, how can it be revised.

NEW BUSINESS

W. Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) Sponsorship Request: Does the Council want to sponsor the TSA 2024 conference, and if so, by how much? Bruce Palmer shared in the past that we provided travel grants for people to attend the TSA conference, which is in South Carolina next year. Motion made (Bruce Palmer) and seconded (Ken MacDonald) and unanimously approved to provide two travel grants in the amount of \$750/grant, and a donation of \$1,000, for a total of \$2,500, in support of the 2024 TSA conference. • Joe Probst will inform TSA and send the money as per the above motion.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Mari Quillman, at 12:52.

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.

6022K

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

Final Minutes of Board of Director's Meeting of the Desert Tortoise Council on 26 March 2023

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 26 March 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. Copper Rays Solar Project (Nye Co, NV)

11/14/2022 – The notice for this project was received directly from the BLM on this date, distributed on 11/16/2022, with a due date of 1/13/2023. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on 1/10/2023, and was submitted to the BLM on 1/13/2023 with eight endorsements and two recusals.

3. Vidal Energy Project (San Bernardino Co, CA)

12/2/2022 – On this date, the County provides notice of the preparation of an EIR, which is distributed on 12/8/2022, with a deadline of 1/23/2023. The draft letter was circulated on 1/22/2023, and with 10 endorsements, the final letter is submitted on 1/23/2023.

4. <u>Notice of Intent To Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement To Evaluate Utility-Scale</u> Solar Energy Planning and Amend Resource Management Plans for Renewable Energy Development (Western States)

12/8/2022 – On this date, a third party provides notice of the solicitation of scoping comments on a programmatic EIS covering western states, which is distributed on 12/8/2022, with a deadline of 2/6/2023, which was later extended to 3/1/2023. The draft letter was circulated on 2/26/2023, and with eight endorsements, the final letter is submitted on 3/1/2023.

5. Alien Commercial Center (Baker, CA)

12/15/2022 – The notice for this project was received from San Bernardino County on this date, with a due date of 1/16/2023. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on 1/14/2023, and was submitted to the County on 1/16/2023 with seven endorsements.

6. Lugo-Victorville and Eldorado Lugo 500 kV Remedial Action Scheme (San Bernardino Co, CA)

12/22/2023 – The notice for this project was received from a third party on this date, with a due date of 1/23/2023. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on 1/21/2023 and submitted to the BLM with 10 endorsements on 1/23/2023.

7. Wonder Inn (San Bernardino Co, CA)

1/23/2023 – The notice for this project was received from local conservationist, Pat Flanagan, and Halle Kohn on 1/23/2023, with a due date of 2/22/2023. The letter was submitted with Mari Quillman as author, since Ed LaRue worked on the project and recused himself, on 2/20/2023 with nine endorsements and two recusals.

8. Jove Solar Energy Project (La Paz Co, AZ)

12/7/2022 – On this date, a third party provides notice of the solicitation of scoping comments on an EIS, which is distributed on 12/8/2022, with a deadline of 1/6/2023. The draft letter is circulated on 12/31/2022, and with seven endorsements, the final letter is submitted on 1/4/2023. After a Board member attended a webinar on the project, an amendment letter was drafted and circulated on 1/26/2023 and delivered to the BLM on 1/28/2023 with eight endorsements and one recusal. On 2/17/2023, Judy Hohman and Ed LaRue

participate in a conference call with Derek Eysenbach of BLM who instigated the call to talk about this and other solar projects.

9. Soda Mtn Solar Project (San Bernardino Co, CA)

1/18/2023 – The notice for this project was received from CDFW on this date, with a due date of 2/16/2023. The final letter was submitted on 2/16/2023, with eight endorsements.

10. Proposed Draft Revisions to the Habitat Management Program (San Bernardino, Kern Co, CA)

2/1/2023 – On this date, Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife provided a draft comment letter, asking Ed LaRue to review and submit it back to him before seeking Board approval of an internally approved letter, which was completed on 2/14/2023. The letter regards proposed revisions to the Habitat Management Program (HMP) under the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program administered by the Off-highway Motorized Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Ed informs Aardahl on 3/15/2023 after 10 endorsements are received that we are willing coauthors.

11. <u>Red Rock Canyon State Park Final Draft General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report (Kern</u> <u>Co, CA)</u>

2/21/2023 – On this date, we receive a letter from State Parks with links to the draft general plan and EIR, with a due date for comments of @@/2023. The draft comment letter is circulated on @@, and with @@ endorsements, submitted on @@.

12. Dry Lake East Energy Center Solar Project EA and Regional Mitigation Strategy (Clark Co, NV) 2/21/2023 – The notice for this project was received from the BLM on this date, with a due date of 3/22/2023. The draft comment letter is circulated on 3/19/2023, and with eight endorsements, submitted on 3/21/2023.

13. <u>Gold Discovery Group LLC, exploratory drilling (Kern and San Bernardino Co, CA)</u>

2/24/2023 – On this and several other dates, we receive notice from three different third parties, but not from BLM, on this proposed project, with comments due on 3/27/2023. The draft comment letter is circulated on 3/22/2023, and with 10 endorsements, submitted on 3/25/2023.

14. <u>Middle Gila South Access and Transportation Management Plan (Pinal, Pima, Cochise, and Gila Co, AZ)</u></u>

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 @@, and with @@ endorsements, submitted on @@.

15. <u>Helendale Fuel and Convenience Center (San Bernardino Co, CA)</u>

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 @@, and with @@ endorsements, submitted on @@.

16. <u>Armendaris Ranch Bolson Tortoise Safe Harbor Agreement and Draft Environmental Assessment (New Mexico)</u>

3/8/2023 – Max Havelka and Judy Hohman circulate this letter on the indicated date. The final letter is submitted on 3/13/2022 after nine endorsements were received.

17. <u>Apache Junction Goldfield Recreation Area (Pinal Co, AZ)</u>

2/9/2023 – Judy Hohman distributes this letter in Ed LaRue's absence on 3/9/2023. With five endorsements, the final letter is submitted on 3/9/2023.

18. 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 4/16/2023.

19. ADOT Statewide Rest Area Plan (Arizona)

3/10/2023 – The notice for this project was received from ADOT on 3/10/2023. With six endorsements, the final letter was submitted on 3/26/2023.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. <u>Washington City Water Tank and Pipeline (Washington Co, UT)</u>

3/17/2023 – The notice for this project was received via email on this date, with a due date of 4/16/2023.

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Summary Table from 1/7/2023 to 3/26/2023

Current date for this latest table revision is 3/26/2023

Dates (2022 or 2023)							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	KB	KM	MF	MH	MQ	MT	MV	PW
1	CEC Planning for Electrical Systems	10/5	10/14	??																
2	Copper Rays Solar	11/14	1/10	1/13	1/13	Y 1/11		Y/A 1/10		Y/PI 1/11	Y/PI 1/12	Y 1/11		R 1/11	Y 1/11	Y 1/11	R 1/12		Y 1/16	Y 1/11
3	Vidal Energy Project	12/2	1/22	1/23	1/23	Y 1/22		Y/PI 1/22	Y 1/22	Y/PI 1/22		Y 1/22		Y 1/22	Y 1/22		Y 1/22	Y 1/23	Y 1/24	Y 1/23
4	Programmatic Solar EIS Western States	12/8	2/26	3/1	3/1	Y 2/27		Y/PI 2/28		Y/PI 2/27	Y/PI 2/26	Y 2/27			Y 2/27				Y 2/28	Y/PI 2/27
5	Alien Commercial Center	12/15	1/14	1/16	1/16	Y 1/16		Y/PI 1/14	Y 1/17	Y/PI 1/14	Y 1/15				Y 1/15	Y 1/15	Y 1/15	Y 1/16		
6	Lugo-Victorville Project	12/22	1/21	1/23	1/23	Y 1/22		Y/PI 1/21	Y 1/22	Y/PI 1/22	Y/PI 1/21	Y 1/22		Y 1/21	Y 1/22		Y 1/22		Y 1/24	Y 1/23
7	Wonder Inn	1/23	2/6	2/22	2/10	Y/PI 2/7		Y/R 2/6	Y 2/9	Y/PI 2/7		Y 2/7		Y 2/7	Y 2/6	Y 2/7	Y/A 2/7		R 2/7	Y 2/8
8	Jove Solar Project	1/26	1/26	1/30	1/28	Y 1/26			Y 1/28	Y/PI 1/26	R 1/28	Y 1/27		Y 1/27	Y 1/27		Y 1/27	Y/PI 1/28	Y 1/29	Y 1/28
9	Soda Mtn Solar	1/18	2/14	2/16	2/16	Y 2/14			Y 2/16	Y/PI 2/14	Y 2/15				Y 2/14	Y/PI 2/14	Y/PI 2/14		Y 2/14	
10	Habitat Management Program	2/1	3/8	3/17	3/15	Y 3/13		Y/PI 3/14	Y 3/15	Y/PI 3/14		Y 3/12		Y 3/12	Y 3/12		Y 3/13		Y 3/15	Y 3/13
11	Red Rock Canyon SP General Plan	2/21	3/2	??																
12	Dry Lake East Solar Energy Center	2/21	3/2	3/22	3/21	Y 3/20				Y/PI 3/21	Y/PI 3/19			Y 3/20	Y 3/20		Y 3/20		Y 3/20	
13	Gold Discovery Group exploratory drilling	2/24	3/2	3/27	3/25	Y 3/24			Y 3/24	Y/PI 3/22	Y 3/25	Y 3/24			Y 3/22	Y 3/23	Y 3/24		Y 3/26	Y 3/25
14	Middle Gila South TMP	3/1	3/2	4/3																
15	Helendale Fuel and Convenience Center	3/2	3/2	4/3						Y/A										
16	Armendaris Ranch Bolson tortoise	3/8	3/8	N/A	3/13	Y 3/8				Y/PI 3/8		Y 3/8		Y 3/8	Y 3/8	Y/A 3/8	Y/PI 3/9		Y 3/11	Y 3/8
17	Apache Junction Goldfield Recreation Area	2/9	3/9	3/9	3/9	Y 3/9			Y 3/10	Y/PI 3/9		Y 3/9			Y 3/9		Y 3/9		Y 3/11	Y 3/10
18	Red Cliffs Warner Valley Land Exchange	3/17		4/16							Y/PI									

19	ADOT Statewide Rest Area Plan	3/13	3/25	3/27	3/26	Y 3/26	Y/PI 3/25	Y 3/26	Y/A 3/25		Y 3/26	Y/PI 3/26	Y 3/26	Y/PI 3/26		Y/PI 3/26	
20	Mosey 3-yr Segregation	3/20		??						R 3/26							
21	Joshua Tree Campground	3/20		4/21													
22	Red Cliffs ROW	3/17		4/16													

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, MF = Maggie Fusari, MH = Max Havelka, MQ = Mari Quillman, MT = Michael Tuma, MV = Michael Vamstad, PW = Pete Woodman