

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, January 5th @ 3:00pm
Meeting Location: Zoom / Conference Call**

*In attendance: Gina Dello Russo, Amy Erickson, Sarah Anderson, Rex Myers, Matt Mitchell, Kathy Granillo, Abigail Plecki, Jerry Wheeler, Yasmeen Najmi, Sandra Noll*

Meeting began at 3:04 pm

1. **Approve Agenda**
Matt motioned to approve the agenda with a couple additions from Sandra on the Socorro Valley Trail. Rex seconded, motion approved.
2. **Approve minutes from last month’s meeting**
Sandra gave a few corrections to last month’s minutes and Amy made the corrections. Rex motioned to approve the corrected minutes, Sandra seconded, motion approved.
3. **Action Items** -
	* Sarah will schedule a meeting with Yasmeen, Abigail and Gina to discuss MRGCD land work through the FAWRA grant
	* Sarah will send an email to all the board members with questions answered, stipulations for the loan and to ask for a vote on applying for a second round of PPP funding
	* Sarah will set a date to take photos on the Pack property for the NMC grant and invite Amy and Jerry.
	* Sarah will get with NPS for a deadline for the story map so we can start to plan next steps
	* Sarah and Gina will work with Jerry on the potential next round of funding under the NMC grant.
	* Sarah, Gina and Matt will work with Kathy Granillo (auger equipment) to schedule planting day(s) for PFW projects and keep the Barclays updated on our project planning efforts
	* Sarah, Matt and Jerry will gather materials to take to the schools for Bosque Conservation Day by Jan 20
	* Gina will set a date for a closed meeting to discuss 2021 interns
	* Gina will work with Sandra and Matt on outreach to refuges for financial support
	* Kathy will send Sarah a blurb with details on the planting days so we can post it on our website
	* Yasmeen will keep us updated about the guardrail repair at the riverine parks
	* Yasmeen will reach out to the Mayor about installing the picnic tables and trash pickup at the riverine parks
	* Sandra will develop a membership drive summary for the Defensor Chieftain and Valencia County News Bulletin, Gina will work with NM Tech to get information on their bulletin.
	* Jerry will send Gina the treatment plan for the NMC grant so she can review.
	* All – Send Sarah a list of people to invite to become a SOBTF member (provide contact info for them) by January 21
	* 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 $43,602.73, and as of yesterday we have $47,722.50. The current balance includes the CARES act grant for $10,000. Sarah sent out an updated 2021 budget spreadsheet to the board. The PFW tab had a formula error which Sarah corrected. The 2021 Project Manager fund includes unused funds from Bureau of Reclamation that rolled over from 2020.

1. **Fundraising update**
MRGCD funding update - Using the MRGCD funds, Sarah has been working with Abigail, and Gina researching and writing grants to implement habitat restoration work on the MRGCD bosque. She has been updating the website to make it more user-friendly, and posting on social media. She is currently working with landowners including the Barclays, Conklins, and others who live and work along the bosque.

The FAWRA grant is due in March. We are designing it as a multi-year project with New Mexico State Forestry as the lead. If we receive this grant, the funding will allow us to go back to the Central Socorro Bosque project for saltcedar resprout retreatment. This grant will also include the parcel of bosque owned by MRGCD on the east side of the river (between Matt Mitchell’s property and Sal Gonzales’s property). We would like to treat the saltcedar in that area to reduce fire danger and improve wildlife habitat. Yasmeen would like to see replanting on the previously treated areas. Some planting and seeding was done a few years ago and Amy noted that none of the planted shrubs had survived. There was an attempt to keep cattle out of the area with a hotwire fence but no one is sure if the plants got watered. The fence did not stay up very long and was not effective. State Forestry has an obligation to restore these areas for wildlife benefit under the Biological Opinion with USFWS, as they were the lead on the Central Socorro Bosque project. Now that SOBTF has a water tank, we have the ability to water future planting areas.

Membership Drive – we have finalized all of the membership information and documents. We brainstormed ideas for getting the word out about our new membership opportunities. We can put an announcement in the Defensor Chieftain and in the Valencia County News Bulletin, and reach out to New Mexico Tech. We now have the ability to use PayPal, but we are still waiting to be certified as a nonprofit which will reduce the PayPal fees.

CARES Act – there is no spending timeline for the $10,000 that we received through the CARES act. We have spent the first round of Paycheck Protection Program funding and the loan was forgiven. We will vote to apply for a second round of PPP funding. The PPP funding has more stipulations than the CARES act funding and must be used for payroll and other specific costs. We will investigate if we can return the unused portion if it is not spent during the allotted time period.
2. **Community Outreach**All of our in-person community events are on hold due to Covid-19. Gina got nice feedback from people after the last trash pickup day. The community members are letting us know that the parks look great and there is hardly any trash out there. Thank you for everybody who is helping to keep the bosque clean and safe. Matt gave an update on Bosque Conservation Day – we have some videos available to share with the schools. San Antonio elementary is doing a hybrid in-person/virtual attendance starting in 2021. Matt will deliver the BCD materials to the school (including videos on a flash drive and items for the students) on January 20th. Sarah will get the stuff together to give to the students, and Jerry has some Firewise stuff that can be distributed as well. Matt and Sandra will let Gina know the size of jump drives needed and how many and she will order.
3. **Advocacy**No updates.
4. **Project Updates**Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Matt gave an update on our current projects.
* Thomas – he has over $4,000 left and wants to put in 50 cottonwood poles. We have set a tentative planting date of Friday, Feb 19th.
* We still need signatures from Angel and Gwen (from USFWS) on the Conklin project.
* Sal Gonzales is working on his fence. If he is not finished in February in time for planting, he will put up a temporary hot-wire fence to keep the cattle out of the planting area. We need to amend the agreement if we are paying for the hot-wire fence. If he pays for it, then we do not need to do anything.
* Gina will schedule an Armendaris planting day. We need a power auger to do this, which we can either rent or borrow. Kathy said Sevilleta might be able to help if the dates work out. Gina will coordinate with Kathy on the dates. Sevilleta is planting on February 12, 13, 19 and 20 so we can schedule an Armendaris planting day after the 20th.
* Barclay – We have cancelled the field trip to BdA but will continue planning a phased approach to their restoration project.

Rio Grande Trail and Bosque Trail
This Friday (Jan 8th) at 10am, EMNRD is presenting a webcast about the Rio Grande Trail. NPS Attila Bality, a NPS intern and Sarah had a meeting last month. Progress has been made on the Rio Grande story map. The final map will be used for outreach, and Sarah is contributing information and captions to be included on the map.

Yasmeen will contact the Mayor to schedule a workday to install the new picnic tables and grills at the parks. She will also ask about having the city workers help with regular trash pickups at the 5 parks within city limits.

BOR Cooperative Agreement
Sarah found a contractor to do noxious woody vegetation treatments and they’ll be starting this week.

Sevilleta NWR
Sevilleta is planting trees on February 12, 13, 19 and 20th. SOBTF members can help if they would like. New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors is helping on both Saturdays so Sevilleta will still need help on both Fridays. Renee retired Dec 31st and a new maintenance worker starts in 2 weeks (after 8 years without a maintenance worker).

WaterSmart Grant
We are writing a new WaterSmart grant. Abigail and Sarah have a draft together which Gina is reviewing. Contact Sarah if you would like to review the grant before it is submitted.

New Mexico Counties grant
Jerry gave an update. There is a lot to do in the next 6 months. We can hire a contractor to do the work after we receive the updated State Price Agreement. In the meantime, we have to review the treatment plan and get a landowner notice of participation for Johnny Pack to grant us access to the property. This grant is for $48,250 and need a 10% match. We need to get photos of the site before work begins. Amy/Sarah/Jerry will coordinate that.

Around Feb 1, NMC will open up the grant again for another round of funding. Do we want to move forward with treating another piece of the Pack et al. property?

1. **Other**No other items were brought up.

1. **Adjourn**
Matt motion to adjourn, Yasmeen second – meeting adjourned at 4:44 pm.

**\*\*\* Our next board meeting will be Tuesday, Feb 2nd @ 3:00 \*\*\***