

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

Date: September 25, 2006
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Multipurpose Room
Irvine, CA

Meeting was called into order by committee chair, Milan Mitrovich, at 1:15 PM.

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

Trish Smith, The Nature Conservancy
Allan Schoenherr, Fullerton College
Kathy Keane, Biological Consultant
Brad Henderson, California Department of Fish and Game
Sharon Heider, City of Irvine
Milan Mitrovich, Nature Reserve of Orange County
Lyn McAfee, Nature Reserve of Orange County

The following members of the TAC were absent.

Jon Keeley, UCLA
Will Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service

The following invited guests of the TAC were present:

Albert Lucero, County of Orange
Lindsey Kircher, IRLR Trust
Meghan Sherburn, IRLR Trust

- Comments on minutes from previous meeting were requested. As no comments were made, minutes from previous meeting remain unchanged.
- Updates on the 2006 NROC funded research (i.e. Cactus Wren Translocation and Cactus Wren Habitat Mapping and Surveys) were provided to TAC members. A brief description of NROC Staff Ecologist's work schedule, as it pertains to the projects in the remaining months of 2006, was also presented.
- The need for review of NROC's Restoration Program was discussed. The TAC agreed to pursue development of a 5-year plan to allow for modifications to the current program as needed. TAC recommended that Staff Ecologist and TNC work together on developing research questions considered essential to better understand program success.

- A population study of Southwestern Pond Turtles at Aliso and Oso Creek was proposed for funding in FY2007. The study was to contain research elements that included assessing population size and age structure of Aliso and Oso Creek populations and movement patterns (via telemetry) of adult female turtles at Aliso Creek (and potentially Shady Canyon). Telemetry was to provide much needed information on the space-use behavior of gravid females as they move through the upland habitat in search of nesting sites. Project cost was not discussed. TAC members were not comfortable funding a research project that might otherwise be funded by Army Corp of Engineers or County of Orange. Both organizations were identified as being involved with a major stream alteration and restoration project in Aliso Creek. TAC recommended staff ecologist attend an upcoming meeting discussing the project and identify if there were funding opportunities present with these organizations. TAC also recommended staff ecologist, write a letter to the government organizations involved with the project in order to make concerns over the fate of the turtles in the creek become a matter of public record.
- The TAC discussed the merit of the Egg Contaminant Study following review of written proposal detailing the project. Members felt that project proposal was incomplete due to absence of a budget detailing a cost allocation for requested amount. TAC members recommended staff ecologist obtain project budget from PI prior to making a final decision concerning project.
- Proposed research by CSULB graduate student, Matt Teutimez, was discussed. TAC approved the project as work that NROC was willing to support. When discussing project details, TAC considered the project to be overly ambitious given the proposed number of wren family groups that would need to be banded and followed over multiple seasons. TAC recommended that the graduate researcher, reduce his sample size and redefine his research questions so that the questions asked more specific questions answerable within the time frame given for the project.
- Biological Monitoring and Research Program Review Document prepared by Staff Ecologist was discussed briefly and handed out at the meeting. A subcommittee of the TAC was established to review the material in the document and make comments. TAC recommended that the sub-committee be comprised of at least two representatives from the wildlife agencies and NROC Staff Ecologist. Sub-committee was to convene independently of the TAC and set up own meeting schedule.
- Challenges inherent in integrating of multi-taxa/year datasets were discussed briefly. Possibility of Staff Ecologist collaborating with SDSU faculty was mentioned.
- TNC/IRLR funded research projects for FY2007 available for NROC to support were introduced. NROC support of project development was requested as it was recognized that with support projects could be improved. The TAC was in favor

of the collaboration with TNC on the listed projects as they were considered beneficial to NROC. The TAC requested that they be sent reports and materials as they were developed by NROC staff, County of Orange, and TNC/IRLR contractors.

- Next TAC meeting was tentatively scheduled for mid-November 2006
- Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM