

Recreation User Group
Meeting 19
May 15, 2019
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Representative	Organization
Elizabeth Butler	Friends of the Tonto/equestrians
Bill Scott	Sun City Hiking Club
Sheryl Cormack	Tonto National Forest
Jason Scow	Tonto National Forest
Justin Eddinger	Tonto National Forest
Andrew Bollners	Tonto National Forest
Rick Schonfeld	Westland Resources
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)
Debra Duerr	GRA

Welcome and Introductions

Very few RUG members attended today's meeting. John Godec told the group that the RUG plan submitted to the Tonto National Forest will be discussed at the Community Working Group meeting tonight. He reviewed the history of the RUG, for the new Tonto National Forest folks in attendance. Justin Eddinger said that he will be taking on Pablo Burghard's former role at the TNF, and the group welcomed him.

Discussion of RUG Communications & Outreach Ideas/Plans and Additional Members

Godec reviewed the purpose of a public information piece for RUG members to use, and reviewed previous group conversations about this. He said that some members didn't think there was enough informational detail for specific user groups, so he's suggesting that we prepare an additional "Frequently Asked Questions" piece tailored to each group. Elizabeth Butler observed that perhaps separate brochures wouldn't be needed, but one more detailed handout could address specific questions that different groups might have. Rick Schonfeld suggested that if information could be put on a website, we could give more detail. This could be done on the CWG website.

Participants questioned whether this is a Town of Superior publication or a RUG publication. The idea is for it to be a RUG publication, but it could be used by the town as they see fit. Some members thought that other recreational maps were being prepared by/for the town.

Most of the discussion centered on what a map in this brochure should look like. There is concern that if a map is created showing the proposed RUG trails, it could lead people to believe that they already exist, and consequently they could try to find and use them (illegally).

It was suggested that we could show existing 'legal' trails. If proposed RUG trails are added, they should be "cartoonish" and simplified, making the difference clear.

Bill Scott noted that the new trails like Arnett Canyon attract people because there were recent articles about them. He observed that if people don't have correct information, they will go everywhere and anywhere. Elizabeth also has similar concerns about putting even dotted lines on a map, encouraging people to start using them. She suggested that perhaps we could just show an area with boundaries. Rick felt that we should include existing trails and describe that there will be additional trails in this area. This would be more like a sketch, not using a topographical map as the base. The general concept is that the area west of the Telegraph Canyon ridge would emphasize non-motorized use, while motorized uses would be further east toward the town.

We will need to consult with Mary Morissette to get approval for preparing something like this and to provide direction to WestLand.

The group reviewed the brochure copy and felt it was suitable.

Discussion of Trail Plan Funding and Maintenance

A RUG member recalled that there had been talk about an endowment fund from Resolution that would be set up to help fund this project. However, since Morissette isn't here we don't know the status of this. It was generally agreed that there will still need to be partnerships established, grant funding sought, and volunteer efforts developed.

The group thought that possible funding sources might include:

- State Park grants (RTP)
- Arizona Wilderness Coalition grants, but only for wilderness
- TRAL has applied for/used grants in the past, and would know these sources
- The Clean Trail Initiative Program (see handout) grants are small (\$500) but can be used for a lot of things that other grants can't (e.g. food for volunteers)
- REI
- Possible mountain biking connections, e.g. IMBA
- It was also noted that Mark Flint is knowledgeable about trail funding options.

The Forest Service said that they already have partnerships with TRAL and Friends of the Tonto, so these groups could possibly be asked to coordinate an effort including other groups. LOST is also a 501(c)3 corporation that can accept grants.

In thinking about timing of potential implementation of this plan, the group discussed the current status of the RUG proposal being included in the Resolution Copper Project Environmental Impact Statement as part of the overall recreational mitigation plan. They thought that the main benefit of this approach is the potential for funding. The challenge is that working through the EIS process will take a long time, and the group wondered if implementation could be started more quickly if the plan were pulled out of this regulatory

process and evaluated as a stand-alone project. All agreed that legal advice would be needed to evaluate this tradeoff. As things stand, RUG members could develop 'shovel-ready' projects to be ready to take advantage of Resolution funding, but this could take a long time. On the other hand, projects could be developed more quickly if the plan was not part of the EIS, but funding could be lacking.

Jason Scow reiterated Pablo's advice that funding for maintenance is of primary importance to the Forest Service, so that needs to be committed in order to get approval. Sun City Hiking Club said that they currently perform maintenance on the LOST, and they also do it on the Telegraph Canyon trail even though it's not an 'improved' trail. Bill Scott suggested that, since people tend to like loop trails, this piece would be a good candidate to pull out of the RUG plan and thought it could be finished in a year. He said that the LOST was funded by Arizona Department of Transportation and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Next Steps, Next Meeting

The group asked the facilitators to start working on a history of the RUG, to include information that could be used as basis for grant applications, etc. WestLand Resources will follow up with Resolution about design and preparation of a 'public' map explaining the RUG trail plan.

The next RUG meeting was tentatively scheduled for

Wednesday, July 10, 2019
10:00 AM
Superior Town Hall – same meeting room