

Nature Reserve of Orange County (NROC)
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Minutes of Regular Meeting

Date: March 8, 2006
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Board Room
Irvine, CA

Meeting was started at 1:00 p.m. by committee chair Milan Mitrovich.

The following members of the TAC were present at the meeting:

Trish Smith, The Nature Conservancy
Jon Keeley, UC Los Angeles
Allan Schoenherr, Fullerton College
Milan Mitrovich, Nature Reserve of Orange County
Lyn McAfee, Nature Reserve of Orange County
Will Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Sharon Heider, City of Irvine

The following members of the TAC were absent:

Kathy Keane, Biological Consultant
Brad Henderson, California Department of Fish and Game

The following invited guests of the TAC were present:

Albert Lucero, County of Orange

Highlights from the meeting are as follows.

- Minutes from the last TAC meeting (November 30th) were approved with editions provided by Will Miller.
- Cactus Wren Translocation Project, approved by the Board for funding in December 2005, was resurrected after staff ecologist was informed by Trish Smith that the donor site located on Irvine Company property was still intact and not slated for grading until mid-July of this year. Prior to this announcement, the staff ecologist was operating under the false impression that the donor site was graded earlier this year and had thus discontinued planning efforts. After reviewing the present time-schedule for grading and necessary field-work involved with capturing, banding, and releasing of the cactus wrens, the TAC concluded that there was still time to complete the project successfully. The TAC suggested that project should continue as originally planned, with the

understanding that the permitting process needed to be expedited in order for the project to be a success.

- TAC reviewed a request by Dr. Risebrough, principal investigator of the Raptor Egg Contaminant Study, initiated in 1999 and one of three interrelated studies of raptors identified in the Reserve's Umbrella Monitoring Program, to receive continued funding to complete the long-overdue study of organochloride contaminants levels in the nesting raptors of Orange County. Project details were discussed as well as reasons for the substantial delay in project completion. Although performance-record was considered to be poor, the TAC decided to suspend their decision on whether to recommend the project to the Board for continual funding until receipt of more detailed information as to the current status of the project and value of the project to the Nature Reserve.
- TAC was provided an update concerning the on-going Cactus Wren and Cactus Scrub Research Program. Field methods used on the project were subsequently reviewed at the request of the staff ecologist. Following the review, data forms used in the project were revised and recent changes to study protocol made by staff ecologist and consulting biologist, Robb Hamilton, were approved.
- Staff ecologist introduced the proposed research interests of a graduate student from Cal State Long Beach. The student's research interests were identified as being focused on the demography of the coastal population of cactus wrens, with research tentatively scheduled for in the reserve in '07 & '08. These interests were brought to the attention of the TAC because of their similarity to the Reserve's current research efforts on cactus wrens and the opportunity for future collaboration with the student and his academic advisor, Charles Collins. The TAC acknowledged the potential benefit of the student's work and decided to tentatively provide the student with support in their pursuit of permits and possibly funding.
- Staff ecologist announced his desire to see members of the TAC join him in forming a working group, with the sole purpose of reviewing the Reserve's biological monitoring program. The group is to meet monthly over the next 3 to 6 months and review: past monitoring efforts completed under the Umbrella Monitoring Program; proposed monitoring programs of other local NCCP/HCPs; and results of analyses completed by the staff ecologist. Earlier, Brad Henderson (CDFG), and at the meeting, Will Miller, agreed to join the group and participate fully in the review process.
- At the close of the meeting the next TAC meeting was tentatively scheduled for middle of May, 2006. Final scheduling of the meeting time and date is to take place via email during the next week.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.