



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2009

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman Bob Buster at 12:06 p.m. in the RCA Conference Room, 3403 Tenth Street, Suite 320, Riverside, California.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee/Alternate Members Present	Committee Members Absent
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Bob Buster Frank Hall Jim Hyatt Melissa Melendez Eugene Montanez Jeff Stone Gary Thomasian	None
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3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

4. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Committee Member announcements.

5. ADDITIONS/REVISIONS

There were no additions or revisions to the agenda.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jim Hyatt noted a correction on Page 9, 4th Paragraph, 3rd Line; it should be "7' box culvert".

M/S/C (STONE/HYATT) to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2009 meeting of the Executive Committee, as corrected.

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7. FISCAL YEAR 2008-09 SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Honey Bernas, Director of Administrative Services, presented the Financial Report for the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2008-09. She noted that MSHCP fees are down by 32% for the second quarter and the out-of-county tipping fees are slightly down by 1%. A report on the tipping fees will be further reviewed by the Executive Director under Agenda Item No. 10B. It is anticipated that the RCA departments will have sufficient funds through the end of the fiscal year with the additional \$2.2 million draw on cash from land acquisitions.

In response to Jim Hyatt's questions for staff to review the Leave Buy-Out Parity and Retiree Health Insurance (OPEB) line items in Attachment 2, Honey Bernas said that the annual leave buy out provision is an employee benefit that provides employees the ability to buy out leave hours. This line item amount was reduced to reflect the change in the annual buy out provision from 80 hours to 40 hours. With regard to the Retiree Health Insurance (OPEB) line item, this in accordance with GASB requirements regarding postemployment benefits other than pensions.

Jeff Stone expressed his belief for the need of a two-tier retirement system, especially with the increasing liability that the County is faced with. In addition, he reported that at the National Association of Counties meeting, the proposal that Section 6 be increased to \$125 million received a positive response from the Legislators of both parties. Hopefully, Riverside County would be one of the beneficiaries of this proposal because it has the most progressive plan in the country.

M/S/C (HYATT/STONE) to:

- 1) Recommend that the RCA Board of Directors receive and file the Fiscal Year 2008-09 Second Quarter Financial Report; and***
- 2) Authorize staff to agendize this matter for the April 6, 2009 meeting of the RCA Board of Directors.***

8. REQUEST TO CONSIDER RESCHEDULING THE RCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS TO THE SAME DAY AS THE RCHCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Charlie Landry, Executive Director, stated that staff reviewed the meeting schedule of the RCHCA and found that the dates would conflict with RCA's long standing meeting schedule with the Wildlife Agencies. The meetings with the Wildlife Agencies are valuable and important to the RCA and difficult to coordinate.

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Chairman Buster commented that perhaps the RCHCA could consider rescheduling their quarterly meetings to the third Wednesday.

M/S/C (HALL/STONE) to not change the current RCA Executive Committee meeting schedule.

9. SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT OF MSHCP MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ken Graff, Director of Land Acquisition, reported the RCA contracts with the Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District for the management of MSHCP properties. The services provided by the District include enforcement and maintenance focusing on access controls, interdiction and education. There are 8.75 employees, and the MSHCP vehicles have County-frequency radios and a base station radio is set up in the Natural Resources Management office.

Gary Thomasian asked if the cities could be considered in the future to provide management services in exchange for trail access. This is an immense responsibility and believes that resources should be shared on managing the reserve lands. Perhaps the cities within the boundary lines could assist and take on some of the responsibilities.

Ken Graff said that the MSHCP authorizes several various trail activities in the reserve lands. Such activities are coordinated with the city requesting access as long as liability insurance coverage is provided. With regard to the management of the reserve lands, RCA works with entities such as the Bureau of Land Management, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Game, and the RCHCA on sharing or grouping management responsibilities. RCA is working with cities on the Public/Quasi Public (PQP) reconciliation as there are a number of city-owned properties that could qualify and contribute to the MSHCP PQP. For city-owned properties to be designated as PQP is an advantage as they would have the ability to have authority for activities.

Charlie Landry acknowledged that the sharing of management responsibilities is worth looking into and staff will look at working with the cities.

Chairman Buster noted the K-Rat Plan in the Sycamore Park as an example wherein the City of Riverside manages and coordinates the trail activities.

Gary Thomasian added that the schools could also be brought in to do an outreach program to educate their students. The Cities of Menifee and Wildomar would like to work with Murrieta toward developing a trail connection. Additionally, the reserve lands in Murrieta could be included are one of the areas for their annual clean up days. Perhaps the cities could take the lead for such a proposal to bring to the RCA for review and approval to avoid infringement of the MSHCP.

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Charlie Landry iterated that only those trails identified in the trails map of the MSHCP, which was originally established with the cities and the County, are covered and could be upgraded. Nevertheless, staff will be happy to work with the cities and the County to identify other trails in existence.

Jeff Stone informed the Executive Committee of an action taken by the County Board of Supervisors at their meeting yesterday wherein an applicant of a 200+ acre project agreed to donate 102 acres of habitat land to the County and RCA at no cost. He stressed the need to be creative especially during these bad economic times, and using the entitlement tool where it makes sense, to provide linkages that are needed.

Michelle Ouellette reminded the Executive Committee that there are requirements in using non-RCA staff such as appropriate liability insurance coverage and training.

Jim Hyatt stated there should be guidelines that would define what the appropriate requirements are for volunteers, i.e., insurance, training. He would also be interested in a basic design of existing trails.

Ken Graff told the Executive Committee that Temecula is drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for groups working in a volunteer capacity at the trails. A trails map would have to be developed first before processing the MOU. This could be used as a template for the cities/county and volunteer groups for trail access and management services which will include such things as liability insurance, license agreements, etc.

Eugene Montanez said that with the Santa Ana River Trail, they worked with the Wildland Conservancy as they are able to use their 501(c)3 tax status to raise funds. Two years ago, RCA developed standards for trails, which included requirements for construction of trails.

Frank Hall added that there are trail standards for the various uses such as hiking, equestrian, etc. The Equestrian Trails, Incorporated has a manual for equestrian trail standards. Also, Norco has an adopted trail program that has worked well for the city.

In response to Jim Hyatt's question if RCA has a map of the various habitat management units and how they are laid out, Ken Graff said that he will include a map with the staff report to be presented to the RCA Board of Directors.

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Melissa Melendez asked about the number of staff assigned to the MSHCP program and Ken Graff said that the District is within the approved staffing level. Two positions that were not filled the previous year were rolled over to the current reporting period.

M/S/C (HYATT/MELENDEZ) to:

- 1) Recommend that the RCA Board of Directors receive and file the Semi-Annual Report of MSHCP Management Activities; and***
- 2) Authorize staff to agendize this matter for the April 6, 2009 meeting of the RCA Board of Directors.***

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Outreach Efforts

Charlie Landry stated that as part of the outreach effort, RCA is updating its website to be interactive for public agencies, the general public as well as the developers to print brochures and access data on the acquired lands. It will highlight awareness of the various tasks that RCA is undertaking not just on acquisition but also on management and monitoring. The site will have pictures of the species, which is currently not shown on RCA's webpage.

B. Update Regarding Tipping Fees

Charlie Landry stated that the County Executive Office has informed RCA that the in-County tipping fees are down significantly and they are in the process of calculating the figures. The impact this will have on RCA is uncertain as the RCA is last in line for receiving these fees. It should be noted that last year, RCA received only \$266,000 of the \$400,000 that was expected. The MSHCP states that after payment of debt service on the Santa Rosa Plateau and an annual commitment to the County Parks, there will be a balance of approximately \$400,000 that will be applied toward.

He continued and said that for the out of county fees, RCA receives \$1.50 of the \$3.00/ton for the El Sobrante Landfill. Staff is currently developing an MOU that will include an escalating provision based on the use of the landfill with the County Executive Office.

C. Consultant Report - Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA)

Charlie Landry reported that SAWA provides monitoring services on RCA's reserve lands. The MSHCP requires the RCA to monitor newly acquired land and existing land so that we meet the species objectives. They employ approximately 30 biologists and work under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. The Plan requires that for the first eight years, the agencies perform this function and they have the ability to continue thereafter, if they wish. RCA's contract is for \$1.5 million but it is estimated that they will expend \$1.4 million. In addition, the State provides \$500,000 in funding. Next year's budget will be scaled down but noted that since this service is required, there may be a limit as how much the contract could be reduced. The RCA approves the work plan.

D. Update on Fire Response Plan

The Fire Response Plan will be presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting next month.

11. DISCUSSION REGARDING RAND REPORT – CHAPTER 2, “VALUE OF PARCELS ALREADY ACQUIRED BY RCA”

Charlie Landry reviewed Chapter 2, Land Acquisition and Reserve Operating Costs. RAND reviewed property sales records from January 2000 to October 2007. Properties attributes such as zoning, slope, proximity to roads and freeways and job accessibility, and predicted parcel values as of mid-2007 were considered. RAND used a USC model to value the land needed for the reserve. RCA has bought 35,500 acres for 321 million which is an average of \$7,400 per acre. Subsequent to the RAND Study, several large purchases were made and the total of funds expended to acquire approximately 40,000 reserve lands including local, state, and federal funds is \$401 million which dropped the per acre price to \$11,000.

Discussion followed relating to the possibility of routing linkages to avoid the developed parcels in order to save expenditures. Chapter 3 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

At this time, Jim Hyatt expressed his appreciation for staff's assistance in processing a Criteria Refinement in Calimesa.

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13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other items before the Executive Committee, Chairman Buster adjourned the meeting at 1:06 p.m. The next meeting of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, at 12:00 p.m., at the Riverside Centre, 3403 Tenth Street, Suite 320, Third Floor, RCA Conference Room, Riverside, California, 92501.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Honey Bernas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'H'.

Honey Bernas
Clerk of the Board