

June 10, 2020
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present:

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Todd Pryor – Town of Superior
Jim Schenck – Rebuild Superior and Legends of Superior Trail
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimists Cl
Mila Besich – Town of Superior
Tweedy Armitage – Superior Historical Society
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College
Jeff McCormick – Town of Kearny
Lynne Nemeth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board
Silvia Werre – Top of the World

Community Working Group members not present:

Gloria Ruiz – Town of Winkelman
Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Fire Department
Pamela Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Karen Kitchayan Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe
Tino Flores – Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition
Anna Flores – Town of Kearny (retired from Town of Kearny and CWG)
Sylvia Kerlock – Town of Winkelman
Richard Matthews – Queen Valley Water Board
Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board
Tiffany Rowell – Superior community
Roy Chavez – Retired Miners and Concerned Citizens
Lynn Martin – JF, JI Ranch
George Martin – JF, JI Ranch
Cathy Melvin – Gila County
Ricardo Provencio – United Superiorites
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior

Resolution Copper Company:

Hesston Klenk – Communities Manager
Mary Morissette - RCM
Caitlin Pierce – Community Performance Manager
Vicky Peacey – Senior Environmental & Permits Manager
Rick Schonfeld – WestLand Resources
Doug Oliver - FloSolutions

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):

John Godec, Debra Duerr

Public Visitors: The public was not able to attend this online meeting.

Housekeeping

John Godec introduced a new CWG member. Jeff McCormick is the new Town Manager of Kearny and has agreed to join the group to replace Anna Flores who has retired. Other members of the CWG introduced themselves.

Godec asked the group how they felt about public visitors joining the meetings. He noted that there may be requests since the meetings are still publicized. Members thought this would be fine if by specific request or invitation, as there does not seem to be an effective way to open online meetings to everyone. It was suggested that the number of visitors might be limited due to issues with bandwidth in some geographic locations, but Godec said this is not generally a problem. The group agreed to allow visitors on this basis, and will still schedule a public comment period at the end of the meetings if guests are present.

Mayor Besich said that it is very nice to have completed the Superior Water and Trails Plan, which was distributed to CWG members. This is an important effort that includes many years of planning and community investment by 'generations'. She emphasized that it is a living document that can provide flexibility for the future.

Godec mentioned that a news release was distributed about equestrian restrictions around the Salt River, in case anyone is interested in this. There was some discussion of this.

Australian Mine/Juukan Gorge Discussion

Caitlin Pierce – Resolution Copper

Godec noted that this issue regarding a Rio Tinto project in Australia has been in the news and he thought the group might like more information. Caitlin Pierce updated the group. She said conversations about the situation are delicate at this time because of the ongoing discussions between Rio Tinto and the affected Aboriginal community there. In essence, a cultural resource site of great importance to the indigenous people was destroyed as part of the mine plan of operations. Pierce provided an overview of the history, relationships, legal parameters, and negotiations that have taken place around that mine over the past 7 years.

At the Resolution level, they have had several conversations with the Australia team to learn more about what happened and learn any relevant lessons that might be applicable to Resolution Mine development. The important question is what systems need to be put in place to avoid such situations in future throughout the company and here in Arizona.

Several CWG members expressed concerns about how such a huge company as Rio Tinto could make such a dramatic mistake. It was noted that there may be 'disconnects' between corporate Operations staff and Communities staff. This prompted members to reiterate that agreements between Resolution and the Copper Corridor communities should be documentable and committed to 'in writing'. It was suggested that the CWG also put something in place that documents assumptions and agreements, for future reference. Vicky Peacey emphasized that

constant dialogue and engagement are essential so that when situations and priorities change over time there is enough flexibility to address these in a satisfactory manner. The CWG observed that a lesson here is that inadequately addressing indigenous and opposition views can have negative consequences later on.

Update on Recreation User Group Multiuse Trail Plan Review by Tonto National Forest

Vicky Peacey & Mary Morissette – Resolution Copper

Rick Schonfeld – WestLand Resources

Godec introduced this topic saying that the Recreation User Group (RUG) has been working for more than three years on this trail plan. It's completed and in the hands of the Forest Service.

RUG Multi-use Trail Plan:

Vicky Peacey reported that the Tonto National Forest (TNF) is reviewing the RUG plan in the context of noncompatible uses, wild and scenic rivers, and the TNF's own plans such as the Travel Management Plan, Forest Plan, etc. to identify any inconsistencies. Their review is not complete and there is no update on what they are thinking. A CWG member thought that they are preparing a counter-proposal but there is no timeline for this; the Imerys property may be a problem.

In response to a question about size of RUG plan relative to Oak Flat mitigation, Todd Prior and Hesston Klenk have confirmed that the Forest Service is not looking at only 1-for-1 mitigation. Peacey did acknowledge, however, that there are a number of entities who are concerned that Resolution is doing too much mitigation that will set standards too high for the future.

Peacey confirmed that Resolution will fund implementation of the RUG plan and will also establish a fund for long-term maintenance. They can't construct it until they get permits and approval of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) but these commitments will be included in the Final EIS. RUG members were extremely happy about this. They observed that it appears there is a great coalition coming together among the Town of Superior and trail/recreation groups to continue and expand these local recreational efforts as a basis for economic stability. There is a potential for small businesses to grow from this initiative, and member organizations are committed to partnering on implementation and maintenance. Resolution will continue to consult with the RUG about timing, staging, and methods for trail construction. Construction methods were discussed among the group. Cultural resource detailed surveys need to be completed.

As a possible expansion of the RUG system, Mary Morrisette offered to provide Resolution's support for a trail designer for an Apache Leap trail, if desired. CWG members expressed their thanks and noted that this might be a good future project.

Castleberry Campground:

Rick Schonfeld of WestLand Resources provided an overview and description of plans for a new campground at the Castleberry site, which is being proposed as part of the mitigation for loss of

the Oak Flat Campground. As Vicky said, the EIS will stipulate that Resolution will provide transitional/interim funding for the Castleberry Campground. After that, operation of the facility will be negotiated among possible management agencies.

Schonfeld showed a map of the campground area with relationships to the Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA), the Legends of Superior Trail (LOST), and other trails. It was suggested that the Martinez Ranch corral private property be shown on the map for clarification. Schonfeld said Resolution and the town have been having discussions with BTA about managing the campground. The RUG has seen the studies of the campground that would include mixed use for some RV, car, and primitive tent camping. Another study looked at full RV use as a possibility. As we move forward, we will be looking for input on the kind of use we want, what we want to put there, and how dense it should be. The rich cultural history (prehistoric, historic, ranching) of the campground and surrounding area is also an opportunity to include cultural interpretation as part of the experience.

The CWG asked how many campsites this area could hold. About 10-15 RV spots would probably be about as dense as you'd like. The whole site is in the 100-year floodplain, which can be managed. There are 16-18 sites at Oak Flat, for comparison. Lynn Nemeth of BTA said that they have an appointment to walk the site on June 24, so concepts can be reviewed. Jim Schenck asked to join them on this tour. It was pointed out that people can still camp dispersedly on Forest Service land, and members felt that it will be important to have space for families that don't have RVs. The current thinking is that about 1/3 of the site would be for RVs, and it was noted that there is an increase in people buying and using RVs during the COVID pandemic. Nemeth said that there are RV hookups at the BTA for volunteers, which are much appreciated, and that if BTA continues to be involved in planning for Castleberry they will definitely want to see a mix of uses. Regarding stay limitations, 2 weeks would be allowed if the site is in the Town of Superior, but the operator could decide on a different approach (e.g. BTA allows stays for several months). Access road improvements are not included in Resolution's plans; it's possible that the Town of Superior might adopt it as a town road if annexed.

Hesston Klenk reported that he will be meeting with Tom Hawke of Imerys tomorrow to find out if they have any concerns about the proximity to their pit. There seems to be some concern that campers will wander onto their property and fall into the pit. Peacey noted that it's up to them to secure their facilities from trespassers. A RUG member observed that Imerys was happy with the work on the LOST and signage, so hopefully there is a good relationship there. It was suggested that Imerys could be invited to the RUG or CWG to discuss their plans.

A CWG member inquired about the status of a previously-discussed option of establishing a replacement campground in the area near Top of the World. Peacey clarified that this was the JJ Ranch, but access into and out of this is quite dangerous. There isn't much water and the site has mostly sand and gravel. Local residents were very opposed to the idea of a campground there. Proximity to Superior was also a consideration, as was the similarity of Top of the World to Oak Flat in terms of ecosystem and its value to the Apache community. Therefore, Castleberry is much better suited.

Peacey confirmed that the Castleberry Campground has been accepted as a mitigation measure by the Forest Service, so they are not reviewing or approving this any further. Development could only be start after the EIS Record of Decision (ROD), however. Currently, the Final EIS is expected to be released in winter 2021, followed by an objection period and the ROD. Resolution expects that this will be litigated, so approvals and implementation could take some time.

She noted that the Trump administration has said that mining projects don't have to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but that Resolution will continue with its NEPA process, which is required by the land exchange legislation. She observed that this is similar to the new Waters of the U.S. rules the CWG heard about at a recent meeting. The company feels that it would be foolish to change its approach now, since government policies and administrations change.

EIS Mitigation for Recreational Climbing

Doug Oliver - FloSolutions

As part of the overall EIS recreational mitigation plan, Doug Oliver reported on additional mitigation proposed to address potential impacts to rock climbing. He said that he completed a climbing resource inventory at the Queen Creek climbing area in 2017. There are both climbing and bouldering resources. The area studied included Oak Flat, Devil's Canyon, and adjacent locations that represent some of the more popular climbing areas in Arizona. About 800 climbing routes and 1100 boulder challenges were identified in the inventory. The project will be a particular problem for bouldering since most of the preferred locations sit over the center of the ore body and subsidence area. Resolution has a mitigation agreement with the Queen Creek Coalition and also with Stoneman Climbing, and REI is involved in sponsorship.

As possible mitigation for bouldering, an area know as Inconceivables is a perfect place but it's a long 3-mile walk in, whereas Oak Flat is directly accessible. Forest Road 315 can be improved for access, at Resolution's expense, to the original FS designation of level 2 (poor), that could be used by high clearance vehicles. A CWG member suggested that OHV users would also want to use this.

CWG members asked whether this plan could be tied into the RUG plan. Although the areas are close, they are not connected so this is probably not feasible. A member wondered whether interest in climbing activity is increasing since it's now an Olympic sport.

Update on Filter Plant Locational Studies & Use of MAARCO Railroad

Resolution was not prepared to provide an update at this time, and offered to discuss this at the next CWG meeting.

Community Monitoring Update

Resolution has asked whether the Community Monitoring Task Force would agree to conduct the second quarter well sampling at the end of June. Members of the task force agreed to do this.

Public Questions & Comments

Due to restrictions for online meetings, the public was not able to attend this meeting.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

6:00pm