

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 March 9, 2017 Meeting

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

ATTENDEES: Carolyn Shafer, Anne Townsend, Dave Ellis, Martin Lawrence, Kate Tirion, David Teel. Guests were: Bill O'Brien and Randiesia Riggs (NextGen Engineering), Jennifer Barin (Coronado National Forest), Susan Belt, Diana Nash and George Lorta (Circle Z Ranch), Fred Mareno, Justin MacEleney, Oliver Lysaught and Laura Nolier (Borderlands Habit Network)

1. F&F welcomed attendees and introductions were made all around.
2. Approval of February 9, 2017 Minutes – Anne moved and Dave E seconded approval of minutes as written except with Randiesia's name correctly spelled. Minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Dave Ellis talked about water issues: there are two: – Quantity and Quality. Flood is a concern of quantity and there are two primary ways to mitigate the potential for flooding: gabions that slow the fast-moving water and give it a chance to recharge the groundwater; and recharge basins that serve to retain for a longer period of time the fast-moving water to allow it to recharge the groundwater. The Borderlands Habit Network (BHN-a non-profit) is addressing only the quantity part of these issues to date. There is no current plan to monitor water quality, which is up to the Town and individual well owners.

To determine how best to proceed with flood and quantity planning, there is a need to fund Phase 1 of the Town's Water Management Plan, to be conducted by NextGen in cooperation with BHN. The proposal to the Patagonia Community Foundation to fund Phase 1 was not selected; however, an anonymous donor has provided the \$5000 necessary to fund Phase 1.

Bill O'Brien and Randiesia Riggs defined what their business is and their backgrounds, defined their definition of a watershed, emphasizing that a watershed should only shed water, and explained that they are collecting surveys on people's attitudes about our watershed in order to obtain a snapshot of its current condition, our goals and what projects should have priority. Phase 1 draft results will outline the full Water Management Plan (no new data will be collected), summarize goals and priorities and provide an initial list of projects and programs. This initial WMP will be done in draft by April 1, 2017. This will then be reviewed, modified as needed and eventually present specific plans and maps to explain the data and better educate the community.

Jennifer told us that the Coronado National Forest will be putting in new water flow measuring devices up Harshaw Creek (they have been re-engineered to use digital data).

Bill emphasized that because this area is not in an official Watershed Management Area, this Water Management Plan will have no legal authority and no regulatory teeth, and it will not be a fixed document. It will be revised as new information is found.

4. Dave E advised that there will be a workshop about Patagonia's Water History on Saturday March 18 at 10 a.m. at Cady Hall to which the community is invited and

during which local stories will be told to illustrate what the Sonoita Creek's history has been over the years.

Anne reminded attendees of the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Friends of Sonoita Creek (FOSC) to be held April 15, 10 a.m. at Cady Hall. Kate Tirion, founder and owner of the Deep Dirt Farms (DDF), will be the featured speaker and will lead attendees on a tour of DDF following the meeting. Deep Dirt Farms is now the official demonstration site for gabion-building/erosion-slowing tactics for the new Borderlands Restoration Leadership Institute, a project of BHN.

5. The next F&F Committee Meeting is scheduled by April 13 at 10 a.m.