

SONOITA CREEK FLOOD AND FLOW STUDY COMMITTEE

INITIAL MEETING NOTES

NOVEMBER 12, 2015

ATTENDEES: Ann Townsend- Friends of Sonoita Creek

Luke Reese and Eric Anderson- Nature Conservancy

Andy Bennett- Tucson Audubon Society- Paton Center for Hummingbirds

Steve Buckley-Botanist-National Park Svc.

Kate Tirion-Borderlands Restoration and Deep Dirt Farm.

Carolyn Shafer- PARA

Dave Teel- Town Manager

also invited but not present:

David Seibert- Borderlands Restoration

Meeting notes from Shafer and Teel

Introductions and discussion about goals. Focus on Sonoita Creek Preservation and protection

Discussion about status of the Town's recent water improvement project as well as the use of water by Town's water system customers and the sewer system customers (about 20% of in-town residents use wells and not necessarily the same 20% use septic systems). Estimate is that the Town "loses" 20-30% of the water drawn from Town wells with the nation-wide standard being a 10% loss. About one-half of the daily 100,000 gallons of water drawn by the wells is returned through the water treatment plant (as measured by meters at both wells and at water treatment plant although it is acknowledged the meters are old).

The Forest Service has officially designated the Town of Patagonia as a municipal watershed. Dave will forward the Town's agreement with the FS to committee members. The Town is obligated to post "you are now in the watershed" signs as part of that agreement.

The WIFA funded study conducted by Clear Creek Associates is still pending and Dave advised that he sent them a note that the report is long overdue.

There was a discussion about the Santa Cruz County role in flood plain review by FEMA. It was agreed that since the watershed is in Santa Cruz County, John Hays from the County will be asked to join the committee as a member. 70% of the town's property is in flood plain.

There was a discussion of recent taking of sand from the creek bed which is of great concern for many reasons. Dave provided Article 13-3 the town flood plain regulation..

Other items discussed included Monkey Springs, Wildlife Corridors LLC, upstream activities, downstream consequences, community education of water related issues, private ownership of the creek bed, Prof.

Michael Brescia's presentation about unique water rights in this area, creating a conservation easement (Julie Holding will also be asked to join the committee as a member OR to talk about land trusts), additional committee members (Laura Norman from USGS and the local Forest Service hydrologist), and next steps.

There was agreement that all present want to continue to be a part of the discussion with a goal to address the entire watershed and to make recommendations to the Town of Patagonia on best practices to manage erosion, to enhance water flow, to create optimal flood mitigation and to promote the long-term health of the riparian corridor.

Dave will create an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting (Wednesday, November 18 at 7 p.m.) for approval of formation of the "Sonoita Creek Flood and Flow Study Committee" and of its initial members. Committee members are encouraged to attend the meeting.

The group will meet next at 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 10 at the Town of Patagonia Town Council Chambers.