

Recreation User Group
Meeting 20
July 10, 2019
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Representative	Organization
John Bricker	Tonto Recreation Alliance (TRAL)
Kevin Patterson	TRAL
Jim Schenck	LOST & Superior Community Working Group
Mila Besich	Mayor, Town of Superior
Todd Pryor	Manager, Town of Superior
Mary Morissette	Resolution Copper Company
Paul Burghard	Globe resident/former TNF – joined by phone
Charlie Goff	Superstition Area Land Trust
Pete Casillas	Superior Chamber of Commerce
Sheryl Cormack	Tonto National Forest (TNF)
Jason Scow	TNF
Rick Schonfeld	WestLand Resources
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)
Debra Duerr	GRA

Welcome and Introductions

John Godec reminded the RUG that Justin Eddinger from Tonto National Forest has taken over from Paul Berghard (Pablo), but Justin wasn't able to be here today. Pablo is joining by phone.

The Mayor told the group that the Town of Superior and the Chamber of Commerce have applied for a grant for a branding study for the town to use with the Arizona Office of Tourism, so they will be asking for representation from this group as the process proceeds.

Review of Status of RUG Map for Informational Brochure

Mary Morissette of Resolution Copper suggested that it might be better to wait until the Forest Service approves a plan before the RUG creates a map that might change. RUG members thought that it might be good to inform people about the status of the planning effort but not give any details, specific routes, or numbers of miles, etc. Rick Schonfeld suggested that a map could just indicate the area we've been looking at. All agreed that if it's general it would be acceptable to put something out for public and stakeholder information, as long as it's small and not able to be used for navigation. The written copy for the brochure is quite general, as well, and is aimed at giving people an idea of what's going on this area and the efforts of the RUG. It was also suggested that the group could publish a link to an online map (on the CWG website) that will change over time. The group wondered if this would be valuable to the town and the Chamber of Commerce, and those representatives responded that it would be. RUG

members agreed that we need a map of what trails and connections already exist, because people get confused. The Mayor mentioned that Mike Alvarez started working on something similar to this brochure for the Chamber, but we don't know what they intend to do with it, nor does it show trails; this map may be a resource to look at or incorporate in what the RUG is doing. Morissette asked WestLand to go ahead and prepare a map, as discussed, for the RUG to review at the next meeting.

Preliminary Plan for Campground at Castleberry

Schonfeld showed a vicinity map with property lines and access opportunities. Another map laid out a concept drawing of a campsite with vehicle access, parking, picnic area, a spot for a camp host, a rest room and possibly a shower, area for RV camping, and primitive tent camping along the foot path. There would be about 16 sites including everything. The Town Manager pointed out that this area is in the annexation plan for the town, so there may be availability of sewer lines in future. Septic would be allowed under the town code if the site is more than 1200 feet from a sewer mainline.

Morissette reported that Resolution has met with State Parks Department about this site, and they were very enthusiastic about it. They would like to see a trail from the camping area to the Boyce Thompson Arboretum. There is no formal agreement with State Parks at this time, however. The Arboretum is also interested in annexation by Superior because they want sewer access. However, they would need an 8000-foot force main to accomplish this, which is challenging. Therefore, they may require a new sewer system rather than linking into Superior's. The Arboretum wants to have more events, which is difficult at the moment because there is currently no formal agreement with State Parks (until a new agreement can be developed that does not include the University of Arizona).

The RUG discussed this proposed campground concept, offering many observations and suggestions. TRAL felt that many people would want to come with larger vehicles with hookups, and would pay handsomely for it. The income from that could offset facility maintenance costs. This accommodation wouldn't need to be big, perhaps 6 sites. Todd Pryor explained that getting approval for an RV park (any site with hookups) in the county is difficult and would require 24-hour supervision, so annexation would make it easier. If located in the Town of Superior the site would need rezoning and use permits from the town. It wouldn't require hookups if there's a dump station in town, and this would qualify as unimproved camping. There should be a nominal fee, regardless of what is developed. The federal government is not interested in adding a campground, nor is Resolution able to do it. It was noted that Oak Flat, which this would replace, is all primitive camping. It was felt that the demand for 16 spaces here would be very high, as it's difficult to find camping spots in this state.

RUG comments included the following:

- What do we want the area to be? If you like Oak Flat, this could be similar and a direct mitigation. At Oak Flat, families go there on holidays for big family parties, so that could be another use for this area.

- Will Resolution provide long-term maintenance? Will State Parks take it over? If so, Resolution will be paying for maintenance anyway.
 - Rio Tinto will probably not fund all this access unless it's directly part of mitigation.
- Will there be parking for horse trailers?
 - Two of the parking areas could accommodate horse trailers, but probably not for overnight parking.
- ATV trailers are widely used, as well, and users come in 'big herds'. From the ATV perspective, TRAL and other organized groups want to encourage users to gather and park in approved areas rather than wildcatting, although under current regulations one can park anywhere on the Forest now. This demand must be met somehow.
- From the town's perspective, it would be better for ATV users to visit this area so they can come into town and spend money.
- How do we address, acknowledge, and protect the history of this area? It's adjacent to the old town of Pinal site, and some are concerned about damaging this historic site. The challenge is how to both protect it and make it available for public education at the same time.
 - Some ideas for this were discussed including interpretive signing. Another idea was installation of a fiber optic cable to accommodate Wi-Fi that would allow videos of oral histories and narrated tours that people could access from their phones, perhaps by scanning a bar code from a sign at the site. (Other features in town could also be added to a virtual tour, e.g. the Caboose Park). A related idea was to license Bess Walker's book, which includes stories about lots of things around town.
 - It was recognized that Resolution wouldn't pay for this kind of program.

The consensus of the RUG was that the concept for this facility should include primitive to undeveloped to moderately-improved camping, so we stay away from the RV park concept. If State Parks ever takes it over there could be more improvements. Good signage and information about downtown Superior would be key to its success for economic development. Therefore, funds will also be needed for signage and promotional materials.

Tonto National Forest said that they support development of an activity center in this area, which will relieve pressure on the Forest.

In conclusion, it was agreed that Resolution and WestLand will continue conversations with State Parks to better determine what their priorities are and what they would like to see. Todd Pryor offered the assistance of the city engineers if desired.

Report on Forest Service Comments on RUG Plan

Resolution has not yet received any comments from the Forest Service on the plan that was submitted. Perhaps they are too busy with getting the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) completed. Release of this document is scheduled for late July/early August. Resolution does not know how the RUG plan will be addressed or included in the DEIS, so it will be

important for the RUG to review the draft to see how it's handled and to make comments of support.

Discussion of Trail Plan Funding and Maintenance, continued

Resolution is not ready to do this yet, since the plan isn't finalized. Therefore, the actual costs of implementing the plan cannot be estimated yet. Resolution has committed, however, to establishing a funding mechanism.

It was mentioned that the National Park Service is doing a building and maintenance plan for the Legends of Superior Trail (LOST) under a grant, which may be another funding source for the RUG plan. For the LOST, all easements are in place and all permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Flood Control District, and Arizona Department of Transportation have been obtained.

Next Steps, Next Meeting

The group thought a meeting in September would be helpful since the DEIS will be out by then. Further materials for the RUG brochure will be ready for review, and Resolution will have talked more with State Parks. The date agreed is:

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

10:00 AM

Superior Town Hall – same meeting room