

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, May 4th @ 3:00pm
Meeting Location: Zoom / Conference Call**

*In attendance: Amy Erickson, Gina Dello Russo, Rex Myers, Sarah Anderson, Sandra Noll, Rafael Sierra-Castro, Amy Kimball, Yasmeen Najmi, Matt Mitchell, Nancy Spencer-Morris, Biddy McColville.*

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
	+ Gina will convene a meeting of the Board Nomination Committee to search for new board members, and invite Sandra and Matt
	+ Sandra and Matt will continue outreach to refuges to seek funding opportunities
	+ Yasmeen will develop a draft guidance document to get our segment of the trail designated into the Rio Grande Trail system.
	+ Amy will send an e-mail 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

All attendees gave a quick introduction.

Approve minutes from last month’s meeting
A clarification from last month’s minutes - Yasmeen asked Jerry if Socorro County would *consider* management of riverine parks. This was not a commitment that they would do so.

Sandra moved to approve the minutes, Amy second, passed.

We approved the following changes to the agenda:
- Make the riverine parks and trails an agenda item, and Rio Grande trail a separate item.
- Put the public forum before the treasurer’s report.
- Lump all current fiscal matters together (grant statuses, etc.)
- Fundraising and grant applications will be separate than current project funding.
- Put the newsletter updates under Community Outreach.

Matt moved to approve the agenda with the changes discussed above, Yasmeen seconded. Passed.

Treasurer’s Report
Matt gave the Treasurer’s Report. Last month’s balance was $42,847.53 and as of today is $49,351.81. There was a moderate amount of bank activity this month, and we got two donations from the Socorro community.

Public Open Forum
We got a comment that our bosque is one of the jewels of our valley and along with New Mexico Tech, it makes Socorro better.

Biddy, a Socorro resident, picks up trash along the bosque and organized a cleanup event. MRGCD came and picked up the trash bags including some large items. The trash is not limited to the river so we should brainstorm some city-wide ideas. In the past we have had an “Adopt A Park” program with local businesses. The city regularly cleans up trash off of Highway 1 near the dump but not elsewhere in town.

Gina gave an overview of the SOBTF’s 25+ year ongoing battle with trash at the bosque. We do have trash pickup days and our summer interns pick up trash weekly. We appreciate the Socorro community helping with the trash issue and any new ideas are appreciated. Long-term Socorro residents say that the trash situation is much better nowadays than it has been in years past.

Yasmeen mentioned that there will be a meeting with the City next week, and having the City work on trash cleanups at the riverine parks will be a topic of discussion.

Project Updates

*Partners for Fish and Wildlife*
Matt gave an update. We are ready to spend the last of the Gonzales money on grass plugs. We can pay now and plant them next year, then close out the project. Same with Ron Thomas – he is all done with the work and is taking photos so we can put together a final report for Angel and close out the project. The first draft of the Barclay agreement is finished and has been sent to them, but we have not heard back yet.

Can Sarah work on Partners for Fish and Wildlife projects using MRGCD funding? Matt called Mike Hammond for clarification on the intent of the MOU with how to spend the money. The agreement is not narrowly focused to MRGCD lands. Our work on non-MRGCD lands has a beneficial impact for everybody. For example, if we create a firebreak it benefits MRGCD and their constituents even if the firebreak itself is not on MRGCD property. Even a project 40 miles from the river may have an erosion control benefit for lands nearer the river.

*Rio Grande Trail / Socorro Valley Trail*
Sarah gave an update on the Rio Grande Trail. We are still discussing specific trail alignments. Sarah will schedule a meeting as soon as next week with the project team. The story map has been sent to Yasmeen for review and soon will be sent to the board for review. Gina gave a brief overview of what the Rio Grande Trail / Socorro Valley Trail effort is.

*Riverine Parks and Bosque Trail*
Yasmeen had a meeting with the grants/finance office to talk about Capital Outlay funding and what types of projects it can be used for at the riverine parks. They have to get approval with bids for expenditures which was not required in the past. We have until 2024 to spend the money. Their requirements are very general so it is probably okay for us to use the money for new signs at the park. MRGCD understands and agrees that there is a need for new signs. We will design the signs in collaboration with MRGCD.

Sarah has another meeting with the city next week about our annual $5,000 from them. What do we want to do with the remaining $500 from last year? Everybody wants new signs. A new guardrail has not been installed at Otero Park but MRGCD has placed large rocks there instead. We will form a new Riverine Parks subcommittee to address the parks issues and funding.

*Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Agreement*
The interns are a major part of our agreement with BOR. With the money from BOR, we are leasing a truck for Sarah and the interns to use and it will be picked up on Wednesday. Sarah will be starting herbaceous weed surveys on the 19th on the Rhodes property and the other restoration sites around Socorro.

*Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge*
The trees we helped Sevilleta purchase are leafing out and it looks like they have a good survival rate. The ongoing prairie dog releases are going well.

*New Mexico Counties grant*
Gina gave an update. The consultation with USFWS (regarding Southwestern Willow-flycatcher habitat) is complete and are hoping to get the work done by May 31st. We have been working with Forest Fitness and they are will start the saltcedar clearing early next week. The contractor that was originally going to work on the project broke his leg.

Community Outreach and Social Media
We said we would send out a newsletter on June 1st but decided to push it back so we can do a piece on the interns after they arrive.

Advocacy

Participation in the Rio Grande Basin Study is ongoing. At a future meeting, Rex and Gina will give a presentation about their work on the study. Are we going to sign on to the letter? Gina will set up a board meeting to discuss our advocacy and support protocols.

Other

Internship Update – we received 6 qualified applicants from ACE. The internship committee reviewed the applications and will be scheduling interviews in the next two weeks. ACE did not do a pre-screening due to time constraints. The interviews will all be done over Zoom.

We have open positions on the board – Gina, Sandra and Matt agreed to be on the board nomination committee.

We now have 41 members and have raised of $4,365 so far. It is an annual membership so we will not do another membership drive this year.

We discussed a timeline for returning to in-person meetings, outdoors at one of the riverine parks.

Adjourn
Matt motion to adjourn, Rex seconded – meeting adjourned at 4:27 pm.

**\*\*\* Our next board meeting will be at 3:00 on Tuesday, June 1st\*\*\***

**We will continue to meet over Zoom for the time being.**