

**Candelaria Farm Preserve
Technical Advisory Group**

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW

Education Building

August 30, 2018 • 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Minutes - Final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson, Chairman, bhanson5@comcast.net; Peggy Norton, Kent Swanson, Heather MacCurdy, Dave Parsons, Michael Jensen, Steve Cox, Christina Sandoval

Additional Technical Assistance: Dave Hutton, James Lewis

Community – Linda Shank, Matt McMillan

Review of Agenda – approved

Minutes August 16, 2018: approved

Announcements from TAG Members

- Michael Jensen stated that the only flows in the Rio Grande are San Juan Chama water.
- Brian asked James Lewis if Open Space had contracted with Adrian Oglesby and he was not aware of a contract with him.

Vegetation Management along the east boundary of the cropland

Brian hoped that Yesmeen Najmi with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) would attend this meeting since she is very interested in informing this group about vegetation concerns along the fence line boundary just east of the cropland. Michael summarized her ideas that included removal of exotic vegetation and planting native species. This would include removal of the elms and dead trees along the fence and seeding grasses along the irrigation ditch. Michael said that Brandon Gibson had approved the idea at an Open Space Advisory Board meeting.

Comments about this proposal follow

- Brian really liked the idea but was concerned with complete removal of the trees and shrubs since it has some wildlife values now. Options could include keeping some of the large trees, even though they are elms or leaving patches of the existing vegetation. Brian also added that he has ideas of the plant species that would do well, since he has been planting shrubs and grasses at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park since 2015.
- Brian suggested that we get some planting advice from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Santiago Misquez is with NRCS and he is a technical advisor for TAG.
- Steve said that wildlife do use the trees. He stated that when clearing occurred or fires occurred in the bosque, spotted towhees and bewicks wrens disappeared because of the lack of low cover such as shrubs. Some of the dead trees along the fence may be used by cavity nesting birds. Steve mentioned that new plantings would take at least 5 years before they were valuable to wildlife. Brian also agreed.
- James Lewis stated that he preferred a transition approach, not complete removal.
- Need close coordination between MRGCD, TAG and Open Space.
- Project Design includes species, timing and phases of the project.
- Michael offered a field trip to see the site and he will organize it.

Because it appeared that there was widespread support for this, we voted. There was a proposal to go ahead with the project of removing exotic vegetation and planting native species just east of the cropland; then it was seconded and all present raised their hands in support.

Report to the Park Service on compliance for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Michael Jensen put together an excellent summary of Candelaria Farm Preserve that could be sent to the National Park Service to demonstrate we are meeting LWCF requirements for reporting. The summary was distributed to everyone just a few days before this meeting so many didn't have a chance to review it. So, we decided that everyone should get their comments to Michael Jensen by September 6. There was some confusion about who would send the letter and where to send it. Maybe Judy can clear this up. One suggestion was to add the signage about guided field trips that Albuquerque Open Space accomplished.

Transition Plan before the completed Resource Management Plan (RMP)

The TAG wants to complete a report of what Albuquerque Open Space can accomplish and agree to before the completion of the RMP. This would include actions in 2018 and 2019. Some ideas that were discussed were:

- Perhaps Open Space can begin planting additional or new wildlife crops in 2019
- Communication with the neighborhood that abuts Candelaria South
- Improve the control of human access by adding and fixing fences
- Clean up the trash in Candelaria South
- Begin to remove the elm farm in Candelaria South and plant native vegetation like shrubs and trees
- Begin working in the Albuquerque Nursery including growing native plants to transplant into the cropland area and other areas in Candelaria Farm Preserve

After the meeting adjourned Peggy and Brian spoke to Matt about the map of desire future habitats. We wanted to make sure that it was clear that the cottonwood bosque label included all habitats that are in the Rio Grande valley cottonwood forest including grasslands, shrubs etc.

Next Meeting:

September 20 2:30 PM – Rio Grande Nature Center. Topic – Public Engagement Plan and Transition Plan before completion of the RMP.

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.