

Final Final Final

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

**23 February 2023  
Dixie Center, St. George, Utah**

Mari Quillman called the Annual Business Meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. (MST) at the Dixie Center, St. George, Utah. **Motions made, seconded, and approved are shown in bold red font.**

**Attendees (include both in-person and virtual attendees):** Kristin Berry, Halle Kohn, Judy Hohman, John Kalish, Maggie Fusari, Ken MacDonald, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Max Havelka, Michael Tuma, Pete Woodman, and Ed LaRue. **Guests:** There were approximately 15 Symposium attendees at the beginning of the Annual Business Meeting.

**A. Introductions:** Mari Quillman introduced all Board members in the room and online.

**B. Review Agenda:** The agenda had been provided by Mari Quillman and made available to attendees, with no new items added.

**C. Officer and Committee Reports:**

**1. Chairperson's Annual Report:** Mari Quillman welcomed everyone to the Annual Business Meeting. Her summary of Board member accomplishments in 2022 will be 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 2022 income (as of 12/31/2022) of \$176,086.43, expenses of \$72,078.22, with net assets of \$292,199.67. Individual line items were shared but not specifically listed in these minutes, so they are available at the footnoted link<sup>1</sup>. The audit is ongoing, with assistance of Ray Butler. **Motion was made by Bruce Palmer, seconded by Ken MacDonald, and unanimously approved by attendees to accept the Treasurer's Report.**

**3. Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Becky Jones' microphone was not functioning, so Mari Quillman reported that we receive hard copy mail for membership, captive tortoise care, notices of proposed projects that she shares with the Ecosystems Advisory Committee, etc.

**4. Membership Committee Report:** In an electronic report, Halle Kohn indicated the Council's contact list contained 2,859 names (current and past members) and we currently have 321 active members. This is an increase of 90 active members from the last Annual Report. The activities of the Membership Committee during 2022 primarily included tasks related to monitoring the membership database and providing the members with relevant notifications,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/z5kfcsfikf4alsv/12-31-2022%20Treasurer%20Report.xlsx?dl=0>

working with the Council's webmaster to resolve issues with the database and to improve email communications, and reporting to the Board of Directors regarding the status of the membership. In 2023, the Membership Committee will continue communicating with current and prospective members to retain and increase the active membership of the Council. The Committee is comprised of Mari Quillman, Judy Hohman, Halle Kohn, and Maggie Fusari. Her detailed committee report is available at the footnoted link<sup>2</sup>.

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

**6. Ecosystems Advisory Committee (EAC) Report:** Ed LaRue provided a summary report for 2022<sup>3</sup> indicating that, from 1/8/2022 to 1/7/2023, the Council received 80 notices, commented on 77 (96%), authored 70 letters, coauthored 1 letter, cosigned 6 letters, and signed 3 petitions. These letters included 27 in California, 26 in Nevada, 13 in Arizona, 8 in Utah, and 6 on national issues. We are happy to report that longtime BLM biologist, John Kalish, joined the Board on 1/7/2023, and has done a wonderful job already in informing EAC functions.

**7. Agency Coordinating Committee Report:** Cristina Jones was absent, so there was no formal committee report. She is resigning from the Board as of this meeting, and we all extend our deep appreciation for her conservation efforts and service to the Board since 2014.

**8. Basic Introductory Course and Training Program Committee Report:** Maggie Fusari shared that we completed the full course with 148 students at the complete course and 22 in the field. The 2023 indoor course will be October 27 and 28, 2023 with the field portion on November 3 and 4, 2023 in Ridgecrest. We do not anticipate any other workshops in 2023.

**9. Media Committee Report:** In her report<sup>4</sup>, Halle Kohn indicated the Council ended 2022 with approximately 5,009 cumulative followers on social media. This is an increase of 740 followers since the end of 2021. The activities of the Media Committee during 2022 primarily included tasks related to sharing posts about desert tortoises and the Council with the public at large, encouraging engagement from followers on social media, working with the Council's webmaster to ensure the website is functional, and reporting to the Board of Directors regarding the status of our social media accounts. The Media Committee drafts and executes posts across four platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn (with primary focus on Facebook and Instagram, where the Council's largest following is). The Committee responds to inquiries made via messages and comments on these platforms, and tags partners and sponsors in posts when applicable, while engaging with other content as time permits (posting stories, sharing the posts of others where appropriate, creating graphics, selecting suitable/credited photographs to share). In 2023, the Media Committee will continue digital communication efforts intended to increase the active membership of the Council.

**10. Outreach and Education Committee Report:** There was no formal report from Maggie Fusari. 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](mailto:outreach@deserttortoise.org).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jav0i18xnbvzer/DTC%202022%20Annual%20Membership%20Committee%20Report%201-7-23.pdf?dl=0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/d0o9kf5b0n8hi0/2022%20Summary%20of%20EAC%20Activities.docx?dl=0>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/5ugch2n0kzedb0c/DTC%202022%20Annual%20Media%20Committee%20Report%201-7-23.pdf?dl=0>

**11. Grants Committee Report:** Bruce Palmer reported on behalf of Michael Tuma, sharing that in 2022 the Morafka Award of \$2,500 was awarded to Jacquelyn Tleimat; the Best Student Paper was awarded to M.A. Walden and Steve Hromada at \$500 each; and a Southern California Edison grant of \$9,000 was awarded to Transitions Habitat Conservancy. In her honor, the Linda Allison Memorial Research Grant was created, and will focus on tortoise research. There were no travel grants issued in 2022 due to the virtual nature of the Symposium and associated lack of travel.

**12. Fundraising Committee Report:** There was no formal report from Ken MacDonald.

**13. Awards Committee Report:** There was no formal report from Kristin Berry.

**14. Annual Symposium Program Committee and Local Host Committee Reports:** Mari Quillman did a remarkable job coordinating the 2023 Symposium, taking the lead in organizing the Board during multiple Zoom virtual meetings.

**15. Mexican Tortoise Conservation Committee (MTCC):** There was no formal report from Michael Vamstad.

#### **D. New Business:**

**1. Election of Officers:** The three open positions are Chairperson-elect (Mari Quillman), Membership Committee Chair (Halle Kohn), and Recording Secretary (Ed LaRue). Since Becky Jones' was not present in person, Bruce Palmer conducted the elections. **Given these nominations, no new nominations from the floor, with a total of 15 non-Board members voting in person and 4 online, 100% of the votes were in favor for Mari Quillman to serve as Chairperson-elect, Halle Kohn as Membership Committee Chair, and Ed LaRue as Recording Secretary, as per the terms of office given in the Bylaws.**

**2. 2024 Symposium:** Tentative arrangements have been made for the 2024 Symposium to be February 20, 21, 22, 2024 at the South Point Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

**E. Adjourn:** **The motion to adjourn the Annual Business Meeting was made by Joe Probst, seconded by Maggie Fusari, and unanimously.** Following a motion to adjourn, Mari Quillman adjourned the Annual Business Meeting at 7:33 a.m. (MST)

Draft minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary, and these final minutes encompass feedback from Board members.



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