

Arizona Strip Alliance, Landscape Subcommittee Meeting

August 15, 2003, 9 am – Noon (Arizona Time)

Conference Room at Pipe Springs National Monument Office

Attendees: Chris Ballard, Alan Gardiner, Brent Mackleprang, Mark Habbeshaw, Jon Beck, Diana Hawks, Bill Towler, Sue Pratt, Oliver Barlow, John Hiscock

Excused: Chris Newell

Next Meetings:

September 3, 2003 9 am – 4 pm? (Arizona Time), Colorado City Marketing Center, 50 North Colvin Street (behind the Market) - Work meeting for socio-economic input into Arizona Strip planning effort

October 10, 2003 9 am – Noon Interagency Offices, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah

Minutes

Arizona Strip Planning Effort

Diana Hawks summarized the preliminary alternative meetings held in June. They received 6,270 public comments, the majority of which were form letters from - Arizona Strip planning effort – Mark Habbeshaw wondered why we were using ROS to define the alternatives, it should only be an inventory. Diana replied that the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is only for recreational uses. It is defined by distance from road and is supposed to guide what kinds of visitor experiences there will be in certain areas.

Based on the public comments received and on discussions held with various individuals and groups, the Arizona Strip BLM/NPS is working on the alternatives and has redefined them, bringing in the sides and changing the alternatives. The No Action, or current management, is now Alternative A, Alternative A now becomes Alt. B, Alternatives B and C become Alt. C and Alternative D remains Alt. D.

The resource specialists are working on the alternatives and expect to have them done sometime in September. At that time the BLM/NPS would like to have individual meetings with all the communities, agencies, tribes and groups involved in the planning effort to make sure these alternatives are on the right track. We need to make sure that we haven't missed anything critical and that we have coordinated as much as possible.

The draft document should be completed sometime this winter and will then have a 4-5 month internal review, at the state office, the Washington Office (BLM and NPS), the Regional Office (NPS), and the Department of Interior.

Alan Gardiner would like a copy of the Wild and Scenic Rivers info to be used in the plan. Diana told him it would not change but would be the same as from the 1992 RMP.

Coconino County Comprehensive Plan

Bill Towler said the Coconino County Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and will go to the County Board of Supervisors on September 16, 2003

Growing Smarter allows petitions from ranchers for a rural planning area. Two landowners are developing a plan on economic viability for the ranches in the county. This could be a model applied elsewhere. Big part of the plan is to figure out how to keep private landowners from subdividing their ranches into 40-acre parcels and even smaller. Every large property owner would like to keep his ranch intact. And the county is interested in seeing these large ranches remain viable. They have already had a group look at a whole range of alternatives to keep the ranches economically viable. This includes the Dude Ranch concept, selling portions of the ranch, grassbanking, and possibly energy development. They will formalize it into a Rural Planning Area Plan. The only other one completed was in Yuma to protect the irrigated farmland. The Rural Planning Area in Yuma was formed but county is not moving ahead with it. The idea is that the Rural Planning Area would have more clout with the Board of Supervisors.

Utah has agricultural protection through the Natural Resource Conservation Service. It goes to the County Planning Board and then to the County Commission.

Mohave County already was broken up and divided long before state law allowed any protection.

Mohave County

Chris Ballard reported that the Citizen Participation Program has been approved by the Board and they will hire a third-party facilitator to assist in meetings. Under Growing Smarter they will do a Cost of Development plan in their comprehensive plan, to look at impact fees, etc.

They have a community plan for the Beaver Dam area. They will have to look at the Blackrock Interchange area off I-15. The biggest problem is that there is no water analysis, just land plans. Growing Smarter requires them to match what is proposed in the plan with the water reserves. There has been no attempt to do that yet.

They will have to pay more attention to the Arizona Strip than in the previous plan.

They do have the inventory analysis completed and are getting ready for policy development and analysis at this time. They are doing it inhouse. They are only going out with the facilitator.

The current plan already follows Growing Smarter so they don't have to worry about the deadline in December. But the county population is at 170,000 and they are worried about meeting the 200,000 threshold. There are new areas of development at Topock and in Kingman, and south of Lake Mead off of Highway 93 (100,000 people capability).

A group of citizens proposed a Rural Development Plan but they shifted to an Area Plan. The Rural Development Plan does not work well with a large number of landowners. Growing Smarter forces the counties to coordinate with the State Lands Department. However, when a citizen's group proposes an Area Plan there is no requirement for them to coordinate with State Lands Dept.

Question about state land involvement in the AZ Strip plan. Diana answered that State Lands early in the planning indicated a desire to be a Cooperating Agency but later decided they did not have the staff to actively participate in all the BLM planning efforts going on at the present time. They did want to remain involved in planning on the Arizona Strip, however. Eventually, it would be a good idea to complete an exchange between BLM and state lands on the Arizona Strip to get isolated state land parcels out of the monuments and to consolidate state land holdings.

Oliver Barlow spent time recently with Mark Winkelman, the new state land director. He is interested in talking about a study group in Arizona that would be a coalition of ranchers, environmental groups, and communities working on the next land authority to do land exchanges. It is a fairly limited concept right now for conservation purposes only. Oliver has advocated against limiting that state exchange authority to only conservation related exchanges.

They do not want to amend the enabling act. There are two routes to conduct the exchange that needs to take place

1. Work with the state lands at the state level (enabling act, constitution, and acts)
2. Federal condemnation work with the feds to do this exchange

Visitor Survey Questionnaire

Fredonia and Colorado City

The Landscape Subcommittee took a look at a questionnaire to assist communities as they change from a resource based economy to a tourism economy.

Oliver- how do we gather that same information from the local people that are using the Arizona Strip? How do we insure the randomness of that information? How much are

the local communities using the Arizona Strip? We don't want to end up with a product oriented only to visitors on the Arizona Strip.

Contact the Convention Bureau in St. George for the same information. Kane County? U. of Utah? Check with Grand Staircase Escalante as well.

Send out the updated questionnaire and electronic version of Recreation Use Survey for Parashant to all on the committee.

The question to the Alliance this afternoon about the purpose of the Landscape Subcommittee may affect the use of this survey. Remember the federal agencies cannot do this survey but others in the subcommittee can push it forward. We may have to work with one of the universities to actually do the survey. The local survey would be separate from the visitor survey. The Rural Summit suggested community meetings and inviting varied interests to the meetings. Do Open Houses and make sure you have all your community interests at that meeting.

"Talk's cheap but it takes money to buy good whiskey," says Oliver Barlow's grandmother.

What is the purpose of this subcommittee? What are we supposed to be doing?

It does not seem to be feasible to do one plan for the entire area since all are on a different schedule. There still seems to be a role for the local communities working with the federal agencies. So far this was a good meeting to actually speak more freely and ask the important questions, look specifically at the maps and don't have the formal federal agency agenda directing the meeting.

Oliver Barlow was involved in the original formation of the Alliance and the Landscape Subcommittee group. One of the best things is to make sure that NEPA is truly being followed and that the community interests are still being considered. The Cooperating Agency process on the Arizona Strip is dominated by the federal agency people. Previously Bill was involved as a cooperating agency and they had their more say. This subcommittee is our meeting and we have opportunities to have the different federal plans discussed and insure that the communities have an opportunity to participate. Even the Alliance operates on a different level. This subcommittee is a very valuable forum for this.

Chris - There has been inconsistent participation from members.

Diana – There is value in having the subcommittee because it allows the federal agencies to participate in a meeting not organized or directed by them. FACA limits federal agencies from calling advisory groups or committees.

Bill – This affords what our common interests are in the federal processes. There is value in this subcommittee.

Mark - Cooperating Agency meetings are too big and he wasn't able to participate in detail. He sent his comments on the Arizona Strip preliminary alternatives to Mohave and Coconino counties but neglected to send them to Colorado City and Fredonia. This committee could be a more task oriented committee.

Chris - No one realized how many cooperating agencies there would be and the NPS /BLM planning process is very consuming.

Diana - Oliver There could be workout groups and that meet together at the end of the day after the Cooperating Agency meetings.

There could be breakout groups on water, biological resources, transportation, etc. It would be good to have some joint discussion between all the groups

Alan - In these subgroups will we have any chances to make comments now on the Arizona Strip plan? We need to become empowered as a cooperating agency.

Bill - That is the way it is supposed to work.

Chris - We need to change direction and act more as a forum for communicating with each other and with the federal agencies.

Mark - I think so particularly with the socioeconomic portion of the plan. I think we have a responsibility to bring up an issue as early in the process as possible. This comes from the community based partnership course. Bring up the issue and get it out on the table and let the process take care of the issues raised. We shouldn't be afraid of voicing our opinions. This is the way we can get a common voice in this subcommittee meeting.

This results in a better plan.

Chris - We have been meeting for several hours every other month. So the next meeting will be October, will that be enough time to really sit down and talk? That won't allow sufficient time to have good discussions before that. Do we need to start setting aside a full day or 4-5 hours? Is October too late a date?

Mark - When would BLM need the socio-economic data for the plan? October (Diana)

Mark - We can coordinate by email and meet in September in a work meeting.

Chris - Look at matrix of all being considered in the plan so that they can see what concerns they might have.

Mark - We can work on it between now and September. We all have our own ideas on what the economic and lifestyle needs are on the Arizona Strip. We will generate categories, destination points, tourism, grazing, rock quarries, woodcutting, a list of what our people need to be able to do on the Arizona Strip. In the road closure project on

Cedar Mountain the county did a roads inventory and identified which roads were important to local people – Ron Wilson of the Dixie Forest worked with the county. We could do something similar.

Chris – We need to start a new contact list so all can be in touch. Diana will send that out next week.

Start making a list of categories or issues from the socio-economic side that we would be concerned about, transportation, grazing, activities accommodated – free form the list initially. And have everyone send that list to a central point via email.

Bill Towler - One other issue is who is on this subcommittee. Is the desire to keep the membership broad? How was the membership formulated originally? Oliver picked whoever was noisy – now you are officially a member of the work group.

Oliver saw it as the Arizona Strip Regional Planning Taskforce – a group of planners looking at the planning. It never was the intent of the workgroup to be exclusionary but they needed to understand that it was a workgroup and they would need to work. It was not just a philosophical discussion.

Diana will check on the Cooperating Agency MOUs and sharing the information. What we might have to do is restrict what we discuss in this meeting (Mark). We need some guidance on where that line is – we need to be asking some specific questions.

Mark – Whatever we do now is better than what we already have. We have tour guide operators, the rancher's association, David Johnson, rock quarry permittee, etc. We can get their specific needs. Develop an inventory list and a narrative.

Chris – Identify the uses or interests on the Strip that are of most interest to the locals. It addresses the needs and interests that the visitor survey questionnaire does not address.

Brent - Tourism has not helped yet and it will not carry these communities –Sept 11, etc . They may be the low paying jobs (Mark) and a local community should not rely on a single economy. But should diversify the economy based on reasonable resource expectations.

Date for work meeting - 9 am (Arizona Time) September 3, 2003 (Wednesday)
Colorado City Marketing Center

Next meeting after that October 10, 2003 9 am - Noon - Find out where Alliance is meeting (Brent Mackleprang gone all October).

Action List

Assignment	Person Responsible	Due Date	Completed
Get meeting room for Sept. 3 meeting	Oliver Barlow	9/3/03	

in Colorado City			
Get meeting time and place for October meeting – St. George	Diana Hawks	9/3/03	8/19/03
Send meeting minutes and list of all subcommittee members to all	Diana Hawks	8/25/03	8/19/03
Send Bill Towler all substantive comments from AZ Strip plans	Diana Hawks	9/3/03	8/25/03
Send Bill, Alan, Mark socioeconomic info from Denali NP DEIS	Diana Hawks	8/18/03	8/18/03
Send all on committee Recreation Use survey (NAU) on Parashant NM	Diana Hawks	9/3/03	8/19/03
Send Alan Gardiner Wild and Scenic River info	Diana Hawks	9/3/03	8/19/03
Send all on subcommittee the Survey Questionnaire as it stands now	Diana Hawks	8/19/03	8/19/03
Work on socioeconomic section for AZ Strip BLM/NPS plan	All by email	9/3/03	