

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

Date: November 29, 2006
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Wilshire 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:

Allan Schoenherr, Fullerton College
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
Jon Keeley, UCLA
Will Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Kathy Keane, Biological Consultant*

The following members of the TAC were absent.

Trish Smith, The Nature Conservancy

The following invited guests of the TAC were present:

Albert Lucero, County of Orange

- Comments regarding the Reserve's Umbrella Monitoring Program and the Biological Monitoring and Research Program Review Document were provided by TAC. Absence of a specific program to monitor vegetation was considered as greatest weakness of the original Umbrella Monitoring Program. TAC recognized that additional discussion was needed to evaluate the merit of individual research projects that fall under the program.
- TAC decided to recommend funding support for development of a vegetation monitoring program. TAC was made aware of and supports the opportunity by NROC to collaborate with TNC in development of a monitoring protocol. TNC will be working on this issue in 2007. Support will allow NROC to include additional resource professionals in discussions of protocol development and site selection process.
- TAC decided to fund support for NROC staff as they prepare a new Target Species Monitoring Program in 2007. Program is to be made up of three separate

plans describing monitoring needs, field protocols, and analyses necessary to monitor for the status and trends of the California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, and Orange-throated whiptail.

- TAC was introduced to the “3-Tier” system that describes the monitoring mandates set forth by the NCCP/HCP as interpreted by the wildlife agencies. The first tier included monitoring of vegetation and the three Target Species.
- TAC decided to recommend funding for a telemetry study of the dispersal behavior of juvenile cactus wrens. Project will be designed to answer questions raised following 2006 surveys of cactus wrens and their habitat. Project is scheduled to run throughout the 2007 field season and will benefit from (as well as compliment) CSU Long Beach graduate student research also scheduled for 2007.
- TAC decided to recommend continued funding of the Exotic Plant Control Program in Coastal Reserve in 2007. Oversight of the efforts is to include mapping of exotics in a way similar to what was done by TNC in their original mapping effort.
- Given the substantial costs associated with implementation of the Exotic Plant Control Program, the TAC requested an external review be completed of the program in 2007. Review is considered necessary by TAC in order to learn more about the program’s effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the results prior to making future recommendations concerning the program.
- TAC recommended that candidate researchers/organizations to complete the review should include Katie Suding (UC Irvine), Jodie Holt (UC Riverside), Margot Griswold, Soil and Ecology Restoration Group (SDSU), and Conservation Biology Institute. External review of control program is to involve the synthesis of existing photo, tabular, and GIS data describing control program efforts, and the collection of new data via field surveys.
- Given budgetary considerations and the presence of alternative methods to influence policy, the TAC decided not to recommend the Egg Contaminant Study and Southwestern Pond Turtle Population Study for funding. The poor track record of the principal investigators in meeting prior obligations to NROC influenced the TAC’s decision to not fund the Egg Contaminant Study. The opportunity to influence change and possibly elicit funding from other sources prompted the TAC to again suggest that written letters to government organizations involved with structural modification of Aliso Creek will go farther towards protecting turtles in Aliso Creek than a scientific study of the population.
- Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM

**attempted on multiple occasions to join the meeting via satellite phone but was continuously disconnected*