

# Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency

## Minutes

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the RCHCA Board of Directors was called to order by Chair Joseph Morabito at 11:30 a.m., on May 19, 2022, on the Zoom platform.

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Morabito led the Board members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. ROLL CALL

- City of Corona - Tom Richins
- City of Hemet - Russ Brown
- City of Lake Elsinore - Steve Manos\*
- City of Menifee - Lesa Sobek
- City of Moreno Valley - Ulises Cabrera
- City of Perris - Michael Vargas
- City of Riverside - Steve Hemenway
- City of Temecula - Jessica Alexander
- City of Wildomar - Joseph Morabito (Chair)
- County of Riverside - District 5 - Jeff Hewitt

\*Joined after Roll Call

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

### 5. CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR

**RESULT:** APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

**MOVER:** Menifee

**SECONDER:** Temecula

**AYES:** Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, Wildomar, County of Riverside - District 5

#### A. Assembly Bill 361 Findings

**Action:**

1. Adopted Resolution Number 2022-04; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency authorizing virtual Board meetings pursuant to Assembly Bill

361.

**B. Summary Minutes from the February 17, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting**

**Action:**

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the February 17, 2022, Board of Directors meeting.

**C. Status Report on the Attendance Roster**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**D. Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies Through March 31, 2022**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**E. Financial Report Through March 31, 2022**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**F. Approval of Agreement Between RCHCA and A.B. Landscape for Weed Abatement Services**

**Action:**

1. Authorized the General Manager to execute and administer the Professional Services Agreement (PSA) between RCHCA and A.B. Landscape for Weed Abatement Services with an annual not-to-exceed amount of \$30k and to execute any future amendments to the PSA, if necessary, so long as such amendments do not result in an overall monetary increase and are approved as to form by legal counsel.

**G. Contracts and Grants Status Updates**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**H. Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Committees for the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**I. Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Coordinating Committee**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**J. Records Retention Schedule Update**

**Action:**

1. Adopted Resolution Number 2202-03; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency adopting an updated Records Retention Schedule and amending and replacing all prior resolutions.

**6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION**

**A. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Agency Budget**

Riana Fisher, Program Manager, reported that with the implementation of the Range-Wide Management and Monitoring Plan, staff are gearing up for increased monitoring of SKR; therefore, RCHCA is proposing to change its organizational structure in FY 2022/2023 by removing one full-time Open Space Habitat Technician (OSHT), promoting the current OSHT position to a senior OSHT position, and hiring two to four season OSHT.

Staff are proposing a contract with the Santa Ana Watershed Authority to assist with fieldwork required to carry out the Monitoring Plan. This contract will provide four biologists for six to eight weeks. The Agency needs to purchase a new vehicle to support additional staff.

Overall, RCHCA is presenting a balanced budget of approximately \$2.3 million in revenues against \$2.3 million in expenditures, with an overall increase from FY 2021/2022 of approximately 12%.

**Action:**

1. Adopted Resolution Number 2022-05; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency adopting the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Agency Budget.

**RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

**MOVER:** Perris

**SECONDER:** Hemet

**AYES:** Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, Wildomar, County of Riverside - District 5

**B. SKR Downlisting Celebration**

Brian Shomo, Director of RCHCA, reported that last month staff organized a celebration event for the downlisting of SKR in southern California. The event was held at the Southwest Multi-Species Reserve on April 30, 2022, to honor and commemorate all of the partners and agencies who made the downlisting possible.

In attendance were representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, reserve managers, and past and present RCHCA Board members.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**C. Status Update on Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Recovery Efforts**

Harry Sandoval, RCHCA Natural Resources Manager, reported that implementing the SKR Range-wide Management and Monitoring Plan is necessary to work towards full recovery of the species. This will require additional monitoring efforts to determine the density of the species in each area where they are located. Staff will be conducting live trappings in at least 150 grids throughout the SKR's range.

Trappings will occur this fall, from August to October. Live trappings are limited to individuals who have a specialized permit. Staff is proposing to train four biologists from the Santa Ana Watershed Association who would each be issued an institutional permit.

**Action:**

1. Authorized the General Manager to execute and administer agreements necessary to complete the task associated with this project, not to exceed \$100,000, and to execute any future amendments to the Agreements, if necessary, so long as such amendments do not result in an overall monetary increase, and as long as such amendments are approved as to form by legal counsel.

**RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

**MOVER:** Lake Elsinore

**SECONDER:** Perris

**AYES:** Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, Wildomar, County of Riverside - District 5

**D. Educational Outreach Program Activities Update**

Riana Fisher, RCHCA Program Manager, reported that RCHCA participated in Menifee's Earth Day event on April 22, 2022, and provided hands-on learning stations and pamphlets to educate families about wildlife and natural resources. Over 300 community members attended.

RCHCA's educational outreach program will resume this September and October to celebrate the importance of the Endangered Species Act. Staff will host approximately 300 5th and 6th grade students from Hemet, Lake Elsinore and Perris elementary schools.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**E. Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Reserve Management and Monitoring Efforts Activities Update**

Harry Sandoval, RCHCA Natural Resources Manager, reported that staff recently conducted targeted sheep grazing within the Lake Mathews / Estelle Mountain Reserve improved and maintained approximately 2,500 acres of habitat. Staff also conducted prescribed burning on approximately 150 acres in the Lake Mathews Reserve. CALFIRE conducted the burning and trained firefighters and fire police. This year, fires were held in areas which had not burned in 25 years.

Staff were invited to do presentations about land management and monitoring activities at the International Association of Landscape Ecologists Annual Conference, a meeting of the Tri Counties Land Management Coordinating Group, and the Western Section of The Wildlife Society.

Director Russ Brown asked if the grazing has helped with stinknet and the problems it creates.

Mr. Sandoval responded that the sheep do not like stinknet so do not eat it; however, the prescribed burns are helping.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**F. Disposition of Surplus Land**

Brian Shomo, Director of RCHCA, reported that by 2006, RCHCA had acquired enough property to sufficiently supply habitat for Stephens' Kangaroo Rat. Staff was recently approached by the Ecosystem Investment Partners about the potential purchase of three RCHCA surplus parcels, totaling 75 acres located near the unincorporated community of Nuevo for potential inclusion into the Riverpark Mitigation Bank.

Staff has determined that there is no need for the property, nor are there any conveyance restrictions or leases, licenses, or other encumbrances on the property. Finally, staff has determined that there is no need for the parcels, nor was the property purchased with any state or federal funding.

The Board directed staff to further explore the opportunity to dispose of the three Nuevo surplus parcels by notifying the appropriate public entities and the authorizing Planning Authority of the RCHCA's intent to dispose of the land before reporting back to the Board at the next scheduled meeting.

The Board also requested a map of all eight parcels be presented at the next meeting.

**Actions:**

1. Formally declared eight parcels (APNs 307-120-009, 307-130-071, 307-210-022, 454-090-014, 569-320-026, 580-120-013, 580-120-014, 580-450-001) RCHCA owns and that are not located in an SKR core reserve and do not exhibit any SKR signs of occupation as "Surplus Land."
2. Adopted Resolution Number 2022-06; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency declaring certain real properties surplus land owned by the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency located in the County of Riverside and identified in the surplus real property inventory.

**RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

**MOVER:** Menifee

**SECONDER:** County of Riverside - District 5

**AYES:** Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Perris, Riverside, Temecula, Wildomar, County of Riverside - District 5

**7. REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER**

Dr. Kurt Wilson, General Manager, reported that the key staff of the Agency have been involved in working towards the downlisting of Stephens' Kangaroo Rat for years. As the Agency goes through the next phase of determining what species recovery looks like, what the Habitat Conservation Plan will look like going forward, staff will continue to be a big part of it.

## **8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

There were no requests for future agenda items.

## **9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no general announcements.

## **10. NEXT MEETING**

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 11:30 a.m., on the Zoom platform with the option for Committee members to attend in-person at the WRCOG office.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Board of Directors was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.