



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources



COLORADO NATURAL AREAS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 24 2019
Denver CPW Office
6060 Broadway Denver, CO 80216
Red Fox Conference Room

CNAC Attendees: Tom Nesler (Chair), Ken Strom (Vice Chair), John Shaw (SLB), Dina Clark, Julia Kintsch, Lynn Riedel

CPW Staff: Raquel Wertsbaugh, Savanna Smith, Lisa Merkhofer, David Klute (SCON supervisor), Craig McLaughlin (Terrestrial section manager)

Other: Jessica Smith (CNHP Botanist), Lindsey Brandt (SLB)

Call Meeting to Order

Council Chair Tom Nesler called meeting to order at 10:00 am

Presentations from Commissions and Appointees

Tom Nesler: Final meeting, end of 2nd year term on CNAC. Expressed gratitude to staff and council members for passion and dedication to program. Program is in a better position now than when first started on the CNAC.

Ken Strom: Highlighted the importance of natural areas for research purposes. Dinosaur Ridge at Dakota Hogback is the only permanently staffed HawkWatch in Colorado and is considered prime place to see migrating ferruginous hawks. The volunteer event held at the Trinidad K-T boundary in April was a success and a great opportunity to connect with people interested in the program.

Dina Clark: Natural Areas are important on a global scale, not just to Colorado. International researchers have contacted her regarding herbaria collections from Arikaree Natural Area, a great example of how our state natural areas are important furthering scientific research.

John Shaw: SLB will be getting two new commissioners; Governor did not reappoint Barbara Bynum and Greg Moffat. The new commissioners will be Josie Heath from Boulder and Christine Scanlan from Keystone.

Lindsey Brandt: The State Land Board is working on its triennial review of Stewardship Trust properties. There are no major changes to properties within CNAP. They are currently taking public comments and will present to SLB commission in August. New Stewardship Trust nominations can be submitted at any time. SLB will notify nominators, lessees, and some adjacent landowners any time there is a proposed new use on Stewardship Trust properties.

Lynn Riedel: Also emphasized the value of natural areas to research on a large scale. Geologists are conducting research at White Rocks Natural Area and Colorado is included in range wide studies of tallgrass prairie.

Update from CPW Staff

Craig McLaughlin: Thanked Tom for leadership and gave updates regarding staffing changes within CPW. Dan Prenzlou, previously SE region manager, was selected as the new director for CPW. New SE region manager is Brett Ackerman and SW region manager is Cory Chick.

David Klute: Budget for SCON unit is looking good and many projects that were previously funded by SCTF are now part of the permanent SCON budget, including CNAP. One outcome of the Trinidad volunteer event was that Commissioner Vigil asked CNAP to give a presentation at the June commission meeting in La Junta. The presentation was well received and was great exposure for CNAP.

Matters from Staff

- *Recent news*
 - The Governor's office has reappointed Denise Culver and appointed Lynn Riedel to the CNAC council. The new administration is thoroughly evaluating all appointments. Charles Garcia will be the new representative of the CPW commission to CNAC. CPW commissioners have been doing an excellent job raising awareness of and supporting our program.
 - Staff took previous CNAC chair, Jill Ozarski, and a colleague of Jill's from New Zealand to Dakota Hogback Natural Area in May. Jill now works the Walton Family Foundation.
 - Raquel and Savanna attended a TNC led training on a new app, Land PKS, that is being developed for range and soil health monitoring. We are hoping to use this tool next field season for monitoring select natural areas.
 - CNAP technician Lisa Merkhofer has accepted a GIS specialist position with NPS & CSU in Lakewood and will be leaving at the end of this week.
 - Staff have been conducting analysis of potential SWAP species that may occur at natural areas and including these as we review individual site summaries.
- *2019 field season update*
 - Staff updated council on sites visited so far and highlighted specific findings and outcomes.
- *Update on identification of potential sites on eastern plains*
 - Staff visited Picketwire Canyon in SE CO with USFS staff in May. Decided that political climate is not right for designating that site.
 - Raquel presented an overview of CNAP at a USFS-CPW meeting Pueblo. Several Forest Service staff there were in an acting role so CNAP should wait to pursue USFS designations until there are permanent staff in place.
 - CNAP has been getting increased attention from DNR. The Governor could potentially attend next designation event, keep that in mind when prioritizing new potential designations.
 - We need to make sure to communicate with area and region CPW staff when we hone in on the next site(s).
 - Renee Rondeau gave feedback on potential sites, she highlighted several of the sites other people have mentioned. She mentioned that she would like to see SE Canyonlands, sandhills, and piedmont grassland represented.

- Fishers Peak/Crazy French Ranch has been mentioned by several people. Dina starts field work there next month so we will see what features are present. Designation there would have to wait until the change of ownership is complete.
- Fox Ranch is registered with TNC and contains representative sandhill country as well a perennial waterway. This could be a good example of regenerative grazing lands, but has no public access.
- Several SLB parcels are considered, need to have more discussions with SLB.
- We need to be thoughtful about public access, our relationship with the landowner, and our conservation effectiveness when considering a designation. Next designation might involve a public dedication ceremony.
- Staff and council agreed to take a closer look after field season in September.

Matters from Council

- *Approval of March minutes:* Motion to approve made by Ken Strom, seconded by Dina Clark. All in favor.
- *Future CNAC vacancy discussion*
 - DNR has indicated that diversity will be important for next council appointment. The staff and council should be thoughtful about reaching out to people who have the relevant background and will add diversity to the group as well as communicating our needs to the Governor's office.
- *Future Natural Area field tour planning*
 - There might be opportunities next year to coordinate a CNAP field tour with a PWC meeting.
 - Council indicated interest in a one-day field trip to Dakota Hogback Natural Area during the September 20th council meeting. Staff will look into facilities near the site.
- *Nominations and voting of new chair & vice chair*
 - Motion to nominate Ken Strom as chair made by Tom, all in favor. Motion to nominate Dina Clark as vice-chair made by Tom Nesler. Motion by Tom Nesler, all in favor.

CNAP Project Updates

- *CNAP outreach and marketing discussion*
 - *Presentation of draft storymap*
 - Lisa Merkhofer presented the second version of the CNAP storymap. This iteration incorporated comments made by council to make it more engaging and focused on storytelling. CNAC made minor comments and approved the re-make. After incorporating the changes, CNAP distribute to partners, CPW & DNR staff & leadership, PWC, website, and CPW social media.
 - *Discussion regarding need for CNAP "elevator speech" or "story brand"*
 - As CNAP receives more attention, it would be beneficial to streamline our language about the program for outreach purposes.
 - Current outreach materials already capture the essence of the program, but it needs to be simplified. Consider what engages the listener and accept the fact that a simple explanation won't encompass everything. Consider developing a 3 second, 30 second, and 3 minute pitch.
 - Staff will come up with some phrasing and present to council for comments. Suggested further discussing during next strategic planning process.

- *CNAP Strategic Plan: next steps discussion*
 - Most goals & objectives from the last strategic plan have been achieved; several are an ongoing process. Big accomplishment is the increase in CNAP's recognition and acceptance within the agency.
 - When we write the next strategic plan, we should better incorporate language from CPW's strategic and operational plans. It's important to highlight how CNAP is already accomplishing the objectives of the CPW plan. David suggested highlighting how the program fits into reporting requirements for the sustainability bill.
 - Council and staff decided to dedicate a full day meeting in March 2020 for writing a draft strategic plan, with the goal to have it finalized by Jan. 2021. Council expressed interest in an out of office setting, staff will look into venues.
 - It could be beneficial for CNAP to better highlight publicly accessible natural areas and demonstrate our importance in connecting people to the outdoors. We need to make sure that any public outreach is thoughtful and properly educates visitors.

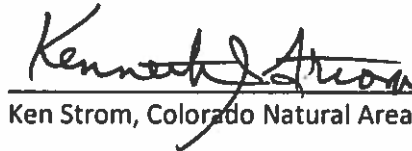
Meeting Adjourned: 3:04 pm

Respectfully submitted:



Raquel Wertsbaugh, Colorado Natural Areas Program Coordinator

Approved:



Ken Strom, Colorado Natural Areas Council Chair