

**October 14, 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  
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association  
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County  
Mila Besich – Town of Superior  
Silvia Werre – Top of the World  
Ricardo Provencio – United Superiorites  
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club  
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce  
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College

*Community Working Group members not present:*

Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board  
Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Water Department, Fire Department  
Tweedy Armitage – Superior Historical Society  
Lynne Nemeth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum  
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  
Lynn Martin – JF, JI Ranch  
George Martin – JF, JI Ranch  
Cathy Melvin – Gila County  
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior  
Mayor Bracamonte – Town of Winkelman  
Gloria Ruiz – Town of Winkelman

*Resolution Copper Company:*

Hesston Klenk – Communities Manager  
Darla Gage – Environmental Superintendent  
Bo Deen – Construction Superintendent  
Chris Lilly – Health & Safety Manager  
Scott Stilgenbauer – Health & Safety

*Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):*

John Godec, Debra Duerr

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

## **Housekeeping**

Participants introduced themselves since there were several people who hadn't attended before. It was reported that Superior is opening up a bit from the restrictions of the past few months due to the COVID virus. The Farmer's Market was open from 9:00 to 12:00, and the Chamber of Commerce is open at times. A few winter visitors are starting to return to Queen Valley, which has not had a lot of COVID cases, being a small, relatively isolated population. There has been a mountain lion at the West Plant site. There will be a laser light show in Superior for Halloween, but everyone is sad that the witches can't perform. The Town Manager reported that Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross visited Resolution last week with 12 staff members. He wanted to "see what's going on in town"; Hesston Klenk said it was a good visit and pretty low-keyed. A CWG member asked if there an update on Asarco's status, and it was reported that people are returning to work at the mine, but no one knew if they are working under contract. The smelter is still shut down.

## **Update on Magma Tailings & West Plant Reclamation**

Darla Gage, Resolution Copper

John Godec said that there have been questions from CWG members over the years about what activities are being completed at the West Plant site. Darla Gage told the group that she started at Resolution in 2008 working with Casey McKeon (who passed along her greetings to the CWG). She's been in the environmental industry for about 17 years. She provided some history of the West Plant and updated the group on smelter-affected soils and reclamation actions.

Resolution took over the mining project from Magma in 2003. It has taken about 15 years to clean up the contaminated soils at the West Plant site. Gage showed a map of the site layout. When Resolution acquired the facilities, they decided to clean up environmental problems according to applicable regulations, including:

- Aqifer Protection Program (APP) administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) – This program primarily addresses groundwater issues that have occurred post-1996, but Resolution treats older problems the same.
- Federal Mined Land Reclamation Act
- Voluntary Remediation Program, also administered by ADEQ

Cleanup started in 2001 with due diligence, and remediation programs started in 2005 with submission of the APP application.

The bulk of the remediation work has focused on Smelter-Affected Soils (SAS). Characterization of these soils showed constituents including arsenic, copper, and lead. The program looked at the aerial extent of contamination, and over 1000 samples were taken. The depth of contamination is thickest near the former smelter stack, and was up to 4 feet thick there and reducing in depth farther out. Pathways for human exposure needed to be determined by assessing the likelihood of people accessing the site and being exposed. These included industrial workers and 'trespassers' (pre-teens, teens, adults). The human health effects were

evaluated after the site characterization, based on computer models. Exposure was evaluated as fixed and probabilistic. Arsenic is the constituent of most concern and is most likely ingested; this can be tested in soils in a lab or through analysis of animals. Copper and lead were also examined.

To perform this analysis the potentially-affected lands were divided into 5 sections defined as North Mountain Front, East Mountain Front, Silver King Wash, Industrial Area North, and Industrial Area South. Site-specific soil remediation levels were assessed for the 5 land use areas for the 3 constituents of concern. Unsurprisingly, the nature and levels of contamination were different in these discreet areas. This analysis indicated that only arsenic in the Industrial Area South required remediation. Copper and lead concentrations in the Industrial Area South will also be reduced during remediation for arsenic. The remediation objective was to reduce the contamination level of the SAS in this area from 237 micrograms per kilogram down to 177 micrograms per kilogram.

There were 4 soil removal campaigns over 3 years. Samples were collected in 100-foot increments. Haul roads were sampled every 100 linear feet. Treatment of the soils required that they be physically removed, from about ½ to 4 feet deep. About 712,000 cubic yards of soil was removed and placed on Tailings Pond 6 (TP6) for mass grading fill, which also helped with closure of the tailings because part of the closure plan was raising the grade. The relocated SAS will be covered with clean soil and runoff will be captured. Although not required, Resolution has seeded and revegetated hillside slopes.

Gage described the worker health and safety measures that were taken during remediation, including protective equipment, decontamination facilities, haul road controls, safety briefings, etc. Various levels of personal protective equipment (PPE) were required in specific geographic portions of the site. Respirators were required in some locations.

Public engagement activities were conducted in conjunction with the cleanup efforts, including meetings, social media, festival booths, and other activities.

In all, 390 acres have been reclaimed, 85 are currently under treatment, and 495 acres will be completed by end of this year. Gage showed some photos of pre- and post-reclamation at several sites. At TP6 a stormwater channel and riprap have been installed. This includes about 885 yards of relocated mine materials, low permeability soil, riprap, and 200,000 cubic yards of clean fill.

Resolution successfully received a ruling of Administrative Closure under the Voluntary Remediation Program. The company has been complimented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and ADEQ for the groundbreaking science they conducted in the program.

CWG members had the following questions and comments:

- Is Resolution doing water samples off the old tailings site?
  - Yes, when it rains. Water is contained on site.
- When it flows into the retention area behind Cobre Valley, is that water tested?
  - Yes, the well at this location is tested.
- Should the Community Monitoring Task Force water sampling team test this area, or is Castleberry a suitable indicator?
  - Castleberry is suitable for purposes of evaluating Resolution's future discharges.
- Is bioaccumulation a possibility for arsenic?
  - This was part of cleanup work BHP was doing. Arsenic can accumulate in fish and shellfish, but humans tend to slough it off quickly through perspiration and urination.
  - Godec pointed out that all known health studies conducted in the Superior area are posted on the CWG website.
- A CWG member noted that naturally-occurring arsenic is very high in Superior, and the same for copper. This means that people should use imported soil when planting a garden.
- What's the status of the slag pile? Will it go away or stay as it is now?
  - Stay as it is now. It will be clean-closed in place with a clean cover. The timeframe is unknown but in the next several years.
- Will slag near the Harding School be removed?
  - No, there will be clean soil placed to cap it.
- What's the overall cost of the project?
  - Direct cost for reclamation is about \$80 million. TP6 alone is \$10.6 million.

Several CWG members had suggestions for publicizing this work. They suggested that Resolution prepare photos similar to these of the reclamation process and results for the community to review. Members thought the photos were very impressive and informative, especially since some of these sites aren't visible from the town or highway. Sketches of the finished product could also be included. When possible, tours of the area could also be resumed for the public. The group also felt that Resolution should publicize its ADEQ approval more in the community, as this is very positive news. A pullout for public viewing and information displays was suggested for placement on the road to show the work that's been done. Godec noted that tailings piles are a major concern in the region, so this helps to 'make it real' for people to see what's possible in future.

Hesston Klenk complimented Odenetto Construction on their work for this project and on their ability to grow and compete for this contract. They have around 25 San Carlos Apache community employees as well. CWG members said this is a "big deal" and very welcome. Todd Pryor suggested also identifying the number of Superior employees. The Mayor congratulated everyone who worked on reclamation and thanked them for keeping everyone informed.

### **Recreation User Group Update**

Jim Schenck reported on the RUG meeting this morning. It was decided to leave the Imerys issues in the hands of the Forest Service. It was noted that the map Imerys used in its protest letter was not the correct RUG Trail Plan map. The Superior annexation was also discussed. The

town is appreciative of Resolution agreeing to a pre-annexation agreement that was approved by Council. This agreement will annex the Castleberry property and an additional 6000 acres, increasing the city limits to 10 square miles including the Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Imerys has not signed such an agreement. Discussions were held with ADOT about future disposition of the old Queen Creek bridge, and the current thinking is that public pedestrian access will be cut off.

### **Community Monitoring Task Force Update**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter well sampling was conducted on September 30. Jim Schenck reported that there was nothing too different. Participants were impressed with Resolution's safety protocols. The 3 wells were sampled as planned. Godec noted that the number of monitors has dwindled, and asked if anyone knows of someone who might be interested in joining the task force. It was pointed out that a Boyce Thompson Arboretum board member may be interested since this is her area of expertise. It was also suggested that students from the high school or community college may be interested. The Eastern Pinal Watershed Group's Jim O'Donnell may be interested. Local representation from that area around Skunk Camp should also be invited. The facilitators will research these contacts.

### **Public Questions & Comments**

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

### **Next Meeting**

A member asked if there's any possibility of the CWG getting together in person in the near future. This is something that we can explore, considering social distancing, masks, and possibly an outdoor venue. Town representatives mentioned that Felicia's and other restaurants would be happy to stay open and serve food. Klenk said that in general, however, Resolution isn't having any in-person meetings nor can they attend any. They do not think that the group can reconvene until after the new year at least.

The next regular meeting date would be November 11. However, since this is Veteran's Day, the group thought they would like to find an alternate date. The facilitators will try to arrange this with members. It was later agreed to meet on:

**Tuesday, November 10, 2020**

6:00pm