

## ElCaT Board Meeting Notes

Austin, TX

July 17, 2021

In attendance, in person: board members Tom Byrd, John Kisalus, Judge Bob Perkins, Dave Regan, Cindy Freeman; Executive Director Steven Gonzales; and Agency partners Aaron Mahr from NPS, and Brad Patterson from THC. Attending via Zoom: board members Chip Briscoe, Jesse Treviño, and John Pruett. Also present were Sergio and Melinda Iruegas of GTI Environmental, LLC. Absent were board members Adam Adams, Lynn Young, and Rebecca Blankenbaker.

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by president Cindy Freeman, who took the minutes in the absence of secretary Lynn Young, who had previously informed us she would not be able to attend due to being out of the country.

Minutes from the April 24<sup>th</sup> board meeting were considered. Cindy noted a minor typo on the last page in naming the Partnership for the National Trails System. A motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Judge Parkins and seconded by John Kisalus. Motion passed.

Sergio and Melinda Iruegas of GTI Services made a presentation about their efforts to assist ElCaT with the latest cultural and technological standards advocated by NPS. They have donated over \$365,000 in in-kind services to the organization.

Treasurer Dave Regan presented the financials. We are ahead of budget YTD by about \$50,000, with net income of about \$48,000. A motion to approve was made by John Kisalus and seconded by Judge Perkins. Motion passed.

Steven Gonzales presented the Executive Director's report. Efforts to establish new Model Trail Communities (MTCs) in central Texas have been pushed out a few months due to the pandemic and NPS scheduling. Good headway has been made in terms of logistics. The Onion Creek Metropolitan Park project is partly funded. ElcaT member and volunteer and performing artist Brian Beattie has established a Go Fund Me page that the association will be publicizing, so that GTI can continue their subcontract work on our behalf. Regarding the Austin / Travis County - Old San Antonio Road bridge near Estancia development: a dedication ceremony will be held on 8/29 at 5 pm. Signing efforts along the trail: updates were provided for Wilson, Travis, Bexar, and Sabine counties. Intern effort: Elaine Sullivan, who designed our traveling exhibit, will be volunteering twice a week. She will be working on a variety of projects including the Story Map and new brochure. Tom Byrd will lead a task force to review the Story Map prior to going live on our website. Intern Melanie Butler will be assisting Steven with a PNTS fall workshop. The traveling exhibit will be moving to Bastrop State Park from August 1 to September 15. Steven concluded by reviewing recent ElCaT events at Medina River Greenway, Lobanillo Swales, and Floresville.

We took a brief lunch break from 11:50 to 12:05.

Tom Byrd gave an update on the annual meeting, scheduled for October 22-23 at McKinney Falls State Park. He gave an overview of potential excursions and asked for a show of hand to reserve a block of rooms at Marriott South. He will reserve 10 rooms.

Jesse gave a Development Committee update, in writing and verbally. He emphasized that the trail is underfunded in terms of capacity, and relative to other national trails. Efforts will continue to increase funding at the national level, as well as the state of Texas and through private sources. John Kusalus offered to make it a bi-partisan push by arranging meetings with Victoria based US Rep. Michael Cloud (27<sup>th</sup> Dist.) and State Rep Geanie Morrison (District 30.)

New 5 year strategic plan: a draft version was reviewed briefly. Comments from the board and Agency partners are due by August 31. The final version will be voted on at the annual meeting in October. Cindy noted the 3 goals can be characterized by Capacity, Identity, and Protection. She also noted that we retained our mission focusing on Protection, Education, Engagement, and Promotion.

We received MTC updates from John Pruett and Dave Regan. John said the Rancheria Grande chapter is working on a Powerpoint highlighting sites in their area. Hopefully it will be ready for viewing at the annual meeting. Dave highlighted ongoing efforts to extend the hike and bike trail from Floresville toward Mission Espada. It will go in phases, with the initial phase focusing on Helton Park. He also noted that the currently established hiking trail in Floresville has recently been officially renamed as the Floresville El Camino Real Trail.

John and Dave then gave an update from the Chapter Logo task force. Their presentation reflected the wishes of their respective chapters. Rancheria Grande members preferred to have their chapter name below the Association logo, without a chapter-specific image. The Trail de Flores chapter has been working on a chapter-specific logo for over a year. Dave said they advocate all chapters who choose to have their own logo have common elements: maximum of 4 colors to coincide with the colors used by the Association in its marketing and branding materials, and 3 elements. Those colors should be the darker brown / maroon seen on the exterior of the Trail de Flores logo, the white of the lettering in the exterior, the mauve / creamish-pink color of the interior background, the cream color of the trail, and a red feature within the logo itself. As for the number of elements within the logo, there will be a limit of three elements; with one of them being the linear-trail within the logo, which would tie the other elemental features together. Regarding the border, which has been the source of much discussion, Dave offered to make it in the shape of the Association's logo, with the chapter's preferred image inside. Dave Regan made a motion to the board to allow chapters create chapter logos (but not be required). Chapter logos shall be the same shape as the Association logo, use the colors of the Association's logo and branding products, use the same font, and include no more than 3 design elements, one of them being a depiction of a trail. The board decided we could do a final email vote after seeing this image online. A motion to approve conditionally based on the future email vote was made by Dave and seconded by Tom. Approval was unanimous. A separate discussion followed that resulted in chapters being required to submit chapter logo designs to the board for approval. This approval process can be done on-line outside of quarterly board meetings.

Aaron gave an NPS update and mentioned 2 new leadership hires: chief of interpretation Paula Ogden-Muse and Faith Welty, a landscape architect. He said the interested party meetings for a potential Zebulon Pike NHT have been held. The outcome is uncertain. They are also beginning a feasibility study on the Emancipation Trail. He encouraged board members to use the 1-2-3 app with a GPS feature to document signage issues in their areas. Cindy mentioned a productive call she and Steven had with an NPS intern, Ramona, and Angelica Sanchez-Clark, on how to nominate sites in our areas for inclusion in the places to see portion of the NPS trail website, with further forwarding to the mobile app team. Cindy will forward a related email to the board.

Brad gave an update from THC. Caddo Mounds will be receiving an NPS Connecting Trails to Parks grant to enhance the Camino portion of their site. The state fair in Dallas will be held from September 24 to October 17. There will be an opportunity for EICaT to publicize our work. Mission Dolores is expected to reopen soon, with exhibit installations currently underway. The agency has also initiated the process of undertaking its 10 year statewide preservation plan and we are encouraged to get Camino resources and needs incorporated into it.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m .