

**March 13, 2019**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Meeting Attendees**

*Community Working Group members present:*

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison  
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College  
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association  
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County  
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce alternate  
Todd Pryor – Town of Superior  
Jim Schenck – Rebuild Superior and Legends of Superior Trail  
Silvia Werre – Top of the World  
Ricardo Provencio – United Superiorites  
Pamela Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce  
Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Fire Department  
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club  
Lynn Martin – JF, JI Ranch  
George Martin – JF, JI Ranch  
Richard Matthews – Queen Valley Fire Department  
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board  
Tiffany Rowell – Superior community  
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance  
Sylvia Kerlock – Town of Winkelman  
Gloria Ruiz – Town of Winkelman

*Community Working Group members not present:*

Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board  
Karen Kitchayan Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe  
Mila Besich Lira – Town of Superior  
Tweedy Armitage – Superior Historical Society  
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior

*Resolution Copper Company:*

Hesston Klenk – Communities Manager

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

John Godec, Debra Duerr

*Speakers:*

Mary Rasmussen – Tonto National Forest, NEPA Project Team Leader  
Chris Garrett – EIS Project Manager, SWCA  
Donna Morey – Environmental Planner, SWCA

*Public Guests:*

Elizabeth Butler – Friends of the Tonto  
Adam Milnor – National Park Service  
Brian Seppala – Resolution Copper  
Michael Macias – Superior resident

## **Introductions & Housekeeping**

John Godec asked everyone to introduce themselves. The group welcomed new members Sylvia Kerlock and Gloria Ruiz from the Town of Winkelman. Godec thanked the Tonto National Forest and SWCA for coming to talk with the CWG about the Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is an important discussion. Pam Bennett noted that Mary Rasmussen will also talk with the Queen Valley Community tomorrow night at the Recreation Center.

The Community Monitoring Task Force sampling will be done tomorrow, March 14. The date was mixed up, for which the facilitators apologize. Fred is able attend, and the rest of the task force agreed that this would be sufficient.

In local news, The Apache Leap Mining Festival will be held this weekend, and the CWG will have a booth. Silvia Werre and Jim Schenck have volunteered to help staff it on Sunday. The Arnett Canyon segment of the Legends of Superior Trail (LOST) will be inaugurated this weekend, and all are welcome to attend. Mentioning a beloved Superior community member, Bruce Wittig told the group that Mike McKee will have life support stopped this week after suffering brain trauma. Bruce asked the community to remember him. United Superiorites are celebrating 50 years of existence. They have donated over \$175,000 over the years in scholarships for students. They will be having a golf tournament on May 4. The Magma Hotel is now open and will have an opening celebration on March 30. They have been open for breakfast and hope to open the new restaurant, The Barmacy, for the mining festival this weekend. Room rates are \$299 per night; a special is being run for the festival this weekend. Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center is having a golf tournament on March 30 at Apache Stronghold. Fernando Shipley invited everyone to participate.

Godec told the group that the RUG plan will be submitted to the Forest Service next week. He suggested that perhaps CWG/RUG members can do a presentation on this at the next meeting.

## **Discussion and Update of Resolution Copper Project Draft EIS**

Mary Rasmussen, Tonto National Forest  
Chris Garrett, SWCA

Mary Rasmussen said that the Draft EIS is scheduled to be released this summer. Tonight, she will update the group on the status of alternatives and some of the impacts of the alternatives. She noted that it has been more than a year since she updated the public and is glad to take up that process again by talking with the CWG.

Chris Garrett showed a chart illustrating the overall EIS process. The scoping process resulted in issues to guide the studies. Alternatives to the proposed action were developed for analysis, and impacts of these are currently being studied. Also, he mentioned that inclusion of the land exchange in this EIS made it quite complicated.

Issues studied particular to this project include subsidence impacts, tailings safety, and mine dewatering as well as the usual environmental topics. A CWG members asked for clarification about the topic of environmental justice; “EJ” communities are affected by this project including the Town of Superior. The concept of environmental justice seeks to ensure that impacts of projects are not unduly concentrated on communities with minority, low income, or native populations and geographic locations that already experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks. This analysis requires an assessment of whether undue impacts are being imposed on these types of communities.

### ***Discussion of Alternatives:***

In the alternatives development process, alternatives eliminated include other mining techniques as alternatives to the block cave process, the use of other mining Brownfields sites for tailings disposal, and upstream tailings dams. Analysis determined that traditional cut-and-fill mining techniques would not work for this project due to the quality of the ore and the consequent amount of material that must be handled; this would not be physically or economically reasonable. A statewide search of existing closed mines failed to reveal any practical tailings disposal sites. An upstream dam was initially proposed by Resolution, but due to recent issues, lessons, and design improvements the proposal has been changed to modified centerline and centerline dams for all alternatives.

Alternatives being carried forward are four tailings locations including the Near West proposed by Resolution and a site that’s off federal land, Skunk Camp, as well as three different tailings deposit methods including dry stack at Silver King (potential water quality problems from fast oxidation). Garrett talked about the history and possible benefits of the Skunk Camp site, which include being located a distance of about 10 miles from the Gila River. This site falls in both Gila and Pinal County on both State Land and private land. A CWG member pointed out that State Land Department has refused to sell land to Resolution for tailings in the past; this was probably because the other land at Superstition Vistas had higher and better land uses, while this one may not. It would need to be put up for auction as is the normal State Land process.

A CWG member asked how the preferred alternative is selected. The Forest Supervisor will select this, and it may or may not be identified in the Draft EIS. Although it is normally called out in the Draft, in this case the decision is a big one and it is difficult to balance impacts among alternatives.

The CWG wanted to confirm that the people who live in the area of Skunk Camp are aware of this proposal, and asked what the people living at Dripping Springs have said. Hesston Klenk said that Resolution has consulted with local residents. It seems that drainage is challenging in this large watershed. Hesston reported that about 8 meetings have been held with the residents, but they haven’t talked to every landowner. The closest residence is about 6 miles away from the tailings dam. Some people are opposed to this idea while others who have worked in the mining industry are more understanding of the need; it’s a mixed reaction. Water quality is the biggest concern, along with the potential for dam failure relative to water

resources. Everyone in that area depends on wells. It's likely that Resolution will need to install many safety measures including liners, drains, and seepage collection and pumpback. The Forest Service emphasized that any facility must be designed to not fail.

The group had several questions about the tailings facility:

- What happens when and if the drainage gets into the Gila River?
  - That's part of the current analysis.
- How do you regulate how far the tailings need to travel, through pipelines whether above-or-below-ground?
  - The Forest Service will rely on pipeline engineers and try to minimize impacts. At this point, the pipeline routes are just feasible corridors, not detailed designs.
- Are these facilities designed to consider earthquakes?
  - Yes, these are being designed to withstand a 10,000-year earthquake (v. design standard of 5,000 years).
- Winkelman representatives asked for a map with the tailings locations. They asked if Skunk Camp is the preferred alternative, and Tonto National Forest said that the preferred alternative has not been identified yet.
- Regarding the West Plant, a question was asked about whether the filter load-out facility could be moved to the West Plant site.
  - This is now part of Alternative 4 for analysis, but it could be included in other alternatives.
- Could the preferred alternative change between the Draft and Final EIS, because there's mitigation for everything?
  - Yes, it could change, partially based on public comments.
- How long would it take before a pipeline failure is identified?
  - There will be sensors along the line for immediate notification, and a pipeline safety plan must be prepared.

CWG members indicated that they found the Skunk Creek site to be surprisingly good because it is farther away from people and does not seem to have the intensive recreation use that the Near West site has. They asked whether it would be good to write a letter of support for this site, and asked if it should be sent to the Forest Supervisor. Rasmussen said that communications should be sent to the Supervisor.

### ***Discussion of Impacts:***

#### ***Water Resources***

The Forest Service formed an independent Geology and Subsidence Modeling Workgroup, which found similar data to that prepared by Resolution. Their conclusions are that the subsidence crater at the mine site would be about 1,000 feet deep and 1 mile across, but probably won't result in a lake at the bottom. The fracture zone edge is about 1115 feet from the Apache Leap Special Management Area, so would not result in problems for that feature.

The Forest Service also formed a Groundwater Modeling Workgroup including multiple agencies to examine impacts on key groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) like springs, Devils Canyon, Queen Creek, Arnett Creek, Telegraph Canyon, and Mineral Creek. They believe that there are at least 5 springs that would be dried up by mine dewatering whether the mine is developed or not, and at least 3 more springs are affected by mining operations.

In relative terms, the Proposed Action would use the most water. The CWG asked:

- Have you modeled just the watershed above Superior? Older folks here say that Queen Creek flowed much more in the past.
  - Because of the subsidence crater capturing some drainage flows, the water in Queen Creek through Superior would be reduced by about 15%.
  - Todd Pryor felt that mitigation for this should be mandatory, as evidence shows that the riparian area through town is much degraded. Perhaps water could be replaced directly back into the creek.
  - The Silver King alternative would cut off some flows in Queen Creek near the Arboretum.
  - There would be no water resources impacts to Queen Valley.
- Will Arizona Water Company's wells be affected, which is what Superior relies on?
  - In the Salt River Valley there would be 90-130 feet of drawdown. These wells are in alluvium and there is plenty of water, so the solution would be to drill deeper. In the New Magma Irrigation District there could be about 40 feet of drawdown. Resolution has stated that they expect to get about half the water they need from here, and would like to figure out how to get it all; this may be more difficult under the state's new Drought Contingency Plan.
- A CWG member suggested that Tonto National Forest hasn't listened to people about the access they want in the Travel Management Plan, so why do they have to listen to Resolution? This is part of the reason the project is taking so long, because the Forest Service has spent much more time than anticipated on alternatives.
- Can the Tonto National Forest 'squash' the project if they don't like it, or do they have a legal responsibility to approve it?
  - It's a lawful proposal and so the Forest Service must consider it under applicable laws.

### *Scenic Resources*

For the analysis of visual impacts, 31 key observation points (KOPs) were selected, and visual simulations were prepared by Truscape. Garrett showed several simulation graphics, both block sketches and simulations showing full reclamation.

### **Discuss HB2701 to Restore Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund**

Due to time constraints, this discussion was postponed until the next CWG meeting.

### **Thoughts on CWG Facebook Page**

Jim Schenk said that he thinks this is a way many people get their information, but many CWG members think that the level of effort involved in maintaining and moderating it might be too much. Some were also concerned that people from a very wide geographic area might get involved in online discussions. It was noted that there can be pages that aren't moderated. It was suggested that if the CWG does create a Facebook page it should not include issues but only meeting information, etc. It was also noted that mainly older people use Facebook now, and younger folks use Snapchat and other online formats. The group agreed that it won't pursue this idea further.

### **Public Questions & Comments**

A lifelong Superior resident who spends much time outdoors thinks it's pretty sad that we're talking about destroying this area. He remembered the 'blood-red' water from old tailings, and sees the huge pits and tailings around this region. Superior is unique in the area in its scenic beauty. He wanted to come to this meeting because the Forest Service are stewards of the land. He realized that people want jobs and have different opinions but hopes that these concerns can be taken into the equation.

A visitor asked again if existing old mine sites can't be used for tailings. Forest Service responded that a statewide search for suitable facilities of this kind showed that none are feasible.

### **Next Meeting**

The next CWG meeting is scheduled for:

**Wednesday, April 10**  
**5:30 pm**  
**Superior Chamber of Commerce**

Hesston offered to pursue having cultural resource monitors and archaeologists present to the CWG in April; the group thought this would be an excellent discussion.