

Recreation User Group
Meeting 24
May 13, 2020
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Representative	Organization
Fred Gaudet	Arizona Trail Association
Greg Waterman	Sun City Anthem Hiking Club
John Bricker	Tonto Recreation Alliance (TRAL)
Jim Schenck	LOST & Superior Community Working Group
Elizabeth Butler	Friends of Tonto/Equestrian
Mila Besich	Mayor, Town of Superior
Todd Pryor	Manager, Town of Superior
Erik Filsinger	Queen Creek Coalition
Jerry Stevenson	SALT/Mountainbrook Hiking Group
Chris Burkhart	Meadow Ranch Hiking Club
Cheryl Cormack	Tonto National Forest, Globe District recreation
Chad Herrold	Tonto National Forest, Acting District Ranger
Mary Morissette	Resolution Copper Mining
Rick Schonfeld	WestLand Resources
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)
Debra Duerr	GRA

Welcome and Introductions

John Godec welcomed everyone and noted that this is the first time the group has been meeting online, using Zoom. He asked participants to introduce themselves. Attending were several new members and those who had not joined the group for a while.

Tonto National Forest Updates

Sheryl Cormack

Sheryl Cormack updated the RUG on several initiatives and ongoing activities, as discussed below.

Forest Service RUG Plan Review

She read a notice from the Forest public affairs office providing an update on the Resolution Copper Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the main elements of which were:

- The project Interdisciplinary Team is continuing to review the submitted RUG Plan.
- Revisions and proposals to this will be evaluated for impacts and mitigation by the third-party consultant between June and October.
- The Final EIS is not now projected to be released until Winter 2021.

Mary Morissette told the RUG that Resolution is in the initial stages of setting up an endowment to fund the RUG Plan even though we don't have final Forest Service review yet. They will develop a construction schedule after Forest Service approval, including reaching out to Pablo Burghard who has a great deal of endowment experience.

Golf Course OHV Area

OHV staging areas were outlined in the RUG plan, added at last minute. The Tonto National Forest is preparing an environmental assessment for a staging area at the intersection of Forest Roads 230 & 2421 for OHV users. Under NEPA they will be conducting public scoping for another month or so, and then intend to apply for a grant to fund its development.

Arnett Trail Signs

These have been ordered and paid for, and are ready to be installed in the fall or when the weather is cooler.

Leftover ADOT Fund Money

Cormack reported that the Forest Supervisor's office has \$10,000 left from the ADOT fund for moving the trail. Sheryl asked the group for ideas on how to use it. A member noted that the town requested ADOT to make a parking lot (1/4 acre or so) at the end of the LOST at SR177; there is an ADOT lot on the east side and this would be across the street. Also, signage from Pinal City to Picketpost was suggested, as well as preparation of a good map. Signage for Pinal City, Arnett Canyon, and other locations was also suggested. The town receives a lot of questions about how you get to Arnett. A member asked if there should be signs on US60. It was pointed out that a 'wayfinding' study would be needed to install signs on state highways, so US60 would be challenging; however, the town will pursue this idea.

The Mayor told the group that the town has just completed a branding study, so will need a comprehensive engineering study and plan for areawide signage including on the highway. It was noted that ADOT would require sequential signage as part of their overall plan. She asked if anybody knows of someone who could do this. Cormack offered to ask Karen Lane who usually does signage for the Forest Service.

In conclusion, Cormack offered a recommendation that we should focus on signs around Pinal City since that's where people seem to have the most questions. She asked if this makes sense to the group, and the RUG agreed.

Forest Road 4 Realignment

RUG members asked how the new Road 4 is progressing. This is becoming more important as the parking at Picketpost is starting to get very overloaded. Cormack said that the Forest had an Enterprise team do the design work, and they submitted a package to Engineering last week.

IMERYS Easement

This remains a challenging issue. The Forest Service has been trying to get an easement working through IMERYS lawyers, but they apparently do not want to do that. Sheryl isn't having a lot of luck getting answers. She doesn't want to put a lot of effort into Arnett Trail if there's no

resolution on this small section. A RUG member suggested that a trail could be constructed in another canyon, if all efforts with IMERYS fail.

Legends of Superior Trail Updates

Jim Schenck has developed a LOST Volunteer Log, which he offered to distribute to RUG members. It was agreed that Schenck would send a copy of this, and a similar one for organizations, to the group facilitators for distribution. He said that LOST is trying to track all volunteer hours to support any future grant applications. TRAL endorsed this approach as being huge support for grants, as it helps to assign a dollar value to volunteer hours. Queen Creek Coalition noted that they had logged \$400,000 in in-kind services in one year. Some RUG members offered to coordinate with their organization members if any do work on the LOST (reciprocity). There is no requirement for this kind of tracking when working on Forest Service land, and working on the Forest is complicated by requirements for training, safety protocols, etc. It was noted that if one is working for a Forest partner group, they would do the tracking for you.

Schenck reported that the LOST has been getting a lot of traffic on the Queen Creek segment, which is not surprising, but the new sections aren't getting as much use. They've noticed that use from out-of-towners goes down as the weather gets hotter. Some locals have expressed concerns that trails should be shut down, but the town decided on more signage about public safety and distancing. Forest Service trailheads have been closed/restricted but they'll be opened on Friday. It was suggested that the town needs to promote interior trails more to reduce congestion on the Queen Creek section.

Castleberry Campground Update

RUG members asked the status of Castleberry Campground concept. Morissette reported that Resolution has developed design concepts for a campground and a preliminary design to extend water and sewer (or septic) to this area. They have also been coordinating with State Parks to take over management of a campground. It was noted that there are no trails linking with this area because it's located on private property (Martinez Ranch), but pointed out that the campground does border the old LOST alignment Forest Service trail, so you can get to the LOST easily.

This was the first time the RUG had seen these plans and members were very pleased. Rick Schonfeld of WestLand will send this map to the facilitators who will distribute it to the group.

Miscellaneous

Other topics discussed by the RUG included the following:

- Is there any discussion about making the Picketpost parking lot any bigger?
 - Sheryl Cormack said they are waiting to see what comes out of the EIS. It was noted that this process could take years; meanwhile, the parking area is very overcrowded now, including conflicts with horse trailers and parking for hikers.
- What's the maintenance schedule for Picketpost Trail? It's getting kind of 'hairy'.

- The Forest Service doesn't have a maintenance schedule. They don't maintain it because it's not a designated trail. If turned into a system trail it would be very strenuous and would need to conform to Forest Service standards.
- Is there any further news or discussion about Apache Junction's proposal for a Superstition National Monument?
 - Nobody has heard anything. Mayor Serdy is probably busy with COVID-19, as other towns are, spending time outreaching to federal elected officials.
- A RUG member asked Fred Gaudet if he knows what's happening with the terminus of the Arizona Trail at the southern border wall.
 - Options for this area are being evaluated, e.g. virtual wall, and comments are being taken until May 15. The start of the Pacific Coast Trail may be a prototype, as Fred has experienced. He's not optimistic about finding a satisfactory solution, however.
- An outstanding issue for the RUG has been perceived discrepancies on the RUG Plan map between motorized and nonmotorized trails. There was some concern about a motorized trail crossing the Arizona Trail at Woods Canyon, and some other locations where motorized trails dead-end at pedestrian trails. Godec asked the group if any further action is needed on this.
 - The group agreed that there is nothing that can be changed now that the plan is in the hands of the Forest Service. Morissette pointed out that if the Forest Service misses something of concern, Resolution will have an opportunity to do a final review.
- The group asked Chad Herrold if there is an update on the permit activity of Bronco Creek Exploration for the Superior West area.
 - He believes that area is now on hiatus as Bronco Creek is focusing more on an area north of Globe.
- The Superior Waters and Trails Plan, which was supported by Adam Milnor of National Park Service, was approved by the Town Council last month. The town is very excited about this.
- The Mayor shared Superior's new logo, as developed by the branding study:



Next Steps, Next Meeting

The RUG agreed to meet again in August. Members think this would probably be enough time to get more updates from the Forest Service.