

**MINUTES OF THE**

**SANTA FE COUNTY**

**COLTPAC**

**Thursday, March 19, 2009**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

A regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) was called to order on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Chair Matthew McQueen.

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

**Members Present**

Matthew McQueen, Chair  
Brent Bonwell  
Todd Brown  
Jack Frost  
LouAnn Hunt  
Jan-Willem Jansens  
Sam Pallin

**Members Absent**

Martin Gabaldon  
Sandra Massengill  
Jerry Rogers  
Stephen Schoninger  
Scott Stovall

**Staff Members Present**

Colleen Baker  
Scott Kaseman  
Beth Mills  
Allison Moore

**Others Present**

Bill Baxter  
Bill Johnson

**2. ASSIGNMENT OF ALTERNATES**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Ms. Baker asked to add the Siler Road Extension that looked like it was funded.

Chair McQueen placed it under Matters From Staff.

**Mr. Brown moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Bonwell seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2009**

The Committee discussed what should be done with the minutes that were done by a court reporter and submitted verbatim even though she had been asked to transcribe them in normal minutes' format.

After the discussion, the Committee took no action on these minutes pending condensing them into minutes format that Mr. Kaseman agreed to do.

#### **5. UPDATE ON COMMONWEAL ACQUISITION AND MARCH 31 BCC MEETING**

Ms. Mills said they had been meeting with the Commissioners to make sure they were familiar with all the details.

Commissioner Anaya asked that the two items related to it (purchase and MOU) on the consent calendar be moved to the front of the agenda under Items from Commissioners under his name. So he was sponsoring them and they would be considered sometime between ten and noon.

Commissioner Anaya also asked that as many members as possible be there and he specifically asked for Chair McQueen to be there.

Mr. Bonwell asked if a letter to commissioners would be of assistance.

Ms. Mills thought they were okay with that. Since the approval of the acquisition she got over 60 letters of support on it. She thought Commissioner Anaya was overwhelmed by the support.

She reported that in Washington last week the omnibus appropriation bill from the Bush Administration went through the Senate with all the earmarks including one for a half million dollars for this. That was why the MOU was so critical at this moment because there would be funding from the BLM for it.

#### **6. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE**

- **Trail Connection – Edgewood to Stanley**

Mr. Pallin said that looking into the future; Stanley was also a place of future commercial development. He thought it would be short sighted not to include a trail connection and not just have the west side of the trail developed.

- **Accommodating the Equestrian Community at Trailheads**

Mr. Pallin said he had spent lot of time on horseback in the back country and the places most friendly to people who use the trails a lot had a big open space where horse trailers could be parked and pack in

on horses. They would need a space to park and a place to keep their horses such as in portable corrals. If COLTPAC didn't plan for that, it would cut out a whole community.

He suggested a structure with three sides where they could store manure and a tractor could easily get it in a truck to be hauled away without a mess. He added that he was not talking about needing grass or water. It would take a minimum of an acre but depended on frequency of use. He explained further what was needed. He added that there were some around Rio Rancho.

Ms. Baker said they had not identified where the trail heads would be yet.

Mr. Pallin said he would be willing to spearhead it and asked what the next step would be.

Ms. Baker said they should determine where those trails were and start looking at suitable places for that access.

Chair McQueen asked if they were making provision for orientation of new members.

Ms. Baker said they had talked about it but should make it happen.

Chair McQueen recalled that last year they spent several weekends driving around. It was an education hearing the history explained.

Mr. Bonwell said reviewing the map of the county and where the open spaces were in relationship to BLM land and state parks would be helpful for him; to look at the map and then go see what it looked like.

Mr. Jansens suggested that people from the different areas basically prepare the trip - what was special about that area - what was adjoining properties - then have them serve as trail guides.

Chair McQueen thought weekends were the best times for it.

Ms. Baker thought staff could probably arrange that and agreed to try to organize it.

Ms. Mills proposed that at the next meeting some time could be dedicated to it and begin to schedule the visits.

Mr. Jansens said they could also look at how the sites came up and how certain sites would better serve future populations. Ms. Mills agreed.

The Committee briefly discussed an open space parcel of 40 acres up against BLM land which had a new lock and Mr. Brown had been given the authority to unlock.

Mr. Pallin felt this whole Galisteo Basin would give people a place to recreate on horseback all winter long.

## **7. MATTERS FROM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STAFF**

Rather than addressing the topics in the agenda, the staff took turns reporting on their work.

### **Mr. Kaseman's Report:**

Mr. Kaseman said the upper parking for the Arroyo Hondo Open Space was going forward. They would have to go through legal and that would slow things down a little.

Mr. Bonwell said the Arroyo Hondo Open Space was a mile west of Old Pecos Trail at Highway 285 across some bridges to some wet lands and then back to the southwest, just west of the Old Santa Fe Trail intersection.

Mr. Kaseman said the upper parking lot would have 8 parking spaces and a hammer head for buses to turn around. A kiosk for information would be installed with interpretation signs. A forest restoration project took care of dead Piñon trees there. It would have interpretive signs.

Ms. Moore was working on the other side of the mountain. In the management plan there was a lower parking area proposed. She was now researching options and checking the status of the acequia running through there before implementing a management plan. She was working with Earth Works on it.

Chair McQueen asked if COLTPAC recommended going ahead with the parking lot.

Ms. Moore said they were working with NMED on a grant for restoration out there. They expressed concern because of drainage off the parking into a detention pond so we were exploring those issues and meeting with the County Traffic Engineer on safety and environmental concerns. With the NMED concerns it might be difficult to get final approval. She had to submit plans to legal for county development review.

Ms. Baker noted that the procurement process changed with all projects over \$10,000 required to have a PSA and go through Legal and all over \$20,000 requiring a bid process.

Mr. Kaseman added that on Monday he was going out to address some trail erosion where a previous vehicle getting stuck had diverted water onto the trail. A backhoe would be used to fix it and would only take a day.

### **Ms. Moore's Report:**

Ms. Moore reported on the RFPs on the Rail Trail for engineer and trail designer as finished and ready to go to Legal. They had some problems putting it out for a bid based on the trail alignment from RTI because they didn't have enough detail for contractors to bid on and were getting responses from many who had no experience with trails. The budget for trail design was \$20,000.

Mr. Bonwell mentioned a national rails and trails preservation organization.

Ms. Moore said she was trying to get from them trails specifications and standards for the environment here in Santa Fe County to apply to other projects.

Mr. Bonwell asked about the funding deadline.

Ms. Moore said they did not have that funding any more as they did not get the project ready in time.

Ms. Baker said they were discussing with them the possibility of moving it into a new fiscal year. GRT and State Parks were still a possible source of funding.

Mr. Bonwell asked when would transfer title for the Galisteo Preserve.

Ms. Baker said it would be at the same time as the acquisition. All the due diligence had been done. By first of April they would have the agreement.

Mr. Bonwell said as soon as that happened he would like to make the connection under the bridge. He explained there was a double track there making it easy to connect. There were volunteers and could coordinate with Commonwealth to see where they would have to cut the new trail. He knew of volunteers who would help.

Ms. Baker said they wrote that into the scope of the work.

Ms. Moore thanked him. They also submitted engineering for the first part and last part of the rail trail to follow the setbacks correctly. An engineer would do that. They were submitting the parking agreements next week. She said they were doing a trail head there near Rabbit Road and Avenida Eldorado. They had an option to buy from Amrep. She added that they might have a commuter station there in the future so they wanted a trail head with parking and incorporate the two uses together.

Mr. Pallin asked about overnight parking there.

Ms. Moore agreed to meet with him on it. It was rather involved and they found that none of the trail heads were owned by the County.

Ms. Mills noted that there was a piece of land just down from the Lamy crossing near the section worked out with Commonwealth that had been designated as a trail head in the 84/285 study. It would be perfect for overnight.

**Ms. Baker's Report:**

Ms. Baker reported that at 599 and the Santa Fe River she got the easement for the trail there and

was working with Design Workshop on the designs. She anticipated procurement to be completed sometime in the fall.

They just got word from NMED that they would do the rest of the EA for the well testing. They got NMED comments on the mediation plan and a contractor was addressing them. Everyone was pretty clear on what was needed. She explained that the study was to figure out what was needed to clean it up. She clarified that the mediation plan involved hauling some soil away.

Mr. Baxter mentioned that cadmium had been identified there.

Mr. Brown said they moved the gravel scale yesterday out of the gravel pit.

Ms. Hunt asked if she had the actuals for each one of these projects.

Ms. Baker said they were trying to get software for that. Right now it was not that formal. There were about 30 total projects. They didn't have a project manager and were trying to put in place all the tools needed but they were managing so many that it was hard to put all the pieces in place.

#### **Ms. Mill's Report:**

Ms. Mills said she had been working with Ms. Moore on the Peñasco Blanco Open Space property in La Cienega in the midst of La Cienega Springs area. She pointed it out on the map. It was a restoration project with help from the Soil and Conservation District. It was a critical historic area that flowed from artesian wells. It was right on Camino Real opposite Las Golondrinas. There were archaic materials and interesting history materials.

Ms. Baker said they ended up with that name for the 11 acre piece and they also bought 70 acres from Las Golondrinas. El Panche stuck out by itself.

Ms. Mills thought it was an incredible success story out there and should be high up on their list. There was a lot of water flowing there and the community was excited about it. They were embarking on a management plan for the entire open space out there. The County was working on the new community center also adjacent to the property so there was a lot of activity.

Ms. Mills reported they had a new employee who was working mostly with Mr. Kaseman on maintenance work. He was very experienced and a really good asset.

She said she wanted to talk with the Committee about orientation and future planning and about what the role of this Committee had been in the past and redirect and change the roles with this Committee since circumstances had changed a lot.

For a long time, activities were limited to acquisition and making decisions about sorting through applications and determining the process behind properties and making purchase recommendations. That

was how COLTPAC thought about their purpose.

Now the program had matured and the bond money spent so it was now a role of how to manage and at what level to manage. So the role had to shift for the Committee to be along the lines of a planning committee, helping sort through the types of management plans that were to occur for each of these properties and what was envisioned for investment in them - strategic planning.

There was also a shift in the program as they responded to the growth management plan that was going on and how this program would fit into it. The program would have to work together with the new development plan. So they would be spending time on the needs identified by the growth management plan and insert themselves so the Committee had a say in how it would look at the end of the process. So the next few meetings she proposed to look at it with the Committee and figure out what recommendations they would make.

She created a conservation layer in a digital file that overlaid all the other planning efforts going on in the County so land use planners could see where COLTPAC concerns intersected with their plans and layered it in with their analysis. She would ask for feedback on that. She explained that she would like to engage the Committee over the next few months in a slightly different role. This was a time when they needed to re-evaluate the program and this was the perfect place to do that.

It had been suggested in the Open Space plan that COLTPAC would work with the County on outreach and she suggested the Committee take that seriously. There was a lot of work to be done for trails. When staff put out the request for volunteers for COLTPAC, they got many from the central part of the County and primarily on trails work; building them, maintaining them, etc. It was a little daunting to sort through all those. Staff kept all those contacts and she suggested they activate a large and powerful subcommittee on trails and reach out to them. It would take a great deal of organizational effort. She hoped to get some strong leadership from this Committee for that subcommittee to tap into their knowledge and energy - work on stewardship, planning, trail maintenance.

On subcommittees, she realized that for Arroyo Hondo it would be helpful to have a member act as a conduit and organizer to implement the management plan for that open space. They were working on management plans and Maps. But when it came to outreach - to act as a sounding board to make sure they didn't get too far away. That kind of implementation of management plan might best come from a COLTPAC member to organize that outreach.

Chair McQueen recalled that at one time they had an education subcommittee. And they could send members to talk with the community about what was being done.

Mr. Pallin thought that would be very popular in the communities.

Mr. Bonwell said he would be willing to help get it started, as he had been on the committee. In Albuquerque there was Friends of the Outdoors Trail Partners who were putting on a round table. He felt that more coordination with state and city would get a lot more done and done better. It was important that

they were not doing something in a short-sighted manner. Use of volunteers was also important. They have built miles and miles of trails in Los Alamos with volunteers. There were horse people and Sierra Club. There needed to be somebody to put things together.

Mr. Kaseman said they had a big trails meeting with 40 different people and it was driven by the Conservation Trust.

Ms. Mills thought that was a big piece of their work over the next few months, shifting away from the role of hearing applications coming in and making the next step into outreach.

Chair McQueen reminded them not to forget open spaces as well as trails.

Ms. Mills agreed. They needed advocacy from COLTPAC on looking at these next steps for management of open space. That would come quickly. They could use that at Peñasco Blanco too.

Ms. Baker said there was a whole list of what they had in the past for subcommittees but they needed to sort out which ones people might want to engage in.

Ms. Mills agreed that as they went forward and members became more and more familiar with the program each one could decide where their skills were best inserted.

### **Siler Road Extension Project**

Ms. Baker explained the Santa Fe River trail crossings. Two were planned. One existing was at Camino Carlos Rael and one proposed at Siler Road. The County purchased 13 acres right there in 2005 but there was no right of way or road easement for Siler to cross. It was a joint project with the City. When done then Camino Carlos Rael could be closed.

They knew where the road was going but needed to define the use of that property. It would be designated road right of way. The benefit would be insuring a pedestrian crossing there. She would bring to the April meeting the right of way to make sure everyone was comfortable with it and to define where that would be done.

Mr. Frost asked what happened when there was no money yet people were submitting properties for open space.

Ms. Baker said staff kept track of them. They could look for grant funds or figure out how to schedule it into acquisition when they got more money but would not close the door. She didn't discourage anybody but told people to go ahead and submit an application. They should still evaluate them and see if they would be beneficial to the program.

Mr. Pallin asked about trail easements.

Ms. Baker thought they could deal with those as donations and still have a little money. They should



still go after trails in strategic developments. They could also look actively for what they thought made sense. The next bond money was not that far off. They could identify the properties now but there was a lot of planning needed.

## 8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

## 9. ADJOURN

**Mr. Bonwell moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brown seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Approved by:

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Matthew McQueen, Chair

Submitted by:

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Carl Boaz, Stenographer