

June 14, 2022

Re: EPC June 16 hearing regarding zone map amendments for 4 west side properties: 1) Calabacillas project # PR-2021-005816, 2) Boca Negra project # PR-2022-006903, 3) La Cuentista project # PR- 2022-006906 4) Poole Property project # PR- 2018-001402

Dear EPC Chair MacEachen and fellow Commissioners,

We support designating the acquired land as Major Public Open Space. The public has work very hard to support the acquisition of these lands to preserve Albuquerque's unique landscapes, and archeological sites. The public has also worked hard to ensure these properties are protected and that the surrounding land uses will be complementary and sensitive to its protection.

This is an unusual process requiring acquired Open Space lands to go through an EPC process for a zone change in order to designate it as Open Space. In the past, once open space land was purchased, it automatically became Major Public Open Space. It did not go thru a hearing process. This method of designating Open Space through a hearing process has never been done before. It tends to treat the Open Space like an application for development.

There are also questions raised about the Use Table that applies to Open Space. Attendees that attended the April 25th facilitated meeting to discuss the 4 open space properties, questioned the IDO 4-2-1 Use Table, associated with the Open Space NR-PO-B designation, which lists numerous uses as permissive, or permissive accessory, that can be applied to the Open Space properties. Most of the uses would not be appropriate for the properties, that are being reviewed today. Please note that there are also State and Federal statutes that need to be adhered to, to guide and regulate the protection of wildlife and the natural, and cultural resources. The purpose of purchasing land for Open Space is to maintain its natural character and protection, and not apply inappropriate uses to it. Here is a summary of the properties we reviewed at the facilitated meeting, and support for Open Space designation.

1) Calabacillas: Calabacillas is an old pueblo archeological site, where numerous artifacts have been found. Two years ago the Open Space advisory board inspected the area and supported it for Open Space acquisition.

2) Boca Negra: Is a natural arroyo with volcanic rock outcrops, and boulders, that leads to the Middle Geological Window and northern most volcanoes. Some of the boulders have petroglyphs on them. Kurt Anschuetz, a leading archeologist in Albuquerque did a presentation several years ago, explaining that the pueblo people used these arroyos as pathways to the volcanoes.

3) La Cuentista: Will add a total of 60 acres to the Petroglyph National Monument, buffering and protecting the escarpment and will preserve numerous rock outcrops, juniper trees, along with the abundant wildlife and several petroglyphs found on the rock out crops. The view shed is spectacular.



La Cuentista has rock outcrops, junipers, grasslands, wildlife and views!



Petroglyph found on one of the rock outcrops at La Cuentista.



La Cuentista provides a nice open space buffer between the escarpment and the residents. This area will preserve multiple rock out crops, junipers, grasslands and the spectacular views of the mountains forever. Nearby residents and home builders have expressed gratitude for having the La Cuentista Open Space as a community amenity.

4) Poole Property: Mr. & Mrs. Poole purchased the land above the Oxbow from the Taylor Ranch Family in 1957. The property overlooks a significant wetland, as well as the Albuquerque area, the Bosque and River. There is abundant wildlife in the area. The property will buffer and protect these resources.



Sample of Wildlife on the Suzanne Hanson Poole Property & Oxbow Wetland



Common wildlife:

- Amphibians
- Birds
- Butterflies
- Dragon & Damselflies
- Mammals
- Reptiles

Recently spotted:

- Large turtles
- Wood ducks
- Great blue heron
- Green heron
- Black-crowned heron
- Cattle egrets
- Harriers
- Coopers hawks
- Black phoebes & Says phoebes
- Swallows
- Sparrows
- Tanagers
- Chats
- Vireos
- Bluebirds
- Indigo buntings
- Hummingbirds (3 species)
- Woodpeckers & flickers
- Scrub jays & Stellars jays
- Marsh wrens
- Kinglets
- Kingbirds
- Red winged blackbirds
- American & Lesser goldfinches
- Dragonflies



Poole property overlooking the Oxbow wetland in the winter.



Taos Pueblo Indians and friends, on their way to Washington for the signing of the bill returning Blue Lake, December 1970. Corinne Locker, second from left; the Governor of Taos Pueblo; Suzanne Poole; Cacique Juan de Jesus Romero; and Paul Bernal.

Thank you,
Rene' Horvath - Land Use Director for WSCONA