

Recreation User Group

Meeting 32

March 10, 2021

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Representative	Organization
Fred Gaudet	Arizona Trail Association
Greg Waterman	Sun City Anthem Hiking Club
Jerry Stevenson	Sun City Anthem Hiking Club
John Bricker	Tonto Recreational Alliance (TRAL)
Rich Smith	
Charlie Goff	SALT
Jim Schenck	Rebuild Superior, LOST & CWG
Mila Besich	Mayor, Town of Superior
Todd Pryor	Manager, Town of Superior
Bill Scott	
Erik Filsinger	Queen Creek Coalition
Pete Casillas	
Elizabeth Butler	Friends of the Tonto, equestrians
Tom Hawk	Imerys Plant Manager
Nick Lund	Tracks
Chris Burkhart	
Pete Casillas	Superior Chamber of Commerce
Brian Stultz	Wild Arizona
Maricela	BHP
Adam Bromley	Tonto National Forest, Globe Ranger District
Jason Scow	
Ashley Frambach	
Hesston Klenk	Resolution Copper Company
Caitlin Pierce	
Richard Hudson	Rio Tinto
Ericka Vasquez	Resolution Copper Company
Mary Morissette	Resolution Copper Company
Rick Schonfeld	WestLand Resources
Mark Flint	
Sheryl	
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)
Debra Duerr	GRA

Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping

John Godec introduced a discussion about the petition for ____Transportation that was distributed by Mayor Besich and asked if the RUG would like to sign on. This would be a petition that goes to the Arizona Senators supporting the proposed legislation. They asked the facilitators to submit a signature from the RUG.

Another item for review is the invitation from LOST to attend two field trips. Friday March 12 at 10:00 to look at the jungle area at Queen Creek and Pinal City. This is to help the Forest Service review a parking area for the trail here and see how we can make the space more useable. The other trip is to look at Woods Canyon, and the Mayor thought this would be very important for RUG members to participate in. She has talked with the Forest Service about the proposed trail plan and all the trail segments that have been left out.

Godec said that Mary Rasmussen sent an email confirming that the FEIS objection period has been “vacated” and will be taken up at a later date. It will be necessary to resubmit the RUG objection letter at that time.

Effects of Recent FEIS Developments: Trail Plan Issues, Ideas, Alternatives, Approaches, Path Forward

Hesston Klenk reported that the President issued an Executive Order regarding tribal consultation a couple of weeks ago, so this project was pulled back to re-open consultation. Resolution is hearing that this will probably represent ‘months’ delay rather than years. He felt that it will be important for stakeholders to continue to follow this and keep the pressure on to move forward.

Erik asked if our objection was pulled, would it make sense to send a letter to support moving forward. Probably not because the Forest Service is doing what the White House is telling them; it’s not a procedural issue but a political one. Resolution is hearing from USDA, Congressional offices, etc. that the local viewpoint is important and they pay more attention to individual residents of the community than they do to form letters.

Jim wondered if there’s a case for Resolution or Rio Tinto to sue the Forest Service for failing to do what they were supposed to do. Hesston doesn’t think this would happen. The company will not object to continuing consultation.

Fred mentioned that friend of his who worked for the Forest Service said that he had never seen this particular situation happen before. Hesston said that there are people and companies around the country who are looking at this closely as a possible precedent.

There was discussion of whether the RUG might want to get involved in the larger political conversation about this. Members were hesitant to enter a discussion about treatment of tribes. It was noted that there are two arenas in play here: political and media. Local voices can be powerful in the political arena, with actions such as the Town of Superior is taking. Fred said that Mila’s letter was cited in Representative Gosar’s weekly newsletter. Superior thinks that they should check again in a month or so to inquire about progress. USDA has told the town

that they think in a month things will be back on track. There will be a Mining Matters conference tomorrow where the industry can formulate opinions and statements. The important thing is to find balance between the media and political battles. We will need to shift our focus from urging Resolution to implement mitigation measures to putting pressure on our government. Might need to use the 'people of color' argument with Grijalva.

Some members felt that there will be a strong effort by opponents to reverse the land exchange. Hesston confirmed that Grijalva started circulating an intent letter to look for additional sponsors for a bill, which is likely to surface in the near future when it can gain the most media attention. He doesn't think there is much chance that such a bill would pass.

Mila felt that our message needs to be that the ore will always be there and we need to take advantage of all the work that's gone into this to date. So, we need to be vigilant but 'not get our hair caught on fire'. People should realize that someone will ultimately develop this mine, and a new owner could be much worse than Rio Tinto.

Hesston suggested that he will keep a distribution list of all the new faces in place in the administration now. Since these are new they will not have been party to previous conversations with ACHP, etc. The group agreed that they will revisit this conversation in a month to consider resubmitting letters to this audience.

The mayor reported that she has had conversations with Robert Bonney and with Liz Archuletta, USDA government relations, who was a former Coconino County Supervisor. She pointed out that there is a ripple effect to this situation, and they committed that they have an open door and this will not linger. The Mining Law of 1872 also comes into play.

A suggested approach was that the group continue to be available to convene immediately as needed and to keep track of this and put pressure on as needed.

Hesston reported that the Forest Service briefed them on objections received to FEIS. From 130,000 comments on the Draft, they only received 10 objections with only 6 being valid. (Center for Biological Diversity, San Carlos Tribe, SALT, RUG)

Godec asked if they want us to prepare a letter encouraging progress for the RUG to review at the next meeting, and developing a mailing list of 'active decisionmakers'.

Get on with it. One last chance for consultation OK, but there needs to be a courageous end at some reasonable point....

Discussion about state of Oak Flat today, Forest Service has forgotten about it and hasn't maintained it since Magma— cut out road to upper flats.

Updates on RUG initiatives

New business – Erik – this whole plan was an attempt to frame this plan in a way that would be acceptable to FS, so if we need to start over we might want to explore expanding it, e.g an old historic trail that attaches to the end of LOST, and a CCC? Trail going to Upper Devils – “Via Ferrado” in Ouray, may in Europe – trail with harnesses etc. to assist climbers. Mila suggested to Tom Torres that if the areas we proposed don’t work for various reasons then we’d need to look at other areas. Godec reminded the group that the RUG initially looked at a large geographic area, but this was reduced as a ‘starter’ plan to fit into an EA.

Next Steps, Next Meeting

The next RUG meeting is planned for:

Wednesday, April 14
10:00am to Noon
Online