

**Board Meeting Minutes\_Final**  
**Orient Land Trust Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Orient Land Trust Spruce House Across from the Welcome Center**  
**October 21, 2017**

Orient Land Trust is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to the preservation of Valley View Hot Springs (VVHS) and its viewshed—including natural and biologic resources, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, open space, and historic and geologic features of the northern San Luis Valley—for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

**Record Attendance**

Board members: John S., Roger C., Patrick C., Martin J., Geneva M., Sarah H., Scott H., Aleia S., Steve S. All board members present.

Staff: ED Doug Bishop, Rosie R., Scott M., Mike O., Cherrye O.

Guests: David M., Barb T., Rob Z., Cynthia N., Phil B., Alexander H., John G.,

**Meeting Call to Order**

Board chair John S. called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM

**General Guest Questions/Comments**

Guest Alexander H. suggested that trees be planted for shade at the uppermost top pond. ED Bishop noted that the Nature Conservancy who holds the easement on the property would have to approve this and suggested that the Conservation Committee could be the place to review this further. Guest John G. commented that the springs on the beds of in Willow cabin make a lot of noise which is disruptive to those sharing that space. ED Bishop commented that we could look into this. Guest Phil B. introduced himself as the neighbor down the road and played an instrumental song on the guitar after saying that he had nothing else to share in english. Board member Steve S. made a special announcement that Mark C., OLT's lead astronomy volunteer, was here tonight and he encouraged board members to the astronomy pad beginning around 7:30 pm for viewing through the new telescope.

**Reports & Updates**

**Management Reports**

**Executive Facilitator (Executive Director) Report**

ED Bishop noted that his report follows the headings of the Strategic Plan. Board Chair John S. commented that he was on the last task force that updated the Strategic Plan we now have that was finalized in 2014. In answer to a question about other locations for the smoke hut, ED Bishop answered that basically where it is now, but further east closer to the pavilion. He shared that there has been discussion about possibly closing the smoke hut at 10 pm. This is in response to complaints about the negative impacts of smoke for campers in the sites close to this space and excessive noise during quiet hours.

**Facilities Director Report**

Board member Aleia S. asked about the installation of the drinking water disinfection system system and about potentially finding the reason for the drinking water positive test for contaminants. Facilities Manager Mark J. spoke to this saying that we are looking into what happened to pinpoint a reason for failing the water tests with geologist Jim M. Equipment has been ordered and staff is working out the implementation plan for the drinking water disinfection system system with digging starting next week to

take advantage of fall weather. The state completion date for the system is Nov 18 which may not be feasible for us to meet. Mark J. shared that we can continue to provide drinking water the way we have been under the boil order and that we are working as fast as we can. Answering board member Sarah H.'s question, Mark J. shared that he is documenting communication with the state.

### **Visitor Services Manager Report**

Board member Scott H. asked about volunteers at the ranch that were referred to as "Woofers"-WWOOF (Willing Workers on Organic Farms). Rosie explained that OLT is not signed up with this program, which requires that food be provided to volunteer workers, but that these volunteers had experience with that program at the other places they volunteered at. In past years we had signed up on the WWOOF website, but had not had any volunteers. These volunteers were from Switzerland and spent time mostly helping in the garden.

Ranch Manager Mike O. stated that the garden needs a full time person working and managing it in order to bring in more income. Rosie mentioned that the garden was created as a community garden and that she was proud of the volunteer effort this year. There was some discussion of the ranch harvest dinner this year and Rosie R. mentioned the success of the event reaching out to ranching families in the valley that would not come up to the hot springs.

Board member Aleia S. asked if we get feedback from Colorado College students about our educational partnership. Do students visit and become OLT members outside of that program. ED Bishop answered in the affirmative explaining that our main partnership is with the Freshman Team Building Program whose organizers and participants change every year.

Visitor Services Manager Rosie R. spoke about the success of the Science Camp. She was unable to fill a couple of open slots caused by late cancellations and she had some ideas to make sure open slots can be filled. One idea was requiring a deposit for attendance.

### **Ranch Manager Report**

Ranch Manager Mike O. shared that there is a new ranch hand employee at the ranch and the intention is that this will be a permanent position to replace the ranch help that we have had in the past. With the "Beehive" House at the ranch nearing completion the new ranch hand may stay at the ranch as well. Board member Geneva M. cautioned that compensation should be adjusted if housing is provided in this case adding that we need to be fair to other employees that we don't provide housing to.

Board member Aleia S. asked if more help was needed for tours at the ranch. Mike O. answered in the affirmative. Some suggestions were made to schedule ranch tours. Board member Scott H. also suggested that staff be proactive and ask for contributions for ranch projects from those visiting the ranch. ED Bishop countered that we already solicit ranch contributions at the front desk 50 times per day for Land Conservation and the ranch which is where membership donations are allocated.

Board member Scott H. said that since the ranch manager is using his own vehicle for ranch tours that it would be a good pilot program to raise funds for this project and he offered \$1000 matching donation of his own to start things off,

Scott H. commented that he is looking for ways to be able to pay for more staff at the ranch. It was pointed out that any increases in income from the garden would likely be offset by the added expense of seasonal paid help in the garden. There was discussion about a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) model for selling the garden produce. Board member Sarah H. added that an animal share program would be worth considering as well. Cherrye O. mentioned that we might need more animals to make that work and board member Geneva M. mentioned that we might get more revenue from retailing the ranch products at the Welcome Center. She also commented that OLT may now be ready to tap into government grants for a VISTA volunteer,

### **ISS Manager Report**

Questions and discussion during this part of the meeting concentrated on the status of the new database project. Information Services Manager Doug Bates shared that there is still much work to be done in only seven weeks and we should be prepared for the possibility that we will have to launch the new system next year instead of this year. Board member Scott H. asked if the vendor was over confident and underestimated the project. Bates answered in the affirmative and shared that they are saying an additional 800 hours may be necessary to complete the public facing parts of the project to our specifications. Board member Scott H. confirmed that their proposal was a fixed price (and time) bid based on our detailed requirements. Board Chair John S. asked what happens according to our agreement with them if the database project is done according to them, but not useable? Bates agreed that this could be the case. Bates also clarifies that although we are not going to turn on public booking initially, the public facing aspects of the project are still important. (Showing availability, for example.) VSM Rosie R. commented that by November 1st we are supposed to have a more workable staff product to start testing and using. Board member Scott H. said that he doesn't blame OLT staff for where the project is at now, stating that it is possible that the vendor either grossly underestimated the project or that they are incompetent, or both. He then asked if they were capable? Doug Bates replied that he couldn't speak to their intentions but has some concerns about their competency. We are still clarifying the next steps and we can use our current system for another year.

Continuing discussion on this topic board member Scott H. said that OLT doesn't have much leverage since only \$43,000 or so of the project hasn't been paid yet. He offered that perhaps the board should communicate directly with the vendor, if another voice is needed so that staff can remain on friendly working terms. ED Bishop commented that we need to see where we are at after the Nov 1 deadline, then get board feedback and decide if direct communication is necessary. ISS Manager Bates mentioned that on the positive side we have communicated with the same person on the vendor team throughout the project.

Board Chair John S. called for a break at 10:40 am and called the meeting back to order at 10:50 am.

Discussion wrapped up on this topic with ED Bishop's commented that tensions have escalated nearing the end of this large project and that he is nervous, but hopeful or cautiously optimistic. He will report initial thoughts to the board.

### **Reports & Updates cont.**

#### **Board and Committee Reports**

## **Board Chair Report**

There was no questions, comments or discussion about this report.

## **Board Treasurer Report**

This report did not make the deadline to be included in the packet, but was sent out to all board members by email. Board Treasurer Patrick C. shared that things are going well financially as we nail down expenses at the ranch and working to increase revenue there. ED Bishop commented that we are at a good point where our ratio of increased revenue to increased expenses is good.

## **Conservation Committee Report**

This report did not make the deadline to be included in the packet, but was sent out to all board members by email. Committee chair and board member Geneva M. shared that the committee has been reviewing the Strategic Plan and Ranch Plan. Soil testing and ranch planning next steps are moving forward. Geneva mentioned that there are things missing from the Strategic Plan which should be included like the recycling program. VSM and Volunteer Coordinator Rosie R. thanked the committee for spearheading the weed pull and roadside trash pickup events earlier this summer.

## **Internal Affairs Committee and Governance Committee Reports**

Board member and chair of both of these committees shared that the governance committee is working on the revision of the email voting policy.

He shared that the Internal Affairs Committee met on Oct. 16 and covered these topics: Updating the employee handbook. Continuing with the accountants that have done the audit for the last several years for this years audit. Establishing a new board designated fund for educational programs. The committee also talked about the suggestion that we look into a deed restriction ( like the one the founders put on the hot springs parcel when they donated it to OLT) that would guarantee clothing optional use of the ranch and other OLT properties. More information will follow on this topic. It was learned from a review with OLT's attorney that though a deed restriction can be done, future boards can change it. A resolution by the board could also be used to put into policy the board's wishes on this.

## **Updates**

There was minimal discussion about the Ranch Harvest Dinner update and the Astronomy Project report. Staff member and board meeting assistant Scott M. shared that the ticket sales from the Ranch Harvest Dinner covered all the expenses for the event, netting around \$75. Staff consciously choose to spend more money on the band for the event with the thought that they would draw a new audience for OLT and that we would sell more tickets to the event from those that know us as well. Also the catering costs were more because of additional staff requirements. The event was an outreach success. Board Vice Chair Roger C. asked if there was an insurance rider for the new telescope. ED Bishop said that it was covered under OLT's insurance, but not listed separately.

## **Old Business**

**New Parking area south of Welcome Center**



ED Bishop expressed that staff parking on the side of the road opens up space in front of the Welcome Center which has been useful to guests. He added that this is proof of concept for the parking lot idea. Board member Aleia shared that she is in favor of moving forward with a dedicated parking area. She shared that she understands and has weighed the environmental impact of disturbing a new area vs. the negative impacts of congestion from vehicles and parking in the village. Board member and Site Plan Committee chair Sarah H. welcomed input and asked how we'll come to a decision on this Site Plan Committee recommendation. Board member Aleia S. added that the provision to make parking in the new parking area mandatory seemed to be the cause of the sentiments against the proposal. She shared that she would like to move forward on the proposal without requirements to park there. Board member Geneva M. shared that she is in favor of the idea for the parking lot but wants to make sure it is a nice space for guests to use and it's fair across the user base. The proposed space for the parking area is flagged, so those interested can see the area.

No decision was reached on this.

Board Chair John S. called for a break at 11:30 am and called the meeting back to order at 11:40 am.

### **New Business**

#### **Presentation by Colorado Parks and Wildlife about the Land Conservation Meanders Project - Paul Jones**

Paul Jones from Colorado Parks and Wildlife gave a slideshow presentation about the status of the species protection of the Rio Grande Sucker and Rio Grande Chub. These species are managed for active recovery designated as Tier 1 Species of Concern: the highest level of state protection. Paul Jones explained that the goal is recovery of healthy species before they need federal endangered species protection. OLT lands (ranch meanders and reservoir) referred to as the "Hot Springs ditch" is an important part of the CPW's recovery project with these fish. Rio Grande Sucker fish are being stocked in the reservoir and meanders. From a conservation standpoint, CPW is very pleased with the habitat creation on OLT lands, as well as the health and growth of fish populations.

Board member Scott H. asked if the Hot Springs ditch is the only CPW project area that is maintained by a private entity. Paul Jones answered, no, there are other areas on private land and one ranch does actively manage. In answer to another question, Paul Jones said that as long as we aren't spraying in the water, the fish species are hearty and resilient enough that humans swimming in the water should not be a problem. There is no evidence of disease transmission. (Note: OLT's insurance coverage does not allow recreation/swimming in the reservoir.)

ED Bishop asked Paul Jones to speak about the water loss from the volume of water at the start of the meanders to the end of the meanders at the reservoir. This means less water available for agricultural use. Paul Jones shared that there is more water loss than evaporation would indicate. The extent of the water loss is not expected and Paul Jones theorized that geologic factors play a role in this and won't be easily mitigated, if at all. There was discussion about helping to find the source of the water loss. Paul Jones mentioned seeing how much bank storage of water there is, explaining that streams transport sediment and dissipate energy. Velocity and energy are not a one to one ratio. Paraphrasing his explanation, he continued that the higher velocity of water flowing without meanders can actually drive the water underground. Meanders bring water back to the surface and build wet soils which store water

better. Other ideas about piping water around areas of high water loss in the meanders were mentioned but this could have a negative impact on the healthy habitat creation. From a wetlands perspective Paul Jones said, the meanders are doing exactly what we want, though he recognized the need to address water loss concerns.

### **Lunch**

Board Chair John S. called for a break for lunch at 12:20 pm and reconvened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

### **New Business cont.**

#### **Early Payment toward loan for new database.**

### **Motion**

After an explanation from ED Bishop that we have been putting money away for the loan payment on the new database, \$25,269.84, a motion was made by board member Geneva M. and seconded by board member Roger C. to approve an early payment on the loan in the amount of \$25,269.84. Without further discussion the motion was passed unanimously.

#### **Creation of new Board Designated Education Fund**

Board member and Internal Affairs Committee (IAC) chairperson Martin J. shared that the IAC recommends starting this fund. It has not been decided what initial allocation should be made to the fund, nor the percentage of net operating funds that should be put into the fund, if any. Staff member bookkeeper Scott M. shared that board designated funds are not restricted funds, but reserves that the board has recognized as important. Board member Aleia S. asked what is included in the educational fund. How is that being defined and what programs will it cover. Board chair John S. suggested that the IAC draft a resolution and allocation structure for the new fund to be considered by the board at the next meeting in January.

#### **New Windows for Oak House Project**

ED Bishop introduced this project as a December 2018 project that has been long talked about and is now on the schedule for completion. No decision is necessary at this meeting but he wanted the board to have awareness of the project because it needed to be approved as part of the 2018 budget. No further discussion or decision.

#### **Year round Massage Space Yurt in the space currently occupied by the Tipi**

ED Bishop introduced this topic saying that a yurt would provide a year-round structure for massage without being a permanent structure and could be placed in the same location the current massage Tipi sits. He said the structure could be heated with geothermal water and added that the Site Planning Committee should look at this. There were questions from board members about a building permit, which would likely not be needed given the current design of a natural earth floor. OLT massage therapists, Cynthia N., Anita P. and reflexologist Suzanne R. were there to help present the idea and talk about the positive impact of the massage program at OLT. They passed around pictures of similar yurts used as massage spaces. The therapists also mentioned helping with fundraising for this project so the

impact to the budget would be minimal. Suzanne R. also brought up the possibility of a hempcrete structure. There were questions about this. Board member Scott H. suggested that the board should take a step back and look at the big picture of all OLT projects coming up before making a decision on this. Board member Geneva M. commented that the Site Planning Committee should be involved in that. VSM Rosie R. spoke about the positive impact and growth of the massage program since she has been at OLT, commenting that this is an appropriate time to consider this. Board chair John S. asked that this project go to the Site Planning Committee for review and recommendation to the board.

On the suggestion of cataloging expected (and even dreamed of) OLT projects so that the board/staff have a resource when considering individual projects in the larger context of other short and long term expectations/goals, ED Bishop spoke in favor of putting together a list of projects. There was more discussion on this idea later in the meeting.

### **Policy Review**

#### **New Strategic Plan Update**

It was mentioned at the last board meeting that it was time to revisit and revise the Strategic Plan. Committees were asked to review the current plan. Board chair John S. asked if a task force is the way to go to gather input, revise the plan and then present it to the board for approval. ED Bishop answered yes. Board member and Long Term Vision Task Force (LTVTF) member Scott H. suggested that LTVTF would be a good place to do this because this task force has already done good work that will inform the new strategic plan. Though no formal vote or direction was given there was general agreement that the LTVTF should work on this.

#### **Ranch Plan Update**

Board member and Conservation Committee (CC) chair Geneva M. shared that the Conservation Committee is working on the Ranch Plan revision. The current plan is a partial version that needs to be updated to provide more direction. For example the areas of visitation and recreation at the ranch are not addressed in the current plan. Board member Scott H. has been active in looking at models for the ranch operations that may be applicable to OLT and he has been included in the CC discussions. He shared a document with the committee outlining his thoughts after the July board member ranch tour. ED Bishop's written thoughts have also been shared with the committee. Geneva M. asked for guidance on how the board/committee should proceed to hash out these ideas. It was suggested that a Sunday work session after the Saturday board meeting in January would be a good idea. ED Bishop shared that staff has been brainstorming what we will do next year at the ranch suggesting that letting the investments that have been made at the ranch over the last couple of years mature. We are not in a rush. Board member Scott H. shared that naturism at the ranch is important. Board member Geneva M. spoke in support of naturism at the ranch as well.

### **Financial Reports**

In answer to why membership income is up this year, staff member Scott M. answered that increased demand and member benefits are likely reasons. Board member Scott H. brought up Internal Affairs Committee member former board member Myron H.'s suggestion to make a 5 year project plan. ED Bishop added that the list would be fluid, not complete. Board member Roger C. suggested that land



acquisition projects should also be on the list. Board member Aleia S. suggested the ED Bishop can start the project wishlist and committee heads can add to it. There was a question about how projects will be funded. We have been funding most projects from previous years board designated reserves not from current year operating income.

### **Break**

Board chair John S. called for a break at 2:55 pm and reconvened the meeting at 3:05.

### **Draft 2018 Budget Review and Discussion**

ED Bishop explained that the 2017 budget was based on 2015 actuals since we start the budget process before the previous year is complete. To provide more accurate estimates, the basis for the 2018 draft budget is 2017 Jan-Sept actuals added to 2016 Oct-Dec actuals.

Board Treasurer Patrick C. asked why the budget for the ranch is not changing. ED Bishop answered that if we do more at the ranch then employee income will rise as well as the potential for more income. Board member Scott H. asked if the revenue budgeted being the same as 2017 is the best guess of what the ED thinks we will do. ED Bishop answered that he started with the premise that we could do at least as good as 2017. Board member Scott H. suggested that the budget for legal expenses be increased to \$15,000 and there was agreement on this. Board Treasurer Patrick C. suggested that the increase in employee expenses should be increased by 4 or 5%, not the 1% increase in the current budget. ED Bishop stated that the employee expense for 2015 was high. He is trying to stay in the 50% range of employee expense to income. Board member Scott H. asked what employee expense increases would be. ED Bishop answered that raises and more seasonal help account for the increases expected. The suggestion was made that any new employees should also be accounted for in the budget. There was agreement to increase the budget on employee expenses to \$790,000, 5% of the 2017 actual estimates.

Board member Roger C. asked if the final draft of the budget could be ready in December so the board has plenty of time to review before approval at the January 2018 meeting. Board member Scott H. asked what particular expenses make up the Village Improvements category and details will be sent to the board on that. Board member Sarah H. asked if the Oakhouse foundation project should be in the budget. ED Bishop answered that work is being done this year and the foundation has been shored up. No large expenses are needed or expected for this.

### **Adjourn Regular Meeting**

With a couple of final comments the regular meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm. First, there was a reminder that board members and staff needed to have bank paperwork notarized. Second, there was a reminder that a sunday work session would be scheduled after the saturday January board meeting.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

 1/20/18  
Martin Jolley, Secretary Date

 1/20/18  
John Standish, Chair Date