



RCHCA  
RIVERSIDE COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION AGENCY


Board of Directors Meeting  
February 9, 2023



The slide features a header with the RCHCA logo and meeting details. Below the text is a photograph of a field with orange poppies and yellow wildflowers. The bottom right corner contains logos for RCPD, RCHCA, and WCCO.

1

1. CALL TO ORDER



The slide displays the text '1. CALL TO ORDER' on a gold background bar. The bottom right corner features the RCHCA logo.

2

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



**Yxstian Gutierrez**  
Supervisor  
County of Riverside



**James "Stew" Stewart**  
Mayor Pro Tem  
City of Temecula



**Cheylynda Barnard**  
Council member  
City of Moreno Valley



**Jackie Peterson**  
Council member  
City of Hemet



3



4

### 3. ROLL CALL

5

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Non-agenda items only; three-minute limit per person

6

## CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR (5.A – 5.I)

### 5.A Assembly Bill 361 Findings

Requested Action:

1. Affirm the findings of the Board of Directors in Resolution Number 2022-04, adopted on May 19, 2022, which are:
  - a. The Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 4, 2020, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which State of Emergency continues to exist today.
  - b. State or local officials have recommended measures to promote social distancing.

7

## CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR (5.A – 5.I)

### 5.B Summary Minutes from the December 15, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting

Requested Action:

1. Approve the Summary Minutes from the December 15, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting.

### 5.C Status Report on the Attendance Roster

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.

8

## CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR (5.A – 5.I)

5.D Financial Report Through December 31, 2022

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.

5.E Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies Through December 31, 2022

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.

5.F Fiscal Year 2022/2023 2nd Quarter Budget Amendment

Requested Action:

1. Approve the 2nd Quarter Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2022/2023.



9

## CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR (5.A – 5.I)

5.G Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Committee for Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and the and Lake Mathews Reserve

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.

5.H Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Coordinating Committee

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.

5.I Contracts and Grants Status Updates

Requested Action:

1. Receive and file.



10

## 6.A STATUS UPDATE

### ON STEPHENS' KANGAROO RAT RECOVERY EFFORTS



Brian Shomo  
RCHCA



11

#### SKR Recovery Efforts

- Last fall, the RCHCA began collecting range-wide SKR and habitat data from approximately 100 random sample cells throughout the SKR range. In the next year, another 100 different sample cells will be surveyed and the process will repeat until sufficient data is provided to make a determination on SKR recovery.
- This process generates a tremendous amount of data that must be stored, quality checked, updated, and maintained for the duration of the project. The data is used to identify information gaps, predict population status and trends, and develop new survey parameters to ensure any determinations are statistically defensible and scientifically robust.



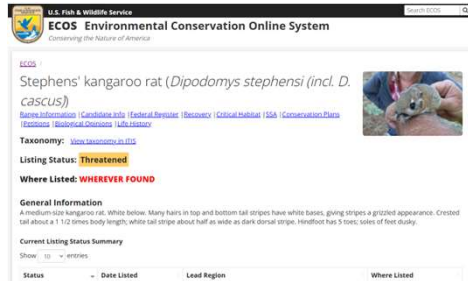
- Currently, the RCHCA is using Bureau of Land Management (BLM) grant funding to contract with Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) to develop the initial database structure, test its functionality, and identify the ultimate location for the long-term data repository. RCHCA and its partners recognized that this arrangement was not ideal in that it requires ongoing funding as well as requiring other Federal agencies to submit their data first to the USFWS prior to submission to the CBI database.



12

## SKR Recovery Efforts

- Consequently, the USFWS recently began exploring the use of their own in-house database solution known as Ecosphere (ECOS) for the long-term SKR data repository. This new and enhanced cloud-based system will be more secure and with higher capabilities, including mapping functionality. This will make it more simultaneously more user friendly and integrated when looking for information such as population trends, mapping, and general reporting needs during regular status reviews.
- Ecosphere staff (USFWS staff) are now working closely with the project team to develop and mesh the existing database to Ecosphere's structure to ensure that there is an easy transition when the time comes. In particular, the USFWS is exploring their ability to take over responsibility for support of the SKR Management and Monitoring Program.



- The RCHCA continues to work with its partners to ensure the shared responsibility associated with the long-term needs of the SKR Range-wide management and monitoring program are balanced and fiscally responsible.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



13

## 6.A STATUS UPDATE

### ON STEPHENS' KANGAROO RAT RECOVERY EFFORTS

#### Requested Action:

1. Receive and File.



14



## 6.B SKR RESERVE MANAGEMENT

### AND MONITORING EFFORTS ACTIVITIES UPDATE



Harry Sandoval  
RCHCA



15

## Management Activities

### Invasive Species Control

- Stinknet (aka: globe chamomile) is an invasive species native to South Africa that was first identified in our region in 1981.
- Since 1981 the range of stinknet has greatly expanded in range and can now be found in central California, southern Nevada, throughout Arizona and northern Mexico.



16



## Management Activities

### Invasive Species Control

- Stinknet poses a threat to SKR and many other sensitive native species within our region.
- Uncontrolled stinknet will create a monoculture. Monocultures reduce biological diversity and have lower biological functions than diverse habitats.
- A food preference analysis conducted by UCR determined that SKR will consume stinknet seed as a last resort.
- SKR that have been trapped in areas with high concentrations of stinknet have exhibited lower body weights and less reproductive activity.



17

## Management Activities

### Invasive Species Control

- Rain events during late 2022 and early 2023 have led to an early and widespread germination of stinknet throughout the region.
- Typically, stinknet blooms between February and June.
- Staff regularly carry out surveys for various invasive species.
  - Surveys are carried out by walking transects on the land or by using unmanned aerial vehicles that employ specialized cameras and artificial intelligence systems to identify plants.
- Various methods to control stinknet have been carried out already this year within the Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve.



18

## Management Activities

### Prescribed Burn Planning

- Preparations have begun for Spring 2023 Prescribed Burns within the Lake Mathews Reserve.
- Prescribed burning helps improve Stephens' kangaroo rat habitat by reducing invasive grasses and removing grass thatch layer.
- Controlled burning reduces available fuels and limits the potential for uncontrolled wildfires that can threaten the surrounding communities.
- Prescribed burns within reserve lands provide some of the only live fire training opportunities for Firefighters and Fire Investigators

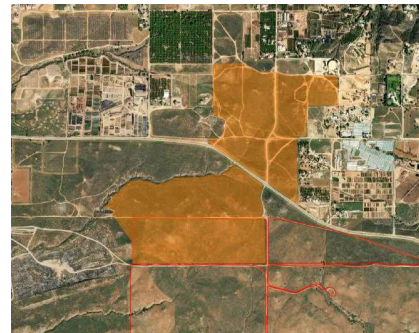


19

## Management Activities

### Prescribed Burn Planning

- Sites for prescribed burns are selected based on current habitat conditions.
- SKR prefer habitat that contains 50% grass and 50% bare ground.
- Prescribed burns are planned and carried out in a manner to promote optimal conditions for SKR and other grassland species.
- Lands within the Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve are burned on a rotational basis with approximately five years between burns.



20

## Management Activities

### Prescribed Burn Planning

- Approximately **300 acres** will be burned between May and June 2023
- Cal Fire Archaeologists and Cultural Resource Surveyors have been conducting records surveys and field surveys to identify and map any sensitive cultural resources.
- RCHCA staff and Cal Fire will begin the extensive process of creating fuel breaks around sensitive cultural and natural resources for protection.



21

## Management Activities

### Grassland Management: Grazing

- Sheep have returned to the Lake Mathews / Estelle Mountain Reserve
  - Sheep grazing is an efficient and cost-effective method for managing grassland habitat.
  - Sheep flocks are shepherded through reserve lands in a way that mimics prehistoric herbivore behavior.
  - Grazing requires less effort and less expense than prescribed burning or chemical treatment of invasive grasses.
- Sheep will be present at the Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve for approximately two months.
- We anticipate grazing approximately **2,000 acres** of grassland habitat.



22

## Management Activities

### Western Section of the Wildlife Society Field Trip

- As part of an annual conference held in the City of Riverside, members of the Western Section of the Wildlife Society had the opportunity to attend a field trip to the Lake Mathews / Estelle Mountain Reserve.
- Field trip participants from all over the western U.S. had the opportunity to learn about the various habitat management techniques and technologies that the RCHCA utilizes or has developed.
- Fuel Management staff from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Cal Fire were present and presented technical information related to fire management practices.



23

## 6.B SKR RESERVE MANAGEMENT

### AND MONITORING EFFORTS ACTIVITIES UPDATE

#### Requested Action:

1. Receive and File.

24



## 6.C SURPLUS LAND

### DISPOSITION



Brian Shomo  
RCHCA

### Surplus Land Disposition

In August 2007, the RCHCA adopted Resolution No. 2007-004 that established the Uniform Policy and Procedures for Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property (Policy # RCHCA-003). This policy requires the RCHCA to conduct an annual inventory of surplus real property ("Surplus Land"). Surplus Land is property that is not necessary for the RCHCA's use and is in excess of the RCHCA's foreseeable needs. The RCHCA lists those parcels in its inventory that are not located in a core reserve and show no signs of SKR occupation as surplus real property. The RCHCA has determined over the years that there are 8 parcels that are "surplus" properties (APNs 307-120-009, 307-130-071, 307-210-022, 454-090-014, 569-320-026, 580-120-013, 580-120-014, and 580-450-001).

## Surplus Land Disposition

### RCHCA Surplus Lands

27

## Surplus Land Disposition

In May 2022, the Board directed staff to explore the opportunity to dispose of the three Nuevo surplus parcels as set forth in the Policy by notifying the appropriate entities and report back to the Board at the next scheduled meeting of any interested parties. In addition, based on new requirements set forth from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the surplus parcels were also advertised to various affordable housing developers that have registered with HCD.

Following the required 60 days' Notice of Availability (NOA), the RCHCA received letters of interest from the following entities: 5 Talents 401K Trust, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD), and Ecosystem Investment Partners (EIP).

28



## Surplus Land Disposition

The Surplus Lands Act requires that any Housing and Community Development Agency or a developer registered with the HCD, such as 5 Talents 401K Trust be given priority and a full 90-day good faith negotiation. 5 Talents 401K Trust quickly informed the RCHCA that they were no longer interested but the RCHCA had to wait the entire 90 days before pursuing the other 2 offers. This period ended December 6, 2022, and staff quickly requested offer letters from the other parties.

In January 2023, staff received notice from the RCFCWCD that they were no longer interested in the 3 surplus parcels. Consequently, EIP has the sole remaining offer for consideration of \$1,866,000.00 on an appraised value of \$1,870,000.00. The original purchase price in 1994 for all 3 surplus parcels was \$376,000.00. Therefore, the RCHCA surplus lands subcommittee met on January 26, 2023, to discuss EIPs offer and recommended moving forward for the full RCHCA Board's consideration and acceptance.

## 6.C SURPLUS LAND

### DISPOSITION

Requested Action(s):

1. Accept EIP's offer of \$1,866,000 for the three RCHCA surplus parcels (APNs 307-120-009, 307-130-071, and 307-210-022).
2. Authorize the Executive Director to proceed with the sale and execute all associated agreements.

## 7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dr. Kurt Wilson  
WRCOG



31

## 8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

## 9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 10. NEXT MEETING

Thursday, May 11, 2023

11:30 a.m.

In WRCOG's office located at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside

## 11. ADJOURNMENT



32