

**Candelaria Farm Preserve
Technical Advisory Group**

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW

Education Building

July 12, 2017 • 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Minutes - Final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson, Chairman, bhanson5@comcast.net: Christianne Hinks, Peggy Norton, Judy Kowalski, Kent Swanson, Steve Cox, Carolyn Siegel, Michael Jensen, Christina Sandoval

Additional Technical Assistance: Dave Hutton, James Lewis, Brandon Gibson

Community – Linda Shank, Matt McMillan, Ken Romig, Kathleen Hall

Review of Agenda – approved

Minutes June 14, 2018: approved with addition of Christianne Hinks comments on pesticides.

Announcements from TAG Members

- Via email Brian distributed an issue paper dated July 1 that will help Albuquerque Open Space and the contractors write the Resource Management Plan. Brian received 2 comments via email that will be added to the Issue paper. The topics included pesticide use and transition work that was requested from New Mexico State Parks (Judy) for compliance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. A revised Issue paper is at the end of these minutes, Attachment 1.
- Brian was informed today that Michael Jensen will step in representing the Open Space Advisory Board. Allen Reed will return when needed.
- Peggy Norton wanted to know why Canada geese were a target species for the winter period. Brian responded that we had decided that in early discussions in December 2017. The species will be addressed by the contractors and we can review this issue later.
- Carolyn wanted to know how our work would be affected if the Land and Water Conservation Fund was not funded. Judy responded that it is likely to be funded and added that even with no new funding, compliance actions would continue. Michael Jensen stated that new funding amounts would be for new projects not old projects.
- Christianne asked if the sorghum fields (4) were going to be mowed this summer. Brandon Gibson said they would not be mowed this summer.
- Brandon Gibson announced that Albuquerque Open Space will pay a farmer to do the cropping for CFP (Candelaria Farm Preserve) so that all the crops will be for wildlife. The group clapped. He also added that Jim Roberts agreement with Open Space expires December 2018 and can be renewed for up to 2 more years. Brandon suggested renewing with guidelines to maintain continuity.
- Brian explained why part of the cropland will be developed as native bosque habitat. Bosque habitat is very good for native wildlife species. The current bosque habitat along the river is threatened by poor water due to the drought, low water tables and expected lower river flows. BEMP (Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program) predicts that old cottonwoods along the river will all die in 15 years. Albuquerque Open Space has been planting cottonwood poles to ensure the future of a cottonwood galley with good success. CFP can establish good vegetation for the benefit of wildlife.

- Michael Jensen suggested looking at what Valle de Oro is doing concerning our desire for a mosaic of habitats.
- Michael talked about a possible water source, a well that is mentioned in his research but could not be found. Brandon Gibson mentioned that establishing a new water well is very expensive; he quoted a new well for a golf course will cost \$700,000.
- Michael mentioned that the 4 ponds at the Nature Center have water rights.
- After Michael mentioned the ponds have water rights, Brandon stated the site does have surface water rights.
- Brian and Peggy recommended Adrian Oglesby to address water rights and water use. Brian understood that Adrian would be among the contractors for this RMP.
- Michael suggested that TAG put together a document of activities that Albuquerque Open Space is completing to meet the reporting requirements for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reporting requirements. NM State Parks has requested progress reports be submitted every six months from February 4, 2017 to February 4, 2020. That will be a topic at a future TAG meeting.
- Peggy added that David Mehlman has surveyed Candelaria South for birds and has compiled an impressive list of species. His findings will be in Dropbox.
- Michael talked about his concern with the time line presented by the contractors at the Open Space Advisory Board meeting. The final RMP is scheduled for December 13, 2019.
- Matt McMillan presented his draft Table of Contents for the Resource Management Plan. TAG members should review it and provide feedback. That document is at the end of these minutes and TAG should review them and provide comments.
- Matt McMillan stated that they have wildlife cameras up. They will also be doing 2 days of monitoring in the summer (7/26 and 7/27), 2 days in September, 2 days in the winter and 2 days in the spring. When Steve Cox asked what they expect to find in 2 days, Matt agreed that they would be more dependent on other research data.
- James Lewis suggested that the RMP should have several alternatives.
- Christianne suggested having cropland on the western boundary of the cropland and having a viewing area there. Brian suggested the contractors look at this option.

Public Comment – Matt McMillan presented his draft Table of Contents for the Resource Management Plan. TAG members should review it and provide feedback. That document is at the end of these minutes and TAG should review them and provide comments (Attachment 2).

Next Meeting:

July 26, 2:30 PM – Rio Grande Nature Center. Topic – Public Engagement Plan.

The TAG looks forward to the day when the City of Albuquerque proudly advertises that the City has a wildlife preserve within the City limits. This sets our city apart from other large cities and demonstrates to all that Albuquerque values the natural environment and its wildlife.

Attachment 1

Issues to be explored in detail for Candelaria Farm Preserve

July 1, 2018 prepared by Brian Hanson, Chairman of Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

At our TAG meeting on June 14 we discussed our preferred management plan with 4 contractor representatives, following the order of a May 11 briefing statement. We discussed principles for management and specifics about future habitat conditions in the present cropland. Three other areas within CFP need to be addressed including the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, Candelaria South and the Albuquerque tree nursery along Rio Grande Blvd. We will address those areas at our July 12 meeting. TAG discussions for all areas can be found in the minutes on the Open Space Advisory Board website. This paper summarizes many of the issues that need to be further developed by the contractors and Albuquerque Open Space. These issues will be organized in the same order as the May 10 briefing statement. We welcome additional comments from the TAG, individuals that are listed as supporting TAG, contractors, Albuquerque Open Space and others.

Principles of Wildlife Management at Candelaria Farm Preserve

Create mosaic of habitats – How can each habitat be created to result in a mosaic? What plant species should be planted? What would be the best time of year to plant and develop habitats? (i.e. wetlands). What is the suggested timing of habitat development? Develop wetlands first, or bosque first? How many years would be needed for habitat development? Who will accomplish the habitat development and maintenance afterwards? What will be the cost of development and maintenance? Where will water come from to water new plantings? How will water be provided to the wetlands to offset evaporation?

Remove exotic species while restoring native species in phases over time; Keep vegetative cover for wildlife until new plantings How do you remove the various exotic species such as elm, Russian olive, saltcedar, tumbleweed? What would be the time frame for removal? What native species would be appropriate to plant and where within CFP? How can a phased development be accomplished? i.e. maybe plant native species at the downslope areas first utilizing the current irrigation system then in ensuing years as plants become established plant closer to origin of the system. What might be the cost of development and maintenance?

Improve recreation while avoiding wildlife disturbance Where would viewing areas be created? What educational sign would be appropriate? Where would users park? How would guided walks be organized?

Improve pollinator habitat (Bee City designation) What species should be planted and their location to attract pollinators?

Improve bird habitat (Migratory Bird Treaty City designation) What habitats could be created to attract and support migratory birds?

Improve habitat for native fauna What plants would support native fauna?

Crops for wildlife only (PreDock Plan) What crops should be planted to support winter birds such as cranes and geese? Is there a minimum size of cropland to attract cranes? What other crops might be appropriate for native wildlife?

Keep cropland near fence/boundary for wildlife viewing What is the minimum size necessary to attract cranes and geese and what crops to plant? Should there be crop rotation?

Monitor management actions How will plant growth and wildlife use be monitored?

Habitat improvements discussed in four areas of CFP

Cropland - restricted public access to guided trips only; keep croplands for migratory birds, primarily cranes and geese, near the east and west fence lines; convert the rest – remove exotic plants such as Russian olive and elm; increase hedgerows; plant trees, shrubs and grasses; use moist soil management; add 2 wetlands; and add salt grass meadow. How can wetlands be developed that will be valuable for wildlife? Should groundwater wetlands be developed? Should wetlands with impermeable linings be developed? What plant species would enhance the area immediately adjacent to wetlands?

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park – improve water quality in the ponds. How can water quality in the ponds be improved? Are there other habitat developments that might improve wildlife habitat at the Nature Center?

Candelaria South (south of Nature Center) –

Restricted public access to guided trips only

Who would organize and conduct a recreational use and education program? What structures might be constructed to improve wildlife viewing and where? What would be the cost of viewing areas?

Remove debris such as wire, asphalt, large logs, trash; Who would organize and accomplish removal? Over what time frame?

Remove exotic plants Russian olive and elms How would removal be accomplished and over what time period? Removing the “elm farm” at the northeast corner of Candelaria South has been proposed. How would removal be accomplished?

Plant native trees and shrubs What species should be planted and where?

Tree Nursery along Rio Grande Blvd How can wildlife habitat be improved in the area?

What trees, shrubs and grasses might enhance habitat at the fencelines around the nursery?

In all areas - To meet the needs of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we have discussed adding viewing areas, informative signs, guided walks and talks. How would this be organized, implemented and funded? Where would viewing areas and informative signs be located? In addition, there is a requirement for the City of Albuquerque to transition their compliance by providing progress reports every six months from February 4, 2017 to February 4, 2020. Compliance requirements are outlined in a letter from State Parks to the City of Albuquerque dated February 4, 2017. Transition requirements should be included in the Resource Management Plan.

Within the RMP the TAG would like to see how pesticide use is managed, and is discouraged.

Attachment 2

Proposed Candelaria Farm Preserve RMP Table of Contents

1. Introduction

- a. Purpose
- b. Executive Summary?
- c. Mission
- d. Maps and Location
 - i. Planning Limits and Areas
 - ii. Legal Description
- e. Policy Framework
 - i. The Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - 1. Implications of
 - ii. Zoning
 - iii. 1980 Lease Agreement
 - iv. 1983 Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and Preserve Management Plan
 - v. 1983 MOU between the City and State
 - vi. 2001 Farm Operating Agreement with Rasband Dairy
 - vii. Current Farm Operating Agreement with J&T Farms
 - viii. 2004 Open Space RMP for the Candelaria Farm Preserve
 - ix. Other Applicable Policy Documents

2. Goals and Policies

- a. Wildlife Habitat
- b. Sustainable Farm Operations
- c. Education
 - i. Tour Programs
 - ii. Farming History
 - iii. Wildlife
 - iv. Woodward House
 - v. Volunteer Efforts
- d. Reasonable Public Access

3. Project History

- a. Agriculture in the North Valley
- b. Candelaria Farm History
- c. Acquisition
- d. Farm Operating Agreements
- e. Management Obstacles Identified through the Planning Process
- f. Recent Farming Agreements

4. Ecological Conditions

- a. Climate
- b. Soil Types
- c. Surface and Ground Water
 - i. Water Quality and Depth
 - ii. Water Rights
- d. Fauna

- i. Birds
 - ii. Mammals
 - iii. Amphibians and Reptiles
 - iv. Insects and Pollinators
 - e. Flora
 - i. Agricultural Fields
 - ii. Habitat Areas
- 5. Public Input/Outreach**
 - a. Public engagement process
 - b. Public engagement summary
- 6. Conceptual Site Design**
 - a. Provide Habitat for Wildlife
 - i. The Candelaria Wetland
 - ii. Grasslands
 - iii. Hedgerows
 - iv. Bosque
 - b. Demonstrate a Sustainable Farm Operation
 - i. Cropping and Soil Management
 - ii. Integrated Pest Management Plan
 - iii. Irrigation
 - iv. Farm Equipment Storage
 - v. Gates, Fences, Signage, and Farm Roads
 - c. Education
 - i. Guided Programs
 - ii. The Woodward House and Gardens
 - d. Public Access
- 7. Financial Considerations**
 - a. Capital Improvements Costs
 - b. Maintenance/Farming Costs
- 8. Recommendations**
 - a. Preferred Site Design
 - b. Expected Outcomes
 - c. Capital and Maintenance Costs (including contract farming)
- 9. Adaptive Management, Monitoring, and Implementation**
 - a. Adaptive Management
 - b. Monitoring Habitat Areas
 - i. The Candelaria Wetland and Grassland Areas
 - ii. Hedgerows and the Bosque Area
 - iii. Monitoring Wildlife and Habitat in the Ecosystem Context
 - c. Monitoring Farm Operations
 - d. Implementation and Interagency Coordination
 - e. Future Planning
- 10. Appendices**
 - a. Appendix A: Candelaria Farm Management Plan Partnering Agreement
 - b. 1980 RGNCSP Lease Agreement
 - c. 1983 Rio Grande Nature Center Management Plan

- d. 1983 Memorandum of Agreement
- e. 2001 Farm Operating Agreement
- f. Current Farm Operating Agreement
- g. 2004 Open Space RMP for the Candelaria Farm Preserve
- h. Non-Technical Soils Description Report
- i. Other Applicable Policy Documents

Scope of Work and Timeline

Phase I (July – December 2018)

1. Literature Review and Stakeholder Outreach
2. Resource Management Concepts
3. Public Meeting #1

Phase II (January – June 2019)

1. Preferred Concept Development and Review
2. Public Meeting #2
3. Report Development

Phase III (July – December 2019)

1. Report Development
2. Draft Report Submittal, Review, and Comment
3. Final Report Submittal, Review, and Comment