

Cascabel Conservation Association
Fall Meeting Minutes
9/14/2024

In person attendance at CCC: Brandon Wert, Erik Revere, Birgit De Gregorio, Susan Tollefson, Karen McKelvey, Katie Talbott, Tom Talbott, Chris Eastoe, David Blocker, Barbara Clark, Sue Newman, Gail Loveland, Alex Binford-Walsh, Anna Lands, Bill Doelle, Jodi Wert, Daniel Baker

Zoom attendance: Cindy Salo, David Omick, Pearl Mast, Marissa Katz, Madison Cook

I INTRODUCTION

- A. Introductions- Chris E., meeting chair
- B. Reading of sojourner reflection Susan T. (see attached Hermitage report)
- C. Approval of the April 13, 2024 minutes with one correction- Goat pen cost \$12,000, not \$1,200 Motion-Barbara C., Second Gail L. unanimous approval

II BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

A. Board matters and outreach

Chris summarized the status of our water supply- slowly drying out, reduced flow and perennial reaches, too few major recharges. He will continue to obtain data from The Nature Conservancy and BLM. TNC has changed the scope of wet-dry mapping due to increased dry portions of the San Pedro. James questioned whether given the data we should have an action item to pursue funding to possibly do more collecting. Sue N. stated she would gladly pay someone to monitor her well. Birgit wondered whether it would make sense to buy a well meter (apparently one is broken on a TNC well) Chris said he would ask TNC and BLM about their plans, and discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Alex B-W and Bill D. reported on an invasive plant species that is on par with the Buffelgrass threat. They referred CCA members to the Stinknet.org website which has mapping, photos, and descriptions of the plant. David Blocker noted that he found the plant at Clayworks and destroyed it with herbicide. Bill reported that the plant is caustic if touched or breathed, that it follows rivers and roads, and has been a problem in Pima and Pinal counties. Birgit asked if it could diminish like some other invasives that have come and gone, and Bill and Alex said likely not.

B. Finances

Birgit summarized the financial report. There have been 2 large expenses- the McGinnis land purchase and SunZia legal fees. The GoFundMe account for SunZia legal fees is virtually depleted. The Goat proposal has surpassed its fundraising goal due to being the recipient of a grant and the transfer of educational funds. Hermitage funds have increased secondary to donors, particularly the Proctor group. Total net loss is roughly \$73,000. Motion was made by Sue N., and seconded by Katie T. to accept the financial

report and it was unanimously approved.

McGinnis-Verbance land purchase Katie/Chris

Susan and Pearl will pursue tax exempt status. The clean up party was successful. Many items found homes. The composting bin was left to mature. Mike Gray purchased some of the tiles. James expressed thanks to Susan for rodent mitigation. A problem of water collection in the roof of the straw bale structure was identified. Erik asked if there is a mechanism to determine condition and use of the structure. There were questions from several people about how it might be used, considering the remote location and current lack of functioning water supply. Brandon W., David O., and Erik R., will make a field trip to jointly assess and make a recommendation.

C. Baicatcan land committee

Erik expressed feeling stuck due to issues with needing to make changes and updates to the CCA website, and a wide ranging discussion followed regarding website management. Katie said she makes a few changes. Karen expressed concern about the need for CCA to archive documents and to place more pertinent information on the site. Susan noted that the Sojourner News is an example of that. Birgit said that all the information is in the Cloud, but we would need to determine what to put out to the public. Erik stated he wants a way to communicate policy changes on the site. Karen noted that the board met previously about this topic without coming to any conclusions. Does it need to meet again? Chris proposed an email board discussion regarding this issue and all agreed, though Susan felt that in the short term committee chairs need to have a way to make changes. Marissa asked who currently manages the site (not really anyone) and if CCA could pay a dedicated website manager. David Blocker suggested that the person who manages the CCC website might take this on. Susan noted that grant makers would look first at the website when gathering information for considering potential grant recipients.

Regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between CCA, ASW and the Wert family concerning the Wert Family homestead agreement, Erik reported that the document is completed and all parties are happy.

Regarding the new online volunteer spreadsheet for recording volunteer hours, Pearl reminded committee chairs of the need to track and record hours.

D. Saguaro-Juniper announcements

James introduced a new intern, Madison Cook, who has a goal to be a veterinarian, and wants to gain large animal experience with SJ and also to develop Spanish language proficiency. He also announced that SJ has obtained official 501(c)(3) non profit status and is seeking board members. And he announced that the annual Home on the Range event is scheduled for February 28- March 2, 2025 and plans to have more outdoor time and less meeting time.

Katie announced the possible land acquisition by SJ of the Sue Sparrold property. This property borders Lisa Vogel's land and the SJ grazing lease with access to a drinker and also to the CCA straw bale legacy site. The asking price is a very reasonable \$65,000 for 80 acres. SJ is collecting donation pledges and talking to TNC about a possible conservation easement. They have already secured 2 \$20,000 pledges. SJ is asking if CCA would be willing to make a small pledge. James spoke of the ecological value to the watershed, and Susan noted that access to the legacy site is important since the old road is no longer available. Brandon noted that as a place to walk goats it sweetened the deal for CCA. Initially the idea was floated by Birgit to pledge annual interest on the Meader Fund commensurate to at least \$5000, but after discussion a Motion was made by Birgit and Seconded by Anna to pledge \$5000, unencumbered. Katie and James abstained from the vote and consensus was reached.

III HERMITAGE PROGRAM (see attached report)

- A. Susan reported a very busy season, with October filling up. The Proctor Academy has arranged to return in January, 2025. The next Sabbatical Gathering will be held on October 12, from 10-12 featuring goat walking on the San Pedro River. The September snake workshops were very successful, with 6 young people attending the overnight option.

Katie reported that Lynn Thorsell will be taking over her position as co-chair of the Hermitage committee, and reminded people that Lynn has spent considerable time in Cascabel and covered for Susan's recent absence. Katie will remain on the Hermitage Committee as SJ representative. Katie noted that, still, after all these years no one else does what we do and that the Hermitage Program continues to honor the initial impetus for our founding, the idea that the land can heal.

Susan announced that she is preparing to transition from being the program leader. She feels graced by her time here, but this will be her last season. Her lifestyle has limitations related to aging and she is considering joining her family in Ecuador.

IV CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- A. Committee Summary Report (see attached)

Pearl reported that the summary includes updates on SunZia, Air Force proposal, LSPWA, and NAU capstone project

Chris circulated a letter (which will be attached to the minutes) in which he expresses his views about turning our attention away from challenging SunZia since it has effectively happened and focusing on investing our resources in conserving what remains in Cascabel. It includes writing from Richard Rohr on the concept of "radical resilience." He urged members to read it and think about it. No decision making is requested at this time. He expressed his view that the proposed Faraday copper mine is a far greater

threat to the lower San Pedro Valley than SunZia. David O. and James spoke to placing our resistance in the larger context of a strategy for living a full life.

Alex noted that Archeology Southwest remains involved in 2 Federal cases in dispute with SunZia/Pattern Energy

V GARDEN/ORCHARD PROGRAM

- A. Marissa reported that grant funds were received for building the goat pen and that plans are being finalized, with construction expected to start in November.

The Gail announced that onions are being harvested in the garden.

Tom T. presented a proposal for goat walkers on confluence property (see attached) It contains descriptions and ownership of lands surrounding Baicatcan where the goats will be housed, in addition to a map. The proposal contained 2 motions.

Motion 1- formally permit goat tenders to walk goats on the Confluence Property
(second by Alex)

Motion 2- Designate and clear "goat paths" from Baicatcan through the Confluence Property on the lower floodplain that connects up with the Talbott property and its current trails, avoiding BLM land along the San Pedro River
(second by Anna)

There was brief discussion regarding the issue of easements which Barbara C. clarified. Katie spoke in favor of the paths. Barbara said that there needs to be recognition and attention paid to the potential for overgrazing. Both motions were passed unanimously and appreciation for Tom's work was expressed by members.

VI EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. A local mesquite milling will be held at the CCC on Saturday, September 21 with breakfast provided by Edie Cundiff and Brenda Brown
2. Tom Talbott announced that he will be terminating his board membership when his term expires at the end of the year

VII NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY JANUARY 18, 2025 at the CCC at 3PM, followed by potluck dinner