

OAK CREEK CANYON TASK FORCE MEETING
Vultee Conference Room, Sedona City Hall, Sedona, AZ
Friday, June 12, 2009 – 9:30 a.m.
Summary Minutes

1. **Welcome and introductions** - Co-Chair Barry Allan called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.
Participants: Barry Allan - Co-Chair; Rex Bergamini - Director-At-Large; Edessa Carr - U of A Cooperative Extension; Jeanmarie Haney - The Nature Conservancy; Gary Johnson - SFD - arrived at 9:36 a.m.; Lee Luedeker - AZ Game & Fish; Charles Mosley - City of Sedona - arrived at 10:00 a.m.; Katherine Nelsen-Allan - Pine Flats; Randy Phillips, Coconino County Health Dept. - arrived at 9:42 a.m.; Jim Sandoval - Resident; Amina Sena - Forest Service; George Tice - Secretary-Treasurer, and Kristine Uhlman - U of A, WRRC

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Barry asked for a motion to approve the April 10th minutes.

MOTION: George Tice so moved. Jim Sandoval seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried ten (10) for and zero (0) opposed. (Johnson, Phillips and Mosley not present)

3. **Treasurer's Report** - Barry Allan asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.

MOTION: Lee Luedeker moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Amina Sena seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried ten (10) for and zero (0) opposed. (Johnson, Phillips and Mosley not present)

4. **Round Table status reports plus, (a) Update on Education Grant, (b) Memorial Day Weekend, (c) Update on Watershed Improvement Plan grant application**

Kristine Uhlman explained the focus of the NEMO program, and indicated that in September, they will have finished modeling how watersheds respond to rainfall events through the entire state. Documents showing the results are on their website at arizonanemo.org, They also are training groups on IMS, Internet Mapping Service, so you can go to their website and make your own GIS map, without having GIS software. NEMO is tasked with facilitating watershed activities and helping you obtain and implement grant funding. Channah Rock is part of the program and her DNA genotyping laboratory may be instrumental to your upcoming grant; they also have a specialist in arid lands on the team. Kristine offered to provide a copy of this Watershed Base Plan; it is expected that the watershed plans will reference the NEMO plans or incorporate some of the NEMO work. The NEMO plan is for the entire watershed, so you can use it to expand your plan, and these plans are required, to be eligible to receive 319 grant funds from ADEQ. They are negotiating with ADEQ to update the earlier plans, and this plan was done in 2003 or 2004, so it doesn't have the newest data.

Lee Luedeker reported that he attended a presentation by Don Bills, a hydrologist with USGS, on particularly the Red Wall Aquifer and fluctuations in the water level, relative to prevailing precipitation, and the implications for our future water resources, and Gary Johnson indicated the new Fire Chief will start September 1st, Station 5 has a new fire truck, and the weather is pushing back the fire season.

Jeanmarie Haney reported that they have been working on a Verde watershed internal planning process with a lot of partners; the final Conservation Action Plan will be done soon. She also is doing an ecological flow study on the Verde River with the Arizona Water Institute and that is on their website, plus she is working with the USGS on a proposal for an

environmental flow study watershed-wide. They are also scoping a project with ERI at NAU for some inventorying of all watershed data collection efforts. Rex Bergamini added that he and Jeanmarie had discussed the irrigation ditch management on Oak Creek, and Jeanmarie indicated that the USGS did a major measurement effort in 2007, and it would be interesting to have Don Bills present that. Rex explained that we just resubmitted the targeted watershed grant, and we will have to work with NEMO on identifying areas that may be sources for bacteria, such as the ditches, so a collaborative partnership is important. Jeanmarie indicated that she uses the report done by James Allen in 1997 and the Department of Water Resources Verde 2000 report. Edessa Carr added that one of Abe Springer's students, Rob Ross, has a presentation mapping the ditches, so he might be a source. Rex explained that some funding was allocated to get some boots on the ground to identify where those are.

Randy Phillips reported that in the last three weeks, there has been a decrease in rabies activity, but a USDA individual came to do more traps, and they were chosen as a funding site to begin using an oral vaccine for foxes starting in mid-July. The current quarantine expires July 5th and they will probably request a 30-day extension, and then the USDA will do more trapping. The vaccine could also be of some benefit to other animals as well. Lee indicated another fox from Red Rock State Park tested positive, since our last meeting. Randy added that the variant found in the foxes and skunks is a brown bat variant. Additionally, the County currently has a hiring freeze, and they have lost one person in environmental quality and a part-time person in environmental health.

Charles Mosley reported that the City is still waiting on new ADEQ regulations regarding the MS-4, and he is interested in seeing what is happening on the E Coli issue and the impaired water standing. One person responded to the City's request for information regarding the MS-4 program, but on illicit discharges, he feels the City is in line with the monitoring program and requiring corrections, when deficiencies are found. Out of 300+ inspections per year, maybe 10 violations were found in a given year, and many of those weren't reaching Oak Creek. The education program will continue and enforcement will probably be stepped up on retention basins, which should occasionally be cleaned out, and the City definitely wants to be part of what the task force is working on. If someone sees stormwater-related contamination, they should call Public Works at 928-204-7111. Rex explained that he is mostly seeing the lack of maintenance of post-construction stormwater BMPs.

Amina Sena reported that the Forest Service is applying for in-stream flow rights; currently everybody has a right to the water in streams in the Southwest, to the point there are more water rights than water in the stream, so the Forest Service is trying to apply for rights to keep water in the stream. Phelps Dodge has protested every water right they could that the Forest Service has applied for, by questioning how much water is needed in the river system for it to function correctly, so there is an active study in the Cherry Creek system that will be a detailed study. She is also doing range NEPAs; there are two allotments up for renewal, and the process is to ensure the capacity of how they are grazing is in balance with the resources. Additionally, she thinks the thinning around Cave Creek in Oak Creek Canyon is localized, and Kelly Lawrence, their new Volunteer Coordinator, is someone to involve if the grant comes through. Jeanmarie added that they completed Phase I of the ecological flow study for the Verde, and they are doing Phase II with three study sites. Grant Lewis, Hydrologist for the Tonto National Forest, has in-stream permits and is interested in a very technical Cherry Creek study for that in-stream flow permit application. TNC is hoping to expand that to the whole watershed, and their Phase II report should be done in October.

Edessa Carr reported that she is helping teachers with water education; they have done workshops on sampling, etc., for teachers. They also did an Arizona Conserve Water Workshop and partnered with the Highland Center for Natural History in Prescott. One school received a grant to take children to the Verde headwaters and into the Verde Canyon to see the watershed, and a school water audit was held in May at Cottonwood Middle School with over one hundred 7th graders. She also has been attending hearings in Prescott regarding the modification to Prescott's Assured Water Supply Designation to include the Big Chino water; if things aren't resolved, the discussions are gearing toward the discussion about the groundwater and surface water connection.

Barry Allan referenced the pictures taken on Memorial Day weekend showing about 3/4 of a dumpster filled at Indian Gardens, which was funded through the education grant, and the same is planned for the July 4th weekend. Generally, people seemed to be picking up their trash, and the washrooms and visitors' center were also open. Lee added that he didn't see any hazardous waste in the dumpster this time, and Katherine Nelsen-Allan suggested having a sign saying no hazardous materials; Lee indicated that might get some compliance.

Rex Bergamini reported that an agreement signed with Waste Management says we wouldn't have any hazardous waste in the dumpster, so we need to enforce that better. Regarding the education grant, about 40 hours was spent on curriculum and a presentation for the students, but the lead teacher was laid off and the ball was dropped on the volunteers. We are still moving forward, but not as anticipated. The bags for visitors have been redesigned, so they have current information, and they should be ready this week. T-shirts for the students have been developed, but we don't have the number of students promised, so he is taking the lead with the high school. We have a van ready to go and will probably start this weekend. Rex also announced that he is no longer with Pender Engineering, but he still does contract work for them, and he is now at NAU, plus working as an independent consultant. The big news is that we resubmitted our ADEQ Targeted Watershed Grant, with monitoring, sampling and quality analysis control plans, résumés, etc., and there is a conference call scheduled for Tuesday; we expect the award by the end of the month. Barry added he posted some of the grant application and goals on the display board. The grant is for \$311,603, and the total available was \$800,000; however, two other watersheds have been awarded grants, so that is what is left over, but it is a good grant that goes for 2 years, with the first year for developing the plan and the second for BMPs, and we expect a coalition of about 40 people.

Charles Mosley indicated that the City has applied for a small grant to develop an E Coli monitoring plan for the MS-4, and that might fit into what you are also looking at. He believes that would be a bid opportunity; once they approve the work plan, they give you the grant money. Kristine explained that in regard to 319 funds, you can't do anything that would be supporting a permitted activity, so there could be issues if there was mingling of these two issues. Rex indicated it would be interesting to collaborate, because we will be developing a stormwater monitoring plan too. Kristine explained that anything developed by the City couldn't be tied to funding received for your 319 project, because ADEQ would be concerned if there is perception of supporting a MS-4 permit activity. Charles clarified he was looking at it as one party taking care of something and not duplicating that. Rex explained that we will be required to develop a sampling, quality assurance and monitoring plan for E Coli, and we have a 5-hour processing time, so the availability of the lab is important. Regarding the doggie waste stations, Rex reported that Bob Heiar put the stations on hold; they would like to see more empirical data on the issue, so part of the base line surveys includes monitoring for dog waste. Bob was reluctant about anecdotal information, but he wasn't really clear about what he wants, except additional evidence of the issue, so they can justify the stations.

Barry explained that it was put together based on the need for pet waste stations and the signs for the canyon, and there was no resistance to the proposals, and then Bill Stafford left, but you can't stop the flow of things when you have funding and are ordering things, so it has changed things a little, but we are letting it roll at this point. Rex explained that the volunteer force is in place and we have the monies; it is simply documenting the need for them. Regarding the signage, ADEQ didn't like the original design and the Forest Service didn't like the revised design, so we will now be working with the Forest Service, which may require some match funding from their architect, etc., to put it together. Then, we will have to get it approved by ADEQ; Amina offered her assistance if needed.

4. **Old Business** - There was no old business discussed.
5. **New Business...** (a) **next meeting date** – Barry stated the next meeting date is August 14th.
7. **Adjourn** - **MOTION:** *George Tice moved to adjourn. Lee Luedeker seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried thirteen (13) for and zero (0) opposed.*

The meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna A. S. Puckett