

Meeting #54
April 12, 2017
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present:

JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club
George Martin – JF Ranch
Lynn Martin – JF Ranch
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Nancy Vogler – LOST Trail
Bill Vogler – Superior Copper Alliance
Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Fire Department
Jim Schenck - Magma Dorada
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior
Pamela Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Tom Spridgen – Rotary Club of Superior
Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board

Community Working Group members not present:

Karen Kitchayan Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County
Roy Chavez - Concerned Citizens and Retired Miners
Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce alternate
Tiffany Rowell – Superior resident
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board

Resolution Copper Company:

Melissa Rabago
Dr. Casey McKeon
Heather Gluski

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)

John Godec
Debra Duerr

Speakers:

Kevin Hebert – Southwest Groundwater Consultants
Casey McKeon – Resolution Permits Manager

Public Guests:

DeLores Hatfield – VFW Aux. #3584

Introductions & Housekeeping

John Godec welcomed everyone. He told the group that there is a new director at Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Sy Sohmer, who will be available in May to talk with about CWG representation. Hank Gutierrez had approached Henry Munoz to discuss his participation in the CWG as a representative of the Retired Miners and Concerned Citizens. Unfortunately, Mr. Munoz will not be able to join the CWG due to work commitments, but he will check with others. Godec wondered if we should have a representative from Top of the World, and the group thought this would be a good addition. The facilitator will pursue this.

The group discussed a schedule for CWG meetings for the rest of the year. Ten meetings are planned for this year, meaning that they would take two months off. Traditionally, we have taken August off. After discussion, the following was decided:

- Move the June meeting to June 21, which is the 3rd Wednesday
- July – no meeting
- August – no meeting

The Voglers noted that they won't be here for the November meeting.

Godec asked the group if they would like to have business cards to hand out that could show the website address and a little information about the CWG. They thought this would be a good idea. The facilitator will have these prepared.

CWG Representative for Rio Tinto Corporate Relations Meeting

Melissa Rabago told the group that Simone Niven, Group Executive from Rio Tinto Corporate Relations, will be on site the week of April 17 and would like to schedule a working lunch meeting with key stakeholders from Superior. This meeting is scheduled for April 18 at 11:30 at Jade Grill. She asked the CWG if they would like to select one of their members to participate. Bruce Wittig volunteered to attend on behalf of the CWG.

Results of Water Quality Sampling

Kevin Hebert – Southwest Groundwater Consultants

Casey McKeon – Resolution Copper Company

John Godec reminded the group that the independent consultant, Southwest Groundwater Consultants (SGC), performed water quality sampling on February 23. Kevin Hebert, the project manager, provided an overview of the sampling day. Three water sources were sampled:

- Gallery well at the Arboretum
- Pond at the Arboretum
- Monitor well 002-2 at Castlebury

The approach used was for SGC to take samples of the same water pulled by Resolution staff from these sources to ensure consistency. They then had an independent laboratory test the samples. This lab does not currently do any work with Resolution. The analytes tested were the same as those that Resolution tested for.

Hebert explained the results, as shown on a handout. He discussed the primary and secondary maximum contaminant levels, known as MCLs, against which the results were compared. MCLs are typically used to evaluate drinking water quality, and so represent the most stringent standards. He observed that overall the water quality indicated in these results is quite good.

He showed results for the Gallery well, noting that the nitrate levels are very low (good). Levels of antimony were considered nondetectable. Arsenic is slightly higher than the drinking water standard (.0192 versus .01), but this could be due to natural background levels. We don't currently know what the background levels are for this area. Bill Greenslade of SGC noted that arsenic is usually found in deeper aquifers, and asked Resolution if they find the same thing. They said that finding arsenic in shallow wells in this area is quite common. Sulfate is sometimes an indicator around mine sites and the results are below the secondary MCL. Total dissolved solids are slightly above the secondary MCLs.

Godec asked how these data compared to those obtained at Queen Valley. Queen Valley representatives said these results show surprisingly good quality, particularly for nitrates, and are similar to what they get for drinking water (.005 for arsenic) at Queen Valley.

In response to a question, Hebert said that the depth to water in the Gallery well is 13 feet, which is very shallow. A CWG member suggested that the depth of the wells tested should be included in the reports, which Hebert agreed to do.

Test results for the Arboretum pond show that arsenic is below the quality standard. Other parameters are also well below the standards.

The monitor well 002-2 was at a casing depth of 20.6 feet, and it is screened at 20 feet; the depth to water was 6.9 feet. The water quality is similar overall to the other sources except that the arsenic level is about double what it is at the other locations. A CWG member said he is also surprised at the low nitrate levels.

In describing Resolution Copper's water quality testing results for these same sources, Casey McKeon noted that Resolution uses "aquifer water quality limits", not drinking water standards, for describing and comparing results. These standards are somewhat different from drinking water standards. Greenslade explained that there are only two or three parameters that are different between the two sets of standards. CWG members wondered if SGC reports should continue to use drinking water references, or whether they should be changed to aquifer standards. McKeon noted that Resolution uses this measurement because it is consistent with their Aquifer Protection Permit requirements from the Arizona Department of Environmental

Quality. They also collect a minimum of 8 quarterly samples to account for any seasonal variations that might occur.

Godec observed that the public might ask whether you could drink this water; in this case, using MCLs might be a better comparison. There was discussion about the best ways to interpret and present test results in the future, so that the public can easily and accurately understand them. This will be a topic for further discussion with the consultant and Resolution.

Jeanene Mancha presented the results of sampling collected by Resolution. She explained the sampling protocols used. She said they use two different laboratories to test different constituents.

For the Boyce Thompson Arboretum Gallery well and pond, arsenic was in the non-detectable range (<.025), as was lead. McKeon noted that she's interested in copper levels since Queen Creek is on the watch list for copper compliance.

The pH on the Castlebury well 002-2 is 8.73; Cecil Fendley said it's about 7 in Queen Valley drinking water. This was compared to vinegar at about 4. (Note: a pH of zero is highly acidic and a pH of 14 is highly alkaline.) Resolution's results showed .05 for arsenic, which is very similar to SGC's results. Nitrates were 1.35 compared to a standard of 10 (and 1.48 for SGC results). TDS was also very similar, as was sulfate.

Overall, both Resolution and Southwest Groundwater concluded that both sets of results are very similar.

A CWG member asked whether these results are going to be posted on the CWG web site. The group agreed that we should not do this now, but perhaps could do it once there are more results. All agreed that some explanation will be needed so people can understand the results and the context in which they should be interpreted. A member suggested it needs to be clarified that no biological constituents are included in testing.

Members asked Resolution how long they have been sampling, how often, and whether much variation has been observed. McKeon said they have been sampling for about one year, every month. They are considering reducing this to quarterly. There has been some seasonal fluctuation.

It was suggested that SGC might want to prepare a graph of key constituents that are 'hot buttons', e.g. sulfates, arsenic, that could be plotted at each sampling event.

May 25 at 7:30 AM will be the next sampling date. The Community Monitoring Task Force, SGC, and Resolution agreed to meet at the Chamber of Commerce, since it is easier to park here than at the Resolution office.

Godec mentioned that he has talked with Sierra Club about joining the Community Monitoring Task Force, but they have not committed to doing this.

Subcommittee Updates

Fred Gaudet reported on the Recreation User Group (RUG) meeting that was held earlier in the day. He said that the result of the meeting was to identify a general area within which the project would be established. This area is essentially south of US 60. The group also discussed single- versus multiple-use trails and motorized versus non-motorized trails. Resolution said they could pay for analysis of about 100 miles of trail and about 30 acres of parking and ancillary facilities. It was noted that the next meeting will likely be rather contentious in trying to gain agreement among the stakeholder groups on some of these issues, as there are several points of conflict between member organizations. Forest Service brought up the issue of shooting ranges, which was new.

For the Historic Preservation Task Force, Pamela Rabago is still working with Vicky Peacey to get together to discuss the stack and ancillary buildings.

Comments on Draft Apache Leap Special Management Area Plan

Godec said that there have been two public meetings held by Tonto National Forest to explain and get comments on the Draft Apache Leap Special Management Area (ALSMA) plan that was recently released. Public comments are due May 1, and Godec asked the group if they would like to develop and submit any additional comments. A member mentioned that she heard that cattle grazing may be eliminated in a few years, and another noted that grazing helps in wildfire control as well. Emergency access was an issue that was discussed among meeting participants and is also of concern to the CWG.

Those who read the entire plan felt that it was unclear about what would happen, and there were no definite answers about what could and could not occur. This vagueness of the document seemed to be the main concern among CWG members.

Godec asked individual members to send any concerns and comments they would like to submit to Debra Duerr by end of day Friday 4/14. She will prepare a draft letter including these for the group to review by Tuesday 4/18. After the CWG agrees on the letter, it will be submitted to the Forest Service.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting

Godec reported that Tom Torres asked if he could come to talk to the CWG about Forest planning at some time in the future. The group thought this would be a wonderful idea. TNF also is willing to discuss the Resolution Copper and Land Exchange Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping report at the May CWG meeting, and the group said they would like this.

*Wednesday, May 10, 2017
Superior Chamber of Commerce
6:00pm*