

**MINUTES OF THE SANTA FE COUNTY
COUNTY OPEN LAND TRAILS AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COLTPAC)
Projects, Facilities and Open Space Conference Room
901 W. Alameda St., Suite 20C, Santa Fe, NM 87501
Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Open Land, Trails and Parks Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) was called to order on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Chair Rubén Cedeño Projects, Facilities and Open Space Conference Room, 901 West Alameda St., Suite 20C, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present

Rubén Cedeño, Chair
Greg Betts
Jan Cohen
Sandra Madrid Massengill

Sue Murphy
Jean Pike
Linda Siegel
Apple Snider

Members Absent/Excused

Matt Wagoner

Staff Members Present

Maria Lohmann, Open Space/Trails
Planner
Paul Olafson, Planning Projects Manager

Others Present

Carl Boaz, Stenographer

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented by consensus.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 3, 2019

Member Betts moved, seconded by Member Siegel, to approve the minutes of April 3, 2019. The motion was approved on a unanimous (8-0) voice vote.

5. MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Presentation, discussion and recommendations of Ortiz Mountains Open Space Management Plan

Ms. Lohmann had been working on this plan for a while and was finally able to move forward with this draft and asked for a recommendation for the BCC to approve by the end of the meeting, if possible.

She reviewed the plan, noting that she had already incorporated some comments she had received.

- Many challenges addressed are related to accessing and managing the property. The purpose of the plan is to help understand the existing environmental conditions; clarify priorities for management and maintenance; identify potential future investments; determine how to approach the work on the property; and look at stewardship and community opportunities, especially related to educational programming.
- The property's history included a lawsuit that resulted in Santa Fe Botanical Garden receiving and managing the property as an educational preserve. Santa Fe County purchased the property from the Santa Fe Botanical Garden in 2007.
- The property contains incredible geology, gold and mineral mining, cultural significance and existing infrastructure such as a kiosk with picnic tables and benches, and trails. Some historic structures are related to the mines and significant features of mining.
- There is poor access; road conditions are not meant for public traffic. The nature of the access agreement is through the gold mine. The mine site is being rehabilitated, and reclaimed, and is closed to the public. Complicating the access is a conservation easement that limits motor vehicles beyond a point and prohibits ground disturbing activity that could create erosion. Environmental resources are significant, and the conservation easement calls out soil health. There are huge exploratory trenches through the property causing runoff and the road and the steepness generates erosion. The easement prohibits overnight camping.
- The Botanical Garden provided short guided trips on easier trails and longer trips to Placer Peak and North Mountain. Three hikes were done in 2015 but due to limited staff, they have not been provided at the same level and programming.

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- The fire danger concern was considered in the plan development and management. The ecosystem is very diverse and wildlife species are present: Piñon Jays, bats and bears and rare warblers such as Graces and Virginia that are only found on these mountains. The property is considered an island in the sky on the mountains and different from everything below it, which is another indicator of its unique habitat.
- Archaeological surveys have been conducted and one is in currently being done.
- The goal is to preserve wildlife, ecosystems, flora, and fauna as fundamental elements of the preserve. They also want to ensure guided groups visit the site to learn about the uniqueness and the important wildlife species and the impact on the land around them. Education can be provided on the history of mining and work being done to restore the land. The hope is to offer a balance of providing access while protecting the wildlife in the management plan.

Goals are: 1) manage the property in a holistic transparent manner, with ongoing communication with everyone; 2) provide education and research opportunities; 3) maintain the ecological health and resilience of the Ortiz Mountains; 4) preserve its natural appearance; 5) preserve the cultural resources; 6) balance access while protecting the site; 7) limit infrastructure because of erosion.

The Plan focuses on getting people to use the site safely with scheduled visits and guided hikes; resolve constraints both legally and physically for access; maintain existing trails before adding new trails; manage the ecosystem health and build staff capacity for outreach and programming. A trail assessment is needed before guided tours are conducted and very few trails are in good condition.

Options are outlined for Visitor Management including guided trips with partnerships, agencies or docents. Policies should ensure safety and monitoring impact to the infrastructure. The two biggest policy changes are: *Will not drive up the road from gate to mine for the guided trips (which will limit access).* Also, *Placer Peak has cultural significance and hikes will not be allowed until the trail is rerouted.*

Work is being done to monitor the Piñon Jay and the Warbler species while mitigating forest health and fire damage and a very conservative approach is taken.

Plan implementation: short, mid and long term: For years 1 to 5, work on environmental assessments; continue forest thinning and data collection; and determine how to do a trail assessment and consider how to do the tours while including public safety. Midterm - find ways to continue holding tours - either with partnerships as outlined in the plan or others.

Possibly working on a master plan for all 1,350 acres and finding other accesses to the property

Long-term: Find alternative access; implement the master plan; consideration of a dedicated on-site staff.

Presentation Discussion:

The plan will be updated every year and definitely after 10 years.

Actual tours would be scheduled in years four and five, possibly sooner.

A lot is unknown. The Plan basically was a plan to do assessments and was needed to show the thought process to the County Commissioners and managers. Much of it is a matter of staff capacity. Partnerships for tours will require changing current legal agreements. Legal visits to the site must be with a county escort. The management plan could include a requirement for an update in five years before the development of the master plan.

The gold mine owners will probably never open the easement for public access and hikes will always have to be guided. Public access, if obtained, would probably be through private property. Access provisions for emergency vehicles through the mine have been discussed.

There were no other questions.

Mr. Olafson asked for a recommendation from the Committee to the Board of County Commissioners.

MOTION: Member Siegel moved, seconded by Member Murphy that the Committee, having reviewed and discussed the plan as presented, recommends the Board of County Commissioners approve the plan with the condition that the five-year update is inserted into the schedule of the plan. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

8. MATTERS FROM THE COUNTY STAFF

A. Project Updates

- Ortiz Mountains Open Space - conversations with archaeologists.

A forest health assessment is being conducted with forest and wildlife experts throughout the West. The County has done extensive, in-depth scientifically sound data collection related to wildlife, birds in particular. There are control sites and background data and they hope to get another season of data to help with statistical analysis. They are working with the County fire crew to start thinning and have started data collection. Work with archaeologists on base-line surveys is to ensure to SHPO there would be no negative impact to the archaeology/historic resources. They will also work with the

Santa Fe Conservation Trust who holds the easement and oversees ground disturbances.

The ecosystem has many transition zones and a lot of mixed conifer and Piñon Juniper. Tree removal will be conservative and done selectively. There will be some pile burning with the approval of Santa Fe Conservation Trust, but most will be thinning by hand. There are very few invasive species and some species, such as native thistle, is noninvasive.

- Los Potreros Open Space - pictures of the flowering restoration process before and after is shown with the great results of many wildflowers. Phase II in the fall.
- Planning: A Parks and Recreation Facility Needs project is starting to determine the type and best location for facilities; participation with Greater Santa Fe Recreation Partnership of a multijurisdictional, multi-county trails plan for a coordinated system throughout the greater Santa Fe area. That will make it easier to collaborate on work plans and consider future acquisitions. Recommendations would come before COLTPAC.
- Rancho Viejo donation is in ongoing discussions with the landowner. Part of the discussion concerns a possible TDR by the owner.
- Perennial pepper weed was removed at Arroyo Hondo; these 2 weekend events were one of the stewardship events advertised as part of the 20th anniversary celebration.
- Working with the Santa Fe Watershed along Santa Fe River and Arroyo Hondo open space and expanding the stewardship partnership to include the Adopt an Arroyo project. It includes erosion control, invasive species removal and water quality testing. They will work with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from Desert Academy.
- The Master Naturalists 2019 series began, and the class meets every Tuesday for 3 hours; 20 people are enrolled.
- Movie nights were scheduled at Romero Park, also as part of the 20th anniversary celebration. The first was August 20th with about 100 people attending. The second is September 16th in the same location with Spider-Man shown. Back Roads Pizza will be there, and the City will provide fun prizes and popcorn and drinks.
- Management plans adopted are being implemented. In Madrid an assessment was done of flooding, hazards and risk and they will partner on improvements with AML. Assessments at San Pedro and at Lamy on

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resource management and regional impacts and connections. La Cieneguilla - resource management and providing pollinator habitat work in the river and hope to do dry land restoration.

- Construction is being done on Arroyo Hondo Trail and should open at the end of the year. Segments 2 and 3 are approved for construction in 2020/21. The Rail Trail segment 5 has started and will be completed by the end of the year. Phase II construction will start in the new year at Romero Park, as well as improvements to the Bennie J. Chavez Community Center Park. Phase 3 at Pojoaque Valley Recreation Complex has started and should be completed by the end of the year. Leo Gurulé Park improvement should be done by the end of this year.
- Thornton Ranch - work has been done with consultants for cultural resource monitoring and environmental monitoring and coordinated with BLM NEPA. The master plan has outlined a multiuse facility for nonmotorized users to include horses, pedestrians and bicyclists with ADA access. Dogs will not be allowed.
- They are working with Master naturalists for monitoring to better understand the impact to the Thornton Ranch Open Space property and how to plan. Design will include trail alignments and needed trailhead facilities and construction documents. Also, negotiating for a facilitator with Tribal communications throughout the project and an educational campaign.

Thornton Ranch planning documents have won two awards; the 2019 Innovation and Planning Award and the Sheldon D. Gerber Merit Award for Excellence in Environmental Planning. The awards will be presented next week at the Western Planner Conference. Ms. Lohman and Colleen Baker will give a presentation on Thornton Ranch called *Beyond Recreation Honoring Cultural Places*.

The Committee was shown a video on the main educational campaign component to be shown in local movie theaters and as many people as possible. The Santa Fe Film Festival was suggested as a possible screening and a contact was given for the National Museum for American Indians.

- New Projects include NM Central for an archaeological survey between I-25 and Thornton Ranch; Management Plans for sites at Little Tesuque Creek, Talaya Hill, Los Caminitos; and El Rancho will review the site for actual needs versus a full management plan, as well as organizing the Open Space Program and digitalization.

B. Meeting Schedule for 2019

The next COLTPAC meeting will be on December 4, 2019 in the new building. Ms. Lohmann will be out of town for two months and will provide updates in the strategic plan and milestones at that December meeting.

The meeting schedule will continue as needed and will be an agenda discussion in December. They will continue to meet when there is a request from the BCC and will meet notice requirements of the Open Meetings Act. The first Wednesday of every month can continue to be scheduled for the remainder of the year as a placeholder with adjustments to dates as needed.

Mr. Olafson explained the rolling quorum prohibition: to avoid members intentionally or unintentionally making policy or advocating, etc. through an email chain, questions or ideas should be shared with the Chair. They could also contact staff but should refrain from sending any email to the entire group.

Chair Cedeño recommended at the next meeting they put closure on the roles and responsibilities. Member Murphy suggested having no meeting in January.

9. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Committee discussed the Committee process and what to expect.

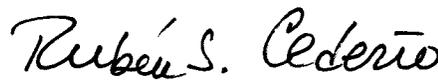
Santa Fe Conservational Trust is having a fund raiser with raffle tickets and a legacy dinner that can be purchased online.

10. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 6:00 to 8:00 in the new County building.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Member Murphy moved, seconded by Member Madrid Massengill to adjourn at 7:44 pm.

Approved by:



Rubén Cedeño, Chair

Submitted by:



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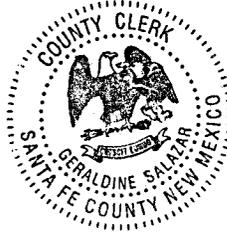
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Carl Boaz for Carl G. Boaz, Inc.

COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 11TH Day Of March, 2020 at 09:28:43 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # **1911464**
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Geraldine Salazar
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

Deputy *Estrella
Mortens*

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