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**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, October 3, 2011**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority was called to order by Chairman Jeff Stone at 1:07 p.m. in the Board Room of the Riverside County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside, California, 92501.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Stone led the RCA Board Members and those present in a flag salute.

**3. ROLL CALL**

**Board Members Present**

Marion Ashley  
Kevin Bash  
Ben Benoit  
Randy Bonner  
Bob Buster  
Maryann Edwards  
Thomas Fuhrman  
Mike Gardner  
Jim Hyatt  
Linda Krupa  
Alan Long  
John Machisic  
Scott Miller  
Eugene Montanez  
Adam Rush  
Jeff Stone  
John Tavaglione

**Board Members Absent**

Bill Batey  
John Benoit  
Roger Berg  
Melissa Melendez  
Mark Yarbrough

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bud Spresney of Cerritos, California, expressed that that he was pleased to see presentations on wildlife corridor and mountain lions on the agenda which he requested at previous RCA meetings. He conveyed his discontent with Murrieta's plans for Linkage 16 as it would be degraded from a deer and cougar corridor and instead be one for coyote, rabbits and rodents. If Linkage 16 did contain cougars, it would be most inappropriate to have a corridor pass through a planned professional office park and within a 1,000 feet of

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Murrieta's new hospital. By maintaining the present linkage, land area would serve no other meaningful conservation purpose because it is being cut by several close-together roads, the environment is unacceptable to wary animals, and the shape and width of the area. Mr. Spresney said that he has ideas regarding Murrieta's mitigation and will discuss further, should RCA desire. *(A written testimony was submitted to RCA.)*

### **5. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Board Member announcements.

### **6. ADDITIONS/REVISIONS**

The following changes to the agenda were announced:

- a) Agenda Item No. 14.1, Conference with Real Property Negotiator, Assessor Parcel No. 940-140-010, was continued to the next RCA Board meeting, and
- b) Agenda Item No. 14.2, Conference with Legal Counsel, Existing Litigation, RIC 530137, Anheuser Busch, was pulled from the agenda.

### **7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***M/S/C (ASHLEY/HYATT) to approve the September 12, 2011 minutes of the RCA Board of Directors' meeting, as submitted.***

### **8. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN (MSHCP) TRAILS**

Laurie Correa, Director of Reserve Management and Monitoring, provided an overview of trails and public access in the Western Riverside County MSHCP Conservation Area. There are two types of trails: 1) Existing community trails which are primarily used by equestrian users; and, 2) Existing adopted regional trails and future proposed regional trails of which uses will include hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. In addition to the trails, there are three other types of public access facilities located in the MSHCP conservation area; trailheads, interpretive centers, and maintenance facilities. She then showed on maps the locations of the trails/public access facilities.

Alan Long commented on the importance of identifying all trails sooner than later, especially in areas that have urban sprawl, i.e., in sensitive areas such as around Core 2 where there is a potential of disturbing critical habitat by people desiring to explore the scenic land and it is important to redirect them around the critical habitat areas.

In response to Adam Rush's question regarding the process for cities/county to include trails in their jurisdiction in the Trails Master Plan, Laurie Correa said that RCA staff makes an effort to include existing and proposed trails, but suggested that local agencies

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submit them to RCA in order to identify individual jurisdiction's needs for take associated with existing trail maintenance and future trail construction.

Tom Fuhrman remarked about the development impact fees of which 50% is for highway improvements and the remaining funds are divided between libraries, parks and trails. For example, in Menifee for 2005/2006/2007, \$42 million was collected by the County of Riverside of which 7% is for funding trails. The collected funding should remain in the area from where it was collected. There should be approximately \$3 million collected by the County of Riverside to spend on trails in Menifee and this would hold true for every city that was formed and the County was collecting these fees. This matter needs to be looked into and funding be recovered for trails. This also affects the newly incorporated cities.

Chairman Stone agreed that this matter needed looking into and added that when Menifee was a part of the unincorporated area of the County of Riverside, fees were collected but he understood that funds are for recreational trails and not for habitat trails. He noted that they will look into this matter.

Vice Chairman Hyatt mentioned Calimesa's efforts working with their Parks and Open Space Committee and with RCA documenting current and potential trails, and he urged the newly formed cities to do the same. They are also working with Redlands to link trail plans for both cities.

Chairman Stone said that the County of Riverside is embarking on a Wine Country Plan and the environmental document is being circulated and they discovered that there are comprehensive trails through the wine country area that development in the past had reserved. He noted that the surrounding area around the wine country is habitat.

Kevin Bash stated that there are 160 miles of trails with two trail heads at the top of the Santa Ana River and this is not shown on RCA's Trails Plan. He will submit Norco's Trail Map to the RCA.

Alan Long asked about the possibility of RCA entering into a collaborative agreement with the cities with accessible funding that may be utilized for trails, and consideration of third party funding sources such as the "adopt a trail program" as part of the agreement. Michelle Ouellette, Legal Counsel, responded that they will look at such an agreement with the cities, including use of third party funding sources and report back to the RCA Board.

Upon review of the trails mentioned in the presentation, it was noted that there were existing community trails that needed to be incorporated into the Western Riverside County Trails Plan Map. Therefore, Chairman Stone encouraged the cities and the County to submit their respective Trails Master Plans to RCA in order to have an updated, comprehensive Western Riverside County Trails Map.

***M/S/C (STONE/GARDNER) to receive and file and report on Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Trails.***

**9. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

Laurie Correa presented the planned wildlife corridors (linkages) for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). She said that conservation planning for the MSHCP in Western Riverside County is based on core reserves and the connections between the reserves called linkages. The connection between the core areas (with adequate size, configuration and vegetation characteristics) generally provide for "live in" habitat and/or provide for genetic flow for identified planning species. Constrained linkages are expected to provide movement of identified planning species between core areas, where options for assembly of the linkage are limited, due to existing patterns of use. She presented maps identifying the cores and linkages that identify the mountain lion as planning specie, and showed the core locations that are considered "live in" for mountain lion. The linkages considered critical for mountain lion movement are: 1) Proposed Constrained Linkages 1 and 2, which will provide a connection between the Cleveland National Forest and Chino Hills State Park under Highway 91; 2) Proposed Linkage 1 and Constrained Linkage 5, which will provide a connection between the Cleveland National Forest and Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain under I-15; 3) Proposed Linkage 9, which will provide a connection between the Cleveland National Forest and the Santa Rosa Plateau; and, 4) Proposed Constrained Linkage 14, which will provide a connection between the Santa Ana Mountains and Palomar Mountain using potentially both Temecula and Pechanga Creeks as well as another non-drainage crossing under I-15 further south.

Bud Sprezney submitted public comments regarding: 1) installation of wildlife signs; 2) monitoring and statistics regarding attacks by wildlife to human and vice versa; 3) installation and the type of fencing to protect wildlife; 4) Linkage 16 issues; and, 5) deer circumventing culverts and jumping to roadways. He urged the RCA Board Members to review previous written testimony that he submitted in July 2010 and March 2011.

***M/S/C (ASHLEY/HYATT) to receive and file the report on Wildlife Corridors.***

**10. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAIN LION MOVEMENT**

Dr. Winston Vickers of the University of California Davis Wildlife Health Center presented the Southern California Cougar – Bobcat Study Results prepared in collaboration with the University of California Davis Wildlife Health Center, The Nature Conservancy, and Orange County Parks. He reviewed the species physical traits and lifespan, critical habitat linkages being studied, and course of action used for tracking movements and behavior. He showed a map where cougars utilize narrow strips of remaining habitat along escarpment as one of two remaining pathways to and from Santa Rosa Plateau Reserve. He pointed out that the Tenaja Corridor is the most protected pathway as it allows cougars to move between the Santa Rosa Plateau and conserved habitat to the west. However, the cougars are likely exposed to increased edge effects due to the

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corridor's inconsistent nature. The largest barriers to connectivity between blocks of habitat appear to be roads, especially freeways, and developments. Freeways such as the I-15 and Route 91 have very few remaining suitable passages that would allow wildlife, like the mountain lions, to cross safely. He noted that the objective of the study is to better understand puma behavior, disease and habitat needs, as well as assist in the effective use of scarce conservation funds. Finally, the study strives to balance the needs of people and wildlife.

Tom Fuhrman commented on deer as a prey to mountain lion and decreasing deer population in California resulting in attacks to sheep, goats and cows. With a normal size mountain lion requiring 3,600 lbs. of meat/year, the reduced number of deer population will lead them to attack domestic animals.

Chairman Stone asked if RCA has a fully realized Corridor Plan and its affect on the mountain lion population as it relates to development resulting in limited ingress and egress. Dr. Vickers pointed out, as an example, development affecting population of the Florida panther coming close to dangerous level.

Maryann Edwards said that citing decrease of any specie makes a compelling argument in favor of the MSHCP because it demonstrates that there is a need to provide areas for people and specie to co-exist. The presentation demonstrates that mountain lions avoid the freeways. She asked whether any efforts to encourage the use of the remaining linkages should be abandoned or should we be more diligent in preserving the few linkages that exist and provide ways over and under the freeways. Dr. Vickers agreed that although it is highly challenging, it can be done.

Bob Buster stated that assuming the mountain lion meet its demise in the Santa Ana Mountain area unless proactive actions are taken, he asked if this should be a concern if the population could exist in another location. Dr. Vickers pointed out the delicate ecological balance between the predator and prey within the ecological system and how it affects the food chain and the natural balance of the ecosystem once an animal goes extinct.

Alan Long said there has been sighting of mountain lions in the southern area of Core 2 which may have been a result of urban sprawl. He then asked Dr. Vickers' recommendation whether sufficient efforts are being made to protect them to which Dr. Vickers stated that corridor design is critical and there are cases where they may not be readily available.

Chairman Stone commented on the fiscal crisis facing the State of California, he asked if Dr. Vickers is able to continue with his studies. Dr. Vickers stated that their current study relates to mountain lion movement which is funded by Orange County and the Nature Conservancy.

On behalf of the RCA Board, Chairman Stone thanked Dr. Vickers for attending the RCA Board meeting and for presenting results of their Bobcat Study.

*M/S/C (STONE/EDWARDS) to receive and file the Southern California Mountain Lion Movement report.*

## **11. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Charlie Landry, Executive Director, briefed the RCA Board Members on the following items:

### **11.1 Loan Program**

Staff continues to work with infrastructure groups, such as Mobility 21, AASHTO (American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials), and RCTC, as well as with environmental groups to expand support of the loan program as the legislation moves forward to Congress.

### **11.2 Section 6 Update**

Contact was made with the Carlsbad and Sacramento offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service inquiring on the rationale used for RCA not being included in the list of recipients to receive Section 6 funds. They indicated that a response with information on the rationale used for the allocation is forthcoming within the next few weeks, whether it was a result of change in priorities in Sacramento or Washington. Staff will present the information to the RCA Board once it is received.

### **11.3 Nexus Study**

The proposals for the Nexus Study were received and interviews conducted. Staff will report back to the RCA Board on the selected consultant after the scope of the contract is finalized.

### **11.4 Critical Habitat Amended Biological Opinion**

Staff has been in discussion with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C., regarding this matter. The Service has signed an amended biological opinion for the MSHCP. Staff will continue to monitor this matter to make certain that the Service remains in compliance with their agreement with RCA in order for the MSHCP to remain whole.

## **12. LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Brian Beck, Land Acquisition Analyst, reported that an additional 135 acres were added to the reserves, bringing the total acres conserved to 44,334. He illustrated on a map the locations of the acreage acquired.

**13. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

At this time, Vice Chairman Hyatt suggested that RCA Board Members consider changing the RCA Board meeting start time to be held 30 minutes earlier, from 1:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. to allow more time for discussion.

**14. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS**

**14.1 CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR (Continued)**

**Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8**

**Negotiating Parties:** RCA – Executive Director of Designee

**Under Negotiation:** Price/Terms

Item	Assessor Parcel No.	Property Owners
1	940-140-010	Alan Oto, Patricia Oto

**14.2 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION (Pulled)**

**Pursuant to Subdivision (a) of Government Code Section 54956.9**

■ RIC 530137 Anheuser Busch

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other items to be considered, the next meeting of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors is scheduled for Monday, November 7, 2011, at 1:00 p.m., at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, Board Room, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside, California.

Respectfully submitted,



Honey Bernas  
Clerk of the Board