

CNAC Meeting Minutes, Roxborough State Park and Natural Area 12/3/2004

Council Present: Phil James, John Masson, Kathy Yates, Dennis Brinker, Dave Anderson

Council Absent: Dr. Lee Shropshire, Dr. Tom Ready

DNR staff: Rob Billerbeck, Larry Kramer, Whit Johnson

Guests: Lynn Riedel – Friends of Natural Areas and City of Boulder Open Space Department Botanist, Kathy Carsey – Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest, South Zone Botanist.

Council Chairman, John Masson, called the meeting to order at 11am.

Introductions: New Council member Dave Anderson introduced himself as did Dennis Brinker. Dave Anderson is from Aurora, CO and currently a staff botanist for the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) in Ft. Collins. Dennis Brinker is a rancher and County Commissioner from Jackson County.

John Masson asked how to fund inventories of potential Natural Areas. Previously the inventories were completed by staff of Natural Areas, but now that there is a vacant position, there is the potential for contract work for inventories paid on a project basis. Section 6 of the ESA was discussed and how monies from this act could possibly fund inventories of Natural Areas. John brought up how CNAC is approved for an additional 10 years at this point in time (will sunset in 2014).

11:15am. Kathy Yates and Phil James arrived and they emphasized the need for better signage to the Visitor's Center at Roxborough State Park.

11:25am. Report from staff: Rob Billerbeck, update on staff hiring (seasonal and permanent), budget and priorities. Rob outlined how CNAP will be housed under the Resource Stewardship section of State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Larry Kramer stated that there are definite advantages for structuring CNAP this way in terms of funding and support. He emphasized that with Natural Areas under Resource Stewardship, the Program will be more integrated into the system and this will give more options to Natural Areas in the areas of funding and staffing.

Restaffing of Ron West's position: Ron's position should be advertised within 1-2 months and hopefully be filled within the next few months, possibly in February. Larry Kramer stated the delays were due to a new Human Resources (HR) person, as well as very high workload in terms of vacancies to be filled. Some the competing new hires are due to the restructuring of the Division of Natural Resources Regions from 2 regions to 3. This, along with State Parks employees retiring, has created about 25 open positions to fill in State Parks. The day before the meeting (12/2) Ron's position was reviewed and may be posted in January as the "Natural Areas Biologist/Researcher."

Budget review: The primary sources of funding are through USFWS Section 6 and EPA Grant money. John Masson noted that Jefferson County has hired a Washington DC lobbyist to find and acquire funds and has proved very effective. John urges CNAP or Parks to consider hiring

someone like this to acquire funding from various grants and industry to diversify where CNAP gets money.

John suggested that CNAP create a patch and give to CNAP Volunteers. These patches could be put on a vest or jacket to show recognition for CNAP volunteers as well as identify these persons while they are volunteering. Putting this idea in the hands of a Volunteer Coordinator was considered a good idea to follow through with this idea. John made a motion to find a patch or other item to give to volunteers to wear while working as well as a badge or certificate with a nice picture of the site. Dennis Brinker seconded the motion. It was decided that there should be a patch or a badge for volunteers, and a certificate to give to each volunteer for recognition.

Larry said Parks has written into their strategic plan, a requirement for one staff member at each park to visit a Natural Area in their district once a year. Because Park staff will be visiting these Natural Areas, there is an opportunity to work cooperatively with the volunteers to monitor these Natural Areas. Each Natural Area needs to be identified as being Open or Closed to the Public, and whether it is appropriate for additional visitation. If a Natural Area is appropriate for increased visitation, this information will be put in the nearest State Park's brochure to advertise the NA as a place to visit and thereby increase awareness of CNAP.

John commented on how GOCO and CNAP are very related – the language of GOCO is what CNAP is doing. Therefore, GOCO should be very supportive (financially) of what CNAP is doing.

Rob proposed setting the designation of identified and registered Natural Areas as a priority over the identification of new sites for the next year or two. There will still be some new site surveys but he would like less emphasis on new inventories until there is a good grasp on what CNAP already has. Rob also suggested that one of the roles of CNAP in the past has been long-term monitoring of rare plants on Natural Areas. This was sometimes accomplished with small grants, and it should be a priority to get these reinstated. It might be good for staff or contractors to conduct some long-term monitoring also, at least once every two years if not once a year. There are some examples of long-term monitoring in Natural Areas like: grazing exclosures in the Colorado Tallgrass NA. The budget item "small grants and protection" could use more money for such long-term monitoring of sites with possible funding from GOCO.

Larry brought up the need to report CNAP volunteer hours and their FTE equivalent to show the benefit and size of the volunteer program. This amount was estimated that about \$200,000.

For next summer: prioritize Natural Areas to be visited. Rob visualizes extensive field trips to Natural Areas to familiarize himself as well as the new hire and the rest of the Stewardship Team with these areas.

There was a discussion of the rare gilia, *Ipomopsis polyantha*, and upcoming work on this species via a section 6 grant. John Masson suggested that the common name, Pagosa gilia, was not very easy for the general public to remember, and suggested that a more catchy common name might get more people interested in the effort on this species. He suggested the "Pagosa white star-flower."

12:20pm. Kathy Carsey brought up the North St. Vrain Identified Natural Area. Kathy commented that the District Ranger for the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest in Boulder, Christine Walsh, should be communicated with regarding the proposed designation of this area as a Natural Area. Christine may be unfamiliar with CNAP and what constitutes protection of a Natural Area. Kathy said that she thought Rob or the new CNAP staff person should talk with her in detail about the benefits and capabilities of the program. This would be required before the USFS would be ready to sign off on the designation. Christine will want to know how the NA designation can assist with management or protection of the site. Basically, CNAP needs to communicate with the Arapahoe-Roosevelt District Ranger what CNAP is and does. Ron had a list of benefits that he gave to agencies that may be of use. Lynn Riedel also has a list that she will send to Rob to use in this matter.

Break for Lunch at 12:35 – 1pm.

A slide-show of Geneva Basin Iron Fen, Copeland Willow Carr, Brush Creek Fen, and North St. Vrain Natural Areas was presented by Rob after lunch.

Items from the Council:

Dennis Brinker moved for approval of the previous meeting's minutes, John Masson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Gifts for Ron West were discussed.

Rob suggested recognizing Ron West at the next CNAC meeting in the spring. Boulder was suggested as a possible location because of nearness to Ron and the Volunteer Stewards on the East slope. All Volunteer Stewards will be invited as well to honor their contribution. Parks will give Ron a plaque, and possibly a framed map of his favorite Natural Area (Orient Mine). A gift certificate to Cabellas for some hiking boots or other was also suggested. An engraved hiking stick was also suggested from one of the Natural Areas. Kathy Yates strongly suggested that his wife, Leslie, should also receive formal recognition for her part, as they were a two-person team.

Locations for 2005 CNAC meetings were discussed. CNAP should invite the Friends of Natural Areas" to these meetings, especially the March meeting where Ron West will be thanked.

1. March for the 1st meeting in Boulder or nearby location. Lynn Riedel offered up a City of Boulder Open Space meeting room for such an event.
2. June meeting on the west slope with possibly a field visit to a Natural Area as well.
3. Late July or early-August - possibly a Geneva-Basin field trip or other Natural Area that is accessible to the public.
4. Late October or Early November - another Volunteer Steward meeting on the west slope?

Kathy asked about why the new appointed council members had different appointment terms. She noted that the new council members did not have full terms. Rob replied that the Governor's office had based the end-dates on when the positions were set to expire, regardless of the fact that the council members originally in these positions had resigned and were replaced.

Public Comment:

Lynn Riedel. Lynn commented that Denise Wilson at the Denver Botanic Gardens could be a good contact for volunteer opportunities on Natural Areas.

Lynn urged the CNAC to go back and look at the priorities of the strategic plan from 2000 and to stay on track. She also said that City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department could work together with Eldorado Canyon State Park since the park borders City Open Space properties. She said they could work on projects together, share volunteers, information, etc.

Lynn commented that Green Mountain Registered Natural Area is still being considered being designated a Natural Area, but any decision will be delayed because of the public comment period on the Recreation Management Plan being completed in Boulder right now. John suggested renaming the Green Mountain Natural Area so that in the future, it won't be confused with the Green Mountain in Jefferson County Open Space, which could someday be its own Natural Area.

Kathy Yates suggested putting a contact number on the agenda for the next meeting, since the directions to Roxborough were a little confusing.

No further issues were brought up.
Meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.

After the meeting adjourned, Angel Tobin led a short hike around Roxborough from 2-3pm.