

Conservation Committee Minutes—Jan. 7, 2015 FINAL

Attendees: Jim Daniel, Mark Young, John Cannella, John Parker, Cherry Payne, Tom Bredenberg, Tom Brimacombe, Greg Coehlo (Board liaison)

Guests: Rob Egemeier (third meeting); Arnold Atkins

November minutes: reviewed, corrected and approved unanimously.

Status of New Preserve Trailhead Signs: Mark reported on the history of the project. Before the holidays proofs of the smaller signs and the large sign were received from the fabricator. The large sign was incomplete; the smaller signs looked okay. Mark has tried to contact the vendor several times with no success. If we do not finalize this soon, Mark suggests we move to another vendor. It was decided to give him until March 1 to produce the signs. It was suggested we research other vendors.

Status of Goat Remediation: The goats were not mobilized last year because of an issue with liability insurance from the vendor. In November, the vendor was contacted again. On January 7, an email was received from the vendor that states that ECIA was in arrears in payments. John discussed the burden of liability on small operations such as the goat mitigation operation, and suggested that ECIA decide if goats are a useful tool and try to work things out with the vendor. This issue was redirected via Mark Young to the Board to address. Looking through minutes, some details were provided to Greg to take to the Board.

2015 Budget: The committee received \$7800 for 2015. This is great, but will not cover the costs of rebuilding some of the water calming structures in Galisteo Creek that were damaged in September in a big storm, because heavy equipment would be required. The work would probably require a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers; Jan-Willem Jansens of Ecotone may know of some grant monies that we could apply for.

Ecotone: we found ourselves without Jan-Willem's prioritized list and decided to defer consideration of the Ecotone-proposed projects until February.

Tom Brimacombe offered the following:

Trail 301: there are some prolonged, steep grades (30-31%). It would be easy to reroute this to make it easier to climb.

Trail 401: again, there are some very steep grades that could be mitigated with re-routing the trail.

Trail 203 through the middle of the 200 loop is rutting badly. There is a beautiful rock formation that parallels it that we might be able to incorporate into a new trail alignment.

Trail 201, east side: the substrate is soft and it is getting rutted.

Trail 105: there is an unofficial connector that comes down from 101. There is a social trail there ("Doug's Trail"). This has come up several times. It was suggested we prioritize this along with other projects.

John suggested we consider a master plan for the Trail 400 series, and noted that it could be connected to the 300 trails.

Materials will be sent to all committee members who are asked to be prepared to prioritize projects at next month's meeting.

Trail 401 between the trailhead and 403: the trail is rutting more and more and is becoming more and more of a problem. The solution is to re-route the trail as a hiking trail. John noted that because PNM wants to maintain this as an easement, we should consult with them. This would

be the kind of thing that the former GM would have done, but John noted that the committee could take this on.

Greenbelt work between Rail Trail and Vista Grande Public Library: the Board has approved work improving this section of trail. All work will be accomplished with a volunteer using hand tools. In November it was approved in concept by the committee and advanced to the Board; Jim Daniel will send an email to Dag to make sure that the Board has approved this project. Greg noted that the neighbors may need to be notified. Jim will follow up with Dag.

COLPAC (John Parker): John went with them to Petroglyph Hill (600 ac) to determine how to manage some newly acquired property on Thorton Ranch, a property of 2000 ac. There was a public meeting in November. Because of the sensitive archeology, John feels that a trail needs to be installed. There are several multi-year management and transportation plans in the works related to trails in the county.

The Rail Trail is moving along between Avenida Vista Grande and Rabbit Road and the Spur trail to the community college. John reports that they are closing in on completing the project.

Windmills and Dreams: Pam Henline sent the committee chairs an email about an effort to update *Windmills and Dreams* which is a history of the Eldorado area. There is a section on the Conservation Committee and she is requesting that we expand that from 1996-2014. It was suggested that we look at annual reports to see what committee highlights were for those years.

Review of 2014 CC Annual Report and 2015 Goals: Goals for 2014 were reviewed and edited for 2015, along with a draft committee report of accomplishments. Mark will see if Marilyn can find them back to 1996; John has materials back to about 2000. Greg stated that it is important that the corporate memory of the community remain intact, and noted that understanding controversial issues can be especially helpful. If committee members from the late 1990s are not local, we should be trying to track them down in other locales. It is very helpful to include "lessons learned."

Other Business:

A). Greg Colello brought up the issue of access to the greenbelts, in that some of the trails are eroding and steep between the road and the main trails in the greenbelts. One thought is to review and prioritize work needed on access points to the greenbelts.

B). Steve Griego sent an email requesting a project in Gallena Park. John Parker moved we vote as to whether we consider a trail project in Gallena Park this year; it was seconded by Tom Bredenberg. The committee unanimously voted not to consider this project this year.

C). Arnold Atkins raised the issue of worsening erosion between the Rail Trail and Enebro Road. He discussed the Pilot Project and said he was initially a little skeptical of the project, but now believes it turned out well. However, since 1998, he has seen a dramatic change in the greenbelts, particularly with the drought. The trail ruts are deepening and are changing the watershed and the vegetation character. Mr. Atkins is involved with Trout Unlimited and has experience in trail work and other landscape restoration project. He has been doing some rock work to help manage water drainage in some of the trail/ruts. He is asking for some materials to continue to do some work, and wondering if he could volunteer to do work in the greenbelt. There is plenty of woody material to use. There is some rock staged at Gavilan Road.

John noted that there is concern about people who are not trained in trail maintenance working independently is worrisome. However, in cases like Mr. Atkin's offer, we can get some good work accomplished.

The committee agreed to endorse Mr. Atkins to do the work. John suggested we let Carol and Steve know that the committee will order 3 yards of rock to be dropped at the bottom of Vista Grande Drive at a location in the Greenbelt: 1.5 yards at the bottom of Vista Grande and staff

could move 1.5 yards to the north leg of the Pilot Project Trail just west of the greenbelt where other erosion mitigation needs to be done. Mark will order the rock, and John will help with the location of the staging.

D). As this was Rob's third meeting. Cherry moved to nominate Rob to the Conservation Committee, seconded by Tom Bredenberg and John Parker and unanimously approved.

E). There was some discussion about the new management company. A contract is close to being signed with Homeco. The interim GM will start Feb. 1 and will be here until a permanent GM is hired. It is not anticipated that much will change in terms of operations. There will be some changes in financial management. The ECIA Board will be directing the company, and current ECIA staff will be working for the Board, at least initially. Eldorado will be their largest client in New Mexico, though Greg noted that there are some larger homeowner associations in the works in New Mexico.

Next meeting: Feb. 3 at 7:00 p.m.

There was no December 2014 Meeting of the Conservation Committee