RIVERSIDE COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION AGENCY
Reserve Managers Coordinating Committee

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 25, 2020
10:00 a.m.
Lake Mathews Reserve and Via Conference Call
13225 Cajalco Road
Perris, CA 92570
Call-In Number: (877) 336-1828
Access Code: 5233066#

The meeting was held outdoors and called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Harry Sandoval, Chairperson, and continued as follows:

1.   Roll Call – Self-Introductions

Name	Reserve
James Gannon	BLM
Stephan Awender	CDFW
Amanda Swaller	USFWS
Jared Valencia	City of Riverside, Parks
Chris Wagner	March Air Reserve Base
Alex Marks	MWD
Harry Sandoval	RCHCA /Lake Mathews Reserve
Princess Hester	RCHCA Administration
Ken Keitzer	State Parks, Lake Perris
Joe Sherrock	SWMSR
Ken Halama	UCR, Motte

2.   Review of RMCC

Harry Sandoval opened the meeting with a discussion of the RMCC. This group is comprised of all member agencies in the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan (SKRHCP) are eligible to present items on the agenda and have voting rights.
Other agencies are active participants of this working group.
Due to COVID-19, meetings will be held using social distance orders.

3.   Approval of Minutes from February 27, 2020

The minutes of February 27, 2020, meeting was presented for approval.

MOTION to approve the minutes as presented: Brian Shomo
SECOND: James Gannon   **Motion Approved**

4.   Public Comment

No comments were offered.

5.   SKR Threats Worksheet

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Conservation Biology Institute is working in partnership with RCHCA, Bureau of Land Management, and USFWS to develop a Species Range-Wide Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

This plan will be based on genetics research, habitat suitability modeling, and expert knowledge about the status and needs of SKR to better understand and address population fragmentation and provide a protocol to track existing SKR populations across the range and determine trends of occupancy over time.

As part of this process, CBI is soliciting input on the SKR Threats Worksheet from the RMCC. This worksheet will identify threats to the species on a regional or specific area. Please review and complete the survey as it pertains to each area and submit your responses no later than July 8, 2020.

RMCC members discussed conditions to note, such as loss of habitat, the impacts of development.

Ken Keitzer - How much of SKR population is not protected in reserve? Brian Shomo answered the SKR Habitat Suitability Model is available and can be used to identify populations both inside and outside reserves. For the purpose of this study, focus on conserved areas.

James Gannon – Are you considering undeveloped areas as a threat to habitat fragmentation?

Ken Halama- Provided a scenario to determine how to note it on the survey: the North Side of Motte is a large area of undeveloped property with tentative plans for a large rock quarry, thereby removing habitat and blocking connectivity for areas north such as sycamore or MAR. Would this be described as a definite threat?

Brian suggests including information such as; is the threat high or likely and, is this a current or future threat. Also, include spatial scale or impact; is it a temporal scale (one-time) or ongoing? How would this threat impact SKR populations? Is the threat being currently managed? What is the severity to individuals/populations?

Ken Keitzer– how is this different from the SKR plan? How will this get done?
Brian Shomo – This will help develop a practical monitoring strategy across the range and to identify long-term trend data and how to manage and influence decisions.

Please Include: Degradation of habitat, Genetic diversity, & Human Impacts

James Gannon – Consider adding structures, buildings, etc., development adjacent to wildlife areas, infrastructure development within the reserve.

Chris Wagner - Satellite area adjacent to the reserve being developed and increased activity – Be sure the plan has clear recommendations. Define proper land management and best practices.

Ken – Have other small mammals recovery plans been reviewed?

Brian Shomo – Yes, he will share a link to the CBI site.

The group would like to include consistency of and funding, resources, time, bureaucracy, restrictions, support, how do they affect species recovery, prioritization, equipment availability, agency limitations, qualified personnel, and the permitting process as threats.

6.   Restoration Projects

Restoration Projects seeds are purchased through the commercial channel Seed is not the best quality, and high quality is expensive and limits the seeds bloom at a different schedule which indicates seeds are being gathered from other areas.

RCHCA is working for a more stabilized process by starting a regional seed bank to share. Each reserve has diversity, and a good variety can be collected. RCHCA will work with volunteers to help harvest native seeds. Logistics will need planning. This effort could benefit each participant and relive resources to use in other areas. Is there interest?

Princess Hester explained how the RCHCA's Riverside Communities Partnership Project used the AmeriCorps's program to assist in restoration efforts.

Joe Sherrock - is interested in expanding the effort at SWMSR.

Chris Wagner – Requests a list of plant species that SKR prefers.

Brian Shomo will provide a seed pallet and competitive hierarchy study showing what is competitive for survival etc.

7.   Roundtable / Reserve Manager Reports

   a. San Jacinto/Lake Perris

   Not much activity in the past months. State Parks hired two Full-time Environmental Scientists to assist reserve management. Stinknet is a concern at Lake Perris, and they are researching the effects of a prescribed burn. With less grass in an area, will the stinknet problem diminish?

   b. UCR Motte

   Ken Halama reports due to Covid-19 and alternating schedules. No SKR trapping was completed. Stinknet area is not as large as prior years.

   c. BLM

   James Gannon reports on prescribed burns for SKR at Lake Mathews and Estelle Mountain with a stinknet focus near gate 13.

   d. Sycamore Canyon

   The focus is on fire prevention in sycamore canyon. The previous burn areas are growing. There are funding challenges, but they are working through things. The staff is preparing for SKR surveys in the fall.

e. Lake Mathews / Estelle Mountain

UCR Stinknet Herbicide research continued. RCHCA – grazed 1,200, burned 120 acres, and broadcast seeded 40 acres yielding good growth. BLM funded a Good Neighbor Agreement to support management.

In the next fiscal year, we want to make some funding available to land managers. If you need equipment or anything associated with management that would help the reserve submit a list, purchases will be made and sent to the reserve.
We have set aside $65k to support recovery; if we receive too many requests, we will have to prioritize.

f. Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve

The prescribed burn resulted in good thatch removal near Dominigoni Pkwy. Staff will monitor for stinknet. Current plans are to perform biological monitoring, and there are tentative plans to trap for Los Angeles Pocket Mouse.

g. March Air Reserve Base

Chris Wagner reports on SKR populations in MARB. Some areas are scheduled development, and mitigation measures relating to SKR are met. Monitoring demonstrates last active burrows were in 2004. We are preparing an Environmental Assessment, which will survey for SKR, for a warehouse building south of the museum.

h. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service / California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Amanda Swaller (USFWS) reports there are not many SKR projects currently, and most are on hold due to COVID.

Stefan Awender (CDFW) reports on mowing near Davis Rd. in the San Jacinto Wildlife area.

i. Metropolitan Water District

Alex Marks thanks Brian Shomo & Joe Sherrock for the efforts made at the LMR and SWMSR.

j. RCHCA Administration

Princess Hester reports on the volunteers from the AmeriCorps program. Due to Covid, the program is on hold until further notice.

8.   Determination of Chairperson for next RMCC Meeting

The next meeting is September 24, 2020.

9.   Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.