
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, June 21, 2007 - 9:00 a.m.

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

PRESENT: Mr. Mark Yarbrough, Acting Chairperson, City of Perris
Mr. Steve Brown, City of Temecula
Supervisor Bob Buster, County of Riverside
Mr. Gary Thomasian, City of Murrieta
Mr. Frank West, City of Moreno Valley

ABSENT: Mr. Bill Batey, City of Moreno Valley
Mr. Dom Betro, City of Riverside
Ms. Robin Lowe, City of Hemet
Mr. Eugene Montanez, City of Corona
Mr. Bob Schiffner, City of Lake Elsinore

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mark Yarbrough called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call of the RCHCA Board of Directors showed five member agencies present with the cities of Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore and Riverside absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

4. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

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 February 15, 2007 and May 9, 2007 Meetings

The minutes from the February 15, 2007 and May 9, 2007, meetings were presented for approval.

6.2 Revised Minutes from September 29, 2005 Meeting

The revised minutes from the September 29, 2005 meeting were presented for approval.

6.3 Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies through April 30, 2007

The fund balance as of April 30, 2007, is \$2,844,805.50.

6.4 RCHCA Financial Report through April 30, 2007

The fund balance as of April 30, 2007, is \$15,038,120.94.

6.5 Status Report Concerning the Sycamore Canyon Habitat Restoration Grant Proposal

Carolyn Syms Luna reported that we have been working closely with the City of Riverside Park and Recreation Department to prepare a grant proposal for the removal of non-native grasses, etc., from the Sycamore Canyon Reserve, thus encouraging native grasses to repopulate.

On April 3, 2007, the City Council took an action to allow their staff to submit the grant to the State Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Ms. Luna stated that RCHCA staff will keep the Board apprised as the grant documentation is finalized and officially considered by the Wildlife Conservation Board. She also stated that she would like to take a representative from the City of Riverside and from the RCHCA to Sacramento in order to give testimony on the grant proposal.

Ms. Luna stated that an update on this proposal will be given at the next RCHCA Board meeting.

6.6 Report from Reserve Managers Coordinating Committee (RMCC)

A written report regarding the April 26, 2007, RMCC meeting was presented for informational purposes.

MOTION for approval of items 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6: Frank West

SECOND: Gary Thomasian

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

7. POLICY CALENDAR:

7.1 Report Concerning RCHCA Sponsored National Endangered Species Day Event

Carolyn Syms Luna gave a report on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Day event that was held on May 11, 2007, at Sycamore Canyon Reserve. She stated that this was the second annual ESA Day. Ms. Luna reported that the RCHCA partnered with the City of Riverside and the County's Environmental Programs Department (EPD) to host an outdoor educational program developed to commemorate the National Endangered Species Act Day. The theme was, "Where our World and the Natural World Meet".

Ms. Luna stated that three programs were scheduled throughout the day. The first two were modeled after the State of California's 6th grade Life Science curriculum. The third program was modeled after the requirements for the Girl Scout Wildlife Interest Badge. The 130 attendees included 6th grade students and teachers from Mission Bell Elementary and Arizona Intermediate schools, local Girl Scouts, and members of the surrounding community who happened to be enjoying the reserve that day.

As with last year's event, Wildhaven Ranch, a local wildlife rehabilitation center, brought several animals to the event. This allowed the students to enjoy a personalized introduction to some of the animals they might encounter in a reserve.

Event attendees also received a commemorative backpack, a RCHCA pen, and the newly released *Field Guide to Habitats, Plants and Wildlife of Riverside County*. The field guide was a collaborative effort between the RCHCA and the EPD.

A reporter from The Press Enterprise, along with a cameraman, were in attendance to cover the event. As a result, the event was the headline article for the Local section of the Press Enterprise on May 12, 2007.

Ms. Luna introduced Ken Baez, Chad Young, David Carr, and Jared Bond of the EPD staff. They worked together to develop the Field Guide that was given to the students at the ESA Day event.

Ms. Luna stated she would like to continue to grow the event and make it even bigger next year. However, Sycamore Canyon Reserve is a small reserve and may not be able to accommodate the number of people in attendance. It may be necessary to

move the event to a larger reserve.

Mr. Yarbrough commended the EPD staff for the Field Guide they put together for the students.

Mr. Thomasian suggested that we look at grant monies to assist with promoting this event on an annual basis.

7.2 Approval of RCHCA Financial Audit for Year End June 2006

Greg Neal stated that the RCHCA contracted with Ahern, Adcock, Devlin, LLP (AAD), to prepare an annual audit for FY 2005/06 of the Agency's accounts and records. He stated that, in the Auditor's opinion, the financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency as of June 30, 2006, and the results of its operations for the year then ended, in conformity with United States generally accepted accounting principles". Their findings are as follows:

- **Capital Assets:** During testing, AAD noted a significant number of land parcels that were included on the asset listing which were not owned by the RCHCA. There were several instances where the Riverside County Assessor's office did not reflect the RCHCA's address on Agency owned property.

AAD Recommendation: That the RCHCA assign an individual the responsibility of updating the capital asset listing on at least an annual basis, including calculation of depreciation expense.

RCHCA Action: The RCHCA has revised its asset list according to the auditor's recommended standard. The asset list will be entered into the County Auditor-Controller's Asset Module, which will capture accumulated depreciation. The asset list will be evaluated and updated on an annual basis in accordance with GASB 34. Staff has corrected the address errors in the County Assessor's records.

- **Accounting System:** The Auditor-Controller's office records some accruals, but not the majority of the accruals. There were instances where the accruals were not in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles which require that accounts payable be recorded when the goods and services are received, not based on date invoiced. Additionally, AAD noted that some prior year audit adjustments were not recorded in the general ledger.

AAD Recommendation: That the RCHCA maintain records, adjustments and accruals necessary to provide accurate financial reporting in compliance with both modified accrual and full accrual basis of accounting as required by GASB 34. The RCHCA should ensure that all required adjustments necessary for accurate financial reporting are recorded within the general ledger. In the event that the Agency is unable to record the adjustments into the fiscal year under audit, the adjustments, to the extent they affect revenues and expenditures/expenses in the subsequent year should be recorded against fund balance/net assets.

RCHCA Action: For FY 2007/08, the County Auditor-Controller's office has modified its procedures in an effort to capture more prior year activity through accounts payable. Also, the RCHCA has proactively initiated a procedure to ensure that revenue accruals occur in a timely and proper manner. Additional care in these accounting areas, plus a better understanding of the needs of AAD, should eliminate similar findings in subsequent year's audits.

- **Board of Directors Minutes:** It was noted that the minutes reflected authorization of the sale of a specified parcel of land. The actual property sold was different than the assessor parcel number authorized within the minutes.

AAD Recommendation: It is recommended that the minutes reflect corrections or changes, when appropriate, at the earliest point in which the error is discovered or the correction is warranted.

RCHCA Action: This recommended correction to the minutes mentioned above is included as Item 6.2 of this agenda. In the event that future minutes are discovered to contain material errors, then corrections will be made promptly.

- **Board of Directors:** AAD noted that organizations benefit from new perspectives and/or dynamics as a result of the periodic rotation of Board officers and members.

AAD Recommendation: The RCHCA consider establishing criteria which would facilitate periodic changes of the Board officers and members.

Prospective RCHCA Action: Staff has reviewed the methodology used by the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) to select the Chair and Vice-Chair. The language is included as Exhibit 7.2B and can be used as a starting point for the basis of a policy.

Mark Yarbrough stated that he agrees with the process of rotating the Board officers on a periodic basis, if they feel the need to, beginning in January 2008.

Mr. Neal asked the Board to approve the audit for FY 2005/06 and instruct RCHCA staff to develop a policy similar to the Regional Conservation Authority's that would provide for the periodic rotation of Board officers.

MOTION to approve the audit for FY 2005/06 and instruct staff to develop a policy similar to the RCA's that would provide for the periodic rotation of Board officers:

Gary Thomasian

SECOND: Bob Buster

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

7.3 Consideration of RCHCA Fiscal Year 2007/2008 Operating Budget

Greg Neal presented the proposed budget for FY 2007/08 to the Board. He stated

that the budget continues to focus on land management and key administrative functions. The proposed budget also includes a Natural Resources Manager and two part-time maintenance personnel. The budget does not anticipate any costs associated with core reserve acquisitions and minimal costs associated with the BLM Land Exchange Agreement Implementation. Consultant and professional services expenses have also been reduced.

MOTION to adopt the proposed budget for FY 2007/08 as presented: Frank West

SECOND: Gary Thomasian

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

7.4 Authorization for Ahern, Adcock, Devlin, LLP to perform the RCHCA's Annual Audit for Year End 2007

Greg Neal discussed the upcoming audit for year end 2007. Mr. Neal asked the Board to direct the RCHCA Executive Director to sign the Letter of Engagement allowing Ahern, Adcock, Devlin, LLP to commence with the audit at a cost of approximately \$13,500.

MOTION to direct the RCHCA Executive Director to sign the Letter of Engagement allowing Ahern, Adcock, Devlin, LLP to commence with the audit for year end 2007:

Gary Thomasian

SECOND: Steve Brown

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

7.5 Consideration of the Lake Mathews/Steele Peak Reserve Management Plan and Corresponding Budget

Gail Barton stated in October 2005, the RCHCA executed a contract with DUDEK and Associates to complete a SKR Management Plan which includes a Fire Management Plan and monitoring program for RCHCA owned lands at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves. The plan provides practical and reasonable goals and recommended actions for the management of RCHCA owned lands at Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves.

Copies of the final SKR Management Plan were provided to all Board members for their review. The Plan includes the following key elements:

- Overview of the management goals, objectives, and strategies.
- A physical description of each management unit within the Plan area, including detailed management issues and options specific to the particular unit.
- A Fire Management Plan that addresses preventative measures, public health and safety concerns, environmental issues, and consistency with resource management objectives and activities.
- Discussion of administrative management tasks.

- Public access, outreach, and educational opportunities consistent with reserve management objectives and constraints.
- Description of the short-term monitoring program and discussion of how resulting data will be utilized to inform management decisions and long-term monitoring.

Ms. Barton stated that a critical ingredient in building and implementing the Management Plan for both Reserves is the hiring of a Natural Resource Manager, along with two part-time maintenance staff.

Ms. Barton presented the proposed budget for the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves. The budget itemizes the costs for implementing the Management Plan and includes \$500,000 for fencing and \$250,000 for monitoring that was previously earmarked by this Board.

Ms. Barton asked the Board to approve the SKR Habitat Management Plan for RCHCA owned lands in the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves, approve the recommended strategy for Plan implementation, and approve the proposed budget for FY 2007/08.

MOTION to approve the SKR Habitat Management Plan for RCHCA owned lands in the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves, approve the recommended strategy for Plan implementation, and approve the proposed budget for FY 2007/08: Frank West

SECOND: Gary Thomasian

Motion Approved

Ayes–5

None Opposed

7.6 Phase 1 Fencing Program for RCHCA Lands at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves

Gail Barton gave an update on the Phase 1 fencing program for RCHCA owned lands at the Lake Mathews and Steele Peak Reserves. She stated that the survey work is complete, signs have been ordered, and the RFQ for fencing and placement of signs is being prepared.

7.7 Report on Reserve Management Committees for the Southwest Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve

Gail Barton gave an update on the Reserve Management Committee (RMC) meetings as follows:

Southwest Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve:

Discussion included the following:

- Consideration of an MWD proposed interpretive program partnership;
- Reserve Public Use Policy;
- Consideration of process and options for securing a new office facility;

- Discussion of research necessary to determine whether two additional MWD parcels belong in the Reserve;
- Concurrence with a Vegetation Management Plan that will address controlled burns and fuels reduction;
- Institution of a "Log of Actions" to document decisions and accompanying conditions agreed to by Committee members;
- Consideration of options related to the Reserve tractor that is no longer functional;
- Request from USFWS to consider a SKR research project being proposed by Conservation Research of Endangered Species by the San Diego Zoological Society;
- Consideration of the ability of the Alamos School Reunion group to continue to use the Alamos School for their reunions and to access and copy video tapes of interviews that relate to the history of the areas;
- Review of the draft Management Plan.

Lake Mathews Reserve:

- Consideration of issues relating to Reserve security;
- Review of completed data summary and the process required in order to complete a management plan that will include MWD owned RCHCA easement lands;
- Received an update on the MWD response to the encroachment of a neighbor onto MWD owned reserve land.

7.8 RCHCA Policy Update

Carolyn Syms Luna reported that on November 16, 2006, and February 15, 2007, respectively, this Board adopted RCHCA Purchasing policies, along with a RCHCA Reimbursement Policy. She stated that we have been systematically updating our policies to bring our agency in line with other industry standards. We discovered that additional subject areas require policy clarification. Therefore, we would like to bring the following policies to this Board for review and approval on the following dates:

August 16, 2007

- Acquisition of Property and Disposal of Surplus Land
- Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Record Retention

November 15, 2007

- Acquisition and Disposal of Equipment
- Access to Public Records
- Creation of a Budget Subcommittee

Ms. Luna asked the Board to direct RCHCA staff to develop the above policies for the aforementioned six subject areas and bring them before the Board for approval on the above dates.

MOTION to direct RCHCA staff to develop the above policies for the aforementioned six subject areas and bring them before the Board for review and approval on the above dates: Gary Thomasian

SECOND: Bob Buster

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

7.9 Adoption of Resolution No. 2007-003 which Revises Policy No. RCHCA-002 Concerning a Reimbursement for Expenses Policy

Karin Watts-Bazan stated that it has come to staff's attention that changes to the Reimbursement for Expenses policy are necessary in order to provide clarity with respect to certain reimbursable expenses. She stated that the changes specifically focus on transportation, lodging, and meals.

Board members were provided with a redlined copy of Policy No. RCHCA-002 which indicates the suggested revisions to the policy.

Ms. Watts-Bazan stated that staff is recommending that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2007-003 which revises Policy No. RCHCA-002 concerning the Reimbursement for Expenses policy.

MOTION to adopt Resolution No. 2007-003 which Revises Policy No. RCHCA-002 concerning the Reimbursement for Expenses Policy. The maximum dollar amount per trip, not requiring prior Board approval, will be adjusted to \$2,500: Steve Brown

SECOND: Gary Thomasian

Motion Approved

Ayes-5

None Opposed

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

Carolyn Syms Luna discussed the Plan that has been circulated for public comment. She stated that the responses have been received from CVAG staff, as they are the lead agency concerning this plan. Ms. Luna stated that there has been a bit of a glitch in that there is a project in the city of Desert Hot Springs that has gone before LAFCO. She reported that concerns have been expressed by CVAG in that if the development is allowed to proceed forward as proposed in the annexation, it could have some significant ramifications on the Plan.

Ms. Luna stated that she believes all comments regarding the Plan are to be submitted back to CVAG by the end of July 2007.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report was given.

9. CLOSED SESSION

No items were scheduled for closed session.

10. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Supervisor Buster asked the RCHCA Executive Director to clarify what our policy is, for the public's awareness, regarding the posting of upcoming RCHCA regular and special meetings and meeting agendas.

Ms. Luna deferred this question to the RCHCA's legal counsel for comment.

Ms. Watts-Bazan stated that pursuant to the Brown Act, the RCHCA is required to post meeting notices/agendas in an area outside the meeting place. She stated that meeting notices/agendas are posted in the display case outside the main entrance to the CAC. This display case is accessible 24-hours per day. Ms. Watts-Bazan stated that we also, although we are not required to, post the meeting notices/agendas on the RCHCA website. She also reported that if we receive a request by an individual or entity that wishes to receive notices of our meetings, we will provide that as well.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 a.m. The next meeting will be held on August 16, 2007.