

**Candelaria Nature Preserve
 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
 Rio Grande Nature Center State Park • 2901 Candelaria Rd NW
 Education Building
 May 21, 2019 • 1:00 pm – 4:30pm**

Minutes Final

Participants present:

Christianne Hinks, James Lewis, Judy Kowalski, Steve Cox, Heather MacCurdy, Carolyn Siegel, Colleen Langen McRoberts, Michael Jensen, Peggy Norton, Dave Parsons, Steve Cox,
 Additional Technical Assistance: Dave Hutton, Matt McMillan, Dave Lightfoot, Ken Romig, Matthew Peterson, Bill Pentler, John Busemeyer, Shannon Horst (Tree New Mexico), Christina Sandoval, COA Community: Julie Kilpatrick, Linda Shank
 Meeting Chair for this meeting: Judy Kowalski; Notes by Carolyn Siegel and Peggy Norton

Call to Order 1 PM

Acceptance of previous meeting minutes May 9, 2019- accepted

Review of Agenda – Agenda accepted

Announcements: TAG Members

Peggy Norton: guiding North Valley Coalition. Though not living directly in the neighborhood, visits often, values prior North Valley Area Plan (no longer exists) its principles guide the NVC.

This Plan has been through 4 City of Albuquerque administrators. There are no role models for this plan. It is critical that the “presentation” to the public be appropriate. It is critical that we as the TAG committee resolve what activities support this Wildlife/Nature Preserve. TAG comments are most critical to the Draft document and should be weighed more heavily than public comments. Questioned where all documents, including the current draft, will be available—on City website? Who will be allowed to access and comment on the Draft Document?

Public Comment: Julie Kilpatrick, lives adjacent to South Candelaria property at the end of Decker Rd. Requesting a smaller public access path and walking path with disabled access. Less human impact, walk loop should be smaller with a more internal/not a perimeter loop. Access should be guided and only during RGNC open hours.

MEETING FORMAT:

Judy K. will chair the meeting. She is not a voting member of TAG; she is acting in an advisory capacity with respect to LWCF issues. We have 6 issues to resolve and will hear comments on all issues and vote on priorities for each issue. If no consensus is reached, major disagreement and justifications will be presented in the preliminary report.

Colleen: this is a collaborative process.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION:

- A. LWCF access compliance on South Candelaria and the whole property
- B. Woodward House activity
- C. Tree farm (at Rio Grande) and Tree Nursery (at Woodward House)
- D. Wildlife farming/no farming
- E. Name of Preserve
- F. Phase-in of the plan

It was agreed to change the order of the items:

NAME OF PRESERVE: (ITEM 'E') Consider Brian Hanson's written comments: not to use "Refuge" or "Conservation Area"----To not confuse with other similar projects

Peggy Norton noted that the Predock Plan called it "Wildlife Preserve" and that adding the name of "Albuquerque" is more inclusive than a reference to "Candelaria"

Dave Parsons suggested the last 2 words be "Wildlife Preserve" and that RGNC should be clearly distinguished from the fields that have a different mission. others agreed.

Steve Cox suggested to use the word "Nature" as more inclusive.

Carolyn Siegel agreed that "Nature" is more inclusive and suggested that the name include "Candelaria" to help people locate it more specifically.

Christianne Hinks suggested that "wildlife" is more powerful than "nature"

Steve Cox suggested adding the words "Ecology or Ecological" to be more inclusive of animals and plants.

Heather (RGNC) suggested we select 3 to choose from for the Public to vote on again.

Michael noted that Candelaria name has a history (farming and plans) and that RGNC Wildlife Preserve notes that the Fields and Nature Center work together.

Colleen noted that 2004 Plan refers to "Candelaria Farm"—continuity.

(group agreed not to use a name that confuses with Texas "Rio Grande Valley".)

Dave Hutton and Colleen supported using the public vote result.

James Lewis – historically been Candelaria.

Voting: which title to include (can vote for more than one)

"Albuquerque" --- -0-

" Candelaria" -10-

" Rio Grande" -6-

" Wildlife" -4-

" Nature Preserve" -7-

Voting: which full name: (can vote for more than one)

" Candelaria Nature Preserve" -8-

" Rio Grande Nature Preserve" -3-

Final vote with members voting only once:

"Candelaria Nature Preserve" : 7 Yes; 3 No

WOODWARD HOUSE ACTIVITY (Item B):

Judy K.: Is it ok for Woodward House (W.H.) to be an “interpretive” building? What should its use be?

Comments:

Shannon (Tree NM, new Director): Not planning daily use, yet need storage for educational material and desk area. TNM had an M.O.U. with the City for long-term shared use from 20013-2017. Somehow, during transitions at TNM and the City, that lapsed. Over that time, TNM played a crucial role in successfully lobbying the City Council to set aside \$175,000 in capital funds for improvements to the WH. TNM also raised \$360,000 of USFS urban forestry funds that paid for stock, educational programs, planting in the bosque, and some of the very early cleanup of that site/area, etc. It came in \$120,000/year during 07, 08, and 09. Currently TNM has an M.O.U. for its use for one year. TNM owns the tool shed. Grow stock for Albuquerque Neighborhoods program, in which TNM donates 100 trees to communities and plants 100 street trees; also grow stock and assist City with hedgerows and bosque planting; interested in revegetation

---- Would like return of Educ. Program “ABC Tree Stewards” (3 to 4 years gone)

---- Pruning workshops, Children’s programs; needs a bathroom/toilets

----Currently: “Just Grow Trees” waters the tree stock

---- TNM has no other locations where it can do these things. TNM would like to keep its M.O.U. with the City and activities at WH if possible so that it does not lose the value of what has been raised from long-time donors and invested in that site. But, TNM is willing to look at relocating to the Tree Farm on Rio Grande.

Dave Parsons(TAG): suggests relocation of Tree NM to current Tree Farm (from WH)

Colleen: Schools plant trees in coordination with Open Space and sometimes use trees and shrubs grown by Tree NM.

Discussion: TNM says Woodward House building is too small for inside education programs, but the outdoor space is good for student and adult education. The house area is good for storing educational materials and for small groups to meet or to get out of the weather if they are at the site working. The outdoor picnic area would be safer if it had a gazebo covering over it. There is a need for the large cottonwoods (above the picnic tables) to be trimmed regularly for safety (if gazebo put in place, would be less likely a big wind would bring a limb down on top of a person.) Well is not producing enough water, either the well needs improvement or the pump needs work; need 25 gpm of flow.

Water use issues: Christianne reports farmer washes trucks and equip from well. Inappropriate use. Numbers of people involved: 20-35 kids, 12-15 adults; 15 for corporations doing cleanup; 40 doing cleanup.

Colleen (COA) Suggests for Woodward House and use for Educational purposes:

Add Interpretive signage, desks, storage, small meeting space, vault toilets; due to adjacent Duranes Ditch trail and dog walkers, we need to restrict access to WH and fields.

“To get youth passionate about this area, we need to engage the community now with educational activities in an intentional and mindful way—provide separate gardening areas and buffers in fields near Woodward, growing wildflower seeds collected , etc. Involve more people, minimize numbers at one time.” Area she wants for this is only 3% of the preserve, could grow trees and shrubs as a buffer

Christianne Hinks: Wildlife and people not compatible mix. Use current Tree Farm area for Educ.

Bill Pentler – negative impacts are due to additional housing in the area

Dave Parsons: Remove asphalt millings pad (was laid down 2.5 years ago).

Judy K.: would it be possible to relocate equipment to Tree Farm?

Christina S. (COA): Access---control who and when. Need managed volunteers without pay. Some already have access: birdwatchers with permits for birdbanding/BEMP. Shouldn't limit to only them.

Heather – Nature Center has a system for research permits

Vehicular/ Pedestrian Access

Michael – what are access points? Nature Center?

Judy: Should there be access off Rio Grande Blvd.?

Christianne: access should be at Tree Farm and secondary at Woodward.

Michael Jensen: funnel people through Education point prior to access to Nature area, then out to fields--
- ex: Petroglyph and Valle del Oro.

Heather (RGNC) cited rough attendance statistics based on car counter: +-2600 visitors in cars last week. But not same numbers come through RGNC building...many skip off to Bosque trails.

Colleen (COA) We need more ages, subcultures represented with their opinions to create public engagement.

Dave P. - make a nice entrance at the Tree Farm.

Christianne – people should be encouraged to participate in area because of wildlife

Colleen – emphasize how to engage community, need groups on the property

Michael – why not do propagation consolidated at the Tree Farm near Rio Grande?

It was agreed that the group needs more discussion on the following regarding Woodward House: (and tree farm/tree nursery)

Tree New Mexico is a valued asset; where should their activities be focused?

More Interpretive information and where

More Storage and where

Few parking spaces for material delivery

Education Program with Tree NM

More activity at Tree Nursery or Tree Farm and how to phase transition of activities

Colleen (COA): Tree Farm is too disconnected from the Land—community will not get a connecting, engaging experience to the fields to encourage them to become “stewards”.

Carolyn S. and others: Children and adults alike will learn the lesson to respect the wildlife/nature by viewing from a distance and staying “out of the fields”.

It was agreed we have an unlimited amount of restoration work ahead of us and we need to figure out how to weave this into a plan.

The group agreed to the following:

--Vehicular and pedestrian access should be on East at current Tree Farm. Some parking could be accommodated there (off Rio Grande Blvd)

- Connect Tree Farm to Woodward House via pedestrian way.
- Provide a few parking spaces at Woodward House—to move materials, etc.
- Plant propagation should support restoration of property and other Open Space sites (to a lesser extent).
- Increase Public engagement with focus on native plants/seeds, observation, restoration.
- create a welcoming entrance and field views via “blinds”
- ADA (disabled) access between Tree Farm and Woodward House.
- Agreed to limited access, including numbers
- Monitor activity consequence (impact on wildlife and vegetation)
- Draft plan should include guidelines and limitations

LWCF access compliance on South Candelaria and the whole property (Item A):

Agreed to: items listed in the public access subcommittee issues paper with slight changes

No dogs (except service dogs), no hunting, no running/jogging, no kite flying or drones, no biking, no motorized vehicles (except authorized vehicles), no rentals or use for private events and film making.

Limited access – guided/managed access only to North Tract, primarily during the day (guided tours, school groups, public programs, research, citizen science, silent meditation, photography via permit, fundraising events for possible friends' group). Guidelines need to be developed.

Public access should be restricted to developed trails and blinds or other designated activity areas. Trails should be restricted to existing roads in the Northern Tract.

ADA access should be provided according to ADA code

The properties should be fenced to prohibit undesirable activities on the properties and ensure safety for visitors and for the wildlife. Need to consider type of fencing so as not to exclude wildlife. Valle de Oro has fence openings for wildlife.

Public Access to South Candelaria:

- RGNC doesn't want to absorb that project or Rehab project at that location
 - RGNC : pond would be fenced if open to public (guided or not)
 - Guided access should be allowed only after rehab of property (however, can use restoration activities for public engagement in the meantime)
 - Open Space supports open access
 - No running or well water available there now: mostly saltbush & sand sage
 - Need volunteers
 - could bird tours currently led to the north ponds do this property occasionally? Guided tours already go to the Discovery Pond
 - Trail would be ok...but not directly behind abutting properties
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For Follow-up on Review of the Draft Candelaria Resource Management Plan comments:

The Draft Plan is available in the “Drop Box” online. Look for the Candelaria Resource Management Plan” folder. In Excel format—add comments based on line number format –with initials. Michael Jensen will send a link via email.

TAG committee comments are due by June 10, 2019.

The next TAG meeting will be Thursday June 6 at RGNC at 1:00 PM to continue review of the six issues noted in the beginning of these minutes.

The meeting was dismissed at 4:30 PM