

TorC Rio Grande Trail Segment

Working Group Meeting Group Memory

January 14, 2020

Participants: Attila Bality, Gina Kelly, Mario, Michael Apodaca, Erica, Joe Baca, Linda, Bill Salee, Heidi, OJ, John M, Kim Skinner, Brent Tanzy

Meeting Agenda

- Driving Tour of trail corridor
- Discussion of project name
- Discussion on establishing Vision and Goals
- Civic Engagement Strategies

ACTION ITEMS

What	Who	When
Trail Project naming & Williamsburg concerns	Bill Sallee talk with Trustees	Feb 17
Provide Review and Comments on Talking Points	Everyone. Gina will re-distribute	Feb 17
Design of table top panels by high school art class	Bill Sallee will check with art teacher	Feb 17
Creat FB posts on Mainstreet and Tourism pages to announce project and solicit community responses. Direct people to Health Fair to discuss project	Linda, Gina	Feb 24

Discussion along the trail corridor

At the Rotary Park Crossing:

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) manages water delivery between Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs. Easements exist along the river corridor to permit BOR operations to maintain channel and water flows. This section of river channel was re-engineered in 1985 to restore flow capacity. The dike/dam is constructed and de-constructed every year when water delivery from Elephant Butte dam starts and stops. The river water table affects the thermal springs flows and pressures. The dike provides some recreational benefits, as NM Game & Fish stocks the backwater with trout during the winter. During high flows, the dike designed to fail, preventing and residential flooding in TorC.



BOR doesn't object to the installation of a footbridge across the Rio Grande. Exact placement is up to this working group. However, it's important to involve BOR in site selection discussions. Within the vicinity of Rotary Park, there are lots of crossing opportunities.

Since the BORs mission is water conveyance, it's important to note any pedestrian bridge cannot impede operations, which can include heavy dredging equipment.

There are essentially four stakeholders along the east side of the Rio Grande who could be impacted by the trail proposal – (1) a private landowner/developer directly across from Rotary Park, (2) Lee Forstner, private property owner, (3) Lloyd Parker, rancher with grazing lease on BOR land, (4) BOR. The BOR has contacted Mr. Forstner and Mr. Parker and they have not stated any objections to the trail proposal.

The BOR envisions the public trail corridor as serving as a management tool to help minimize dumping and other illegal activities on the rivers east side.

Near Kate's Farm:

The segment of trail between TorC and Williamsburg is rich in cultural history. Archeological sites, 1860's homesteads with a waterwheel and historic laterals can be interpretive elements. Previous, successful salt cedar eradication projects left brush piles along the river corridor. Further pile removal or burning might be necessary to provide a great visitor experience.

The BOR prefers the trail alignment stay closer to the river so archeological sites are avoided. Archeological surveys would be required, and there may be less constraints closer to the river. Instead of following the road along the mesa edge, the trail could follow some existing game/cattle paths.

At Williamsburg Park:

Lots of possible pedestrian bridge locations in this area. River is wider, if a center pier is necessary, the Army Corps of Engineers would be involved. The BOR and Village of Williamsburg are in discussions about cooperative management of some BOR land as a new Williamsburg park for day use and camping.

Re-convene at USDA Service Center

Review Group Memory Assignments from Dec 11 mtg

Some tasks have not been completed!

What	Who	When
Develop Talking Points	Gina	December 16
Review and edit talking points	All project team members	December 18
Follow up on Planning Team participants	See page 2 of notes	Jan 7
Explore Website and Social Media Presence report out at next mtg	Kyle Cunningham	Jan 14
Compile and distribute group memory	Attila, Merry Jo	Dec 18
Plan Familiarization Tour	Merry Jo, Brent Tanzy	Jan 7

PROJECT NAME DISCUSSION

The “Healing Waters Trail Segment” of the Rio Grande Trail merits consideration because Healing Waters is already associated with TorC. Thru-hikers would know they are near rejuvenating soaks and re-supplies in town. It is a unifying theme associated with the Hot Springs Historic District. Keeping the Healing Waters theme could help with marketing and funding opportunities. However, the Village of Williamsburg may have concerns about using the Healing Waters name since it is only associated with TorC and not Williamsburg. **ACTION: Bill Salee intends to have conversations with Williamsburg Village Trustee’s about trail naming ideas and to determine if there are concerns or objections to Healing Waters Trail RGT Segment.** Naming the project tabled until February meeting.

ESTABLISHING PROJECT VISION & GOALS

The NPS presented some information on creating a strong project vision and goals. NPS recommendation is for our working group to solicit some community comments about vision and goals before we craft the statements. The NPS Community Toolbox offers some resources:

<https://focus.nps.gov/RTCA/GetAsset/2b5bc57f-db57-4aee-b0a5-bd71f02c72e3>

What is a project Vision?

- A vision is a description of what your project or program will look like 10 years from now if its successful and achieves it's full potential. It is a statement of the preferred future.

vision creating

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Vision Characteristics

- Motivational and Inspiring
- Connects to you ultimate purpose
- Connects with past and present
- Takes a transformational leap into the future
- Provides a framework of decision making

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Project Goals

- Goals are broad, action-oriented statements which identify areas of priority for the next several years and the direction of change. They describe what you need to do to move towards the vision.

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Goal Characteristics

- They should connect to the critical issues
- Help establish priorities
- Externally oriented
- Support one another
- Brief and clear

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COMMUNICATIONS DISCUSSION

Talking Points were prepared for working group review. Our talking points assure everyone involved with this project are delivering the same message. This will be important in our community engagement strategies.

Some additional thoughts emerged for consideration:

- Highlight opportunities for interpretation and STEM learning

ACTION—Final review of talking points by Feb 17. Gina to re-distribute ASAP

Health Fair

Health Fair occurs Feb 1-2 at the Civic Center. It would be a great opportunity to talk to residents about trail possibilities. Gina is willing to coordinate. The NPS provided a 4 panel table top display for use at this event and throughout the project. The NPS prepared some concept panels for consideration. Two questions to ask the public:

If we developed trails on the other side of the river, how would you use them and, How could more trails help our communities?

The 4th panel could direct people to project website and list opportunities to participate in the project.

Some needs might include:

- Researching Bridge Designs and Costs
- Researching history and storytelling
- Learning about river launch sites and developing proposals
- Exploring trail networks on BOR/BLM land
- Helping with Pop-Up Civic Engagement activities

Health Fair Volunteer Coverage

Sat Feb 1

10-12 pm **Gina**

12-2pm **Linda**

2-4 Heidi

Sun, Feb 2

10-12pm _____

12-2pm _____

ACTION: TorC High School Commercial Arts Class could develop “professionally” designed panels for the display. Attila can provide Publisher files if necessary. Bill Sallee will check with art teacher.

Civic Engagement Strategies

Meeting participants felt a “kick-off” community meeting would not generate good attendance or participation and we should explore other avenues to engage TorC residents. Pop-Up Displays and Social Media should be initial strategies

The Communications Committee should also explore a speaker’s bureau to present the project at local civic club meetings, PTA, church congregations, etc.

Pop-Up Civic Engagement Locations/Events to consider:

Bullocks

Walmart

Post Office

TorC Brewery

Popular restaurants

Morningstar Outfitters

Art Hop

Social Media could start right away. The TorC Mainstreet and TorC Tourism Facebook pages could post project kick-off announcements, post questions identical to Pop_Up display questions and monitor and record community responses.

ACTIONS: Use FB Mainstreet page to share project information – Linda, use FB Tourism page to share project information -- Gina

A project webpage needs creation ASAP. Refer to Action items Dec meeting.

Next Steps //

Send out notes to Working Group

Review and follow-up on Action Items

Next Meeting

February 20th, 1pm Location TBD (10am hike of corridor, contact Attila if interested)

Agenda

Vision and Goal formulation based on community input

Review Rio Grande Trail Plan (NPS or State Parks to lead)