

**Candelaria Farm Preserve
Technical Advisory Group**

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW

Education Building

September 20, 2018 • 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Minutes - Final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson, Chairman, bhanson5@comcast.net; Peggy Norton, Kent Swanson, Heather MacCurdy, Alan Reed, Christianne Hinks

Additional Technical Assistance: Ken Romig, James Lewis, Yasmeen Najmi

Community – Linda Shank, Kathleen Hall

Review of Agenda – approved with addition of Yasmeen discussion of east cropland boundary

Minutes August 30, 2018: approved with additional of adding - communication between, MRGCD, TAG and Open Space is necessary to plan east cropland boundary work

Announcements from TAG Members

- Heather introduced a new staff member for the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park – Charles Baca. He is the park manager and law enforcement officer for the Nature Center.

Public Engagement for the Resource Management Plan DPS Design Ken

We talked about the planned field trips through the cropland and other areas.

- Peggy wanted to ensure that field trips included guidance to the public how to act to avoid disturbing wildlife
- Heather wants to ensure the timing of the trips during the day will avoid disturbing wildlife and will check with Steve Cox for guidance. This includes maximum group sizes.
- The trips should include the time that sandhill cranes are present (November through February?).
- The trip guides need to include why the TAG is moving forward with removal of exotic vegetation and planting native species; what the proposed plans are and soliciting opinions and advice from the public. Ken Romig is planning what the guide needs to cover.
- Ken suggested November 8 at 6:30 PM for the first public meeting at the Nature Center.

Vegetation Management along the east cropland boundary

Yasmeen Najmi with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) lead the discussion. She wants to add vegetation next to the irrigation ditch (Duranes Lateral) that will stabilize the irrigation ditch and be good for wildlife.

Comments about this proposal follow

- The area identified included the ditch, it's banks and adjacent areas to the east and west; the east fence line of the cropland; includes the open area just north of Arbor south to Veranda Road.
- MRGCD needs to ensure that any actions result in a stable irrigation bank. It could include changing part of the ditch.

- Funding was brought up and it seemed that the MRGCD and Open Space could complete the work within their established budgets assuming they get help. The plan has to be completed to identify if additional funds are needed. Obtaining shrubs and/or trees may require funding. Yasmeen and James will look into the staffing and funding issues. If additional funds are needed, Alan Reed said the Open Space Advisory Board may be able to help.
- Both the MRGCD and Open Space said it was possible to do the work this winter.
- The work needs to be completed before birds start nesting in April. Steve Cox will tell us precise dates.
- Several ideas were discussed including – clear the smaller nonnative trees first then plant shrubs; only clear and plant a small portion of the strip of vegetation; thin out nonnative vegetation throughout the area; clear nonnative vegetation and keep an area open for future viewing areas. Viewing areas should include good wildlife viewing spots.
- To develop a plan, a field trip should happen soon; perhaps the second week of October organized by Yasmeen.
- A plan should be ready for the first public meeting November 8. The TAG should meet before the meeting to prepare talking points. Brian is proposing a TAG meeting October 25.

Soil Sampling by GeoSystems Analysis (GSA)

James passed out a report from GSA summarizing soil sampling and piezometer installation (Sept 19).

Tours of the cropland

Heather mentioned that she would find out what how to structure tours of the cropland so that sandhill cranes would not be disturbed such as time of day, size of tour group etc.

Possible Name Change for Candelaria Farm Preserve

Near the end of the meeting some members mentioned that we should change the name of Candelaria Farm Preserve because we are not preserving a farm but managing for wildlife, education and outdoor recreation. We decided to talk about it later.

Poole property for sale, west bank of Rio Grande, directly west of the Nature Center

Susan Chaudoir informed TAG about the future sale of the property for development of 73 houses on 23 acres. This sale is moving fast so any action on your part should be quick. Her contact information is – edu.chaudoir@gmail.com 985-302-2878

Next Meeting:

October 25 2:30 PM – Rio Grande Nature Center. Topic – Vegetation Work along the east cropland fence and Preparation for the Candelaria Farm Preserve Public meeting November 8. Note – after the meeting Albuquerque Open Space decided that a public meeting should be postponed until SWCA was better prepared, probably in January 2019.

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.