

# LOWER SAN PEDRO WATERSHED ALLIANCE

PO Box 576, Mammoth, AZ 85618

www.lowersanpedro.org

## Minutes of the Meeting held June 24, 2014 at the Central Arizona College Aravaipa Campus

**The following 23 members attended the meeting:** Celeste Andresen, Tab Bommarito, Cate Bradley, Lon Brehmer, Bud Bristow, Barbara Clark, Peter Else, Bob Evans, Cathy Gorman, Enriqueta F. Guevara, Doris Haynes, Phil Hedrick, Anna Lands, Diane Laush, Gil Lusk, Pearl Mast (via Skype), Mick Meader, Sue Newman, David Omick (via Skype), Elna Otter, Bill Radke, Gary Vinson, and Scott Wilbor.

**Chair, Peter Else, called the meeting to order at 9:30** and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**Secretary, Cathy Gorman, announced the Results of the recently held Election** for the following candidates for the LSPWA Board of Directors:

**Lon Brehmer**, LSP landowner in Pinal County  
**Jim Bergstrom**, LSP landowner in Graham County:  
**Peter Else**, LSP landowner in Pinal County  
**Robert Evans**, LSP landowner in Cochise County  
**Cathy Gorman**, LSP landowner in Pinal County  
**Doris Haynes**, LSP landowner in Pinal County  
**Anna Lands**, LSP landowner in Cochise County  
**Norman Meader**, LSP landowner in Cochise County  
**David Omick**, LSP land/systems manager in Cochise County  
**Elna Otter**, LSP landowner in Cochise County  
**Scott Wilbor**, supporter conducting a watershed-wide conservation study

The slate of candidates was elected unanimously by the 37 members who voted. Three new directors, Lon, Jim and Doris, are joining eight who served on the initial board.

**Acting Treasurer, Peter Else, reported that our Current Balance is \$717.14.** Additionally,

- We are committed to spend between \$200 and \$400 on administrative services this summer on the following:
  - a) Website upgrades such as Pay Pal capability, aesthetic improvements, and posting our public documents.
  - b) Accounting system upgrades such as adding fields for project codes and in-kind donations, as well as upgrading to Quick Books, if appropriate. Tracking our extensive in-kind contributions from our volunteers is especially important.
- The updated ledger is stored on the LSPWA Gmail account with access by all officers.
- Our current trend is to cover operational costs through personal donations and cover specific projects (with “deliverables”) through grants and special gifts.
- The annual IRS Form 990 and Arizona Corporation Report were submitted last week.
- IRS Form 1023 (application for tax-exempt status) was submitted June 1, 2014

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**Chair, Peter Else, continued with his Power Point presentation to lead the discussion on Strategic Planning.** We started with a review of the two documents that all attendees had received prior to the meeting.

The first, subtitled “Where We’ve Been”, summarizes our activities in the first seventeen months of the LSPWA based on our submittal to the IRS for tax-exempt status.

- Our membership has grown to 143, 91 of whom are landowners in the watershed.
- Our four program areas are based on the second half of our Mission Statement.

*The LSPWA promotes conservation initiatives and educational programs, fosters a resilient local economy, and resists large scale or inappropriate development proposals that will cause ecosystem fragmentation, degrade wildlife habitat, devalue conservation investments, and threaten sustainable rural enterprise.*

To date, we have allocated our resources among our four program areas as follows:

- 30% to Production of Educational Materials. Past and current examples include the film, brochures, the website, newsletters, and white papers.
- 40% to Community Outreach. This has consisted of holding three general meetings, as well as participating in and presenting at community events, conferences, symposia, and the meetings of other organizations active in the watershed.
- 20% to Collaborative On-the-Ground Conservation Projects. Members are collaborating with other NGO’s in the watershed to collect data, protect resources and improve habitat. The main project is the ORV Control/Wildlife Monitoring Initiative that was started after our last meeting in February in collaboration with USFWS and AGFD.
- 10% to Landscape Level Conservation Planning. Following a decision at our last meeting, in conjunction with the Cascabel Conservation Association, we sent a letter to the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative expressing our interest in participating in a Landscape Conservation Design process which would include the Lower San Pedro watershed and promote voluntary conservation actions. They responded immediately and positively, and communications are ongoing.

The second document, subtitled “Where We’re Going”, is the initial result of a limited strategic planning survey conducted via email by one of our members, Daniel Baker, as a starting point to a work in progress. Peter solicited additional input, especially from the new directors, agency and NGO representatives and active members. The discussion was focused on our Major Goals, Objectives and Projects with an emphasis on our next year and reaching a decision on at least one on-the-ground project that will advance our mission. Specific changes proposed from the floor are in italics. LSPWA directors and members were asked to send additional comments on the goals and objectives to the Chair at [LowerSanPedro@gmail.com](mailto:LowerSanPedro@gmail.com).

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## **A. Major Goals:** List broad overarching landscape scale conservation aspirations:

1. Maintain largely intact and un-fragmented landscape.
2. Gain national recognition for Lower SPRV conservation status.
3. Maintain free flowing river, active floodplain space, and recharge capacity.
4. Educate regarding LSPRV conservation attributes.
5. Build strong partnerships with agencies, conservation groups *and other major stakeholders* in the region.
6. Protect endangered or threatened species, and a thriving diversity of other species.
7. Promote broad landscape linkages, *and water conservation practices*, adapted to climate change to a high degree.
8. Promote best possible conservation practices among a broad range of landowners.
9. Build a culture of conservation, promote sustainable enterprise, and provide recreational opportunities. *How do we define "sustainable"?*
10. *Reduce, manage and monitor the impact of non-native plants and animals.*

## **B. Objectives and Projects** (Designed to address the goals. Who will do this and how will we measure success?):

1. Advocate for a voluntary USFWS-based conservation easement program through a neutrally-facilitated Landscape Conservation Design process.
2. Support *voluntary* opportunities for additional designation of conservation land by other agencies or land trusts.
3. Produce LSPWA film and multimedia projects.
4. Actively advocate for conservation and appropriate land use through comment packages, white papers, letters, petitions, litigation, etc.
5. Develop a landowner registry/database/inventory and a pilot program of landowners willing to voluntarily establish cooperative resource management areas.
6. Advocate and/or litigate for co-location of proposed infrastructure with existing land disturbance.
7. Attend meetings and conferences and invite various groups to our meetings as we collaboratively identify and implement tools and practices for conservation.
8. Continue to use cameras for wildlife and vehicle monitoring purposes.
9. Promote and support other habitat improvement projects.
10. Facilitate local management of designated conservation lands through a registry of volunteers and available workers for pay.
11. Recruit more representatives of sustainable enterprise into our organization and support their efforts to develop the local economy. *"Sustainable" needs to be defined.*
12. Support natural resource monitoring and surveying by collaborating with agencies and NGOs.
13. *Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with willing landowners to facilitate collaborative research opportunities.*
14. *Promote State Trust Land Reform.*

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There was also a more general discussion of the necessity of continuing to build our relationships with the folks working on the Upper San Pedro, the AZ State Land Department, the Lower San Pedro Working Group, which consists of representatives from the mitigation properties, the Sonoran Institute and others.

**Next we discussed our Near Term Funding Opportunity brought to our attention by Cate Bradley from the National Park Service.** Peter suggested that we keep in mind the following advice from these local model organizations and a professional grant writer:

*“Under promise and over deliver.”* Bill McDonald, Malpai Borderlands Group

*“Pick a project that benefits everyone.”* Pat King, Altar Valley Conservation Alliance

*“A major grant is like a marriage: the application process is the courtship, the award is like the ceremony, and then the real work begins.”* (Diana Stirling)

This would be a “mini-grant” of approximately \$3000 from agency year-end funds. We will be in a better position next year after our tax-exempt status is approved and our planning is more developed to pursue a major grant. One option would be to expand our ORV/Control Wildlife Monitoring Initiative that we began after our last meeting in February.

- Vice-Chair, David Omick, summarized the project to date. Cameras are in place, but more could be added. The data base needs to be formalized, local law enforcement and OHV users educated, and signage for both outside and local traffic developed. Bill Radke, FWS, could provide data management protocols from larger projects.
- Since the LSP Working Group also has cameras and faces similar issues, such as camera theft and the education of camera users, this would be an opportunity to collaborate.
- The project area could be expanded from the river corridor to focus on landscape linkage areas, and other such areas important for wildlife where OHV use is not such an issue.
- Although there is no immediate interest in the “mini-grant” for the film project, we will use video to document our project for educational purposes.

The consensus was to pursue this funding for this project. David agreed to continue to be the lead with the following also expressing an interest in being involved: Jim Bergstrom, Cate Bradley, Barbara Clark, Peter Else, Bob Evans, Jorja Foster, Doris Haynes, Phil Hedrick, Jude Martinez, Mick Meader, Sue Newman, Bill Radke, and Scott Wilbor.

**Director, Anna Lands, introduced some local Dark Skies Initiatives.** She and Peter have been attending the Oracle Dark Skies Committee meetings. The committee has already had success in reducing local light pollution and has the potential to do much more. Anna read the letter, which the LSPWA board recently approved and sent to the International Dark Sky Association, which is based in Tucson, in support of the designation of Oracle State Park as an International Dark Sky Park. Anna would like to see a larger area that would include the watershed as a Dark Sky Reserve.

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**In preparation for the Election of Officers by the Directors**, Peter projected a slide listing their duties from the LSPWA Bylaws. Bob Evans nominated the existing officers, Peter Else as Chair, David Omick as Vice-Chair and Cathy Gorman as Secretary. All were willing to continue except that Peter did not want to continue serving as Acting Treasurer as he has since Karole Skeen had to resign. Anna Lands accepted the nomination to serve as Treasurer. The voice vote of the Directors was unanimous.

**The subject of appointing an Advisory Council was the next item of business.** According to our Bylaws, this is optional, but as we produce educational materials, especially white papers, we need to have them reviewed by experts in the relevant field. Such advisors could also assist with grant writing. We have such experts among our membership and we can reach out to others. The consensus was to pursue this on an informal basis for now.

**For convenience, Board Decisions are sometimes reached in Virtual Meetings via Email.** In order to formally approve and publish the minutes of such meetings since our last in-person meeting, they are included here.

## **Minutes of March 12, 2014**

In accordance with the minutes of the February 22, 2014 meeting held at the Cascabel Community Center, the chair, Peter Else, followed up on the following agenda items:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. We need to adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy. The chair emailed the draft of this Policy to all Board members.

By March 12, 2014, all eleven board members had sent a brief summary of their qualifications, had approved the following through their emailed consent:

1. LSPWA Conflict of Interest Policy
2. Article III, Section 16 of the LSPWA Bylaws was amended to reflect formal adoption of the LSPWA Conflict of Interest Policy.
3. Article IV, Section 7 of the LSPWA Bylaws was amended to include this additional sentence, "The Treasurer shall ensure that all officers of the LSPWA have access to current transaction ledgers, and that all business transactions of \$100 or more are reported to the Secretary as they are recorded."
4. Article VIII, Section 4 of the LSPWA Bylaws was amended to define the fiscal year to be identical with the calendar year.

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5. Article VIII, Section 7 was added to the LSPWA Bylaws, stating "Section 7. Transactions at Fair Market Value: Goods and Services shall be purchased at fair market value. Individual purchases totaling more than \$1000 shall require competitive bids. Individual payment for services totaling more than \$1000 shall ensure that reasonable and customary fees are negotiated, based upon either competitive bids or proof provided by the vendor of standard fee structures for other customers."

## **Minutes of June 2, 2014**

In an email to all LSPWA directors on May 28, 2014, the chair requested permission to hire Diana Stirling of Stirling Word Services in Mammoth, Arizona at a rate of \$25/per hour (along with her standard printing fees) to do the following tasks that are estimated to require 10 to 20 hours of contracted labor, all in preparation for submitting our IRS Form 1023 and for meeting with a National Park Service representative at the end of June:

- a) Proofread and print our IRS Form 1023
- b) Update our web-site to include recent information on our activities and to improve its aesthetic appearance.
- c) Install on our website PayPal or some other widely accepted internet-based tool for receiving credit/debit card payments.
- d) Review our accounting ledger to make suggestions on improvements that will facilitate adequate tracking of any grants we might receive in the future.

By June 2, all directors except for Karole Skeen had approved this request.

## **Minutes of June 10, 2014**

On June 8, 2014 the LSPWA chair, Peter Else, emailed to all LSPWA directors a draft letter supporting the Oracle State Park in their nomination to be designated as an International Dark Sky Park.

By June 10, 2014 all LSPWA directors, except for one abstention (Karole Skeen), had approved the draft via email, with suggested updates and corrections. The chair signed the final copy, mailed it to Director Anna Lands for her signature, who then mailed it to the Oracle Dark Skies Committee.

**The Meeting Adjourned at Noon.** Attendees were invited to stay for a light lunch and continue our discussions informally.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Gorman, LSPWA Secretary