

Candelaria Nature Preserve (CNP)
 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
 Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW
 Education Building
 January 17, 2020 • 2:00 – 5:00 PM
 Minutes Final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson chair, Christianne Hinks, Carolyn Siegel, Colleen Langan-McRoberts, Peggy Norton, Dave Parsons, Heather MacCurdy, James Lewis, Suzanne Shave, Jeannie Allen
 Community – Linda Shank, Yolanda Holmann, Dave Hutton, Steve Ewing, Carole Ward, Kent Seis, Jason Hinkes, Denise Wheeler

2:05 PM

Introductions

Review of Agenda– the agenda specified Review of RMP, 1 Transition Plan and 2 Wildlife Cropping. The group added – 3. Interim Issues before approval of the RMP 4. Fund Raising 5. Herbicides and Pesticides 6. Group size 7. Bus Parking 8. Veranda Access 9. Habitat Positioning 10. Budget. The group approved the agenda.

Announcements from TAG Members – Peggy stated that she wants the TAG to vote on approval of the RMP. Brian stated that we don't have to do that if we don't want to. TAG has had many reviews of the RMP.

Public Comment -

Jason, who lives on the north side of CNP is an organic gardener and is concerned with the use of chemicals on the CNP.

Kent Seis stated that chemicals would be needed to treat elms, but it would be spot treated not sprayed. Steve Ewing asked if there would notes from the meeting about parking. Brian stated that Open Space at the meeting said they would not be taking notes. Steve stated that he would submit notes of the meeting.

1. Transition Plan

Peggy noted that the 10 year plan still had cropping in the diagram and thought that we all agree that cropping will be completed early in the restoration of native habitat. Also, the Land and Water Conservation Fund required a quicker response. Colleen stated that it would be completed earlier and it should be corrected in the diagram. Brian looked at the habitat transition section and it indicated that habitat transition would be completed in 4 years. Colleen added that funding would have to be obtained before work could proceed and would affect how fast or slow the habitat work proceeds. Other issues such as contracting may slow the process as well. Brian added that establishing habitat may not proceed quickly because the plants may not grow as expected. See number 3 for more information about transition.

The group discussed forming a group to support CNP after TAG. The group approved the following statement – There is interest in TAG to form a group to discuss future issues of CNP i.e. funding, crop plan etc.

2. Wildlife Cropping (see the above number 1 also)

According to Colleen, they will be some commercial cropping in the year 2020 but any crops grown after that will be 100% for wildlife. Open Space recently received approval to continue cropping in 2020 from a representative of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Open Space will probably ask for bids for the work after 2020.

3. Interim issues before approval of the RMP

Colleen submitted a request to the Land and Water Conservation Fund to allow commercial farming until January 2021 and they approved it.

Peggy brought up the present management of CNP that is not covered by the RMP. Colleen said that Jim Roberts is planning on farming the area and has not submitted a plan yet for 2020. She said that if there is interest, a meeting could be held but thought it would be best to submit concerns to her immediately before Jim Roberts develops his plan.

Peggy was suggesting a group could be formed to address issues such as funding before approval of the RMP and afterwards since TAG will disappear after the Open Space Advisory Group approves the RMP. The group could be a Friends group or called something else. Colleen stated that such a group could be very useful.

4. Fund Raising

Peggy said to get funds, a group has to be formed to effectively go after funding. Her success last year was because she submitted a request representing the North Valley Coalition and TAG. Heather and Dave Hutton explained that a Friends group requires an agreement between the Friends group and the agency, like the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. Concerning the CNP, Albuquerque Open Space would be the agency. The Open Space Alliance was mentioned, and it was thought that the group was already addressing other issues and probably would not be effective for CNP without additional support. Peggy said that it would take a while to form a Friends group. Everyone decided that an initial meeting of interested individuals could form a group so that funding and other issues could be addressed.

5. Herbicides and Pesticides

Christianne stated that she heard that alfalfa would be treated with chemicals when the land is converted to native plant habitat. Colleen stated that they would not use chemicals to do that. Linda specified that the City Council resolution that formed TAG stated that the Council desires to not use pesticides and limit the use of herbicides.

6. Group size

Peggy said in the RMP it mentions a group size of 60 and she thinks that is too high. Heather said that number came from the number of students that are in a bus. After they arrive, they are broken up into smaller groups of maybe 25 to make teaching the group more effective and reducing impacts to wildlife. Peggy added that the school groups count toward the discovery walk count.

7. Bus parking

Heather explained that buses often come and unload, drive away, then return to pick up the students. She doesn't have a problem with buses and does not have a designated bus parking space; the buses use the other 147 parking spaces. The RGNC is required to charge the day-use fee (currently \$15) for school buses. Open Space has stated that they will work with the neighborhood when they design parking.

8. Veranda Access

The diagram in the RMP shows access on Veranda. Colleen stated that it was for viewing the CNP and would not be gate to enter the CNP.

9. Habitat Positioning

Brian and Peggy submitted comments to create salt grass habitat near the present viewing area in the northeast corner of the Nature Center parking lot. This habitat may attract winter sandhill cranes and could be viewed by visitors. Colleen said that habitat creation will be flexible and this suggestion could be implemented.

10. Budget

Colleen stated that Open Space must have a final RMP before they can expend funds for CNP. The only change in the budget between the Dec 6 RMP and the Dec 26 RMP was a correction in the amount needed to control elms. Concerning the timing suggested, she said that the availability of funds could change the timing. The budget amounts could be reduced if work can be obtained at lower amounts.

Volunteers could also reduce the budget amounts.

Approval of the RMP

Brian asked the TAG members if they felt that TAG should vote on acceptance of the RMP. At this meeting there were 9 of 17 TAG members. Most of the group approved of the idea of a vote.

A vote for approval of the RMP was proposed and seconded. It was followed by a discussion. Many members felt that all TAG members should be present. Voting followed - Results were - 4 people approve and 5 did not; so the voting for approval at this meeting was not approved.

Another vote was proposed and seconded to have TAG meet for the sole purpose of approving the RMP before the Open Space Advisory Board meeting January 28. Voting followed- Results 7 approve and 2 did not vote – The proposal for a meeting passed.

After that the group decided to meet January 24 at 2:00 PM at the Nature Center to discuss and vote on approval of the RMP.

5:00 PM Adjourn