

**Colorado Natural Areas Council**  
**Minutes**  
**Denver, CO**  
**October 22, 2007**

**Council (Present):** Kathy Yates, Jill Osarski, Dennis Beuchler  
**Council (Absent):** Lee Shropshire, Renee Rondeau, Tom Ready  
**CNAP FTE Staff:** Rob Billerbeck, Brian Kurzel  
**Other Staff:** Larry Kramer, Gary Thorson

Meeting was an informal gathering to introduce new council members to the program held in the Denver Office. Rob showed a slideshow providing a general introduction to the State Parks Resource Stewardship Program, State Parks Fuels Mitigation, CNAP and the role and duties of the Colorado natural Areas Council. The following notes highlight discussions among those present.

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RB: CNAP Budget is complicated. To figure it out, you need to look at the total Parks Biology budget and pull out what is spent on CNAP.

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DB: Weed issues at Cherry Creek State Park are very concerning and getting worse.

LK: Currently we have \$100K per region available for weed management in each region.

RB: Of course more money is needed, but the amount of money for weeds has gone up while the overall budget for Parks has declined. We are focusing attention on the areas with less weeds to keep them that way while trying to contain places like Cherry Creek.

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JO: Who are the potential State Land Board members on the Council?

RB: Steve XX from Weld County has an ag background and may be a good fit.

JO: Steve is a contract lobbyist for CCLT and GOCO, as well as on the State Fair board

RB: There may also be a representative from McStain Neighborhoods that could be good.

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LK: Discuss with the council about the history of the Program, and particularly the past 10 years.

RB:

- CNAP was primarily created when conservation easements were not a popular conservation strategy, or they may have been written into the Natural Areas Act.
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program was initially part of CNAP

- 5 FTEs used to work for the program, and CNAP was active in monitoring around the state, as well as surveying and reviewing lands for the USFS and BLM.
  - In 2000, CNAP staff was down to one ¾ time FTE and CNAC was getting close to its ‘sunset’ date. The politics of the time made the renewal of the council anything but certain and the future of CNAP and the Council was unclear.
    - The CNAC was renewed and will not sunset again until 2014
  - Generally CNAP has been a quiet technical program with a small staff and budget
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LK: It is important for CNAP to be connected with Parks because the funding for the program goes through parks budget lines.

LK: This past year, 24 FTEs were approved for Parks. Only 10 of them will be paid for by general fund, the rest must be paid for by Parks out of pocket (Parks Visitation fees).

RB: One FTE was approved by the legislature and will come out of general fund. This position will be joint for CNAP, general Parks GIS, Fuels and Parks biology.

KY: How do other states pay for their expenses... through user fees?

GT: Every state is different. CO Parks and visitors may not want to have large, resort-like parks to pay for things, so we have to look for alternative ways of funding our needs.

LK: When Lyle was director, he was told that any new construction needs to be 100% self-sufficient.

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Rob showed slides about the details of CNAP

DB: If the mission of CNAP is protecting Colorado’s unique places through ‘cooperative agreements’, this last part could be constraining on our program.

RB: I think this is an important part of what we do because during harder times, this saved us.

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KY: What is the status of talking to the GOCO Board in December 2007?

RB: It is still uncertain, but I am working with Michael Regan, the Parks liaison with GOCO.

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KY: Can you relate the amount/percentage of funding you get from various sources to the percentage of designated sites on various landowner properties (i.e. TNC funding and TNC Natural Areas)?

RB: This would be rather simple. As of now, most of our funding comes from GOCO, Lottery, Parks General fund, and USFWS. There is not much of a direct relation between this funding and where we designate. This could be something we look into to pursue different funding sources.

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DB: I would like to hear more about CCLT from Jill.

JO: CCLT is an umbrella organization for 55 groups around Colorado. 41 non-profits, 14 local governments. We are different from both CO Conservation Trust (CCT) and the CO Cattlemans Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). Generally, they take the lead on public policy for land trusts and conservation organizations, working closely on government tax incentive programs and GOCO. We also work in professional development and education for conservation and land trust organizations, aiming to raise the knowledge level of associated groups through conferences, trainings, and guidelines. They are working more on getting groups accredited with the state, as this may be required in coming years to receive incentives.

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KY: What are the redundancies with CNAP designating on TNC lands?

RB: We can serve as a 'gadfly' to agencies and organizations that we work with that may already have special designations on their lands. We can help assure that the most significant features for which an area is designated are monitored and given due attention.

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RB: Funding for FTE's in the Parks Stewardship Program and CNAP is diversified between Parks Cash/General Fund and GOCO. Only \$212K was available last fiscal year for CNAP and parks Stewardship projects.

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DB: How do you receive Lottery money?

RB: This is somewhat unclear.

KY: ***GOCO and lottery should come to talk to CNAC and explain funding structures and processes.*** They can explain what their goals are and where they are coming from.

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DB: What is the relationship between the Parks Board and CNAC?

KY: This relationship hasn't been utilized very much in recent years.

RB: We may want to have a more formalized meeting between the CNAC and Parks Board.

DB: So, in general, CNAC has been primarily functioning apart from the Parks Board, DOW Commission and State Land Board?

RB: Yes, but there could be much better coordinated efforts between these boards.

DB: I have been involved in a couple of adjunct positions between boards, such as working with the Oil and Gas Commission on behalf of the DOW Commission. I would like to help with 'adjunct' roles of CNAC and DOW, and would have been part of Rob's meeting with Tom Nesler if I was in town.

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JO: I would like to hear more about the Friends Group structure.

RB: We have some handouts that are in draft form, but this needs to be further determined in coming months as (hopefully) the Friends Group grows. The Nov. 8 FriendRaiser is a great opportunity to

build support for this group, and we could use some help contacting people to make sure they are coming.

KY: I can call some people if you'd like.

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DB: Severance tax money may be best used to protect rare plants on O&G development areas instead of a general fund for Parks/DOW to address other needs.

RB: Harris agreed with this and he asked Bill Levine if rare plant \$\$ can be added to the Parks request for severance tax money. However, the Parks proposal was already through the legislature and it would have been politically difficult/damaging to ask for more at this point.

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RB: We are pursuing a rare plant policy in the DNR, and are continuing to work with the State Land Board and DOW on this.

DB: I can help by bringing this up with the acting director (Mark Konishi) and Tom Burke.

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DB: CNAP should have a booth at the Colorado Garden Show next year, since we could reach a lot of people interested in what we do. It is from Feb. 16-24.

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JO: In the CCLT electronic newsletter, she could highlight CNAP in the 'Did you know' category. A possible entry could be: "How can CNAP help Land Trusts?".

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DB:

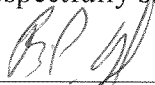
- HB1298 requires consultation with the DOW before O&G development. The rulemaking is occurring now, but there is some resistance from private landowners. However, most Applications for Permits to Drill are by larger O&G companies, and directional drilling allows for ~3000' offset. Since plant populations are usually small and they could likely be easily avoided, a plant review should be in the rule-making process. There are three subsets of reviews being led by Kim Kall, the first of which is a general GIS review. The plant info could easily be included. **We should contact Kim Kall and see if plants are currently being used in the analysis. If not, maybe we can work with her on this.**
  - HB 1341 would reorganize the Oil and Gas Commission, and the CCT Board Chairman, Mike Dowling is on this Commission. **They are doing rulemaking now, so CNAP should get in front of the Oil and Gas Commission ASAP.**
  - The O&G Commission works on both private and public lands. The approval process on public lands has traditionally been a 'rubber stamp'. The Commission can't stop leasing on public lands, but they can make sure that the activities are consistent with established statewide plans and priorities. The Commission doesn't have over-riding authority on overall leasing on BLM land, the BLM has that authority. But, the state approves the well sites and the number of wells. We could talk with Brian Macke more about this.
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RB: We need to meet with the Pueblo State Wildlife Area folks to discuss the potential designation of the area for rare plants. Tom Nesler may help us meet with Regional Staff.

DB: I may be able to assist with this.

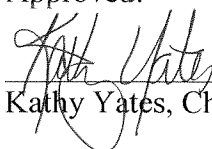
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**The next Council meeting that works for JO, KY and DB is Dec. 14 in the morning.**

Respectfully submitted:



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Brian Kurzel

Approved:



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Kathy Yates, Chair