

September 11, 2019
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present:

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County
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
Lynne Nemeth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum
Mila Besich – Town of Superior
Tiffany Rowell – Superior community
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Lynn Martin – JF, JI Ranch
George Martin – JF, JI Ranch
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance
Tweedy Armitage – Superior Historical Society
Gloria Ruiz – Town of Winkelman
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College
Roy Chavez – Retired Miners and Concerned Citizens

Community Working Group members not present:

Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Karen Kitchayan Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe
Tino Flores – Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition
Anna Flores – Town of Kearny
Sylvia Kerlock – Town of Winkelman
Richard Matthews – Queen Valley Water Board
Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board
Woody Cline – Gila County Supervisor
Cathy Melvin – Gila County
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club

Resolution Copper Company:

Hesston Klenk – Resolution Copper Communities Manager

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):

John Godec, Debra Duerr

Speakers:

Vicky Peacey – Resolution Copper Mining
Greg Ghidotti – Resolution Copper Mining
Allen Hayden – Natural Channel Design

Public Guests:

David Herrera – Eastern Pinal & southwest Gila Watershed Partnership
James E. O’Donnell – Eastern Pinal & Southwest Gila Watershed Partnership
Henry Munoz – Retired Miners and Concerned Citizens
Tom Tatalovich – homeowner
Andrew Lye – Resolution Copper Mining

Introductions & Housekeeping

John Godec welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. He thanked guests for coming. He pointed out items in the CWG packets including the CWG Annual Report, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) readers guide prepared by Todd Pryor, and a Forest Service scoping announcement for the Copper King exploration project, which has been separated from the Superior West project. The Forest Service is proposing to treat the project as a Categorical Exclusion. He introduced the topic of making comments on the DEIS, noting the schedule and how CWG might work toward that. Godec asked members who had attended the Forest Service public hearing on the DEIS last night; several had.

In local news, members reported that the Burro Run was sold out in 36 hours. There are six runners for the race on October 12. On September 21 there will be a Fiesta as well the High School golf tournament. The United Superiorites will be celebrating their 50th anniversary. For trail fundraising, people can adopt a foot of the LOST for \$3.

Resolution Copper Mining Water and Environmental Mitigation Planning & Commitments

Greg Ghidotti – Resolution Copper Mining
Allen Hayden – Natural Channel Design

After the July CWG meeting, the group asked Vicky Peacey to come back and talk more about mitigation plans for water resources. Tonight, Peacey said she has asked Greg Ghidotti to discuss this issue further. There are different impacts from loss of surface water and the reduction of groundwater aquifer levels because of mine dewatering. Greg will provide details of these impacts and the mitigation measures being developed.

Ghidotti showed a diagram of present and future surface features, the alluvial aquifer (Queen Creek) beneath the surface, the deeper rock layer including Gila conglomerate, and the regional aquifer with several wells at different depths including a 4000-foot-deep Resolution index well in Superior. He pointed out that the alluvium is filled to various water depths depending on rain and drought conditions. Water from here does recharge the aquifer at times, but this is a slow process of up to 50 years. The groundwater drawdown from the project is predicted to be 10 to 30 feet (mean annual flow) due to mine pumping. Data from wells drilled for the West Plant site show that groundwater is deeper than 100 feet at many locations. The levels have declined about 10 feet in the past decade.

For surface water, the mine subsidence area is predicted to reduce stream flow from precipitation by about 20% to those waterways that traverse the site and are connected to the mine area.

For groundwater mitigation, Resolution will develop deeper wells wherever needed. Regarding Top of the World, specifically, they have a “great” well where waters levels have not dropped. This shows that it is getting recharged from rain events. Mitigation for springs, such as spring boxes, was discussed at the July CWG meeting.

Questions included:

- Do homeowners need to prove a causal link to the project to obtain mitigation? A CWG member suggested that this will be very difficult and therefore anyone in Superior who has had a well dry up since dewatering has started in 2009 should get a new well.
 - Resolution will consider this idea.
- A CWG member observed that on their property they have wells outside the dewatering area that have dropped from drought but also wells in the dewatering area that have not dropped.
- What’s the affected area or radius for a 7000-foot-deep well? Does the aquifer extend to the Pinal Mountains?
 - It can vary greatly depending on the geologic material surrounding the well. Yes, the Pinal Mountains represent the groundwater divide, but impacts to areas this far east toward Globe are not predicted.

Allen Hayden of Natural Channel Design discussed some of the “many opportunities” for surface water mitigation. Natural Channel Design is an engineering company based in Flagstaff that specializes in habitat restoration. They have been asked to evaluate Queen Creek through Superior under the conditions of a 20% water loss. This study is being done to see whether and what mitigation can be done for stream flow to maintain or enhance stream quality. The results and proposed mitigation will be detailed in the Final EIS. In preliminary evaluations, they have concluded that the Queen Creek channel is in good condition for an ephemeral system and appears to be resilient to these kinds of changes.

The CWG had the following questions and comments:

- Are you familiar with tree of heaven, which is a big problem in Superior?
 - Yes, stream channels are not formed by stream flow, but associated vegetation is. Baseflows are more important for vegetation. If you put baseflow in a stream, or even if it has shallow groundwater, you can support cottonwoods and willows. More frequent flood flows, equal to about a 2-year event, form stream channels.
- How is Queen Creek in good shape?
 - In an initial visit, it is supporting the expected vegetation, does not experience a lot of bank erosion, is not overly wide or narrow but is carrying its sediment adequately.
- Will the mine have any effects on flows in Queen Creek?
 - It could contribute to increased sediment.
- Members asked Hayden what areas he has visited.
 - The field tour extended from Castleberry to Oak Flat.
- Have you dealt with fracturing in stream beds, such as occurs here?

- Yes, in karst topography areas. It's not an easy thing to deal with or to fix. Ghidotti observed that they are not able to figure out how this occurring, for example in the Never Sweat Tunnel.
- How will Queen Valley be affected?
 - The will have about a 5% reduction in Queen Creek flow. In this area there are a lot more streams that flow into Queen Creek that contribute to stream flow near Whitlow Dam.
- A member who lives on Queen Creek said there have not been flows high enough to clean out trash in the last 10-15 years, whereas there were before that. Does this contribute to changes in vegetation like more tamarisk?
 - Yes, it can lead to more invasive species like tamarisk.
- Have you considered that there will be 4 other shafts in the mine than there are now?
 - Yes, each shaft has been evaluated individually and cumulatively.

Discussion of DEIS Comment Period

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Liaison

Pam Bennett asked the CWG for their thoughts and advice on an issue that has arisen in the Queen Valley community. She reported that Emily Newell of the Forest Service contacted her to schedule a DEIS public hearing in Queen Valley, and it was agreed that they would be the last meeting held. However, since this is a retirement community Queen Valley requested that the meeting be held in November at the earliest, but the Forest Service said this wouldn't be possible since comments are due November 7.

A winter visitor resident has asked to extend the comment period to 180 days and have a meeting in Queen Valley in January, and wondered whether the CWG would be willing to make this request on their behalf. It was noted that Concerned Citizens, Climbers Club and others are also requesting an extension of the comment period to December or early January. It was also mentioned that the Forest Service held a special preview of the DEIS last March in Queen Valley because they realized that residents would be gone when the document was released. Pam noted that water and the Near West tailings site are the biggest concerns of Queen Valley residents.

CWG members were sensitive to the concerns of winter visitors, and many felt that it would be good to extend the review period for a reasonable amount of time. It was agreed that the CWG will include a request for an extension (of 30 days) in its submitted comments. The CWG didn't feel that it wanted to weigh in on when public hearings should be held, and it was suggested that Queen Valley could request a special meeting at a later date.

Discuss Submission of CWG Comments on DEIS

As of now, November 7 is the final due date for public comments. The Forest Service will be here to talk with the CWG at the October 9 meeting. This gives us about one month to prepare and submit comments. In light of this, members think they will need another meeting between

October 9 and November 7. Alternative dates were suggested, with October 14 being preferred by most. The facilitators will check on availability of the Chamber of Commerce meeting room.

Todd Pryor reported that the Town Council will be holding a DEIS review meeting tomorrow (September 12) at 6:00pm, with comments following shortly so that other agencies can review them. Therefore, the earlier the CWG can develop comments, the better. Godec suggested that the CWG can use the Town’s comments as a starting point, and the group members agreed this would be helpful. Pryor offered to share his report to the Council for CWG review, emphasizing that this is a working session and not approved. The Arboretum noted that their comments will be similar to the town’s. It was emphasized that this would not preclude everyone preparing his/her own individual comments.

In a quick poll of CWG members, the following concerns were listed as the most important.

Issue	Primary Concern of CWG Members (number)
Socioeconomics (social and economic effects on Town of Superior and region, need for mitigation bonding)	9
Water (quantity, effects on wells)	8
Need to require assurances and financial commitments from Resolution for social, water resources, and tailings environmental mitigation measures	6
Tailings (varying opinions about preferred location, bonding)	4
Queen Creek (preservation, restoration)	1
Overall ecological effects on the Arboretum and surrounding area	1
Assurances for long-term community support (cultural heritage, establish a community foundation)	1

It was observed that socioeconomic impacts to the region is a main concern of the group, but the DEIS does not contain exhaustive analyses of these effects because it was not raised as a significant concern during the public scoping process.

A question was raised as to whether the Skunk Camp tailings site would require environmental bonding since it is not located on Forest Service land; the group will clarify this with the Forest Service at the next meeting.

As noted earlier, the CWG will also request an extension to the public comment period for the DEIS.

The facilitators will distribute the Town of Superior preliminary assessment to the CWG. They will also prepare a first draft of CWG comments for the group’s review.

Public Questions & Comments

A visitor is concerned that, based on his understanding of Rio Tinto's past performance and reputation, there are no guarantees that they are going to take care of people around Superior, Top of the World, other communities, and Native Americans. He started looking into the company to see how they handle things, and he feels that they don't seem to have a lot of concern for people or the environment.

Next Meeting

The next CWG meeting is planned for:

Wednesday, October 9, 2019
5:30 pm
Superior Chamber of Commerce

Mary Rasmussen of the U.S. Forest Service, Tonto National Forest has been invited to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement with the CWG.

A second October 14th meeting is planned to finalize CWG comments on the DEIS.