

Meeting #43
April 13, 2016
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present:

Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Water Board
George Martin – JF Ranch
Lynn Martin – JF Ranch
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board
Arlynn Godinez - Superior Unified School District
Nancy Vogler – LOST Trail
Bill Vogler – Superior Copper Alliance
Pamela Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce alternate
Mark Siegwarth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Community Working Group members not present:

Frank Stapleton – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center
Roy Chavez - Concerned Citizens and Retired Miners
Tiffany Rowell – Superior resident
Jeff Bunkelmann – Central Arizona College
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club
Karen Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe

Resolution Copper Company:

Casey McKeon, Regulatory Specialist
Jim Schenck, Communities Manager

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)

John Godec
Debra Duerr

Public Guests:

none

Housekeeping

John Godec thanked CWG members for coming tonight. He said that there is renewed interest on the part of some in the Superior community about alleged local health issues. It appears that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has been asked to investigate further. Godec has asked ADEQ to let the CWG know if they do intend to do anything related to

this issue. Some members observed that ADEQ has no history with the health aspects of this issue, so it will be more difficult for them to recreate the history and pursue.

CWG Subcommittee Status

The Recreation User Group met today. Nancy Vogler reported that it was a good meeting. International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) did not attend, but Mary Morrisette showed a combined user group map showing that IMBA trails are quite extensive. She said that Resolution wants to cut back a bit on the entire plan since it is too large to fund at this point. Pete Casillas and the Queen Creek Coalition representatives will go out in the field with IMBA to discuss which trails to keep or how they might be realigned or consolidated with other trail proposals. The Tonto Recreation Alliance (TRAL) is looking in the region to find multi-use trails on which they can use single-track motorcycles. The current thinking is to cut the overall proposal down to a smaller size, concentrating on the Apache Leap area, to make it more feasible from a cost and time standpoint and to ensure that the proposal remains at the Environmental Assessment (EA) level for Forest Service review. A member said that she is interested to see what resource damage and environmental impacts are identified in this EA.

Regarding the Community Monitoring Task Force, Casey McKeon said Resolution has started some of the baseline sampling studies to look at surface water discharge associated with mine dewatering, along with the groundwater permit, which is more complicated. Another meeting of the task force will be planned in the near future to discuss next steps.

Remediation Activity Update

Casey McKeon, Resolution Copper

Casey McKeon handed out a summary of the work Resolution will be starting on, including a fact sheet on smelter-affected soil remediation at the West Plant Site. She referred to a map showing locations of sampling activities, defined by geography or proximity to the smelter stack. Right next to the stack there is emission outfall from past Magma smelter activity that needs to be cleaned up. The remediation/cleanup standards are different for this industrial site than they would be for a residential or public area. The site characterization program was started in 2006, and an update was provided to the CWG in April 2014. McKeon noted that potential arsenic ingestion is the main concern. To assess this, several inches of soil have been removed and tested. In some areas, this showed 500 parts per million (ppm) of arsenic, and Resolution is required to remediate to less than 186 ppm. Contaminated soil can be placed with the tailings.

Cleanup will be conducted by zone to minimize dust and effects on workers. Resolution has in place a dust particulate monitoring plan and a worker safety plan. There are air quality monitoring stations that will determine if offsite impacts occur. There will also be personal dosimeters for workers to wear. Samples will be checked onsite daily, and some will also be sent to an offsite laboratory. Later, tailings pond #6 will be closed. Some of the contaminated soil removed from the smelter area will be used to fill the tailings pond, which will then be

covered with clean soil. The stack and historic buildings will be cordoned off during cleanup, since there have not been any decisions made about the future of the stack. The company who did the structural study on the stack will also be evaluating the associated buildings.

McKeon said that the Remedial Action Work Plan and the information distributed here tonight are all available on the Resolution website, along with contact information for the state regulators in the event people would prefer to contact the state than Resolution.

CWG members had the following questions and comments:

- How does the 186 ppm cleanup standard compare to what BHP was doing?
 - They were dealing with residential areas where children could be present, which is a much higher standard. So, BHP treated to about 50 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg).
- Why is there a boundary at Pinal Avenue for cleanup? Smelter emissions could have affected the whole town. Also, people in the old days used to take tailings to use as fill on their property, so tailings contamination could also be anywhere in town.
 - The remediation area was explained. The BHP area was related to the tailings. The area outside of the immediate smelter fallout is the area John Godec referred to that ADEQ may take another look at, because the state is probably expecting some questions from the community about their properties when the remediation begins.
- Were the emissions coming from the smelter or the tailings?
 - The smelter emissions are visible in the top layers of soil. The vegetation will be removed from the hillside during remediation, but the area will be revegetated when cleanup is completed.
- Will the plants be healthier then?
 - Perhaps. There may be reestablishment of more native trees and vegetation.
- People who were born and raised here remember times when there was a 'fog bank' of smelter smoke.
- A member questioned why Resolution is responsible for the cleanup, since it wasn't Resolution who created the pollution; Magma and Newmont operated the smelter, and BHP created the tailings.
- Is Resolution doing this cleanup voluntarily, or are they required to do it? What does the word "voluntary" cleanup mean?
 - At some point, Resolution would likely be required to do remediation, so they have chosen to conduct this program now rather than at the end of life-of-mine. They knew they had to do this when they purchased the property, and also, they need the soil to close the old tailings site. The tailings impound needs to be closed by 2017, and this remediation needs to be done first to meet this schedule.
- How much will Resolution spend on this cleanup?
 - \$10-15 million, up to about \$20 million with tailings pond closure. Local contractors will be used for this work.
- Is it true that previous tests have shown that the slag pile is benign for environmental contamination?
 - The areas around the edges will need to be cleaned up from drainage. The slag itself is inert, and is essentially glass.
- Will plants (e.g. prickly pear) absorb the arsenic, or be subject to bioaccumulation?

- We don't know that, but will do some research.
- Does it affect wildlife?
 - There is wildlife in the area, and the vegetation is pretty robust. These do not appear to have unusual problems but we don't really know, as no studies have been done.
- There was some discussion about public perceptions of health problems.

Final Discussion of CWG Scoping Comments

All

CWG members offered that they were not very impressed with the scoping meetings. Some felt that the Forest Service should have just taken questions, not let people talk for unspecified periods of time. Some thought Mark Nelson did a good job with his presentation. Godec asked if the meetings helped members understand why we've been working so hard on these scoping comments. He said he had heard that there may be another scoping meeting, since some participants asked for another meeting in Queen Creek, and possibly one in Tucson.

The group reviewed the latest draft of the scoping letter and made several revisions to finalize it. Everyone present agreed to sign the letter, and did so. Those who were unable to attend the meeting will be asked if they would like to have their names included by proxy. The letter will be sent via Registered Mail to the Tonto National Forest.

Future Meeting Topics

All

The group requested that Resolution be invited to the next meeting to provide more information on the filter plant, rail and pipeline corridors, ancillary facilities, well locations and purposes, and other related facilities that have not been specifically explored in previous meetings. CWG members said that questions regarding these were raised at the public scoping meetings.

Public Questions & Comments

There were no public guests in attendance at this meeting.

Next Meeting

*5:30 PM
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
Superior Chamber of Commerce*