



Colorado Natural Areas Program



1313 Sherman Street, Room 618 • Denver, Colorado 80203 • (303) 866-3203

Colorado Natural Areas Council Meeting Minutes Walden, CO June 19, 2006

Council (Present): John Masson, Dr. Tom Ready, Dave Anderson, Dennis Brinker

Council (Absent): Kathy Yates, Tom Burke, Lee Shropshire

DNR employees: Rob Billerbeck, Brian Kurzel, Courtney Hurst

Others: Tim Metzger (State Forest State Park) , Mike Blanton (Jackson County Commissioner)

Meeting called to order 7:05pm

General:

- Introductions
- Thanks to Dennis Brinker for the tour of his ranch, which is a new TNC conservation easement
- Staff requested permission from the Council to focus on the field portion of summer Council trips, rather than spending lots of time and effort on agenda items for the Council meetings. The Council agreed that summer meetings may be abbreviated, with general updates on staff field season rather than extensive agenda items.

1. Update on CNAP Activities:

❖ *Wacker Ranch:* (43 acres, \$218,000)

Fund Raising CNAP, TNC, Center for Native Ecosystems to recoup \$13,000 investment for the purchase of the Wacker Ranch.

Tactics:

- Targeted Fundraising
- General Fundraising
 - Holistic Fundraising Angles: Soil Crust, Lichen Communities, Rare Plants, Sage Grouse(?)

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*******Dr. Tom: Approach State Parks Foundation as a funding source*******

❖ *Outreach Plan:*

Not on the website yet, waiting for approval from EDO

❖ *Volunteer Stewards:*

Have:

- ~80 Stewards currently
- People with good natural resource backgrounds
- Currently, there is a survey given to all Stewards so staff can understand how communication can be made more efficient

Want:

- Want 103 total Stewards to cover all the Natural Areas. Staff is in the process of recruiting Stewards, but we are cautious because of the time commitment required to orient new stewards.
- Looking for good technical people, and some good “people” people
- Online database that stewards can access and submit hours, mileage, reports

Possibilities:

- Volunteer Stewards “Leaders” for regions---phone trees to help communicate ideas

John: More overlap needed between State Parks and Natural Areas volunteers—share some of the volunteers with State Parks and Natural Areas.

2. Field Season Action Items

❖ *Rare Plant Field Surveys*

Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS)

1. Bonny Prairie---patches of loess prairie

- Rare plant: Prairie moonwort
- Working with CoNPS gets other folks to organize trips to the natural area, get volunteers to the site
- Testing of soil samples to determine the presence/absence of Prairie moonwort

2. Duck Creek—Dudley Bluffs Bladderpod

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- Monitoring plots were set up 5 years ago
 - Re-survey of Duck Creek
3. Planned trip at Hoosier Ridge (near Hoosier Pass)
- USDA Forest Service (Pike and White River National Forests)
 - Essential a training for rare plant surveys and filling out the rare plant forms

Work with

4. Arkansas Valley

- TNC, BLM, USFWS, Ft. Carson have done lots of investigation and are interested in the rare plants in this area.
- CNAP and Parks: \$25,000 for the vegetation surveys along the Arkansas, including AHRA and Natural Areas. This has been spurred by the Cristo art project that is seeking approval. We will fill in the blanks left by what the BLM could not do.
- Denver Botanic Gardens---Tom Grant (researcher): wants to learn more about rare plants in the area
- Look at OHV use in these areas, (Area of concern for the BLM)
- 2010 (Potential Project Date) Cristo Money: Create areas that will be turned over to us after Cristo is done with them---in the condition that we would like them to be in

5. Chalk Bluffs

- Designated in 2000
- Green Light Energy---Wind Farm Proposal
 - Prairie Falcon/Golden Eagle Nests along the escarpment
 - ½ mile buffer for eagle/prairie falcon nests, ¼ mile buffer along the rest of escarpments
 - Very late notification on the wind farm proposal
 - DOW working on the raptor issue---want ½ mile buffer
 - CNAP comments will incorporate some research: What are the weed and dust impacts? Are the current setbacks of the turbines enough for the rare plants?

State Land Board doesn't have a good way to track the Natural Areas—CNAP staff will follow up with SLB staff to address the possibility of Dummy Leases for Natural Areas in their database?

Chalk Bluffs (cont.)

CNAP will write a Draft Memo that will address: 1. Powerline path, 2. The natural features Chalk Bluffs was designated for 3. State Land board monies 4. DOW issues vs. CNAP issues

◆ ***Forward to Council/DOW***

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❖ *Fencing Projects*

1. Pyramid Rock:

- Fencing areas to try to control OHV trampling of rare plants (federal candidates/listed)
- BLM may contribute to the monitoring of the fence
 - Cost \$3-5,000
 - How will the fence be enforced? Law enforcement? Volunteers?
 - Dr. Tom: Regular patrols of the fence to prevent destruction?
 - BLM will be responsible for maintaining the fence
 - Notify the sheriff's department of the building of the fence---help to prevent destruction
- CNAP fronting money to buy the materials, BLM construct

2. High Mesa

- Grazing regime is changing—how with the native grasses react?
- Exclosures of the native grasses to determine impacts

❖ *Weed Projects*

Jimmy Creek

3. Items from the Council

1. Pueblo County Field Trip Details:

- Identified Sites: Beulah Marble (State Capital Construction Marble)/Land owner: Shirley Neu

Cocktail Party/Stay in Pueblo: Thursday, August 10th

Meeting at Beulah Marble and Big Red Butte Sites: Friday, August 11th

- Connect with the landowners for both of these sites

CNAC Roles and Responsibilities:

- CNAP---give proper notice to the Council members about field trips to areas of their interest

Approval of April 7, 2006 Minutes

- Motion: Moved and 2nd- all in favor, passed unanimously.

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Comments/ Action Items:

John: For next meeting, CNAP staff should outline current budget (it's conditions) and where is the money going

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Courtney Hurst

Approved:

John Masson, Chair

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