

### **Conservation Committee Minutes—Nov 4, 2014 FINAL**

**Attendees:** Jim Daniel, Michael O'Farrell, Mary Clark, Cherry Payne, Pam Henline (standing in for David Yard), Jerry Gulseth, Tom Bredenberg, Tom Brimacombe

**Guests:** Rob Egemeier (2nd meeting), Steve Griego, Jan-Willem Jansens

**October minutes:** reviewed, corrected and approved unanimously.

**Recap of Greenbelt Pilot Project:** Tom Brimacombe gave a report on the trail noting that we are about 95% complete; there are a few minor drainage issues, but the trail is open and useable. He suggests we monitor over the next few months and wait until next spring to consider other projects. John discussed work needed to address some of the potential erosion issues in the area. Maintenance will be needed as we move through the year with (hopefully) precipitation. John is happy about how well the trail is holding up and does not see any urgent issues at this point. Jim brought up the head cut that desperately needs attention and it has been brought to the attention of the county trails head Carol Branch. John said that the Roads Committee should be made aware of the head cut and might be tasked with approaching the county about it. Jim will contact the Roads Committee and let them know of the problem. Pam asked that the email be cc'd to Dag Ryen and David Yard.

Steve reported that the trail has compacted nicely and that the drainage nicks are filling up and sustaining new vegetation beautifully. The whole trail is blending into the terrain as anticipated. There are a couple of old trail sections of 2-3 meters that need to be scarified and rehabilitated to make them less obvious. Steve rode it at dawn and said it is one of the best trails he's worked on. He has a friend who will film the trail for the committee to use. If we have any grass, this might be a good time to sow. Tom Brimacombe has some wildflower seeds that he has collected this summer that he will sow to see what might happen.

Some of the dead wood that was used to help define the trail can be removed and dispersed.

**Status of New Preserve Trailhead Signs:** Cherry presented draft signs that have been put together. John is suggesting that a connector be built between 105-101. The issue is that to add more trails will immediately make all of our brochures and maps inaccurate. John noted that the downside is that bisecting too many trails limits opportunities for wildlife. He withdrew the suggestion.

Steve Griego observed that the trails are not rated. He offered to send the IMBA rating system to the committee. John said that most of the Preserve trails are probably black diamond rated. We will add a bullet under the Safety column that trails are recommended for advanced riders only.

**Ecotone:** Jan-Willem put together the annual report for the US Army Corps of Engineers that was very well done. The wetland saw a huge storm Sept. 23. Over the last few years there has been significant aggradation. The structures in the river have held up and worked as planned. Jan Willem has asked the US Army Corps of Engineers to relieve us of next year's reporting requirement as we have reported for 3 years. We should know by next summer.

The area of the junction of 101 and 105 needs a lot of work. The area was probably originally a jeep trail that got too deep, so users have moved to the side, creating a series of parallel trails. This might be a big job. The area gets a lot of equestrian use and John suggests we engage that community to plan and help with the work. This could be an Eagle Scout project. Mary asked about using manure to help promote growth. Jan Willem discussed some of the pros and cons of that, and John mentioned the issue of noxious weeds that manure can introduce.

Trail 101 between 1E and 1F is a high priority project that will take about 1/2 day of work.

There are some sections of trail 101 that are very cupped and that need maintenance. There is also a section that needs to be rerouted.

Jan Willem then went into a discussion of the wetland and talked about how effective the work there has been. The area is holding water. There is a water mark that is 2 feet high, giving an estimated amount of 150-200 cfs during the Sept. 23rd storm. The heavy rains took care of much of the needed work that remained by filling in the area with sediment and dispersing moisture. A side arroyo was very rutted. A storage tank by I-25, not on ECIA property, was full and apparently overtopped during the storm.

The 105 trail has a large head cut. Last year Jan Willem installed some flagging that is now gone. The head cut may have advanced 1-2 feet. There is a 10 year window before this becomes a major issue. A one day project building one-rock dams, a luna, some branches and 3 yards of rock could stabilize the advancement. To address the head cut would require design and planning. A series of rock bowls and run downs could address the head cut.

At trail head 3 there is a problem adjacent to the county road where there is a drop of 15' with a lot of sheet flow off the road. There are some berm structures that hold water back and dump it onto the trail (201). Jim noted that the county may need to be involved as there is an area where the road could be undermined. Jan Willem suggested getting Adam Levant and other county officials there to look at the problems.

In the Canoncito arroyo the storm made some major changes. A lot of debris was put down. There was major disturbance by sediment—perhaps 2 feet of sediment and cobbles deposited. There was not major erosion within the stream bed itself. In one or two years there should be much beautiful vegetation. The rock can be collected to be used for erosion control structures.

All the structures held and worked as intended.

There is a section of trail 201 at the 202 junction that needs trail work due to rutting and erosion.

The structures that were built in September on Trail 201 held beautifully. There is some needed trail maintenance on Trail 202.

On Trail 302 there is a "meadow" that has a head cut that is eroding and being lost. Jan Willem suggests we stabilize the head cut to improve habitat. There is also a dense dead wood area that needs to be cleaned up. This project would require rock to be brought in. The project needs 6-7 yards of rock. There is some rock nearby that could be gathered, but it would increase labor significantly. This is a project that could be done in 2017 or later.

Trail 401 has an old dam that has created a major rut in the trail. The spillway has totally blown out. There is a deep arroyo that has formed on the trail; people walk parallel to it and now another arroyo is forming. In a matter of 1-2 years this will be pretty much inaccessible. Jan Willem suggests rerouting the trail through the piñon juniper. The old road may be historic and we might need to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer to address the issue. This is a major project that will require design and significant work. PNM has a right of way on the old road.

The parking lot is also getting a lot of water runoff from the trail area. By scarifying and rerouting the trail this issue could be addressed. It, too, is a project that requires design work.

**Budget Status, 2014:** We estimate that we have about \$7000 of \$8000 committed. Tom has suggested we get more McClouds (4) which would be about \$300. Better shovels are needed as the ones that ECIA has are not in good shape. Another foldable tree saw would be handy as well as an adze (full sized). The ECIA staff has the means to maintain tools; we could talk with the new management when they come on board. Steve has volunteered to do sharpening on a regular basis. John, Cherry and Jim will meet with Mark to finalize the 2014 budget.

**Budget and Project Needs, 2015:** Cherry, Jim and Mark will meet to put a budget together ASAP. Pam indicated that the budget is due very soon. Jim suggests we look into wildlife monitoring using remote cameras in the wetlands. (If there is enough money this year, we can purchase it with 2014 monies). Photos would be good to post on the web site so that residents can see what wildlife is traveling through the area.

**Goat Remediation:** Pam suggested that we use some good reasoning on where the goats will work. The committee is not prepared tonight to give priorities at this time. Two residents have

asked for goats to graze in the greenbelt in the area of their properties (Pueblo Canyon south of Balsa Rd and the two sides of the greenbelt around Jornada Loop). We only have \$500 to contribute. Pam noted that there is a board workshop this week and suggests that it be discussed there. John Parker moved we defer to next year, seconded by Michael, unanimously passed.

**Other business:** Steve Griego brought some suggestions for new trail projects. He suggests a new Gallina Park trail between the rail trail and the Clubhouse. There are no nearby houses. The work would require realignment of the existing trail and Kubota work. The rail trail will be completed all the way through Eldorado this winter. John suggests that if we do another project like the Pilot Project trail we get some funding.

Starting immediately, Steve Griego is offering to fix the little trail from the library to the rail trail. Steve would not need help and is willing to do this by himself. It would be all hand work. It would be between 18-24" wide and the existing trail alignment would remain. Steve would bring it to a class 3 standard. The total length is about 1/2 mile. This is the trail that we allowed to be mowed for the school race; to our knowledge there were no complaints but Pam will follow up on that. Pam suggested that we don't do anything until the board considers it. John moved that the committee vote on Steve's proposal and to pass the project's consideration on to the board for their approval. Mike seconded. The proposal passed unanimously. If the board approves it, Steve would start immediately.

John Parker is attending the COLPAC meeting tomorrow night. They are looking for contacts so that they can do outreach and planning throughout the county. They will be reaching out to Mark to participate. He also suggests that the co-chair's names be passed on as well to participate in their efforts.

Pam reported that a management company is being considered for the manager's job (Homeco). They have lots of expertise with web sites and can revamp the ECIA web site. There was a question about the earlier information that there were some finalists that the board hoped to hire. Pam explained that the management company brings a full suite of expertise that most candidates did not have. Nothing is set in concrete at this point. There was a general discussion about the inadequacies of the web site.

Tom Brimacombe brought up the idea of a small badge to wear when working on the trails so that residents will know who we are. Steve suggested a vest. John suggested we look into possibilities to develop a more refined suggestion.

There will be no meeting in December.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15, with all members unanimously voting to do so.

Next meeting: January 6, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

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