

Save Our Bosque Task Force

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 Minutes

Attendees: Doug Boykin, Gina Dello Russo, Fred Hollis, Matt Mitchell, Bob Markwell, Nick Smokovich, Jon Erz, Carlos Coontz, Mark Mercer, Yasmeeen Najmi, and Kristen Jespersen

9:15 AM Save Our Bosque Task Force Meeting

1. Approve Agenda. *Motion made by Nick to approve, second by Matt, approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from March 2016. *Motion made by Matt to approve, second by Nick, approved.*
3. Treasurer's report
 - a. Account activity – table treasurers report until next month when an update is available. We are setting up an Amazon Smile account, thanks to Connie and Doug for working on that.
 - b. There are no bills this month.
4. Project Updates
 - a. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project: Waiting to schedule a conference call with FEMA and the Tech team soon. Phase I has been approved and the sub agreement is now signed. County has submitted applications to NM Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NM DHSEM) to do additional work on the river in the northern section of the county with the Task Force as a partner. The County also got an outreach grant through FEMA. This work will focus on outreach for any type of emergency, hired person will be in charge of workshops, and with helping the County with any kind of outreach for emergency management. It is expected to be a two-year position but there are opportunities for longer employment.
 - b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: Gonzales planting project went well and there are pictures up on Facebook and Website. Perry project update: Logs have been moved. We need to complete an amendment to Cooperative Agreement because of this delay. Jon Erz, Gina Dello Russo, Angel Montoya, and Gwen Kolb (new Partners lead) met to develop a proposal for Task Force and FWS approval to collaborate to hire an SCA or equivalent intern to work with all area partners to develop and monitor projects. Gina handed out a summary of that meeting (included at the end of these minutes). We currently have three projects in development phase, and it would be a good time to have an intern assist with outreach, design, and follow through to plantings. A longer discussion will be possible in May.
 - c. Riverine Parks/SNA: SNA – No report on SNA. **Doug or Yasmeeen will check to see if they still have some cable and posts that MRGCD could supply.** Maybe we need a large volunteer project to get the parks up and ready for the public again. Could we get in to the parks and do an inventory? **Doug will ask Jacob this.** In Phase II, the contractor has been hauling big trees to a pit near Brown Arroyo and people have been coming to harvest firewood. IWC – working two crews right now, they started at Escondida Lake and working towards Flood Control (Unit 3). People are taking firewood and slash is being left for BOR to mulch. They are working fast so we will probably have funds enough to work Unit 5 starting from Brown Arroyo and working south to San Antonio. They will work until April 15 then start back up in the fall.
 - d. Rio Grande Trail, Socorro Valley Trail efforts – Gina reported that the Commission meeting will be held in Socorro on May 19. Location tbd. We haven't heard from the City of Socorro's contractor on the trail proposals he presented to us. **Gina will contact James McNeil** to see about the public interaction planning sessions. He reported that the City is in the process of hiring someone to work on the plan. He'll update us when there is more to report.
 - e. Other Projects: 1) CRI project at Sevilleta NWR. Sevilleta NWR is considering a cooperative agreement with SOBTF to supply 10,000 Goodding's willow to their Unit A' project. **Gina will work with Jon on the scope of agreement and what we would be supplying,** bring it back to the Task Force in May. May be able to work in some funds for the SCA intern. 2) Check out our Facebook

page. The site will be focusing on one of our river parks to highlight the different parks. 3) Website – **Gina is going to look at verbiage on the website.** New pictures will be taken of all the parks this spring, San Antonio School will go out to clean their park before it is highlighted. 4) Fred announced that their office and other cooperators would be putting on a program on May 7, National Wildfire Awareness Day. Should be a great celebration – food supplied. Maybe the Task Force could put a booth out for the day.

5. Tamarisk Coalition (TC), Kristen Jespersen, presented a fundraising campaign that TC has designed to help watershed partners like ours build their capacity in monitoring, maintenance, and outreach to complement on the groundwork. TC is a regional organization that provides a suite of different services including invasive plant control and restoration, which focuses on riparian restoration. They host a regional conference each year. They monitor the leaf beetle and inform land managers about the beetle. In their experience, soft costs are not funded through usual sources. They are trying to attract funders like foundations and local governments to provide regional and local donations into the watershed groups. 2 million dollar fundraising goal through the Restore Our Rivers campaign, 9 watershed groups in 5 states with 70% of funds going to them and some used to hiring contractors. They hope to attract donors that are regional in scope. Remainder goes into their reserve, \$250,000. January to June is planning phase, in June begin what they call the “quiet phase.” Public campaign begins in October of this year, the action phase. Example of a similar model is the National Forest Foundation. Restore our Rivers fund is reaching for larger capacity with this campaign. TC wants to invest in our partnerships. There are eight other partnerships in four other states. The goal is to build up opportunities for us to work with and build a diversified portfolio. TC will help us bring in regional donations, and assist us with our messaging, we provide a 30% match over 2 years, funds distributed in March of 2017 and 2018. We would need to raise ~\$15,000 by March of 2017 for the first year’s funds. We need to assign a point person, help provide testimonials, success stories, attend fundraising events, help identify speakers, get people out on the river, probably the most time intensive responsibility, coordination: routine calls, coordinating outreach and regional donors, work with Chamber to discuss economic piece, helping to come up with a media campaign for our efforts, a unified front. Point person would also help them develop a profile of our efforts. TC will assist us through distribution of funds, types of match donations by individuals, foundations, local government, and fee for service dollars.
Question: We work locally but are impacts are felt regionally, what do you suggest we use as our Impacted Area?

Response: We can stay with our designated reach, and then discuss the larger landscape that we do affect with our work.

Question: How much time will the Task Force be contributing to fundraising as compared to the TC assistance with fundraising?

Response: TC is hoping this plugs into goals we have already, and into our fundraising priorities, they don’t want to detract from on the ground, additive in some ways, gives us the opportunity to hire and get the capacity building to continue this added benefits of our efforts. There isn’t a set estimate of hours, example: monitoring is hard to fund through the usual grants but very important to overall success, there will likely be more capacity needed to get the funds required, but TC can help us research potential funders, can help with events, hope to benefit us by making their support additive.

Question: Is this the first time TC is embarking in this? They do collaborate and serve as lead fundraiser in partnerships but this is the largest private funding drive they have launched.

Response: This will bring in approximately \$200,000 of flexible funding to each of the groups, this allows for a lot of capacity to these groups. Lots of up front work, but once we are going we should look at how to sustain these efforts.

Question: Have they already hired a campaign coordinator?

Response: Yes, and this person is already working with some of the groups. There will be training opportunities as well along the way.

Question: How far behind are we?

Response: May be two months behind. Groups are at different places, the pre-applications were due in February, some have already put together fundraising plans. More focused calls after we get application in to get us going.

Comment: If for some reason you can't raise the first match required, they are willing to be flexible with the first years fundraising if we need to. No penalty if we have a hard time raising the first round. They want the money to go out to us right away.

Our priorities: Monitoring funds is one priority, maintenance as a priority, building local workforce to do monitoring and maintenance, ongoing outreach to promote funding and endowments, fund a director that will take on: tasks to be determined.

Question: Estimate of maintenance and reasonable dollars needed over the long run.

Response: Developed through discussions.

Matt a motion and Yasmeen as second, that we pursue the TC partnership with a review of the MOA involved. Passed with Nick as proxy to Fred, Connie absent.

6. Update on Fire Danger - tabled
7. Public meeting planning – tabled
8. Other agenda items – 1) Fire season – could be intense in the months to come, let's keep it on the agenda in case we need to get ahead of things. County has 14 wildland units so they are now geared up with staff to cover it. 2) Doug reported a potential fundraising opportunity through Amazon Smile. A motion was made to accept that we share required financial information to Amazon Smile and PayPal? *Matt made the motion, Nick seconded, approved.* 3) Gina reported that Adventure Partners Ecotours had contacted her about offering the Jornada Bat Cave as fundraiser again this year. Board decided to do this event again this year; Gina will get with the company for details.
9. Calendar items – City Water Conservation Plan public meeting April 6, 5 pm at City Council chambers. Bosque trash pickup day is on April 22, Earth Day! San Antonio Park rendezvous and work both north and south from here. Next Task Force meeting is on May 3. May 7, which is National Wildfire Awareness Day, the County is having an event at the Plaza. Send Jon Facebook items.
10. Individual Reports – Fred reported on a WUI conference in Silver City last week, Nick attended too. Very well done in terms of organization. Next year they are having it closer to home.
11. Adjourn: *At 11:20 AM, Matt made a motion to adjourn, second by Nick, approved.*

Potential Partnership for
Interns in the Middle Rio Grande Bosque
March 30, 2016 Meeting Notes
Sevilleta NWR

Attendees: Jon Erz, Gwen Kolb, Gina Dello Russo, Angel Montoya

Invited but not able to attend: Kevin Cobble, Kathy Granillo, Doug Boykin

Background information:

- Student Conservation Association (SCA) stipend from \$80 to \$160, and Americorp award, and housing. SCA has a lot of overhead, but they handle the workmans comp, insurance. This is one avenue to consider.
- SCA interns are supposed to be assisting with projects, not the lead.
- Mentorship is a responsibility, but with many of us that should work well.
- Learning opportunities for a new generation of conservation professionals.

Idea of Internships in Middle Rio Grande

Tasks for Interns:

- Assist Partners projects
- Assist with Task Force projects
- Delineate the boundaries of project
- Monitoring

- Technical writing, proposal development, design aspects
- Presentations/outreach of their work for us

To get into the implementation phase, we need a longer duration – but if we leap frog with interns, all could get that experience.

Note: As we develop partnership, we should be very clear of what and when they will be accomplishing tasks for each partner.

Question for Task Force? Is public outreach and education a part of the tasks we want them to help with?

Funding: SCA is about \$6,000 for 3 months, you save a little if you have longer duration, Jon doesn't suggest doing longer than 6 months or 8 months. So, around \$12,000 needed for each intern.

Note: SCA requires vehicle and lodging.

If SCA would be hired through Task Force, volunteer with FWS, can drive vehicle, Sevilleta NWR might do that depending on time of year and amount of driving. Same with housing, either Sevilleta NWR or Bosque del Apache NWR . Laptop required of intern as something they bring with them.

Sevilleta NWR's contract with Task Force may have funding left over that could go to intern if their duties fit within the tasks included in the contract. Include monitoring, design, mapping.

Friends groups could be a good partner.

Potential Partners for Internship or other efforts:

- Sevilleta NWR
- Task Force
- Partners
- BdA NWR
- Friends of the refuges
- Tamarisk Coalition partnership goal
- Foundations or businesses
- Others?

Partners for Fish And Wildlife and Task Force Partnership

Does the Task Force want to take on more with Partners?

Task Force signs up as a sub recipient, as a fiscal agent, the Task Force could earn more money if the task force is assisting with planning – watch out for substantial involvement though. We will need to discuss this with Gwen and Angel at a future date when all board members are present.

Our overhead costs need to be put in to the budget of projects as an indirect costs!