

**Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve
Reserve Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 2, 2018 – 1:00p.m.
Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Center
39400 Clinton Keith Rd, Murrieta, CA 92562**

Meeting Notes

RMC members present

Kyla Brown (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District/Parks)
Eddy Konno (California Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Alex Marks (Metropolitan Water District of Southern California/MWD)
Brian Shomo (Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency/RCHCA)
Geary Hund (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Other attendees

Robert Williams (Reserve Manager, Parks), Bill Wagner (consultant, MWD), Gail Barton (member of the public), Tania Asef (MWD), Charity Hagen (Parks), Dustin McClain (Parks), Howard Rosenthal (Western Center Academy)

1. Call to order and introductions – The meeting was called to order at 1:07pm.

2. Public comments – Gail Barton suggested weather conditions be taken into consideration when Reserve staff are conducting mowing operations.

3. Meeting notes – February meeting notes were presented and discussed.

MOTION to approve the meeting notes as presented for August.

Motion – Eddy Konno; Second – Brian Shomo; Motion approved

4. Western Center Academy Expansion Plan – MWD will update the RMC on the expansion plan and request comments on the landscape plan in the vicinity of the Reserve. - Alex described the Western Center Academy's expansion project and stated that the school is located in Planning Area 1 of the DVL Park Specific Plan, which established a landscape and lighting transition zone along the edge of planning areas abutting the Reserve. He added that the Specific Plan requires that preliminary landscaping plans for the zone must be provided to RMC for review and comment prior to construction or installation. Alex distributed copies of the project's landscape plans and plant list, and introduced Howard Rosenthal whom was in attendance representing the Academy. Following discussion of the plant list, the RMC suggested that Bigberry Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*) be substituted for Marina Madrone (*Arbutus Marina*) and Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) be substituted for Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). The RMC members agreed to provide any additional comments on the proposed plan to MWD within a week. Following their review, Howard stated that he would revise the landscape plans as suggested by the RMC and would also provide the project's lighting plans to MWD for distribution to the RMC.

5. Reserve Manager Report – Robert presented the February 2018 through May 2018 quarterly and annual work plan update reports on progress of management tasks pertaining to natural resource management, ranger patrol, maintenance of property and facilities, and interpretive program development. Highlights from the written report were as follows.

Quarterly Report

- Prescribed burns will be performed from June 5-7 at the north shore, pig farm, and south shore.

- Quino checkerspot butterfly surveys were conducted in various locations on the Reserve with significantly lower numbers observed.
- Cowbird traps were installed at three location and 41 birds were captured.
- Reserve Patrol assisted with a CSUSB geology study, trespass issues included homeless camps and unauthorized biking.
- 721 visitors, including campers from Lake Skinner, came to the Schoolhouse and nine Nature/Wildflower/Earth Day Walks were held.

Annual Work Plan Update:

- Fuel and weed management – 75% complete
- Weed management (invasives) – 50% complete
- Riparian habitat – 75% complete
- Discovery days at the Schoolhouse – 100% complete
- SKR restoration at Rawson Road – 75% complete
- Brown-headed cowbird trapping – 75% complete
- Munz Onion surveys – 0% complete
- Quino checkerspot butterfly surveys – 90% complete
- CSS, Habitat enhancement, and bird surveys – 75% complete

6. Annual Work Plan and Budget– Parks will present the FY 17/18 annual work plan and budget for discussion and approval - Robert presented the annual work plan and budget, including scopes and anticipated costs of projects and activities to be undertaken in the Reserve during FY 18/19. The work plan includes tasks related to property, species, and vegetation management, including riparian restoration, and interpretive programming. Concern was expressed by members of the RMC about whether the proposed budget for Reserve patrols was sufficient. The RMC also discussed and requested that additional detail, including related to deliverables and costs, be provided for the management tools in the work plan. Following Robert's presentation and RMC discussion of the proposed work plan, there was a discussion of trails in the Reserve. There was concern expressed among the RMC members regarding trail maintenance, trail patrol, long term funding, and the biological analysis contained in the KTU&A alignment study. Following discussion, Kyla requested RMC approval of the FY 18/19 budget of \$400,000.

MOTION to approve the FY 18/19 annual work plan and budget with the understanding that metrics will be added to the work plan for additional detail regarding deliverables:

Motion – Geary Hund; Second – Eddy Konno; Motion approved

7. Meeting Schedule – The Reserve Manager has requested consideration of altering the meeting schedule from Feb/May/Aug/Nov to Mar/June/Sept/Dec due to reserve management activity timing and the annual budget cycle – Robert presented the item and stated that under the proposal the meetings would be altered to one month later than the current schedule from February, May, August, and November to March, June, September, and December. He elaborated that the updated schedule would better accommodate Reserve management surveys, monitoring, and reporting.

MOTION to amend the meeting schedule.

Motion – Eddy Konno; Second – Brian Shomo; Motion approved

8. The Reserve Management Evaluation Criteria The RMC will continue discussion regarding evaluation of reserve management – Kyla introduced the item and stated that it was a continuation of

the RMC's discussion at the February 2018 meeting. The criteria for evaluation will be based on the performance based metrics, which will be included in the annual work plan.

9. Scope of Work - The RMC will discuss reserve management scope for future RFP process – Kyla introduced the item and that it was a continuation of previous RMC discussion in August 2017 about reserve management services. At that time, MWD noted concern with the timing of beginning a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Brian stated that the RCHCA board is still interested in the RMC pursuing an RFP to evaluate management service options. He distributed a draft scope of work for an RFP prepared by RCHCA. The RMC expressed interest in discussing the scope further at the next meeting.

MOTION to approve moving forward with the RFP with a scope of work completed in one year.

Motion – Eddy Konno; Second – Brian Shomo; Motion approved

10. Data Collection and Sharing - The RMC will discuss the Reserve Manager's use of RCHCA's database – The RMC previously approved the use of the Collector Application for data collected on the Reserve. Brian stated that management actions common to all the reserves in the county such as ongoing efforts related to stinknet. Robert indicated that he would coordinate with RCHCA about uploading data.

11. Property Acquisition - The RMC will be asked if there is interest in a potential property Acquisition – Alex introduced the item and stated that the owner of an approximately 42 acre parcel adjacent the Reserve had asked if MWD was interested in purchasing their property. He also reported that there are two additional properties adjoining that parcel, which the RMC may also have interest in purchasing. If purchased, the parcels could be added to the available Reserve mitigation bank. Bill indicated that the three parcels contain chamise chaparral, rock outcroppings, and could provide habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher. Alex stated that if the RMC were interested in the parcels MWD would handle the acquisition process and purchase the properties with the Reserve's endowment funds.

MOTION for MWD to look into purchasing the 3 properties, including the parcels to the east and west of the initial 41 acre property.

Motion – Kyla Brown; Second – Eddy Konno; Motion approved

Following the motion to pursue acquisition of the three parcels there was RMC discussion regarding the inclusion of the HOA fees in the Reserve management budget for certain land parcels in the Reserve. Although MWD paid the fees, they were previously included in the budget. After discussion, members of the RMC suggested amending the FY 18/19 budget motion to address the HOA fees.

MOTION to amend the FY 18/19 budget to include parcel HOA fees, as appropriate.

Motion – Geary Hund; Second – Eddy Konno; Motion approved

12. Trail Update – MWD will update the RMC on the Goldrich Trail and Lake Skinner Equestrian Trail – Alex introduced the item and Bill to provide the update. Bill distributed photo exhibits of the Goldrich Trail and reported that maintenance of the entire trail including the trailhead parking area on Rawson Road is needed. He added that Steve Montgomery would survey the parking area for SKR prior to any maintenance work being conducted and in coordination with Geary and Eddy, if necessary, conducting trapping. Bill noted that an access trail was needed along the north side of Rawson Road so that trail users can avoid being on the road between the trailhead and parking area. Alex indicated that he would follow up with Brian on the access trail along the road. He added that a short segment of the trail needed to be realigned to avoid several gullies and that another short segment at its terminus to a peak overlook that had been closed due to potential use by Quino would be reestablished. Bill reported that he,

Ken Osborne, and Tania Asef had visited the segment and concluded that there would be no effect on the butterfly as result of its reestablishment. The maintenance effort would also include installing five-strand barbed wire around several mine shafts in proximity to the trail. Following discussion of the Goldrich Trail, Bill indicated that maintenance work on the Skinner Trail would begin after May 20 and that a small amount of Plantago is growing on the restoration site. He indicated that he would follow up with Geary after the meeting regarding lining the trail with railroad ties.

13. Reserve habitat credit Bank - MWD will provide the mitigation credits fee schedule for discussion – Alex introduced the item and noted that it was a continuation of the RMC's discussion at the February 2018 meeting. MWD's goal is to update the mitigation bank with more current habitat valuations to sell Reserve land for credit. MWD staff in coordination with Bill will continue to research what other regional mitigation banks are selling credits for and will report back at the next meeting.

14. Roundtable discussion: (a) Bill reported that weed abatement is needed along Rawson Road and that the California Conservation Corps may be available to assist with projects requiring fire/fuel abatement (e.g. tamarisk), (b) Alex reported that he will be filling Wendy Picht's seat on the RMC. (c) No other reports

15. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm



Quarterly Report May-August 2018

Natural Resources Management

- A 1,261 acre wildfire known as the Patterson Fire took place on May 17, 2018. The fire started on private property and entered the Reserve along Rawson Road. Approximately, 1,035 acres of Reserve land was burned and 3.75 miles of dozer lines were established. Cal-Fire was scheduled to repair dozer lines, but were called off to work on wildfires in the state.
- Cal-Fire conducted a 212 acre prescribed burn in the South Shore burn unit. The intent of the burn was to increase habitat for QBC, SKR, BUOW, and various native plant species. Due to extreme heat, we were unable to conduct the scheduled burns located in Pig Farm and North Shore burn units.
- Field staff continue to manage for several invasive plant species within the Reserve. 6.64 acres of Bassia, 2.67 acres of Stinknet, and 0.5 acres of Sahara Mustard have been treated mechanically or with herbicide.
- SKR management in Crown Valley, Rawson Units, and various smaller units is ongoing. Staff have mowed approximately 250 acres on non-native grasses in these regions.
- Cowbird trapping has concluded for the season. A total of 59 cowbirds were captured with 18 of the birds being female. Numerous Red-winged blackbirds, House finches, and California towhee were captured. There were no fatalities of non-target species.
- Biological Monitoring Crew bird surveys have concluded. A total of 42 California Gnatcatcher were observed, which included 19 females and 5 fledglings. Additionally, 4 Bell Sage Sparrows, 4 White-tailed Kites, and 3 Bald Eagles were observed.
- Reserve Manager received 3 research applications this quarter including a research project that will study the dietary ecology of San Diego horned lizards.

Ranger Patrol

- RivCo Parks hosted the annual Temecula Valley Balloon and Wine Festival. Reserve staff conducted roadside abatement along service roads in case balloons had to be recovered. Three balloons landed in the Reserve this year.

- Trespass issues this quarter include 3 mountain bike riders on service roads within the Reserve and a hot air balloon landing within the Reserve. A pile of old wood was also dumped on the edge of the Reserve.
- Ranger Ash has been working with MWD security to address a growing concern of homeless camping on MWD lands and private property adjacent to the Reserve. All staff have been in contact and will continue to monitor the situation.
- California State Parks conducted a post-grant inspection of fencing and OHV barriers that were installed in 2016. The Reserve Manager is working grant on applications for State Parks (OHV Fund) and a Federal Environment Enhancement grant.

Maintenance

- Field staff conducted annual preventive maintenance on both Kubota tractors, mowers, and all herbicide equipment.
- Lack of rainfall and high winds this year has caused numerous oak trees to drop large limbs. An Engelmann Oak assessment is scheduled for October.
- Staff upgraded the lighting in the Schoolhouse. Old incandescent light bulbs were replaced with energy efficient LED lights.
- The main waterline entering the Alamos Schoolhouse failed due to its age. Piping and valves were replaced. Staff took the opportunity to add isolation valves to prevent complete shutoff of the building.
- HVAC system failed twice this summer. The unit was covered under warranty and was repaired immediately.

Interpretive

- A total of 547 visitors came to the Schoolhouse including campers from Lake Skinner. 173 visitors attended one of 9 Nature/evening walks this quarter.
- The schoolhouse continues to be upgraded for visitors. Additions include a new TV for various programs, a kids play area, a schoolhouse restoration exhibit, and a new geology display.
- Hagen is working on establishing a school/group program for the Nature Center.