**SONOITA CREEK FLOOD and FLOW STUDY COMMITTEE**

MISSION: The watershed is a vital component of this community’s wellbeing.  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 mitigate downstream consequences, and (iii) educate the public.

 **MINUTES for Zoom Meeting**

**Meeting I.D. 957-511-4862 Passcode 338501**

**10 a.m. Thursday, January 18, 2024**

**Committee Members:**  *Bill O’Brien-Chair/PTE, Ron Robinson-TM, Aaron Mrotek-TNC, Rodrigo Sierra-Corona- BRN,*

*Carolyn Shafer-PARA, Kathy Pasierb-FOSC & recording secretary, Bob Proctor-FOSC, Howard Buchanan -TAS,*

Chris Gardner-Hydrologist PARA, *Kate Tirion.*

**Guests:** Alan Sanchez-S.C.C. Flood Plain Coordinator, Tomas Goode-hydrologist

1. Call to Order by Chair-Bill O’Brien at 10:02 a.m.
2. Roll Call: Bill O’Brien, Aaron Mrotek, Howard Buchanan, Ron Robinson, Kate Tirion, Rodrigo Sierra-Corona, Bob Proctor, Kathy Pasierb, Chris Gardner
3. Pledge of Allegiance-Bill
4. Correction and/or Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2023, regular monthly meeting-Ron moved to approved, Second Chris
5. Call to Public A. R. S. §38-431-01(H):  AT THIS TIME, ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC IS ALLOWED TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COMMITTEE, SUBJECT TO REASONABLE TIME AND MANNER RESTRICTIONS.  THE PUBLIC WILL ONLY BE RECOGNIZED TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS LISTED FOR PUBLIC INPUT PURSUANT TO TOWN CODE SECTION 2-5-6.  PURSUANT TO THE ARIZONA OPEN MEETING LAW, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CALL TO THE PUBLIC, INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL MAY RESPOND TO CRITICISM MADE BY THOSE WHO HAVE ADDRESSED THE COUNCIL, MAY ASK STAFF TO REVIEW THE MATTER, OR MAY ASK THE MATTER BE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA.  HOWEVER, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BODY SHALL NOT DISCUSS OR TAKE LEGAL ACTION ON MATTERS RAISED DURING AN OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS THE MATTERS ARE PROPERLY NOTICED FOR DISCUSSION AND LEGAL ACTION -None

 **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Update on School Canyon Failure of CCC Structures (Bob Proctor)-Impact on Town and Watershed Analysis

 *Alan sent background information to Bill. Bill will prepare an exhibit for the Forest Service.*

*Bob reports: Mesa residents would like more information. Bob requests from Ron a letter from the TOP for a release of liability. A few residents are not interested in any renovations and do not see a need to fix anything. They expressed concerns about the project like water settling, mosquitos, and types of restoration.*

*Bob suggests digging more capacity at the lower end of the retention pond area part above the dam. Will a partial fix remedy the situation? Bob reports the water ran for about 6 weeks in 2022. Forest Service land could be fixed and restored but is complicated by the requirements of an environmental assessment and a long NEPA process. S32 might be encouraged to restore their property in the future.*

1. Patagonia Regional Flood Control Project Feasibility Study (Bill O’Brien/Alan Sanchez)

*Alan reports that S.C.C. is moving forward with the project. The team including Kimly-Horn & sub-contractors, who are overseeing the project. A mid to late March public stakeholders meeting is planned for information only and letting the public know what the 2-D modeling for Phase 1 (mapping floodplains) looks like. School Canyon is in the study area. The TOP will be able to see the draft in February/March.*

1. Watershed Stakeholders USBR/CWMP Grant Notice of Information and funding. (Howard)

*Howard reported on the Bureau of Reclamation grant. The WRRC, supported by the U. of A. is a semi- independent center to help with development of the grant. A survey will be presented to stakeholders who reside in the Sonoita Creek Watershed. There will be a series of public outreach meetings to get input about the watershed and its management. Deadline for the grant is September.*

1. Update on the South32 CCC Flood Plain Use Permit. (Bill)

*Bill reports that the point of contact for records requests from the County is from* *Leonard Fontes- S.C.C. -Public Works Director. A public records request for the floodplain use permit and design documents for this connector has been made. There was a very rigorous review of the permit by CMG consultant, Scott Altair.*

1. Potential Aquifer Management Area (AMA) for Sonoita Creek Watershed (Cienega Creek Groundwater Basin) (Bob Proctor)

*Bob met with Chris Kuzdos-Environmental Defense Fund on the Governor Katie Hobbs water advisory panel to write legislation regarding Rural Management Areas (R.M.A.), Sonoita Creek and Cienega Creek are part of the Cienega Groundwater Basin (CGB). The CGB would be the local basin for managing groundwater for this area. The legislation would help to establish a rural active management area. The advisory panel needs ranchers’ input, a letter of support from the Town of Patagonia, involvement with Sonoita, Elgin, and possibly Rain valley and Cienega Watershed Partnership. Cienega Groundwater Basin is the correct hydrogeological term to use when referring to RMA’s or AMA’s.*

1. Comprehensive Groundwater Study for Sonoita Creek Watershed status and steps forward

(Ben Lomeli)

*Bill reports the need for a comprehensive groundwater model for the CGB and ways to estimate the effects of changes in groundwater pumping. The groundwater model would be a tool to estimate the drawdown of water and to help with calculating a water budget.*

1. Harshaw Creek Watershed Restoration Plan – F&F subcommittee appointments, status, and discuss Town position (Ron, Howard)

*Jennifer Varin of the Forest Service plans to meet in February. Bob provided all the field data collected from FOSC efforts on Harshaw Creek over the last couple of years. The F.S. would like the information on the condition of springs, invasive species and any mining tailing’s locations in order to complete the review of the data. Bill asked if there is a way to obtain a general update on the data? TNC, TAS & FOSC, BRN, have been discussing finding funds to establish a clearinghouse of the data base.*

*Alan reports that there is a rainfall gauge on top of Red Mountain. He will provide the monthly data from the gauge.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

13. Next Regular Monthly Meeting: *February 15, 2024, at 10 a.m.*

14. Future Agenda Items: *Cross Creek Connector and School Canyon*

15. Adjourn *approved* *at 10:33 a.m. Ron, seconded- Bob*

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Pasierb

PARKING LOT (future agenda items)

Sonoita Creek Watershed Stakeholders Group

Community Database of Water Studies

RADAR SCREEN

 Hudbay property ownership

**CONTACTS/RESOURSES**

Jennifer Varin-Coronado Forest Service -Watershed Program Manager

Chris Kudoz-Environmental Defense Fund

Leonard Fontes- S.C.C.Public Service Director

Chris Thiel-Natural Resoursces staff officer for the Coronado National Forest

Daisy Kinsey-Sierra Vista District Ranger

Edgar Martinez-Watershed Hydrologist with Coronado National Forest

**AGENCIES/NON-PROFITS**

PTE-Patagonia Town Engineer

TM – Town Manager

TOP-Town of Patagonia

TNC-Tucson nature Conservancy

BRN-Borderlands Restoration Network

PARA-Patagonia Area Resource Alliance

FoSC-Friends of Sonoita Creek

TAS-Tucson Audubon Society

WRRC-Water Resources Research Center

CWMP-Cooperative Watershed Management Program

SCC-Santa Cruz County

WRAP -Watershed Restoration Action Plan

USBR-United States Bureau of Reclamation

CCC-Cross Creek Connector

AMA- Aquifer (Active) Management Area

RMA-Rural Management Area