

SONOITA CREEK FLOOD and FLOW STUDY COMMITTEE

MISSION: The watershed is a vital component of this community's well-being. The Sonoita Creek Flood and Flow Study Committee will (i) make recommendations to the Patagonia Town Council with respect to best practices within its jurisdiction to manage erosion, to enhance water flow, to create optimal flood mitigation and to promote the long-term health of the riparian corridor, (ii) look at the entire watershed area to influence upstream conditions and to optimize downstream consequences, and (iii) educate the public.

DRAFT MINUTES for November 10, 2016 Meeting

(NOTE: this meeting's recording is available at Town administrative office)

ATTENDEES: Dave Teel, Carolyn Shafer, Anne Townsend, Dave Ellis, Kathy West, and Meg Gilbert; Guests were Susan Belt and Randiesia Riggs

1. Approval of October 13, 2016 Minutes – Dave E. moved and Anne seconded approval of October 13, 2016 minutes of the Flood and Flow Committee Meeting. Minutes were approved unanimously as written.
2. Discussion about the Town of Patagonia draft water conservation plan and the upcoming November 22nd Town workshop at 6 p.m. – After considerable discussion, we agreed that Carolyn would take these comments and draft the Committee's recommendations for approval by Committee members in attendance and after approval by the Committee, Dave T would distribute to the Town Council before the November 22nd workshop.
3. Kathy told us that the new manager at The Nature Conservancy is Martin Lawrence who will begin his duties in early January and Carolyn told us that the new manager at Tucson Audubon's Paton Hummingbird Center is Jonathan Lutz who will begin on November 14th.
4. Dave E talked about the AZ Supreme Court ruling in AZ Dept of Water Resources vs McLennen. Dave E reported that he had done extensive research on documents from various sources and that TNC, Town, Rio Rico and Nogales all agreed to Patagonia having diversion rights of 629 acre feet of water as of 2001. Per ADWR:

○ Ground water rights mean we can pump as much as we want;

○ However, if we want to store that surface water, we must have a permit. The Town has filed but the document includes mistakes and obviously was not reviewed by ADWR. The permit is still sitting “down there” and our attorney says we’re dealing with ground water, not surface water so it’s moot.

○ However, one of the possible things to do in the future to mitigate flooding is to build a reservoir, so having the right to store surface water is an important thing for the Town to get in place as soon as possible despite what the attorney says. Also, this could help to reduce flood insurance rates in town and possibly to attract private insurers.

○ Steps needed to accomplish this include applying again for these rights (not terribly difficult nor expensive, per Dave E.); then get an expert to visit to determine where to put this reservoir; and finally determine what would be entailed to actually accomplish it (get stakeholders’ buy-in; estimate costs; fundraise; etc.). Dave E. thinks the Town could get funding via the Arizona Water Fund and/or the Arizona Water Planning organization and therefore there would be zero expense to the Town.

5. Anne announced the upcoming Saturday, December 17 10:00 a.m. presentation at Cady Hall on Patagonia’s watershed by expert Dr. Laura Norman.

6. Parking Lot and Radar Screen discussion – It was agreed that Dave E. and Kathy would talk to and work with the sub-committee on upstream water retention as well as the sub-committee on retention pond solution. The rest were again deferred.

7. Next Meeting: December 8, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.