

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

Date: November 30, 2005  
Time: 1:00 p.m.  
Location: Irvine Ranch Water District  
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue  
Multipurpose 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  
Brad Henderson, California Department of Fish and Game (substitute for David Mayer)  
Trish Smith, The Nature Conservancy  
Jon Keeley, UCLA  
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

The following members of the TAC were absent:

Sharon Heider, City of Irvine

The following invited guests of the TAC were present:

Albert Lucero, County of Orange  
Cathy Nowak, County of Orange

Highlights from the meeting are as follows.

- TAC welcomed Allan Schoenherr (Fullerton College) as a new member.
- Minutes from the last TAC meeting (September 21th) were approved.
- Competing proposals to carry out the 2006 Cactus Wren and Cactus Scrub Research Program were reviewed. Following in depth review of the methods and purpose of the program and discussion of differences in received bids, the TAC ultimately approved and recommended the proposal presented by consulting biologist Rob Hamilton to the board for funding. In addition to this recommendation, the TAC further suggested: 1) the contract be handled as a “time and materials” contract; 2) Hamilton be encouraged to hire field assistants in order to complete the work in a timely manner; 3) Hamilton exhaust the use of

aerial imagery in identifying cactus patches prior to conducting walking surveys in order to improve efficiency of field efforts; 4) minimum mapping unit for the project be more clearly defined in order to avoid possible when in the field; 5) a schedule of activities (and deliverables) be developed and identified prior to initiating work; and 6) the Reserve review the possibility of purchasing an “ArcPad” for use on the project in order to minimize and expedite data entry.

- Details concerning the methods and costs of the 2006 Cactus Wren Translocation Project were reviewed. Following discussion the TAC recommended the project to the board for funding. The TAC approved the project even though projected total project cost was acknowledged as being a rough estimate. This uncertainty in actual cost was considered justified given the large uncertainty concerning the effort needed to capture adult and juvenile cactus wrens. TAC requested a review of use of telemetry in birds be completed prior to making a final decision on whether to use this as the method for monitoring the behavior of the wrens following translocation.
- 2006-07 Vegetation Mapping Project was not recommended to the board for funding in the FY2006. Although the TAC recognized the value of such an effort, the estimated total project cost (~\$250,000) was considered to be too great considering the Reserve’s current budget constraints. The TAC recommended the Reserve work towards securing future partnerships necessary to reduce the size of the Reserve’s monetary contribution to the project. One potential partner that was recognized was the local fire authority, given their potential use of the map for fire management. The TAC also requested that they be presented the existing vegetation map in order to review its quality and more accurately gauge the importance of creating an updated map.
- 2006 Exotic Plant Control Program was recommended to the board for funding. The TAC considered the proposal present by Nakae to be superior to the alternative proposal and suggested that the majority, if not all, of work required by the program be conducted by Nakae. If the work was to be split up, the TAC felt that the Reserve’s historic contractor, Natures Image, would be an appropriate compliment to Nakae. The TAC recommended that the contract(s) be setup as a “time and maintenance” contract(s). During the discussion that preceded the vote, the TAC discussed the history of the Exotic Plant Control Program. From this discussion the TAC concluded that it would be informative to review the monitoring data and associated reports collected and prepared by the Nature Conservancy to better evaluate and review the effectiveness of using herbicides as a method of exotic plant control.
- TAC was informed John Rotenberry (UCR) did not accept the Reserve’s invitation to serve as the second scientific advisor to the Board. In earlier conversations with TAC members John explained that he was too busy with his research and teaching responsibilities to participate in Reserve activities at the level he thought was required of the position. Although he declined the advisory

position, John did state his interest in working with Reserve and exploring the possibility of utilizing the Reserve's historic data in future analyses planned by his lab at UCR.

- TAC members were assigned responsibility of generating a new list of names of prospective candidates for the second scientific advisor position.
- The Nature Reserve ten-year anniversary event was introduced to the TAC. TAC recommended that the date of the event not coincide with scientific meetings planned locally (San Diego and Orange Counties) for the fall of next year.
- At the close of the meeting the next TAC meeting was scheduled for late February, 2006.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.