

Save Our Bosque Task Force
Tuesday, August 2, 2016 Minutes

Attendees: Matt Mitchell, Gina Dello Russo, Connie Robnett, Don Boyd, Debra Caldwell, Dominic Otero, Chris Hill, Nick Smokovich, Doug Boykin, Darrel Reasner, and Yasmeen Najmi (via phone).

9:00 AM Save Our Bosque Task Force Meeting

1. Approve Agenda. Agenda adjusted to move Raffle winner selection to right after Treasurer's Report. *Motion made by Connie to approve, second by Nick, approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from July 2016. *Motion made by Gina to approve, second by Chris, approved.*
3. Treasurer's Report. No Treasurer's report available for July, but the following is a summary of banking actions: No bills this month, one check cashed for \$106.49, and there was a \$2 anonymous donation, thank you. Two transfers into our account for Partners for Fish & Wildlife project payments totaling \$995.17. Total ending balance of \$5036.25.
4. Fundraiser: Summary of our Raffle: The event had over 300 views on Eventbrite with 81 tickets sold for the tour. Purchases were highest in the last week in June when a more concerted effort was made to get the word out. Thanks to everyone including the Friends of Bosque del Apache's for assisting us with spreading the word! Of the total participants, almost half said they heard about the event through the Friends. Summary: Total earned = \$4351.35 (\$4509.91 last year); net earned after Eventbrite charges = \$4027.06 (\$4175.84 last year); Total earned for Armendaris Tour = \$3380 + tax; net to Task Force from tour = to be determined after taxes for tour are computed. The donations to the Task Force on the site are open until the end of the calendar year. These funds are earmarked for park and trail rehabilitation following the Levee project phase I completion. We used the following method for randomly selecting the four winners of the raffle: All names were listed in one column of an excel spreadsheet; random.org (sequence selector) was used to generate a random sequence of numbers, with one random number placed next to each name. If someone bought multiple tickets, their names were displayed multiple times. Using Microsoft Excel, under Formulas/Math & Trig/RANDBETWEEN, one number was selected and matched with the winner's name. That name was removed and we repeated this three more times to select our four winners. Winners are: (last name only) Key, Lehrhaupt, de la Beaujardiere, and Julian. Congratulations to our winners! And many thanks to all who joined us in this fundraising effort. **Gina will contact winners and work with the organizers to make sure all is ready for the event.**
5. Project Updates
 - a. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project: They have awarded the subgrant agreement for the Environmental Assessment study portion of the project. Tracey is working on getting the environmental clearance portion of the project going. We are concerned that the EA will take some time and we need to get in the field as soon as possible this fall and winter. Doug reported that \$750,000 has been requested through G & F and Severance Tax money and another \$500,000 for the Bernardo Reach to address bosque fire danger and restoration. These funds can go on MRGCD, other state lands, and federal lands. The Severance Tax funds would take care of match for federal grants. He will probably know within the next month.
 - b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: Partners Cooperative Agreement is signed and a new agreement is in place. Four projects are in the hopper including potential projects with Lawrence-Devers, Taliaferro, and Armendaris Ranch. We did increase the amount of overhead for us to 10%. This 10% could go to fund an intern who would work to design, monitor and report on these projects. Landowners, other partners, and Task Force will come up with 25% to 50% of the total

costs of each project depending on the value to wildlife for the overall project. We can look at the Task Force requirements for each project and see if they are reasonable. We will plan to meet with Angel and Nyleen this fall to get an update on budgets and planned projects. Gwen is working with Susan Aranda and her property near Bernardo, this could be considered one of our projects or be a stand-alone project, we will check.

- c. Sevilleta NWR Cooperative Agreement: In place. We will meet this fall with Sevilleta NWR and line out what is needed.
- d. Socorro Nature Area: Chris reported that BLM has funds awarded but with staff shortages, the infrastructure improvements (\$300,000) are on hold until engineering support is available. They are working on the Quebradas Scenic Byway at this time. Riverine Parks: **Doug will contact Jacob and see if we can get out there in September.** First phase of levee should be done by end of calendar year, second phase coming along with bentonite core being installed. The Inmate Work Crew will begin working after the first of September. First they will do some fire rehab work in Escondida Fire footprint and then they will be working the ribbon from Brown Arroyo south. For the fire, they will work north and south of the bridge on the west side of the river, both the ribbon and the active floodplain. There may be the opportunity to do restoration with some of the Severance tax or G & F funds in this area.
- e. Rio Grande Trail Commission: Next meeting is on September 22 in Corrales. Related topic: TAP grant to the City of Socorro has been awarded and they are in the process of putting the contract out for bid. This contractor will prepare the trails plan for the city. James McNeil reported that he let the Mayor and Mable Gonzales at the City offices know that we would like to be involved once a contractor is in place. Gina let him know that a group of interested stakeholders is likely going to meet this fall to talk about the potential Rio Grande trail through our valley. He would be welcome to join that discussion.
- f. Restore our Rivers Initiative – Connie attended a webinar training session this month hosted by the Tamarisk Coalition. Gina handed out the Tamarisk Coalition the summary of the initiative being developed by TC. The formal public introduction of the initiative is scheduled for this fall. If more information is needed, please let Gina know. The Task Force is hoping to present to McCune Charitable Foundation soon to see about possible support from them. **Gina and Connie will meet to review the training materials and work on the website.**
- g. Other: 1) Darrel Reasner presented his ideas of how we can address the problems of trash along the bosque. He worked with his son recently cleaning up the bosque and dealt with numerous illegal dumping sites. He suggested the Task Force hire someone part time to patrol, pick up trash, and coordinate slash burning, wood harvesting, and other work that is needed. Maintenance would curtail trash-dumping activities but we would need partners to contribute vehicles and funds. **Darrel said he would be willing to help with this effort, Doug will assist,** write up the request, work with us to hire a contractor that could be reimbursed for mileage and standard vehicle maintenance. Partners contributing could be the County, City, MRGCD, Tech, others. The added presence out there could limit trash the trash we deal with at our twice a year trash pickup days. It would not take much funding from each entity. *Gina made a motion to pursue the options available in terms of a lasting partnership to maintain the bosque trash free, Matt seconded, approved.* 2) Trash pickup for the Festival of the Cranes: Last year the Task Force organized a trash pickup day along Highway 1 from San Antonio to the fee booth on Bosque del Apache NWR timed to precede the Festival. Participation was good and everyone did a great job. This year, Gina asked Deb if the Friends and Refuge staff might volunteer to help? This event is tentatively planned for the Sunday before Festival week. Doug reported that Roy Baca,

Operations Manager at the City landfill, phone # 575-518-8665, will assist us in getting free dump privileges when we have trash pickup days like this one. **Gina will write up something for Deb for the next Bosque Watch Newsletter** by the end of September on this event and will work with Deb or a designate on logistics. 3) Dustin Armstrong of the Bureau of Reclamation reported to Nick that they are working on habitat restoration from San Acacia to Brown Arroyo, which includes vegetation removal and bank lowering. We had a presentation on this work from Todd Caplan of GeoScience Analysis, Inc. earlier in the year and Fred, Gina, and others went out in the field to look at some of these sites. Reclamation has also worked down at Ft. Craig to open up the access road so fire crews can respond more easily to fires in this area. In Bernardo, people are calling to ask about the defoliation due to the Tamarisk leaf beetle. Dustin reported that Reclamation and FWS will meet to discuss this but Dustin didn't feel the need for our involvement at this time. On a related note, the Task Force has been asked by landowners and agency personnel to convene a meeting to discuss the leaf beetle and subsequent actions to address fire danger and wildlife habitat improvements in the greater area affected. We will host a meeting this fall, in Socorro, and invite professionals who know about the beetle. Discussion points will include impacts by the beetle, southwestern willow flycatcher projects possible to offset impacts to this species because of the beetle, potential funding sources to address these issues, current efforts, and future steps. A small group of agencies would be invited and the public would be welcome, as always, to attend. **Gina and Doug will work with US Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Ecological Services program, NM Department of Game & Fish, Reclamation and others about this event.**

6. Update on Fire Danger: tabled.
7. Upcoming Events: Conservation Day will tentatively be on October 21 with **Nick and Nicole checking with the schools and Nyleen if this will work for them.** Trash pickup day will tentatively be on October 28, **Doug will check with the County and MRGCD to see when they go back to 5-8 hour days.**
8. Public meeting planning: now working on a Tamarisk leaf beetle meeting. Public meeting was discussed and a possible valley tour for us to look at restoration projects, all this is possible this fall, but will first focus on the leaf beetle meeting. **Gina will contact the Tamarisk Coalition Director to see if they could present. Board members should have potential dates in mind by the next meeting.**
9. Other agenda items – 1) Deb Caldwell, Friends of Bosque del Apache Executive Director and representing Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association (MRGEDA) handed out a press release and talked about this effort started by the Chamber of Commerce last year, and a process called SET – stronger communities together. Four counties are working on this (Socorro, Sierra, Valencia, and Catron Counties), with the result being a “high quality plan,” which opens up the door to funding opportunities. Tomorrow is the last meeting (UNM Valencia) and their website has the agenda and a draft of the plan with 5 basic focus areas. Two ways we could be involved are to review documents and provide comments and to participate when they run stakeholder meetings in the future. Don Boyd, also of MRGEDA presented an effort to involve UNM's Community and Regional Planning Program interns to work with other partners on the Trail system in our area. We could be a leader in that effort as well. He will be presenting this idea tomorrow at the meeting. 3) Wood permits will be available after Labor Day, **Yasmeen will check the exact date.**
10. Calendar items – September 6 will be the next Task Force meeting. Bosque Conservation Day is tentatively scheduled for October 21. Trash Pickup Day will be on October 28.
11. Individual Reports – Matt working with a researcher on a project to monitor interaction between bats and raptors at the bat cave. Next spring, there could be possible volunteering activities. Deb: Friends annual meeting is October 15, so everyone is welcome. **Gina will present at this meeting on ROR initiative.**

They are looking at a number of different events to do in association with their annual meeting. Gina: She is going to WTB training session in Albuquerque, will report back on opportunities through this funding source. Doug: Nolina Bryant and Oceania Lowry lost homes during the Escondida Fire and Mr. Sanchez died from complications from 3rd degree burns. Our condolences to his family. Doug has been asked if there are funds to help with cleaning up the debris? Response: not that we know. There are opportunities to donate to help these families though; they were highlighted in an article in the Albuquerque Journal and Defensor Chieftain.

12. Adjourn: *At 11:40 AM, Connie made a motion to adjourn, second by Chris, approved.*