

**Candelaria Nature Preserve (CNP)
Technical Advisory Group, (TAG)**

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW

Education Building

July 11, 2018 • 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Minutes - final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson, Chairman, bhanson5@comcast.net; Peggy Norton, Steve Cox, Colleen McRoberts, Carolyn Siegel, Michael Jensen

Additional Technical Assistance: James Lewis, Dave Hutton

Community –Linda Shank, Shannon Horst, John Busemeyer, Richard Barish, Ann Dunlap, Melinda Moffitt, Ruth Salvaggio

Review of Agenda – added several items – review of official TAG members, review of Peggy Norton TAG document, review of Brian’s introductory document to public meeting of June 22

Announcements from TAG Members

Valle de Oro fundraiser night; Open Space Alliance beer fundraiser

James Lewis wanted to know why he was not an official TAG member. Colleen and Christina are listed as official members from the City of Albuquerque. We decided we would discuss it later. He also mentioned that decisions during an open meeting would have to be a majority and that a quorum would have to be present to make decisions.

Colleen warned against discussing issues outside of meetings and had Michael address the “rolling quorum” issue. If a few people talk and pass it on to a few more people, it can constitute a quorum and a violation of the Public Meetings Act.

Public Comment - No public comment

Resource Management Plan, Transition to wildlife habitat

Colleen summarized transition – There is no allocated budget for CNP; Transition will include adaptive management; Whitfield Conservation Area has a budget of \$400,000; Can do more when more funding comes in; Vista volunteer in Open Space will help; Colleen said Mr. Gibson has stated that it may cost \$50,000 to hire a farmer for CNP. Open Space will work collaboratively with TAG.

Need Friends group to acquire grants which can’t go to the City. Michael is working on this but it will take 6-9 months.

Concerning funding, Brian suggested that a Resource Management Plan should be completed before funding can be discussed

Brian suggested that plantings in the hedgerow area and other areas should begin immediately since it takes many years before the plantings become valuable to wildlife.

Year 1 of transition – shrubs and trees planted in hedgerows and other areas (Brian); plant saltgrass in some areas (Peggy); alfalfa will be filled and other approved plants planted (Colleen); get wetland design

Discussion around removing elms and other nonnative plants; needs further discussion. Shannon said remove and replace immediately, or plant first and then remove; any removal disrupts soil ecology. Colleen suggested trying various methods.

Brian said that we need the assistance of a farmer to help decide what and how plantings can proceed. Colleen suggested meeting with Mr. Roberts.

Brian informed the group that the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS (federal agency, Santiago Misque) has funding to help with farming but it has to be between the NRCS and a private farmer. The NRCS could cost share on a 75% federal/25% private rate but it would require a contract and the farmer would have to follow NRCS recommendations. Colleen suggested a meeting with Jim Roberts and Santiago. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation also funds restoration projects.

Michael Jensen said that grass seed to accomplish the proposed seeding would cost about \$14,000.

Michael stated that structures in the CNP, like blinds for viewing wildlife, will require review from the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) and Environmental Planning Commission (EPC)

Colleen and Shannon suggested that we try small areas first to see how vegetation grows

Someone suggested that a parcel of the land be left alone and irrigated, in order to see what will grow on its own before any plantings commence. This has been done elsewhere and could offer important insights.

Capital Outlay for CNP from the State

Peggy obtained funding from the state and the Open Space Division is administrating the money. Peggy would like to see a written plan for the process of spending the money. Open Space has promised collaboration with the applicants (including TAG). Colleen said that they are committed to providing an annual report and a 4-year evaluation.

Peggy said another group obtained money for purchase of land for CNP but it could also be used for other needs of CNP. Michael said that OSAB must approve any land purchase.

Candelaria South Management i.e. acceptable recreation and brush piles

The ancestral land crew has removed some of the brush piles. The Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) evaluated 11 brush piles and think 5 had wildlife values by observations during 1 week in June. Traps were also set. The other 6 were removed by Ancestral Lands to reduce fire threats. Colleen handed out copies of the results and camera results of the study. Colleen also commented that BEMP is not free and needs funding. Steve Cox commented that the brush piles do have value in the wintertime. Carolyn stated the study was not over a very long time period. Peggy commented that TAG had discussed breaking up the large piles into smaller piles.

Colleen said that the Land and Water Conservation Fund requires a plan for recreation for Candelaria South and that is why she is proposing trails and other activities like open public access. The group stated that the private landowners did not want open access. Someone also stated that the area should be for wildlife. The Nature Center was concerned with liability of

open access to the Discovery pond. Having guided tours only or building a fence could address the liability issue. Viewing platforms would be ok.

Public comments

Colleen said that public comments are due by July 22. She couldn't comment on what the public has said yet. She handed out hard copies of public copies received so far after the June 22 meeting.

Valle de Oro field trip

Two proposed dates for the visit was July 26 in the morning or July 29. It was suggested that another TAG meeting be at the same time.

Next TAG meeting will be on a Valle de Oro field trip and/or our scheduled August 15 TAG meeting at 2:30 PM at the Nature Center.