

Colorado Natural Areas Council

Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2009

Council (Present): Mike Bloom, Kathy Yates, Renee Rondeau, Lee Shropshire, Jill Ozarski, Dennis Buechler

Council (Absent): Lenna Watson

CNAP FTE Staff: Rob Billerbeck, Brian Kurzel

CNAP Seasonal: Miranda Curzon

Others: Gary Thorson, Bob Wiig, Bruce Schumacher, Doug Dennison

6:05 PM - Call to Order

Presentations from Commissions and Appointees

DB: COGCC Wildlife Rules: comprehensive drilling plans are being worked on with ~15-20 O&G companies; lynx kittens have been found this year, which is more than the past few years.

MB: new SLB director (Brownell Bailey); 2 new Commissioners will be coming to the SLB by July 1, 2009; SLB is working very hard to develop an ethic and system to account for the natural values of their lands; SLB manages 8 trusts in all (including the Trust for Colorado State Parks), the largest of which is the School Trust; SLB is the 2nd largest landowner in CO (behind federal government) with about 3 million acres; SLB has Constitutional Authority over management of perpetual trusts.

JO: There is a potential cutback on the tax credit for conservation easements at the state level. There has been talk about cuts in GOCO.

Matters from Staff

RB: Bruce Schumacher is a potential council member – he is very interested and has submitted an application. Harris Sherman's office has recommended Bruce as a lead candidate – the Governor is expected to decide by a July 7th meeting.

Progress on Designations/Registrations

BS: For Picketwire Canyon, recommended that CNAP staff encourage Jeff Stoney to talk with Sarah Mayben (now in PSICC Supervisor's Office)

MB: Thought that Miramonte SLB parcel was just added to list for the Stewardship Trust.

KY: Has CNAP had any experience with registrations or designations passing with changing ownership?

RB: White Rocks may be first, but otherwise not yet.

KY: What about idea of trusts for passing ownership (following death); question of who land would be granted to and designation would pass to. Inheritor may be more likely to continue designation if it was in accordance with the deceased owners' wishes.

JO: A conservation easement may be a better tool for this.

****Give site nomination form to Renee – knows of a property worthy of designation with potentially willing landowner.**

Species Conservation Trust Fund

RB: Operating budget will be cut for next year, but \$260,000 from SCTF was given to CNAP for rare plant conservation and monitoring. However, SCTF is severance tax funded and latest forecast was that income from the severance tax will be down 80%. So, we plan to spend very carefully during the first 2 quarters of this next fiscal year.

BK: Discussed studies that have been products of SCTF funding (pollination study/alkaloid study).

MB: How is this being publicized?

BS: Are these purely internal reports, or are they going to be peer-reviewed publications? Getting a publication is key to having a meaningful impact.

MB: Given the current funding environment, in order to get people/legislature to know this is going on, it may be necessary to do something such as having a major press release on a program like Colorado Matters.

BK: We have to be careful about press releases before the research is complete.

MB: Encouraged contacting Colorado Matters (CPR), especially with events like Mount Callahan visit.

KY: Suggests "Your Colorado".

BK: In some cases, too much publicity could be detrimental to the sensitive features we are trying to protect

KY: It is good to engage with people who could be the threat (OXY model) – good PR for them (industry) if they fund protection, good way to go particularly w/funding pattern.

Parks Budget Update

GT: \$3 million cut from general fund. Agency dealing with what this and budget shortfall means. 3rd mtg with legislative audit committee went well; they are happy with progress. Governing manual has been developed that lays out responsibilities of DNR, Parks Board, staff, improvements to financial mgmt. GOCO pleased with progress; relationship improved. Potentially an additional cut to come, beyond the \$3 million, discussions ongoing about what we can and will do. Emphasis on building relationships with legislators. Can only use 1/10 of DNR lobbyist's time – need to be more aggressive with legislature. This will involve the CNAC and other support groups.

MB: Any thought on mobilizing citizens?

GT: That is key, big part of our outreach. Working to create master database of people who support parks and programs (owners of parks passes, people who register vehicles).

KY: Work that SLB is doing with CNAP is a good marriage of approaches to reach people – shows cross connection. Dennis can talk with wildlife commission about how a cut to CNAP would affect wildlife.

MB: Afraid that this approach (internal) would be less effective than a "citizen outcry".

KY: Citizen and internal not exclusive (experience with children's arts), closing parks will continue the loss in revenue. Don't segregate, show interconnectedness of programs and how they impact the vitality of the state.

GT: At one time had \$10M in parks operating budget (8 yrs ago) from general fund, has been whittled down to \$5 million currently. Joint budget committee may take more.

JO: Need to be organized with a good message, lobbyist, grassroots person getting letters (minimum of 3 to each legislator). For all of us to stick together, we need to talk about long term solution to the funding problems

GT: Interesting to look at other state park programs (i.e. Montana has 20+ different sources of funding for their state parks). Latest way is through vehicle registrations (if you don't check this box, state parks get \$5 – result: all Montana citizens get into parks for free).

Other CNAP Funding

BK:

- USFW Section 6 Grant Approval – received \$30,000 this year. Supports rare plant research with CO Natural Heritage Program.

- Applying for EPA wetland grant this year. Last applied for it in 2004. Hired Stephanie Neid, wetland expert – helps with eligibility for grant. If awarded, it would help reimburse salaries.

JO: any potential for tapping into federal stimulus money?

RB: Not directly, maybe through state forest service or collaboration with the Youth Corps, or tag team with federal agencies.

KY: Did triennial report go to the governor?

RB: Yes, Harris (EDO) gave positive comments back, but nothing from the governor's office. Frank Weston's book is a big positive - good gift to give.

JO: Frank Weston's book is good because it highlights the CNAP as a great thing as a piece of State Parks rather than individual thing. Give it out before the fall in concert with tours, meetings in the districts w/ legislators. Fiscal decisions likely to be made by Sept-Oct.

KY: Rather than give free copies of the books, have citizens buy the books and send to legislators – tell legislators that they spent money on the book, so they could send it.

BK: OXY funded \$6000 last year, will hopefully fund \$5500 for next year. Other little bits of money coming in (\$2500 received for fencing issues in Custer County – good for plants and cattle)

Other Reports from Staff

RB: RPCI is considering legislation for rare plants. CNAP had a good meeting with TNC recognizing all the work that has happened, esp. with SCTF money; many people at meeting. Charles Bedford (TNC) called a meeting with some of those people again to move towards additional support for CNAP to create a long-term program with the state paired with a program under Co Dept. of Agriculture to support private landowners' efforts.

Matters from Council

Approval of Minutes: Lee motion to approve. Jill motions. Renee seconds. None opposed.

Have to select a chair from remaining four governor appointees; Lee Shropshire is willing to take it on short-term. Renee motions for Lee to be temporary chair. Jill seconds. No discussion. All in favor, none opposed.

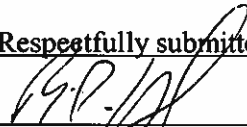
Motion for Jill as vice-chair. Dennis motions. Lee seconds. All in favor. None opposed.

Discussion of Sept. meeting: Sept 2-3 set aside, assuming a field trip. Geneva Basin, near Guanella Pass, a possibility to observe Iron Fen and completion of road closure.

8:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned

Presentation: Oil and Gas Primer for Western Colorado
Doug Dennison of Olsson Associates

Respectfully submitted:



Brian Kuzel

Approved:



Council Chair

