

Final Final Final

**Desert Tortoise Council,
Minutes of Annual Business Meeting**

20 February 2019

Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort and Spa, Tucson, Arizona

In Michael Tuma's absence (he will be here later), the Annual Business Meeting was called to order by Bruce Palmer, Past Chairperson at 6:00 p.m. at the Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort and Spa facility in Tucson, Arizona. **Motions made, seconded, and approved are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Kristin Berry, Judy Hohman, Larry LaPré, Maggie Fusari, Ken MacDonald, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Cristina Jones, Pete Woodman, Mark Peaden, and Ed LaRue. Michael Tuma, Michael Vamstad, Greer Dolby, and Halle Kohn were absent (but later present at the Symposium). **Guests:** There were 12 Symposium attendees at the Annual Business Meeting, who made this one of the best-attended meetings ever and who participated in the votes described herein.

A. Introductions: Board members introduced themselves to those in attendance.

B. Review Agenda:

C. Officer and Committee Reports:

1. Chairperson's Annual Report: Michael Tuma will present an extensive Chairperson's report Sunday afternoon at the Symposium, which will summarize Board member activities during 2018.

2. Treasurer's Report: Joe Probst read his report, which included the Council's total income of \$127,429±, about \$50,000 given in grants, with net assets of \$214,632 as of today. Joe also summarized the 2019 budget, which is not reflected herein. **Motion was made by Ken MacDonald, seconded by Cristina Jones, and the membership in attendance unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report.**

3. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones indicated that she recently reviewed a number of emails, mostly questions about captive tortoises, Introductory Course, and Symposium. There was very little hard copy mail this year, which she forwarded to Ed LaRue when comments were solicited for proposed projects. There were several donations, to which she responded with thank you letters.

4. Membership Committee Report: Mari Quillman reported that this year we restructured membership rates and benefits. There are (tentatively) 261 active members and 269 membership renewals overdue, which will be confirmed shortly. Thanks to Judy Hohman and Bruce Palmer for helping revise the Membership Policy. In 2019, we plan on implementing an online store for Council products.

5. Nominations Committee Report: Bruce Palmer reported that in 2018 Chris Noddings left the Board, as Mark Peaden, Michael Vamstad, and Halle Kohn joined, and that we now have 17 Board members.

6. Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report: Ed LaRue provided a summary report for 2018 indicating that the Council received 95 notices, commented on 39, cosigned 10 letters, declined to cosign 1 letter, attended 3 public meetings, and made 1 trip to Washington D.C. to oppose building Northern Corridor through Red Cliffs National Conservation Area in Utah. Environmental projects on which we commented included 29 in California, 8 in Nevada, 9 in Arizona, 2 in Utah, and 6 on national issues.

7. Agency Coordination Committee Report: Cristina Jones reported that the Council continues to organize a list of pertinent regulatory agency biologists for future coordination. Cristina plans to work with the Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs) in 2019, with four or five of our Board members already serving on the RITs.

8. Introductory Training Course Committee Report: Maggie Fusari reported that the Introductory Course in Ridgecrest, CA in early November 2018 included a total of 88 students, including several local high school teachers. There were 30 people on the list wanting to attend in 2019, and we plan to expand the course to be available to 100 students in 2019. Tests have been graded and letters of completion submitted. The 2019 Introductory Course will be at the Kerr-McGee Center in Ridgecrest, CA the first weekend in November.

9. Advanced Training Courses Committee Report:

a. Health Assessment Training (HAT): The HAT event, which has not occurred in several years, is planned for the first week in April 2019, with a total of 13 students currently on the waiting list. Cristina Jones is hoping to accommodate 18 to 20 students, which is limited by the number of tortoises we have available for handling.

b. Advanced Techniques Workshop: There is no intent to have this workshop in 2019. The Board will continue to discuss specific modules that may replace this workshop.

10. Media Committee Report: Bruce Palmer reported that the website has been restructured and is now much more useful to our members and the public. Halle Kohn is overseeing the Instagram and Facebook pages and is doing a great job. Members are encouraged to share our page with others.

11. Education and Outreach Committee Report: Maggie Fusari shared about a group of students that created tortoise habitats, adopted a tortoise, and wrote a curriculum for their school. They have a formal poster here at the Symposium. Ed LaRue recently attended The Wildlife Society conference in Yosemite several weeks ago. Although we made only about \$450 compared to attendance expense of about \$1,400, there are now new members, new students for Council courses, and new sponsors for the Symposium. We also plan on having representatives at The Wildlife Society's national meeting in Reno, Nevada in September 2019.

12. Grants Committee Report: Bruce Palmer reported that the Council awarded grants in 2018 and is currently considering the first grant for 2019. The Lockheed Diversity Grant was established at \$1,000 and is currently matched by the Council with an additional \$1,000. There were six applicants for the Morafka Award this year. Grants Committee member, Glenn Stewart, shared there were two outstanding candidates among the six applications received, that each of the two were selected to win the award, in part because the Morafka Award had not been awarded in several years.

13. Awards Committee Report: The Awards Committee presented a full complement of awards in 2018 and not quite as many in 2019. The Council will be presenting student awards during the Symposium.

14. Annual Symposium Program Committee and Local Host Committee Reports:

Our most recent planning meeting was in Las Vegas, Nevada. Kristin Berry extended her thanks to Tracy Bailey (Symposium host), Maggie Fusari (local logistics person), Cristina Jones (for a very successful Gila monster trip and planning for Tucson logistics), Mari Quillman (for sponsorships, raffle, and auction items), and the host committee for their energetic commitment. Thanks to Merci Vaughn for assembling a panel of scientists and conservationists working in Mexico. There will be two tortoise translocation sessions. Tracy Bailey is serving as the head of the Host Committee, sharing that there are approximately 240 people registered. Tracy thanked David Carr for his persisting audio-visual support. The 2020, 45th Symposium will be at Excalibur in Las Vegas, Nevada and the 46th Symposium in 2021 will be in St. George, Utah. Mari Quillman shared that we have in excess of \$8,000 in sponsorships this year. Special thanks to Southern Nevada Environmental, Inc. (SNEI) who is providing the mixer this evening.

15. Audit Committee Report: Ray Butler has served on the Audit Committee for many years, and intends to provide the 2018 Audit Report by the second quarter of 2019. Every Treasurer we have had has improved the system, and Joe Probst has done a wonderful job using Excel to keep track of our finances.

D. Old/New Business:

1. Proposed revisions to the Bylaws: As required by the Bylaws, the proposed changes were posted on the website for the minimum of 30 days (no hard copies of the proposed changes were available in Michael Tuma's absence). The changes were all editorial. The first affected the preamble of the Bylaws by changing "the desert tortoise" to "tortoises," to accommodate the three affected species. In the Council's objectives, we clarified the support of conservation of *imperiled* tortoises. The former Information Outreach and Social Media Committee became the "Media Committee" and the Workshop Committee is now referred to as the "Introductory Course Committee." **Joe Probst made the motion to adopt the Bylaws revisions as given above, which was seconded by Ken MacDonald, and approved.**

2. Election of Officers: The three current nominations are Ken MacDonald for Chairperson-elect, Ed LaRue for Recording Secretary, and Mari Quillman for Membership Coordinator. **Given these nominations and no new nominations from the floor there were three motions that were seconded and approved for Ken MacDonald, Ed LaRue, and Mari Quillman, to serve as Chairperson-elect, Recording Secretary, and Membership Coordinator respectively, as per the terms of offices given in the Bylaws.**

E. Adjourn to Opening the Symposium: Bruce Palmer adjourned the Annual Business Meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Draft minutes were recorded, later 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.



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