

Candelaria Nature Preserve
 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
 Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW
 Education Building
 June 6, 2019 • 1:00 to 4:00 PM
 Minutes Final

Participants

Members: Christianne Hinks, Judy Kowalski, Carolyn Siegel, Colleen Langan-McRoberts, Michael Jensen, Peggy Norton, Dave Parsons, Steven Cox, Heather MacCurdy, Jennifer Owen-White, Christina Sandoval

Additional Technical Assistance: Dave Hutton, James Lewis

Community – Matt McMillan, Linda Shank, David Lightfoot, Shannon Horst, Oscar Simpson, Melinda Moffitt, Joan Robins, Yolanda Homann

Review of Agenda– Approved

Review of May 21 minutes – Approved

Clarification presented by Judy: Tree NM would continue at the Woodward house until a possible move to the Tree Farm - unanimous

Announcements from TAG Members or others –

Tree NM had a \$120,000/year grant for 3 years to do urban forestry activities for bosque restoration (clearing confusion over \$500,000 figure recorded in 5/21 minutes)

Colleen – Open Space does plantings with students. Stock grown by Tree NM is used by Open Space

Peggy – continuing communication regarding capital outlay from the state – legislators, participants presenting outlay including land acquisition, meeting to be scheduled with Director Simon

Colleen – presented flyer for public meeting. Suggestions were made to include time of presentation and allow specific legislators time to speak

Judy – Did TAG agree to basic principles of habitat management in 5/21 issues discussion sheet – group agreed to revise by omitting “keep cropland near fence/boundary for wildlife viewing”

Michael - updated that Valle de Oro approved plan has no cropping, although partially because of being in airplane flyway

Discussion regarding farming for wildlife/no farming

Draft prefers crops

only two alternatives will be presented at public meeting – TAG and Open Space

Open Space prefers farming with possibility of phase-in approach

Dave P - Start with alternative 2, move to alternative 1 as data comes in

Steve – cropping for wildlife only

Colleen – alfalfa will change next year

Dave P – 2 new fields planted with alfalfa this year

Linda – concerns about what happens with the farmer

Colleen – possible contract, pay to farm

Christianne – farming requires chemicals

Dave L – weeds can be managed with mechanical means, mowing works best

at Whitfield

Michael – animals survived without alfalfa. Valle de Oro found when stop crops, lose numbers. Can't compare numbers in natural habitat to cropland.

What happens if don't crop for cranes and geese?

Transition to natural process: Plant salt grass first.

Valle de Oro (570 acres) represents 1% of crane food source

Address issue of crane population, include as education

View sheds– plan needs to identify what view sheds need to be protected and why

Driver for saving the property – fought back to BLM plans to cut the bosque.

Site was saved as bosque connection, not as a farm.

Michael – reasons for no cropland: minimize cost, create natural mosaic landscape, increase diversity. Do wet grass areas first (includes saltgrass), dry grasses then the following year, hedgerows over a longer time span

Christianne - nut sedge is invasive, not a native crane food, could use native sedges interplanted in salt grass

Hedgerows are a separate issue from cropping and their management and location needs to be discussed separately.

Judy will review the draft RMP for LWCF accuracy prior to sending out to public. Education is not required for LWCF compliance.

Jennifer Owen-White (TAG member, Refuge Manager of Valle de Oro, 570 acres of former dairy and fields) presented and answered questions

Long term goal is no agriculture, in 2 years, no commercial farming

Will restore native habitat to what was historical on the refuge

Will have wetland (spring moisture); playa (monsoon moisture)

Need to comply with NEPA and produce Environmental Assessment

Wetlands with a 2-shelf drop off, salt grass planted, 14 acres done by Bureau of

Reclamation and others - \$1 million from Fish & Wildlife, 5x that from other partners

Remove top layer, dug out, put some back, put back in top soil

Since not farming, she would recommend a strong winter habitat, might need some water

Has 8 staff members – Assistant, 1 worker, 1 biologist, 1 admin, 3 Visitor

Center – depend on youth and volunteers

Grant writing – Friends Group does, need to have someone responsible to do it, could contract out, use Congressional Staffers for info/leads

Seed Sources – NRCS, Bosque del Apache, harvest poles

Salt grass – Santa Ana, harvest Bosque del Apache

Monitor – USGS, Citizen Scientist, Biologist

Dan Collins would be a good source of information/specific questions

Pesticides – used heavily up front in restoration (disc/herbicide)
more constant use in agriculture

Transition from alfalfa – not much research, timing is everything

treatment 1 – disc field/apply herbicide

treatment 2 – let dry

others to try – flooding for a period of time, multiple discing, water/then mow for weeds

Balance and change access

Compare compatible vs appropriate use

Grants may require access

Difficult to take away what's been allowed –effects of bikes on birds
Driving will be closed on the refuge when the Visitor Center is done
of visitors – 12-15,000/year (10,000 for programs, 5,000 visitors)
Community fought for protection, try to accommodate
Do some things off site
Think of target audience
Know and relate to community concerns
They engage the community around the area and Isleta Pueblo

Jim Roberts on Candelaria Nature Preserve provided a cost of \$50,000 for him to disc and till the fields
3 years ago

Heather – warning that need to control access. Trails are everywhere in the bosque area west of the
Nature Center.

Concerns were discussed that the preliminary preferred alternative graphic in the current RMP draft did
not reflect TAG decisions and vision. Colleen indicated there may be two preferred alternatives in the
draft released to the public for the upcoming meeting – one approved by TAG and one presented by
Open Space.

On the farming issue, after some discussion and several motions, Michael moved that the ultimate goal
be no farming - 7 support, 2 oppose. Colleen explained Open Space opposition was based on the need
to remain flexible in implementing the adaptive management approach. It was recommended that there
be posters at the public meeting explaining the alternatives and the reasoning behind those
recommended. The public can't be expected to read the entire draft RMP and understand fully what is
being proposed for management of the CNP.

The use of pesticides and herbicides on the CNP was discussed and there was a preference indicated for
the prohibition of their use, with a possible variance process in place in case there was a problem that
couldn't feasibly be addressed by natural means.