
Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency

City of Corona ◇ *City of Hemet* ◇ *City of Lake Elsinore* ◇ *City of Moreno Valley*
City of Murrieta ◇ *City of Perris* ◇ *City of Riverside* ◇ *City of Temecula* ◇ *County of Riverside*

MINUTES

Thursday, February 15, 2007 - 9:00 a.m.

Riverside County Administrative Center
4080 Lemon Street
Board Hearing Room – 1st Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

PRESENT: Ms. Robin Lowe, Chairperson, City of Hemet
Supervisor Bob Buster, County of Riverside
Mr. Eugene Montanez, City of Corona
Mr. Bob Schiffner, City of Lake Elsinore
Mr. Gary Thomasian, City of Murrieta
Mr. Mark Yarbrough, City of Perris

ABSENT: Mr. Dom Betro, City of Riverside
Mr. Steve Brown, City of Temecula
Mr. Bill Batey, City of Moreno Valley

STAFF: Carolyn Syms Luna, RCHCA
Gail Barton, RCHCA
Kristi Lovelady, RCHCA
Karin Watts-Bazan, County Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Robin Lowe called the meeting to order at 9:19 a.m. She introduced Gary Thomasian to the Board and audience. Mr. Thomasian is our new Board member representing the City of Murrieta, replacing Kelly Seyarto.

Mr. Thomasian stated that he is a 16-year resident of the city of Murrieta and is excited about serving on our Board.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call of the RCHCA Board of Directors showed six member agencies present with the cities of Riverside, Temecula and Moreno Valley absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

4. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Robin Lowe stated that she will be traveling to Washington, DC, at the end of the month, representing the RCTC, at a SCAG meeting. She stated she's hoping to meet with Dirk Kempthorn in an effort to bring him up-to-date on the RCHCA and what we're doing. She encouraged the Board members to notify her of anything they would like her to address while in Washington.

5. ADDITIONS/REVISIONS

There were no additions/revisions to the agenda.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR: Presented for Block Approval. Board Members have the option of excluding discussion items from a master motion.

6.1 Minutes from the November 16, 2006, Meeting

The minutes from the November 16, 2006, meeting were presented for approval.

6.2 Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies through December 2006

The Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Mitigation Fee Collection report for FY 2006/2007 was presented for review.

6.3 RCHCA Financial Report through December 2006

The fund balance as of December 31, 2006, is \$13,465,623.06.

6.4 Status Report Concerning RCHCA Seed Money for Motte-Rimrock Reserve Facility

Kristi Lovelady reported that at the RCHCA Board meeting on May 18, 2006, the Board authorized the expenditure of \$100,000 for seed money for a facility improvement project at Motte-Rimrock Reserve, pending the securing of matching funds by the University of California, Riverside (UCR) within the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

Reserve Director, Dr. Ken Halama, has been working with UCR officials in an effort to identify potential monetary sources to match the RCHCA commitment. Under Prop. 84, which was approved by the electorate on November 7, 2006, UCR is prepared to apply for a grant for matching funds from a designated \$25,000,000 source available to the University of California Natural Reserve System to, among other things, create and upgrade facilities on the System's 35 Reserves. UCR is currently working out the details of the distribution of the Prop. 84 funds in an effort to maximize this funding

resource.

Considering the opportunity that exists for UCR, and the fact that there have been no proposals from other reserves for one-time facility improvements, the RCHCA FY 2007/08 budget will reflect the \$100,000 available to the Motte-Rimrock Reserve, pending the securing of matching funds.

MOTION for approval of items 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4: Bob Buster
SECOND: Eugene Montanez

Motion Approved
Ayes-6
None Opposed

7. POLICY CALENDAR:

7.1 Verbal Report on Status of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

Carolyn Syms Luna reported that a public draft of the CVMSHCP should be released on the last Monday of this month. She stated that as of yesterday, the CVAG Executive Committee was going to authorize CVAG staff to release the document to the public.

Eugene Montanez asked how Desert Hot Springs will go about preserving their lands without being part of the CVMSHCP.

Ms. Luna stated that the City of Desert Hot Springs would have to go to the wildlife agencies independently and negotiate via the Section 7 process.

7.2 MOU with RCA Concerning Pilot Program for Burrowing Owl Introduction at the Lake Skinner Reserve

Kristi Lovelady discussed the MOU with the RCA concerning the pilot program for Burrowing owl introduction in the Lake Skinner Reserve. The project included the following four phases:

1. Treatment (mowing) of three contiguous 80-acre plots, two times per year for five years.
2. Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) monitoring before and after mowing.
3. Burrowing owl monitoring.
4. Artificial burrow installation and maintenance.

Ms. Lovelady stated that an MOU was recently approved by the RCA Board. The MOU spells out our cooperative agreement with the RCA to do this particular project. It also ensures several particular features that we are concerned about with the RCHCA. Those features are as follows:

1. SKR populations will be monitored.
2. If the SKR populations are negatively affected by enhancing the Burrowing owl habitat, then the SKR habitat will be replaced by enhancement activities on RCHCA lands.
3. The enhancement activities will be done by the RCA, at no expense to the RCHCA or to the Lake Skinner Reserve.

Ms. Lovelady asked the Board to authorize the Chair to initial several corrections to the MOU editorial, along with APN corrections. With that, RCHCA staff would then ask the Board to authorize the Chair to sign the MOU with the corrections.

MOTION to authorize the Chair to initial the corrections to the MOU and return it to the RCA for their final approval: Bob Buster

SECOND: Eugene Montanez

**Motion Approved
Ayes–6
None Opposed**

7.3 Consideration and Adoption of Resolution Number 2007-001 Approving Revisions to the Appendix of the RCHCA Conflict of Interest Code

Kristi Lovelady reported that on a periodic basis, RCHCA staff works with legal counsel to determine whether we need to amend or update our Conflict of Interest Code. In our recent review it was determined that the Appendix required revisions to reflect updates to disclosure categories and designated positions.

Ms. Lovelady asked the Board to adopt the amended Appendix to the RCHCA Conflict of Interest Code, approve Resolution Number 2007-001, amending the Appendix, and forward the amended Appendix and Resolution to the RCHCA's Code Reviewing Body for approval.

MOTION to adopt the amended Appendix to the RCHCA Conflict of Interest Code, approve Resolution Number 2007-001 amending the Appendix, and forward the amended Appendix and Resolution to the RCHCA's Code Reviewing Body for approval: Eugene Montanez

SECOND: Bob Buster

**Motion Approved
Ayes–6
None Opposed**

7.4 Consideration and Adoption of Resolution Number 2007-002 Concerning RCHCA Reimbursements

Karin Watts-Bazan stated that the reimbursement policy allows for the RCHCA Board members and staff to be reimbursed for expenses related to RCHCA business. It is now a requirement of Government Code Section 53232.2 and 53233.3 that we have an officially adopted policy. Staff is recommending, at this time, that Resolution 2007-002 adopting RCHCA Policy 2 be adopted.

Eugene Montanez suggested removing out-of-state travel requiring Board approval prior to the trip from the policy.

Supervisor Buster asked if the reimbursement for meals, etc., is within the County's guidelines for reimbursement, along with copies of receipts.

Ms. Luna stated that meal reimbursement, etc., matches the County's guidelines for reimbursement.

Supervisor Buster stated that there is also the issue of foreign travel.

Chairperson Lowe reported that it's not likely that any RCHCA Board member or staff would be traveling outside the U.S. for business purposes.

Supervisor Buster stated that to the extent it can be done, budgeting for travel should be done in advance of a business trip. In the event of an emergency trip, a listing of expenses should be presented at the next Board meeting for ratification.

MOTION to approve RCHCA Policy 2 as amended above by removing out-of-state travel requiring Board approval prior to the trip: Bob Buster

SECOND: Robin Lowe

Motion Approved

Ayes—6

None Opposed

7.5 RCHCA Mid-Year Budget Report

Kristi Lovelady discussed the mid-year budget report. She stated that expenses have been well managed and revenues are slightly over what we had anticipated. Ms. Lovelady reported the following:

- At this time, no funds have been expended from the Core Reserve Acquisition Expense account. Staff does not anticipate any reserve acquisition expenses through the end of this fiscal year.
- Some monies have been set aside for the BLM land exchange; however, we do not anticipate spending this money during the current fiscal year. It is possible that such expenditures may occur next fiscal year.
- Approximately 5% of the Land Improvement budget has been expended, to date, this fiscal year. The RCHCA is making progress on a large, multi-year, fencing program at Lake Mathews. Staff anticipates that the fencing will not commence until the early part of the next fiscal year. Fencing is a major component of the overall RCHCA land management strategy and will likely continue to be a major budget expense for several years. Funds for the improvements at Motte-Rimrock Reserve will be carried over into the FY 2007/08 budget as it is not likely that they will be able to match our donation by the end of the current fiscal year.
- To date, 23% of the monies set aside for Consultants has been expended. These

funds were calculated to provide funding for the following three tasks at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves:

- ✓ Funding consultant costs associated with the completion of the SKR management plan.
- ✓ Continue funding SKR monitoring on RCHCA land.
- ✓ Begin funding the costs associated with the RCHCA's SKR management plan implementation.

At this time, RCHCA staff does not anticipate expending all of the funds in this line item.

- Only 12% of the monies for Professional Services have been expended to date. More charges will accrue before the end of the fiscal year. This line item anticipates costs associated with land appraisals, grant writing, and legislative services.
- RCHCA staff does not anticipate expending any monies for Professional Services – Law Enforcement Personnel as we do not expect to have a contract for law enforcement services in place by June 30, 2007. It is expected that this item will carry over to the FY 2007/08 budget.
- To date, no funds have been expended from the Special Program Expense account. However, the RCHCA will be working with the City of Riverside to develop and implement an event at the Sycamore Canyon Reserve commemorating the National Endangered Species Day on May 11, 2007. The RCHCA and City coordinated a similar event (on a smaller scale) last year with great success.

7.6 Approval of SKR Management Plan for RCHCA Lands at Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves and Status Report on Monitoring Program

Gail Barton reported that in October 2005, the RCHCA Board approved a contract with DUDEK and Associates for the completion of a SKR Management Plan, a Fire Management Plan, and institute a monitoring program for RCHCA owned lands at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves. The Plan includes the following key elements:

- It defines the management goals, objectives, and strategies.
- It defines the monitoring program to aid in formulating management and long-term monitoring decisions.
- It divides the land into management units that detail issues and options for management activities specific to each unit.
- It defines the fire management plan that looks at the environmental issues and at preserving life and property.

- It has a discussion of administrative management tasks.
- It addresses public access, outreach, and education.

Ms. Barton stated that the Plan is a comprehensive, yet practical Plan.

Ms. Barton stated that we have completed the August/September and November/December monitoring sessions and will be going out for the February/March session.

Ms. Barton asked the Board to approve the SKR Habitat Management Monitoring Plan and Fire Management Plan; direct RCHCA staff to finalize the Plan and return to the May RCHCA Board meeting with a recommended strategy for Plan implementation, and direct staff to secure outstanding CDF input and add it to the document in Appendix G.

Ms. Luna stated that of the seven reserves in the SKR system, Sycamore Canyon is the only reserve that has a Reserve Management Plan. The plan is old and needs to be updated. Motte-Rimrock Reserve also has a Management Plan that we will request be updated. She stated that the SKR Management Plan for Lake Mathews and Steele Peak has been drafted so that it can be used as a model for the other management plans.

Ms. Luna stated that RCHCA staff would like to come back to this Board in May, in order to review, in more detail, the Plan with the Board members. At that time, staff will discuss how they would like to implement the Plan, as well as present a budget for the Plan.

MOTION to accept the SKR Management Plan: Gary Thomasian
SECOND: Eugene Montanez

Motion Approved
Ayes—6
None Opposed

7.7 Status Report of Phase 1 Fencing Program for RCHCA Lands at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves

Gail Barton reported that RCHCA staff is working on a phased-in plan for the repair and reinforcement of existing fencing, along with the erection of new fencing on RCHCA lands at Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves. In addition to the fencing, signs will be placed on the reserves that cite both County and California Civil Code regarding the prosecution of illegal OHV use, dumping, and trespassing on RCHCA lands.

7.8 Report on Reserve Management Committees (RMC) for the Southwest Riverside County Multiple Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve

Gail Barton reported on the Reserve Management Committees for the Southwest Riverside County Multiple Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve. She

reported the following:

November 1, 2006, Southwest Riverside County Multiple Species Reserve

- The Committee considered a proposal from Metropolitan Water District (MWD) regarding a “Watershed, Habitat and Environmental Education Program”. This item is on “hold” until a further date.
- The strategy to complete the Reserve Management Plan was considered.
- The RCHCA proposed Table of Contents was adopted.
- The Committee agreed to cancel the December and/or January RMC meeting in order to give the Reserve Manager adequate time to complete the proposed Management Plan.
- It was determined that the Management Plan should be completed prior to the February 2007 RMC meeting.
- The Committee considered the Reserve Office facility. The conclusion was that MWD would not handle the procurement. In order for the RCHCA to procure the facility, there would be a cost for utilizing County Purchasing. There would need to be an agreement between the RCHCA and MWD to define the responsibilities and procedures. Such an agreement would come back to the RCHCA Board for approval.

Chairperson Lowe asked what we had decided on regarding relocating the Reserve Manager’s office at the SWRCMSR.

Ms. Barton stated that the RMC has agreed that a new facility is needed and that the Reserve has the funds to pay for the new facility. The RMC is now considering how the procurement will be handled. Ms. Barton stated that for the RCHCA to handle the procurement, we must have an agreement with MWD that outlines the particulars because MWD holds the Reserve funds and the facility will be located on MWD land.

Chairperson Lowe stated that since MWD holds the funds for the Reserve, she would like Karin Watts-Bazan to make a Public Information Records request regarding the monies that MWD is holding for the Reserve, where it is located, and what it is being used for.

December 13, 2006, Lake Mathews Reserve

- The RMC reviewed a draft summary of documents that may be used to develop a new Management Plan that will include MWD owned RCHCA easement lands. Ms. Barton stated that we would ask that they incorporate the plan for our lands into their document.
- The RMC examined the encroachment of a neighbor onto MWD owned reserve

land and discussed the response that will be pursued by MWD.

Chairperson Lowe suggested that RCHCA staff develop a short presentation for MWD's attorney in an effort to bring her up-to-date on the RCHCA. Chairperson Lowe suggested that this be set up for some time in the spring.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Carolyn Syms Luna reported that for last year's Endangered Species Day event, Supervisor Buster contributed \$250 from his discretionary funding at the County. This money paid for a firm to be present, and bring with them several endangered species so that participants at the event could view the animals in a personal setting.

We are looking forward to making this year's event bigger and better than last year.

9. CLOSED SESSION

No items were scheduled for closed session.

10. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Lowe suggested that we have a brief report regarding the Esperanza fire, and what it meant to Potrero, at the next meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next meeting will be held on May 17, 2007.