



KEEP GALLUP CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL BOARD (KGCB) Minutes

Google Meet, January 15, 2026 4-5pm

Mission statement: *"To inspire and educate people to take action every day to improve and beautify Gallup"*

Quorum Members Present: Bill Bright, Tammy Parker, Greg Kirk, Tracy Lassiter, Noelle Lee, Elizabeth Barriga – Liaison
(All Board Members Attended)

Guests: Bud Lopez, Margie Dressler, Jodie Henderson, Sherrie McDargh, and Judy

Agenda Item B) Approval of November 18th, 2025 Meeting Minutes (Action Item): Motion made by Greg, Seconded by Tammy; all Board Members are in favor of approving the 10-21-25 KGCB Meeting Minutes.

Agenda Item C) KGCB Strategic Plan Update:

VISION - "The Keep Gallup Clean & Beautiful Board envisions a community that takes pride, invests resources and actively engages in maintaining a clean and beautiful community landscape as a contribution to local quality of life, sustainable economy and attraction of business and tourism" – All in Favor to keep this document as is.

If any KGCB Board Member has any input about future strategies or would like to become a coordinator to implement these new programs and events, please contact Elizabeth to improve and add to this document.

ITEMS

- Coordinate with supplier/s to purchase & receive trees while still dormant so they can harden off locally before the last frost.
- Share the training link for the Beyond Plastics course and any free training options with the group so members can access the training.
- Follow up and confirm the remaining grant spot Youth Empowerment MOU opportunity (Elizabeth will reach out to finalize the eighth non-profit Youth Group organization).
- Connect interested parties to coordinate with Betsy Windisch (the MCRC contact, for bottle cap collection) so more volunteers and schools can contribute caps for bench projects.
- Promote and support the ongoing bottle-cap collection (Claire / Hozho Academy) and consider campaign support for a future Terra-Cycle bench.
- Contact KGLP Radio Station Manager and advertise Tree- Give Away Event
- Coordinate with NMSU Extension agent & Hope Garden for future Composting KGCB Meeting Agenda discussion.

Agenda Item D) Open Discussion of events and partnerships:

Beyond Plastics has a wonderful, amazing library of all kinds of plastic issues. You can visit this website: <https://www.beyondplastics.org/pubs> and download articles. They have a new book titled: *"What the plastic industry isn't telling you about chemical recycling and about the crisis growing and globally"*. Plastic waste is projected to almost triple by 2060 if we don't do something. An unfortunate thing is, if you recycle plastics and make more plastics, they're made from a combination of carbon, mainly oil and gas and toxic chemicals. Studies show that plastics can absorb contaminants via direct contact with whatever was inside of it. And, can transfer it to the recycle plastic product created. Literally, it can compound the problem by recycling plastics. Did anybody else learn something from Beyond Plastic?

Bill – In the past we learned from chemists. What happens with our plastic bottles, and the clear ones? After testing these plastics bottles in the lab, when you take these bottles and you freeze them or when they heat up during scorching summer heat inside vehicles, which often do in the summer before they go out, you know, frozen. And sometimes it's just the opposite. They sit in the car being a clear glass, they get heated up quite a bit, and they said they've tested them before and after heating or freezing, and it releases, releases the chemicals in harmful chemicals in the plastic, into the water. And some of us can taste that. It's bad enough buying plastic water bottles. When you when you see it getting too hot or too cold, it's releasing the toxic chemicals from the plastic bottle. You're really doubling up on cancer causing type ingredients. So just a suggestion, do Not to freeze plastic water Bottles. And, don't leave them in your car in the sun or in freezing weather because you would be doing an injustice to whoever is drinking it.

It's best to just put water in a glass jar or something like that. Or, simply drink COG tap water, it's not as bad as plastic toxins as a much safer alternative. How do you get plastic toxins out of our bodies? It is a hard thing to do.

Tracy mentions that Beyond Plastics has classes that are CEU, credit bearing, for \$400. If it's for general audiences, it's only \$100 bucks, it isn't too bad to have someone be informed about plastic education in this in this class. Maybe, this is something Keep Gallup Clean and Beautiful, or the MCRC would want to sponsor to attend.

There is are Beyond Plastic classes if someone would like to listen that are No Cost. If you want to get to know more. Beyond Plastic's database is phenomenal. They have an interesting new published book named: **"The problem with plastic. How can we save ourselves and our planet before it's too late?"** The more important part of those courses is the how to be an activist. Beyond Plastics organization has people sharing from small towns into large cities all over the United States. Describing how they have been able to approach their elected officials, state, local, federal, and actually get some things to change. Learn how to how to be an effective advocate for your local elected officials to address these issues as much as possible. This training could be used if you, or someone you know, would like to be an activist.

Bill mentions - it only takes about two or three committed people that want to pursue this or do this to make a

difference, in the community. It sounds like it's very effective. If KGCB attendees and Board Members are interested it only takes a few of us plugging along to get things done. To make a difference in the world. It would be great if some youth group at college or school levels could access that training for students to send them on off the rest of their life, to become active citizens and voters. To going to city council meetings and be effective environmental stewards. Encourage students; if possible, to enroll and learn about these critical topics.

It would be absolutely wonderful for those want to be committed to make a difference and help clean up the Gallup and our planet from this onslaught of plastics that cannot be recycled. What are solutions for the plastic dilemma? Possible solutions could be: Extended Producer Responsibility, (EPR) as in California. To make the people who make the plastics responsible as well. The manufacturers which produced it. Shouldn't they be responsible for cleaning it up as well?

Agenda Item E) NMCB FY26 Grant update & Promote Clean-Up Events

- One More Youth Group organization needed. Each non-profit entity receives \$1,230 after the MOU is complete.
- Tree Give-Away event –**Saturday, May 9th, 2026 @ 10:00am** at the Community Panty
All City of Gallup citizens & KGCB Board Members are invited – come to get your own free tree & learn how to keep it thriving.

Currently, we are working on purchasing the trees for May 19th, 2026. This event will include hands on training how to plant and take care of trees. Hopefully, we'll have good weather,

We are trying to deliver these trees early. To bring the trees to Gallup February 2026 to avoid them from being leafed out. To keep them in dormancy, so they can't handle those freezes when they come here. To harden off, that'll give them a better chance of survival in colder Gallup temperatures.

Native Pinon trees are really taking a beating, and a lot of we're losing a lot of them, plus the birds that are dependent upon them. Elizabeth asks Bud - Have you heard anything about that? The bark beetle is an opportunistic insect, and what it does is it's able to detect weak trees, and that's the reason we are having such a loss in the forests and everything everywhere else, because these trees, trees are weak from drought. In your own yards, if you have specimen trees, regardless of how old they are, if you want to keep them healthy, water them in the wintertime at least once per month during droughts. You're going to want to water them in the summer too.

These last couple of drought-stricken months have been brutal for our trees all over New Mexico and other states. It is important You still need to water during the winter. Especially, because it's been so dry. Bud saw Elephant Butte water level is down to 7% of capacity. Even our native trees are suffering.

Bud suggests a good rule of thumb is to water deeply on the holidays. Such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Martin Luther King Day. About a month apart, and give them a good deep-water soaking. That should help them get through these dry winter months.

If anybody has any suggestions about trees types given away for this event that are hardy in our area, please ask *Elizabeth*. FY26 Budget this year is \$4,500 to purchase approximately 20 to 35 trees to give-away. Bud says, he has found that the Hackberry Tree seems to be growing extremely successful even with the drought conditions. We will look into ordering more of these trees.

Elizabeth asks about the pros and cons about the Golden Rain Tree. Bud replied: they're not very fast growing, and are small trees. He thinks they might be a little dirty with little bladder pods. In Washington, they consider them to be invasive. That's not a problem in Gallup. Another tree NMSU likes is the flowering Pear Trees which are considered weeds in the East. Pear Trees cannot get established in Gallup with the amount of rain that we get. Unlike the Siberian elms that are invasive. The Tree of Heaven, sometimes confused with the golden rain tree, is also very invasive. *Elizabeth* asks: What do you think about pecans? Bud replied: They use a lot of water and do not meet drought tolerant, low water use parameters.

Agenda Item F) Open KGCB Topics, and Future Meeting Agenda Items

- Regarding the grant funded Memorial Benches, Elizabeth displayed two benches to be located at the historic El Morro Theatre. The colors chosen are brown slats with the white metal.

In the future, we'll be looking at inquiring about **one or two plaques Memorial plaques** for these benches. MCRC has a bench from that they received from saving and mailing bottle caps to TerraCycle. The Boys and Girls Club wants to use it. Claire from Hozho Academy is doing another round of bottle cap collecting to get enough for another bench. There may be another collection underway. If anybody wants to participate, please contact Betsy Windisch.

Tracy mentions that UNM new budget starts July 2026 and it would be a good time to ask for project funding collaboration for projects such as: a community garden, arboretum, and trails.

Bill suggests talking to the new KGLP radio station manager in town: introduce him to KGCB as a non-profit to look into public radio spot space for PR Public Relations and advertise our Tree Give-Away event. Bill will accompany Elizabeth for the Tree Give-Away event.

Food Waste and Composting Initiatives

- Tracy introduces a colleague from the Albuquerque campus, Eva Stricker, is working on a project to reduce food waste and address food insecurity for families.
- The project involves college students coming up with ideas to solve these issues, including composting and reducing landfill waste.
- Tracy will share Eva's contact information. The group discusses the potential for collaboration with Eva's project and the benefits it could bring to the community.
- Bud Lopez, the tribal NMSU Ag agent, also would like Eva's contact information and expresses interest in the project; and, mentions his work with Darren Rabago on a composting program at Hozho Academy with their Gardening Club which includes composting.
- Tracy will send Eva's contact information as a group email.
- *Elizabeth* would like to see collaboration with the Hope Garden staff as well.

Elizabeth asks about Hope Garden's composting efforts. Zoom meeting technical issues delayed answering this question.

For the next KGCB Meeting Agenda Item – it is recommended to add "Composting" as a discussion item to include information gathered and from all interested persons. With updates from Bud, the tribal, and city NMSU Ag agent and the Hope Garden.

Agenda Item G) Motion to Adjourn – (Action Item): Meeting motion to adjourn by *Tracy*, and seconded by *Tammy* at 4:43 pm, all in favor.

Our Next KGCB Meeting will be Thursday: March 19th, 2026



Tammy Parker, KGCB Chairperson

ATTEST: 

Elizabeth Barriga, Environmental Program Coordinator