

Recreation User Group
Meeting 14
July 25, 2018
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Representative	Organization
John Bricker	Tonto Recreation Alliance (TRAL)
Rich Smith	TRAL
Kevin Patterson	TRAL
Bill Howes	TRAL
Jim Schenck	Superior Community Working Group
Paul Burghard	Tonto National Forest (TNF) Globe District Trails
Pete Casillas	Legends of Superior Trail
Jamie Wages	Tonto National Forest Acting Ranger
Sheryl Cormack	Tonto National Forest Recreation
Mark Flint	Southwest Trail Solutions
Rick Schonfeld	Westland Resources
Mary Morissette	Resolution Copper Company (RCC)
Paul Medueno	RCC
Hesston Klenk	RCC
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)
Debra Duerr	GRA

Welcome and Introductions

John Godec welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it's been two months since we met. He pointed out the new maps that are provided in handouts and in posters on the wall. The group is small today, but Godec noted that other RUG members have been submitting comments and suggestions that have been used for the map updates.

He reported that the Arizona Trail Association has endorsed the plan, and a copy of Matt Nelson's letter was distributed. Godec suggested that the mountain biking community is 'reasonably happy' with the current plan. The equestrian community appears to be satisfied. He felt that this group has been working toward a consensus decision, and feels that we are very close.

The objective for the meeting today is to complete a plan that can be shown to the Forest Service. Pablo Burghard concurred with this assessment, noting that everyone recognizes that things may change but we need a starting point.

Mary Morissette told the group that Resolution is coming to two important milestones, including starting to talk about mitigation with the Forest Service in September. The RUG plan will be part of what is offered for mitigation for recreation impacts. She estimated that this

might be a \$4 million plan. She emphasized that if this plan is not complete in this timeframe it can not be included in the discussions, so it is critical to have something to present at upcoming Forest Service consultations. She said she will not get additional funding if there is no plan to put forward, and Resolution has already spent more than \$600,000 on developing it.

Presentation of Progress Since Last Meeting

Rick Schonfeld, Westland Resources

Rick Schonfeld reviewed the mapping requests from the RUG at the last meeting and showed an updated overview map, which clarifies (as requested):

- Motorized existing
- Motorized proposed
- Nonmotorized existing
- Nonmotorized proposed

Existing trails and other features are also shown for reference, even though they are not part of this plan. Another more detailed map breaks the roads into finer categories like single track. Schonfeld noted that the Forest Service roads shown may not be entirely accurate or accurately numbered, but Westland used the Forest Service data base for this. Parking and staging areas (3) have been identified, that are all fed from SR 177 on the east side; details of these are shown. A RUG member asked if these would include facilities like toilets, but this will be function of budget and future expansion of the plan. Morissette pointed out that it would be easier from a permitting standpoint to not have facilities on Forest Service land but to look for private parcels for this. Schonfeld emphasized that all these segments have been ground-truthed and are constructible in a sustainable fashion. He explained that the maps are available on the geo-portal, where one can pull out specific features ([RUG maps](#)).

TRAL pointed out that the many motorized trails shown just west of SR 177 are a jumble of existing and proposed trails. Perhaps this will be narrowed down during the review. Burghard said that none of the trails, even though existing, have been Forest Service-approved, so all would need to be evaluated. Also, much of this is on the private property of the perlite mine. Rich Smith suggested that there should be a note in the plan that the mileage as shown will be reduced. Burghard observed that some of the user-created trails may be closed and/or naturalized as part of this plan, as well, for mitigation. RUG members asked how existing system roads fit into the environmental analysis. Forest Service said that they would not have to be analyzed if they have already been done. If not, they need to be surveyed and included.

Godec asked what the process is from here. Morissette explained that FS would provide further direction at the larger mitigation meeting in September to give a better idea of what needs to be changed or done and the level of effort. After this, the plan of operations would be developed, including environmental, cultural resource, and biological resource surveys. Surveys may be done this winter (along with a Native American crew) so a full plan can be submitted to the Forest Service in April or so. Morissette opined that Resolution would hire a third-party consultant to do the environmental work under the direction of Forest Service specialists who will provide guidance and approvals; and the Forest Supervisor would sign a decision (Finding of No Significant Impact).

Godec asked if the Forest Service sees any 'fatal flaws'. Burghard said that this is a good starting point, but there will be some changes and everyone will not necessarily be happy. He reminded the group that the objective here was to keep this pilot project at a manageable level, but this doesn't mean that there won't be further phases to include a larger area. Morissette noted that we can expect there to be quite a few cultural resource sites found, but the solution to this would be to move/change/eliminate the affected trail segment.

Godec asked whether the RUG wants to have a public review before this plan is submitted. It was pointed out that the NEPA process will have some kind of public review process (scoping). In the interest of time, the critical factor in this discussion is that unless this plan can be included in Resolution's mitigation proposal right now, it will likely never happen.

Godec polled those present to see if they are agreement that this plan should be turned over to the Forest Service as a starting point for mitigation discussions. TRAL approved, and tacit agreement is hoped for from the equestrian, mountain biking, and hiking stakeholders. Pending agreement from the Town of Superior, the group approved completion of this plan.

It was noted that previously the group had discussed dealing with questions of signage, maintenance, and funding. Morissette said that the plan of operations will include 'blanket statements' about these that can be fleshed out in future. The RUG group can also continue to meet to discuss these if they like, but Resolution will be ultimately responsible for compliance with Forest Service requirements.

Next Steps & Agreements

Just to clarify, Jim Schenck asked if endorsement of this map today would be sufficient for Resolution's management review and approval; Morissette said it would be.

It was suggested that the RUG could have another meeting in October, after the Resolution/Forest Service mitigation meetings, to get an update.

If anyone on the group would like to send a letter or email to Mary Morissette supporting this plan it would be appreciated. It was agreed that the facilitators will prepare a letter by next week for signature by all members who wish to do so.

Next Meeting

The next RUG meeting is planned for:

**October 17, 2018
10:00 AM**

Superior Chamber of Commerce