

#2 – If you owned this property and money was not a limiting factor, what is your vision of the property 10 years from now?

Birdwatching, walking, schools from Lockhart, Austin, and Luling.
3 schools in the county Prairie Lee, Lockhart, and Luling
38,000 people live in Caldwell County, 14, 000 people live in Lockhart

Would like to see people hike and bike. Would like to see intercity schools from Austin come down for education. He felt there was a need for outdoor education and that towns of Luling, Lockhart, and Prairelee would use it.

This is your job. We are looking to you for experience. It could be an educational tool and provide digital curriculum. Geology Canyon as an example.

At one point he intimated that we (ANCA) were hired to produce that vision for the site. He feels it is uniquely located, near Austin and policy makers. He feels site could be a “champion” of wetland preservation model. It makes him wonder what else could be show-cased there.

He wants to know what the potential is out there and how they can achieve it.
He feels it is best used for the community as an educational tool

“I would clean it up.” There should be fish in every pond. There have been three floods in the last two years.

“If you don’t have controlled access, you’ll have a bunch of dope dealers. . . . That would be the worst thing.” Drugs are a big issue.

“I wouldn’t do anything with it.” He doesn’t know about hunting. Maybe duck hunting would work.

“Whatever they decide to do, it’s not going to bother me.”

“I’d probably use it for winter grazing, more than anything.” You could divide the property using electric fences, but it might not be worth it. He doesn’t believe goats would work—too many predators. “The little ones would never make it.”

Clean up.

Fish in all holes on property.

Good for boy scouts.

Center, static exhibits, full trail system, two full time staff & 1 part time. You want it open more than anyone I know. Open seven days a week. Limited access. Volunteer Crew. Would Carrie be able to manage this process, YES! SLOW access building up to more access and a nature center. Regular use.

Is the demand there? Not sure. Marketing Plan. Natural Resource is quite compelling... when there is water in it... needs access boardwalk or two, fishing pier. Viewing Tower...

Facility with full trail system, safe use for recreation, 2 staff, open hours 7 days/week, volunteer crew

Maintain the property as a natural wetland habitat. Provide great water quality for Plum Creek

“I can see the community becoming involved with this project”

“A place where a lot of folks could visit.” He mentions having a detailed bird list for the site. “A ton of clean-up needs to be done.” His model for the project: state parks with interpretive programs for kids, projects done by scouts.

Place for lots of folks to visit. Walking trails. Bird lists and info.
Great place for ed. programs with rangers and boyscout projects.
Lots of clean-up to be done to make it safe.

“I’d love to see it be what a wetlands should be . . . ,” i.e. filtration, wildlife, etc. His model would be the Dow Chemical wetlands on the coast. It has swamp buggy and airboat tours. They hunt it for deer but not for waterfowl. He wouldn’t want to see hunting here. Locally, people hunt “tanks”—ponds. “Open to the public, but on a limited basis.” He’d like to see it used as a learning site for local universities like Texas State. Set aside some areas especially for education.

“I would love to see it develop slowly into something McKinney Roughs-like.” The County would be interested in that, he thinks.

Wetland, estuary, some public access. Similar to DOW wetland down the coast.
No hunting should be allowed. Plenty of other places to hunt.

His focus is the mitigation. Regarding education, “You could spend a lot of money real quick and be back where you started.” The ponds dry out, the plantings die.

PC Cons. Dist. Might have possible interest in being involved. Not sure what role the board would want to play.

Maintained the natural setting. We don’t have place like this. We have a lot of people interested in a natural setting. County had made mistakes in the management and it is really over grown.

Maintained a small entrance, picnic area, playground, rest area from the highway, nature trails, go enjoy the setting, camp, stroll, vehicular access – bicycles, no quick way back. No trailer parks, primitive camps, not many at the Lockhart State Park.

Playground, picnic tables, bicycles, walking, strolling.
He felt the local trends show that the public want this type of area to use.

The City would have maintained the natural beauty if they’d had a blank check. Camping, hiking, maybe bicycles, probably not cars. “You’ve mentioned nature parks and preserves—I think that’s what we have in mind.”

“We did not want TxDOT to come and buy this property and then just close it off.”

“We’ve had several groups that wanted to develop natural areas, and they’ve gotten a lot of resistance.” However, a proposal to close Lockhart State Park sparked an outcry. It gets a lot of use.

“I think the idea of the cross-country meet went by the wayside. . . . I don’t think that’ll ever happen with our present cross-country coach.” The meet is too big—needs too much parking.

Says there are a lot of people clamoring for bike trails, if that wouldn’t be a detraction from the nature area.

Mentions it as a tourism draw, too. “I see this as another tremendous attraction.” He refers to the property as “the park.” He thought it would be open a year ago.

Maintain natural setting. Lots of people interested in the natural terrain.

Maintain small entrance, restrooms, maybe small playground. Maintain trails.

Place for people to go and enjoy the beauty of it. Nature park/preserve is what everyone has in mind. Natural campground.

Kids coming out. Community involvement, Environmental Learning area, GBRA is already involved in schools, outreach. There is a good volunteer base for stream cleanup.

Get kids out there. Conduct outreach activities. Use site for environmental learning and exposure.

When asked about community perception of the site, he said “I don’t think anybody knows about it”.

Functioning toward some purpose like JBSWC

Improve water quality of PC watershed. Safe access, minimal roads, walking paths. Beautiful area and would like to share the aesthetically pleasing area with the PC Watershed community.

“This is modern life and has minimal impact on the community” “Would like to show best practice”

Functioning toward some purpose like JBSWC

Improve water quality of PC watershed. Safe access, minimal roads, walking paths. Beautiful area and would like to share the aesthetically pleasing area with the PC Watershed community.

“This is modern life and has minimal impact on the community” “Would like to show best practice”

“. . . A place that’s functioning toward some purpose.” Something that improves water quality, where you could look at it as it comes in and as it goes out. “Minimal roads, mostly walking trails.” Cattle grazing could be “really good or really bad.”

“It also needs to be beautiful. When you come in, it needs to have a certain feel.” He envisions a demonstration area for the 21st century. “I think it’s about opening people’s eyes. . . . People in Lockhart could feel like, ‘This is ours!’”

“Place that functions to some purpose.”

Demonstrate improved water quality. Improved infrastructure, but minimal roads.

Grazing could be good or bad. Good is minimal impact.

Have demonstrations out there.

Needs to be esthetically pleasing.

Tie water quality into water conservation. Should show how you can improve the environment (solar, wind power).

This project could “open people’s eyes.”

Office and nature center, partners that would participate in the process. Educational tours, trained docents, limited public access.

Was the public given a chance to give feedback? YES, the city had ample time. But there was no valuable input from the public. Not much contact.

“I want to see this as a diamond in the rough”

“Lockhart has to know as something other than four BBQ joints”

Build nature center with offices, have partnerships engaged, educational tours, trained docents, limited public access.

Wants it to be a property that enhances the community; wants it to “be a centerpiece of the Plum Creek Watershed.”

Hikers should use it, walkers, camping, scouting.

In 10 years, “an office and nature center” on high ground adjoining. Partners that take responsibility for certain parts. Get “pavement kids” to see what “pristine nature” looks like.

“We’re living in the 1940s in this county.”

Put office/nature center on hill.

Partners to participate would take responsibility for specific areas. Use volunteers, docents.

Grow additional wetland vegetation. We could expand the property to include more riparian wetland habitat. Acquire more upland habitat to protect the watershed and viewshed. It would be best to begin expanding now before Austin grows this direction.

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It could be a nursery for wetland vegetation. Maybe expand the property, since the region is growing. “I’d do everything I could to expand it right now.”

Use wetland impoundments to grow nursery vegetation to sell.

Could property be expanded up Plum Creek Preserve uplands as well?

Wildlife and waterfowl, food plots

Lease for cattle grazing like Bobbie Smiedt- they leased the surrounding property/.
Drain wetland, plant millet. Sell this idea to the public and make awareness of what it is.
Feral hog problem.

“Come to Lockhart, eat barbecue, and do the fun run.”

“It needs to be regulated. It needs to be controlled locally.” [Referring to access.]

“It’s not appropriate for vehicles. . . . If you allow motor vehicles in there, the whole thing is ruined.”

“I think the waterfowl is the key attractor. . . . The opportunity to make this a major wildlife—waterfowl—site is pretty significant.”

He suggests that the site needs food plots, and says that if you have cattle, you can draw water from the creek. He thinks an arrangement with Ducks Unlimited would be good (to offer controlled hunts).

“Needs to be wetlands with wildlife first.”

Don’t see changing it, just enhancing it.

No permanent structures because of flooding.

This site should be for everyone, but special privilege could happen (DU hunt for example)

“We have a lot of people interested in hiking . . . birdwatching.” Might be a good place for Scout jamborees. “A place for city people to get out into nature.”

Science groups in the schools would utilize it. Four-five teachers have expressed interest.

No vehicles. Fishing ponds. Trails. “Of course, all ADA.” He’d like elderly people to have access.

“I probably have received 150 calls” from people wanting to walk on the property. Quite a few elderly people, many who grew up along the creek. “Even from the east side.”

Hiking, birding, scout jambourie, lots of plants, waterfowl. Place for city people to get into nature. Fishing ponds, trails, ADA, signage, plant id markers

NO vehicles.

Old bridge is historical, former hwy 29

#3 – What is the top challenge to achieve that vision?

Funding and solid partnership

Floods have delayed the maintenance and private lands around

No grant writer on staff

No parks in the county

The climate of great partnerships between Ducks Unlimited and Master Gardeners

FUNDING!! He felt there is opportunity in GBRA and GBRT building on existing partners and in writing grants for funding.

PR!! He feels that people don't even know it is there. Felt there was a perception problem.

Funding! We could accumulate funds from small funding sources and provide an anchor tenant to continue the funding. Wildlife federation, Meadows Foundation

Funding!! But feels GBRT should tie their goals into the Watershed Plan for better funding success.

The dead trees (which are numerous) will take out the fences again when flooding returns. Flooding will also take the roads again.

Roads and fences hard to maintain.

Getting people to manage the property

He felt that partnerships could be a challenge – just getting people to show up for meetings.

The Trust's ability to manage the property with its limited resources. Maintaining it is "an unknown to me." Manpower is a concern.

"It would be much better to keep it open a whole lot of the time to the public, in my opinion."

"I think we'll need partners."

"Most of our experience has been with conservation easements."

Management with limited people and resources.

Maintaining is an unknown.

Doesn't know what project might cost.

The biggest challenge: flooding. "That's one thing here—we have either no rain, or way too much."

Not too much infrastructure because of flooding.

Put berm around public area so doesn't get flooded.

Open limited area for education of public for wetland studies.

County would probably love it to draw tourism and tax generation.

The inability to build there. The Conservation District was offered the property but declined. They own no property, just easements.

Most of the Conservation District's money (two-thirds) comes from Hayes County, though only about a third of the watershed is in that county. There is more development there, though.

Kill weeds, clear brush

Education benefits. Can be used as is, but limited because ponds go dry. Lots of trees have died.

Budget is limited.

Recurring maintenance issues from flooding.

Maintenance of the property.

Blood weed took over the park. Tons of clean up.

Nature center or preserve, cross country went by the waste side. They like the cross country where it is in the city park.

What would be a similar Place – What model would that be. Marble Falls, Bastrop. Bike trails and walking trails. Build that into a plan. Dedicated bike lane from the square to the PCWP.

FUNDING!!! BUT, He said, “there are strong nature advocates in the area who have money...”

When the property was deeded to GBRT, he said that the county assumed GBRT had a trust fund. He also thought they would have greater access to grant monies and that they had experience managing natural land.

He said, “it all comes down to money and manpower.”

“It all comes down to money and manpower.”

Only thing holding it back is money.

“Lots of potential for tourism draw for people from all over Central TX.”

Funding

GBRA gets revenue from water sales

GBRT get revenue from GBRA

We need more improvement on a watershed protection plan. What is GBRA getting out of this partnership? It could bring revenue into the lab.

Nick is involved in the PC Partnership.

MONEY! 😊 He said that if GBRT could figure out how to put a monetary value on the benefits that the site could bring to the community, it may help with raising money or drawing partners into the fold.

When asked about GBRA, he stated that they struggle. That they only bring \$\$ in on water sales.

He highlighted partnerships and said he felt GBRT should try to build off existing funding mechanism.

Investment, capital improvement

Investment, capital improvement

Money? It's going to take some investment.

Engage local civic groups to do work. Could use Pegasus School for volunteer labor.

Shape a vision then ask people to help out there. Engage first then get help.

Organizing a core group or planning committee. They would be the ones that understand what happens out there and can do something about it. How can we find a sponsor?

There is not the capacity currently to bring this process forward. Not sure, how do you pull them away from their current work to put them on this project.

Who would be the on the ground champion?

How about the Board of Directors capacity to bring this forward?

Fundraising, embryonic stage. gets the money from the water selling. Grants – anticipated forms of revenue. Come up with the funds for salary and benefits through a grant. Possible that a similar partnership like Plum Creek Watershed Partnership. The soil and water conservation board started this with an embryo. 100,000 K

“We are counting on living and dying by the grant”

When we can present an organized approach than we can organize the locals. Is there a relation that the City and County can do what we want? No they can't even keep the city parks. The revenue is not there but the potential is there.

Partnership Development - MOU with DU about the wetland on the coast. San Antonio Bay Foundation is an example of how this can work.

Organizing a planning committee is biggest challenge.

When asked if funding was a challenge, he said “I am fool enough to believe there is money out there, but it is not going to come from Caldwell Co.”

Top challenge is to organize the planning group.

“I wish I could say there was an up-and-going organization” that could lead on this.

There might be “a project champion there, but they don't have the time.”

The Trust Board is “in the embryonic stage.” It does have some capable people. “This [project] didn't come from the Board.” They were “very receptive to taking ownership.”

“They have been far too willing to let me take the lead.” The Board members are identified by county, so there is a perception that this project, in Caldwell County Funding will also be a challenge. “In the water field there’s a lot of [grant] money out there.” “It’s not going to come from the citizens of Caldwell County.” He focuses on Ducks Unlimited, whose local director is on the Trust Board. Also mentions the Mitchell Foundation.

He thinks if they could get a grant they could match it from their \$400,000 and hire a staff leader, at least for a couple of years. “That person’s out there somewhere.” They might need to create something like the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership.

Dangerous – get dead trees on ground, clean up roads, fences back up.

Open for hikes. Give tours – drive them around to look.

Camping areas for scouts (not public)

Give work projects to Pegasus School

“Caldwell County needs to stay in control.”

Haven’t had input from any local interest groups.

Willingness of landowners to sell tracks of land. It would be important to identify the first to sell then it would have a domino effect.

Willingness of landowners to sell tracks of land. It would be important to identify the first to sell then it would have a domino effect.

“It may not be the money, oddly enough. It may be the willingness of the landowners to sell their property.”

“We can’t let that asset sit there.”

“Usually the hardest thing is to get the first person to say, ‘Okay—I’m in.’” He seems to suggest that GBRA needs to demonstrate they conserve the environment rather than just using it. Perhaps they could invest \$250,000-\$500,000, at least initially.

Managing the property now might cost \$25,000-\$50,000/year. Adding a position will cost \$100,000.

The Board does not have term limits. They did not have 100% giving last year. “Most of them are [donors].”

“The wealthy members of the Board who give a lot of money give \$1,000 . . . or \$500.”

He wonders if they could monetize providing tertiary treatment to the waters of Plum Creek.

May not be money, but willing sellers of surrounding property.

Wants plan and goals for site before stops being ED Dec. 31.

May have \$250K for property expansion.

Hiring a “local manager” and providing access. Have a part time person to open and close the gate

Not many folks in the county know about what this is.

Image. But, he said “I think the image can be changed ...by events”
Funding. He is a proponent of having a fee associated with use.
Feels the site needs a local manager to be successful.
Feels site is “under the radar” for folks. He said, “they would use it if they knew it was available.”

The feral hog problem needs to be addressed professionally.
“You have to have someone to open and close the park . . . It’s not a park—wetland—I’m sorry. . . .”
“Those noxious plants need to be controlled.”
“The potential is unlimited, but it has to be promoted. . . . It’s kind of off the radar.”

Hours of operation need to be controlled.
Feral hogs a big problem.
Need to have local manager. Have “maintenance fund” that part of event fees goes toward.
It’s a perfect place for students to do thesis.
County residence don’t know it’s there – it’s “off the radar.”
Biggest challenge is maintenance.

“Funding.” He mentions Ducks Unlimited and the Plum Creek Conservation District as possible sources.

#4 – If the wetland property opened up tomorrow, how would it be used?

Hikes, biking, kids hanging out
Have a grand opening with a ribbon cutting

He believes people would come out to walk and bike. But he felt strongly that local people, “are not gonna pay...” for use of the site.

Community – the community is hungry for projects to work on.
Champion for the region. Please see the white paper on Aransas Project, Sierra Club

Shouldn't be open with unlimited access.

Birding community, wetland spots, master naturalist, hiking groups, Five mile trek, hunters and other customers, grazing for landowners, scouts within the month, mountain bikes, photogs, horseback riders

Picnics, open space, hiking, birdwatching

He could see people picnicking and relaxing

Small groups of birders could be unsupervised.
Need picnic areas. Needs gathering area/pavilion.
No hunting.
May be use site hosts for entry monitoring.

“Unless you did some pretty significant advertising, no one would know it was open.” He mentions McKinney Roughs—“That’s sort of what I envision for this area.”

People would come to a bird walk—“A lot of people from Austin would come.” Local demographics have changed a lot recently; the newcomers look like people from Oregon [which he thinks is a good thing].

“That’s sort of what I worry about”—undesirable uses in the short term. “They’re terrible about picking up their trash. . . . I don’t know what you would do to keep it from happening.”

“I think it has to be a slow process.” No hunting. A day-use area only. It would have picnic areas, perhaps. “Some sort of a gathering area . . . not necessarily a fancy building, but maybe a pavilion.”

“I think we’re going to have to have grants.” Maybe have fees. State parks do, as do the River Authorities. Would GBRA contribute to the costs [we asked]? He hadn’t thought of it.

Volunteers would be “probably good out here.” Maybe like RV hosts who just get an electrical hookup and a camping site.

Staffing “is a concern to me.” Having two Board members nearby has been a blessing.

No one would know it was open without advertising.

“In my opinion, it’s pretty limited.” He stresses that the whole thing floods. “It’s pretty limited what you could do there.”

The District controls a small lake visible from (and uphill of) the preserve, but it is “not our water.” “We can’t take that water out”—it belongs to the State. [This came up in a discussion about how the Trust might keep water in the wetland during times of drought.]

We ask if the ponds on the property are seasonal. “In my opinion they are. . . . Most times I’ve seen them they’ve been dry.”

“If you can’t keep water in those ponds, you’re dead in the water.”

“When it’s dry, the only water in these creeks is treated wastewater. I don’t think there are many permits for water use out of Plum Creek.”

“I don’t know how a person would get water. . . .” Maybe out of Plum Creek, or through the State. Maybe the pond on the Mueller (formerly Ball) property.

Possibility of using the wetlands as tertiary treatment for the treated sewage water of Plum Creek.

Hikers, campers, patrolled and security in the area. Help and activity in the area to keep up the park. What indication does the community show to use the park... several groups that wanted to develop natural areas. Move to close the Lockhart State Park, community pushed to keep the park open. Lots of nature trails. \$2 entry fee, they wave the fee for some of the special event like astronomy. Austin Vee – Park Superintendent. No much hotel motel tax. Trying to attract a small boutiques hotel.

“Potential for Heads and Beds. Day use eat BBQ and walk it off”
“I see this as another tremendous attraction”

Immediate use = hikers, camping, hunters, naturalists, volunteers, walkers
He feels long-term it would be a tourism draw.

Hiking, maybe camping. It would need oversight and patrol. “I think you’d get a lot of help, a lot of volunteers.”

Hikers, camping if area open. Needs some security.
Would get a lot of help/volunteers (to lead nature walks for example). Lots of people willing to work in the dirt.
Clean up so natural flora can come back in.
People clamoring for bike trails.

Access to the parks, kayak trail, creek access. None of the community has access to the creeks.

He felt that people would come to get close to the water resource, because PUBLIC ACCESS to a riparian corridor is hard to come by in this region and in Texas (lots of privately owned riparian corridors in TX). He thought people would come out to bird, walk, hike...

He cautioned that the wetlands drying up would be an issue. That GBRT needs to make sure they can fill those wetlands in drought.

He also touched on ecoli counts in Plum Creek Watershed near Kyle. He warned that could be an issue.

He stated that the Kyle water treatment facility is in trouble.

Tie in water quality into water conservation. Surface water and ground water comparison. Use the site as a model example. Add composting toilets. Showcase energy conservation. Launch PR campaign.

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People might go out for hiking.

“Once you get a design, a picture for people to look at . . . ,” you should involve community members. Pegasus School, the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. They will take ownership.

“If you’re doing all this work and nobody uses it—really, what’s the point?”

Hiking

Outreach – teachers, kids who will then take their parents. Use local paper and facebook of city and newspaper.

Offer unique opportunities even 1 hour programs.

Vision should be in line with local community socio-economic situation and willingness to use it. Bi-lingual because of large Hispanic population.

Make for people of all ages.

“Don’t focus on duck hunters.” “Don’t get too narrow in focus.”

Get tree removed

Repair the roads and passable

Hiking trails and jogging trails, docents

Concerned about hazards—dead trees, bad roads. Get the fences back up. People—hikers and joggers—would use the roads and trails. Have driving tours. “Pretty soon” they could have camping for scouts. Mentions involving Pegasus School as volunteers. “There was no valid input from the public.” “We’ve never had and contact from the Master Naturalists.” “The interest wasn’t there.”

D.U. has real potential.

Use \$400K to go for matching grants – get a couple years salary

Could be a collaboration for staff like watershed partnership.

Use on a limited basis. Girl scouts, boy scouts, random use.

Texas Parks and Wildlife had just called me about leasing the property for \$3,500 for a month of dove hunting. We could issue special use permits for events like this.

We must have someone on site or a point person for public use or special use permit.

I would also like to prove the water quality enhancement of the wetland and recognize the benefit to the Plum Creek Watershed.

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Budget if have to hire someone.

Currently get \$25-30K TexDot help.

Schools would use it

Local hunter would love to go in there.

People who go walking, hiking, general health.

“Come to Lockhart, eat BBQ, do the fun run.” Property has lots of potential.

Once the project becomes known more people will step up to help.

Walking, hiking, Use from the Bluebonnet Mental Health facility. Local hunters know the property but don’t use it. Not appropriate for vehicles. Austin people would come down to use the property.

He feels folks would use it for hiking, walking, cycling, general health benefits. He feels there should be no vehicles allowed.

Local people think of the site as “the mosquito ponds.”

“There is nothing around here.”

“People are gonna want to go out there, take their camera, take their kids.”

“You’re not gonna satisfy everybody.”

Natural amenities can be enjoyed now.
Limit use. Picnics, recreation, education.

#5 – Is there any message that you would like us to convey to the Land Trust?

Don't forget Caldwell County.

“When having meetings, don't forget to invite Caldwell County”

He felt that GBRA and GBRT need to work on their messaging to the county. GBRT should invite the county to meetings (etc) so that the county feels included in the project.

PCWP can fit into the overall management plan of GBRT. The state water conservation board can use this as a model example.

Wants to see kids on property.

Invite school groups from the Kyle community

Find the legal way to communicate to the board about how to get water into the wetland

He feels drought is going to be an issue as is the ecoli counts in Plum Creek.

He said that GBRT should talk to conservation district if they are in need of emergency water in the wetlands.

He also stated that the GBRT could do a better job at communicating with the conservation district.

The Board needs guidance from the Executive Director to make “the right kinds of decisions.”

Board is depending on ED to give several options and guidance to make the right decisions.

Local kids need education opportunities. The project could be a good partnership between the County (which could get grant money not available to GBRA or the Trust) and GBRA.

Slowly and surely work towards opening.

Get county more involved. GBRA could work with county to get grant money.

Give educational opportunities to poor kids.

Maintenance of road will be an issue.

Road maintenance.

“Thankful for taking on the responsibility and we value that as another asset that we can claim back to the community. Now that you have accepted the responsibility we expect you to follow through on this! Don't want this to sound bad”

“I think people are ready for the park to be open...”

He feels the GBRT needs to know what they need to be successful.

He intimated that GBRT were dragging their feet.
He feels a 5-7 year phased out project seems reasonable.
He is thankful for GBRT taking on the responsibility of the project but there needs to be follow-through now.
Need a site plan to propose to community at stakeholder meetings.
HJ Wright – there should be a tribute out there for him in some way.

He would like to see a site plan ASAP. Maybe a 5-7 year timeline. Mentions including an H.T. Wright tribute “in some form or fashion.”

People are ready for the property to be open. Ready for it to be a nature center/preserve. It has “lots of potential but is a big, big undertaking.”
“Develop slowly over time.”
“We value it as another asset we can claim for our community.”
“Expect them to get the ball rolling.”
Would like to see site plan develop then could give good input.
Right away start on grants, site plan, fundraising.
Develop a 4-7 year timeline.

There is a disconnect between GBRA and GBRT. We need more communication between the organizations.

He said that there is a disconnect between GBRA and GBRT – that no one at GBRA really understands what GBRT is doing. That communication is poor. He said everyone could benefit from clarification on what the Trust is working on and also just overall improve communication about the site.
He talked a lot about how gifted Nick is in bringing folks together and inspiring people to participate in cleanups and outreach events.

“Make sure that the vision of the PCWP matches the local demographics” The Plum Creek Watershed community is mainly Hispanic and an underserved region. Have respect for diversity.
“Have the community help to build this up” work days, clean up days, birding days. Engage the civic groups. Design the location to sell to the community.

Reach out and involve the diverse community. Offer signage in Spanish and English, for example.

“Make sure that the vision of the PCWP matches the local demographics” The Plum Creek Watershed community is mainly Hispanic and an underserved region. Have respect for diversity.
“Have the community help to build this up” work days, clean up days, birding days. Engage the civic groups. Design the location to sell to the community.

To make it happen and I don't care how names on the front of it is. Judge HT Wright would become the HT Wright Memorial Park. Locally it would have been a great idea. Dedicated to the memory of HT Wright.

Limited access. Scouts could camp. People can walk trails. Birding.
Make it a public place that the public would want to protect. "Waterfowl is a key attractor."

Make sure that this is for public use... no special privilege
Priority #1 –General Public – walking hiking

He feels management is challenge #1, first off. He says:
"not gonna satisfy everybody"
"It's a wetland, not a park, and needs to remain that way. Everything else is secondary"
He felt strongly that any in kind services promised by a partner should go in writing.
He feels that PR about site needs improvement and needs to be increased.
When talking about local competition and ability to use a wetland site like this for public use, he said "don't know anywhere 30 miles within Austin that you can do that"

"Plum Creek is vital to our community. . . . Maintaining its environmental integrity is important. We'd like to see it maintained as close as possible to its current condition."
And made accessible to walkers, other users.
"Our plan had been to put granite trails through it." Also signage, etc.

Plum Creek is vital to community.
Development is a challenge to it.
Maintain in current condition but make better for people to enjoy the natural setting.
"Natural but accommodating."

Additional Comments

Public Relations can be done of the county FB page
80% of Caldwell County goes to Austin or San Marcos to work
CAMPA Committee – composed of 7 counties, population will grow from 1.9M to 4M by 2040
No idea that the PCWP is even there.... It is known as mosquito pond.

1st Sponsor wetland project in Johnson City
The “white paper” is the path forward for the whole GBRA watershed.

He stated that the mitigation site was once the Old Lockhart Reservoir Site

“I’m a big advocate of getting kids out in the country. . . . This would be a place that would work for that. I don’t know what else to do with that.”

Communication:

Colleagues? Have the lines of communication been?

Maintained... if you don’t put information out there they fill in the blanks. Working with the communication department on a brochure. 150 calls about the PCWP.

Board of Directors:

GBRA – Handful of meeting. United front moving forward, Qualified and communicated well.

GBRT – Supportive but quieter. Some are compliant but don’t interact as much. More courteous. They are always agreeing... not sure how comfortable. How do we get them to the board to contribute for the securing the property.

What if Kyle did reuse

We are in region L for Texas Water Development Board

This could be a champion or model for the region

Where are the contaminates coming from?

He said that wastewater-reuse could be an issue down the road for the mitigation site. Because, there would no longer be water coming into Plum Creek Reserve.

He thought it would be interesting to take samples (long-term) above and below the wetland on Plum Creek to show how the wetlands are affecting water quality on Plum Creek as it moves downstream.

Wells Fargo might be financial partner.

Need grants in order to fund.

A landfill is coming to Lockhart—the site is just north of town, right on the highway. “It’s caused an uproar here in town.”

County has no staff that could address the needs of the area.

Martin Richie (512-636-5681) is a great grant writer and would be a great resource.

Plum Creek runs year-round with treated water. Get water rights to pump from Plum Creek? Get water rights to pump from storage structure above site?

Parks and Wildlife were closing underperforming parks a few years ago and they almost closed Lockhart State Park. But there was opposition and it stayed open. This is one park that would be “competition” with the Plum Creek Reserve.

Mentioned that we could talk to park ranger Austin Veogh at Lockhart State Park about how folks use that park and trends.

Said, “there has not been a big outcry (for opening site to public use), but constant state of questions.”

Project is taking longer than expected.

Need labor and talents and money to be successful.

Intimated that financial transparency from GBRT would be a good thing.

People are “starting to wonder where it’s going and what’s the timeline.”

Trust gave impression they had access to wetlands management and grants.

Management, funding, and maintenance is up to Trust.

Reasonable access fee would not bother people.

-he felt the city and county as well as TXDOT might have tools to help maintain the trails and road.

-he touched strongly on the community perception. He felt that better PR would help with exposure of the site and more public awareness.

-he did state that this area needs a place for environmental learning “desperately”

In Texas, water quality and water quantity are managed and regulated separately, as are surface water and ground water.

When asked if any stakeholder surveys had been done in previous years, he said “they” had five years to find out how stakeholders would want to use this property.

Regional Director of Ducks Unlimited is on GBRT Board.

Mentioned Mitchell Foundation and San Antonio Bay Foundation when asked about potential funders.

Organize a planning committee of people from professional agencies. Present organized approach to present to locals.

Some board members not very interested in site because they don’t live in this county.

There is money out there but it’s not going to come from citizens of Caldwell County.

Project mission is “sub-mission” of Trust’s mission.

Communication

How has the PCWP been communicated to the public?

They come to speak with the city council of Lockhart in April or May.

Board of Directors

Tell us a little more about the board and the interactions?

Interaction is great. Appoints two members annually. OTHER boards – San Antoni bay foundation. Gorge Preservation Society.

What is your perspective on the capacity of the board and future investment board of directors? Capacity as individual donors? They have been asked by Todd and they don't all donate. 10% of the total budget. No limit to the number of terms for board members. They are contributing. They could all contribute.

Financial

What specific financial offer have you had to manage the wetland? No funds committed but they are waiting for the plan. They said that they would be committed. DU Texas Park and Wildlife. Formal evaluation from ANCA will be taken back to the planning group. What will be the shared vision? What about the upland property?

What capacity does your current budget need to sustain the wetland? If we hire someone – 100,000 a year or 25,000 with partnerships. Roads were repaired by TX Dot for free. They have an investment in the property. 20,000 for fences. Repairing for flood every 10 years.

GBRA is about to embark on two water projects and could have more money coming in. The public would gain from the PCWP. ¼ million upfront commitment. Republican board would be excited about the process.

TV The facility could be covered by earned revenue by TX Parks and Wildlife. Girl Scouts pay for the fee. School fees that might be able to pay as well. No specific philosophy on how to do this.

Who would handle if site were open? Could have group with point person that would have responsibility.

No financial commitment from anybody until plan is done.

Communications – have not talked the site up much yet.

Authority and Trust have good communications.

Tom's notes he brought in.

Waterfowl Enhancements:

Drain or fill impoundments as necessary for planting.

Plant food plots of small grain, brown top miller, milo.

Feature USFW/Ducks Unlimited, bird counts and banding

Invite University research studies

Build observation blinds for bird watchers

Feature lottery drawn hunts for duck and dove

General Public Usage:

Controlled access – permit events

Boy Scouts of America – leave no trace

Cross Country training and meets

Allow events by planners and managers to charge usage fees

GBRA could share the funds for maintenance
Hiking to promote general health
Mountain Biking training and races
Establish bleacher observation sites on neighboring property – higher ground

Maintenance:

Fencing, perimeter and temporary hot wire for food plots
Road maintained
Restroom facilities cleaned
Boundary fences repaired as needed
Mowing of giant ragweed
Herbicide usage on mesquite, locust and other noxious weeds
Signage with hours of operation and local manager contact phone numbers for public

Publicity: State and local notices of official opening and policies. Advertise features and benefits

Access is by public road—US 183, not the toll road.

No vehicles, but bicycles would be ok.

People from Austin would come down and use the site.

“It’s not a park and it’s a wetland.” Wetland is priority. Can’t satisfy what everyone wants.

His implication is that the preserve could be an economic attraction as well. We ask what aspect of the project is more important to him—its economic impact or its value as an amenity for local people. He says the latter.