

Final                      Final                      Final

**Desert Tortoise Council  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
November 9, 2024  
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:** Board members: Bruce Palmer, Kristin Berry, Judy Hohman, Mary Lane Poe, Ken MacDonald, Maggie Fusari, Mari Quillman, Becky Jones, Rick Applegate, and Operations Manager-David Hedrick. **Absent:** Peter Woodman, Michael Tuma, Ed LaRue, Joe Probst, Max Havelka, Luke Basulto. **Guests:** None.

**A. Welcome/Announcements/Introductions.**

**B. Review Agenda:** Although this is the first time an agenda has been subjected to formal adoption, **a motion was made to finalize the agenda (Rick Applegate), seconded (Kristin Berry), and unanimously approved.**

**C. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 9/27/24:** Ed LaRue finalized draft minutes of the most recent virtual Board meeting, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final. **The motion was made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Rick Applegate), and unanimously approved to accept the draft minutes as final, with Kristin Berry's modification to the Bolson tortoise discussion.**

**D. Review of Board Actions since the Last Board Meeting:** None.

**E. Special Discussion Items:** None.

**F. Next Meeting Date:** The next virtual meeting of the Board of Directors will be on Zoom, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (PST), on January 11, 2025.

**OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**G. Operations Managers Report:** See report submitted by Operations Manager<sup>1</sup>.

**H. Treasurer's Report:** No report. **Joe Probst was unable to attend and will soon provide the Treasurer's report.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/1z1so8qpfisu7hq6k406/Ops-Mgr-Report-for-Nov-9.docx?rlkey=oyo2femrcubzs77uo711q41cj&dl=0>

**I. Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Becky Jones summarized report on emails, mail, and electronic correspondence.

**J. Membership Committee's Report:** Chair position open. [David Hedrick](#) will check on membership status relative to Symposium registration.

**K. Nominating Committee's Report:** [Mary Lane Poe](#) to lead a Symposium presentation inviting Board participation.

**L. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report:** The EAC report is attached to these minutes.

**N. Strategic Planning Committee Report:** No report.

**O. Grants Committee's Report:** No report.

**P. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report:** [Judy Hohman](#) to coordinate with Palm Springs U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office leadership to schedule meeting with DTC.

**Q. Mexican Tortoise Conservation Committee (MTCC):** No report.

**R. Training Program Committee Report:**

**1. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report:** Maggie Fusari updated Board on another successful training.

**2. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report:** [Mary Lane Poe](#) is working with [Kristina Drake](#) and [Kim Field](#) on setting up an advanced course, potentially as a Health Assessment Training refresher this late winter.

**S. Education and Outreach Committee's Report:** No report.

**T. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report:** Kristin Berry has been reporting to the subcommittee on a biweekly basis and updated the Board. The deadline for abstract submission is November 15.

**U. Fundraising Committee Report:** Contract signed with Just Write Grants. Will meet in November to launch campaign with intent to prepare approximately eight grants in the coming year. David Hendrick organized two Drink Beer, Save Tortoises events, one in Ridgecrest, CA and one in Henderson, NV the first weekend in November.

**V. Awards Committee's Reports:** Kristin Berry discussed eligible candidates. Morafka Award coordination underway.

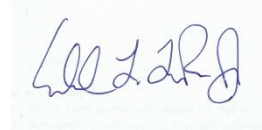
**W. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Operations Manager Review** in progress. Employee manual deferred until 2025.

**Adjourn: Following a motion by Kristin Berry, seconded by Bruce Palmer, the meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 12:24 pm PST.**

The draft minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted for approval to all Board members on November 9, 2024 by Ken MacDonald, Board Member at Large on behalf of Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary, who later edited and redistributed them on November 12, 2024, and were approved as final at the subsequent Board meeting on 1/11/2025.

Ken MacDonald for

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed LaRue, Jr.", is centered below the text "Ken MacDonald for". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

## Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 9 November 2024

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

**1. Direct Sale of Public Lands in Barstow (San Bernardino Co, CA)**

On **8/28/2024**, we receive a link from a third party announcing this project, which has a due date of **10/15/2024**. With eight endorsers, the final letter is submitted to the BLM on **10/14/2024**.

~~**2. San Manuel Solar Power Plant with Battery Energy Storage System (Pinal Co, AZ)**~~

~~On **8/27/2024**, David Hedrick receives an inquiry from a concerned citizen, which he forwards to the EAC, with Maggie Fusari serving as the lead contact (see email of **8/31/2024**). There is no due date and some confusion as to just what this project entailed, so it was dropped from consideration on **10/18/2024**.~~

**3. Bonanza Solar Project Draft EIS (Clark and Nye Cos, NV)**

On **9/6/2024**, the BLM provides us with the notice of this Draft EIS, which has a 90-day comment period, ending on **12/5/2024**.

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020905/510>

**4. Copper Rays Solar Project Draft EIS and RMP Amendment (Nye County, NV)**

On **9/20/2024**, we receive a link from the BLM, with a due date of **12/19/2024**. See Aardahl's email of 9/24 where tortoises are mapped. LaRue attends the webinar on **10/24/2024**. Comments are due on **12/19/2024**. (<https://mail.aol.com/d/folders/1/messages/AFebtPdE4dluZvMPwgnToMraC4I>).

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2019523/510>

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

On **9/11/2024**, we receive a notice from the project proponent, with a suspected due date of **10/22/2024**. An email from proponent Jennifer Skulstad on **9/27/2024** said the draft EIS will be available in "late 2024."

<https://ranegrasplainsenergycenter.com/>

**6. USFWS General Conservation Plan DEIS for Desert Tortoise (CA)**

On **10/11/2024**, we receive notices from two third parties that this GCP is available for review, with a due date of **12/10/2024**. USFWS's direct notice was received on **10/15/2024**.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/11/2024-23573/draft-environmental-impact-statement-for-a-general-conservation-plan-for-the-desert-tortoise-in>

**7. Overnight Solar Project (San Bernardino Co., CA)**

On **11/2/2024**, San Bernardino County sends a notice on this date, with a due date of **2/19/2025**. There is a Teams meeting presentation scheduled for **1/31/2025**.

<https://lus.sbcounty.gov/planning-home/environmental-2/desert-region/>

~~**8. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Science Plan (Clark Co, NV)**~~

~~On **9/26/2024**, the BLM informs us that there will be a public kick-off meeting for this project on **10/21/2024** from 5:30-7:30 pm, at which time we can determine opportunities for public input, which Ed LaRue is able to attend. Not a NEPA exercise, so we could provide scientific input but no comments will be necessary for this effort.~~

**9. Sapphire Linear Facility Routes Project, Environmental Assessment (Riverside Co, CA)**

On **10/4/2024**, we receive an email from the BLM announcing this project, which has a due date of **11/4/2024**. LaRue attends the webinar on **10/24/2024**.

**10. State Mining and Geology Board revisions of SMARA 2714 (f) exemption preliminary regulation and rulemaking package (CA)**

On **10/16/2024**, we receive a letter from Jaren Naimark of Center for Biological Diversity asking us to cosign the provided letter, with a turnaround of only two hours. When the initial four endorsements are received (a total of 8 were received), LaRue lets Naimark know that we are willing cosigners.

**11. Congratulatory letter to Defenders of Wildlife (Ca)**

On **10/19/2024**, we receive a letter from Roger Dale of DTPC asking us to cosign a letter acknowledging the sound tortoise conservation work of Defenders, which is distributed to the Board on **10/21/2024**. LaRue lets Roger know on **10/22/2024** that we are willing cosigners.

**12. Protect Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Zone 6 (St. George, UT)**

On **10/23/2024**, we receive a petition from Conserve Southwest Utah to conserve the “Greater Moe's Valley Area,” which includes the Zone 6 area. The petition is circulated to the Board on **10/23/2024**, and with four endorsements, the Council signs the petition on **10/31/2024**.

**13. Larrea Solar Project, Mosey Solar Project, and Rock Valley Energy Center Projects (Clark and Nye Cos, NV)**

On **10/30/2024**, the BLM contacts us with information for this project, which has a due date of **11/29/2024**.

<https://www.blm.gov/announcement/blm-seeks-initial-input-three-proposed-solar-projects-southern-nevada>

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee  
Summary Table from 9/29/2024 to 11/9/2024**

**Current date for this latest table revision is: 11/12/2024**

Dates are for 2024 (or 2025)						Board Member Responses														
						Codes: <b>Y</b> = Vote of Yes; <b>N</b> = Vote of No; <b>PI</b> = Provided input; <b>Blank</b> = No Response; <b>R</b> = Recused; <b>A</b> = Authors/Lead Board member; <b>NA</b> – Replied they were not able to respond by indicated date														
#	Title	Rec'd	Dist	Due	Sent	BJ	BP	EL	JH	JP	LB	KB	KM	MF	MH	MP	MQ	MT	PW	RA
1	Barstow BLM land sales	8/28	10/12	10/15	10/14	Y 10/13			Y/PI 10/12	Y 10/13			Y/PI 10/13	Y 10/13		Y 10/13		Y 10/13		Y 10/13
2	San Manuel solar	8/27		None		There was never an opportunity to comment on this project														
3	Bonanza Solar	9/6		12/6																
4	Copper Rays	9/20		12/19																
5	Ranegras Plains	9/11		Late 2024																
6	Tortoise GCP	10/11		12/10																
7	Overnight Solar	10/2		2/19																
8	Red Rock Canyon NCA	9/26	9/26	N/A	N/A	This webinar is for informational purposes, with no opportunity to comment														
9	Sapphire linear facility	10/4	10/30	11/4	11/3	Y 10/31		A/Y 10/30	Y/PI 10/31	Y 11/12			R 10/31	Y 10/31		R 10/30	Y 10/31	Y 10/31		
10	SMARA revisions	10/16	10/16	10/16	10/16	Y 10/16		Y 10/16	Y 10/16	Y 10/16				Y 10/16		Y 10/16		Y 10/16		Y 10/16
11	Defenders letter	10/19	10/21	10/23	10/30			Y/PI 10/21	Y/PI 10/20	Y/PI 10/22	Y/PI 10/21		R 10/21	Y 10/21			Y 10/21			
12	Protect Red Cliffs Zone 6	10/23	10/23	N/A	10/31			Y/PI 10/23		Y 10/24				Y 10/23		Y/PI 10/23				
13	3 solar projects	10/30		11/29																

**BJ** = Becky Jones, **BP** = Bruce Palmer, **EL** = Ed LaRue, **JH** = Judy Hohman, **JP** = Joe Probst, **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