

Save Our Bosque Task Force

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 Agenda/Minutes

Attendees: Doug Boykin, Gina Dello Russo, Priscilla Cora Gwin, Bear Albrecht, Yasmeen Najmi (by phone), Matt Mitchell, Nick Smokovich, Isaac Burleigh, Doris Rhodes, Michael Hanauer, and John Romero.

9:00 AM Save Our Bosque Task Force Meeting

1. Approve Agenda. Edits to agenda include Santiago Misquez's going away party, small contract for inspections (will discuss under Partners for Fish & Wildlife agenda item). *Motion made by Matt to approve, second by Priscilla, approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from July 2014. *Motion made by Nick to approve, second by Yasmeen, approved.*
3. Treasurer's report: Remaining balances in Private Property Project funds: \$1,800.00 (set aside for audit preparation this year if needed), Saavedra property project has remaining funds of \$12-14,000 for follow up treatment, brush removal or treatment, and plantings, approximately \$22,410 available for one more Partners for Fish & Wildlife project (Perry property to augment EQIP funds), Mitchell and Gonzales projects are underway with billing pending; in SOBTF fund: \$4,269.36. Again thanks to donors. Overall balance of: \$6,069.36.
 - a. Bill for Chamber of Commerce membership, *Motion made by Nick to pay, second by Priscilla, approved.*
4. Project Updates
 - a. Rhodes Project: Doris was here to update us on restoration. The northern parcel restoration is almost done, southern parcel to begin this fall; contracts are in place between the Rhodes family and NRCS. The tamarisk control should be done by 2016, with plantings to follow. The Rhodes family is working to secure title on the small holdings claims in between the northern and southern parcels and to establish a conservation easement on these parcels. Doris and Gina met with Bureau of Reclamation to discuss the Phase II plan, specifically if Reclamation would assist in restoration and securing permission to access surface water. They will meet with Interstate Stream Commission and the NM Office of the State Engineer to discuss feasibility of securing water for the project. The property does flood now so the design would add efficiency to the flooding, allowing property managers to flood when it benefits wildlife and habitat improvements. Doris will apply for compatible use determination for Phase II with the NRCS when the time is right. Doris is considering a lease/purchase agreement with SunZia as part of a mitigation plan to offset impacts from the proposed powerline crossing the Rio Grande. Final ownership would most likely be a federal agency. She voiced again her appreciation for all the work the Task Force has done on the property.
 - b. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project: tabled until Jerry or Fred can give update.
 - c. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: Mitchell and Gonzales property projects are underway this fall. The Task Force needs to hire someone on a small contract to inspect and report on the Partners projects this fall. See Treasurer's report for further details. It was suggested that Gina Dello Russo take on this work on a very temporary basis and the Task Force look for a Tech student to train for this part time position. *Motion made by Matt to hire Gina, second by Nyleen (in conversation with Doug), approved.*

- d. Riverine Parks/SNA: Socorro Nature Area (BLM) - Sign at San Antonio Park needs replacing. Doug will ask Kim Meyers for a price to make a new sign similar to the one she did there before. Michael offered that there are vinyl signs that last longer and may be less expensive. He will send the website to Doug. Yasmeen suggested consistency with signs, so all have the same look. It was mentioned that we do need a new set for the Socorro reach. Yasmeen will look into how much it would cost to get a new set of trail and Otero to Confluence signs made. Update at next meeting.
 - e. Healthy Kids Socorro: Welcome, Isaac Burleigh as a new member of Healthy Kids Socorro. Healthy Kids Socorro posted carsonite signs to act as mile markers on trails so kids and adults can track their exercise, but mileage needs to be added. Chris Hill with BLM has the numbering. Isaac will contact her. Isaac also mentioned taking this mileage down to Otero Street and adding it to signage on the trail. Bike to School event was on a Wednesday this month; an event designed to encourage exercise. Isaac introduced himself: his interests are cycling and running, community health. He has worked with HKS since August.
 - f. Other: Corps of Engineers Levee Project - Gina will contact the Corps of Engineers Levee Project manager and see if he can come down and discuss access routes, park closures this fall/winter before construction begins. From Yasmeen after meeting): she spoke with Ray Gomez and he said Jerry Nieto is the levee project contact for the Corps. Ray also said that the Socorro Flood Control and Otero streets will be access roads for the project. Part of the Socorro Flood Control will have to be reconstructed and water trucks will be filling water at Otero Street so it seems likely that, at minimum, both of these roads at or near the bosque and the bosque in between will have to be closed to the public during the construction phase, which is planned to be over one year. The contract award will be announced September 19th and the details should be worked out before the end of the year, so we have a little time. The Task Force should make contact with Jerry and stay engaged so the information (maybe a press release or article) could be published in the Socorro paper, to coordinate with the City of Socorro and post any closures on the MRGCD, SOBTF and other pertinent websites. We will put this information on our website.
- 5. Website update – Bear attended and updated information.
 - 6. Calendar: Next meeting is October 7. Bosque Conservation Day is October 17. Trash pickup day is October 24.
 - 7. Other agenda items: 1) Michael Hanauer of the Friends of Bosque del Apache NWR attended to invite Task Force members on a “dry run” tour of water management at the refuge. The tour will be offered during the Festival of the Cranes in November. Gina will send Michael contacts for other non-profits who might be interested in the tour. The tour guide, Brian Greeves, will take people behind the scenes to see how water management is done on the refuge. October 24th, after the trash pickup, is the date. Limit is 20-25 people. Just let us (Doug or Gina) know you are coming and meet us at the Visitor’s Center at 1:00 pm on the day. Or better yet, join us for Trash Pickup and lunch too. See blurb for tour below. 2) Trash pickup day: John from MRGCD is hoping to get some of his patrol staff down to assist us that day, follow up with evidence if we find any. Reminder: There are large trash items between the north diversion and Escondida Lake, west side of the LFCC. 3) Santiago Misquez is moving on to other opportunities in Oregon for NRCS. The Task Force wishes to thank him for all of his hard work and collaboration on a number of great projects. Good Luck Santiago! 4) Work will continue on the ribbon this fall, probably starting in mid-October. There is approximately \$20-30,000 in state severance funds left. Fuel wood harvesting permits are now being distributed (San Acacia

to Highway 380) and picking up chips and firewood from the ribbon requires one of these permits.

8. Individual Reports: John reported that he has requested a line item budget for fire under the MRGCD budget. He will be coordinating fire and patrol related issues for the District. Bear: Minnesota trip was good, dog-sitting now.
9. Adjourn: *At 11:10 AM, Gina made a motion to adjourn, second by Doug, approved.*

Blurb on tour at Bosque del Apache NWR

Backwater Tour

Bosque del Apache Water Management

Experience the refuge from the perspective of water management.

Join Brian Greeves, refuge water manager, on a tour of the refuge and learn how water is moved, used and conserved to create the diverse wetland habitats that attract wildlife and people to Bosque del Apache. Learn the tools and techniques the refuge uses to mimic historic conditions to restore the wetland habitat of the Rio Grande. Discover how management of water is critical in providing this habitat for sandhill cranes, snow geese, endangered species and other wildlife.