



Yvonne Boudreaux
President

1045-1215 Board meeting

PO Box 14235
Albuquerque, NM 87191
(505) 296-1937
www.prairiedogpals.org
prairiedogpals@comcast.net

General Meeting Minutes

Date: 9 February 2020
Time: The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM.
Location: McLeod Mountainside Family YMCA (South Building), 12500 Comanche Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM.

Overview: Opening Comments by Yvonne B.

Yvonne thanked everyone for attending; she thanked the board members for serving and the volunteers for their efforts during 2019. She noted the many challenges that we had faced over the years and the ones looming in the future. While stress levels have been high everybody has pulled together to make the organization a success. She sent out special thanks for Sharyn D's years of service as she has retired from her board position. While Sharyn will continue to support PDP's artistic efforts her duties will now include a granddaughter, as Dr. Ana D, her daughter and one of the founders of PDP has a new family!

Yvonne went on to explain the PDP has been formed in the late eighties by Liz Green and Ana Davidson and other volunteers that were concerned about the urban prairie dogs living in Albuquerque. She recounted working with Mike Friggens on some of the earliest releases at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge and later with Jon Erz. Mike has since passed away and Jon has moved north to Las Vegas. She extended her appreciation to Kathy Granillo and Renee Robichaud at the Sevilleta for ongoing collaboration.

She extended thanks to Becky D, one of our longest serving and most reliable Stewards and Volunteers who hung up her feeding trolley last year. Becky was always out providing supplemental food to the prairie dogs along the freeway no matter the weather and was a regular volunteer for the releases. Yvonne said she would seek new volunteers through the Albuquerque Journal and Alibi to fill the gaps. Margaret D noted that she had some potential volunteers and would pass on the information.

Both Becky and Sharyn were given crocheted Prairie Dogs as a memento of their involvement with the species.

Yvonne outlined an aggressive spring and summer capture plan along freeway. If we can remove the prairie dogs from the interchanges, it will alleviate the need for supplemental food in this high traffic area. Ed U will develop plans accordingly.

With the departure of Becky coordination of the steward efforts will be needed to ensure that the sites are adequately covered; a coordination meeting will be scheduled later in February.

Yvonne noted that PDP has a community service offer from young man to help. Yvonne will work with him to determine where he might best fit in. Factors such as the time for community service and his abilities need to be ascertained.

Yvonne noted that she will be redoubling her efforts to get the Mayor to proclaim February 2 as Prairie Dog Day, into perpetuity. She noted it had been done once by Mayor Chavez and needs to be reinstated.

YIPS:

- Sharyn D for her years of work dedicated to prairie dogs; she retired as a board member this year but will continue to assist on media and art projects.
- Becky D, Nobuku C, and Debbie S for their stewardship efforts. There is not enough time to highlight their accomplishments.
- Frances G, Debbie S and Ray and Tania and Ella for hosting the garage sales.
- We have monthly and large donors who have sustained PDP operations over the years. Susan D has been a yearly donor since 2006 when PDP relocated a family of PDs out of her yard. Actions have a ripple effect.
- Jane L for her legacy gift, for naming PDP as her sole beneficiary.
- Paul P for getting PDP signed up for the Buffalo Exchange 5 cent donation. His efforts raised \$230.30
- Mayor Jerah Cordova for working with PDP to relocate prairie dogs at Eagle Park in Belen. Ray will follow up in the spring.
- Carrie B, who wrote a letter to the School of Excellence requesting that the administration humanely deal with the indigenous prairie dogs on their site.
- Ella's Catering Services, Inc. for the wonderful homemade cookies, brownies and breads.

NIPS:

- Current Administration: Public lands are under assault everywhere; the National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas, lower Rio Grande Valley, has already been bulldozed, and a portion of the irreplaceable and ancient Saguaro Cacti, and UN designated, International Biosphere Reserve, and part of the National Parks System, Organ Pipe National Monument, was dynamited for construction of the border wall.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2019 meeting

The minutes were approved as issued.

3. Old + New Business

President: (Yvonne B):

Yvonne reported that the board had been re-elected unanimously.

Treasurer: (Ray W): Ray briefly discussed income and expenses; during 2019 PDP had a surplus. Income was generated by contracts, donations, the garage sales, and “crowd funding” efforts by Jim, Margaret, and CJ. PDP also received quarterly “gifts” from Kroger coming from our friends who have signed up PDP with Smith’s Community Giving Program.

\$20,125.00	Total Income
\$18,616.00	Total Expenses
\$1,509.00	Net

Site stewardship: (Ed U)

During 2019 a total of \$3177, was expended on carrots, grains, dry food and hay. The program has suffered a loss with the departure of Becky which we hope to cover with some new stewards. Our efforts were augmented by donations of food from Costco and Whole Foods, thanks to efforts by Debbie, Becky and Bobbie. It was suggested that we strengthen our contacts with Costco and Whole Foods to ensure a continued supply of produce. Additionally, it was suggested that we “recognize” our sponsors with a plaque of appreciation.

Outreach and Education: (Ed U for Jim T)

Need volunteers for Tabling & Outreach Events (Becky will help.) The Westside Critter Carnival is the next outreach event on 7 March from 11AM to 2PM at 1650 Abrazo Road in Rio Rancho. If you can help or want information about upcoming events, contact Jim at 505 872 9842 or check out www.facebook.com/prairiedogpals.

Intergroup Coordination: (Phil C)

Phil discussed goings on with the state legislature, wildlife legislation, land conservation, advocacy, the areas that PDP is engaged in. We are half-way through the thirty-day session and time is running out.

One of the bills with a lot of traction is SB 75, Wildlife Trafficking Act, sponsored by Mimi Stewart. The bill enacts penalties for the trafficking of wildlife anatomy in accordance with CITES; The bill passed through the Senate and is onto the house and looks good for passage. The fines were reduced from \$25K to \$10K by the Judiciary committee. Paul P noted that the CITES act was enacted 50 years ago so it is about time that NM did something about this. Tribal usage is exempted; as are specific firearms and musical instruments.

Celina mentioned the recent intervention on a local household inhumanely holding a number of exotics. The animals were being rented out to movie productions in the area. This included a Kangaroo, which would not be covered by CITES. Apparently, the owners have now gotten some permits to keep the animals. Anything we can do to limit their ability to harm the animals is good; APNM is following up.

HB 223 (Nathan Small) and SB 102 (Mimi Stewart and Steven Neville) Agriculture & Natural Resources Trust Act: There is not much movement; it was scheduled for a committee hearing but something has superseded it. It provides for conservation on private land including water enhancement, preservation of open space, improvement of habitat, control of invasive species and staffing. It would be a recurring fund if approved, but time is running out.

SB 33 Study Funding of Nongame Species Conservation (Bill Soules), non-game conservation funding. Prescribe funding for State Game and Fish to study what funding is necessary to conserve nongame species. G&F already conserves game species, but this will expand to cover nongame. Cover other animals. Gets us away from the old sporting attitude. Supplements funds generated by Share with Wildlife license plates.

Paul P pointed out that Arkansas recently followed Missouri by allocating a percentage of the state sales tax to conservation. NM should adopt, a similar forward-thinking approach for conservation. Additionally, the members of these commissions should not be political appointees. They should be competent SMEs dedicated to conservation not appointees. NM is making up lost ground under the previous governor and there is a definite focus on protecting our state.

These bills are good. They need the support of the citizens of the state. We and our friends are encouraged to call our representatives showing support of these bills also contact the members of the Energy & Natural Resources Committee and Finance committee.

HB 124 Prohibit use of Chlorpyrifos in Agriculture (Damon Ely): The chemical was prohibited by the Obama administration due to its cause of cognitive disabilities; It was allowed by Trump. The bill isn't moving, and it is unknown of the chemical's effect on wildlife.

Tim H asked about trapping legislation; there is no legislation at present as the Game Commission has jurisdiction over game species. The rule making has been indiscriminate and does not affect prairie dogs. Last fall they passed a requirement that any traps be set at least 50 feet from any trail or road.

Carolyn spoke about NM G&F and the trapping issue. Based on her experience the Department sells license plates to promote awareness but issues and seems to encourage permits for trapping, which included leg hold traps. There are a lot of individuals within the organization that are

against trapping but as a whole the organization favors this outdated and barbaric practice. This conflict might be an area to exploit in terms of educating the entire organization. Neighboring states have balloted initiative to ban trapping which does not exist in NM, that's why we still permit this practice.

Graziella noted that the licenses go for \$20. It is very likely that these trappers, representing less than 2000 people across the state, do not likely report the income they generate from selling the pelts. Additionally, there are many trappers that don't even bother with permits. Frances noted that she had attended a meeting and the licenses to kill animals were being sold for \$4.00. The room was filled with trappers who claimed that their profession put food on their tables and benefitted the state. The entire organization is managed by folks committed to hunting, fishing and trapping. This should be reorganized so that the organization was run by ethical people that kept the best interests of the animals, communities, environment, conservation, cattle and farming in ind. We have a long way to go.

Debbie asked about the possibility of increased penalties for trappers that abuse the rules.

There are opportunities at the state: The NMWA report from last month, describes budget and staffing at state agencies; new people are moving into these agencies. This brings a new opportunity for Prairie Dog Pals to educate these folks and lobby on behalf of the prairie dogs.

Last year the legislature passed the Wildlife Corridors Act. The act mandates that the Department of Transportation and Game and Fish study and identify, **with the public**, to identify migration corridors. While this includes roads as traffic is a problem, it includes migration corridors and how to best protect and augment them. A company has been contracted to start the study and announce public meetings to get input. Participation is the best way to influence the future of this act.

Debbie mentioned that Banff, in Canada, already has a successful program; several Indian Tribes have also adopted similar plans as well as a number of other states. This act will put NM in the forefront, and we will have a mandate to build up infrastructure to accomplish. Obviously, PDs are not covered as they are a non-migratory species. Implementation will identify key areas where colonies can expand and get established. Phil is heavily involved disseminating information about where and when meetings are going to be held.

There is a wildlife corridor in Tijeras as well as a number of wildlife passages (sky islands) between Canada and Mexico. If you think about the urban sprawl and interstates this is an important project.

Lobby day is 13 February, you can talk to your representative; Ray usually goes, and it is a fun event. You learn how to write letters and meet

representatives, get to meet them and get lunch, Thursday. At the round house. Starts at 10.

Celina: Sign up early (for Lobby Day) if possible, as they only buy lunches for those who have signed up. Check out details on the APV website.

Opportunity: Since last fall NM has a Department of Outdoor Recreation. The department provides opportunities to engage people who don't know how they can help with conservation and learn how to do it. Working with the secretary could be a fruitful opportunity to help critters.

There is a lot of interest in conservation and protection of bison, on the north American continent. American bison society conducted their last conference in Santa Fe. A lot of discussion that we need a continent-wide strategy, genetic diversity approach. No discussion about prairie dogs which is interesting as the species are linked, great opportunity to advocate Prairie Dogs for conservation of bison.

Paul noted that Clovis is missing a real opportunity to preserve prairie dogs as they have bison; they could conduct environmental, photo, and general tours. Other areas include Las Vegas and Valles Caldera.

Debbie recounted her experience 40 years ago in Wyoming at Devil's Peak. The park provided food for sale for the prairie dogs and had people providing an educational experience about the colony. NM should do the same.

Lynn noted that while she was feeding near Walgreens tourists would frequently stop and ask, and took pictures, enjoyed there.

Candelaria: The "Do Not Feed" sign should be removed!!!!

Frances saw the first PD up of 2020, she also saw the last one up of 2019! She had been feeding at the Antique Connection well into December! Woo hoo for Frances.

Media and Art: (Ed U)

PDP hit 3000 followers on Facebook late last year. Most of it is thanks to Sharyn's artwork, though one post got over 13000 hits. It was a picture of a mom and pup prairie dog from National Geographic's pictures of the year.

Greeting Cards, Christmas Cards & Calendars will be sold during 2020. Assembling the cards and boxes is a time-consuming activity. It was suggested that we have a craft night. Yvonne declared it will be done.

Editor: (Frances G). Newsletter under way, people are working on articles, need feedback.

Legal: (Carolyn M):

No legal issues this year. Monitors face book, anyone has positive feedback to get membership up, just let her know.

Private & Singleton Rescue: (Margaret D).

The year was full of inconsistencies. Got a small, injured squirrel that turned out to be paralyzed in the lower body. After several months it subsequently passed; Worked with one homeowner and caught a mom and 5 young squirrels. Debbie caught a PD and a racoon. The PD on Madrid took the most time to catch with seven visits for Margaret and Frances. The prairie dog had over 30 burrows and was extremely wary. We were lucky to be there at the right time! There will be a story in the newsletter!

PDP Operations: (Ray W and Ed U).

Trying to reduce the number of feeding sites to reduce the workload of the stewards and save money.

In the absence of any contracts, will concentrate on Freeway and Tramway and likely spend a week in Bosque Farms. Ray and Mike will revisit Eagle Field in Belen for a follow up.

Cloudview: Alice won't be feeding there so it would be good to clear that site. We thought that there might be 6 left.

Roaming: (Graziella S):

Need a prioritized list of trapping sites:

4. Items of interest

Paul teaching biology. This spring, the students will do a research paper or volunteer project. Something that might work well with PDP. Paul is looking for reputable nonprofits and has put PDP at the top of the list.

There has been significant turnover of personnel at city and state levels, we should strive to reintroduce PDP to the new staff and perhaps consider a visit to the staging facility (for the Mayor and Director of Parks and Recreation).

Renee mentioned that a group of female students involved with STEM would be at the refuge in early June and inquired about the possibility of a release for them to experience. This can be coordinated but will require hold over of PDs. While this can be accommodated it would be male PDs as the females need to be released to avoid having live births in the staging facility. Renee will coordinate.

Celina and Frances both mentioned that the growing film industry might provide some opportunities for PDP media coverage. Frances questioned if we could show the BBC film on prairie dogs at the Guild. Mike Friggens had made some

previous films of the prairie dogs from a helicopter. Maybe make contact with a charter school, with film makin? Paul noted that CNM had a Media Department. Maybe we could a student to do some filming. It was noted that there was a teenager living along Tramway who makes commercials and video tapes football games; maybe he'd be willing to shoot one of PDP?

Frances cautioned that some people might get the wrong idea about what is being done on the refuge. She recounted the story of a lady that had told her that the relocated prairie dogs were ruining her farm (over 20 miles from the relocation site). The lady claimed to have caught a 7-pound prairie dog!!! While exposure is good, it should be tempered to ensure it is done conservatively.

The YouTube video showing a badger and coyote successfully hunting together got a lot of coverage on the Facebook page.

Al brought up the idea of creating a PD park; mayor is keen on publicity for route 66, and PDs are part of the old west. This might be an idea to pursue with the mayor. Several people recounted stories of locals and visitors enjoying the prairie dogs at the Walgreens. The PDs are a western heritage and part of Albuquerque. It is an uphill battle that not everyone will support. Frances mentioned the individual who would follow the stewards and pick up the food from the PD burrows

Opportunities exist.

Carolyn suggested that we present appropriate plaques to the local merchants who support PDP by providing produce. This was agreed upon. Becky, Bobbie and Debbie will advise. This was done in Santa Fe at the Railyard and was appreciated by all.

Organizations are a function of the corporate attitude; while some, like Costco and Whole foods have been donating, others either give to other charities (Smiths gives to Road Runner Food Bank) or don't want to get involved. While it is a function of the corporate office, local management can choose to be charitable or not. It is all a matter of how they are approached. It was suggested that we approach Road Runner Food Bank to see if they would give us excess produce. Becky noted that RRFB "usually" seeks nonperishable goods and not produce.

Debbie is a good steward of the food. When there is excess, she ensures that nothing goes to waste. She noted that a lot of the produce went to Animal Welfare during the winter months. In return they have helped PDP out with the loan of kennels for releases. Even donating kennels to us.

Paul noted that while PDP is noted on Con Slobodchikoff's Wikipedia site, there is not link to our website. PDP should follow up on reciprocal listings.

5. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:40PM

Meeting Schedule: The next annual meeting will be scheduled for Sunday, January 31, 2020