

Conservation Committee Minutes—October 6, 2015 -

Attendees: John Parker, Cherry Payne, Mary Clark, Mark Young, Tom Bredenberg, Jerry Gulseth, Rob Egemier, Tom Brimacombe, Greg Colello, (Board Liaison)

1. **Guests:** Eduardo Krasilovsky,

2. **September minutes:** Tom Bredenberg moved to accept the Sept. minutes with no corrections, Jerry seconded and minutes were unanimously accepted.

3. **Greenbelt Trails:** The Pilot project was mowed last week and two small mowers were used. Tom Brimacombe noted that he has been on it since it was mowed and is working well. Cherry suggested that we consider mowing the Greenbelt trails; the suggestion was not well-accepted. It was suggested that the Committee go to the Board at some sort with a proposed Greenbelt standard in hand, and then the project should be resourced as it is beyond the capability of a volunteer committee.

4. **Best Landscaping Practices (Eduardo):** Eduardo moved to Eldorado in 2005 and travels Vista Grande all the time. In the last few years, he has noticed dying trees including stressed junipers. He has started to think about trees and other flora that might be more successful in 10-20 years as a result of warming climates. He is suggesting that we do an evaluation of the local ecosystem (including microclimates) and then develop a brochure for homeowners that includes best landscaping practices for Eldorado. This could include a list of trees, shrubs, grasses, etc. that are likely to be successful with average temperature increases.

Tom Bredenberg mentioned the Extension Agent with NMSU. There is already a lot of information out there from a variety of sources. John suggested something on the ECIA website with suggested best practices such as whether to mow or not, etc. Rob noted that there was an article in the most recent Vistas about mowing.

Eduardo brought up the question of fire hazards. John explained how we have worked on fire assessments. John suggested that the Conservation Committee participate in any efforts along these lines. The Architectural Committee has a link on their web page of suggested species to plant. In the 2016 Conservation Committee budget, there is a line item to have someone create educational materials to help assure that their landscapes are fire wise. Eduardo has volunteered to help with the project.

5. **Update of Eagle Scout Project, 10/17:** The Eagle Scout project has fallen apart as the leader is not supportive of our trail project as an Eagle Scout project; the work day on October 17th will not be supported by them. Tom Bredenberg motioned that we consolidate the Oct. 17 and Nov. 7th work days into one day on the 7th. Jerry seconded and the motion carried. Mark will let Jan-Willem know of the change.

6. **Status of Greenbelt work between VGPL and the Rail Trail:** Jim sent an email that included an update; there are some in the county who want to give permission to ECIA to cut the trail, and others who are opposed to it. It does not look like the county will be doing this any time soon. Mark will approach Dag about the possibility of ECIA cutting the trail with our Kubota and if he approves, will ask Dag to talk to county staff.

7. **PNM Utility Easement Update:** This was not addressed in the September meeting and has been pushed to October.

8. **Salt Cedar Remediation, 200 trails:** The stream bed that leads into the wetlands on 201 has some salt cedar. Tom suggests that we get on it as soon as possible. Tom will check it out and will send the committee and email and suggest a mini-workday.

9. **Remaining 3 Trail Junction sign installations:** The signs were installed today.

10. COLTPAC: The ribbon cutting for the new section of trail will coincide with the commencement of the project's next phase (Ave. Vista Grande to Ave. Eldorado), but a date still has not been set.

11. Budget YTD and 2016 budget: We are shown on the books as being \$93.85 overspent, but they accounted Craig Sponholtz's work against our account without adding the special funding to the committee budget. However, if we back Craig's bill out, we have \$2600 remaining though we are awaiting invoices for the new signage and posts. We do have a line item to replace the trail junction signs in the 100 series trails because of the addition of Trail 105. Cherry will survey and talk with Andrea about doing the design work for this project.

12. Mowing on Greenbelt pilot trail on 10/2: Mowing was completed and there were no complaints. Tom Brimacombe has biked it and says it looks good.

13. Other Business:

a). Greg is hopefully taking a sabbatical for 3 months from the committee to attend to personal matter; David Yard will be filling in for him as the committee's liaison. Greg introduced an herbarium and plant list for Eldorado that was compiled in 1997 with 180 plants on the list. There are six binders with specimens and the plant survey list. This had been tucked away for several years. Greg hopes that we can obtain photos of each genus/species and post it on the ECIA web site. Greg would also like to identify plants as native and non-natives.

b) The Plague/Hantavirus talk went well with about 12-15 people in attendance. Mark and John were there representing the committee. The speaker was from NM Dept. of Health, Dept. of Epidemiology.

c) The trail camera has been installed in an area where animals transit. The motion sensor is very sensitive and blowing chemisas will trigger it to shoot a photo. Therefore, we've gotten many blank photos. Most wildlife activity has been at night; a coyote has definitely been photographed and perhaps a large cat. Tom is continuing to look for a good, secure, safe location.

d) John was approached by an environmental educator at the community school wanting to know if we would want to staff a booth at an environmental fair in the spring.

e) John also suggested that we think about finding AmeriCorps volunteers to help us with our projects. Mark will contact Jan-Willem to locate a contact.

f) There are bags of yard debris that were dumped at the #2 trailhead. Tom Brimacombe asked that ECIA staff pick the bags up.

14. Adjournment: John moved to adjourn, Mark Seconded. Unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Next Meeting: November 2nd at 7:00 pm