

Save Our Bosque Task Force

Tuesday, March 4, 2014 Agenda/Minutes

Attendees: Doug Boykin, Gina Dello Russo, Cynthia Connelly, Nick Smokovich, Matt Mitchell, Priscilla Cora Gwin, Don Kearney, William DeRagon, Jerry Nieto, Mark Doles, Connie Robnett, Fred Hollis.

9:00 AM Save Our Bosque Task Force Meeting

1. Approve Agenda. *Motion made by Priscilla to approve, second by Nick, approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from February 2014. *Motion made by Matt to approve, second by Nick, approved with the following correction.* Nick's last name is spelled Smokovich.
3. Treasurer's report: Remaining balances in Rhodes Property Project fund: \$1,800.00; in SOBTF fund: \$4262.43. Overall balance of: \$6062.43. Task Force Board thanks the Treasurer Fred Hollis with assistance from Nyleen Stowe for compiling Treasurer's report.
 - a. Changing banks: SOBTF has changed banking institutions because of increasing fees. The transition is expected to take another month while checks clear from current account.
 - b. Three bills were paid this month to contractors for the Rhodes Property project. Funding from Partners for Fish and Wildlife was deposited to cover these checks. We also paid to purchase checks and set up a business account at First State Bank.
4. Corps of Engineers presentation on the San Acacia to Bosque del Apache Unit, Rio Grande Floodway General Reevaluation – levee construction (Mark Doles, presenter; William DeRagon and Jerry Nieto assisting). This project was authorized in 1948; Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers were to build infrastructure for flood control and water delivery. The purpose of this project has been and remains flood risk management. The existing levee is a spoil berm, not a levee. The location for this project is the length of river from San Acacia Diversion Dam downstream to the top of Elephant Butte Reservoir. The Corps has done a series of studies and now has a Recommended Plan. The objectives of the project are to increase capacity of the floodway and reduce damages in the event of high flows. It is designed for 100 days of water against the levee. The design for the levee will have toe drains and a clay core to prevent sluffing of and piping through the levee. The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the Interstate Stream Commission are the non-federal sponsors of the project.

The reevaluation was needed because of a number of factors: a longer period of record available for analysis, a new standard of levee design, and three new listed species under the Endangered Species Act. In their analysis they used both spring runoff and monsoonal events. The clay cores and toe drains address the spring runoff events and the height of the levee is designed to address monsoonal flows. One issue in the reach considered in the analysis is the perched channel in the lower two thirds of the project area. The Corps cannot compound effects of flooding with the project. The expected increase in flooding with the project is

approximately two inches vertical height. Benefits of the project must meet or exceed costs of the project.

Overall, the footprint width of the new levee will be smaller in the northern portion and larger below Highway 380. There will be riprap on the riverside toe in some places; approximately five miles total. A 15 foot area from the toe of the riverside levee towards the river, once constructed, will be maintained vegetation-free or at least with no woody vegetation allowed to grow there. Jetty jacks will need to be removed during construction, evaluated, and if needed replaced. The Corps will work with agencies and entities like the Task Force to make sure access to parks and other facilities is rebuilt and protection from vandalism, illegal dumping, and off-road use where not authorized is maintained.

Mitigation for 74 acres of vegetation control along the entire footprint of the project will be accomplished in stages as impacts are seen. Most of this vegetation is currently salt cedar. An approximate total of 170 acres of revegetation is expected, including 70 acres under the existing levee footprint, 50 acres of shrub or cottonwood plantings, and the rest herbaceous seeding.

Construction is expected to begin in late fall, 2014. The first levee segment constructed will be from the North Diversion Channel (north of Socorro and south of Escondida) to Otero Street. Within one to three years a segment from Otero Street to Brown Arroyo would be constructed. Next (within three to six years) the segment between San Lorenzo arroyo and North Diversion Channel and then the San Acacia Diversion Dam to San Lorenzo arroyo (year 7) levee would be constructed. Brown arroyo to Highway 380 (years eight and nine), Highway 380 to mid-Bosque del Apache NWR (years ten through fourteen) and mid-Bosque del Apache NWR to Tiffany (years fifteen through nineteen) would be the last three segments constructed. This schedule is subject to change based on funding. During construction, each segment will be closed to traffic and other access roads could be closed or receive higher construction traffic. Approximately one mile of levee would be removed and rebuilt at any one time, with pauses in construction during possible high flow events so there would be no gaps in the levee at those times.

Much more information is available in the reevaluation report including alternatives considered and specific design features. A scanned copy of the presentation is available from the Project Manager: Jerry Nieto at jerry.d.nieto@usace.army.mil

5. Project Updates
 - a. Rhodes Project: Tabled
 - b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: Tabled
 - c. Riverine Parks/SNA: Tabled.
 - d. Healthy Kids Socorro: Tabled.
6. Other Agenda Items: Tabled.
7. Individual Reports: Tabled.

Adjourn: At 11:10 AM, Matt made a motion to adjourn, second by Priscilla, approved.