

LOWER SAN PEDRO WATERSHED ALLIANCE

PO Box 576, Mammoth, AZ 85618

www.lowersanpedro.org

Minutes of the Meeting held February, 22, 2014 at the Cascabel Community Center

The following 18 members and guests attended the meeting: Barbara Clark, Peter Else, Bob Evans, Nancy Ferguson, Tricia Gerrodette, Cathy Gorman, Phil Hedrick, Anna Lands, Jude Martinez, Pearl Mast, Mick Meader, Sue Newman, David Omick, Tom Orum, Gilbert Urias, Jeannie WagnerGreven, Ralph Waldt, and Scott Wilbor.

Chair, Peter Else, called the meeting to order at 2:15 PM.

- Since board member Karole Skeen has resigned as Treasurer, Peter gave the Financial Report as Acting Treasurer. Donations have totaled \$2,624.49. Expenses have totaled \$2,042.05. Our present balance is \$582.44, \$400 of which is reserved to pay our fee for IRS non-profit status. Peter valued In Kind Contributions at \$70,000. In addition to such contributions from the board members, he mentioned the folks from the Light Hawk Flight organization and others involved in the Film Project, and also acknowledged Jessica Fraver's work in lining up Light Hawk for the over flights and Jeau Allen's work as a graphics and technical advisor.
- Peter reported on the Pinal Partnership Economic Development and Open Space Workshop where LSPWA had an informational table. The keynote speaker was a developer who supported Open Space as a valuable amenity to include in developments. Cathy Gorman reported that the new Director of Open Space and Trails for Pinal County, Kent Taylor, had the preservation of the San Pedro River on his list of priorities, so the Eastern Regional Group seemed to have succeeded in getting that message across. LSPWA will need to continue to interact with all the counties in the watershed.

David Omick explained the ORV Control/Wildlife Monitoring Initiative.

- Jude Martinez spoke about the problems she and neighboring property owners along the Middle San Pedro have with trespassing ORV drivers who cut fences, harass wildlife and sometimes even threaten landowners. David explained that Bill Radke from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has offered Cascabel Conservation Association (CCA) 10 cameras worth about \$1500 (\$150 each) to monitor wildlife along the river. They could simultaneously be used to document the amount of disturbance from ORV traffic if not deter it. In exchange, Bill would like reports on any wildlife photographed. Ownership and legal use of any photographs needs to be resolved.

David had several suggestions for how the program might operate, and there was further discussion regarding the need for appropriate and effective signage,

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cooperation with law enforcement, and education of the ORV community. David agreed to draft a contract for the loan of the cameras. It would describe ownership and use of the wildlife photos, specify a deposit for the cameras, define the responsibilities of those who participate in the Initiative, and include a liability release. David Omick and Ralph Waldt would provide training on camera use. It was moved, seconded and approved that CCA would partner with LSPWA in this Initiative.

- Andy Laurenzi, Southwest Archaeology, who wasn't able to attend the meeting, asked that we note that the cultural resources along the San Pedro suffer from ORV abuse as well. They need additional volunteers for their Site Steward Program. For more information, contact andy@archaeologysouthwest.org or call him at 520-882-6946, extension 14.

Peter began the discussion of a Coordinated Conservation Plan for the Lower San Pedro.

- He described the Lower San Pedro Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) Initiative, a project representing the rancher interests of the Winkelman and Redington NRCD's. The Chairs of the two districts, Bill Dunn and Andy Smallhouse, appointed the steering committee, which includes Bob Evans from LSPWA. Steve Spangle from FWS, Josh Avey and Bob Rogers from TNC and Scott Wilbor from LSPWA are also attending the meetings. This Initiative began as an alternative to the proposed FWS Lower San Pedro River Collaborative Conservation Initiative, which came to be known as the Refuge Proposal. The FWS proposal was opposed by the NRCD's and has since been indefinitely postponed. The NRCD Initiative is promoting mitigation leases, which the conservation community and entities requiring mitigation will find problematic because the impacts requiring mitigation are permanent, while leases expire.
- Mick Meader and Scott Wilbor reported on the Webinar they viewed on Landscape Conservation Design (LCD), which is the new program under the Department of the Interior (DOI) for establishing wildlife refuges and undertaking other USFWS conservation projects. A wildlife refuge cannot be created in the Lower San Pedro Valley now without first completing an LCD for the region. We are included in the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative, which extends from western Texas to California and includes part of southern Nevada and northern Mexico. This cooperative would be in charge of developing any Landscape Conservation Design for the valley.

Jeannie WagnerGrevén explained that this new program encourages us to consider working with other conservation partners at a larger scale. A lower San Pedro watershed-scale project is too small for an LCD, yet if the area is too large, coordination becomes difficult. We agreed that we should be proactive in

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helping define this region for an LCD.

A discussion followed about how the LSPWA might participate under this new framework without losing our focus and enthusiasm. To start we could contact some of the other groups working upstream of the lower San Pedro watershed, and possibly even in Mexico. Scott Wilbor agreed to draft a letter proposing an area for a Landscape Conservation Design that would include the Lower San Pedro watershed within a larger region. This region needs to be defined in terms of practicality and ecology, and our proposal should contain no particular agenda. We can express our interest in developing an inclusive conservation design process that is facilitated by a neutral party. We would seek additional signatories for the letter from the other conservation groups working in the defined region.

Peter began the discussion of Water Resources in the Upper and Lower San Pedro.

- The AZ Department of Water Resources recently published Arizona's Next Century: A Strategic Vision for Water Supply Sustainability, a summary of which can be found at http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/Arizonas_Strategic_Vision/documents/GoingForward-CreatinganArizonaStrategicVisionforWaterSupplySustainability.pdf. They project that demand for water will exceed supply by almost 1 million acre feet within the next 25 to 50 years. In addition to proposing some common sense solutions to this perceived overdraft, they include more expensive and energy intensive proposals such as surface water, and even ground water, transfers, weather modification and importation of desalinized ocean water. Our discussion resolved that our public education efforts should emphasize the value of water for the ecosystem.
- In a similar vein, we discussed some recently proposed legislation that would prohibit the use of AZ Water Protection funds to plant various riparian trees and would even allow these funds to be used to clear mesquite trees from riparian areas. Although LSPWA cannot take a position on specific legislation, we can promote the value of native riparian vegetation.

Mick Meader and Gilbert Urias reported on the status of The Lower San Pedro Film Project.

- The grant application for \$15,000 to the Temper of the Times Fund was not successful. Gilbert Urias, who worked on the initial film, would like to see it expanded to at least 15 minutes with more facts about the river included. Light Hawk has offered 3 more flights and the film crew is available to continue the project. Everyone agreed that the film was our most powerful educational tool

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but its expansion would also require an administrator/producer. We need volunteers to serve on a grant writing committee with Mick. We will also need volunteers, including local ranchers, to serve on a film advisory board. Cathy will distribute a notice with the minutes asking for volunteers to help write grant applications and coordinate the project.

Barbara Clark explained some projected changes in land management in the San Pedro Valley.

- The Nature Conservancy is not renewing its management agreement with Pima County for the Bingham Cienega. This may present an opportunity for the LSPWA to help find a proficient local manager to take over the contract.
- The Nature Conservancy's H & E property continues to be for sale with a conservation easement.
- Barbara noted that local land management tops other options. We agreed to stay in contact with TNC about how we might help with land management.

Peter summarized the next organizational steps for the LSPWA.

- Board members need to submit a brief summary of their qualifications including any education and experience that particularly qualifies them for the Board of the LSPWA. They should also provide an estimate of the number of hours they spend annually on LSPWA duties.
- In order to adhere to IRS 501(c)(3) requirements, our Bylaws need to be amended to define our fiscal year, require oversight of accounting by more than one officer, and ensure that all our financial transactions reflect fair market value.
- We need to adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Elections for the Board should be held before June 21 since that will be the one-year anniversary of our incorporation, when the steering committee members became the Board for the first year. The newly elected board members will serve for two years. We are required to have between 8 and 12 board members. Currently, we have 11, but 2 of them are co-owners, so only one of them will be eligible to stand for re-election unless the Board makes an exception as they are allowed to do. Even if all 9 remaining board members agree to stand for re-election, we should all try to recruit some new candidates.
- The Treasurer's office is currently vacant and needs to be filled. Peter would also like someone to take over the management of our website:
www.lowersanpedro.org.
- Peter agreed to e-mail all board members with specific language for the Bylaws

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amendments for their approval.

Cathy Gorman started the conversation about funding for the LSPWA.

- Dues are one possibility but we don't want to discourage people from joining the LSPWA because of dues.
- David related his experience with other organizations that have had more success with appeals to their membership and local businesses than with applying for grants.
- We also need to develop a budget so we can project our funding needs.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Gorman
LSPWA Secretary