

Final Final Final

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

**15 February 2022
Virtual Meeting on Zoom Platform**

Ken MacDonald called the Annual Business Meeting to order at 11:35 a.m. in our second, virtual Zoom meeting. **Motions made, seconded, and approved are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Kristin Berry, Halle Kohn, Judy Hohman, Maggie Fusari, Ken MacDonald, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Pete Woodman, Michael Vamstad, and Ed LaRue. **Guests:** There were approximately 63 Symposium attendees at the beginning of the Annual Business Meeting.

A. Introductions: Mari Quillman thanked members of the Social Media Committee, chaired by Michael Tuma with committee members Halle Kohn, Mary Lane Poe, Caitlin McMurtrie, and Verity Richardson. Ken MacDonald also thanked Bruce Palmer for his work on revising the Bylaws, Michael Tuma for his work on the Grant's Committee, and Kristin Berry for her work on the Award's Committee.

B. Review Agenda: No agenda was distributed prior to this meeting. The business meeting was also very brief and, without an agenda, chairs were not individually invited to share their reports. So, to make these minutes meaningful, Ed LaRue asked for reports and notes from individual chairs so that he could complete informative minutes, which means that much of the information was not discussed during the actual meeting but provided in emails after the business meeting.

C. Officer and Committee Reports:

1. Chairperson's Annual Report: Ken MacDonald welcomed everyone to the Annual Business Meeting. His summary of Board member accomplishments in 2021 was shared at the opening session this morning.

2. Treasurer's Report, Annual Budget, Audit Committee Report: Joe Probst read his report, which included the Council's total 2021 income (as of 12/31/2021) of \$127,857.90, expenses of \$64,475.53, with net assets of \$248,005.19. Individual line items were shared but not specifically listed in these minutes, so they are available at the footnoted link¹. **Motion was made by Ed LaRue, seconded by Judy Hohman, and 95% of the membership (approximately 43 people) in attendance voted yes to accept the Treasurer's Report.**

¹ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rnty2lk5l5f8z9/12-31-2021%20Treasurer%20Report.xlsx?dl=0>

3. Corresponding Secretary's Report: There was no opportunity for Becky Jones to provide her report, so the following information was subsequently provided in an email. Emails were responded to and forwarded to appropriate board members for responses. Most of the emails received were businesses trying to sell us something or asking us to use them to update our website. Other emails included questions about captive tortoises, the workshop and symposium, and biologist approvals. Most of the hard copy mail regarded National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, which were received and forwarded to the chair of the Ecosystem Advisory Committee, assuming he had not already received the information via email. There were also nine returns of certificates acknowledging attendance to the Introduction to Mojave Desert Tortoise course. Maggie Fusari was contacted regarding updated addresses to return letters and certificates to course and workshop attendees. There were several donations received and thank you letters mailed. The remainder of the postal mail included registration and checks for the workshop and symposium or membership renewals. The information was passed on to appropriate Board members.

4. Membership Committee Report: In an electronic report, Halle Kohn indicated there are 819 people in the Council's contact database, including 231 active members. The Committee is comprised of Mari Quillman, Judy Hohman, Halle Kohn, and Maggie Fusari. Her detailed committee report is available at the footnoted link².

5. Nominations Committee Report: There was no report, but we do know that there were two nominations for Council officers, as covered in Item D.1., below.

6. Ecosystems Advisory Committee (EAC) Report: Ed LaRue provided a summary report for 2021 indicating that, from 1/9/2021 to 1/8/2022, the Council received 57 notices, commented on 52, authored 37 letters, coauthored 6 letters, cosigned 6 letters, and signed 2 petitions. Perhaps most importantly, in October 2020 the Council joined Defenders of Wildlife and Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee in a petition to the California Fish and Game Commission to upgrade the state-listing of tortoises from Threatened to Endangered, which was supposed to be decided in October 2021, but was postponed for six months. In September 2021, the Council joined five other environmental groups to sue the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental concerning the 2019 decisions associated with the West Mojave Route Designation project. EAC actions included 23 in California, 10 in Nevada, 5 in Arizona, 4 in Utah, and 10 on national issues.

7. Agency Coordinating Committee Report: Cristina Jones was absent, so there was no formal committee report, but we do know that she hopes to resume agency coordination activities with state and federal agency biologists in 2022, possibly in a virtual format.

8. Training Program Committee Report: Although Cristina Jones was absent, she did share the following information with Ken MacDonald for his 2021 summary of Council activities. We continue to work the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a handling manual from which we will develop specific, advanced courses. We hope to resume more in-person courses in 2023 - or when it is safe to do so while adhering to CDC guidelines

² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3n0lr8jn2rrovve/DTC%202021%20Annual%20Membership%20Committee%20Report%202-2-22.pdf?dl=0>

9. Basic Introductory Course: Maggie Fusari did not present information during the business meeting, rather she provided a Power Point presentation to Ken MacDonald and summary information in a subsequent email. Therein, she congratulated the lecturers, the field instructors, and everyone else who contributed to the safe and successful training events, which included two half-day sessions on October 29 and 30, 2021 with 140 participants. We offered two identical field workshops on November 5 and 6, 2021 for those who completed the online course with 60 attendees each. She also stated that there would be no advanced courses in 2022, maybe in 2023. We are planning to offer a combined course in 2022. The two-session online lecture course will be on October 28 and 29, 2022. Those who complete the online lectures will select a field workshop either on November 4 or 5, 2022. Registration will begin in July.

10. Media Committee Report: Michael Tuma did not make a presentation at the business meeting, but did provide the following information in an email. We continue to update our website with the latest information about Council activities and events. We continue to grow our social media platform audiences and posting schedule. We published one Newsletter in 2021.

11. Outreach and Education Committee Report: Maggie Fusari reported the Education and Outreach Committee had limited activity to report for 2021. Onsite presentations were not possible, nor was it a good time to arrange field activities or internships. Ed LaRue attended the 69th Annual Meeting of the Western Section of the Wildlife Society in Reno, Nevada on February 7 to 11, 2022, where he represented the Council at a vendor's table. Maggie welcomes ideas for effective activities (website links, videos, interpretations of important issues, background information about desert tortoises, special information for teachers, opportunities for outreach, etc.). Please contact Education & Outreach Committee at outreach@deserttortoise.org.

12. Grants Committee Report: Michael Tuma did not make a presentation at the business meeting, but did provide the following information in an email. In 2021, we acquired \$10,000 in funding from Edison International that we used to fund a desert tortoise habitat restoration project. Transition Habitat Conservancy submitted the winning proposal for the funding and is currently implementing a restoration effort in San Bernardino County, California. In 2021, we secured additional funding from Edison International and we are currently evaluating proposals submitted for this year's funding cycle. In 2021, we awarded two Morafka Awards, one to Julia Joos and the second to Anjana Parandhama.

13. Fundraising Committee Report: There was no report in Greer Dolby's absence.

14. Awards Committee Report: Six Desert Tortoise Council Awards were given at the 46th Annual Symposium virtual meeting in February 2021. Recipients included Dr. Elliott Jacobson (Kristin H. Berry Annual Award), Conservation Science Partners (Robert C. Stebbins Research Award), Mari Quillman (Glenn R. Stewart Service Award), Greta Anderson and Cindi Tuell (James St. Amant Special Award), and Sarah Thomas (Conserve Southwest Utah). Sponsors also were given awards.

15. Annual Symposium Program Committee and Local Host Committee Reports: There was no specific discussion during the business meeting. Kristin Berry, Program Chair, was acknowledged on her ability to assemble a stellar group of scientists for about 49 presentations over the six-day period. Similarly, as Symposium Chair, we appreciate Mari Quillman's effective leadership in coordinating actions leading up to and during the Symposium. Thanks also to David Hedrick and Turtle Survival Alliance for hosting our Zoom meetings over this six-day event.

16. Mexican Tortoise Conservation Committee (MTCC): There was no opportunity given for Michael Vamstad to report on his committee, so the following information was subsequently provided in an email on February 16, 2022. The MTCC was active in 2021 to encourage participation in the Annual Symposium by our Mexican partners involved with tortoise conservation. Translations for the 2022 Symposium announcement were posted and emails were sent to key officials and interested parties inviting them to participate in the virtual Symposium. Three Mexican scientists/groups took advantage of the Symposium fee waiver. Sadly, the COVID situation restricted travel to Mexico for much of 2021. Plans for visiting Mexican conservation officials in Sonora (Hermosillo) and Sinaloa (Los Mochis) will be on-hold until safe travel resumes.

D. New Business:

1. Election of Officers: The two current nominations are Becky Jones for Corresponding Secretary and Joe Probst for Treasurer. **Given these nominations, no new nominations from the floor, with a total of about 43 members available to vote, 100% of the votes were in favor for Becky Jones to serve as Corresponding Secretary and Joe Probst as Treasurer (with the remaining voters abstaining) as per the terms of office given in the Bylaws.**

2. Revisions to Council Bylaws: Ken MacDonald introduced the proposed Bylaws revisions, which have been posted on our website for the minimum of 30 days (i.e., since mid-January 2022). Bruce Palmer who was primarily responsible for documenting the revisions, provided the following information on February 16, 2022, which is provided to supplement the truncated information given during this meeting. The Board of Directors has recommended several revisions to the Bylaws to be voted on by the general membership (all Council members in good standing are eligible to vote whether registered for the Symposium or not). The proposed revisions to the Bylaws include:

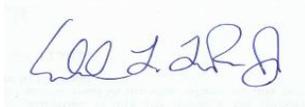
- Clarification that the minimum number of persons on the Board is 9, and the maximum is 20 (14 Board Members at Large, and 6 officers).
- Clarification on determining a quorum for voting.
- Addition of the appointment of a sitting Board member to serve as Parliamentarian.
- Addition of the appointment of a sitting Board member to serve as Products Manager.
- Clarification of the responsibilities of the Awards Committee.
- For the Training Committee, the discussion of specific workshops was removed as this level of detail is more appropriate for the Committee Policy.
- Renaming and clarifying the responsibilities of the Grants and Academic Funding Committee.
- Establishing the Mexican Tortoise Conservation Committee as a standing committee.

The Council's Bylaws can be reviewed at the footnoted link, with proposed revisions displayed in track/changes³. **The motion to adopt the revised Bylaws was among five votes that were all cast on the same poll, which included 96% of the members voting yes and the remainder abstaining.**

³ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/hk5wp7tmq6c5l89/Proposed%202022%20revision%20of%20Bylaws%20of%20Desert%20Tortoise%20Council.pdf?dl=0>

E. Adjourn: **The motion to adjourn the Annual Business Meeting was among five votes that were all cast on the same poll, which included 91% of the members voting yes and the remainder abstaining.** Following a motion to adjourn, Ken MacDonald adjourned the Annual Business Meeting at 12:00 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed LaRue, Jr.", is centered within a light blue rectangular box.

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