

April 14, 2021
MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present:

Todd Pryor – Town of Superior
Jim Schenck – Rebuild Superior, Legends of Superior Trail
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County
Mila Besich – Town of Superior
Jeff Bunkleemann – Central Arizona College
Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Hank Gutierrez - Superior Copper Alliance
Silvia Werre – Top of the World
Amanda Moors – Arizona Wildlife Federation
Ricardo Provencio – United Superiorites
Bruce Wittig -- Queen Valley Water Department, Fire Department

Community Working Group members not present:

Twedy Armitage – Superior Historical Society
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board
Lynne Nemeth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce
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 - Manager – Native American & Regional Government Engagement
Caitlin Pierce -- Communities and Social Performance

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):

John Godec, Sydney Uphouse

Guests:

Ashley Frambach -- Presidio Graduate School, San Francisco, CA

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

Welcome and Introductions:

John Godec welcomed everyone and asked that they introduce themselves. There is a new member of the facilitation team, Sydney Uphouse from GRA, who is assisting Godec in Debra Duerr's absence. The group welcomed her.

Housekeeping

Godec announced that Mayor Besich testified on the Save Oak Flat Bill on April 13, 2021. Godec asked Mayor Besich to talk about her experience giving testimony. Godec also asked Hesston Klenk to update the group on the progress of the EIS for Oak Flat.

Resolution Copper Project Developments

Mayor Besich explained that she served as the only supporting witness during a hearing with the Indigenous Peoples Committee for the Save Oak Flat Bill. She described how she urged members of Congress to oppose the bill, saying residents of Superior cannot fully realize plans for economic development and tourism without the financial support of the mine. Based on her experience at the hearing, she does not expect the bill to pass the Senate. She reiterated the importance of refuting the narrative "town against tribes". The story on the mayor's testimony was picked up by local and national media.

Hesston thanked Mayor Besich for her testimony, and other members of the group provided their own opinions and comments on the hearing. Many members of the group felt that the facts presented by proponents of the bill are inaccurate, and misinformation about the project is being spread. Members of the group pointed out that proponents of the bill did not use data from the current EIS when discussing the mine's expected impact on water. Group members also noted that Representatives did not seem to have a clear understanding of the proposed project or the bill, as irrelevant questions were being asked by members of Congress during the hearing. Members of the group expressed concern about how this will tip the scales going forward. Hesston stated that the current version of the bill has been changed substantially. The current version expands the withdrawal of mining for the entirety of Oak Flat. He also said that there has been no movement on the EIS for Oak Flat. The USDA is conducting the review, and they will be consulting further with Native American tribes. The White Mountain Apache Tribal Council approved the Save Oak Flat Bill last week. The Town of Superior voted to sign onto an amicus brief opposing the bill which is to be heard in the 9th Circuit Court.

Hesston and Mayor Besich shared news that the EIS for Pinto Valley is moving again and will be published for public comment, and the USDA will be consulting with Tribes on this proposed project.

Godec asked what the CWG would like to do to either support or not support the Save Oak Flat Bill. Hesston and Caitlin left for this portion of the meeting to allow for a more candid conversation by CWG members.

Members of the group again expressed concern about misinformation being spread about the mining project. Group members agreed that in whatever position it takes it is important to not appear to be in some way opposed to the tribes. Instead, the CWG wants to emphasize the economic importance of the mining project for Superior and surrounding areas, the significant time and research that has already been invested in the project. The group also wants to stress the the potential threat of some other company acquiring the project and ultimately developing a mine with far fewer agreements and commitments than Resolution has been willing to make, if the Resolution Copper Project is not approved.

The group proposed writing a letter to members of Arizona's Congressional Delegation and possibly the White House expressing the opinions and concerns of the CWG. Members agreed that it is important to establish credibility with lawmakers, locals, and the media. The letter would need to emphasize who the CWG is, what entities are represented by the CWG, and the efforts being done by the CWG. Godec suggested having one of Resolution's government affairs contractors in to talk with the CWG about who the primary decision makers are in this bill, when the best time to send a letter would be, and who the CWG should talk to for guidance. Hank Gutierrez suggested reaching out to Adam Hawkins, who has a history of lobbying for Resolution. Mayor Besich shared that Representative Grijalva, who reintroduced the Save Oak Flat Bill, would not be influenced by the efforts of the CWG; Representative O'Halleran would be as supportive as possible of the project, but he is not appear to be willing to 'put himself out there'; Representative Gosar strongly supports the project, and Senators Krysten Sinema and Mark Kelly would also support the project and the efforts of the CWG.

Godec volunteered to have GRA craft a letter on the CWG's behalf. Hank suggested mentioning in the letter that members of the CWG were originally skeptical of the Resolution Copper Project, but with additional information and education on the issue, the group has shifted their position. Ricardo Provencio expressed the need to establish a strategy for talking to the media, and suggested that all members of the group write letters.

Future Activities

GRA will craft a letter on behalf of the CWG that will focus on the work, composition, education, and credibility of the group as well as the stance of the group on the Save Oak Flat Bill. It will also state that the group supports the findings of the EIS for the project. The audience for the letter will be Arizona's Congressional Delegation and possibly the media.

Public Questions & Comments

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 2021
6:00pm