

ECIA Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2018

Attendees: John Reynolds (Chair), Carol Beidleman (Secretary), Paul Butt, Jim Daniel, Rob Egemeier, Jerry Gulseth, Pam Henline (ECIA Board Liaison), John Parker

Excused Absences – Tom Bredenberg, Tom Brimacombe, Cecil Rich

Guests – Mary Clark (third meeting), Lee Chiacos, John “Obie” Oberhausen

General topics

- **Minutes approved (Jim Daniel motion, John Parker second)**

- **Introduce Guests**

- Lee Chiacos (new Eldorado resident from CA; conservation background)
- John Obie” Oberhausen gave an update on the Cactus Rescue Project. On July 22, 2018 he completed, with 15 volunteers and the State Biologist, the planting of 200 of the endangered Santa Fe Cholla, in cages, in the Eldorado Community Preserve at the junction of T105/T101 (1G). The cages will stay on for about a year. Because the cages will be visible from the trails, he asked if it would be possible to place a sign there saying “Restoration Area, Keep Off.” It was suggested by the Committee that a sign include the common/scientific name of the species, and that one of the extra signs and green metal poles in the shed be used with temporary lamination. Obie will write up the text for the sign, and also a short article for Vistas (including mention of Phase I) and provide it to the Committee for review.

- **Board Liaison – Pam**

Pam raised the issue of mowing to the Board at their meeting, and recommended where it was considered needed to restrict mowing to 6” height. This was unofficially accepted (no motion). Mowing has no effect on insurance rates. Committee needs to provide more direction and good references (SOP/Best Practices) to staff and landscapers, where to/not to mow (not next to trails) and that timing is important (we want natives). County mows the side of road. This needs follow-up; not assigned.

- ● **Reformat Charter**

The Board has requested a new format for all committee charters, so although the Conservation Committee just redid its charter it will need to be redone. The deadline is August 28th. John Reynolds will send the new format template to Carol Beidleman, and Carol will put the charter in the new format. Pam Henline offered to help.

- ● **Budget**

The budget is due August 24th. Suggestions were solicited. It was suggested that the \$10,000 for the fire mitigation be put into a separate budget. With the \$8,000 previous annual budget we'll have about \$20,000 available. The insurance for the goats was \$800. Other budgetary items suggested included getting more maps for next year as we are out of Greenbelt maps (currently being printed off on a printer as needed), including updating the existing Greenbelt map. Also, given the new 404 trail, we should redo the Preserve map; Tom Brimacombe could start this over the winter. See Library Trail section for plan to ask for \$4,000 in the budget for official surveys of this trail and any **new** Greenbelt trail improvements. Note that Tom Bredenberg and Jim Daniel have still not been reimbursed for previously submitted expenses.

- • Goats

A discussion started regarding the use of goats, and the efficacy and timing of their use for fuel reduction/fire mitigation. If they are to be used again, they need to be used after the weeds have sprouted but before they have gone to seed; the timing needs to be set. A suggestion was made for mid-August to the end of September, but this is weather dependent. Volunteers will be needed to manage this effort, and neighbors will need to be contacted. Perhaps an ad hoc goat committee could be formed. Pam suggested we could use \$5,000 in April and the other \$5,000 in August. John Reynolds wrote up and mailed an assessment of this past year's goat effort to the previous Board President, and will resend it to the new Board President/team. It was suggested that we connect with Tom Dominguez of Santa Fe County Extension Services to consider developing something akin to a range management plan for the Greenbelts. Paul Butt suggested we consider a smaller pilot project, via contract, to clear some of these areas by hand, to test greater effect than the goats.

- Signs - The signs are here - Where to put them?

\$1,000 was spent on Preserve signs with the rules. We have theses ready now and need to ask staff to install. John Parker suggested we schedule a work day to show staff where to put these signs.

- • Monsoon Damage - Inspection? - Repair?

We need to schedule time to hike the trails and document any damage from the monsoons, perhaps to assign trails to various committee members to report back to the Committee via email (with photos). Carol Beidleman offered to check with 404, with husband David Tiemeyer (who was a volunteer for building it). Lee Chiacos said he just took the 402, and it was okay. Once the Committee has given its blessing, Mark said he would take workers out to trailheads to do the repairs.

- • Another Preserve Work Day?

It was suggested that we schedule another Preserve work day in late September (will allow UMN to participate too), to 1) fix issues from the monsoons; 2) finish the 404; and 3) lay out the 401/403 bypass.

- • Other Preserve trail issues

- Amelia Adair, head of the Stable Committee, said TH 2 has a social trail on the other side that hooks up. She has offered to flag the route that is better for horses. At TH 3 currently there is parking and access on both sides of the road. It was suggested that she arrange to come to our Conservation Committee meeting to talk about her proposal, following the SOP for new trails, and requests that she **not** flag the route before Committee review.

- We need to consider trail signage improvement, working with the County on signing for safe crossings across roads. Paul Butt suggested improvements are needed for the 300 trail access. The Committee needs to identify those places where we need to have signs.

- There was a brief discussion regarding the last meeting minutes and situation about the Vaquero Road proposed trailhead and Preserve entrance and the social trails which connect to trail 105. Rob Egemeier said the horses are now coming up the arroyo. There are some legal questions about the use of private roads. John Reynolds said there was a problem in that meadow with multiple tracks; we don't want it destroyed by illegal trespass.

Greenbelt topics

● Library Trail – update

Had a work day with Committee members and volunteers, but no staff, focused on the Community Garden area. Regarding the state of the trail now, there were significant berms left when it was bladed, which makes it difficult to ride on a bike. The berms need to get knocked down. We could get a machine to do this, rent a small lawn and garden tractor. Lee Chiacos was concerned that there was a lot of bare ground that would invite weeds. Pam Henline will ask about Committee members being able to use existing ECIA mowers (although would need training for safety). However, Pam will also bring up the Board the idea that it would be nice to have a piece of equipment others could use, to be purchased out of capital and not the Conservation Committee budget, for the purpose of safety/fire breaks/fire mitigation. The question is who can use them and do we need a permit from the County. Committee members could get certification and training, but then it would be ours to use; this will facilitate appropriate use and timing since communication and coordination with staff have presented challenges. John Parker said the County uses a Bobcat brand "Trail Cat" which is 4WD and more stable. This trail will need to be mowed two-three times a year or more, then use will pack it down. Paul Butt emphasized that there are not enough bodies to take on more trails now. Lee Chiacos said machine work creates handwork. Another issue is not knowing the Greenbelt boundaries. We plan to ask for \$4K in the budget for official surveys of the Library Trail and any **new** Greenbelt trail improvements.

Other topics

● Santa Fe National Forest Plan

John Parker said the Forest Service has published a draft revision of their plan, which includes wilderness designation for some areas. This will prohibit certain uses like for minerals, but would also impinge on other recreational uses such as mountain biking. This plan does not affect Eldorado, but we are interested parties. He suggested we review the plan revision on their website.

● Juego property marker

Pam Henline asked re the status of the house on Juego, near the S. Los Alamos Greenbelt, that needed a property marker. It was suggested that a professional surveyor be used. The lot has been surveyed due to a sale. The proposal is to install our own "permanent" markers where the temporary stakes are.

Paul Butt has made some prototypes we can use.

Motion to Adjourn by Paul Butt. Second by Jerry Gulseth. Motion approved.