1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Vargas at 11:36 a.m., at WRCOG’s office, 3390 University Avenue, Suite 450, Riverside, CA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Attendee</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Arrived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Corona</td>
<td>Yolanda Carrillo</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Hemet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Lake Elsinore</td>
<td>Tim Sheridan</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Menifee</td>
<td>Lesa Sobek</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Moreno Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Murrieta</td>
<td>Christi White</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Perris</td>
<td>Michael Vargas</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Riverside</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Temecula</td>
<td>James Stewart</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Wildomar</td>
<td>Joseph Morabito</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Riverside, District 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCHCA Director</td>
<td>Rick Bishop</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
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2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Vargas led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. MINUTES

A. Summary Minutes from the February 21, 2019, Board of Directors Meeting are Available for Consideration.

Action: 1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the February 21, 2019, Board of Directors meeting.
6. CONSENT AND POLICY CALENDAR

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER: City of Murrieta
SECONDER: City of Wildomar
AYES: Corona, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Wildomar
ABSENT: Hemet, Moreno Valley, Riverside, Temecula, District 5

A. Status of Mitigation Fee Transfers from Member Agencies through March 31, 2019

Action: 1. Received and filed.

B. Financial Report through March 31, 2019

Action: 1. Received and filed.

C. Status Report on the Attendance Roster

Action: 1. Received and filed.

D. Status Report Concerning Reserve Management Committees for the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and the Lake Mathews Reserve

Action: 1. Received and filed.

E. Single Signature Authority Report

Action: 1. Received and filed.


Action: 1. Received and filed.

7. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Agency Budget

Princess Hester, RCHCA Director of Administration, reported that there are two components of the Budget – General Fund and Lake Mathews Endowment.

The General Fund consists of expenditures for Administration, land management activities, and educational and community outreach.

The Lake Mathews Endowment supports land management, biological surveys, and research activities.

General Fund revenues include mitigation fee transfers, interest earned, and deposit-based fees. Expenditures include administration, operations, land management for RCHCA-owned lands, and community outreach and education programs.

The Lake Mathews Endowment is a wasting endowment; those expenditures include land management, biological monitoring, and research.
Total Agency revenues are projected to be $1.4M against expenditures of $1.1M. Staff will continue providing regular updates and will closely monitor revenues and expenditures in order to achieve financial goals. Any excess revenues will be allocated to Agency reserves.

**Action:** 1. Adopted Resolution Number 2019-03; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency adopting the Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Agency Budget for the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency.

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<tr>
<th>RESULT:</th>
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<tr>
<td>MOVER:</td>
<td>City of Menifee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECONDER:</td>
<td>City of Murrieta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYES:</td>
<td>Corona, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Wildomar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSENT:</td>
<td>Hemet, Moreno Valley, Riverside, Temecula, District 5</td>
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**B. Status Update on Stephens Kangaroo Rat Recovery Efforts**

Princess Hester, RCHCA Director of Administration, reported that staff continues to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) to demonstrate species recovery and advocate for reclassification under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Stephens Kangaroo Rat (SKR) is listed as endangered under the Federal ESA. Staff are seeking to pursue a listing of threatened. In May 2018, RCHCA was informed that USFWS is conducting a species status review for SKR; this was a milestone and monumental effort. It was originally anticipated that the review would have been completed in 2012; however, that did not occur. Staff believes that due to recent advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., with congressional leaders and legislators have helped to achieve the review.

Initial conclusion indicates that the factors affecting SKR have been reduced to the extent that SKR is no longer in danger of extinction throughout all or a portion of its range and is a candidate for downlisting. Staff anticipates the listing review will be completed in December 2019. RCHCA will be a part of the peer review for the status review. Staff are working with the Chair and Vice-Chair’s availability to schedule advocacy meeting in Washington, D.C., during the month of September.

As part of the review process, RCHCA formed a working group to perform a strengths and weakness analysis and are in the process of completing a Habitat Sustainability Model. Staff are also in the process of creating a Range-Wide Monitoring Protocol and are seeking funding for this particular effort. Last to be completed is a Genetic Study.

USFWS has begun a Species Status Assessment; next steps include a 5-Factor Peer Analysis Review (RCHCA will be a part of this review and will provide comments), Proposal of a Federal Rule for Downlisting to Threatened (this should be completed by December 2020), and lastly the Federal government will be presented with a Final Rule for Downlisting.

Board member Joseph Morabito asked if the ultimate goal is to recover SKR to the point in which it can be delisted.

Mrs. Hester responded that that is the goal. RCHCA has been working on this since 1996 and have met all the requirements to do so. Downlisting from endangered to threatened will align
the listing for both the USFWS (which lists SKR as endangered) and the California Fish and Wildlife Services Agency (which lists SKR as threatened).

Once this occurs, nothing changes for the Agency. Staff will continue to manage the lands in perpetuity, will continue to monitor and manage SKR to ensure it is thriving, and that its habitat is protected.

Board member Christi White thanked staff and leadership for all their efforts in getting to this point.

Board member Lesa Sobek asked how long it takes to list an animal as endangered.

Mrs. Hester responded that she is unaware how long it took to identify and list SKR as endangered; however, it was the development within Western Riverside County that drove the species to be endangered. A Recovery Plan was then drafted, which became the blueprint for this Agency to ensure SKR did not become extinct. Part of that Plan was acquiring land and setting aside a conservation, identifying the SKR Plan Area; this is where participation by the member jurisdictions came into play. Development was able to continue given that RCHCA was able to obtain a 30-year permit in 1996.

Board member Sobek asked if staff anticipates any continued support from members of the community in the continued protection of SKR.

Mrs. Hester responded that there could be. That will likely be identified when USFWS publishes its 5-Factor Analysis Review, which will identify if threats still exist, what changes have been made to the area, and is SKR thriving. RCHCA has layered is research to prove and support its work. Conserved lands have been set aside and continue to be managed. Staff implemented a translocation program in which science-based researched could be used in order to potentially translocate SKR in order to fulfill population numbers. The Habitat Suitability Model will be beneficial not only for RCHCA, but also for its partners, in identifying suitable habitat in the event SKR needed to be translocated. Each of the various partner agencies which monitor for species do not necessarily use the same procedures and look to RCHCA as the experts in the area of developing a Range-Wide Monitoring Protocol that every agency can use to monitor SKR so that all of the information is consistent.

A Genetic Study will be completed given that SKR expands to the geographical range of Northern San Diego County. Staff wants to ensure that the programs currently underway to not interfere with the work being done in Northern San Diego County, but at the same time, ensuring RCHCA is being recognized for the successful work it has completed.

Board member Sobek asked if staff anticipates any kick-back from the development community when SKR is downlisted, because the development community does pay fees.

Mrs. Hester responded that staff will communicate with the development community.

Rick Bishop, RCHCA General Manager, added that if RCHCA is successful in downlisting SKR, nothing changes with regard to land management and SKR monitoring. Many may ask, once SKR is downlisted, why RCHCA should continue to do this. The answer is that when laws were put into place, there was an expectation that the programs would be successful. This is the way to demonstrate to the public that the money paid by the development community have allowed RCHCA to set aside lands and recover SKR – it has worked. Current fee structures will not change nor will lands be opened for development.

Mrs. Hester indicated that staff thought that in 2012 the Agency had supported efforts which
would have resulted in SKR being downlisted. In 2012 the Agency was still working off its Draft Recovery Plan. The difference today is the contact staff has with legislators. When RCHCA first partnered with WRCOG, the main goal was to delist SKR. The partnership and communication WRCOG provided outside of local offices, and bringing attention to RCHCA nationally, was key in supporting the work of this Agency in moving this item forward.

Board member Morabito asked what was the original high number of population of SKR, what did it dip to, and what has it rebounded to for it to be considered for downlisting.

Mrs. Hester responded that it was not a matter of counting animals more than making sure that the habitat is sustainable to sustain populations. RCHCA is a holistic land manager.

**Action:** 1. Received and filed.

**C. Report on Steele Peak Public Access Plan**

Princess Hester, RCHCA Director of Administration, reported that in February 2018, this Board authorized staff to solicit proposals for the development of a Public Access Plan for Steele Peak.

Matters staff face consistently are illegal trespassing and illegal dumping. When the lands were set aside the premise was to install fences with “no trespassing” signs. While there is no access for some parts of the Reserve, there is still access. Staff and consultants are looking for ways open some space for recreation and find a balance conservation and recreation that is in support of community development. Most of the lands are co-owned and/or co-managed by different entities / agencies. There are approximately 200 acres within Steele Peak Reserve which RCHCA owns outright, therefore, this would be an ideal location for public access.

The area of Good Hope is an underserved community within the unincorporated area of Riverside County and staff believes that that community would benefit greatly from having additional recreational opportunities available.

As a result of solicitation for proposals, Alta Planning + Design was selected as the consultant based upon its experience with similar projects.

Last Friday, staff learned that the County of Riverside is preparing a General Plan Amendment for the Good Hope area, updating and changing the designation from village rural residential to include retail and open space for the area along Highway 74, which is a thoroughfare for the east / west corridor. This is the perfect time for RCHCA’s Public Access Plan to be implemented at the same time.

On Earth Day, staff hosted a tour at the Steele Peak Reserve; attendees saw that the area is very rustic.

Next steps include organizing public outreach, identifying mitigation measures, and researching grant funding opportunities. The first public meeting is tentatively scheduled for the evening of July 8, 2019, at the community center in the Good Hope community.

Board member Christi White asked if another report will be provided by Alta regarding the tour, and if any information will be provided by Alta.

Mrs. Hester responded that staff will be distributing a flyer within the next few days; this
presentation is just the very beginning on things to come.

Board member White encouraged staff to speak with Ginger Greeves of the Santa Rosa Plateau regarding property it acquired and the process it involved.

**Action:** 1. Received and filed.

D. **Educational Outreach Program Activities Update**

Princess Hester, RCHCA Director of Administration, reported that on April 17 and 18, 2019, RCHCA celebrated Earth Day by hosting 100 kindergarten students from Sunny Meadows Elementary School. WRCOG and the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources, as well as the Energy Coalition, helped sponsor the event.

Next year will be the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. RCHCA will partner with the County of Riverside on a concerted effort of activities to occur in each member jurisdiction.

**Action:** 1. Received and filed.

E. **Report on Full Consolidation of RCHCA Staff and Operations with WRCOG**

Princess Hester, RCHCA Director of Administration, reported that in May 2018, this Board directed staff to work with the County of Riverside and WRCOG to fully consolidate RCHCA staff and operations into WRCOG. This has been a very successful transition; cost savings have already been realized.

The final step in the process is to inactivate and transfer RCHCA funds maintained by the County to RCHCA accounts held with the California Asset Management Program, which will provide the best yield for fund balances.

RCHCA will continue to operate under a separate Joint Powers Agreement and pay its own financial obligations.

**Action:** 1. Adopted Resolution Number 2019-02; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency authorizing the inactivation of a bank account maintained by the County of Riverside Office of the Treasurer-Tax Collector and the transfer of its funds to existing California Asset Management Program (CAMP) accounts currently held by the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency.

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER: City of Murrieta
SECONDER: City of Corona
AYES: Corona, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, Wildomar
ABSENT: Hemet, Moreno Valley, Riverside, Temecula, District 5
F. Report on the Stephens Kangaroo Rat Reserve Management and Monitoring Efforts

Brian Shomo, RCHCA Director of Natural Resources, reported that the Stephens Kangaroo Rat (SKR) Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) requires RCHCA to count acres of occupation of SKR. 15,000 acres of SKR occupied habitat must be maintained in order to fulfill that requirement. Staff rotates the management of 5,000 acres every year until all 15,000 acres have been managed. Within three years, all 15,000 acres of suitable SKR habitat should have been managed.

There are four ways to manage the lands: grazing, burning, mowing, and/or limited / targeted areas in which herbicides are applied. This year, 1,200 acres were grazed and approximately 800 acres have been burned; it is anticipated that another 800 acres will be burned. Approximately 200 acres have been mowed, and 5 acres or less have received an application of herbicide.

Stinknet is a non-native invasive weed found county-wide and chokes out any other type of vegetation and is a threat to SKR. While it most likely cannot be eliminated altogether, staff can manage it.

In 2017, RCHCA partnered with the University of California, Riverside (UCR), to research Stinknet. Four objectives included the evaluation of the efficacy of herbicides, assessment of the seed bank dynamics to better understand the ecology of Stinknet, evaluation of potential soil legacies to better inform restoration potential, and assessment of how Stinknet may be affecting the foraging of SKR.

It was determined that for areas with a high abundance of Stinknet, SKR had lower body weights. If animals have a low body weight, they are less likely to reproduce.

Mr. Shomo discussed the various types of herbicides that were and continue to be tested and the results thereof. A final report and recommendation(s) on the appropriate herbicide(s) staff should use range-wide will be provided in approximately six months.

Staff are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) on an educational campaign regarding Stinknet.

MWD contracts with RCHCA to manage approximately 6,000 acres of its land and is provided approximately $200,000 annually to do so. Costs this next fiscal year are anticipated to be just under $139,000 and will cover a wildlife / vehicle interaction survey, weed management, and grassland restoration, to name a few. The Reserve Management Committee adopted this budget.

RCHCA has partnered with S&S Seed for the purchase of local, native vegetation seeds. S&S Seeds has a need for collecting local seeds for the purpose of supplying a commercially available source for local conservation and mitigation projects such as the El Sobrante Landfill, which has a requirement to use locally harvested seeds in order to restore slopes around the Landfill. S&S Seeds will only be allowed to pick 50% of any particular vegetation, and in return, RCHCA will get approximately 20% back.

Board member Joseph Morabito expressed interest in seeing pictures of the process of harvesting the plants.

Board member Christi White encouraged staff to promote the P3 (Public Private Partnerships) aspect of the partnership with S&S Seed.
RCHCA recently hosted a six-day fire training for CAL FIRE and the Bureau of Land Management Fire Investigators Training at Lake Mathews. Trainees learned about origination of fire, incendiary devices, etc. Approximately 400 acres will be burned next week in which several hundred fire fighters will be trained. Often times fire fighters come from all over the state when responding to wild fires, and they do not know or understand the terrain or the boundaries, so it is good to be able to provide training here and to be able to explain this information.

**Action:** 1. Received and filed.

8. **REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER**

Rick Bishop, RCHCA General Manager, reported that WRCOG’s General Assembly is being held at Pechanga Resort Casino on June 20, 2019. This year’s speaker is Josh Earnest, White House Press Secretary under President Barak Obama. For the first time, this year’s event will include a Future of Cities Conference which will occur from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., followed by the General Assembly beginning at 4:00 p.m. The Conference will include discussions on automation and autonomous vehicles, as well as new legislation affecting local jurisdictions.

WRCOG has a series of COGCast episodes on the various WRCOG and RCHCA programs and activities which can be accessed at [http://wrcog.us/283/WRCOGCast](http://wrcog.us/283/WRCOGCast), Apple, Spotify, or Google Play. If anyone is interested in being in a podcast, please contact Mr. Bishop.

9. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Chair Vargas would like a presentation on endowments.

10. **GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Vargas announced that the Southern California Railway is having civil war enactments this weekend.

11. **CLOSED SESSION**

The Board of Directors adjourned into closed session at 12:42 p.m.

12. **NEXT MEETING**

The next RCHCA Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2019, at 11:30 a.m., at WRCOG’s office located at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 450, Riverside.

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.