

Sierra County Rio Grande Trail Segment
 Planning Team Conference Call Mtg
 August 10, 2020
 “Group Memory”

Participants: Attila Bality, Merry Jo Fahl, John Masterson, Linda DeMarino, Brent Tanzy, Rebeca Dow, Deb Stubblefield, Sandy Whitehead, Kim Skinner, Maggie Fowler

Discussion Topics:

1. Communication outreach update- Merry Jo/Attila
2. Continued work on outreach
3. Plan for community meetings
 - a. Participate in webinars
 - b. Capture photographs of folks using area
4. Discussion on story-telling interpretive, when call for consultation
5. Selection of trail route
 - a. NEPA compliance
 - b. Visitor experience
 - c. Resource maintenance
6. Partnering with the City Planning grant
7. River Trail subcommittee establishment

ACTION ITEMS

What	Who	When
Re-locate Wburg Information Board to more prominent location	Mayor Stubblefield	ASAP Update: Village Trustee with adjacent property to Post Office agreed to allow information board to be erected on the property.
Chalkboard Comment Capture Google Doc	Merry Jo & Destiny	ASAP
Fact Sheet and Postcard Distribution Plan	Merry Jo and planning team	ASAP
Table Top Display Opportunities	Merry Jo and planning team	ASAP
Photo Database	All	All the time
Virtual Community Conversations – set schedule, confirm panelists	Attila, John,	Aug 30
Working Group Charge and Recruitment	Attila, all team members	Aug 30

Outreach Updates

- The FB posts had good momentum last month. Some videos and questions have been posted to SierraCountyNMTrails FB page. John M. also interviewed the NPS about the project.

- Two Information Boards erected at Rotary Park and Williamsburg Community Park with chalkboards to collect community voices. The NPS purchased the materials as a civic engagement strategy, City of TorC employees installed the information boards. The Rotary Park board is generating lots of comments, no activity has been observed in Williamsburg Community Park.
- Suggestion made to re-locate Williamsburg Community Park board to the post office since everyone in the Village visits the post office to collect mail. Mayor Stubblefield will explore relocation options.
- The group agreed to update questions on the chalkboards on Fridays. Primary reason is participation of Outdoor Adventure Program and ACT youth participation. Rotary Park is seeing heavy public use on weekends. Destiny has created a google doc that captures all the chalkboard question responses. *(See suggested questions at the end of this group memory)*



- On July 22, the NPS and Merry Jo presented the trails project at a City Commission meeting. Our new project fact sheets and postcards were also highlighted and distributed. A discussion is needed on where to distribute postcards and project factsheets. The NPS provided the development and printing of the outreach materials.

Continued Outreach Strategies

- This group needs to continue to think about more outreach strategies. Linda DeMarino mentioned a Community Branding group used Survey Monkey for community outreach and input and received about 70 responses – which is pretty good for our community
 - o We should consider a survey but have to agree on when to distribute it. (I.E. Early in the process or after we collect some ideas and ask for reactions)
 - o The survey link could get broad distribution through various FB pages including Sierra County Tourism, Mid Rio Grande Economic Development, Geronimo Trail, Elephant Butte Chamber of Commerce and local TorC sites.
 - o Linda suggested the survey should engage respondents with choices – like “What local benefits to our community could this trail bring: Economic, Health and Wellness, Recreation. The survey should give people ideas to think about, it shouldn’t be open-ended.
- A table-top project information board is available for display at community events, City Commission or Village Trustee meetings. Local planning team folks should determine good locations to set up the table top display

Plan for Community Meetings

- The NPS developed a virtual civic engagement proposal in April as a way to move from visioning ideas to discussions on issues, opportunities and strategies. The community conversation topics addressed numerous ideas including the Rio Grande Trail project, economic development, public health, river access and conservation.

- With on-going public health restrictions, it will be difficult to convene community members
- Virtual Engagement will have to continue. See River Trail Sub-committee notes in later section.
- Photos: We need to establish a good photo folder. We need pictures of people fishing, hiking, dog walking, tubing, canoeing. Pictures of human activity and pictures of wildlife or habitat. Photos can be emailed to Attila or Merry Jo and you can post to the SierraCountyNMTrails FB page. →



Story Telling

- The interpretive elements will be discussed. A good resource is the Healing Waters Trail Plan and Cultural Landscape Assessment – it covers a lot of history. We can use interpretation to tell stories without adversely impacting any cultural or natural resources. Three emerging topics include archeological site on top of river bench, historic ranching water wheel and remnants of an acequia.

Trail Routing

- The easiest location for the trail is on the existing dirt roadway on top of the river bench. Utilizing the roadway might require minimum compliance since it's an established route.
- The roadway may not offer the best visitor experience.
- Our planning team responsibility is to evaluate both options and determine a preferred route based on agreed upon criteria.
- It's likely federal compliance (NEPA / National Environmental Policy Act) will follow the adoption of our Conceptual Plan. Our plan should outline the steps necessary to help the BOR and BLM coordinate compliance requirements.

City NMFA Grant

- Wilson & Co has received a contract to conduct an economic feasibility study of a TorC "Riverwalk." How can our river trail planning and Wilson & Co efforts be collaborative.
- Mayor Whitehead is scheduling a meeting with City Manager Madrid to better understand the "Riverwalk" scope of work.
- The NPS has also scheduled a meeting with Wilson & Co principals.

Subcommittees or Working Groups / Actions

- The NPS suggests we establish several small working groups to address project related topics. Key subjects include: River Access, Trail Routing, Conservation. These working groups (4-6 people) could begin the in-depth work on understanding issues and making recommendations to the larger planning team for consideration.
- The NPS will create a "Charge" or list of tasks and responsibilities for each of the working groups. Other planning team representatives will have to help recruit participants.
- When we agree on the project vision and goals, it will be easier to move into the issues and opportunities phase—when we start thinking about strategies.
- Look at getting the community designated possibly as a "trail Town" and discuss how that will benefit the community economically
- Determined to have in place by October 1 the subcommittee and their objectives and to have the vision and goals in place
- BOR has volunteered to provide any mapping needs for the groups

Doodle Poll for next meeting forthcoming