



**COLORADO NATURAL AREAS COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday June 6, 2023
Colorado Parks & Wildlife Headquarters Office

CNAC Attendees: Lynn Riedel (Chair), Phyllis Pineda Bovin (Vice-Chair), Jessica Pierce, Denise Culver, Josie Heath (SLB Commissioner), Courtney Krause, Taishya Adams (Parks & Wildlife Commissioner)

CPW Staff: David Klute (SCON supervisor), Raquel Wertsbaugh (Program Coordinator), Victoria Oliu (CNAP Technician), Danielle Marchese (SCON program assistant)

Other: Savanna Smith (CNHP Botanist), Lindsey Brandt (SLB Stewardship Trust Manager)

Council Chair Lynn Riedel called meeting to order at 9:34 am

Presentations from Commissions and Appointees

Commissioner Josie Heath: Both Commissioner Heath and Scanlan were reappointed to the SLB Commission. SLB hired a new water specialist position. The next SLB Commission meeting will take place in Pueblo and will involve discussions on solar farm installations.

Phyllis Pineda Bovin: NPS is working towards strengthening existing tribal relationships, and beginning new relationships early on as new projects emerge. The current Secretary of the Interior and NPS director have largely influenced this shift. NPS is also looking further into the rising number of park visitors and the impact on wildlife.

Lindsey Brandt: SLB is working on moving new staff positions through the legislative process. The SLB envisions that these positions will have a biodiversity focus- focus areas may include stewardship, regenerative grazing, carbon sequestration, and/or pollinators.

Denise Culver: The City of Fort Collins Land Conservation and Stewardship Board is discussing the possible extension of Devil's Backbone Open Space. Denise spoke on the progress that CPW has made in diversity and inclusion throughout the time that she has worked alongside the agency.

Jessica Pierce: Discussed recent visits to South Beaver Creek State Natural Area and facilitated a conversation about the intrinsic value of natural features and the importance of helping the public recognize this.

Lynn Riedel: The City of Boulder is working with tribes to improve their land acknowledgment statement. Highlighted her involvement with a City of Boulder OSMP ethnographic study where plant species important to tribes were documented. Also pointed out the need to include Indigenous people not affiliated with a specific tribe in our work. Boulder City Council is hoping to partner with the Platte Basin Time Lapse Project to create a storymap highlighting Boulder's xeric tallgrass ecosystems.

Commissioner Taishya Adamas: The new CPW director, Jeff Davis, brings a new outlook for CPW and is supportive of biodiversity conservation efforts. She added to the conversation about tribal relations, and emphasized the need for listening to Indigenous knowledge. She highlighted that there is a need for meaningful relationships rather than solely transactional consultations.

Courtney Krause: Courtney discussed the opportunity and possibility of collaborating with the DNR Tribal Liaison in the future.

CPW Updates (SCON Supervisor David Klute)

- SCON has a new program assistant, Danielle Marchese, who will help assist with CNAC meetings and other administrative tasks.
- Highlighted the new CPW director Jeff Davis. Director Davis comes from Washington State and has a strong background in habitat, species conservation, ecosystem conservation and biodiversity.
- Attended the Pathways conference recently and highlighted a presentation titled “Wildlife Values in the Age of Mutualism”. The presentation focused on the different wildlife values people hold, and was attended by the new director as well as Governor Jared Polis. This ties in with the [Relevancy Roadmap](#) and other efforts by CPW to adapt to changing wildlife values.
- Conversations are ongoing within CPW about budget and staffing needs.
- Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) was reintroduced in the senate with ten co-sponsors.
- CPW is working on a contract with CNHP to begin work on the revision of Colorado’s State Wildlife Action Plan due in 2025.

Matters from Staff

- **Field Season Update:** Savanna Smith and Victoria Oliu updated the Council on field visits conducted so far this season and highlighted the visits with partners, volunteers, and landowners.
- **Conservation Updates:** Raquel Wertsbaugh highlighted the ongoing work with the DNR Pollinator Study, in which she is serving as the CPW representative. The study team is currently conducting interviews with state employees to determine current pollinator conservation actions and opportunities. At several CPW-owned Natural Areas, she is having discussions on the need for new interpretive signs and other management issues. It is difficult to find staff time and funding for active management on CPW-owned Natural Areas given program constraints.
- **City of Boulder OSMP designation and expansion updates:** Raquel and Lynn Riedel attended a Jefferson County Open Space Advisory Committee meeting in May where they presented on the proposed Coal Creek Tallgrass Prairie Natural Area designation. Lynn also presented at the City of Boulder OSMP board meeting. Raquel will present on CNAP and upcoming designations/amendments at the June Parks & Wildlife Commission (PWC) in Alamosa and request approval of the designation and expansions. Pending approval, she will move forward with the final steps and signatures in the designation process. Discussions are ongoing about a possible designation event this fall.
- **Other Updates:** A new DNR Boards & Commissions Policy Handbook has been released; annual training is needed for all board members. As a reminder, the Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform will be conducting a sunset review of the CNAC. Raquel is currently working with their staff to provide data for their report and a bill to renew the CNAC will be drafted and introduced during the early 2024 legislative session.

Matters from Council

- March 2023 minutes approval: Motion to approve by Lynn Riedel, Denise Culver seconds. All in favor.
- Taishya suggested that a discussion on the barriers to reaching our strategic plan goals would be useful during an upcoming meeting.
- Raquel provided an update on the applicants and timelines for appointment of new Council members.
- Council members and staff discussed plans for the September 2023 meeting and the feasibility of a joint business meeting and field tour. Raquel will look into potentially holding the meeting at Staunton State Park.

Brainstorming and initial formulation of CNAP “tagline”

- Based on prior discussions, staff introduced the idea of developing a succinct tagline to describe what CNAP does and how this is different from other entities.
- The unique aspects of the CNAP program were discussed, including the voluntary protection mechanism, recognition of natural features not covered by other programs, and the intrinsic value of rare plants, ecosystems types, etc.
- Taishya highlighted the need to better define “natural features” and convey our importance within CPW. Also recommended that CNAP staff coordinate with CPW marketing staff.
- Courtney recommended working on an “elevator pitch” first and suggested drawing inspiration from the language in the Natural Areas Act.
- Several other Council members discussed the unique strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Acknowledgement of service of outgoing Council members

- CNAP staff and Council members congratulated and thanked Commissioner Taishya Adams and Denise Culver on their years of service to the Colorado Natural Areas Council.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn by Lynn Riedel, second by Denise Culver, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Raquel Wertsbaugh

Raquel Wertsbaugh, Colorado Natural Areas Program Coordinator

Approved:

Lynn Riedel

12/5/23

Lynn Riedel, Colorado Natural Areas Council Chair