

**Recreation User Group**  
Small Group Meeting 35  
July 9, 2021  
**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Meeting Attendees (In-Person & Zoom)**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Greg Waterman	Sun City Anthem Hiking Club
Rich Smith	TRAL
Jim Schenck	Rebuild Superior, LOST & CWG
Mila Besich	Mayor, Town of Superior
Todd Pryor	Manager, Town of Superior
Bill Scott	Sun City Anthem Hiking Club
Lynne Nemeth	Boyce Thomson Arboretum
Elizabeth Butler	EV BCH and Friends of the Tonto
John Godec	Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA)

**Meeting Summary**

The Town of Superior met with the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) about submitting a grant for treatment of invasive species along Queen Creek through town as well as restoration and fire breaks as a result of damage from the recent Telegraph Fire. An existing environmental study should cover much of the proposed work. The Town is assembling a coalition of area communities to deal with this issue. Todd Pryor explained the details of what constitutes a fire break. DFFM is not able to do traditional fire breaks at Boyce Thomson Arboretum (BTA) because it is surrounded by wilderness, protected and sensitive areas. A deployable wet line might be feasible instead there.

BTA is working with the Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) on their grant application with DFFM on invasive species removal on their property. BTA is also working with AWC on a larger Arnett Canyon restoration grant application.

There was discussion about specific trails, names and renaming the same in the area.

DFFM is supposedly going to provide \$100m for this area so it's imperative to move on these issues. Todd has submitted a tentative proposal to Americorps and Triple C to do some work in the area in October around the Highway 60 park and access to the LOST as well as other fire breaks. The American Rescue Plan Act might provide resources for open space, parks, healthy living initiatives and trails but not to the general fund because TOS is not able to point to losses during the pandemic.

Resolution's mitigation efforts which have been responsible for the RUG plan under the EIS might also be a resource for some of the immediate needs resulting from the Telegraph fire. The

TOS Waters and Trails Plan might also benefit from these proposed grants and funding proposals.

It's the belief that TNF's intentions are honorable with their new START initiative but it's reasonable to believe they are distracted by wildfire responses, details and other priorities. The RUG has been relentless in getting things done by pushing them along and that should continue but we know that TNF wants to do the right thing and the RUG needs to navigate 'with some grace'.

The Superstition Monument proposal that the RUG was previously briefed on has resulted in additional meetings and it has been pointed out that TNF and Region 3 clearly need more resources and the RUG should be supportive of this. There was some discussion that the Monument initiative might cut down into the BTA which might result in funding for some improvement. TNF needs advocates and the coalitions being built can do that and need to be brought forward to Arizona's congressional delegation. A lot of focus is on tall pine forests rather than the desert and this needs to be addressed.

Mayor Besich plans to pursue a conversation with Adam Bromley and/or Jason Scow and Resolution about on progress made or pending including plans for access and a trail in Queen Creek Canyon and other access on Resolution property. We need to ask TNF about opening dates and access to Picketpost, AZ Trail and PicketPost. When will they do damage assessment and when will they be opened? There's some indication that Tonto is at Stage 2 restrictions but signage still indicates Stage 3. Tonto's social media seems to indicate that the forest is open but there's some question about exactly what on the Tonto is open.

There's a suggestion that the focus needs to pivot from the original RUG planning area – south of US 60 and west of 177, which will require time for recovery from the fire – to targeting the Roger's Trough area, north and west of Superior, adjacent to the Superstition Wilderness and near the Montana Mountains. Much of the environmental assessment was done for that area when it was part of Resolution's original tailing plan. There was a lot of discussion about access, current off road use and possible camping in the Roger's Trough area. It was also suggested that we might push for a trail below Apache Leap.

There were questions about the extent of damage to Arnett. It appears there was damage to the northern area but not the better watered sections. Additional questions came up about status of motorized areas. TRAL has abided by closure restrictions and has not been in burned areas.

There was general support for the TOS to make the request of TNF to, among the other issues that came up in this meeting, provide a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report to the RUG at its next planned – July 14 @ 10am – meeting. It was agreed that if this can't be accommodated by TNF the RUG would be willing to reschedule to meet their availability. Mayor Besich will also ask TNF about when motorized access may be allowed for evaluations. It was agreed that there should be a push for partnership and accountability. There is some concern that USFS might opt to close the area, do minimal restoration and simply wait to see how it

recovers naturally. Comparisons were suggested referring to the status and lack of progress on Apache Trail.

### **Next Steps, Next Meeting**

The next RUG meeting is planned for:

**Wednesday, July 14**

10:00am to Noon

In-Person & Online