

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

Date: September 21, 2005
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Aqua 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:

Kathy Keane, Biological Consultant
Dave Mayer, California Department of Fish and Game
Trish Smith, The Nature Conservancy
Jon Keeley, UCLA
Milan Mitrovich, Nature Reserve of Orange County
Lyn McAfee, Nature Reserve of Orange County

The following members of the TAC were absent:

Will Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Sharon Heider, City of Irvine

The following invited guests of the TAC were present:

Cathy Tucker, City of Irvine
Albert Lucero, County of Orange
Cathy Nowak, County of Orange
Matt Tallouto, Irvine Ranch Land Reserve

Highlights from the meeting are as follows.

- Minutes from the last TAC meeting (June 6th) were approved.
- 2006 Cactus Wren and Cactus Scrub Research Program was approved and recommended to the board for funding. Consulting biologist Rob Hamilton's estimate of the cost for the project was handed out and discussed. Following discussion, TAC members recommended committee chair request proposals for the project from a minimum of three consultants to avoid unfair awarding practices. The TAC followed up this recommendation by suggesting the Reserve adopt this procedural step prior to awarding all future contracts whenever possible. Following future collection of proposals for the cactus wren project, members of the TAC requested that they be notified of choices via email.

- TAC members approved the Vegetation Mapping Project in concept and are awaiting details concerning project cost. TAC members recommended that South Orange County be given the opportunity to be included in mapping efforts. Potential external funding for the project was identified through the State of California Resource Assessment Program. Program specialist Steve Newton-Reed was identified as the contact person for this inquiry.
- The importance of developing a vegetation monitoring program separate from the mapping efforts was reinforced by the TAC. Members agreed, however, the monitoring program should compliment vegetation mapping efforts if possible.
- The TAC briefly debated whether the Nature Reserve should make the final digital vegetation map available to the public for free download via their website. No conclusion was reached on this topic.
- An updated Reserve Research Program was reviewed and discussed. The TAC agreed that it was a good idea to develop a formal relationship with local universities and to support university-level research on reserve land. During discussion the TAC recommended a research review committee, separate from the TAC, be formed.
- TAC suggested the review committee meet two to three times a year and on-going responsibilities of the committee should include: 1) reviewing and approving proposed research projects; 2) reviewing progress made on on-going projects (i.e. tracking and collecting progress reports (on an annual basis), abstracts, and data); 3) identifying and contacting researchers considered delinquent under the terms of the permit; and 4) distributing Nature Reserve grant money to eligible researchers (i.e. graduate students).
- Initial responsibilities of the committee identified by the TAC were: 1) developing the general use application and guidelines; 2) developing the general university-reserve formal agreement/contract (includes language on data-ownership and sharing); 3) developing a general letter to be signed by universities; and 4) collecting the appropriate use applications from the individual landowners.
- In addition to the above mentioned items, the TAC also recognized in regards to approving external research requests on the reserve: 1) individual landowners still need to be able to approve research projects directly; 2) the Reserve needs to make researchers responsible for meeting the terms of the contract and delaying the final payment on a grant may be an acceptable method of enforcement; and 3) the Reserve needs to become more proactive in defining research needs and interests.
- Issues associated with data sharing were discussed. The TAC concluded that the terms of an agreement between researchers and the Reserve need to be specific

and written in a contract. The TAC agreed that the general policy should be such that the landowners (and Reserve) own the data collected on their land following a defined period of time regardless of whether the research is funded or not by the landowner or Reserve. Furthermore, following that specified time period, the Reserve and individual landowners are free to share the reserve data with other landowners, the public, and other researchers as long as the data doesn't disclose the location of sensitive species or sites. The TAC also recognized that it is courteous and appropriate to notify the original principal investigators prior to using or sharing their data.

- Cactus Wren Translocation Project was approved. The TAC concluded that if the costs were minimal as is anticipated, the Reserve should take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about cactus wren behavior and the potential for future relocation efforts. Mitrovich was assigned the task of obtaining cost estimates for the project.
- The idea of creating a native seed and plant nursery on the reserve was introduced to the TAC although because of limitations on time no rigorous discussion of the topic was carried out.
- John Rotenberry and Alan Schoenherr were approved for scientific and biologist advisory positions on the TAC, respectively. Mitrovich was assigned the task of securing an answer from both gentlemen as to whether they would join the TAC.
- The restoration and enhancement plan for the reserve was handed out for review. Comments from members will be discussed at the next meeting.
- At the close of the meeting the next TAC meeting was scheduled for November 30, 2005.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.