

Candelaria Nature Preserve
 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
 Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW
 Education Building
 October 18, 2019 • 9:45 to 12:15 PM
 Minutes Final

Participants

Members: Brian Hanson chair, Christianne Hinks, Judy Kowalski, Carolyn Siegel, Colleen Langan-McRoberts, Michael Jensen, Peggy Norton, Dave Parsons, Heather MacCurdy, James Lewis, Steve Cox

Community – Linda Shank, Cori Ewing, Steve Ewing, Dana McCabe, Suzanne Shave, Doyle Kimbrough, John Busemeyer

9:45 AM - Review of Agenda– added – alternative plan for the RMP, first 2 year plan, new TAG member addition, assignments from past meetings.

October 7 minutes – Brian sent the minutes out for review and comments are due to him via email by October 30.

Announcements from TAG Members – Colleen emphasized the special events coming up with Open Space; Steve Cox talked about the decrease in bird abundance and diversity in the last 50 years, a loss of 2.9 billion birds worldwide according to Cornell Labs.

Public Comment

Steve Ewing asked where he could get the minutes of the public meeting of September 11. No minutes were taken because of the format of the meeting. Colleen said that comments that were sent into the CNP website could be available. She said a group had volunteered to assemble those comments.

Addition of Candelaria Nature Preserve (CNP) member

The process of getting official TAG members was discussed. Michael said that there was no requirement for voting in members. A list of TAG members was provided early in the TAG process. Brian said that the Rio Grande Blvd Neighborhood Association voted in Suzanne Shave as their representative to replace Christianne Hinks. TAG members nominated her, seconded it and all TAG members approved Suzanne as a TAG member.

CNP Resource Management Plan

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Brian stated that the LWCF was a priority for this meeting since Judy Kowalski, the State Parks representative, was retiring soon.

Judy gave a quick summary of the notice that was sent to the Director of the Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department dated February 14, 2017 that gave the City 3 years to come into compliance with the LWCF. That ends February 14, 2020.

Colleen handed out a summary of actions that would be accomplished as part of the alternative plan during the first two years to demonstrate compliance with the LWCF. The alternative plan assumes the present funding of Open Space plus the funds that have already been allocated from the state legislature. It does not include additional funds that may be obtained. This plan was not discussed in

detail since the priority for the meeting was LWCF compliance. Brian thought that it was a good description of what Open Space can accomplish.

Alternative Plan without complete funding by Colleen McRoberts - email of Oct. 17, 2019

Once the RMP is approved by City Council, we can begin implementing the plan. However, it will take a while to secure necessary resources and established contracts for many aspects of the plan. Therefore, much of the first year will be focused on these efforts and activities at the CNP should be ones that we can do with existing resources, including volunteers who are willing to help and staff support from the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. The actions listed below can be established in the first couple of years with limited and/or existing resources.

1. Recreation & Access Actions

- Guided tours increase with the help of volunteers, including the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center. Includes monthly tours at the South Tract.
- Continue to work with school groups and start working with community groups to remove weeds and plant hedgerow areas (funds from existing capital outlay)..
- Begin designing wildlife blinds (funds from existing capital outlay).
- Begin developing themes and concepts for interpretive signs.
- Fence improvements along Candelaria South Tract (funds from existing capital outlay).
- Begin designing Tree Farm parking area and access with community, including neighbors on Cherokee Rd.
- Support and possibly expand existing citizen science programs like eBird, bird banding and BiBlitz. Begin to set up iNaturalist and Nature's Notebook projects with community groups.
 - Friends volunteers conduct weekly bird survey to include RGNC and CNP
 - Summer Wings/Bioblitz extended to include CNP and Candelaria South Tract
 - Informational public presentations at RGNC to encourage citizen science usage at RGNC and CNP
- NM Parks design and build blind on west side of CNP and/or Discovery Pond area of Candelaria South Tract for increased visual access
- Transitional parking for groups/buses at asphalt pad near Woodward house.
- Look into the possibility of establishing a friends group for the CNP.

2. Habitat Restoration Actions

- Develop wetland design (funds from existing capital outlay).
- Convert 1 to 2 fields to restored habitat (starting with 1C, 5 acres) to saltgrass meadow habitat (funds from existing capital outlay).
- RGNC transforms current croplands within RGNC boundary
- Elm removal 8 inch in diameter or less (funds from existing capital outlay).
- Experiment with other ways to remove larger elms.
- Work with Ancestral Lands to assist with ongoing plantings and weed removal (existing OSD resources).
- Work with school and community groups to continue planting hedgerow areas (existing OSD resources).
- Explore possibilities for noncommercial farming until funds become available to transfer entire property to wildlife habitat

3. Monitoring Actions

- Take high resolution aerial photo (existing OSD resources).
- Establish and take photo points (existing OSD resources).
- Come into contract with BEMP to develop monitoring protocols specific to their monitoring methods (funding tbd).
- Support and possibly expand existing citizen science programs like eBird, bird banding and BiBlitz. Begin to set up iNaturalist and Nature's Notebook projects with community groups.

After much discussion the following items were suggested as a means for Open Space to show a good faith effort to come into compliance with the LWCF.

1. The plan should provide more specifics on the transition to wildlife habitat, e.g. how many acres of cropland are being converted to wildlife habitat over time and how and when the parcels currently planted in alfalfa will be transitioned out of their primary agricultural purpose to primarily wildlife habitat purpose.
2. Cropland should be converted to wildlife habitat sooner than 20 years, perhaps 10 years.
3. A table or chart of cropland conversion similar to the spreadsheet showing public access actions should be provided in the RMP.
4. Removal of commercial agriculture and actions that address recreational use should be summarized in the Executive Summary which could include spreadsheets.
5. If an RMP is not completed by February 20, 2020, Albuquerque Open Space should send a letter to State Parks explaining their attempts at achieving LWCF compliance including past actions and planned future actions. Colleen stated that she thinks that a plan can be completed by February 2020.

Michael addressed the summarization of public comments and said he did not have time to do it thus far.

Judy noted that State Parks will flag the lease boundary for State Park's property on the northwest corner of the CNP and request that crops cease to be grown on that leased area so State Parks can begin to transition the land to wildlife habitat as soon as possible.

12:15 PM Adjourn

Notes prepared by Brian Hanson, Chairman CNP