

Final Final Final

Desert Tortoise Council Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

4 December 2021
Zoom Online Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson-elect, Mari Quillman at 10:02 a.m. **Action items are in blue, with responsible parties in red. Motions made, seconded, and approved (or not) are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Kristin Berry, Judy Hohman, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Michael Tuma, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Halle Kohn. **Absent:** Greer Dolby, Peter Woodman, Cristina Jones, Ken MacDonald, Michael Vamstad. **Guests:** None.

A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions: None.

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

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 23 October 2021: 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 (Becky Jones), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as amended to be final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting: None since 10/23/2021.

E. Next Meeting Date: The next virtual meeting of the Board of Directors will be on Zoom, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (PST), on 8 January 2022.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

F. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Kristin Berry shared there are 36 potential presentations, including a speaker from central Africa. Intended sessions include roads and restoration, management of ravens, and climate change (effects on vegetation and key migration areas in Mexico). There are two invited speakers to give plenary addresses on translocation of tortoises. Kristin has offered speakers the opportunity to provide a recorded version of their talks. The deadline for abstracts is December 23, 2021. **Mari Quillman will be working with Halle Kohn on announcements concerning sponsorship, raffle, etc.** There are 37 attendees registered and three or four sponsors so far. **Maggie Fusari is working with David Hedrick to accommodate virtual posters**, using the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) format. We need to be sensitive to payment and attendance by federal employees, and encourage them to register in advance. Par Singhaseni and Mari Quillman will conduct the raffle. David Hedrick will begin working with speakers and practice sessions in mid-January. **Mari Quillman will soon instigate another virtual Symposium planning committee meeting.**

G. Awards Committee's Reports: In an electronic version of her report, Kristin Berry shared that Bruce Palmer has been working on descriptions for two new awards that recognize accomplishments in (1) management actions and implementation by organizations and agencies ("Implementation of Conservation Actions Award") and (2) regulatory application by agencies and/or specific agency personnel ("Bureaucratic Accomplishment Award"). For example, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has recently been very proactive facilitating raven control. Maggie Fusari emphasized we should acknowledge groups for these two and various other awards. There was wordsmithing that Bruce captured that will be added to the Awards Committee Policy. **Kristin Berry made the motion to adopt two new awards, "Implementation of Conservation Award" and "Bureaucratic Accomplishment Award," seconded by Judy Hohman, and unanimously approved** (with the caveat that the final titles of the awards may be changed). Potential awardees were identified and discussed. **All Board members are encouraged to identify potential awardees and provide their names by January 1.**

H. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: No discussion in Cristina Jones' absence.

I. Treasurer's Report: In an electronic version of the Treasurer's Report, Joe Probst shared our total income as of 30 November 2021 is \$121,663.90, total expenses are \$60,475.53, and total assets are \$242,104.40. With regards to the online and field courses, total income after fees was \$36,548.40, SWAG income was \$1,878.00, and expenses were \$2,985.59, so the total profit was \$35,440.81. **Joe Probst will revise the Excel spreadsheet for the introductory course and workshop to show individual expenditures (e.g., food and lodging, supplies, etc.), and add the TSA donation into expenses. Motion made (Maggie Fusari), seconded (Halle Kohn), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final.**

J. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones has forwarded a few project announcements from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to Ed LaRue and Judy Hohman for Ecosystem Advisory Committee (EAC) considerations and to Maggie Fusari for workshop-related correspondence.

K. Membership Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Halle Kohn shared there are 799 Total Members (including past and present), 320 Active Members (increase of 10 new members since October), and 471 Renewal Overdue Members. **Ed LaRue will take membership application forms with him to The Wildlife Society meeting in Reno, NV in February 2022.** All potential email blasts should be shared with Halle and Mari. **Halle Kohn and Michael Tuma are working on developing a QR Code** for our business cards and a placard that can be taken to public events that will link to our website and membership. Each committee chair has an annual budget of \$1,000 to perform their committee work, which does not require Board approval. **Halle Kohn, Mari Quillman, Maggie Fusari, and Judy Hohman will revisit pertinent policies to ensure equitable workload distribution among various committees and to discuss job postings.**

L. Nominating Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Mari Quillman shared that Becky Jones and Joe Probst have agreed to continue to serve as Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Bruce Palmer and Michael Vamstad are Board Members At Large who, if willing, are up for reelection at the 2022 Annual Business Meeting. With Greer Dolby leaving the Board in February, we anticipate having 13 Board members (Bylaws call for a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 20). Mari then outlined the eight-point procedure for selecting new Board members. **Ed LaRue spoke with a potential Utah representative (who was on her honeymoon) and will follow**

up in time, and Michael Tuma has been talking to several other people. We still need Board member(s) with an academic background, and experience with event planning, social media, etc. **Mari Quillman** will develop a slide for the Symposium soliciting new Board members with specific attributes, which she will share with existing Board members for input.

M. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: In an electronic version of his report (see below), Ed LaRue reported that there were 12 projects identified and 10 reviewed by the Board in the reporting period between 10/23/2021 and 12/4/2021, with two outstanding deadlines. These are typical projects on BLM land, some of which resulted from direct contact by the BLM, which is progress. Ed has shared recent draft letters with Verity Richardson, who offered to help, with Richard Spotts, who regularly identifies projects, and Larry LaPré, who regularly provides his input, and expressed his appreciation for Judy Hohman's recent input.

N. Media Committee's Report: In an electronic version of their report, Michael Tuma and Halle Kohn shared they have had committee members take the lead on social media in two-week blocks, with significant input by volunteer, Verity Richardson. **The newsletter is ready, pending information from Cristina Jones and Greer Dolby who would be spotlighted in this newsletter.** Maggie Fusari provided an essay, "The New Normal," talking about our last two virtual basic courses. Halle and Michael Vamstad will be the next two Board members to be spotlighted. **Michael Tuma and Judy Hohman have agreed to review the draft newsletter, which Halle Kohn will send by December 11, with a goal to distribute by December 20.** • **Kristen Berry** will provide a blurb on the IUCN listing of tortoises as Critically Endangered to both **Halle Kohn** for social media and to **Ed LaRue** for EAC comment letters.

O. Education and Outreach Committee's Report: **Maggie Fusari** shared that she would like to use the website for posting educational materials, which she will coordinate with Sky Esser. Ed LaRue is planning to attend the Western Section of The Wildlife Society annual meeting in Reno, NV between February 6 and 12, 2022. The nonprofit registration fee is \$500, and the van cost would be approximately \$700. **Ken MacDonald made a motion in an email dated 11/23/2021, which was seconded by Joe Probst, and unanimously approved today to provide up to \$2,500 to reimburse Ed LaRue's trip to Reno for the Western Section of The Wildlife Society in February 2022.**

P. Grants Committee's Report: In an electronic version of his report, Michael Tuma shared that the availability of the Morafka Award has been posted, with one inquiry so far. In the next few weeks, **Michael Tuma** will announce the availability of a \$10,000± award for the Southern California Edison grant, which would be applied to habitat restoration.

Q. Fundraising Committee Report: Greer Dolby was absent, so no report. Joe Probst shared that there is nothing new to report on the *Amazon Smile* or *Go Fund Me* accounts. **Joe Probst** will investigate the Amazon Smile account to be sure it is linked to the Council's bank account so Amazon can make direct deposits. The *Network for Good Checks* indicates there has been a \$240 donation from an anonymous donor. **Mari Quillman** will contact **Greer Dolby** to better understand the *Network for Good Checks* accounts. • **Mari Quillman** will work with **Bruce Palmer** to create an open raffle opportunity where 50 tickets, for example, are sold for \$20 per ticket, which covers the cost of the raffle item with a known income.

R. Mexico Coordination Committee: Nothing to report in Michael Vamstad's absence.

S. Training Program Committee Report:

1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: In an electronic version of her report, Maggie Fusari shared that the Kahoots quiz was a success. Ray Bransfield told Maggie that he is retiring from USFWS and will not be participating at future basic courses. Maggie Fusari is analyzing the course evaluations, and will share specific comments with instructors and general evaluations with all instructors and Board members. By the end of December, Ed LaRue will prepare certificates for the online course and in-person workshop, which will include Maggie's letter of attendance. Maggie is concerned that we are not including a test, which is intended among other things to ascertain course attendance and promote engagement in anticipation of the test. The training committee needs to meet to discuss these and other items.

2. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report: Nothing to report in Cristina Jones' absence.

T. COVID/Public Safety Policy: Michael Tuma reported there is a draft policy of about a year ago but no recent work. We need to be sure that our policy adheres, at a minimum, to the Center for Disease Control policy. Maggie Fusari will provide Michael Tuma with her write-up that was used for the basic course, which can be incorporated into the draft policy. • Maggie Fusari will include all instructors in email transmissions to students, so that the instructors are aware of the resources the students have received.

U. Strategic Planning Committee Report: Bruce Palmer provided an electronic accounting of our successes and failures to achieve the goals of our strategic plan. There were three priorities that each had goals. The priorities included (1) Collaboration with agencies, (2) secure new funding sources, and (3) increase our membership. There has been discussion about creating a library that includes tortoise literature, which has not been developed. Maggie Fusari will send Bruce Palmer the bibliography distributed to course participants. • Ed LaRue will send Paul Delaney's contact information to Maggie Fusari so she can pursue getting university credit for the course/workshop. Our Agency Coordinating Committee worked very well, at first, but has suffered because of COVID. Michael Vamstad's work with the Mexico Coordinating Committee has helped with the first priority. We have done well engaging students with the Student Paper Awards, maintaining low registration fees for students, and involving educators in the basic course. Establishing the two new awards today will help with Goal 4, "To facilitate projects that demonstrate the implementation of successful recovery techniques, land acquisition, conservation research, and other recovery programs through funding, collaboration, and other means of support." Maggie Fusari will talk to Cristina Jones about Council participation in a TSA event scheduled in Arizona in summer 2022. • The Membership Committee will discuss ways and means of achieving Goal 3: "To grow, engage, educate, and energize a diverse membership and the public to support desert tortoise conservation efforts."

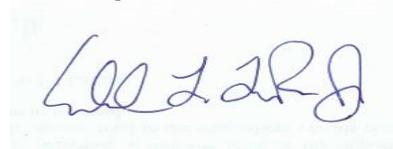
NEW BUSINESS

V. SWAG Inventory: Joe Probst shared an Excel spreadsheet with SWAG items and Mari Quillman has recently placed a new order for depleted products that will be shipped to Joe.

W. Online Store: Michael Tuma is working with Verity Richardson to take photographs of SWAG items with the intent of populating the online store.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson-elect, Mari Quillman, at 13:20.

Draft minutes were recorded, distributed on 4 December 2021, and modified with Board member review and input, then 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 4 December 2021

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

1. National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions (National)

10/7/2021 – The link to information for this comment opportunity are provided by a third party on **10/7/2021**, with a deadline for comment of **11/22/2021**. The draft letter was distributed on **11/5/2021**, and with 6 endorsements and 1 recusal, was submitted to the Council on Environmental Quality on **11/7/2021**.

2. Lost Coyotes Dual Sport Motorcycle Ride: Special Recreation Permit-SR22-03 (Barstow/Ridgecrest, CA)

10/18/2021 – On this date, Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife sends the link. Ed LaRue subsequently sends an inquiry to BLM field managers in Barstow and Ridgecrest on **10/18/2021**, and received a response on **10/21/2021**. After 7 endorsements and 1 recusal, the final comment letter is submitted to the BLM on **11/4/2021**.

3. Greenlink West Transmission Line (Southern NV)

10/20/2021 – On this date a third party provides us with a link to this project, which was distributed on **10/30/2021**, which includes a link to a virtual meeting scheduled for **11/17&18/2021**. Assume due date of **11/20/2021**. The draft letter was distributed on **11/6/2021**, and with 6 endorsements and 1 recusal was submitted to the BLM on **11/7/2021**.

4. Stagecoach Solar Project (San Bernardino Co, CA)

10/22/2021 – On this date, we receive a notice directly from California State Lands Commission, indicating proposal of a 3,000-acre solar development between Lucerne Valley and Barstow, with comments due on **12/22/2021**.

5. Grand Canyon West 69kv Interconnection Project Environmental Assessment (Arizona)

10/25/2021 – The BLM provided the information on **10/25/2021**, and Ed LaRue thanked them for contacting us and asked about potential effects to tortoises on **10/30/2021**, when it was also shared with the Board. Comments are due by **11/24/2021**. The draft letter is distributed to the Board on **11/11/2021**, and submitted to the BLM when @@ endorsements were received.

6. Logandale Trails (Clark Co, NV)

10/25/2021 – On this date a third party provided the link for this project, which was distributed to the Board on **10/30/2021**, with a deadline of **12/6/2021**. The draft letter is distributed on **12/2/2021**, and with 7 endorsements and 1 recusal, is submitted to the BLM on **12/3/2021**.

7. Wildlife Overpasses to Brightline West High-Speed Rail Project (California and Nevada)

11/2/2021 – On this date, Chris Clarke of National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) sent a draft letter, like the one we endorsed on 9/3/2020 on the Xpress West rail project, now referred to as “Brightline,” supporting overpasses over I-15 when the rail line is constructed. The letter was circulated on **11/3/2021**, and with 6 endorsements and 1 recusal, Ed LaRue informed NPCA on **11/3/2021** that we will cosign.

8. Toquerville Butte Road/Utilities Right-of-Way (St George, UT)

11/1/2021 – On this date, the BLM provides us with a link and solicitation of scoping comments, to which Ed LaRue responds with gratitude on **11/4/2021**, which is distributed to the Board on **11/4/2021**, with a due date of **11/15/2021**. The draft letter was distributed on **11/5/2021**, and with 8 endorsements and 1 recusal, was submitted to the BLM on **11/10/2021**.

9. BLM Lake Havasu Field Office Vegetation Management Plan (Arizona and California)

11/1/2021 – On this date, a third party informs the Council of this vegetation management plan, which is distributed to the Board on **11/4/2021**, with a due date of **11/28/2021**. The draft letter was circulated to the Board on **11/15/2021**, and submitted on **11/20/2021** with 8 endorsements.

10. Calico Basin Recreation Area Management Plan (Red Rock Canyon, NV)

11/8/2021 – On this date, a third party provides us with a link to the management plan in the Calico Basin area of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, which is distributed to the Board on **11/10/2021** and due on **12/8/2021**.

11. Land Health Evaluation for Cedar Pockets and Highway West Allotments (Utah)

11/2/2021 – On this date, BLM sends a link directly to us, which is distributed to the Board on **11/10/2021**, with a due date of **12/2/2021**. With 5 endorsements and 1 recusal, the final letter is submitted to the BLM on **12/1/2021**.

12. Draft PEA & Proposed FONSI for Raven Management on DoD Lands in the California Desert (CA)

11/17/2021 – On this date, we receive links to this assessment from the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base. The draft letter is circulated to the Board on **11/27/2021**, with a due date of **12/16/2021**. With 9 endorsements and 1 recusal, the approved final letter is submitted on **12/4/2021**.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 10/23/2021 to 12/4/2021**

Current date for this latest table revision is: 12/4/2021

		Dates (2021)				Board Member Responses Codes: Y = Vote of Yes; N = Vote of No; PI = Provided input; Blank = No Response; R = Recused; A = Authors/Lead Board member; NA – Replied they were not able to respond by indicated date														
No.	Title	Rec'd	Dist	Due	Sent	BJ	BP	CJ	EL	GD	HK	JH	JP	KB	KM	MF	MQ	MT	MV	PW
1	NEPA Revisions	10/7	11/5	11/22	11/7	Y 11/6		R 11/3	Y/A 11/5				Y 11/7		Y 11/6	Y/PI 11/5	Y 11/7		Y 11/9	
2	Lost Coyotes Dual Sport	10/18	10/30	11/6	11/4			R 11/3	Y/A 11/3			Y/PI 11/3	Y 11/3			Y 11/3	Y/PI 11/3		Y 11/4	Y 11/3
3	Greenlink West Project	10/18	11/6	11/20	11/7			R 11/3	Y/A 11/6			Y/PI 11/7	Y 11/7			Y 11/8			Y 11/9	Y 11/8
4	Stagecoach Solar	10/22	10/30	12/22				R 11/3												
5	Grand Canyon West	10/25	11/11	11/24	11/12	Y 11/12		R 11/3	Y/A 11/11			Y/PI 11/12	Y 11/12		Y 11/11	Y 11/11				Y 11/11
6	Logandale Trails	10/25	12/2	12/6	12/3	Y 12/3		R 11/3	Y/A 12/2			Y/PI 12/3	Y 12/3		Y 12/2	Y 12/3				Y 12/3
7	Brightline Overpass	11/2	11/3	11/9	11/3			R 11/3	Y/PI 11/3		Y 11/3	Y 11/3	Y 11/8		Y 11/3	Y/PI 11/5	Y 11/3		Y 11/4	Y 11/3
8	Toquerville Butte Road	11/1	11/5	11/15	11/10	Y 11/6		R 11/10	Y/A 11/5		Y 11/10		Y 11/8		Y 11/8	Y 11/9			Y 11/9	Y 11/9
9	Lake Havasu Veg Management Plan	11/1	11/15	11/28	11/20	Y 11/16			Y/A 11/15			Y/PI 11/15	Y 11/16		Y 11/16	Y 11/15	Y 11/15		Y 11/15	Y 11/15
10	Calico Basin RMP	11/8	11/10	12/8																
11	Cedar Pockets	11/2	11/29	12/2	12/1	Y 11/30		R 11/30	Y/PI 12/1		Y 12/1	Y/PI 11/29	Y 11/30							Y 12/1
12	DoD Raven Management	11/17	11/27	12/16	12/4	Y 11/29	Y 12/2	R 11/30	Y/PI 12/1		Y 12/2	Y/PI 11/27	Y 11/28	Y/PI 12/4	Y 12/2	Y 12/2	Y 12/2			

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