

Final Final Final

**Desert Tortoise Council
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**

**16 March 2019
DoubleTree, 222 North Vineyard Ave, Ontario, 91764**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Michael Tuma at 10:10 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, Greer Dolby, Peter Woodman, Judy Hohman, Ken MacDonald, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Michael Tuma, Joe Probst, Ed LaRue, Halle Kohn, and Michael Vamstad. **Remote Attendance:** None. **Absent:** Becky Jones, Larry LaPré, Cristina Jones, Maggie Fusari, and Mark Peaden. **Guests:** Ray Butler.

A. Introductions: Ray Butler was introduced as helping Joe Probst with the 2018 audit.

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

C. Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2019 and Annual Business Meeting: Ed LaRue prepared draft minutes at the last Board meeting in Las Vegas, NV and the 2019 Annual Business Meeting in Tucson, AZ, which were distributed, reviewed, and approved today as final. **Motion made (Joe Probst), seconded (Judy Hohman), and unanimously approved to accept both of the draft minutes as final.**

D. Review of Board Actions since Last Board Meeting: No actions were identified.

E. Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be in Las Vegas, NV between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., on 8 June 2019 at Excalibur where the 2020 Symposium is planned. **Kristin Berry will ask Tracy Bailey to attend and arrange for a meeting place at Excalibur for the June Board meeting.** The next visit, then, will be on August 24, 2019, tentatively at ECORP offices. It was agreed that Ontario, CA is the least expensive location for Board meetings. Others suggested that we consider some of the meetings be attended remotely to save on costs. The initial conference call should be at the committee level to see how it works.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

F. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Joe Probst. Our total assets as of 15 March 2019 are \$203,380.66. There is a new category, "Equipment," which is at \$1,291.21 and pertains to audio equipment bought in Tucson, AZ for the Symposium. Whereas Joe Probst had predicted a deficit of \$28,450 for the Symposium, the actual deficit was only \$11,702.08. Raffle, auction, and sponsorships contributed about \$14,000. **Motion made (Bruce Palmer),**

seconded (Ken MacDonald), and unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as final. The cost of renting audio-visual equipment from the venues for the Symposium is very expensive and the Council can save money by purchasing its own equipment to use at the Symposium and Workshops. **Motion made (Kristin Berry), seconded (Joe Probst), and approved to formally authorize the expenditure of \$1,291.21 to have purchased the sound equipment in Tucson, AZ.** • Kristin Berry will ask David Carr to research audio-visual equipment in support of Symposia and Workshops and present us with a proposal on which we can then vote. • Joe Probst plans on looking into alternatives to Wild Apricot, which has a new fee if we don't use one of their services.

a. 2018 Audit: During the early part of the meeting, Joe Probst and Ray Butler left the meeting to work on the 2018 audit. Ray indicated that Joe's records are exemplary and get better each year. Joe's system keeps track of checks issued and when they are cashed. The Board has also done a good job submitting invoices with pertinent information. There is a Union Bank checking account, Edward Jones Money Market, CD, and Edward Jones Mutual Funds all of which are functioning at low risk. Our CD is at an interest rate of 2.350, which is at industry standard. Tax filings were done on time. There are credit card fees and Pay Pal fees that are in excess of \$10,000/year, which we should focus on reducing this year. We did a good job in spending money in grants in the past several years. In 2019, we have about \$30,000 earmarked for awarding grants (rather than \$60,000 identified in previous years). Kristin Berry recommended we increase the rainy day fund (currently at \$70,506) to about \$100,000 to match the cost of a Symposium (this year was \$103,000±). **Of the \$44,329 in the checking account, Joe Probst plans on moving about \$25,000 into the mutual fund.** • Ray Butler will soon provide a written Audit Report to the Board. At any given time, we have between \$65,000 and \$70,000 available for expenditure. Joe reported this is the typical cost of a Symposium. The Symposium in Tucson was more expensive.

G. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Nothing to report in Becky Jones' absence.

H. Grants Committee's Report: Michael Tuma reported that Mark Peaden is unable to attend due to travel, and is working on several specific grant requests.

a. Tortoise Group grant request resubmission: After discussion, most Board members expressed concern with a commitment to the Tortoise Group of an *annual funding* of \$5,000 from the Council to support their program entitled, "Keep Wild Tortoises Wild and Captive Tortoises Captive." **Michael Tuma will coordinate communication between Tortoise Group and California Turtle and Tortoise Club (CTTC).** After discussion, **motion made, seconded, and approved (with one member opposing) to deny the 2 March 2019 Tortoise Group grant request for annual funding of \$5,000.** • Michael Tuma will send an email to Tortoise Group asking them to resubmit a grant request that specifies using the money for further fund raising. He will also ask them for an article about Tortoise Group that can be published in our newsletter.

I. Membership Committee's Report: Mari Quillman indicated we have 269 active Council members following the Symposium, and that many of the attenders did not sign up as members. **Mari Quillman will look at the registration information to see affiliations of attenders, in an effort to see why many did not become members.** Increasing our membership numbers should be discussed as part of the strategic planning retreat. Mari indicated that she would like to recognize lifetime members in the newsletter, to stimulate more interest in becoming members, etc. **The committee members are Mari Quillman, Halle Kohn, and Judy Hohman, who plan to initiate a webinar to see how that works.** The current contact list data base is 1,932 people, which includes members who attended the Introductory Course but did not subsequently renew their memberships. The committee members will also be working on the online store. **The Membership Committee was asked to survey members regarding various aspects of the Symposium.**

J. Ecosystems Advisory Committee's (EAC) Report: Ed LaRue reported that there were 10 projects reported to us between 1/13/2019 and 3/16/2019 and that all of them were addressed. We coauthored several letters with Defenders of Wildlife, cosigned a letter with Center of Biological Diversity (CBD), and did not cosign another CBD letter opposing the appointment of a new Secretary of the Interior. The discussion is that we focus on conservation science supporting our mission statement rather than supporting or opposing political candidates or appointees, which is consistent with the latest EAC policy statement. It may be appropriate at the time of Congressional and Senatorial hearings to write letters for this and other appointees that focus on the issues rather than the people. **Ed LaRue will redistribute the standardized paragraphs for comment letters and asked that all Board members provide input by the June Board meeting.** Greer Dolby was asked by a member of a small nonprofit group in Arizona to co-write an editorial piece for a local newsletter concerning the Kingman Transportation Management Plan and off-highway vehicle issues in Arizona. **Judy Hohman will send a recent article about OHV impacts to Greer Dolby as applicable information.**

K. Media Committee's Report:

a. Social Media/Newsletter updates: Halle Kohn reported that there has been a 30% increase in Instagram participation, with 319 "followers." Face Book "likes" are also up 40%. **Halle Kohn plans to publish the next Newsletter at the end of April.** She is planning to have two Newsletters per year. She is planning to draft a letter on women in conservation and science. All Board members are encouraged to send potential Newsletter photographs and stories or event summaries to Halle. **Halle Kohn will ask Cristina Jones for a blurb on the Health Assessment Training planned this spring.** Larry LaPré and Mari Quillman will be the two Board members featured in the next Newsletter. Chris Clarke and David Lamfrom invited Halle to accompany them back to Washington D.C. for a lobbying visit in early April 2019. **Michael Tuma and Halle Kohn continue to work on the Media Committee policy.**

L. Agency Coordinating Committee's Report: Cristina Jones provided a written report that was distributed within the last week, but not specifically discussed today.

M. Introductory Training Course Committee's Report: The course is still planned for early November with registration opening in July 2019. There were 30+ potential students on the waiting list from 2018.

N. Advanced Training Courses Committee's Report:

a. Planning for Health Assessment Training (HAT): The HAT is planned for early April 2019, and was addressed in a written report Cristina Jones recently distributed.

O. Education and Outreach Committee's Report: Kristin Berry, Michael Vamstad, and Ed LaRue are teaching a course at Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree, CA on 23 March 2019. Ed asked about acceptable ratios of cost to income to attend conferences, citing the recent trip to Yosemite for The Wildlife Society where the cost was about \$1,400 and income about \$500. The Education and Outreach Committee has a budget of \$4,700 for expenses and \$1,200 for income, so these visits are not intended as money-making propositions. Advantages included securing a future Symposium sponsor, several memberships, and potential students for courses and workshops. There is a Desert Tortoise Week at the Living Desert April 15 to 23rd, coinciding with Earth Day. Several Board members are planning on attending the Bioregional event in Kernville, CA on Earth Day and The Wildlife Society national meeting in Reno, NV this fall. We also plan on attending the Turtle Survival Alliance meeting in Tucson, AZ. Both Ed and Michael Tuma regularly speak at CTTC meetings, and could probably sell swag at these events.

P. Annual Symposium Program Committee's Report:

a. Review of/lessons learned from the 44th Annual Symposium: Kristin Berry provided a five-page summary of follow-up issues that was very helpful and only partially reiterated herein. We want to be sure that the vendors are proximate to the main meeting hall to encourage visits and sales. The Arizona chapter of the Wildlife Society has a manual that Bruce Palmer spent 40 hours with to develop our own manual for Symposia set-up. Audio-visual equipment is a priority and warrants sufficient expenditure to have enough equipment. It's important that we choose venues that are larger and plan all activities indoors since the Symposia are in February. Screens are too large to transport, so we will always need to rent them or choose facilities that have screens in the rooms. It is a great idea to have a red-green-yellow lighting system to govern the length of presentations by speakers. It would be good to have an evaluation form and feedback survey placed into the packets, which used to be a part of past Symposia. **Kristin Berry will work with Tracy Bailey to look at past contracts to determine request for proposals that specify certain requirements, like meeting hall dimensions and available banquet facilities.** We need two policy statements: (1) planning for Symposia and (2) governing the host committee.

We need to consider new approaches to the agency reports, such as give them a topic of discussion or have a panel discussion where the list of questions is provided beforehand. Kristin Berry indicated that the agency biologists are asked to answer the question, "What is your agency doing to promote tortoise recovery?" We may also want to invite a panel of Department of Defense biologists or representatives. **Michael Vamstad offered to help Becky Jones plan for and organize the government agency panel in 2020.** The session chairs need to be ready to ask questions of their panels when the audience does not have any questions. Also, session chairs should include their contact information, particularly phone numbers, to facilitate communication. The awards letters should be placed inside envelopes rather than handing pieces of paper to the recipients. The award letter for "Carla" Drake needs to be changed to "Cristina" Drake. The podium light needs to be placed at the podium and also brought to the banquet. We need a minute-or-so between speakers to accommodate them, switch to subsequent presentations, and make announcements. Mari Quillman needs dedicated, compensated volunteers to help with physically setting up the raffle and auction items, and also to sell raffle tickets. We spent a little more money than usual on raffle items (\$6,700) and had about the same amount of income (\$14,000). Mari also needs help to identify stimulating trips. (Regarding the Symposium: "It was like a wedding; only the mother of the bride knew what didn't go right" – Ken MacDonald).

b. Planning for future Symposia: Tracy Bailey has a checklist for planning for the St. George Symposium in 2021, and will be encouraged to visit St. George following the June Board meeting in Las Vegas, in June 2019. The Dixie Center was mentioned as one venue, but does not have a connected motel. Kristin Berry suggested that at a future meeting here at the DoubleTree we should do a walk-through to see if this facility can still accommodate more attendees.

Q. Nominations Committee: Ken MacDonald chairs this committee. Most functional Board sizes for nonprofits are 4 up to 31 individuals, so 20 is a reasonable number. We need to remind each other what our mission and goal statements are, all Board members should be on at least one committee, etc. If we had 2,000 active members, we would be a much healthier group. We also really need new Board members from Nevada and Utah. We need new Board members with fundraising, habitat protection/enhancement, and education skills, who are not biologists.

NEW BUSINESS

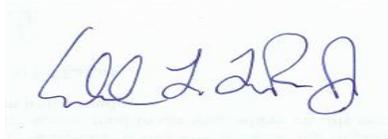
R. Strategic Plan Update/Retreat planning: Bruce Palmer is the chair for the committee. The last plan was from 2015 to 2019, and we are now ready to look at the next five years, 2020 to 2024. Michael Tuma indicated that we were successful at accomplishing many of our goals excepting some Best Management Practices and fundraising. We plan to work with Solution Strategies again. Rather than phone interviews, they plan on providing us a questionnaire we can complete. The last retreat, on June 7-8, 2014 was invigorating. This one is intended to assess our successes and failures since the last retreat and determine what we want to do going forward. There was general agreement that two days would accomplish more than a single day. The best time frame for Solution Strategies is October, and for us would be October 19-20, 2019. **Ed LaRue will check with Paul and Jane Smith about the 29 Palms Inn as a potential location for this retreat on October 19-20, 2019.** The goal is to be able to develop the next five-year plan and present it at the 2020 Symposium. To gauge our success, Halle Kohn suggested we could assign a weighted assessment to each topic so that a value can be determined. **Bruce Palmer will ask all Board members for input on what we want to accomplish at this retreat.** This information can be provided as background information to Solution Strategies to help them develop their questionnaire.

S. Mexico Coordination Committee's Report: Michael Vamstad recently provided an Excel spreadsheet of about 20 biologists involved in research with tortoises in Mexico. He has been talking to Mercy Vaughn and several Mexican organizations about pertinent issues. One of the issues is pursuing permits to perform research on tortoises in Mexico. All members are encouraged to let Michael Vamstad know what they would like him to pursue with regards to conservation of tortoises in Mexico. Eventually, Michael Vamstad will develop a link on our webpage for facilitating research in Mexico. We should also plan for a meeting that gathers all available scientists to begin discussing coordinated research efforts. Michael Tuma suggested looking into export and import permits needed to release Bolson tortoises from New Mexico into Mexico. **Michael Vamstad will redistribute a revised letter that incorporates Judy Hohman's input; and work on a policy statement that describes the vision, mission statement, and function of this committee.** Kristin Berry suggested developing a timeline from the late 1980s on pertinent research and the Council's contribution to Mexican research.

T. New Ideas: The Bylaws do not specifically indicate what happens when Board members are not in attendance or actively participating. It might be best to document these expectations in policy statements rather than the Bylaws.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Michael Tuma, at 16:15.

Draft minutes were recorded, later distributed, and modified with Board member review and input, then respectfully submitted as this final version by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary.



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

Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report DTC Board Meeting of 16 March 2019

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

1. Rule to Revise the DOI's Regulations for Processing Records under the FOIA (National)

1/8/2019 – Ed LaRue receives a notice of this Federal Register Notice on **1/8/2019** from a Utah Council member. Ed forwards this notice to several Board members on **1/10/2019** and distributes the draft comment letter on **1/23/2019**. With eight endorsements, the letter was submitted on **1/27/2019**.

2. Petition to oppose expansion of Nevada Test and Training Range into Desert National Wildlife Refuge (Clark County, Nevada)

1/24/2019 – Ed LaRue receives a notice from the Friends of Nevada Wilderness to oppose this project on **1/24/2019**. On **1/30/2019**, Ed provides letters submitted by the Council in December 2016 and March 2018 opposing the expansion and asking if the Board wants to sign this petition. With 10 endorsements and 1 recusal, the petition was signed by the Council on **2/2/2019**.

3. Off Highway Vehicle BLM Grant Applications (California)

1/29/2019 – Ed LaRue receives a link to availability of these OHV grants on 1/29/2019. Ed forwards the link to other Board members on **2/2/2019**, suggesting that we contact Defenders of Wildlife to see if they want to submit another letter similar to the one submitted in April 2018. On **2/6/2019**, Ed reviews draft letter from Jeff Aardahl and submits comments on behalf of Council, and distributes the letter later that day. With seven endorsements, Ed let Jeff know on **2/12/2019** that he can send the letter,

4. Kern River Pesticide Use Permit Environmental Assessment (San Bernardino County, CA)

1/31/2019 – Ed LaRue receives a notice on **1/31/2019** about availability of an EA for this Pesticide Use Permit, which was distributed to the Board on **2/2/2019**. The draft comment letter is circulated to the Board on **2/20/2019**. With seven endorsements and one recusal, the final letter was submitted on **2/27/2019**.

5. Nevada OHV Play Areas (Nevada)

2/13/2019 – On **2/13/2019**, Ed LaRue receives a notice and attached documents from Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife of potential OHV plan areas being established in Nevada. Ed responds in an email asking Jeff if and when we can comment. The information is distributed to the Board on **2/14/2019**. Ed distributes a draft comment letter on **3/3/2019**. The letter is slightly revised by Ed on 3/5/2019 and redistributed to the Board to encourage a vote (only four endorsements at that time). With only five endorsements and one recusal, the letter is submitted on **3/6/2019**.

6. Increased funding for the Endangered Species Act (National)

2/19/2019 – On **2/19/2019**, Ed LaRue receives a letter from Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) asking the Council to cosign a letter requesting funding in support of FESA. Ed distributes the letter to the Board on 2/20/2019 (from his hotel room in Tucson for 44th Symposium). With seven endorsements and one recusal, Ed lets Stephanie Kurose of CBD know on **2/23/2019** that the Council endorses the letter.

7. Request to cosign a letter opposing appointment of David Bernhardt for Secretary of Interior

3/5/2019 – Ed LaRue receives a letter from Center for Biological Diversity asking the Council to cosign a letter opposing the appointment of David Bernhardt for Secretary of Interior, which Ed immediately distributes to the Board on **3/5/2019**. The deadline for signing on is **3/9/2019**. As of **3/9/2019**, there were only five responses, including three opposed and two in favor. Ed did not respond, so in effect the lack of communication indicated we were not willing to cosign the letter.

8. Recommendations for increased recovery actions (Listed range)

2/28/2019 – On **2/28/2019**, Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife sends a letter to Ed LaRue in which he talks about tortoise declines and recommends some corrective measures. Ed revises the letter on **3/6/2019** and sends it back to Jeff. Jeff is informed on **3/15/2019** that it is okay to submit the letter.

9. Cosign letter opposing Cadiz Pipeline

3/6/2019 – On **3/6/2019**, Ed LaRue receives a letter from David Lamfrom of National Parks Conservation Association asking the Council to cosign a letter supporting SB 307 opposing the Cadiz Pipeline, which is distributed to the Board on the same day. The deadline for cosigning is 3/15/2019. With six endorsements and no opposition, we let Lamfrom know on **3/12/2019** that we endorse the letter.

10. Response to BLM for ignoring previous letter on OHV grant requests

3/6/2019 – On **3/6/2019**, Ed LaRue receives a letter from Jeff Aardahl of Defenders of Wildlife asking the BLM why it summarily ignored all of our considerations for awarding grants through their OHV grants program. Ed responds with revisions that are emailed to Jeff on **3/7/2019**. Jeff is informed on **3/15/2019** that it is okay to submit the letter.

**Ecosystems Advisory Committee
Summary Table from 1/13/2019 to 3/16/2019**

Current date for this latest table revision is: 3/16/2019

Dates (2019)				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	LL	MF	MP	MQ	MT	MV	PW	
1	DOI FOI Regulations	1/8	1/23	1/28	1/26	Y 1/26			PI/Y 1/26		Y 1/26	PI/Y 1/23	Y 1/23			PI/Y 1/25	Y 1/25					R 1/28	Y 1/26
2	Petition to oppose NTTR	1/24	1/30	N/A	2/2	Y 1/31			PI/Y 1/30		Y 2/2	PI/Y 1/30	Y 1/31	Y 1/31	R 1/31	PI/Y 1/30	PI/Y 1/30		Y 1/31				Y 1/31
3	BLM OHV Grant comments	1/29	2/6	3/4	2/12	Y 2/11			A/Y 2/6			PI/Y 2/9	Y 2/6	Y 2/10		PI/Y 2/7	Y 2/9						
4	Kern River PUP	1/31	2/20	3/1	2/27				PI/Y 2/20			PI/Y 2/19	Y 2/26	PI/Y 2/26		PI/Y 2/26	Y 2/26					R 2/27	Y 2/26
5	Nevada OHV	2/13	2/14	3/7	3/6	Y 3/5			PI/Y 3/5			PI/Y 3/3	Y 3/4				PI/Y 3/4					R 3/6	
6	FESA funding CBD cosign	2/19	2/20	2/25	2/23				PI/Y 2/20				Y 2/21	Y 2/21	Y 2/21	Y 2/20	Y 2/20					R 2/21	Y 2/22
7	CBD opposition letter	3/5	3/5	3/9	NA				N 3/5			N 3/5		R 3/10		N 3/5	Y 3/5				R 3/16	R 3/16	
8	Recovery recommendations	2/28	3/6	N/A	3/15	Y 3/11			PI/Y 3/6		Y 3/10	PI/Y 3/9	Y 3/7				Y 3/11						PI/Y 3/7
9	Cosign Cadiz Pipeline letter	3/6	3/6	3/15	3/12				PI/Y 3/6		Y 3/8	Y 3/8	Y 3/7				Y 3/7						Y 3/8
10	BLM OHV grants letter	3/6	3/6	N/A	3/15				PI/Y 3/6		Y 3/10	PI/Y 3/8	Y 3/7				Y 3/11						

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, **LL** = Larry LaPré, **MF** = Maggie Fusari, **MP** = Mark Peaden, **MQ** = Mari Quillman, **MT** = Michael Tuma, **MV** = Michel Vamstad, **PW** = Pete Woodman