

Save Our Bosque Task Force
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 Minutes

Attendees: Doug Boykin, Renee Robichaud, Carlos Coontz, Chris Hill, Gina Dello Russo, Nick Smokovich, Fred Hollis, Connie Robnett, Todd Caplan, Grace Haggerty, Ernest Pargas Jr., Willie Lucero, and Yasmeeen Najmi (via conference call)

9:15 AM Save Our Bosque Task Force Meeting

1. Approve Agenda. *Motion made by Connie to approve, second by Chris, approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from July 2015. *Motion made by Connie to approve, second by Fred, approved.*
3. Treasurer's report
 - a. Balance - \$ 7,465.38 in SOBTF funds, \$445.59 in Saavedra Project funds for a balance of \$7,910.97. On the books, there is still \$24,900 available for the Gonzales property and \$22,410.00 available for Perry project.
 - b. Bills – no bills this month.
4. Project Updates
 - a. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project: Fred reported that the County has sent FEMA requested information on structures within the benefited area. Thanks to Gail at the County for getting that request filled. Still hoping for approval soon.
 - b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: Gina met with Vannetta on plants list for her project. Gina will get price quotes and have Vannetta order plants for next spring's planting. The contractor for the Gonzales project has started work on clearing the western portion of their property of Russian olive and tamarisk. Saavedra has finished his project and will bill the Task Force remaining funds to close out that project. Jon Erz, Gina and Angel Montoya will work together to develop a proposal for Task Force and FWS approval to collaborate to hire an SCA to serve as an intern to develop Partners projects. We currently have one in development phase, and if we had two more, it would be a good time to have a SCA that could assist with outreach, design, and follow through to plantings. It would be great experience for the intern and a good mentoring opportunity for both FWS and the Task Force. Discuss further, when Doug and others are available.
 - c. Riverine Parks/SNA: SNA – Fernando Cortez has mowed the trail, removed hazard tree limbs, and worked on pond in preparation for the Bosque Conservation Day. Thanks, Fernando. Chris reported BLM should have maintenance funds this coming year for some of her planned work at the SNA. Riverine Parks - Suggestion to schedule stakeholder meeting with COE project management for the fall to talk about the river parks and mitigation work from the levee work. Doug will schedule this so we can check the status of the parks. This will be part of a work plan that Doug, Fred and Nick will work on so the County YCC program can be ready to go in 2016. Fred said the deadline to have that workplan ready is spring 2016. Randy Reasner will be completing some community service work by picking up trash on all the accessible riverine parks; 350 hours of service so all parks except those within the Levee Project should get some needed attention.
 - d. Other Projects: 1) Levee Project: Jacob Chavez is the project manager's name. Doug will call him and see when we can meet with him. 2) Rhodes Property: reminder that there will be a tour of decision-makers on November 4th and the Task Force members are invited to attend a discussion, luncheon and tour with them to talk about all the work that has been done on the property. 3) Need to schedule tour at Sevilleta NWR restoration projects soon. 4) Carlos and Willie reported the SunZia project is on hold for now.
5. Fundraising: Fundraising Plan discussion – Gina will check with Doris and see if November 3 meeting in the afternoon for a discussion on funding will work for her. If not we will try for after the **December 1** meeting.

6. Bosque Conservation Day planning update (October 16, 2015): Nick has things organized. Bus scholarship has been offered at one-half of costs covered by either Task Force or County. We are expecting approximately 200 students. Snacks provided.
7. Trash Pickup Day (**October 30, 2015**): **Note change of date!!!** We will meet on the west side of the Low Flow Conveyance Channel at Otero Street. Park off to the side, do not block traffic since the levee work will be underway. We will be working north and south from here. We want to make sure we get to south to Brown Arroyo this time, but would be great if we worked north to the flood control along the LFCC too. In this way, we would have followed the IWC clearing projects and picked up everywhere that they cleared and made sure trash was cleared in those areas. MRGCD will provide dump truck and back hoe (Yasmeen will get with Lorenzo). County will have a dumpster on site. Hope everyone can make it.
8. Presentation by the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) and Geosystems Analysis Todd Caplan on San Acacia Reach Projects: ISC has been working on endangered species habitat restoration mainly in the Albuquerque reach, some in the Isleta reach to date. They have noted that the floodplain is important to the Rio Grande silvery minnow's life history. Now planning to work further south. They have received State Capital Improvement funds and are partnering with the MRGCD, BOR, and Sevilleta NWR to implement. We have heard about the Sevilleta NWR project at past meetings. Purpose of the projects is to connect the river to the floodplain and provide rearing and nursery habitat for Rio Grande silvery minnow and greater potential for southwestern willow flycatcher habitat to develop. They are looking at areas where making some changes to elevations on the floodplain will increase inundation during 2000 to 2500 cfs target flows; looking to increase inundation to about 8 days during spring runoff on a two to five year cycle. The reach they are looking at includes approximately 36 miles between Highway 60 and Brown Arroyo (River Miles 130-94) where in most years there is perennial flow. They are utilizing grant dollars so need to get moving on projects. To date, they have worked primarily on federal and state lands; six sites have been chosen (Sevilleta NWR, RM 114, RM 112.5, RM 100.5, RM 100, RM 99.5 all on the west side of the river). The screening process was thorough, utilizing LiDAR topographic data with updated ground topographic surveys, HECRAS flow modeling, and field verification at 2500 cfs. They also looked at vegetation condition prior to coming up with conceptual designs (note: 2010 high flows could have changed some local conditions). Designs are intended to extend the life span of the features constructed. Basic design calls for approximately two to four feet excavation near the river's edge and then limited excavation further inland; construction to be completed within six months to one year. Only site with revegetation is on Sevilleta NWR due to uncontrolled grazing on MRGCD/BOR lands. One example shown is adjacent to the Island Riverine Park just North of Otero Street. Adaptive management very important to projects success; some maintenance expected. Now they are looking for partnership opportunities with non-federal landowners. ISC and partners involved in construction and some follow up control of weed species, but looking for maintenance partners as well. Task Force is interested in discussion on maintenance and Adaptive Management. Next steps, work with Todd to look at where their analysis shows good potential and where other efforts in the valley might make partnerships possible. Agreement that as a group we can seek opportunities, leverage funding, provide introductions and assistance as feasible. A field trip to look at some sites is planned tentatively for November.
9. Host a discussion with stakeholders on the following topics and follow this with a tour of some of the restoration areas and a public outreach event later in the season (ties in well with agenda item 8). Fred and Doug will help Gina organize this. (Tentative date now early to mid-December) Gina will send out doodle poll to possible participants. Topics could include:
 - restoration efforts planned or underway in the reach – including but not limited to Task Force, County, COE, BOR, ISC, private lands programs (SWCD, NRCS and Partners), private landowners, Refuges, others,
 - funding strategies for getting this work done,
 - coordination and partnering on projects,
 - depletions offsets for restoration work,
 - mitigation if SunZia powerline goes through,
 - Endangered species status in the reach and Biological Assessment Conservation Measures.
 - Design public outreach event to follow this roundtable/tour.

10. Other agenda items: 1) Gina called Dustin Armstrong to report on the Tamarisk leaf beetle and rumor that BOR was spraying to control beetle. Not true. He'll try to make meeting soon to update us on BOR work. 2) Socorro Valley Trails discussion. Ernest Pargas Jr. from the City Council joined us to update us on this effort led by the City of Socorro. There are two grants that the City is working on: Transportation Assistance Project (TAP) and Federal Lands Assistance Project (FLAP grant to connect federal lands through trails). The first is a planning grant, has been awarded, and the city is interested in input from the Task Force and agencies through the process of plan creation. The City has applied for the second but we heard from Carlos there is a long wait period for that funding, which goes to construction. The TAP grant looks at a larger area than just the bosque or river system, but the Task Force is interested in helping as it can on the riverside portion of the plan at least. The new Healthy Kids Socorro lead, James McNeil will be added to the Task Force email list, and the Trails contractor, Tim Rogers will be invited to present at our next meeting.
11. Website: Nick and Gina will stay after meeting to see Connie's presentation of what she has to date on website improvements. At a subsequent meeting when both Connie and Bear can be present, she will present to board and members her work on this. Note from previous meeting to keep in mind: Jon suggested Facebook as another outreach tool and may volunteer to help us with that. Let's discuss further as our webpage gets developed and our outreach/fundraising plan gets underway. It is a wonderful offer.
12. Calendar: Sunday October 11 – Local Food Festival at the Hubble House on Isleta Boulevard in Albuquerque. Gina will present at the Rotary Club on Task Force efforts on October 14. Bosque Conservation Day on Oct 16th, and Trash Pickup Day Oct 23rd, October 10th is San Antonio Harvest Festival, it's their 3rd year! Sevilleta Day is October 24. Festival of the Cranes is November 18th through the 22nd this year.
13. Individual Reports: Nick went to Olympic NP, great trip. Gina is meeting with NM Tech and the NM Bureau of Geology and others on possible research opportunities in the San Acacia reach. Connie working away at the website improvements. Doug thanked everyone for the card following a death in his family.
14. Adjourn: *At 11:40 AM, Yasmeen made a motion to adjourn, second by Connie, approved.*