



**COLORADO NATURAL AREAS COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday September 28, 2023  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife Denver Office  
6060 Broadway, Denver

**CNAC Attendees:** Lynn Riedel (Chair), Phyllis Pineda Bovin (Vice-Chair), Jessica Pierce, Lindsey Brandt (SLB, on behalf of Commissioner Heath)

**CPW Staff:** David Klute (SCON supervisor), Raquel Wertsbaugh (Program Coordinator), Victoria Oliu (CNAP Technician)

**Other:** Savanna Smith (CNHP Botanist)

**Council Chair Lynn Riedel called the meeting to order at 9:38 am**

**Presentations from Commissions and Appointees**

**Phyllis Pineda Bovin:** Mentioned pending federal government shutdown. NPS continues to work on tribal engagement and climate preparedness including evaluation of cost-effectiveness of historic building and infrastructure relocation/restoration.

**Lindsey Brandt (SLB):** Mindy Gottsegen will be presenting the annual stewardship report to the board on October 12th. No new updates on La Jara property, will continue to keep CNAP staff in the loop. REPI project moving forward on Bohart Ranch, nothing yet decided on Aiken Canyon. Angela Boag, the Assistant Director of Climate Change, Forest Health and Energy at DNR, presented the Strategic Plan for Climate Smart Working Plans to the SLB. Greg Ochis, SLB assistant director, will be retiring in December. SLB is splitting his position into two roles; an assistant director of sustainability and working lands and another assistant director of energy, carbon, and minerals.

**Jessica Pierce:** Highlighted two books that are of interest: Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer and Entangled Life by Merlin Sheldrake. She spoke on the importance of fungi and other overlooked taxa. This led to conversations about CNAP efforts to support the monitoring of bryophytes, lichens, and fungi through partners and volunteers.

**Lynn Riedel:** Lynn began by thanking CNAP staff for the joint visit to Antero Salt Creek Natural Area. The Boulder Chapter of the Colorado Native Plant Society will have a presentation on the evolution of landscapes in CO and the American West on October 14th. Mentioned that Denver Botanic Gardens staff were interested in a historic closed bottle gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) point that had been relocated by an iNaturalist user on OSMP lands. This brought up concerns on location sharing of rare plants on iNaturalist.

## CPW Updates (SCON Supervisor David Klute)

- Highlighted changes to the CPW leadership team, including the potential name change to “executive team” and hiring of Heather Disney Dugan as new Deputy Director and Kelly Kaemerer as Assistant Director of Information and Education. DNR has recently hired a Tribal Liaison. The Parks and Wildlife Commission also has three new members: Jess Beaulieu, Jack Murphy, and Gary Skiba.
- The CPW Culture Survey had a high response rate from staff. Preliminary results have been shared, mainly pertaining to inclusivity and better transparency and communication from the executive team.
- Conversations are ongoing about budget and staffing needs. The five year staffing plan has a recommendation for a new full time employee for CNAP (good news!)
- SCON has a Wolf Monitoring and Data Coordinator starting October 9th. SCON is currently reviewing applications for a new SWAP Coordinator position and a Species Conservation Program Manager following Tina Jackson’s retirement.
- Planning is continuing for the revised SWAP, and a new contract with CNHP was recently completed. The revised SWAP will include rare plants and invertebrates in the main body of the document as opposed to addendums. SWAP revision will incorporate climate considerations, robust stakeholder engagement, and align with other state plans including Colorado Outdoor Strategy and Habitat and Connectivity Plan.
- The DNR pollinator health study report will be completed by the end of December.
- CPW is optimistic that wolves will be captured and released this December for wolf reintroduction.

## Matters from Staff

- **Field Season Update:** Savanna Smith and Victoria Oliu updated the Council on field visits conducted since the previous meeting, and highlighted the visits with partners, volunteers, and landowners.
- **Volunteer Program Update:** This year, at least 35 sites have been monitored by CNAP volunteers, and more reports are incoming. Savanna highlighted recent volunteer retirements and onboarding, and mentioned the numerous CNAP volunteers who attended the recent Rare Plant Symposium and CoNPS Conference.
- **Sunset Review Update:** The Council was reminded about the 10 year sunset clause for CNAC that is in state statute. The Department of Regulatory Affairs is drafting a report for the review that should be released soon. The report will then be drafted into a bill, and enter the legislative process next spring.
- **City of Boulder Designation Update:** CNAP is in the final stages of completing the administrative steps needed to finalize the new designations and amendments. Raquel and Lynn highlighted the plans for a Designation Event in Boulder on October 26.
- **Rare Plant Symposium and CoNPS:** CNAP staff attended a coordination meeting led by USFWS to discuss ongoing actions for federally threatened and endangered plant species. The meeting was attended by partners from the BLM, USFS, NPS, CNHP, Denver Botanic Gardens and more. The group discussed plans for future rare plant collaboration meetings. The Rocky Mountain monkeyflower, which occurs at Staunton Natural Area, was highlighted as a plant that may need to be reconsidered for federal listing. The following day, all three staff attended the 20th Annual Rare Plant Symposium led by CNHP. Raquel and Jessica Smith (CNHP) gave a joint presentation

on the SWAP revision and potential changes to Plants of Greatest Conservation Need at the symposium. Savanna Smith and Victoria Oliu also attended the CoNPS Conference.

### **Matters from Council**

- June 2023 minutes approval: Motion to approve by Jessica Pierce, seconded by Lynn. All in favor.
- Raquel provided an update on CNAC members. Richard Reading is the new Parks and Wildlife Commission representative.
- The Council discussed ideas for future meeting agendas. Agenda items may include prioritization of future sites on the Eastern Plains for designations, a CNHP presentation on rare plant projects with CNAP, and/or a discussion evaluating CNAP's similarities and differences with other State Natural Area programs.

### **Ideas for 2021- 23 Triennial Report:**

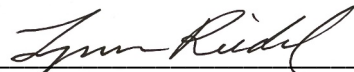
- CNAP staff led a discussion regarding the upcoming triennial report, due in spring of 2024, and solicited feedback on potential changes or suggestions for improvements.
- Council members agreed on the importance of physical reports, suggested clarifications on the Natural Area rankings in the status section and suggested explicitly outlining the criteria for significant natural features. They also suggested that we include more information on the monitoring work that is carried out in the Natural Areas.
- Regarding the Natural Areas status update required by statute, staff and the council discussed the merits of using the current Natural Area ranking tool, and suggested ways to include considerations of climate resiliency. Staff agreed to evaluate this, and to put together a separate document detailing criteria for the current ranking tool that could be shared publicly along with the triennial report.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Motion to adjourn by Lynn Riedel, second by Lindsey Brandt, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 1:25pm.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Raquel Wertsbaugh, Colorado Natural Areas Program Coordinator

Approved:

 9/28/23  
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Lynn Riedel, Colorado Natural Areas Council Chair