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State Land Commissioner

**draft MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING  
of  
THE ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS (ASCOT)  
of  
THE ARIZONA STATE PARKS BOARD**

ASCOT held a meeting open to the public on **August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, at Red Rock District Ranger Station, 8375 State Route 179, Sedona, Arizona (just southeast of the Village of Oak Creek) beginning at 10 am.**

**AGENDA**

**(The Chair reserves the right to set the order of the agenda.)**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL – 10 a.m.**

Members presented at roll call: Laddie Cox, Richard Kesselman, Jackie Keller, Nick Lund, Claire Miller, Craig Stevens, Bernadine McCollum, Angela Villa, and Lisa Gerdl.

Doug Von Gausig, Bill Gibson, and Linda Slay arrived at 10:05 a.m., and Patrick Kell arrived at 10:25 a.m.

Staff in attendance: Robert Baldwin and Dawn Collins. Laurel Arndt and Connie Lane were not in attendance.

**Quorum established.**

**B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF**

Jackie Keller stated that she is a landscape architect who focuses on trail planning and design. She is also an avid hiker and backpacker.

Craig Stevens indicated he represents the Back Country Horsemen of America and volunteers primarily for the U.S. Forest Service.

Rick Kesselman stated that he volunteers for Volunteers for Outdoor AZ. It conducts events for trail-building, maintenance, re-routing, etc.

Bernadine McCollum indicated she is attending on behalf of Wickenburg Conservation Foundation and works also for the Nature Conservancy as a conservation coordinator.

Lisa Gerdl indicated this is her second stint with ASCOT and she is presently serving as a citizen-at-large. She is also an avid hiker and backpacker throughout the state of Arizona.

Angela Villa indicated that her service with ASCOT has been mainly to protect and promote Arizona trails. She is also an equestrian and hiker.

**Chair** Nick Lund indicated he is president of TRACKS, a group of about 400 volunteers that build and maintain over 200 miles of trails in the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest.

Claire Miller stated she is with the City of Scottsdale McDowell Sonora Preserve. She also has been working with natural resources for about 29 years and having fun working out in the dirt!

Laddie Cox stated that much to his chagrin he's pretty much retired from everythin now.

Robert Baldwin indicated that he's the Recreational Trails Grant Coordinator for AZ State Parks.

Jennifer Burns stated she is the Recreation Staff Officer for the Red Rock Ranger District and has worked for the federal government for 32 years, mostly with trails and recreation.

Chair indicated he's invoking the Chair's prerogative and moving up Ms. Burns' presentation.

**E. REPORTS** - May be verbal with handouts provided at the meeting. 10:05-10:45

- 1. Red Rock Ranger District Project Update** – Recreation Staff Officer, Jennifer Burns, will present an overview of trail projects in the district.

Ms. Burns began her report by welcoming everyone to the meeting and passing out maps of Sedona. She indicated that, although most in attendance understood the current trails' context, she wanted to supplement that knowledge. Why do we even care about trails? Well first of all, it's mandated in the Forest Plan where there's a piece of Sedona that's an amendment to the Forest Plan that was developed in 1998. It is still current in the sense that it says, "We will have a very robust trails system here." So, this is where we spend a whole lot of resources on trails. The Red Rock Pass Program provides some resources, along with funds from the State's RTP Program, the Friends of the Forest Group – a nonprofit that's been around since 1995 – whose committees help with all sorts of things, e.g., signs, trail maintenance, etc. The forest plan was started because a lot of folks throughout the community and businesses often have crazy requests for the Plan, e.g., zip lines, mountain biking [because it's a sport], etc. But the Forest Plan states that, "The trails will be for quiet, contemplative trail uses." It doesn't talk about sport. There's a considerable push-pull going on right now with folks proposing different activities for the trails – even

trails and that sort of thing which is very difficult to deal with because the Forest Plan says we will manage our trails in a certain way and for certain types of uses. The other thing we have to look at a lot is the sustainability of the soils right around Sedona and its sustainability. Not so much in some of the other areas of the District, but definitely around Sedona. What we do a lot with the ACE crew and maybe the AZCC is armoring, which is extremely expensive. But because of the volume we use, it's one of our primary tools. It's like paving. Safety is also a high priority because of our responsibilities and why we manage the trails. People are off trail and getting lost. That's why we want the trails maps because people are getting rescued.

The audiences we try to serve are the three million tourists coming into Sedona and the 8,000-to-10,000 residents. Then we have the Verde Front that's shared with the Prescott National Forest, a lot of private lands and municipalities. These audiences are all interested in expanding their trail opportunities. Some things have happened there, but a lot hasn't. Dead Horse State Park has a big de facto trailhead that's in the park leading into a number of National Forest Trails. Then we have these whole areas of Rimrock, McGuireville and Lake Montezuma that are getting more and more populated. People want trails. They have zero trails there now. For the past 15 years, the Cornville Trails Coalition has been trying to get some trails going there, but it's still a work in progress. So a categorically exclusionary decision was made that's still being worked on to add more trails.

Hikers will be the primary audience to enjoy the fruits of this labor. Biking use has grown about 20 percent annually, more for some trails, but mostly less. There's a lot of equestrian use, but less than one percent because it's quite difficult to find a place to park your trailer. Other communities enjoy a lot more and have been asking for additional facilities and access. They have trail registers out there and are now starting to use trail counters, but we're still looking at about 800,000 users a year. We're conducting research to confirm what's going on with the trails as far as the encounter with people are concerned. We have, for example, a number of mountain bikers who claim they're the primary users of our trails but they're not. We know because we utilize volunteers to hike the trails clicking everybody in. We have direct data on who use the trails. Mileage reflects attention to trail use and we have about 370 consistent trail miles that do not include social trails.

During the past seven years, especially around the Sedona area, people have been literally making trails. We recently convicted five people of illegal trail construction. So it's been diminishing quite a bit, especially since we began engaging users in the planning. What we've been trying to do is sort out what the trails systems should be like in this area of intense use. So we've been going area-by-area trying to figure that out and we're making a lot of progress. We've also added about 50 miles of trails in the past five years and recognize that certain social trails are never going to go away. It used to be that you'd see an illegal trail out there under construction and someone would run out there and obliterate it – literally! What a waste! That's when we began to engage our trail users.

We had the NPS River Trails Conservation and RTCA with Kate Bradley from Tucson. We conducted monthly meetings for an entire year to ascertain our next

steps. It was very interesting and I would say somewhat disheartening because people who had negative agendas would come and there were situations where a lot of people just stopped coming. But out of that year's worth of meetings, we received a tremendous amount of information. Kate was hoping for a consensus and we at least found out what people were looking for and what their toleration would be for more trails, less trails, whatever; and where we needed to focus. We've had some success in adding trails, at least in some areas, but felt we had reached the edge of our comfort zone in terms of resources. In these areas of spaghetti and honeycomb trails, we felt that people have enough. Nonetheless we still have tons of social trails. Sedona Fire District performs approximately two rescues a week – and I use that term loosely. Some folks would be standing on the side of highway 79 saying, I don't know where I am, come get me. So we started paying more attention to these other areas. We are in a scoping process right now for trails in Rimrock and a little bit more trail stuff around Cornville. We're continuing to be part of the conversation for the Verde Front to see what comes out of that, which has a lot of focus on river access but not so much on a trail thing. But I think we will have trails. So we'll make a decision and go for the low-hanging fruit. Because if we have to start going into an environmental assessment now, it will raise the cost of everything and the budget that we have now – which by the way is still going down – will have to change.

Stevens asked about the current scoping process and its time frame moving forward. Burns responded that when they scope, it's like a big gulp. We sort through to see what people have said then look at the low-hanging fruit in the sense of what can we afford in terms of archeological clearances. For example [she refers to overhead], this community is going to help pay for some of the cultural clearances. Also there's more scoping to be done on the Jackson Flat Trail just outside Camp Verde. It's complicated in terms of fisheries, because it crosses Wet Beaver Creek several times and is laden with archeological sites, but maybe that will be out in a year. The decision should be made on some of the others things by November, but everything should be wrapped up as far as all the clearances are concerned by then.

Kesselman asked how Jennifer's district had allocated its repairs, maintenance and new trail work, and whether it used professional trail crews or local groups. Burns responded that first of all they were going to try to get the trails on sustainable alignments to lessen the maintenance because they didn't have much maintenance funding. The maintenance is mostly done by volunteers from the Friends of the Forest that has outreached for other volunteer days, trail days, etc., but they haven't attracted very many. They have been successful though getting RTP grants, however, contract work with AZCC and ACE to do some rock work amounting to \$30,000 in trails maintenance will be done. Every year it's a bit different, depending on the source of the funding, but they typically go with those two groups because they already have agreements with them. A lot of people want to use local crews there because they want that face. They want a trail maintenance relationship, but they don't understand mountain bike trail use. They'll put a trail marker right in the way on the trail which ruins the experience. So if they have a consistent, trail maintenance crew, they'd have more popularity in the community.

Gibson asked how many trails have been closed and how many will have to be repaired as a result of the Slide fire. Burns responded that West Fork has been closed, but it's still in good shape, so far, provided the monsoons don't devastate it, but A.D. Young has been destroyed.

Miller asked about the problems with the social trails, and whether people are being cited with facing possible judicial conviction? Burns responded that they have to literally catch people in the act which is very difficult. Miller continued asking whether it's just a matter of catching them and Burns responded that they employ a number of methods. But right now there's an issue with people booby-trapping the trails, they're putting rocks out on the trails and they don't like mountain bikers. They're hikers putting rocks out in certain places and it's just an issue of conflict among users.

Baldwin asked whether the violators had been filmed and Burns responded affirmatively explaining that they publish information about the violations encouraging people to report each incidence, but the burden of proof is very high. Because of the convictions we've gotten so far we've started to fill in the missing pieces of our trails system. So we don't have a lot of illegal trail construction going on right now. There's a little bit here and there, where people don't like some of the pieces of our trails. They are building options because the trails are too difficult. The three-pronged approach of education, engineering and enforcement has been successful, though.

Keller asked whether the trails being used by mountain bikers were designated and Burns responded, no. Keller then continued asking whether the designated trails were for specific users. Burns responded that the group knew as much as she did about that. They hear, time-and-time-again, throughout their year-long planning, "Can't you have separate trails for separate users," a comment resisted big time, because they can't afford separate trails. The other thing that's happening is that some of the areas around Sedona where they're seeing a lot of construction, and where there are a lot of resource issues, cross-country and mountain bike travel have been prohibited. It's not like mountain bikers are generally just winging it off onto the trails – although they *can* do that – there's a lot of history here riding the trails. It's very open country and we want to stop it. We mainly wanted to stop people from constructing thinking if they can't ride it, then they're less likely to construct it. So we did that and it was a hugely controversial prohibition. Some people in the mountain biking community thought it also helped and that still stands today, but the Order expires next year and Burns indicated she didn't know what they will do with these areas after that. Hopefully there are enough trails there where that kind of temptation won't exist.

McCollum asked about the penalties people face when they get fined for building a trail. Burns responded that it varied, depending on the judge.

Gibson asked whether the community service required by the judge is for the folks who go out undoing the damage and Burns responded, no. It could be required and that would be all right.

Gerdl continued asking how they controlled the people who've been banded from the forest. Burns indicated that mainly it's whether other people see what's going on, and whether or not they're caught. In such a case, they'll probably be band forever. Chair indicated maybe they should give all the volunteers a little card to put in their wallets with numbers for the Sheriff, Forest Service, Game and Fish to tell them not to get in conflicts with these people. Just try to take pictures, get good evidence, and report it.

Kell asked Burns whether or not she would give a recap on the comment period that was conducted in May or June. Burns responded that even though they continue to take comments, the period has ended and is being sent off to independent parties to analyze and give us feedback. We're continuing to do the cultural clearances, as best we can with the budgets we have, and think it's pretty likely we'll have the soils and hydrology analyses done. The wildlife biological evaluation is starting to happen for some of those routes. That's kind of where they are. For example, with western civilization, all this stuff is very popular with all three user groups. We would very much like to add those to the system, but the thing that's going to hold us up is that we don't have the wherewithal within our ranks, and don't really have that much expertise to go out and define the social trails and determine sustainable reroutes. Most of those social trails need at least 50 percent re-routing in order to be adopted into the system. That's been the hold up. Kell then indicated that he agreed that's a big block of trails and that changes are needed. He also feels that wouldn't squeeze in on volunteers' free time.

Burns wrapped up by saying she had passed out the Sedona Magazine so everyone could see the relentless marketing that's being conducted, which is another reason they keep getting pulled back into the area. They're not giving enough attention to the other audiences. She continued by indicating that the QR codes are not really being used. The National Forest Foundation has allowed them to put up posters that say: "Please donate to help with our trails," but they haven't received a single donation in eight months. People are extremely sensitive to the trails getting cluttered.

Chair indicated they have been using the blue trail marker diamonds since the late '80s. They have also talked with the Forest Service and indicated that what they would really like to do instead is go to the white, reflective ones that are visible in low-light conditions. He also said that he went to one of the local sign companies and got decals that would really stick. Because of the weather he felt the decals will last longer than the signs. They decided to keep things as simple as possible and picked a trail like Panorama, where the code goes, P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, etc. As they were putting the decals up they went out and recorded the GPS information and put that on the official maps. They checked with the Forest Service to confirm everything was accurate then gave them to all the emergency responders. It's just a standard, trail marker diamond, but it works really well.

Gerdl said Burns had talked about the mountain bikers on the hiking trails becoming so aggressive and asked how the community has affected the hiking trails and whether poaching by canyoneers has occurred in the closing resulting from the fires. Burns responded that she did not know. There's so much territory and there's a lot

they don't know. Gerdl continued and said she knew one person who poached shortly after the fire. While they shouldn't have gone and done it, there were mixed feeling throughout the community about it because they posted it on FaceBook. They specifically said they were walking up to their shins in ash. Burns responded that Sedona Fire is very concerned about the rise of canyoneering and in resulting rescues. She continued saying that Reed Thorn was convicted of doing that commercial training, setting fires and using his laser pointer. We got \$5,000 restitution and we're going to use that to go in and take a look at what's going on, but that's not the only place. We've got Wet Beaver Creek. We've got West Clear Creek. There are gorgeous canyons there. What come people in Sedona Fire think is that this is like Zion.

Gerdl said Zion has much more than Bryce. Burns agreed and said, they had a meteoric rise in use and now they have a permit system.

Kesselman asked whether they had new and/or approved trails on any kind of app that can be downloaded or do they use their website for information. Burns responded they are really behind. Our website's pretty pathetic in terms of trails, but we've gotten a grant from Keene last year. Keene is doing a really nice trail map that's going to be free; and it will be through a QR code and it won't take people to our website. It will take people to the Friends of the Forest website that is so much easier than dealing with ours, but ultimately we will want our website out there as well. That will be a free map app at every junction. The other thing is that Verde Valley Cyclist Coalition has a map app that you can purchase. They have brochures about it, but we can't put it out on the national forest because we don't have an agreement with them. It's a bit of a solicitation and there are rules about that.

Chair added that when they put up the diamonds, they put them on all the maps. It's on the TRACKS website and it's free. We've gotten a lot of comments on how helpful it is because it even tells people, "Here's how far I've gone." The diamonds are about every quarter mile. Another advantage they hadn't thought of is that now people are reporting a downed tree. Rather than saying I'm on the Blue Ridge Trail and there's a downed tree, they're now saying, "There's a downed tree between this diamond and that diamond," which helps the people going out with the chain saws.

Keller asked, "Is it a law or a forest plan that enables you to persecute the people who are going out doing things on the trail?" Burns responded it's a code regulation against doing work without a permit. Keller continued and said, "So, it's work without a permit?" Burns responded affirmatively. Keller then asked whether it covered every federal land agency and gave them authority to prosecute under that law.

Keller speaker said in the other urban areas or other cities there were no repercussions, so it's great. How can other cities – Miller said it's written in our code. We have specific code for the preserve and it was written in, but every city and municipality is going to be different.

Cox asked whether periodic training sessions and workshops are being conducted, or volunteers for trail construction and trail maintenance. Burns responded, yes. We also have an agreement with the City of Sedona for an adopt-a-trail program. So they give us money every year to actually have a person here who recruits

volunteers and conducts training for people who want to adopt a trail and work on the trails. It's been marginally successful, because some people want to adopt a trail to own that trails, but then they don't do anything on it; and other people think it's fun, but they don't actually get out and do the work, so it's more an educational tool for the trails to get people involved in actually solving our maintenance problems, but we do training.

Chair indicated that the next item on the agenda is the Call to the Public.

**C. CALL TO THE PUBLIC** – The Chair will recognize those wishing to address the Committee. It is probable that each presentation will be limited to one person per organization and the time allotted by the Chair. Action taken as a result of acknowledgment of comments and suggestions from the public will be limited to directing staff to study or reschedule the matter for further consideration at a later time.

**No public in attendance.**

**D. ASCOT ACTION ITEMS**

**1. ASCOT Will Review and Approve Minutes.**

**February 7, 2014**

**Motion:** Kesselman moved and Von Gausig seconded.

Chair asked whether there were changes, additions, corrections or deletions. Slay indicated that on page six, second paragraph, it has STF and it should be STS; and further down in the second paragraph it indicated, "not to a state trust," talking about the trails, but it should be state trails. Then on page nine, second paragraph it should read, "shaped files," not "shay files." On page ten, second paragraph speaker can be taken out. On page 14, second paragraph, second line [unintelligible]. Page 15, third paragraph, where I was talking it should read, "Copper Mountain Loop." We have all the agreements with BLM, but not Prescott. The fourth line down reads, "We don't have all the agreements with the BLM," but should read, "We don't have agreements with Prescott." Also, Jane Rau's name is misspelled.

Miller indicated that page 2-of-16 reads, "he is a crew leaders" and it should read, "he is a crew leader." Also on page 15 of 16, second paragraph in, "in the northern area of the preserve," not "reserve."

Gibson indicated that on page 13 of 16, under item F, Discussion, third paragraph, it reads, "Middle Gila Canyon Passage," there's a whole sentence left out where it talks about the proposed tailings piled there that ASARCO is going to build in that area.

Stevens indicated there's one word on page two under "Craig Stevens," the last sentence; "conservation and riding for biology and range" not "conservation and writing for biology and range."

Chair called for the question.

Motion was unanimously approved, as corrected.

**April 18, 2014**

**Motion:** Miller moved and McCollum seconded.

Chair asked whether there were changes, additions, corrections or deletions. Slay said that on page three, it should read, "frozen and archived." On the next page, third paragraph down where we're talking about committee members, Laddie was left out. On the next page under reports, in the paragraph that starts with "Kell," ninth line, it should read: "Fort Tuthill." Then on the next page, third paragraph that starts with "Kesselman," it should be VOAZ. In the paragraph that starts with "Villa" Pinal County is misspelled.

Kell said on page six, under F Discussion, in the paragraph that starts with Kell, halfway down it reads, "Bale Helmets awarding \$100,000," should read "Bell Helmets awarding \$100,000."

Chair called for the question.

Motion was unanimously approved, as corrected.

- 2. The ASCOT Chair Will Select a Nominating Committee.** – ASCOT Bylaws Section VI – Subcommittees and Task Forces requires the Chair to select a committee consisting of at least three members who will report to the Executive Board and ASCOT as needed to: 1) present a slate of officers for the annual election, and 2) recruit and recommend ASCOT nominees to be appointed by the Board. Staff publicly announced the open positions in July.

Chair asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. Gibson, Miller and Cox volunteered. Chair appointed Gibson to serve as Chair.

Gibson asked when a slate of candidates could be expected. Baldwin responded that the nominations were due September 15, so shortly thereafter and everyone would need to report by the October meeting.

Chair stated this would be an excellent opportunity for the group to use their connections throughout the trails communities they represented, or may know of where there are people who would be willing to serve on the ASCOT Board. Word of mouth is often the best way to get people to serve.

Cox asked if there's a prerequisite for the qualifications. Chair responded that they were trying to get a good representation of people from around the state, people who would be willing to take the time to volunteer and represent the areas of the state they're from, bring in good ideas and do the things we do at ASCOT and be an active participant.

- 3. ASCOT Will Receive an Update from the State Trail System Subcommittee and Discuss Their Progress.** – The STS Subcommittee has been meeting to develop criteria and a selection process to showcase exceptional Arizona trails. They will present their suggestions to the entire committee and solicit discussion.

ATTACHMENT A - PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR NOMINATING TRAILS  
July 17, 2014 Meeting

ATTACHMENT B – Cultural Historic Draft Criteria Updated by B. Gibson  
post July 17, 2014 Meeting

ATTACHMENT C – NTSA Criteria & Arizona Trails

Jackie Keller, STS Subcommittee Chair, reported the subcommittee has met several times over the past few months to address many difficult issues. The subcommittee is moving forward developing criteria for a new trails system. They met with the Attorney General Office to confirm the subcommittee is on track and aligned with legislation. The subcommittee passed a motion to freeze nominations, on new trails entering the system, until a new system is approved by the Board.

The existing State Trails System that State Parks is currently updating is the model. However, that plan mentions we're working on new criteria for the new system; and that new system will be what's in place, if approved by the Board, for the 2020 Plan.

The subcommittee moved forward and identified several categories for a new system. Part of the mission was to develop a new name for consideration to the Board. Arizona Premier Trails was suggested. There are several criteria that will be general and apply to every category identified. Seven categories were broken out: U.S. National Trails; Recreation; Scenic; Interpretative; Historic/Cultural; and Water. The Water category will be in two sub-categories: paddle trails and riparian trails, that may or may not be defined, like Araviapa Canyon. Since Arizona can set itself apart from many other states in having these type trails, we felt it was important to break that out as a separate trail system. Jennifer just did a great job of showing potential trail systems that could be a component of the Arizona Premier Trails.

The next step, if everyone agrees, is for the subcommittee to develop the actual nomination forms for each category. These will come back for your review at the November meeting.

Chair asked whether the designation of Arizona Premier Trails could include more than 100 nominations. Keller responded, "up to" 100.

Gibson added that in the National, Scenic, Historic and Recreation categories there are currently 38 in the state. If we bring those into the Premier Trails, that leaves about 63. These would be the "cream of the crop," trails we would want to market to the rest of the country and internationally.

Chair commended the committee for their outstanding work.

Kesselman reiterated that the proposal is for up to 100 trails. There will be new trails nominated every year. Or it may be proposed to keep them for at least two years – or some period – so they can be marketed. There will be opportunities for other trails that didn't make the list, initially; and, if a trail is only allowed on for two years, it would be eligible to come back on after a certain period of time. These are the things we will be working on next.

Chair asked if they could go back to the number. If the trails system is going to have several trails, is that going to count as one in the 100? Keller responded, yes.

Cox added that the rotation that Rick presented allows a better opportunity to introduce the premier trails in the state. Dawn Collins added it would increase interest among the public and land managers who might want to participate.

Kesselman indicated that in the 63 trails left, the committee that would make the decision as to which trails to include would try to make it like the other systems throughout the state. We would have representatives throughout the state, throughout the counties of all the various categories in those 60-odd trails every year to balance it, as best we can.

Von Gausig indicated he is uncomfortable with the rotating. That most of the publicity for the premier trails is going to come from the member trails in its jurisdiction. Most will not come from ASCOT or some other state organization. The maps that will be produced could become obsolete in two years. Most organizations would not want to do hard publicity on a premier trails they thought might be kicked off in two years. He understands they might want to keep the number down, but they should give it more thought than just how convenient it would be for us or for a trail publication. It's going to be difficult for a lot of other people.

Gibson responded that the thought was not fully developed during their internal discussion. Kesselman said he did not mean to indicate it's a done deal and that the process and discussion had just begun.

Chair said the trail that is under review can reapply. It doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen. Kesselman responded that none of the things mentioned have been agreed upon, they are concepts currently under discussion as to how to implement the premier trails system, if it's approved. Von Gausig asked if they were taking the comments into consideration.

Keller responded that if the group could focus on the criteria that are being discussed, things can be done in steps as they continue to process. The subcommittee would like to have a motion at this meeting regarding the criteria, assuring it is something with which everyone agrees so we can move forward. The process will be discussed at the next meeting. Chair concurred and asked the group to focus on the criteria in the attachment A.

Gerdl asked if the U.S. National Trails System are automatically put in, is the idea *not* to have the criteria for any trail that's not part of that system be greater than the U.S. National Trails System? Are we not going to make it part of what other people who are not already in that system to become a premier trail, if you're automatically going to include those others.

Keller responded that the criteria for each category will be based upon the attributes that make a water trail an *excellent* water trail. It's going to be criteria that's based on the type of trail and not national vs. state. There was also a discussion that the U.S. National Trails would only be in the premier trails system if they apply.

Slay added that the land manager would have to agree; but she did not feel it had been firmed up that they would have to re-apply. The one's that are in the State Trails System were already approved. If we could solicit them and say, "You're

already in we're re-doing this do you want to continue." Keller reiterated there would have to be some recognition from the land manager.

Gibson said that it was his understanding that the land manager would have to put it forward, but the national trails would be a permanent part of the premier trails since either the Secretary of Agriculture, Interior or Congress had designated them. Keller clarified that some national trails are not on-the-ground trails and we want the trails in the Arizona Premier Trails to be actual on-the-ground trails.

Gerdl summed up saying she wanted to make sure no one was being asked to meet higher standards and criteria than those in the National Trails System.

McCollum said a lot of the categories somewhat overlap, so when people apply, they have to choose. If they were scenic and historic, if they didn't get the scenic, they could re-apply as historic. Keller said, all trails are recreational, but they're trying to emphasize what the trails are known for; are they known for its cultural attributes or its geological, scenic attributes, etc. That will be part of the criteria for the nomination forms. That will help people identify where their trail fits based on the nomination criteria. McCollum asked whether the subcommittee intended to allocate a certain amount per trail type or just 100 and that's it. Keller responded it will be based on what are the premiers.

McCollum asked whether the criteria are going to be hardcopy or printed material. Keller responded that they've gone through the electronic app and discussed the existing State Trails System database and where to go from here. Kesselman added that funding is an issue, but hopefully this trails system would be on the State Parks website. Gibson added that they were sticking with the criteria in the categories. Gibson said there is a separate subcommittee dealing with the app and the database part of it. Keller said Bill and Phyllis were working on that last year. The app part of this committee is dormant at this time.

Chair said it's often difficult to go through something as extensive and make a decision right away and encourage the group to home and review it with a fine-toothed comb and get back to Jackie. The group may be willing to finalize and offer a motion today. Keller responded that the reason they were looking for a motion is to increase the comfort level of the subcommittee in moving forward with the categories and developing the more specific criteria for the nomination forms. Because they don't want to spend a lot of time on that if the committee is not in favor.

Chair asked for additional comments on the criteria. Von Gausig said they are a unique category and it's difficult to wedge them in with terrestrial trails. They have a lot of unique aspects. In the general criteria, you could meet those unique aspects in a wild and scenic area or a wild and scenic river, but it's doubtful you could meet them anywhere else. If you did, in a "wild and scenic," you probably couldn't meet any of the other criteria under water trails. Chair added maybe it would help if Doug could recommend some wording for the water trails. Von Gausig offered to go home and compose additional comments for consideration in order to entertain a motion today and answer questions about number six in the water trail. Gibson assumed it was going to be the average flow at various times of the year. Chair re-worded to say, "Provide seasonal, average water flow." Von Gausig felt it was useful, but not

tremendously useful to have signs in a river thing, unless something weird is going on. Then there's a provision where you have to provide emergency access points or staging areas every one-mile length of the trail. This is one of the things that would kick you out of the "wild and scenic." Keller indicated the spirit was to make sure when we identify the premier trails there is an emergency plan.

Chair reiterated that Doug could look and see from his perspective whether it's every two mile links or whatever. Because it's difficult doesn't mean it shouldn't be in there. Gibson asked whether it was going to restrict it into the federal and state land managers. Von Gausig responded affirmatively. The stretch of the Verde that runs through the Prescott, Coconino, or Tonto is probably going to be eligible for many of these things, but won't meet many of the other criteria. Cox asked whether Von Gausig agreed with the division that's been made between the paddle trails, actual water and riparian trails. Von Gausig responded, affirmatively, because it's really important for the rivers. If you have a riparian trail, people might feel it should be a paddle trail. That would have a lot of value.

McCollum asked what is being used for the standard measurement, e.g., #20 - opportunities to learn about the value of natural and cultural resources – is that a kiosk? How do you convey that information? Keller responded that she thinks some of the general criteria can be further defined in the nomination form. She added as the subcommittee moves forward and identifies the process that would allow whomever submits the trail will show how they intend telling the story. Hopefully ASCOT would be part of the process. McCollum asked whether the #21 "best management practices" was a specific agency. Keller responded, affirmatively.

Cox said it was like hitting the nail two, three times over the head. McCollum asked if she were submitting a nomination how would she know what the best managing practice would be for that trail. Cox said most of the trail community understands and he thinks the best effort is to ensure there is some kind of bar or standard the trail must meet to be a premier trail. There are lots of trails, some laid out over 100 years ago that don't meet the best practices as we know them today. Keller said it could be better defined in the nomination criteria form.

Gerdl continued with a clarification that it might be hard to have a specific standard. Maybe on the application form the best type of management plan could be utilized because every agency might be slightly different.

Chair said that is possible in the sustainable workshops, but for somebody who is relatively new, some references could be put in there: "here are some websites that you can go to for current – and he thinks the word, 'current' needs to be in there." At least be able to point people in some direction where they can look it up.

Slay summed up by saying she had a few thoughts. They forgot to list the Trail Systems as a category. Chair said it is in the opening paragraph. Slay continued that at the bottom of page one, the theme and general methods of interpretation utilized must be identified and asked whether that should go back to interpretative. Keller responded she thought this discussion was getting at the theme and general methods of the trail type. Slay continued the critique saying that on page two, general criteria #16 just needed to be moved to trail systems.

Gibson clarified, page six; and Keller said “of the criteria.” Gibson responded affirmatively. Slay said on number 19, they obviously were going to want to have a committed maintenance program. If there’s a designated trail stewardship program, it should be for extra points, but not necessarily a premier trail.

Gibson asked whether or not she would want some sort of trail guarantee to ascertain whether it was going to be maintained. Slay responded not necessarily. Cox said, then, they’re not part of the premier system. Slay said okay and asked whether they were going to require the emergency marker system or would that be something for extra points. Von Gausig asked if they could write something in that says the goal is to have a sustainable trail, not to have a steward. If you have some other method of meeting the criteria then it should be allowed. Gerdl asked if national trails have a steward. Slay responded negatively. Gibson said, Lisa was asking if every national trail had a steward. He continued saying, “speaking for BLM,” yes. Every Forest Service in the AZ Trail has. Keller said there’s confusion between Steward and Coordinator because every agency has a trails coordinator. What this is trying to get at is making sure there’s a person designated to make sure that trail – Chair said, “trails steward or coordinator rather than slash?” If you have any heartburn, you could back up and take out – between program and with you could say “preferably” with. That would leave it open.

Cox said at least there’d be a point of contact. Slay reiterated there always is, at least on the nominations. Keller speaker said there needs to be a maintenance program. Kesselman said, basically the ongoing maintenance program encompasses any stewardship, whether it’s done through the steward or a particular person, what they want is ongoing maintenance and the other is extra. Cox said, they didn’t have to be called steward. Kesselman said they could take out designated and not have to worry because of the ongoing maintenance. However it’s done, they’re going to have to explain that question. Slay responded she really likes the emergency marker system. Is that going to be required? Baldwin said looking at this whole best practices/ongoing maintenance thing as a category on the nomination form, can it be identified as point value? We need to wait and see what kind of applications we get, find out what’s actually going on out there as to what can be required as opposed to what we’re getting, then we could set a standard, get so many points in this category via maintenance, steward practices, emergency markers or whatever, and can get to a certain level under the best practices category. That makes them eligible. If they don’t have that stuff, you know, it’s a great trail, but it’s not eligible.

Slay said, explain your emergency preparedness program? Baldwin said if you don’t have a diamond or something else as far as gathering that information under the application form, can you get those in? Say you have ten points. If you don’t get seven either by having a combination or by the next time you apply, then you’ll have a steward program or you’ll have a diamond program or something like that to get that extra point to actually make a premier trail. Chair said you always have to watch out. The devil is in the details. #20 Trails must have a signage/finding and an emergency marker system. If you don’t want to require an emergency marker system on the trails, then you need to have preferably “with” an emergency marker

system, not “and.” It’s the little things like that define whether or not you’re going to mandate are you going to suggest. If you suggest, then you can have a point system.

Baldwin said, once you get that portion of the nomination thing figured out; then you go back and make sure your language is compatible. Trails suggested best practices to include dah, dee, dah, dah, dah and do it that way. Cox said that can be made to work. Slay said, at the bottom, going down to the scenic trail, there’s additional criterion asking for digital data files. Chair said, under scenic trail, number nine. Keller speaker said they’ve actually had that under other categories. Slay again, “under interpretative trails,” they would be picking. Is it going to be self-guided, want to have, or both. Most places that are interpretative have both. They’ll have guided tours or you can walk around.

Chair responded, is that just you saying and/or? Gibson asked, “Isn’t that what we’re saying?” Slay, again, responded negatively. It’s saying you should make it clear you’re doing it one way or the other. It just needs to be tweaked. She continued agreeing with Von Gausig and added that it requires change rooms in some of the more remote places.

Cox said you can’t put markers in the wilderness anywhere except junctions. Confidence markers are placed about every half mile and there’s always a struggle to get them in a wilderness area.

Chair called for the motion. Keller said she would like someone to make the motion based on the categories, if there’s an agreement on the categories. The criteria will be modified accordingly after they get the nomination forms. That would give everyone confidence to move forward with the categories and refining the criteria. Chair asked her to repeat the motion.

Keller stated, I would like to make a motion that the State Trail System Subcommittee moves forward with the categories identified in attachment A and that the exact criteria will be modified accordingly when the nomination forms come back to ASCOT and that there’s general consensus on the criteria as presented, but they may be modified in the future subject to how the nominations are created.

Cox said the goal of the motion is to give the subcommittee the foundation and guidance it needs to prepare the nomination forms. Kesselman seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

BREAK 11:50 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- 4. ASCOT Will Receive an Update from the Public Outreach Committee and Discuss Their Progress.** – The Public Outreach Subcommittee (POS) has met to identify their responsibilities and will report on their outcomes. The POS may solicit suggestions from the entire committee.

Claire Miller reported that she will provide a brief update. The first meeting was over the phone on July 24, and they discussed the responsibilities of the committee and what they will be trying to do, plus some of the aspects of promoting the trails. On

the subcommittee – I'll just go down the line on what was talked about: social media. A review was done with Ellen Bilbrey who talked some of the opportunities with FaceBook, Tweeter and so forth, to be able to advocate and promote some of the trails throughout the state and how everyone could get involved to make that happen. They also talked about putting together possible applications for the Federal Highway Administration's 2015 Recreational Trails Program's annual report. It would highlight some of the trails receiving RTP funds in the state that can actually be put out there and be considered for the annual report: the American Trails website actually has examples of annual report issues. The requirement, however, is they must receive RTP funds. Another part of the charge is to identify important trail events throughout the state, specifically National Trails Day. It will be tough because it's being held in June.

Another thing that was talked about was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act and some of the things going on around that. Possibly coming up with a trail of the month and it tag-teams onto some of the things that the State Trail System folks are doing, how some of those things may overlap. Ellen said she could get some of that information to see if it can be streamlined.

Chair asked if there was a premier trail of the month. Miller continued saying that the final thing talked about was a possible workshop and conference format. There may be some things to do to get some information or tag-on to other conferences, such as the planning association, a component of the AZ Planners, Landscape Architects, AZ Parks and Recreation Association. The AZ Parks and Recreation Conference annual conference is coming up. She asked if there was any way to tag on or add some components to some of those conferences, or have a small mini-conference at the beginning or end of one of those conferences to utilize some of those opportunities. It had been mentioned that on August 21 the AZ Cities and Town conferences will be coming up. It would be a great opportunity to get trail information out there. This came from the first meeting. They're trying to get things squared away and they will be working on the future meeting schedule.

Chair said they tag-teamed with the AZ Trail Association for one of their meetings. Their meeting was Saturday and Sunday and on Friday, ASCOT pulled together a workshop that had people from all over the trail community going through the workshop. It was very well attended. There was a lot of good feedback. The advantage of tag-teaming is that you've got a natural audience. There were a lot of people who were just going to be there Saturday and Sunday. Some came on Friday, as well. That's a good way to go if you're going to do workshops. That's one of the things ASCOT has been noted for, pulling together people throughout the trails community. Miller continued saying, if you've got that audience there, you might as well jump in on that opportunity to be able to have them take advantage of additional workshop opportunities, whether it's trail training or a whole gambit of a lot of different things. They talked about being able to promote attendance for a reasonable cost.

Chair said if there were additional suggestions and ideas to pass them along. Miller summed up saying Connie Lane, Jackie Keller, Clair Miller, Bernadine McCollum and Angela Villa are currently on the committee. Chair said it was a good first step for the committee.

Von Gausig said the league of cities and towns would love to have a breakout session, probably not this August, but next August. Both the League and the AZ [unintelligible] are working on healthy city kind of initiatives all hooked to trails, walking and that kind of stuff. It might be an interesting session for some of the cities to help with.

Chair said that leads right into the next session because the money they're getting ready to talk about came from ASCOT workshops and was put into the State Parks Foundation under restricted funds. He had a telephone call from Christie Statler and she said she has a little over \$5,100 that's in a restricted fund. It was generated from ASCOT workshops and it's just sitting there.

- 5. ASCOT Will Discuss Possible Uses for Some Available Funds.** – The State Parks Foundation has informed ASCOT that it is holding approximately \$5100 in funds available to ASCOT. These funds were generated through registration fees for the last workshop sponsored by ASCOT. Staff has also informed ASCOT that some Recreational Trails Program Education Portion funds are available and must be spent by September 2015.

Statler indicated the money could be used to expand the emergency diamond program to areas like the Superstition Mountains from Lost Dutchman State Park.

She said to take that money and use it to enhance trails, something along those lines. She continued saying she had spoken with Robert Cooper who is the director for Urban Rescue of Superstition Mountain Search and Rescue. He also sits on the governing council of the affiliate group friends of the Lost Investment State Park. That's an area of Superstition Mountain Search and Rescue that contacted them about the emergency responder diamonds doing that. They get a lot of calls. They have a reputation. Doing something along those lines, there were going to be some points where if somebody's lost or something they're going to have to hike up, because you can't get cell coverage. Christie was also going to talk with Fry's grocery chain about matching funds plus possible trail reparations at the Tonto National Bridge State Park that represent's State Parks Foundation and she would also like to see this money enhanced more and more in the State Parks area. But it's really for us to decide where this money is going to be spent. So that just kind of opens the discussion on what might be a good use to come up with a list. If you want to have an application process to use the funds, it's a little over \$5,100 and this would be a good time to use it.

Von Gausig said it's not a lot of money, but he thinks its money that can be used to leverage something, some kind of capital that all the state trail systems might be able to tap into. You might be able to put \$5,100 into trail markers and have a company that says, we can do a bunch of individual trails in individual jurisdictions, it's going to be much more expensive than if we contract with them to do a whole bunch, then people could join that contractor and use the money for leverage or something else that just kind of helps all the trail systems, whether it's publicity or electronic stuff. That's what he would like to see rather than have it go piecemeal out. It's too small an amount of money to have it piecemealed out.

Keller added that maybe it goes along with what Doug said. There's potential for different grants out there. Is that something we could use as a committee to acquire matching funds to make that bigger for education or like you were saying, there are programs that would benefit everyone; or as you said, the publicity of ASCOT goes along with the outreach committee. How are we going to start promoting ASCOT and what we do for the state and what the premier trails are -- education in the schools and respecting the trail -- if there isn't an aspect of how we can create that money, double it with federal grants where there might be educational opportunities or disadvantage populations, things like that -- that educate people on what trails are. Because there are many populations out there that isn't exposed to trails. Maybe that's something we can use to grow out of, the reaching out into the community and reaching these communities that don't get exposed to trails.

Kesselman said he agreed and wanted to say a couple things to Jackie. If you can do matching funds in some manner that would be great, but for the purpose, he agreed. There's not enough money to pick one project in this district and say you're going to get \$5,100. It's something they probably should keep in house. He thinks they have possibly between now and 2015, a little over a year, for possibly some app development for the new premier trail system that would go on to the state site, they might be able to use that money for programming to get what they're trying to accomplish out to the public. He would want to consider holding on to it until what they might need for publication or cost-association with what they're working on. It would be a shame to be working on this then have no money to be able to get it onto the website. There's 100 percent consensus for what they're doing in the committee--at large is important. It's important to consider holding that money for something like that or some other educational purpose. That's the big thing -- doing all this and having no money to get it on the state site. As an alternative, he would rather see it going toward something to enhance the overall state park system. They need money desperately and that's what we're here about. If we can't do it for the premier trails, then maybe we could some way enhance the state park system with marker money or something.

Chair said if you wanted to you could say this is going to enhance the trails and have people apply. We really want to improve the trails in this area by putting up the markers. He said, when we did the trail markers it cost less than \$3,000 on a 200-mile trail system. Put them out every quarter mile. They used their own GPS, but the markers and decals are really not that expensive.

Kesselman said his thought was, if they didn't use them for the new state premier program, we could use the money for making a marker system for State Park trails. Keep them in house. It's not a big amount of money. It would be state park trails for markers.

Baldwin said that: staff informed ASCOT that the recreational trails' educational funds are available. So there's \$40,000. Five thousand is a sufficient match, so now you have \$45,000, not \$5,000, if it's safety or environmentally related.

Gipson added a point of clarification. Does the \$5,200 have to be spent by September 15? Baldwin responded, no.

Chair said that's a good way to look at it. You just increase it significantly then you could go out and have a process. If you want to improve the trail safety, here's one way to do it. Here's some funding to facilitate it. If you have a volunteer group who is willing to do this sort of thing, go for it!

Von Gausig said you could use part of this to standardize that sort of thing to make it really affordable. Chair continued saying, we weren't using this thing. We were just using the plastic trail marker diamonds. We contacted one of the people in Game and Fish because the access goes across their private land. They were going to put up these diamonds on each one of those gates with a code on it and GPS. So if there was ever an issue, they would know where the issue was. Chair asked for other thoughts.

Slay said she was just thinking if now all of a sudden it's \$45,000 to develop a program for trail systems, or trails where we want the emergency markers, we'd be able to assist them.

Chair said he agreed that it may be worth waiting a little bit of time on this to see how much the committee is going to come up with and what it's going to cost. He said it would be a shame to put all this effort in and say, here we want to implement this and there's no money.

Miller summed up asking if there were any restrictions on how it might not be used. Sometimes money is restricted one way or another, is there something it can't be used for? Chair said as far as he knew, it had to be for trails.

Baldwin said, it's ASCOT's money. The RTP portion would have to be safety and environmental, education or programs, something like that.

Chair urged everyone to think about it and they'd see what the committee comes back with next time, including the process: "Here's what we think might have the costs involved." Maybe at the next meeting they could decide, still in time to apply for the RTP funding. Baldwin said there's no applying, just figure out which ones and figure out how to spend it.

Keller suggested that maybe before the next meeting everyone look at some potential grants they could have. It could now be \$80,000. Chair said he'd get back with Christie to see if she has been able to get any matching and what that depends on. It might be that those people willing to match would support the particular area where they're applying.

Baldwin said there is a grant coordinator who has a whole database of label grants. So if a project is identified, she would find out if there's any money available or if she sends it out then something would have to be customized to fit that criteria. Typically with workshops or conferences you would have to – if you used the RTP money – you would have to allow trail maintenance type of stuff to maintain the trails, promote safety and environmental protections. Trail building and maintenance kind of stuff is eligible, but if you get off on planning or those kind of ineligible things under RTP, then it has to be pretty much down that maintenance and environmental protection line if you want to do a side conference with any of those groups. It would have to be trail building.

Chair said, let's use this on something that's going to last like capital or diamond markers, whatever fits your trail, and see if it can be leveraged.

Baldwin responded they could devise a program that people can apply for and say, you can apply to have diamonds installed, or GPS's done and all the local contact information like you've done. They would tell you how big the area is. Whether it's the Sedona area that's 300 miles of trail, then you would need to estimate the cost for doing that. With this kind of money we could hire groups like ACE or AZCC to go out and do it. So we can hire people to do those kinds of things, but we would still need some kind of partnership to take on that kind of responsibility of communicating with the local rescue groups, making those kinds of contacts. They would be the applicants. If the Friends of the Forest wanted to submit those kinds of projects, then they would do all the coordination and we would provide them with the diamonds, GPS installation – all that kind of stuff. So, with something like that, we could spend the money in a good way. In several places, depending on how many applicants, there's a lot of area to cover. You could do it in some of the Parks, too, so they would apply. Our Parks aren't that extensive, except when you go off Lost Dutchman into the Superstition area, that's a different deal. The Mesa Ranger District might apply, but it would certainly be sponsored by the Friends of the Lost Dutchman. The rest of the Parks have access and are contained. They're not hard to find.

Chair added that every rescue since last September has been 45 minutes from us. It used to literally take hours. You'd get that telephone call: we're out here on the trails. They're some blue markers out here, but we don't remember the name of the trail we're on, all the trees look alike, etc. etc. They'd have to send out multiple officers and it would literally take hours. So, it's a program that's simple to do. Keller said it's been beneficial for us. Von Gausig asked how it happens that Christie has that kind of money.

Chair responded when Annie was working as the liaison with Christie, she said we're going to do these workshops and here's a place to put the money. Collins added, so it wouldn't get swept. Baldwin said there had to be a place to buy food and stuff without going through procurement. Von Gausig added if they just had to write a check to ASCOT it could get swept. Collins said if it did go into a state donation fund it could get swept and there were fewer restrictions on what she could or could not purchase with it.

Chair added if there was less public outreach and the committees working on the trails could talk to each other about what might be the essential costs to implement, we could talk about it at the next meeting, the use of these funds.

Baldwin, let's get some more people involved. These people are busy so let's get some new people to come up with kind of stuff. If you look at all these committees, it's the same people.

Chair said if there's anybody you can think of to help with this process, contact either Jackie or Connie and say, I'd like to help out and make some recommendations. The reason I was thinking about the committees is they're going to be talking about what we want to do as part of that process.

Gerdl said she thought it should be someone who is not on either of those committees and that she would be interested, but she would coordinate the communication. Then she could ask what their needs would be, and what they were looking at and report back.

Lisa Gerdl volunteered to Chair a subcommittee to develop some proposals for the use of the funds. Kell and Stevens also volunteered. Gerdl came up with some suggestions as to how it would be used; but since its ASCOT funds, she brought it up for the group to talk about.

Chair asked if someone would like to help Lisa. Gerdl responded, rather than them having to talk to each other to try to figure out the needs, somebody can be an intermediary and look at other options. Chair said it's really investigating what the potential costs may be of either an app for the State Trail System website, how the publicity is going to get out, etc.

Stevens added or possibly contact a group that may have a continuation of the same app diamond trail area and its costs to assemble that group. Chair added, or at least get the information from that group. Stevens responded he would be interested. Keller added that she was wondering – building on what Bob was saying – would it be viable to have a funding subcommittee with that kind of look at how the funds would be used, has this committee ever had sub-funding. Baldwin responded they could make up as many committees as they wanted. Keller then said that committee could then investigate all the different possible ways they could maximize any funds they did get. Chair said it would be a good start because they have tangibles. Keller said then the other subcommittees could then feed into that committee and give them a list of “here’s what we need help with.” It’s a viable subcommittee because funding is big in everything you do and if somebody focuses in on that, you’re not going to get any more money, so, maximize on what you do have.

Baldwin said that was his suggestion that someone take on the process of identifying some projects to spend the money on and if you want to submit a project for using the money that you could develop, okay. If you want to do a workshop, how much do you want to do, how much to tie it on to, maybe you want to do more than one. If there’s an APRA or League of Cities, you can have several opportunities to do that sort of thing. If you do the same workshop for different groups, then it’s real easy as opposed to getting four different themes developed.

Chair said they could call that a grants and funding subcommittee. If the Public Outreach Committee is working on these things, they could say, here’s something we’re thinking about and here’s what we think it might cost. Here’s what we think we’re going to need in terms of developing an app or getting the publicity out. Like somebody said a few minutes ago there’s going to be hardcopy of the material. He continued saying that he didn’t think they would come to a hard decision, but when you get an opportunity to work with some dollars it perks your ears up. Baldwin said that the \$40,000 had to be spent by the end of September. Chair said the of 2015. Knowing how the speed of this committee works, if you want to tie on to a League of Cities next year, you need to tell them now. Chair then said let’s plan on coming

back to our next meeting with some hard recommendations on the priorities for spending these funds. That way the vote can be finalized.

Stevens asked if there was a problem with anybody soliciting different organization to let them know what the thinking is, or is that the whole reason behind it. He continued saying that he knew of two organizations working the Red Rock area trying to get funding maintaining trails. Is there a preference thing going on? If he talked to them and said hey, give me some ideas on what you need.

Kesselman said he didn't think anything should be solicited until they knew what they were agreeing to spend the money on. Let's say, just to make a point, we needed \$40,000 to do a real proper app. He didn't want to encourage anyone to start randomly saying, why don't we wait and see what we come up with. Then we can decide whether we have \$10,000 allocated to markers. But he wouldn't go out there randomly.

Gibson said, that's not the question. Can we reach out for suggestions. Baldwin said, as members of the committee you can talk to your constituents to find out what's going on and report back. Chair added, and you don't have to say there's funding available. We're just trying to find out your needs. Gibson asked whether they could go out and solicit. Baldwin said they were not soliciting. Soliciting means you're asking for funding. We're not asking anybody for funding, we're asking how can we give them funding – indirectly. We're asking them if they could get some money what would they spend it on. Stevens reiterated that he was saying we have money and we're willing to give it out. Can we do that and is it appropriate? Gerdl responded that they were not there yet. Stevens asked then whether they could do that and is it appropriate then to be getting that work out, getting the information.

Gerdl said she didn't think they wanted to tell people they have money that may or may not be available to them if we don't know how to spend it, but she didn't think there was any harm in asking. If money happens to be available for something and you happen to have availability what would be the priority what would be the biggest bang for the buck. Baldwin added and can you bring in matching funds. Collins added that she wanted to remind everyone that there is some data from the trails plan, so there's not only random sample data from Arizonians, generally, but also invested, targeted users; so there's some prioritization available through that. So do the data gathering and there's also some data we can provide saying what the residents in the state says, generally, but also what targeted users say on our website.

Baldwin added that the use of the funds would be based on the eligibility of the funding source and priorities they've gotten from user groups like ASCOT and the trail survey. That would justify our selection. The Parks Board has already recommended and acknowledged the marker plan. You're always open to discuss trail issues with anybody. You can ask what's getting done the way it's getting done, and if you had money what would you do with it.

Chair then said it's better not to say we have money, but you can go out and ask what the group is working on, what are its top priorities, what are the limitations in getting this done. Usually that's where people say, we don't have the money to do it.

Kell said he thought the bigger conflict would be whenever the developed process where folks can apply. For example, a club might want to apply for something, that's where the conflict of interest would come in. If at this stage, just finding out what's going on might be enough. There's nothing wrong with knowing what each group's needs are. Where the group would have to be careful is wherever there's an application process who will be rating. Chair then said you'd have to say, wait I'm too close to this.

Keller said she hopes they use this opportunity to reiterate that and that she's not with a specific group, they use the money to reach the broadest population. She also hoped there would be a committee that would feed down through Bob, of course, the ideas on how we can capitalize on this money. Then they could come back to the next meeting and prioritize as a group what's most important. Chair summed up and said as the group is moving along developing the next agenda – Gerdl responded, yes.

**E. REPORTS [continuing]** - May be verbal with handouts provided at the meeting.

**2. 2015 State Trails Plan** – Staff will provide and update on the status of the 2015 State Trails Plan.

Dawn Collins reported that little progress has been made. Baldwin added that the goal is still to have a final version ready for the Parks Board at their November meeting, which means it may be before ASCOT in October. Although they don't have a draft plan at this meeting, it isn't going to happen. Collins continued that she would get the data for the priorities at the next meeting if decisions are going to be made on the existing available funding. If that's a tool where you need to make decisions on the funding, then she will provide at the very least that data. Chair suggested she send out an email to each of the three committees, because they were all going to be talking along the same lines. Gibson asked if there would be a general review of the draft at some point in the fall. Collins responded there would be public comment, yes 30-day comment. Gibson continued and asked whether it would be some time in September or October. Baldwin responded if it's going to be put out in 30 days it would have to be mid September at the latest, because they hope to have a final draft by the end of October. Keller asked if that was something ASCOT would look at, the public comments. Collins said they would send specific public comments that said this is where it's at, please review.

Chair summed up saying the next update is on the Parks Board action on ASCOT issues.

**3. Staff will provide an update on the Parks Board action on ASCOT issues.** – The Parks Board approved funding for 10 new trail projects and 5 trail maintenance projects.

Robert Baldwin reported he gave the group a list of the projects that had been reviewed by ASCOT at the April 18 meeting that were all approved by the Parks Board at their March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. So we have 10 new trail grant projects and five trail maintenance projects. So they will be authorized in this cycle. Again there will be a non-motorized cycle in January to select projects where money will be spent.

Money will be awarded July through June. So in January they will apply, the funds will be available in July – they have three years to spend it – but in that year between July and June they have to get their projects authorized, funded and approved by Federal Highways. Chair asked have these 15 projects been notified. Baldwin responded, yes. Chair continued and said so each one of those should be processed. Baldwin said, yes, in the process of getting the NEPAs completed and the funding authorized. So we have from now until the end of June to get it authorized and then they'll have two-to-three years to spend it. Two years for the maintenance project, three years for the trail projects. Chair asked if Baldwin had a list of them. Baldwin said he didn't have any with him, but he could send them out. They should have been in your last packet on the last page, the trail maintenance projects. That's all on your last report.

Gibson asked whether there was any word on re-authorization on the federal highways surface transportation. Baldwin said, good question. Supposedly the House passed a Bill and it hadn't got Senate approval yet, but he said it was going to be a nine-month extension. Gibson continued saying he had heard talk earlier in the year of a new bill, but it looks like it's going to be just an extension of Map 21 at this point. Baldwin responded he didn't think they renewed it totally because they wanted to make them have a new bill. Typically that doesn't happen. They usually extend it until a new Congress is in. So they plan on having the same amount of money they had last year for next year. We've already given it out. That's what these projects are funded with, this money we're waiting to get. What happens is – we're not worried about this money because we're still spending money from 2012, so it doesn't matter whether they pass it now or not. He continued saying it doesn't matter whether they pass it or not, unless it's an administrative portion.

Chair summed up with the Open Forum.

## **F. OPEN FORUM**

- 1. ASCOT** members will report on current events and/or recent experiences of interest to the trails community and/or the status of any trail projects with which they may be involved. Action will be limited to selecting individuals to do further research on the issue and directing staff to include the item on a future agenda for appropriate action.

Miller said she didn't have much that the city of Scottsdale is working on a new interpretative trail. It was funded by a private donor in our Lost Dog Wash Trail Head that's under construction. They're working on the interpretive element now. Hopefully it will be completed for this upcoming season.

Chair asked Laddie if he had anything. Cox said, no. Gibson said they had two plans going on. He usually doesn't talk about trail management plans because 99 percent are motorized. These two particular plans will have non-motorized trails. The Ironwood Forest Travel Management Plan will include non-motorized trails. That's down in the Marana area near Tucson. So that's going to be out on the website and may have gone out last night. There will be a 30-day comment period. The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation area where we're currently in the land-use planning for that. That's 56,000 acres NCA down east of Sierra Vista.

There'll be a number of trails on that plan. They're just getting going. It probably won't be out until early next year if you want to be in the queue for comments, be sure and make your wishes known to them. That information is also on the website, [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov). Click on Arizona where you'll see a map then you can navigate to those two plans. The other two items are old news. They're continuing to work with ASARCO on the possibly re-routing the Arizona National Scenic Trails in the area of the Middle Gila Canyons and Tortilla Mountain Passages because of the proposed tailings pile. If that is approved the EIS draft is going to go out in September for public comment. If all goes according to plan, they'll start utilizing that area probably in 2017 or 2018, but for this particular group's purposes, the re-routing of the Arizona Trails is going to be a big issue there.

Gibson continued saying that he's continuing with the inventory of the Juan Baptista National Historic Trail in the Yuma Field Office area. They've got about 10 miles inventoried in areas where the group will actually build the trails. He reiterated that the National Historic Trails are a different animal. Congress designates them then they have to figure out where they're actually going to put the trail on the ground given the high potential of site segments that come with those trails. Baldwin asked whether the goal spikes would have to be moved. Gibson responded that there were no goal spikes on the Anza Trail. Gibson responded, no on the Arizona Trail. Gibson then said, oh no, they would not have to move the goal spikes. He's talking about the monument for where the trails come together. They will not have to be moved.

Chair continued asking next speaker whether she had anything. Collins said that State Parks had put in for a competitive grant for the recreational trails program and it's doing signage to comply with federal legislation for ADA signage. So they're working on new documentation now and that's going to happen in the trails, generally. Baldwin asked what else they were doing and she responded with, trails plans. Baldwin then said her group held preliminary interviews for a new trails grants coordinator and there was a particularly interesting applicant who is doing the same work back East and wants to move to Arizona, so we're seriously recruiting to see if we can get him on board on a fast track to replacing what little I know. Collins said they're still in the process. Baldwin said he would like to see it happen this way, but there are no guarantees. There were three good candidates including Clair who had some recommendations from one of our members, so we'll see. Cox asked Baldwin if it was for his replacement. Baldwin responded it was for another position, Katie's actually because they need someone to pass information on to. Slay said, so Bob is the next ASCOT meeting your last one. Baldwin responded most likely.

Von Gausig said he would try to be brief because he knew they were over, but Jennifer talked a little about the Verde Front process, a process started by the Prescott National Forest that runs up the Verde River and west of the Verde River, kind of at the top of the Black Mountains and Mingus Mountain that goes down to the Verde River. That was six, eight years ago. They started working on the terrestrial trails trying to coordinate them and get them to work together. Then over the past two years they've been working really hard to incorporate water trails along the Verde River with those terrestrial trails. It has now become a much bigger, inclusive kind of

process that's being provisionally called the Verde Valley String of Pearl process. He passed out something showing what they were doing.

Von Gausig continued saying that this process to some extent is modeled after a process that took place in the Grand Valley of Colorado, Grand Junction, Fruita and the Palisades. A very similar area to the Verde Valley, except along the Colorado River where it's highly compromised has a lot of trash in the river. It was used as a junkyard. It's taken them 20-something years to get that cleaned up and create a 23-mile trail through Grand Valley that actually has a 10-foot wide concrete sidewalk for 23 miles. Dawn Collins went up on a trip with a number of the group including Director Martyn to the Grand Valley for three days to study how this collaborative worked. It's a collaborative between the National Parks, Forest Service, State Parks and the Municipal Parks along the river. The River Commission coordinates all these things. So we wanted to take those lessons, move them into the Verde Valley and start having a really serious economic development and recreational project that is working collaboratively amongst a number of managers, including AZ State Parks, Forest Service – both Coconino and the Prescott – that are engaged in that, as well as Cottonwood, Clarkdale and Camp Verde, primarily. Sedona will become part of that process in the future.

Von Gausig continued saying that the first project along the river is the top project, the one in the pictures he's passing around. This is the Verde River at Clarkdale. It's two parks. He started talking about it two years ago and it's going great guns. It's exceeded all expectations in spades. In the first ten weeks, this park system consisting of 110 acres, three miles upstream from Tuzigut Bridge. There's 70 acres at Tuzigut Bridge, connected by opportunities for recreational kayaking, canoeing, tubing and whatnot. More than 3,500 people utilized it the first ten weeks it was open. It's actually paying for itself. It's the only park system that pays for itself. This is happening because they're charging the outfitters who put the people on the river – \$5 a piece – and they're charging for parking and other things. There's been no pushback from any of that and they're keeping track of the impact of having this number of people on the river. It's a stretch of river that's not had any boats on it. It used to be that there was never an Arizonan on the river. Now we see a lot of people. They're doing a great job of instilling the conservation ethic and the leave-no-trace ethic. We have hired river ambassadors for both the parks and they're there the whole time the parks are open. The ambassadors talk to people and make sure they're acting responsibly and we have a really good safety and emergency management plan for the whole system. It's really been put together contentiously and it's working much better.

Von Gausig continued saying, now this is going to be expanding along the river to the Forest Service sites, to the AZ State Parks site at Dead Horse Ranch, the City of Cottonwood, Yavapai County and the Town of Camp Verde. They're all going to have access points along the river that will become coordinated with this whole String of Pearls kind of project, which at its core is an economic development project, as well as a sustainable recreation project. It's really fun to watch all of these different jurisdictions get in and work hard on making sure this whole system works for everybody and it's all based on trails. In this case both, the terrestrial and the water,

it's great to have an example of how one can put trail systems in an area and have them become primary economic development tools. Continuing Von Gausig also said he's proud how everything is going.

So they're in the process now of forming what's going to be called the Verde River Valley Commission, which is similar to the River Commission up in the Grand Valley of Colorado, which will help coordinate signage, interpretation, promotion and bring people in there always instilling the ethic of leave-no-trace. He summed up saying if the group wants to learn more about that the group should contact him. He's continuing this year in his attempt to get the familiarization trips. He's funded to do that, so anybody who wants to get out on the river on a three-hour, three-mile trip, he's happy to take them. He's got about seven or eight more open between now and November. You'd just have to contact him. Baldwin asked if it was the one they did last year. He responded, yes. Continuing on he said they started out with a park that was a mile upstream from the one they ended up with and the reason they moved it downstream a mile was after they started putting in the trails and the road, they put in a Kayak facility, and then Clark and Dale, the two bald eagles decided to nest directly above it. So they had to move the whole park a mile downstream.

Gibson asked whether one of the pictures was their website. He responded, no, that the website it came from was the Verde River Institute website. But you can look it up on Verde River of Clarkdale's website ([www.clarkdale.az.gov](http://www.clarkdale.az.gov)) or call him directly and he'll give everyone the information. Chair added and said he still remembered when they started out how polluted it was.

Stevens said that the Apache Maid cabin is about a miles just below Stillman Lake. It was built in 1909 and the Forest Service leases it out. The back country horsemen and other volunteers have built carrels for people with horses who want to stay at the cabin, so there's a place to put them. They just finished that project last week as an added amenity to a neat old cabin. Keller asked whether one had to be a horse person to stay there. Stevens responded and said, not at all. It's just an added feature for people traveling around who want to stay in the cabin who happen to have horses with them and may not have a place to put them.

Baldwin asked who the cabins are reserved through. Stevens responded through recreation. It's \$75 per night with three bedrooms that sleep six, a little kitchen and barbeque area, but no potable water. It's a cool area. It's right in the pines and the access into it is a little bit rough, but it's not bad. They just added another amenity to it to expand it to the equestrian people as well.

Kesselman said he didn't have too much that they were continuing with their volunteers throughout Arizona, VOAZ. Please make a pitch to a land manager who is looking for a nonprofit to help support. They have plenty of great workers and crew leaders and planners if anyone has a project they need help with. They're based in Tempe if anyone has some work. He added that professional crews are great but they offer something different and they need to keep their organization strong. He added that on a personal note they have adopted – he's involved in two projects in two sections of the Maricopa Trail and they will meet Monday Kim Richards of Maricopa. Anthem is adopting one section and Desert Foothills Land Trust has

adopted another 28-mile section. So they're starting to plan their cleanup day. He's also still involved with saving Daisy Mountain, which is by Anthem over by Desert Hills.

McCollum said that from the Wickenburg's Conservation standpoint they're working with Robert to get going on their maintenance grant they just received tidying up some paperwork. They're also going to fund an ex-BLM employee who is now a consultant to help with the Sophie Flat expansion to do some of the groundwork that BLM can't get to right away and they're hopeful that will move ahead. They'll have another 20 miles to add to the current 15. Chair asked who the consultant is going to be. She responded Chris.

Kell picked up and said he had a quick update on three projects. They're continuing to work with the Forest Service on the Rainbow Rim on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. They have two 7-mile extension of the trail approved and they had a volunteer day in May. He's been up there several times with the AZ Conservation Corp Crew and Forest Service Crew continuing to work on the trail, right along Ten Point a very beautiful location. There's another trail work session involving a volunteer weekend, September 20 and 21. Then they're going to start thinking over the winter how to get some funding to build next year, maybe an RTP fund, for example.

In southern Arizona we're working with a chapter in Tucson – an urban bike park project – involved in a site near Davis Montham Air Force Base, the city parks, Pima County Parks and the Mayor's office. Just recently we met with Tucson Medical Center. They have a community outreach department. We invited Tucson Medical Center, University Medical Center and University Medical Center, three hospitals in Tucson, to one of our meetings. They were very interested in the whole concept of childhood obesity and getting kids outdoors. Their community affairs department pooled its resources and contributed \$25,000 to the master plan for this phenomenal site. You can talk all you like about childhood obesity, but it was really cool actually having the hospitals help fund the project.

In central Arizona we're working on the Prescott Circle trail with the RTP grant. We met with Bob awhile back. We had to make some adjustments to the alignment because of a ten-year and 50-year lease and go back to the different places where we got the permits, the Federal Fish and Wildlife and State Fish and Wildlife. Thankfully none of them have concerns. It's the same trail. We're just doing a slightly different piece of it. So the folks who've been going have no concerns with the new alignment. The paperwork should be forwarded to Bob very soon and we should get a ruling on it fairly soon. In three weeks, the IMBA World Summit is coming up in Streamwood Springs. We do have quite a few folks from Arizona heading up to the Summit.

Villa said she's been busy working. It's that time of year. She added that she did finally manage to make it back to one of the Pinal County meetings for the proposed Pinal County Park Number Four. We received \$120,000 to begin the master plan on Park Number Four. So starting next month the committee will have input on what

that Park will be and they're looking forward to the next 18 months watching it come together.

Chair said that in the Forest Service had a workshop in the Apache Sitgreaves. The workshop is called, developing a sustainable recreation strategy. TRACKS have the non-motorized group and WMOTA, the White Mountain Open Trails Association, has the motorized group. We were invited to be there. So there were three of us and a room full of about 55 Forest Service folks trying to work on the strategy. The bottom line is, if you want to cut to the chase is: how are we going to do more with less. With the severe budget cuts, how are we going to have a recreation program when Fire takes precedence, etc., etc., etc. It's a difficult situation, but they all seem to be willing to get in there to see what we can do to do things more effectively and make more effective use of the volunteers. For example, TRACKS has a very small group of about six people. Showlow Fire got us the Class A chain saw certification. The Forest Service never wanted us to do that before. But now we have that class a certification, and we don't have them go out with our regular crew – they go out separately – so it's just that small group of people. But we're doing things to relieve the Forest Service Fire Crews from having new trail maps. We do the trail maps and they do the fire stuff. We have crews now that have been trained by the Fire Service to do its tree measurement program. You have to measure the height of the trees. That's a lot of fun. They say they climb to the top and drop a string down. It was really taking a different look at things. Here we've got all this talent and volunteers to effectively save the Forest Service and I'm glad to see it. We've got people who're willing to do it and we've got other people – an engineer in TRACKS – who said they'd be glad to be the one to go out measuring trees.

Cox said that for several years there's been a group in the Tucson area that works with the Coronado National Forest doing the same thing, at least as far as providing chain saws and the crosscut in wilderness areas to keep the trails clear, both in the Catalinas and the Chirachuas. They're all trained volunteers. We spent considerable time trying to convince the supervisors in the National Forest that we needed a periodic recertification for the chain saws and the crosscut. They do a tremendous amount of work with only a handful of people. We save the taxpayer a lot of money.

Gibson asked: "You got your certification from the local fire department, right?" Chair responded, yes, that he went to the fire department and said – they normally charge for that certification. We'll give it to you guys free, because you're volunteers and we really appreciate that. Another thing we did was we got a group of about five or six in each of the motorized and non-motorized groups so if anybody is out of town the ones that are left can go out and work together. The head ranger of the Lakeside Ranger District told me that if it were not for TRACKS the trails might amount to 30 percent of the 200 miles of trail because they do not have the funding or the personnel to do trail maintenance. There's a lot of value in having those volunteers and making effective use of them.

Slay said she and her husband have not been doing too much because he has been working six days a week. They don't do all the camping they usually do. The biggest thing with the horse community is the horse camp at Houston Mesa just outside of

Payson. There's been a push to take that and give it over to OHV and that campground is specifically designed for people to park their rigs, facilities for the horses, so there's been quite a pushback about that. Collins asked who the land manager is. Gibson added Payson Ranger District. Villa said that some of them are going up there at the end of the week. Stevens said that he thought some of the backcountry horsemen in the Central Arizona Chapter have been addressing that issue as well. Slay continued saying that Jan Hancock had a hand in designing that campground and is also an ASCOT member and former Arizona Trail Association. She's a member everything trail. She's pushed back pretty hard. Then there seems like there's been a lot of planning and the Sedona group's horse council has responded. They've gone to the BLM scoping meeting in the area north of Table Mesa. Not having been on the trails she's still talking about them a lot.

Baldwin asked if he could defend the OHV community for just a second. First of the trail head is managed by a concessionaire, who wasn't managing it very well at all, which is a Forest Service problem. The trailhead weren't getting any use or they were kept locked and people weren't able to get in for all kinds of reason. State Parks gave the Payson Ranger District a grant to do some NEPA studies in the area to identify possible locations for OHV staging. Because it was being under used as an equestrian area it was under consideration for use as an OHV area. So it wasn't like the OHV community went in there and said, you're not using this, we're going to take it over. That wasn't the case at all. Slay interjected that it was the Forest Service. Baldwin responded that it was the Forest Service that investigated the possibility of using the land for better use to get more use out it. So it wasn't anything the OHV community was trying to take over or anything like that, but it certainly appeared that way. Most of the consternation is with the Forest Service mostly because they weren't managing the concessionaire who wasn't managing the area so that's where they got their ass in the wringer as far as the dollars are concerned. Collins said, "That's a technical term." Baldwin continued saying, take that off the books. As far as Payson RD is concerned, they were investigating the possibility of using it and it wasn't anything that the OHV community was planning to commandeer. Slay said she wasn't implying that the OHV community was doing it. Then Baldwin said as soon as people hear the words OHV and equestrians, obviously there's a bad guy there.

Chair said, okay, let's move to time and place.

- G. **TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS AND CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** – ASCOT will need to schedule one more meeting at the end of October to provide final comments on the 2015 State Trails Plan prior to submission to the State Parks Board and to select new members for 2015.

ASCOT selected Saturday, November 1 as the next meeting date. Staff will find a location in the Tucson area.

- H. **ADJOURNMENT – 1:20p** (staff note: meeting ends at 3:09:30 on the tape)