

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2018

Attending: Carol Beidleman, Tom Bredenberg, Tom Brimacombe, Paul Butt, Mary Clark, Jim Daniel, Jerry Gulseth, John Parker, Elizabeth Maclaren (ECIA Board Liaison), Courtney Handy (representative of HOAMCO)

Resignation: Rob Egemeier announced his resignation from the Conservation Committee (CC). This was accepted by the chair.

The meeting was called to order by chair Tom Bredenberg at 7:05

Approval of agenda, on motion of John Parker, second Paul Butt.

Appointment of recording secretary: Paul Butt volunteered to record minutes for the meeting.

October minutes, with minor corrections, approved on motion of Jerry Gulseth, John Parker second.

Guests: Paul Fink, Jan-Willem Jansen, Cathy Shinkowski

Report from the Board Liaison

Elizabeth Maclaren reported briefly on recent changes in Board membership & committee assignments. The 2019 budget is slated for action on December 12 by the Board.

HOAMCO representative discussion items

Courtney reported that the CC has approximately \$4000 remaining in the 2018 budget. The draft 2019 budget is essentially unchanged from the October draft.

Courtney indicated that, for the time being, tools, etc. need to be purchased from the Eldorado Tru-Value. Additional account(s) for these items are being set up, probably with Home Depot.

Courtney did not know the status of Ecotone Invoice #412, presented 11/01, but will investigate.

Courtney stated that the Project Manager position has been filled by Michael Bullock. Michael will be in the office Tuesday – Friday for the next few weeks, and full-time thereafter. Purchasing requests, requests for HOAMCO maintenance crew time, etc. will now go to Michael from the CC. HOAMCO is in the process of re-staffing the maintenance crew; goals relevant to the CC are the hiring of a qualified equipment operator and having a staff of a supervisor and two crew members.

Library Trail completion

Paul Butt reported that on November 21, the Surveying Services RFP was mailed to surveyors on the list of candidates provided by Julie Navarro in September. The deadline for proposals to be submitted is December 21. Paul will pick up any proposals submitted on Saturday morning, 12/22 before the mail is delivered, to avoid collecting any late proposals.

Paul will send an email announcing whether any proposals were received. If so, a call for Committee volunteers will be made to serve as an evaluation committee. At least three members will be needed. The evaluation process should not be a lengthy one.

In the event no proposals are received, Paul will draft a memo to the Board, requesting a variance from the ECIA Purchasing Policy, to allow the Committee to solicit survey services using an informal phone bid process.

John Parker briefly discussed the need for the Committee to “exercise the process” of obtaining and managing contractual services, in order for Committee members to gain experience in managing procurement and managing contractor services on Committee projects.

Preserve Projects

Two **trail workdays in October** (10/13 & 10/27) were briefly discussed by CC members present on those two days. Additional work on trail 404 was performed on 10/13, extending the developed part of the trail to about 2.5 miles. The 404 trail “shortcut” was developed on 10/27. The shortcut is essentially complete, but wayfinding signs need to be made and installed.

Tom Brimacombe reported that **remaining work needed on trail 404** includes preparing arroyo crossings and some one-rock dams at the southwestern extremity of the trail.

The **re-route of trail 401** was discussed briefly. Jan-Willem Jansen and interested CC members will walk the proposed re-route on Thursday, December 13 at 1:30 PM. Jan-Willem and volunteers will meet at Trailhead 4. If time permits, attendees will also visit the **old impoundment site on trail 401**, and review the work plan for correction of problems on the trail in that area, plus remediation of the headcut. Jan-Willem made an initial recommendation for a “Plug and Pond,” or “Plug and Spread” treatment of the headcut and impoundment area.

The scope of the problem is too great for manual labor to be effective, so either the ECIA Kubota will need to be used, or outside contractual services obtained, to do the earthwork.

Unfinished and on-going projects:

New signs installation including 404: there was discussion of the need to make and place wayfinding and topo “you are here” signs for new trails and trail segments, as well as for replacing old signs that have become illegible. CC members and volunteers are requested to report missing or illegible trail signs over the next several weeks, so that replacements can be included in the order for new signs.

Preserve Map Update: Tom Brimacombe said he may have time to do the graphics for the updated map, plus the topographical trail signs, in the next few months. There was consensus that installation of new signs should be a priority for work day(s) in the spring.

Tamarisk removal in the 200 trail series area was performed by CC members and volunteers in October. Paul Butt recommended use of herbicidal vinegar on cut stems of one or two of the large clones next fall, on a trial basis. Elizabeth Maclaren stated that the ECIA ad hoc Environmental Committee is in the process of drafting comprehensive recommendations for use (or prohibition) of all insecticides, herbicides, etc. Paul indicated that the Committee would comply with procedures or prohibitions as they are put in place. Paul recommended that another Tamarisk removal date be set in the spring, and that documentation be made to determine whether any real progress is being made.

CR-51 fence: Tom Bredenberg reported that he and Betsy Walker cleared most of the dead trees that had fallen over the fence. Subsequently HOAMCO staff re-strung the fence in that area, and it now looks much better.

Planning for 2019 projects.

Jan-Willem Jansen discussed some of the pending projects he feels are most urgently needed. In addition to the projects on trail 401, he discussed some of the mounting problems, primarily from equestrian use, on the 101-105 trail segments. Remediation of some problem areas will require mechanized treatment.

Carol Beidleman asked whether this issue represents an opportunity to reach out to equestrian trail users. Because much of the traffic is incoming from the unapproved entrance on Vaquero Road, it is difficult to ascertain whether users are Eldorado residents. Mary Clarke indicated she would mention the issue to Amelia Adair, head of the ECIA Stable Committee.

Jan-Willem also recommended further work on trail 201 where remediative work and re-routing was done in 2017.

He also suggested that the Committee monitor the 200 series trails over the winter and especially when the ground thaws in the spring, to be able to close the trails if necessary due to muddy conditions.

Review of the Committee Charter

There was a recap of previous discussion of the Committee's role, if any, in directing or providing input to vegetation control and other activities in the greenbelts. Carol Beidleman reiterated her concerns about the wide variance in "expert" recommendations for managing open space for fire safety, and the pitfalls inherent in any Committee involvement in the dialogue. John Parker reiterated his desire for the Committee to continue to take an interest in Greenbelt issues and related projects. Paul Butt stated his belief that as long as specific greenbelt-related responsibilities are kept out of the Committee charter, the Committee will be free to continue to participate, primarily in an advisory role, but will not be obligated to do so.

Tom Bredenberg said that he felt that the committee's authority in the greenbelts, concerning such issues as greenbelt encroachment, view scape impact from residential construction, and unauthorized usage (e.g., dirt bikes) should continue to be what it is now: report problems discovered or observed to Mark Young or others as appropriate.

Trail stewards—Tom Bredenberg restated his desire that the Committee establish recommendations for locating, guiding and monitoring trail steward volunteers. He volunteered to serve as steward for the greenbelt trail segment in Gallinas Park between Rancho Viejo and Azul.

Update on trail condition assessments: a recommendation/reminder was made to document trail conditions, with photographs, when CC members and volunteers are on the trails. We still need to decide on standardized format and an effective means for housing the reports, e.g. Google Docs or similar.

COLTPAC: John Parker said that there was no recent COLTPAC activity to report. His term on the COLTPAC committee ends in January and he will not be continuing to serve on the committee after that time.

Old business: Jerry Gulseth and Carol Beidleman will resume work on the Eldorado Landscaping Guide; the next step is for Carol to review and edit. Once the Guide is complete, it will need to be submitted for approval by the Board through the ECIA Information Committee. Once this has been done, it will be posted on the ECIA website.

New Business: Tom Bredenberg mentioned communication he received from Merlin Emrys expressing concern that the 400 trailhead parking lot was full on November 11, apparently with SAR volunteer vehicles. It's not at all apparent what Mr. Emrys actually observed. The Santa Fe SAR website doesn't show any scheduled activities for that date.

Jim Daniel agreed to mention to the SFSAR president the Committee's suggestion that SAR training or other activities in the Preserve be announced in advance to the Eldorado Community.

Tom Brimacombe said that, in relation to the 400 trailhead parking lot, two additional parking spaces could be created fairly easily, by cutting back some of the branches overhanging the parking area.

The Committee agreed to hold the next monthly meeting on January 8.