Minutes of the Aldo Broadband Steering Committee Meeting

4-12-2021

The meeting commenced at 1:30 pm. In attendance were Joanie Connors, Marcia Stout, Denise Smith, Marty Eberhardt, Sally Sharp and Carol Morrison.

**Grazing Committee:** Denise delivered the Grazing Committee report. She and Marcia met with Renae Cox, a Range Tech detailed to the Silver City Ranger District of the Gila National Forest. The GOBs convinced her that we’d make useful volunteers. At a second meeting, Renae and Mercedes, an intern, met with Denise and Alan Graves of the Wilderness RD. The Silver and Wilderness staff clarified their priorities for grazing monitoring. Marcia and Nancy Coates then met with FS staff in the Bird Area, which is now a very high priority area for the FS since the GOBS have identified so many trespassing cattle incidents there. Marcia and her husband Dale also monitored the Gold Gulch area in the Burros.

A volunteer agreement was signed with the Gila NF which will provide mileage reimbursement for GOBs, and per diem if we camp out. Also, there may be an opportunity for those who can’t or don’t wish to hike far to monitor some small exclosures.

Marcia, Marty, and Denise will meet with Edgar Martinez on 4/19 to get the new monitoring program installed on our phones. This program was designed with some feedback from the GOBS. We also are planning a monitoring trip to the San Francisco River on 4/22.

**Earth Day:** Kate Scott of the Tucson GOBs and the Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center created a video about the border wall, which the Aldo GOBS are contributing to the video presentations for Earth Day this month.Joanie will be reimbursed for the $60 she contributed to the MAWC, and we will contribute an additional $40. Marcia will find out what other environmental groups are conducting clean-ups in the wild for Earth Day, so that we can relay this information to our members.

**2021 Legislative Session:** Joanie has been keeping us apprised of all the pertinent environmental bills, which is a lot of work. There was discussion of forming a coalition with other NM Broadbands to share the work in the future. Marcia will contact Linda and Susan of the Albuquerque Broadband. There was also discussion of contacting our legislator Siah Correa Hemphill if we see a need.

**Gila National Forest Revision Plan:** Marcia will be in on the conference call with local environmental groups on this. Denise, Marty, and Joanie will all back her up if she cannot be on the call.

**National Academy of Sciences Report on Water in the Upper Rio Grande Basin**: The Broadband needs to sign on to the Letter of Support for this to Senator Heinrich by today. We voted to do so.

**GOB COVID Waiver and Form:**  This is a new form that we need to use. It does mention that fully vaccinated people may carpool, given the environmental impact of doing so. Marcia has emailed this form to the Steering Committee. There was some discussion about whether our Broadband would need to require proof of vaccination for activities such as the retreat. This will be discussed at the May meeting. Sally will also let us know what is being discussed about this at the national level, and/or at other NM Broadbands.

**Broadband September Retreat:**  Carol will look into renting the entire Gila Hot Springs Campground for the nights of September 20 and 21, or possibly 21 and 22. The Wildwood Resort does not seem to be operating at this time. Individuals will pay for their camp sites, but if we don’t have them all rented, Steering Committee members said that they could help defray costs so that we could have the privacy of the entire campground.

**May meeting:** We will meet outdoors and in-person at a place TBD.

**Wildlife Connectivity:**  Marcia will be checking into the activities of the SW Environmental Center in this area.

**Malone District Exploration Project:** This is a small-scale” exploration project to look for copper and gold in the Burros. Marcia will take a field trip to explore the exploration.

**Possible Dam on the San Francisco River:** There is a map of this in GRIP’s March email. General disgust and consternation was expressed about this project, which we hope will be stymied, and which we intend to watch.

The meeting did not end on this negative note, as members expressed their appreciation for their colleagues’ efforts.

The meeting ended at 2:50 pm.