

Working collaboratively to support a healthy Rio Grande Bosque and riparian ecosystem while celebrating its benefits to the communities of central NM

**Save Our Bosque Task Force**

Save Our Bosque Task Force Monthly Board Meeting
Socorro County Annex Office
198 Neel Ave, Socorro NM

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**Tuesday, March 3rd @ 3:00pm
Meeting Location: Zoom / Conference Call**

*In attendance: Amy Erickson, Abigail Plecki, Rex Myers, Sarah Anderson, Gina Dello Russo, Kathy Granillo, Sandra Noll, Raphael Sierra-Castro, Nancy Spencer-Morris, Yasmeen Najmi, Matt Mitchell*

Meeting began at 3:05 pm

1. **Approve Agenda**
Yasmeen wants to add riverine parks as a regular item to the agenda. Sandra motioned to make that change and approve the agenda. Rex seconded, passed.
2. **Approve minutes from last month’s meeting**
Amy made a few spelling corrections on the February meeting minutes. Sandra moved to accept corrected minutes. Rex seconded, passed.
3. **Action Items** -
	* Sarah will set a date to take photos on the Pack property for the NMC grant and invite Amy
	* Sarah will set up a meeting for the new Riverine Parks subcommittee
	* Gina will work with Sandra and Matt on outreach to refuges for financial support
	* Gina and others will invite interested folks to our April meeting where we will discuss open positions on the board
	* Yasmeen will keep us updated about the guardrail repair at the riverine parks
	* Yasmeen will develop a draft guidance document to get our segment of the trail designated into the Rio Grande Trail system
	* Yasmeen will check on the Capital Outlay Funding to see if we can use the money for signs at the parks and find out the timeline for using the money.
	* Jerry will send Gina the treatment plan for the NMC grant so she can review.
	* All – Send Amy or Sarah calendar items to put on our website calendar
	* All – Please send Sarah a post for the Facebook page so we can keep everyone engaged in our work. We would like to have a post from each board member
4. **Treasurer’s Report**

Matt gave the treasurer’s report. Last month we had a balance of $47,722.50, and the current balance is $52,436.63. There was a lot of activity in February including drawdowns for Partners for Fish and Wildlife and a payment to Sevilleta for poles (Black Widow Nursery). Sandra had a question about the membership drive money and why it does not appear on the budget spreadsheet. When we receive a donation or a membership fee, the money goes into a PayPal account. The money is in that account and has not yet been transferred to the SOBTF bank account. When the money is transferred, it will go into our general fund.

1. **Fundraising update**

We do not have our nonprofit status verified on PayPal. Matt needs a voided check and some other information which he will get from Sarah later this week. Sarah will send out another email to the listserv on March 8 to folks who did not respond to our first membership request.

New NMC grant (Pack) – Jerry, Gina and Sarah met with Johnny Pack. A lessee wants to run goats and sheep on the property. We would like to be involved in the grazing management discussion and can bring in other partners (NRCS, RGALT etc). We will need to keep goats out of any areas where we do plantings or other restoration activities.

FAWRA – applications were submitted last Friday. The full package (proposal with final acreage maps etc) is due April 1st.

Gina is starting to speak with partners on a Water Trust Board grant to finish phase II of the Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP) update.

1. **Community Outreach**All of our in-person community events are on hold due to Covid-19. Virtual Bosque Conservation Day update – All of the materials were delivered to the schools who wished to participate and they were very appreciative.
2. **Advocacy**Amy gave an overview of Senate Bill 312. This bill would rename the NM Department of Game and Fish, change the process for distributing elk tags, and close the “Jenning’s Law” loophole that allows landowners to kill suspected nuisance wildlife without oversight from NMDGF.

Sandra gave an update of the proposed special use airspace expansion - They went for our preferred option B which means there will be expanded training areas over the caprock, but not in our area or over the Gila.

Gina gave an update on SunZia – A new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on alternative routes for the powerline crossing the Rio Grande is currently underway. The “no action” alternative in the new EIS is currently the approved route which crosses the Rio Grande at Escondida.

1. **Project Updates**

Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Matt gave an update. We just completed two planting days - one at Armendaris and one at Sal Gonzales. They went really well, we had great weather and plenty of volunteers. 630 shrubs were planted at the two sites. We will finish the planting at the Conklin’s on Thursday (100 shrubs and a few trees). Sierra SWCD is under contract to water the plants at Armendaris and they have already done one watering. Sal is watering his shrubs.

Rio Grande Trail/ Socorro Valley Trail
Our Rio Grande Trail storyboard is still in progress. We need to have a discussion about formally designating our section of the trail as part of the RGT. Who assumes the maintenance and liability of the trail? What process do we go through to start these discussions? Yasmeen offered to develop a draft document to guide us in these efforts.

Riverine parks
Yasmeen and Sarah wrote a letter of request to send to the mayor to ask if the City of Socorro will help with regular maintenance on the parks in the city limit. The city crew went to Sandbar Park and replaced two picnic tables. We have new grills to replace the firepits, and they will be installed soon. We want to discuss ways to make the area more ADA accessible.

We should have our request for this year’s funding in by June so we can keep going with the parks improvement, including new signage. Yasmeen mentioned that the $30,000 capital outlay funding can probably be used for signage.

We discussed having an “Adopt a Park” campaign, where groups can adopt a park for trash pickup or maintenance. It has been done in the past and is not just a single event, it is a commitment that people make for a specified amount of time to do regular maintenance and trash pickup at a park that they choose.

We decided to have a special meeting to talk more in-depth about the parks. Sandra, Rex, Sarah, and Yasmeen volunteered to form a riverine parks subcommittee. Sarah will set up a meeting and invite board members – in the future we can invite others but we will keep the first few meetings to board members and staff. The county has discussed taking over maintenance of some of the parks so they need to be invited/involved if they want.

BOR Cooperative Agreement
All sites have been treated for invasive woody species (except for Rhodes).

Sevilleta
Kathy gave an update. They have finished tree planting - over 3100 poles were planted. Pete, their equipment operator, has been helping the Task Force on our planting days.

1. **Other**Internship program – we used ACE in the past, but went with Conservation Legacy last year. We had a closed discussion about which agency to go with this year and decided on ACE because they have a bigger candidate pool and a larger network. We decided to raise the intern pay to $400/week to make it more competitive and get more applicants.

Chad McKenna resigned from the board, so we have one opening on the board. Gina will no longer be the board chair after November. New board members can commit to one or two years. If you know anyone who is interested please invite them to our April meeting. We will provide potential candidates with an information packet to get them up to speed. Board members are not expected to work on all of our many projects – they can select one or two of our projects that interest them and assist with those. If someone is interested in being the board chair, it is helpful if they have project management experience, but it’s not required for them to have an ecology background.

1. **Adjourn**
Matt motion to adjourn, Sandra second – meeting adjourned at 4:21 pm.

**\*\*\* Our next board meeting will be Tuesday, April 6th @ 3:00 \*\*\***