

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, June 1st @ 3:00pm
Meeting Location: Zoom / Sedillo Park**

*In attendance: Amy Erickson, Gina Dello Russo, Rex Myers (on phone), Sarah Anderson, Yasmeen Najmi, Jeff Havlena, Matt Mitchell, Jerry Wheeler, William Haywood, Virginia Weisar.*

Meeting began at 3:04 pm

**Board Member Action Items** –

* + Sarah will set up a meeting for the new Riverine Parks subcommittee on Monday, May 10th at 10am.
	+ Gina will contact WildEarth Guardians to see what our deadline is for signing the letter of support
	+ Gina will set up a discussion with board members to clarify how we deal with advocacy issues
	+ Yasmeen will develop a draft guidance document to get our segment of the trail designated into the Rio Grande Trail system.
	+ Yasmeen will provide the board with fire danger updates in the bosque
	+ Jerry will confirm if we can start meeting in the County Annex again.
	+ Amy will send an e-mail reminder requesting articles for the newsletter
	+ 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

The 2021 interns gave an introductions – William Haywood is currently a Junior at New Mexico State. Virginia (Ginny) Weisar is a Senior at SUNY school of Forestry.

Matt motioned to approve the agenda. Yasmeen seconded, passed.

Minutes from the May meeting – The membership donation amount is incorrect. Amy will get the correct amount from Sarah and make the change. Matt motioned to approve the minutes from May with the correction. Yasmeen seconded, passed.

Public Open Forum – Jeff Havlena gave an introduction as a Socorro resident who is interested in learning more about our work. He is a graduate of NM Tech where he studied groundwater recharge.

Matt gave the treasurer’s report. As of our last meeting, our bank account balance was $49,351.81. As of this afternoon our balance is $46,951.59. Activity for this month includes a few dollars from Amazon Smile purchases and an $11,500 invoice for BOR woody treatment project areas. Sarah has invoiced MRGCD for all of the original 25K contribution.

Current grant applications
We haven’t applied to any new grants recently and are looking out for RFPs to come out in July and August. We did not receive the FAWRA grant. Our proposal was rejected because it didn’t include approval from all landowners in the area. The selection committee also wanted us to include more maps as well as maps of past projects, as well as a 6-year timeline for the project. We have not heard back about the WaterSmart grant. We did not make it past the pre-proposal phase for the NFWF grant. The Water Trust Board grant is coming up and we can write a proposal for on-the-ground work at the Tiffany Fire rehab sites.

Fundraising efforts – Yasmeen will look into the Department of Interior outdoor recreation grant. Amy will send info to the board on the NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG).

Project updates

*Partners for Fish and Wildlife*

Matt gave an update. Currently we have three projects. Matt got a call from Sal Gonzales who is having a problem with saltcedar resprouts. After significant help from SSWCD on the project, they unfortunately weren't able to supply Sal with chemicals or sprayers for policy reasons and Sal had to spray them on his own. His last to-do item is to install the solar pump. He said the trees that were planted are looking good and his project is about ready to close out. We will write the final report once the solar well is in. The Task Force still needs to purchase the grass plugs.

Ron Thomas is ready to close out the project. He is working on submitting a work description so we can submit the final report. Amy can take photos when she monitors his conservation easement at the end of June.

Conklin – they are watering regularly. They don’t need anything else for their project. We can see if they want some grass seed.

New project with the Barclays – we sent them draft agreement and they looked it over and they had a lot of good comments and seemed involved in the process.

Gina gave an overview of PFW for new attendees.

Gina updated Armendaris – everything we planted is leafing out and Sierra SWCD has been watering the plants. Gina said the weeds have not come up too bad so far but there will need to be a mowing sometime in June. We may get a second mowing if there is funding available. The project will be finished up this summer then we can close out FY16 and FY16a awards by September. Gina will let the interns know before she goes out there again so they can do some weed whipping.

Riverine parks and bosque trail

*Riverine parks subcommittee*

The parks subcommittee met and talked about what issues to address. They are deciding how to finish spending what remains of the first $5k and developed a budget for 2021. Sarah submitted the new budget to the mayor.

The meeting with the mayor went well – They talked about the budget (the mayor wanted specific tasks that we want help from the city with, so we added routine cleanup, installing grills and tables, fixing the steps at Island park, and building ADA-approved routes to handicapped tables). The mayor seemed amenable to lending the city crew to do this work. Someone from the riverine parks subcommittee will get in contact with Lloyd to schedule this work.

At the meeting, Felipe brought up people camping/living at the riverine parks. It is a liability for MRGCD. San Antonio park has been getting a lot of camping use and RV use but there isn’t a problem like the parks closer to town. Not allowing camping between Otero and Island Park (the problem areas) would help. The city is responsible for the 5 parks within Socorro city limits. The interns are picking up trash at the parks on a weekly basis, but since there are no regular patrols there it is hard to keep on top of the trash and other issues. MRGCD is working on a solution to get more patrols in the area.

We want to install new signage at the riverine parks this year. The signs should identify the Task Force, say what we do, give some education on the bosque, and include pack it in pack it out and other simple rules for people to follow. Interns can help design the signs. We have the $30K from the legislature to use for signs. Yasmeen and Sarah will work on this mid-late summer before the interns leave on August 11.

Rio Grande trail / Socorro Valley Trail
Yasmeen gave an update. We need to discuss the best way to present the trail alignment and story map to the public. The levee trail alignment is problematic due to liability. It is fine for the trail to cross the levee but we probably can’t use it as part of the alignment. We can however use the riverside drain or low-flow. BOR has to be involved until they turn liability of the low-flow over to MRGCD. The trail will not include pavement, just the signage of routes. Who will have ultimate maintenance and liability of the trail? Some of the trail will be on county roads so we need to have a review by the county. The new BLM trail will tie into our trail, but there isn’t any alignment overlap.

NMC grant
Jerry gave an update. BLM and NMC coordinators came down Thursday and went to the project site. They were impressed with the work completed so far and said it was one of the best fuel breaks in that section of the bosque. Since we only really have a one month window to complete the project, we can ask for an extension. We are at the beginning of a grant period so we can ask for an extension until Dec 31. This means we can do the on-the-ground work in the fall (starting on October 1st to lessen impact to nesting birds). Treatment of resprouts will happen on Mandeville soon. We need a Biological Assessment (BA) to cover the whole valley. We should coordinate with Matt Atencio at BLM.

BOR cooperative agreement
Tabled. We have a new truck for the interns that is paid for using this funding.

Community outreach, social media, newsletter update
No updates.

Advocacy

*Rio Grande Basin Study* –Gina will share Basin Study info with Jeff. The study lead is BOR, with MRGCD as the local sponsor. The county should look into getting involved.

WildEarth Guardians have not gotten back to Gina with a deadline for the letter of support. We need to have a discussion clarifying how the board deals with advocacy issues. Sarah can look at the board retreat notes to see if we already came up with a recommendation for addressing advocacy issues.

Other
We still need to update our bylaws. Who agreed to review the bylaws? Sarah will send out an email to the board saying where we stand on the bylaws.

Open positions on the board – The nomination committee (Matt and Gina) met earlier today. They are trying to do outreach to community members that might be interested.

Gina suggested we apply for a credit card. Currently, a lot of our purchases go through Gina but we don’t want future chairpersons or program directors to have to use their personal card. We agreed to apply for a credit card with First State Bank. Only the treasurer, board chair, and program director will have access to the credit card. To get the credit card, all of the board members have to sign on to a letter of request from the bank, and the minutes have to be signed. This is a business credit card - we can’t do a debit card because we require two signatures on every check. The interest rate on a credit card is high, but we will pay it off every month. Gina suggested we request a $10,000 credit limit. We all agreed to purchase a locking safe for the office. Jerry suggested developing a credit card use protocol for when board members change. Matt motioned to apply for a credit card. Jerry seconded the motion, passed.

Yasmeen gave a few announcements – MRGCD election day is June 8th. Long-time water operations manager Dave Gensler recently retired. Yasmeen is changing positions and will now be working for the conservation program with MRGCD.

Motion to adjourn
Yasmeen motioned, Matt seconded, passed. Adjourned at 4:40.

**\*\*\* Our next board meeting will be at 3:00 on Tuesday, July 6th\*\*\***