

Riverside County Habitat Conservation Authority

5.A

Regular Meeting ~ Minutes ~

Thursday, February 15, 2018

11:00 AM

County Administrative Center

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jonathan Ingram at 11:06 a.m., at the County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside.

Jurisdiction	Attendee	Status	Arrived
City of Corona	Dick Haley	Present	10:49 AM
City of Hemet	Karlee Meyer	Present	10:49 AM
City of Lake Elsinore		Absent	
City of Menifee		Absent	
City of Moreno Valley	David Marquez	Present	10:48 AM
City of Murrieta	Jonathan Ingram	Present	10:48 AM
City of Perris	Michael Vargas	Present	10:49 AM
City of Riverside	Mike Gardner	Present	10:49 AM
City of Temecula	Maryann Edwards	Present	10:48 AM
City of Wildomar		Absent	
District 5	Marion Ashley	Present	10:48 AM
RCHCA Director	Rick Bishop	Present	10:56 AM

Note: Times above reflect when the member was logged in; they may have arrived at the meeting earlier.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board member Mike Gardner led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Chairman Ingram asked for a moment of silence in honor the victims of the recent shooting at a Florida High School.

5. MINUTES

A. Summary Minutes from the November 16, 2017, RCHCA Board Meeting are Available for Consideration.

- Action:**
1. *Approved the Summary Minutes from the November 16, 2017, RCHCA Board meeting.*

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: County of Riverside
SECONDER: City of Perris
AYES: Hemet, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, District 5
ABSTAIN: Corona
ABSENT: Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Wildomar

6. CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: City of Perris
SECONDER: City of Riverside
AYES: Corona, Hemet, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, District 5
ABSENT: Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Wildomar

A. Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies through December 31, 2017

Action: 1. Received and filed.

B. Financial Report through December 31, 2017

Action: 1. Received and filed.

C. Status Report on the Attendance Roster

Action: 1. Received and filed.

D. Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Committees for the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve

Action: 1. Received and filed.

E. Status Report Concerning Reserve Managers' Coordinating Committee

Action: 1. Received and filed.

7. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. Appointment of Budget Subcommittee Member for 2018

Princess Hester, RCHCA Administrative Services Officer, reported that historically the Subcommittee consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and one to three additional Board members. Given difficulties in the past to schedule meetings which work for all Subcommittee members, staff is requesting the appointment of one additional Board member.

Action: 1. Appointed Maryann Edwards, City of Temecula, and Michael Vargas, City of Perris, in addition to the Chair and Vice-Chair.

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	City of Temecula
SECONDER:	City of Riverside
AYES:	Corona, Hemet, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, District 5
ABSENT:	Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Wildomar

B. Status Update on the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Recovery Efforts

Princess Hester, RCHCA Administrative Services Officer, reported that staff continues working with the local U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services' (USFWS) Carlsbad office on Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) recovery. A Request for Proposals was issued in October 2017 for the Habitat Suitability Model. This Model will be beneficial to both RCHCA and partners, such as the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Agency, in implementing a range-wide protocol and acquisition strategies.

USFWS will be supplying the spatial data imagery, which will be the basis of the foundation of this Model.

Two proposals were received; one from the University of California, Riverside, and the other from the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI); staff believes that CBI was the most responsive bidder.

The USFWS is preparing a briefing paper, which is a summary of facts associated with SKR recovery. Ms. Hester will be working closely with USFWS to ensure no new requirements are added. Finalization and adoption of the Model will be presented at the May meeting.

The USFWS Carlsbad office has dedicated a staff member specifically on the finalization of the SKR Draft Recovery Plan. Staff from both Agencies participate in monthly conference calls to receive progress updates.

The USFWS has improved its rule making process by implementing a Species Status Assessment. Each year, various agencies submit information to the USFWS on what has been done to support the species, such as monitoring reports, threats and analysis, and conservation actions to name a few. With this new Assessment tool, a dedicated USFWS staff gathers all the information and reviews it before entering the rule making process. Another effort by the USFWS includes a peer review prior to the rule being made.

Staff are still on target to complete the review of the SKR Draft Recovery Plan and have it in place by 2019.

In March 2018, staff and two Board members will be traveling to Sacramento to meet with the wildlife agencies. The USFWS will be sending a partnership letter to the wildlife agencies outlining its relationship with RCHCA and the joint recovery efforts of both Agencies.

In May 2017, RCHCA leaders and staff made its first trip to Washington, D.C., and met with various agencies, as well as Legislators and their staff, to introduce RCHCA and discuss challenges and efforts in demonstrating the recovery of SKR in Western Riverside County. Staff is requesting approval to plan for another trip to D.C. to build upon those relationships made last year and to continue relaying the positive efforts made toward SKR recovery.

Board member Dick Haley asked which agencies staff would be meeting with in D.C.

Mrs. Hester responded that meeting would occur with local congressional and senate leaders, and various wildlife agencies.

Action: 1. *Authorized staff to plan the annual trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with local legislative members and officials from the wildlife agencies to discuss SKR recovery efforts made in Western Riverside County.*

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	District 5
SECONDER:	City of Riverside
AYES:	Corona, Hemet, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, District 5
ABSENT:	Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Wildomar

C. Status Update on Public Access

Brian Shomo, RCHCA Natural Resources Manager, reported that while many of the local reserves are owned by state and federal agencies and water districts, staff continues to work on public access for the land RCHCA owns.

A Scope of Work is being finalized for inclusion in a Request for Proposals for a feasibility study to assist in the development of a Trail Concept Plan at the Steele Peak Reserve. At least two public meetings will be held in order to involve the community. The goal is to develop trail facilities to encourage visits to the subregion, creating new opportunities for economic development, and enhanced recreational opportunities and quality of life.

Steele Peak is owned by RCHCA and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are designated routes through BLM parcels. Staff is focusing on RCHCA lands right now.

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park provides hiking, mountain biking, and nature photography. Lake Perris State Park / San Jacinto Wilderness Area provides for camping, equestrian use, hiking biking, boating, and bird hunting. The Southwest Multi-Species Reserve provides for equestrian use, hiking, fishing, and biking around the lake.

The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and the County of Riverside have entered an agreement to develop a very large trail.

RCHCA owns considerable acreage in Lake Mathews, but is land-locked with MWD, which owns most of the land with roads access. MWD is also limited on the use of its land via a settlement agreement with the Audobon Society. This land provides for limited hunting of rabbit and dove.

The Protrero Reserve also has limited hunting. The Steele Lockhead Martin facility has unlimited hunting opportunities.

Chair Ingram indicated that there needs to be a sense of urgency in meeting with the Bureau of Land Management, Karen Cleary-Rose, and this Board to discuss access and the types of access RCHCA can provide.

Action: 1. *Received and filed.*

D. Report on the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Reserve Management and Monitoring Efforts

Brian Shomo, RCHCA Natural Resources Manager, reported that staff have removed and treated all the tamarisk and tobacco trees from RCHCA lands utilizing a 10-man crew from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Under a contract with the Metropolitan Water District (WMD) staff removed and treated all the tamarisk and tobacco trees. A total of four baseline vegetation surveys were completed on behalf of MWD.

RCHCA received a \$142,000 grant from the State Responsibility Area. The California Conservation Crew will provide a 10-man crew for four months to perform various fuel reduction and fire prevention activities.

Pre-burn data indicates nearly 100% ground coverage at heights not compatible for SKR.

There is an approximately 13% increase in SKR from nearly three years ago. Statistically speaking, the gender ratio is nearly 50/50. SKR are reproducing at a good rate.

The Lake Elsinore Scout Group, RCHCA staff, and WRCOG staff participated in riparian restoration; 100 cottonwood, 100 mule fat, and 50 willow trees were prepared and planted. Staff from the Western Riverside Council of Governments also assisted in the plantings. RCHCA staff installed the irrigation.

SKR monitoring will continue in 2018. A summary of 2017 activities include the completion of raptor and reptile surveys; reserves were grazed and burned; six Burrowing Owl boxes were installed; and interpretive garden and reserve office landscaping occurred, to name a few.

Chairman Ingram suggesting working with the school district for student volunteers.

Action: 1. *Received and filed.*

8. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rick Bishop had no report.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no requested items for future agendas.

10. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no general announcements.

11. CLOSED SESSION

There were no reportable actions.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next RCHCA Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2018, at 11:00 a.m., at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 1st Floor Board Chambers.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 p.m.
