

**Save Our Bosque Task Force**  
**Tuesday, March 7, 2017 Minutes**

Attendees: Doug Boykin, Gina Dello Russo, Fred Hollis, Carlos Vega, Matt Mitchell, Chris Hill, Fernando Cortez, Nick Smokovich, Kevin Cobble, and Yasmeen Najmi (by phone).

9:00 Save Our Bosque Task Force Board Meeting. Financial business and board logistics discussed. We have a quorum. Connie let Gina know she is not able to continue as Secretary at this time – our great appreciation for all of her work on Trash pickup days, her designing of the website (which we know is a lot of work, and it is great!), her generous donations, and her sense of humor. We hope she will continue as a board member if possible!

9:30 Save Our Bosque Task Force open meeting. Doug began the meeting by requesting a round of introductions by attendees.

1. Approve Agenda *Motion by Matt to approve, second by Chris; approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from meeting of February 7, 2017. *Motion by Chris to approve, second by Fred; approved.*
3. Treasurer's Report
  - a. Balances: Bank balance - \$12,862.11; SOBTF Balance = \$12,862.11. Project funds include: Lawrence/Devers = \$15,199, Taliaferro = \$, 24,900, Armandaris Ranch = \$ 24,900, and Sevilleta NWR = \$ 117,000. Three donations including \$500.00 from Jim and Mary Ruff, \$14,50.00 from Forest Fitness Inc., and \$1,000.00 from Connie Robnett. Thanks to all for their generous support. Thank you letters were sent out to all our recent donations.
  - b. Bills: Garcia Opera House rental \$150.00, John Brooks snacks and refreshments for the public meeting \$78.41, Mailbox rental \$62.00, order of new checks \$26.25, Connie Robnett \$77.50 reimbursement for website license WIX.com; SWCD \$3,756.00 final invoice for Perry project plantings; Taliaferro \$8,000.00 first invoice for their project salt cedar control; Gina Dello Russo reimbursement for rakes bought for cleanup days. Rakes will be in the State Forestry shed for future work. Question on deposit of \$2,490.00 – first draw of admin fee from Partners Coop Agreement, and set this aside for 2017 audit.
4. Project Updates:
  - a. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project: Gina, as the newly hired project manager of the project reported that she is working with the County on the Socorro Valley Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Project. The drafts for the Scope of Work and Request for Proposals are with the NM Department of Homeland Security for review. The Project Team is now working on finalizing treatment plans.
  - b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Projects and Partnership: There are three active projects at this date. Taliaferro and Devers are underway and have invoiced for their first work on their projects. Armendaris Ranch project will be starting soon with gate installation and shrub

planting this spring. Two new projects are in design phases, with hopefully FEMA funds going to tamarisk control and Partners funds to cover the native plant establishment. Carlos is working with Nicole Jordan of State Forestry to get in touch with other landowners in the area of Pueblitos. We did receive the additional \$44,000 from the Partners program under our cooperative agreement.

- c. Riverine Parks/SNA: Everything is open down there. Looks good through the parks thanks to our trash pickup and trail maintenance done last month. ADA trail still in good shape. IWC will go through and clean up bigger trees that are across the trail. Task Force and others need to work together to get cable back up at the parks to direct vehicular traffic. Yasmeen said they had some funding to buy cable. She and Lorenzo will do an inventory and then a crew could help us install. Schedule a workday with MRGCD, Reclamation, and the Task Force (decided on April 21). Use compression clamps as opposed to cable clamps to help control theft. Gina reminded everyone that we need to get two large trash piles picked up (went out to Confluence park on March 7 and that trash pile with couch was still there, assuming other one just north of Otero Street in the first pass through of the ribbon is still there too). Reclamation is going to grade the parks for us this week (went by March 7<sup>th</sup> and that work was done). At the Nature Center, the BLM are going out there today after our meeting to go over the maintenance plan developed and begin priority work. Fernando has been working on gates and repairing signs that have been vandalized. They will be deciding what to do with the pond and decking around it. They are seeing use in the park now that spring is coming on. Boy scouts are interested in coming out to the Nature Area, interested in a service project. The Nature Area is now 22 years old.
- d. Rio Grande Trail, Socorro Valley Trail efforts: Next Commission meeting is April 6, location to be determined. After contractor is on board, bring them down to talk with local stakeholders and landowners.
- e. Sevilleta NWR Cooperative Agreement for construction of an outlet structure and gate, Goodding's willow pole sourced and delivered, and hopefully some funds remaining for the internship program. We would like to have estimate of gate purchase, so we can finalize funding for poles and interns.
- f. Bureau of Reclamation Escondida Fire Habitat Restoration - tabled
- g. Central Socorro Bosque Severance Project: \$750,000 has been allocated for work to be performed on state- and federally-owned land. Reclamation and FWS worked with State Forestry and the Task Force to complete the environmental compliance. They will be getting started shortly, with revegetation following tamarisk clearing.
- h. Other projects
  - 1) Today, the County is issuing a purchase order for Gina to write the application for YCC project in 2017. Two parks in the County are lined out as projects, but there may be other work in parks that could be handled through this project. 2) Bosque del Apache NWR has begun clearing on the river again, this clearing ties in an existing fire break to the burned area from 2016; 800 acres burned. They will be able to work through the summer since it has already burned. They

have started this work. Reclamation is designing a project to move about two miles of river to the east, clearing a 300-foot wide swath for river alignment and clearing tamarisk at this site. They are working towards construction in 2018. Reclamation is also working with them on a new diversion infrastructure at the north boundary. These projects are part of the Biological Opinion that just came out. Cooperative farmers pulled out so the refuge will be farming with their staff this year, smaller acreage and just corn and grains for the wintering birds. They will be doing restoration in the farm fields to establish native plants, are open to research or experimental plantings. They are not reducing but hoping to increase their corn production this year.

5. Restore our Rivers Initiative: McCune Charitable Foundation has awarded the Task Force \$10,000 in funding for this initiative. An update on fundraising for the required \$45K: We currently have \$29,000 and the Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR have committed \$5,000 for 2017 and an additional \$10K in 2018. Gina will pick up the check from the Friends at their March 18 board meeting. It would be great if one or two other board members could attend and introduce themselves. I'll check with Deb Caldwell to see if that is ok and forward the agenda to you. We now need to work on our priorities for this funding: hiring a part-time director and beginning our internship program.
6. Cross-Watershed Network Programs and Opportunities: This is a non-profit organization that is working on the Colorado River watersheds to bring different entities working on rivers together to learn from each other. They have invited us to a workshop on March 21-22. Fred is considering going to represent the Task Force (update: Fred signed up, thanks for representing us!).
7. Planning for Spring 2017 Bosque Trash Pickup Day: April 21, 2017 9:00 am. County can bring equipment, MRGCD will bring assistance. Volunteer firefighters, tech clubs are welcome. We will be stringing cable, picking up trash, and beginning to design the Confluence Park. Gina will get word out to volunteers.
8. Other Agenda Items: MOU handed off to Fred to have the County Manager sign it and return to BLM.
9. Website and Facebook items: Matt sent in photos and a narrative for his property project. We are going to use this as an example to other landowners and hopefully get more examples of our work and partnerships on the website, highlight them on our Facebook page.
10. Calendar items: Work on the FEMA landowner treatment plans on March 9 1:00 pm; work up director's SOW on March 17; Trash pickup on April 21. Firewise activities to will be posted on the Website. Gina will send out possible dates for planting at Armendaris Ranch.
11. Individual reports: Carlos - new Polvadera fire station coming in, will be similar to the San Antonio station. Matt – it is baby falcon season, not seeing javalina around his place this winter. Yasmeen – intern coming in to her office this week from the UNM Planning Department.
14. Adjourn 11:10 a.m. *Motion by Doug, second by Yasmeen; meeting adjourned.*