

Cascabel Conservation Association
Spring Members Meeting
April 26, 2025

In person attendance: Joe Page, Katie Talbott, Tom Talbott, Anna Lands, Erik Revere, Madison Cooke, Gail Loveland, Chris Eastoe, James Callegary, Bill Doelle, Susan Tollefson, Brandon Wert, Daniel Baker, Annie Wilkinson, Birgit de Gregorio, Jimmy McPherson, Elna Otter, Pearl Mast, David Omick, Alex Binford-Walsh, Marissa Katz, Sue Newman, Karen McKelvey

Zoom attendance: Nancy Ferguson, Tom Orum, Lynn Thorsell, Jeanne Greven **Guests:** Bruce Anderson, David Wachter

I INTRODUCTION

- A. Introductions- Chris Eastoe
- B. Reading of sojourner reflection- Susan Tollefson (see attached)
- C. Approval of January 18, 2025 minutes
Motion to approve- Karen McKelvey, Second- David Omick
No discussion. Unanimously approved

II BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

- A. 1. Board elections and nominations: Brandon Wert, previously nominated at winter meeting is up for election. There was an invitation for discussion, followed by expressions of how CCA would be “lucky,” “delighted,” and “thrilled,” to have him on board. Nomination was unanimously approved. A call for additional nominations yielded none. Chris announced that he will be stepping down as President after 8 years, as he and James are moving to Australia. He will continue as a board member.
2. Water monitoring - Chris said that TNC will continue to sample 3 of the 4 wells that he has been monitoring. They will not sample the Gilbert Urias well and have substituted Sue Newman’s well, though Chris thinks Gil’s well would be a better choice. Pearl suggested that the Conservation Committee could follow up.
4. ASW announcement- Bill Doelle presented the fund raising flyer for the purchase of the 120 acre Paige Canyon Reserve (Verbance-McGinnis) and stated the acquisition is in the process of being wrapped up. This was received as very good news and appreciation to ASW was expressed.
- B. Finances
Birgit reviewed the financials. Discussion focused on projects vs operating expenses and the multiple fundraising efforts that have increased the complexity of understanding our true financial picture. The increase in insurance was noted and Birgit expressed concern about depleting the general fund and floated the idea of moving \$33,000 of the Meader Endowment Fund not locked into CD’s to the general fund. Karen asked about the impact on our income of not having a newsletter, which Birgit said was about \$10,000. There was no official motion made about transfer of funds but the conversation veered to the increasing demands on the treasurer position. Previously the Administration committee has done some of what the treasurer is doing

now. There is no longer a stipend being drawn from that committee and a **Motion was made by Erik Revere and Seconded by Pearl Mast to raise the stipend for the treasurer from \$4,000 to \$6,000.** Susan voiced support for this and David O. noted that there have been increased financial transactions from all committees. Pearl said that the more special projects and fundraising efforts we engage in the more complicated it all becomes. Birgit voiced being grateful yet hesitant to accept this suggestion. Following the discussion the motion was passed unanimously with Birgit abstaining.

C. Baicatcan land committee

Erik presented a Baicatcan Housing Proposal (see attached)

Reflections on the proposal:

- Katie- in favor of a second cottage due to Baicatcan being a community space of high utilization
- Susan- Baicatcan represents a sign of growth and is critical to CCA opening up to visitors
- Bill- has used Mick's cottage and supports the proposal
- Birgit- always in favor of adding tangible assets and feels that in time it will pay for itself
- Erik- since changing the rules for use of Mick's cabin utilization is way up

A 3 part motion was introduced:

Part 1: Motion by Erik Revere seconded by Katie Talbott

General approval for the idea of another cottage and fundraising going forward

Part 2: Motion by Erik Revere seconded by Tom Talbott

CCA to match funds by 25% for contributions up to \$37,000 construction cost

Part 3: CCA to work with the goat group to increase refrigeration to keep eggs and milk at the garden - part 3 of the **motion was withdrawn**

Discussion: James questioned the specificity of the cost and was told it still needed final determination. Birgit asked "why a Mick's cottage" rather than purchase a tiny house? Katie noted the educational value of working on something constructed locally. Erik said he would be open to a kit, but it would need a similar aesthetic. David pointed out that it needed to be mobile and that the modular units like those purchased at the Oasis are exceedingly expensive. Brandon said conservation easement restrictions need to be considered, and Erik and David clarified that no grid power or internet were being considered. Karen wondered if a grant might be available and Katie thought the organization that funded the goat proposal could be a possibility. Marissa expressed full support and thought pursuing a grant with the AZ foundation was a good idea. Birgit wondered if exposure such as on a podcast that mentioned CCA in which increase in funds followed might be a strategy. Sue questioned whether it might be competition with her cabin but James responded that they would serve different markets and that recently there has been no shortage of visitors to Cascabel.

There was additional discussion on part 2 of the motion related to maximum cost (Katie) and whether the Meader fund could be tapped (Tom T.) particularly that portion not in a CD. Bill D. said he would not advise using endowment funds, and Pearl suggested that a much larger discussion would need to be had before delving into the Meader fund and reminded all of the guidelines. Chris clarified the motions and both parts 1 and 2 passed unanimously.

D. Saguaro Juniper announcements

James spoke of the resounding success of the Home on the Range event. The new mission Statement is essentially completed in order to be sent to a granting institution, but may continue to evolve. Katie expressed thanks to Lynn Thorsell for her work on organizational and Institutional development on behalf of SJ. James thanked Katie for all she does to keep SJ going.

III HERMITAGE PROGRAM

- A. General program update- see attached Hermitage Report (Susan)
- B. Hermitage Program transition planning- recap of winter meeting proposal in which the Hermitage Committee was given permission to seek pledges for the express purpose of buying Susan Tollefson's property. (There is a detailed description of the proposal and the concerns in those minutes for anyone who may want to review the details.) In the intervening time the Hermitage Committee raised pledges to fund the entire purchase of \$52,000 and in addition, several thousand dollars to establish a maintenance fund.
- C. Property purchase recommendation

Motion by Karen M., seconded by Lynn T. - CCA agrees to purchase Susan Tollefson's Hermitage property, a key conservation property in the Hot Springs Canyon corridor, to serve as the center for Hermitage Sojourner accompaniment activities. The property to be purchased solely by funds pledged for that purpose.

Discussion- Jimmy M. expressed concern that CCA is changing direction to a focus on real estate property acquisition. Gail spoke to how CCA was started as The Hermitage Association and is foundational to what we do. Daniel stated he feels this purchase is consistent with our mission to support conservation properties and that this is a property that is foundational to the continuation of the Hermitage Program. Susan related that selling her place was a very hard decision. She doesn't consider it as simply a real estate transaction, but rather as a way, likely the only way, to go forward with the program upon her retirement.

The motion was carried with 3 abstentions noted.

IV CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- A. Committee summary report- Pearl (see attached conservation report)
Highlights- The committee met with the Cochise County planning folks and felt that their concerns and priorities were heard. The tribal Sunzia appeal is ongoing. CCA joined other organizations in making comments on mining. Joe P. continues to monitor wildlife cameras. Anna reported that the Benson City Council extended the Vigneto permit for 10 years.

V GARDEN/ORCHARD PROGRAM

Gail- With the absence of fencing, deer are entering the garden during goat pen construction.

Katie- Announced that the goat pen is close to completion and the group hopes to move the goats on Mothers Day. She thanked the many contributors, with a special shout out to Andrew Volz.

VI EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Motion- Brandon asked for CCA to support a mesquite milling in the fall.

No discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

VII NEXT MEETING

The fall CCA Meeting was scheduled for September 27, 2025 at the Cascabel Community Center from 3-5 pm followed by pot luck dinner. The meeting concluded with kudos and applause for Chris Eastoe's 8 years of service as board President.