

**Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve
Reserve Management Committee – Special Meeting
Friday, March 10, 2017 -- 10:30a.m.-12:00p.m.
Multi-Species Reserve Office (Alamos Schoolhouse)
Lake Skinner Recreation Area, 37701 Warren Rd, Winchester 92596**

Meeting Notes

RMC Members Present:

Eddy Konno (California Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Wendy Picht (Metropolitan Water District of Southern California)
Keith Herron (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District)
Brian Shomo (Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency)
Geary Hund (United States Fish and Wildlife Service)

Other Attendees:

Alex Marks (Metropolitan)
Bill Wagner (Metropolitan consultant)
Charity Hagen (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District)
Robert Williams (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District)
Dustin McLain (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District)
Marc Brewer (Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District)
John Holloway (KTU+A)

1. Call to order and introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:36 p.m. by Keith Herron.

2. Public comments

None

3. Trail alignments – Parks and MWD will provide an update; the RMC will discuss proposed trail alignments and consider a resolution to adopt such alignments for future study and development of a trails plan.

Keith introduced the item and stated that each RMC member would have an opportunity to speak about their experience on the trail site visits and provide recommendations to move forward with the proposed alignments.

a) Site visits: Summary of site visits by participants—MWD, District, CDFW, USFWS, RCHCA, Reserve Manager, and MWD consultant.

- Geary stated that he attended the March 1 site visit and that it provided a good opportunity for additional discussion on the proposed alignments with Wendy, Bill, and Robert. Some of his concerns about potential impacts were able to be addressed in the field.
- Eddy stated that he always had an interest in a proposed north-south trail to Lake Skinner

that avoids Shipley and likes that a majority of the trail could be on an existing road. He added that the route would need to avoid the grove of oak trees at the trail's terminus near Lake Skinner. Through the Shipley Reserve, he stated a preference for only docent led trail use. Eddy added that the loop trail that includes Metropolitan property adjacent the west side of the Reserve appears to be feasible and although additional analysis of the route was needed, he expressed interest in the Goldrich Trail connection to the DVL west dam area.

- Brian also expressed support for the trail linking DVL and Lake Skinner and noted that the adjacent terrain would likely serve to keep users on the path. He agreed with Eddy regarding docent led trail use in the Shipley area and that any concerns related to creation of a new trailhead in the area could be worked out.
- Dustin stated that the use of existing roads would help to prevent impacts to the Reserve and that it was good the proposed alignments incorporated the findings of the site visits. He suggested development of the trails be phased, commencing with the shorter and loop trails and that if necessary, the trails could be closed for periods to address species needs.
- Wendy stated that she attended each of the site visits and noted that there are many opportunities for the trails plan to work with the existing features of Reserve such as existing roads, firebreaks, old road-cuts, and existing trails. She added that the proposed alignments would implement, and in many respects could improve upon, the trails program described in the DVL EIR and MSHCP.
- Bill stated that a major effort to minimize new cuts in vegetation had been incorporated into siting the proposed alignments. He added that the proposed Lake Skinner Loop Trail should be a priority as it has potential to be good interpretive trail, and that after parking and safety improvements are completed the Goldrich Trail could reopen.

b) Trail alignment evaluation: analysis of the proposed alignments based on mapping and site visits; evaluation summaries and any recommendations to be presented by MWD, District, CAFW, USFWS, and RCHCA.

The RMC had a discussion of the proposed alignments and members offered their suggestions for incorporation into continued trails planning. Notable topics related to protection of covered Reserve species and features of the trails raised by RMC members follows.

Geary noted the Service's position that trails could be accommodated in the Reserve provided the 31 covered species are not adversely affected and that the trails planning process is based upon species biology and preservation with input from a biologist. He expressed that with sufficient avoidance measures, patrols, and maintenance the alignments could pass through areas of species occurrence. Overall, he thought the alignment plan was positive, noting support with adjustments, for the proposed Lake Skinner Loop Trail. Several RMC members were in agreement that the Shipley Reserve area trails be for special event use only led by qualified guides, and potentially limited by season and group size but not to regulate the trail to the point it would no longer be useable. Geary stated that although the proposed North-South Connector Trail segment through the Middle Creek area has potential as a seasonal route, due to the riparian area's potential to support nesting White Tailed Kite, year-round use would require additional study and that year-to-year opening of the trail through the area should be contingent on nesting occurrence by the bird.

Following discussion of Geary's observations, other RMC members expressed support for the Lake Skinner Loop Trail with possible seasonal or year-by-year access limitations through riparian areas. The RMC members were also generally supportive of removing the trail designation off Rawson Road through Shipley from the trails map, biological analysis for potential limitations on use through the Tucalota drainage for White Tailed Kite, and adjusting the trail alignment southwest of DVL to avoid potential cultural resource issues. Geary distributed copies of the Service's proposed "Sample of Content of Trail Plan" to the RMC providing eight elements of a Trail Plan, including sections on patrols, local ordinances for trail use, sign planning, access, maintenance plan, weed management, funding, and measures to address resource damage due to trail use. The other RMC members generally expressed support for his recommendations. Keith then asked if the RMC was ready move forward with the resolution to adopt the trail alignments for further study and development of a trails plan.

4. Identification of additional items to consider in the trails planning process.

Geary stated the Service is concerned about the coverage of take of species that could result from construction, maintenance, and management of the trails. He noted that the Biological Opinion that created the Reserve covers take of Coastal California Gnatcatcher and that impacts to other listed and covered species must be addressed as part of continued analysis. He also noted the importance of indemnification for public use of the trails. Keith then asked the RMC about consideration of a resolution to adopt the alignments for future study and development of a trails plan.

MOTION to adopt the trail alignments as presented and amended today for further study and development of a trails plan, taking into consideration issues of species biology and take as it relates to federal and state regulations, and indemnification: Wendy Picht
SECOND: Brian Shomo **Motion Approved**

After approving the motion, Geary stated that the Service would provide conservation planning assistance to the RMC in development of the trails plan. He recommended creating an RMC sub-committee to work with the trails consultant and volunteered to serve on the committee.

5. Potential opening of the existing Lake Skinner Equestrian Trail for year round use.

Wendy introduced the item, the intent to open the Skinner Trail for year-round use by hikers and potentially by equestrians. A strategy for collection of seed, removal of Plantago from the trail, creation of a Plantago restoration site along the trail, addition of physical barriers to better define the trail, and longer-term maintenance were discussed with Geary at the field meeting on 3/1/17. Work would begin at the end of spring 2017. Geary stated that with restoration of the Plantago to the restoration site there would be no net loss of habitat for Quino. Bill Wagner would coordinate the field work with David Bramlett and Ken Osborne.

MOTION to pursue these measures toward opening of the existing Lake Skinner Equestrian Tail for year-round use beginning in 2019: Brian Shomo
SECOND: Eddy Konno **Motion Approved**

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

RMC 3/10/17