

## Conservation Committee Minutes—June 2, 2015 -

**Attendees:** Jim Daniel, Mark Young, John Parker, Cherry Payne, John Cannella, Mary Clark, Jerry Gulseth, Rob Egemeier, Tom Brimacombe, Greg Colello (Board Liaison)

1. **Guests:** Obie Oberhausen, Cactus Rescue Project.
2. **May minutes:** Minutes were amended to identify Claudia Daigle as person who questioned the committee's budget. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved. John moved to accept the amended minutes, it was seconded and they were unanimously approved.
3. **Status of Greenbelt Work-VGPL to Rail trail:** Tom, John, Steve, Greg, and Jim worked on this trail and assessed the work to be done. The area between the school, ball field, and community garden is the area where the most intense work needs to be done. It has been proposed that two parallel trails, which are badly rutted, be abandoned and a new ridgeline trail between the two former trails be established. There was a discussion about the termini of the trails. Tom raised a question about where the county line boundaries are.

John made a motion to request permission from the Board to use the Kubota to establish a new trail between the two established trails, provided the proposed trail is on ECIA property. The old trails would be rehabilitated and closed. Greg noted that the surrounding neighbors, including the school, library and senior center need to be notified and those neighbors be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed work. He also suggested that they be invited to participate. Tom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

In the meantime, Mark looked at the original plat maps and it looks like the area of proposed work is on school or county property. Steve Griego will be tasked to approach the county and we will withhold approaching the board.

There has also been a proposal to put dirt just off of Monte Alto Road to ease the grade, but many in the committee felt that the dirt would simply wash away. Rather, a trail redesign might be a better approach.

4. **Report on May 29th Work Day:** About eight committee members worked on various projects, along with Jan-Willem. All tasks were completed.
5. **Crossvane Repair:** We are awaiting Craig Sponholz to let us know his availability. However, all other administrative planning and tasks have been completed. Jim noted that there is another crossvane just upstream from the problem one that might need attention. Jan-Willem will have Craig look at it.
6. **Quivera Coalition Grant (Trail 401):** The proposal looks good, but there are some questions about trail alignment and who has responsibility for the ROW. One proposal is to construct a new trail parallel to the ROW, but it seems that hikers and bikers will use the ROW. The Board has approved the items that ECIA needed to provide as a match for the grant. Greg noted that there is an esthetic aspect to the trail that needs to be considered.
7. **Endangered Cholla Cactus project idea (Obie Oberhausen):** Obie proposed a colony of endangered Santa Fe cholla be established in the Preserve. This is a native cholla and will establishing it will have no effect on the preserve or wildlife. Advantages: a feather in the Conservation Committee's cap. The state botanist will monitor how well it is doing periodically. Obie would have a corps of volunteers to do the work, which will take 2-3 hours. He proposes July 11th as the workday. The fact that the cactus are endangered does not preclude ECIA from doing anything in the area in the future. The proposed area is at the east end of Trail 105. About 400 plants would be introduced; all would be little starts. Cherry raised the issue of preliminary work having been discussed in the area of Trail 105 in the future. Obie indicated that they were

thinking of placing the closest plants west of the trail. The committee suggested they be located a minimum of 50-100 feet to the west of the trail itself.

Mark asked if it was ever indigenous to Eldorado itself. It was only known to be located in the area of Old Fort Marcy.

A motion was made by Rob to allow Cactus Rescue Project to plant Santa Fe Cholla at the east end of Trail 105 on the west side of the trail, provided that the planting is greater than 50' from the trail. John Parker seconded. It passed unanimously.

**8. Rock in place near start of Greenbelt Pilot project and ready to be used:** Tomorrow morning is the Greenbelt work. Everyone is invited to come: meet at the Vista Grande/Rail Trail parking lot at 8:30 am. Work will last about 2 hours. Jim has let Arnold Atkins know.

**9. COLTPAC:** John attended their cactus walk and did a hike up Placer Peak in the Ortiz Mountains sponsored by the county. The county is trying to determine the future of the area. The Botanical Garden was managing the area, but dropped it due to liability concerns.

The county is still working on the Rail Trail armoring drainages. Phase 3, between Vista Grande and Ave. Eldorado should begin soon. The county also hopes to buy a specialized Bobcat called a "Trail Cat" with specialized attachments.

**10. Report on Progress of Installation of remaining Trail Signs:** We have not received the proofs for the four small trail junction signs; they have been promised by Friday. We were billed for the 5 large signs which came to \$1496.

**11. Status of budget expenditures YTD:** Year to date we have spent \$4208.25. We have a balance of \$3591.75 for the rest of the year.

**12. June 6th Herpetology Talk:** This is scheduled, John Parker will introduce the speaker. It will be at the Railroad building at 10:00. The speaker will be Ted Brown and he is supposed to be very entertaining.

**13. Other Business:** An Eagle Scout candidate was invited but had not responded by meeting time. Mark will follow up with him.

The National Park Service has a call for project from their RTCA program. The committee felt that we did not want to take this on at this time.

Greg has been working with the US 285 Corridor rezoning project. The county has offered to initiate a separate process to zone the entire Preserve since only a small part of the Preserve falls within the 285 corridor. The committee accepted the invitation. The corridor is defined as 2000' on each side of the centerline of 285, so this entails part of the Preserve. One question is if we would consider a solar array within that corridor (with screening). If there was a desire to do that, we would need to state so now. Mark noted that another use (e.g., a solar farm) would be in violation of our deed. The other question is that the county would like to have a special process with ECIA to discuss the protection of the Preserve that would provide enhanced protections of the whole Preserve (i.e., a larger area than just the 285 corridor). This would become part of an ordinance.

Claudia Daigle had sent a letter that made its way to the committee asking why the County was doing work in the Preserve. We responded that the Roads Dept. is not working on Preserve trails; they cleaned their bar ditches that were affecting the Preserve trails.

Mark has raised the question if the committee should replace the signage in the Greenbelt that is now in bad shape. Cherry suggested that we defer until we see how we expend our budget or defer to next year.

John asked if staff could remove the “No Bicycles” sign that is at Trailhead 2. Committee members tried to remove it but could not do so. There is also a small piece of a sign post that needs to be removed. Mark was asked to see if staff could go out with an angle grinder to remove them.

**14. Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**Next Meeting:** July 7th at 7:00 pm