

## Meeting 5

August 13, 2013 Meeting

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### Meeting Attendees

*Community Working Group members:*

Mark Siegwarth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum

George Martin – JF Ranch

Lynn Martin – JF Ranch

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley HOA president

Nancy Vogler – LOST Trail (Pickett Post to tunnel)

Bill Vogler – LOST Trail

Roy Chavez – Concerned Citizens and Retired Miners Association

Pam Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce

Lynn Heglie – business community

Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board

Matt Nelson – Arizona Trail Association

*Facilitators - Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):*

John Godec

Debra Duerr

*Resolution Copper:*

Vicky Peacey - senior manager of approvals, communities & environment

Bruce Richardson - manager of community & external relations

Ian Edgar – general manager, studies

Frank Deal – tailings manager

Melissa Rabago - community outreach coordinator

*Guests:*

Bruce Wittig, Queen Valley Water Board

Leslie Bryant, Queen Valley

Hank Gutierrez, Superior

### **Introductions**

Members who had not attended in the past introduced themselves. We also had two new people who are interested in joining the group, including Mr. Bruce Wittig of Queen Valey Water Board and Ms. Leslie Bryant, a real estate agent and property owner in Queen Valley. John Godec gave a brief overview of the group's work in the last few weeks for the benefit of the new attendees.

### **Review of CWG Tailings Siting Criteria from 7/31 Meeting & Other Community Comments Received**

A chart summarizing the siting criteria developed by the group at the last meeting was reviewed. A member noted that the length of the list of issues under specific topics does not reflect the importance or priority of the issues. Another member said that she thought we had some descriptors under the heading of environmental concerns that were not included in this chart. Godec noted that this is not a final list, and we can add anything to that we feel should be included – this was just a first cut from a brainstorming session.

### **Review of Resolution Tailings Siting Criteria**

Presenter: Vicky Peacey

Peacey showed Resolution's list of important siting criteria again, as at the last meeting. She provided a bit more definition of the factors, and emphasized the regulatory requirements for some of them. She observed that there is quite a bit of overlap between many of these factors and the ones the group developed.

### **Overview of Tailings Site Alternative Locations – Eliminated & Current**

Presenter: Vicky Peacey

Godec asked the group if we should carry on with the discussion of tailings sites for this meeting, and they agreed.

Peacey showed a slide that outlined a number of alternative locations for potential tailing sites and noted that these are shown on the maps prepared for each group member. She explained that Resolution first evaluated a parcel of State Trust land near Florence Junction as well as some other locations east of Superior and the potential for using existing pits owned by other companies. For various reasons, primarily land

tenure issues and size of the tailings pile, these did not prove feasible. They then looked at a 20-mile radius around Superior to see where it might be possible to fit the amount of tailings they expect to produce. She pointed these out on the map. For reference, they are called:

- Whitford
- Hewitt
- Silver King
- Telegraph
- Lower West (including variations)
- Lower East (including variations)

The State Trust Land parcels near Florence Junction are referred to as Far West. Although there is little likelihood that Resolution will be able to use these sites, they will be carried forward into the Environmental Impact Statement at the request of the Forest Service.

CWG questions and comments and Resolution answers included:

- Did you look at Devil's Canyon?
  - Yes, but the terrain is very rugged and there are many major drainages. Using this area would require redesign of much of the mine operations and facility locations, so there are some major challenges. It could, however, be technically feasible although costly. It appears that there are better options with lower potential impacts.
- Does Resolution have a preference?
  - Considering some of the major concerns of visibility, water impacts and proximity to town, something in the "lower west" area seems to make the most sense.
- Are these sites all on Forest Service?
  - Yes, except the one south of Superior (Telegraph) and the State Trust parcels.
- What would happen if Resolution identified the State Land parcel as their preferred site?
  - It would be very difficult without agreement from State Land Department or owning the land. The Forest Service has indicated that they will review sites on federal land, but also want to see the State Land option studied further.

- Can the federal government force the state to sell the land?
  - No. Also, State Trust land is not subject to the Governor's control either but is managed under its own legislation. Trust lands are sold at auction, and we don't know if they can sell it without doing that. We think that the criteria for the decision might be a determination of the 'highest and best use'. A member noted that the value is based on an appraisal assuming high density residential development.
  
- What about the idea of using existing pits of other mines, including Carlotta?
  - At Carlotta, the pit would only accommodate a tiny fraction of the tailings from this mine. Ray Mine is planning future operations for another 30 years, and are also in the process of doing a land exchange for additional disposal sites (exchange with State – in this case, the state did decide that tailings are the highest and best use of this parcel).

### **Group Assessment of Site Alternatives**

A member noted that some of the sites like Whitford are not of interest to anybody here, so maybe we don't need to spend time talking about them. Another member observed that everyone might not like some sites, but we can't just eliminate them all. Someone observed that people may not really know where some of these sites are, and it will be hard to talk about them without being out in the field.

Peacey indicated on one of the visual simulations where the upper sites of Whitford and Hewlitt would be. There are also issues with water and drainages, including tributaries to Queen Creek.

Comments included:

- A member noted that the Forest Service would not allow these higher-elevation sites due to intense recreational use.
  
- Another member thought that the State Trust land will be 'trashed' anyway, by high-density residential development, which won't be done for many years. Let's protect the arboretum that's been here for almost 100 years, and the bowl around it. He suggested trying to modify the Wilderness Area boundary to include these northern areas.

- Sustainable outdoor recreation has the best potential south of Superior, rather than north, so this is the area that should be protected.
- A member noted that at one time Superior was thinking of annexing about 24 square miles but that proposal didn't go through for legal reasons.
- If another mining method was used there may not be as much volume of tailings. If a cut-and-fill approach were taken, for example, would the existing mine hold this amount of waste?
  - Resolution estimates that this method would still produce about 750,000 tons of tailings.
- Members asked Resolution to prepare visual simulations showing the alternatives from these locations:
  - top of Gonzales Pass
  - Picketpost Mountain
  - Superior looking toward the upper site alternatives

A site-by-site discussion took place, with members providing comments, concerns, and suggestions about each. These evaluations are attached at the end of this summary. The group seemed to agree that it's important to pick the site with the lowest overall environmental impact.

### **Next Steps**

We discussed several options for how the group might want to proceed in their review of tailing sites. It seems that further consideration is warranted. Some people suggested the Lower West site as being least objectionable (specifically, the option outlined in turquoise on the map, not yellow-outlined option). Some thought the Lower East sites had advantages. Most people prefer the Far West State Land option. Most seem to be in favor of getting the NEPA process started by selecting a site to include in the Mine Plan of Operations for submission to the Tonto National Forest.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Gutierrez said that he is a fourth generation Superiorite and miner, and so is aware of past mining, tailings, and annexation discussions. He thinks that the Superstition

Vistas option (Far West) should continue to be pursued because the probability of housing being built in the near future is questionable. He likes the idea of a simulation from the top of Gonzales Pass. His concerns center on the 2700 people in Superior who need sustainable jobs, rather than recreational opportunities for winter visitors. Regarding Queen Valley water issues, he wondered how much growth they expect and how much water they intend to use to support this development.

### Open Discussion & Next Meeting Agenda

Members asked what the agenda will be for the Community Forum. Peacey said that it will be similar to what's been discussed here at past meetings - what are tailings, what's needed for a tailings site, review of site alternatives.

The group suggested several topics to be pursued at the next or future meetings, including:

- Discuss what happens at the tailings Community Forum on August 14, and additional comments from the community
- Water issues, including
  - the possibility of inviting independent experts
  - assurances from Resolution that waterways won't be polluted
  - agreements and mitigation measures
- What goes into an environmental assessment?
- What's the next step, if a tailings site is picked to go into the mine plan, and the timeline for that?
- Alternative mining methods
  - block-cave vs. cut-fill vs. other mining methods - benefits and consequences

**Correction to 7/31 Meeting Summary:** Mr. Chavez wanted to note that he was misquoted in the summary. He wanted to clarify that he doesn't support the project because of the proposed mining method.

Please submit any clarifications and additions to:  
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## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE:** Whitford

**SUMMARY:** Not good

<b>CWG Siting Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Recreation:</b>	Intense recreation use – varied, AZ Trail alignment, important recreation and fire access roads
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	Nobody here likes it, will be public and visitor (snow birds) opposition
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	Perceived to be very high impact/visibility – no simulations done to date
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Big issue for this site, tributaries to Queen Creek. Group rated 10.5 out of 10...
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	Environmental concerns are paramount for this site
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	About 5 square miles, would fill the canyon, there's an option to split tailings into 2 sites
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	

## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE:** Hewitt

**SUMMARY:** Not good

CWG Siting Criteria	Assessment
<b>Recreation:</b>	Near the Wilderness Area, others similar to Whitford: Intense recreation use – varied, important recreation and fire access roads
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	Nobody here likes
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Major drainage impacts, similar to Whitford
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	



## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE:** Silver King

**SUMMARY:** Not as bad as Whitford & Hewitt, but not good

CWG Siting Criteria	Assessment
<b>Recreation:</b>	Not as much recreation/high-value recreation as Whitford & Hewitt, but still used a lot. Impacts to recreation and fire protection roads.
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	Mining activities here are part of the town's history, so it's not a completely "new" site
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	Wouldn't be seen as much from US 60 or Boyce Thompson Arboretum as Whitford & Hewitt – no simulations prepared for this site
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Would also cut off some tributaries to Queen Creek – more than the southern sites
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	Historic features here, including a cemetery
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	Tailings would fill the entire canyon, site includes some private lands
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	May require relocation of 230kV and 500kV high voltage power lines

## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE:** Telegraph

**SUMMARY:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CWG Siting Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Recreation:</b>	High-value recreation road and use, heavily-used portion of the Arizona Trail
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	Sensitive views from Picketpost Mountain – no simulation prepared for this site
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Would interrupt a major drainage
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	Area includes riparian habitat
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	Site has a good shape / characteristics for tailings dam
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	

## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE:** Lower East

**SUMMARY:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CWG Siting Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Recreation:</b>	Used quite a bit, but not high quality
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	Views from Boyce Thompson Arboretum especially bad. This site is more visible from town.
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Pretty good – can avoid major drainages
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	The underlying geology is good for this use on the lower sites.

## Alternative Tailings Site Review

**SITE: Lower West**

**SUMMARY:** \_\_\_\_\_

CWG Siting Criteria	Assessment
<b>Recreation:</b>	Area is used a lot, but not “the good stuff”. Forest Service will be closing some roads under new management plan.
<b>Public Acceptability:</b>	
<b>Local / Town Concerns:</b>	
<b>Visibility:</b>	See simulations from Gonzales Pass, Boyce Thompson Arboretum – not as visible as Lower East sites
<b>Water Impact:</b>	Good – can avoid Potts and Hewitt canyon drainages with the ‘turquoise’-outline alternative
<b>Environmental Considerations:</b>	
<b>Location &amp; Size:</b>	Located about 6 miles from both Queen Valley & Superior
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b>	