

MINUTES
of the
ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS (ASCOT)
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS (ASP)
MEETING OF MAY 2, 2008
Carnegie Center
1101 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Winslow called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. ASCOT members introduced themselves by way of roll call, and Ms. Shulman noted there was a quorum present.

ASCOT Members Present:

Bonnie Winslow, Chair
Don Applegate
Cate Bradley
Maureen DeCindis
Anne Ellis
Reba Grandrud
Daye Halling
Jim Horton
Chris Hosking
Doug Potts
Stephen Saway
Linda Slay
John Vuolo
Sonia Overholser
Charles Scully
Kent Taylor

ASCOT Members Absent:

Mark Gullo
Irene Smith
Erik Wilson
Paul Schilke

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff:

Annie McVay, State Trails Coordinator
Tanna Thornburg, Chief of Planning
Ruth Shulman, Advisory Committee Coordinator

Guests:

Phil Jesilnick, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
Michael Sanders, ADOT
Dave Scarborough, BLM, Phoenix District Office
Mary McFarland, Payson, Parks and Recreation
Tom Fitzgerald, past ASCOT member

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

(Members and staff introduced themselves by way of roll call in the interest of time.)

C. Presentation by ADOT on Transportation Enhancement and Safe Routes to School Funding.

Ms. McVay noted that this presentation was scheduled to aid ASCOT members in viewing proposed trails projects that might be better served under the Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds administered by ADOT. There have been a number of these lately that have come before ASCOT and more clarity would be of help both to ASCOT and to the trails community.

Mr. Jesilnick introduced himself as one of three project managers with ADOT's Travel Enhancement Scenic Roads section. Those project managers work closely with regional planners and the statewide Council of Governments (COGs) on TE grants and the grant applications process. TE funds were made available through the same act of Congress that created the Recreational Trails Program administered by ASP. Mr. Jesilnick referred ASCOT members who knew of interested applicants to the local COG.

Mr. Jesilnick noted that there is a TE Program Handbook available for download from the ADOT website. The web address is: www.ADOTEnhancement.com for those who are interested in the Handbook, which explains the program, and the application process. This process is administered through the local COGs. There are twelve application criteria, only eleven of which are eligible in Arizona. The major areas of "overlap" with the Trails Heritage Fund grant program is in the area of projects for facilities pertaining to pedestrians and bicycles.

There are approximately \$16 million dollars (State Transportation Funds), of which \$8 million is available for Local Government Agency projects this year. Non-profit organizations (NPOs) are eligible to apply for these project funds through a third-party arrangement with a local government agency. Another \$5 million of the \$16 million is available for State Projects, which are those projects located at least 75% on an ADOT right-of-way.

The application review committee is called the Transportation Enhancement Review Committee (TERC) composed of planning directors from NPOs and state agencies. Michael Sanders, of the ADOT Multi-Modal Transportation department, is a member of TERC.

The major criteria for applying for a TE grant is that the project must be surface-transportation related. The application is available online, and consists of the application, a cost-estimate sheet, and linking criteria sheet to be reviewed by the TERC. The process consists of several steps: application process, the award process, project scoping process, and the three criteria necessary to go to project bid. Mr. Jesilnick showed ASCOT several celebrations/ribbon cuttings for successful projects, many in smaller communities.

Mr. Saway asked whether the TE funds could be used to purchase easements. Mr. Jesilnick said easements and rights-of-way purchases are eligible items. Mr. Saway asked if the Rails-to-Trails rights-of-way required that the railroad be abandoned. Mr. Jesilnick clarified that the railroads in those circumstances must have been abandoned for three years to qualify. The TE project philosophy is that projects must have connectivity; in other words, no projects that lead to dead-ends. The projects must have logical start and end points. Mr. Applegate asked how the TE project managers view urban paths vs. rural/primitive path projects, and whether the difference matters. Mr. Jesilnick said that the local government agencies help determine the nature of the project, however TE funds are limited to transportation pathways and not recreational pathways. Ms. McVay clarified that the RTP guidelines say that a path along a road or street would be considered more transportation than recreation, and is therefore ineligible for RTP funds. Mr. Jesilnick added that transportation projects should have, as noted, logical termini, and are likely

to be paved. Further discussion ensued on transportation vs recreation on paths, trails and bike lanes. Mr. Jesilnick noted that the word “trail” on a TE application often triggers a closer review to determine that the project is not strictly recreational.

Ms. DeCindis asked about surface standards for projects. Mr. Jesilnick said that the surface must meet ADA and ASHTO guidelines; i.e. usable by wheelchair. Mr. Potts asked whether the entire project must meet ADA guideline, or would a representative percentage qualify. Mr. Jesilnick noted that the standard they apply is that all people must be able to have the same experience along unique parts of the pathway. He also noted that when a project runs along a roadway, and the project exceeds a 5% gradient along with the roadway, those projects do not have to be ADA compliant.

Ms. Bradley asked about clarifying the 50/50 split of the \$16 million dollars received annually. Mr. Jesilnick said that from the \$16 million, some comes off the top for contingency matters. Another “pot” is the Projects of Opportunity fund, for state engineering districts to aid communities add sidewalks or landscaping or the like to a roadway project underway. The application process is the same whether there is a local project or a state/ADOT project as far as the remaining division of funds. The maximum grant amount for a state/ADOT project is \$1 million; the maximum allowable for a Local Governments project is \$500,000. Out of 80 applications received last grant cycle, 55 were for Local Government projects and the remainder were state/ADOT projects. The process is very competitive, with 20 projects funded out of the 55. Only seven or eight projects of the state/ADOT applications were approved.

Chair Winslow asked about the Safe Routes to School program, which was also on the agenda. Ms. McVay noted that Brian Fellowes, who manages that program, sent his apologies for not being able to attend today’s meeting. He would still like to address ASCOT.

Chair Winslow noted that ADOT provides Arizona roadways with broad shoulders that accommodate bicycles. She asked for clarification whether shoulder width or bicycle accessibility is tied to any funding. Mr. Sanders noted that the minimum shoulder for a bicycle, according to federal guidelines, is four feet. ADOT uses this minimum as the shoulder standard in any case, and often shoulders on state roadways are eight to ten feet. Chair Winslow clarified that, regardless of the funding sources, the ADOT minimum shoulder guidelines are four feet, even when the road is being renovated.

Mr. Vuolo asked signage for connectivity on new and existing roads, especially for people who are looking at using various transportation means besides their auto. Mr. Sanders said that the Intermodal Transportation Division do not sign for bicycle routes, but on occasion ADOT makes agreements with local governments to create signage for bike lanes. Further discussion of bike lanes and shoulders followed. All projects are locally driven, so contact your local government to discuss proposals.

Ms. Thornburg noted that alternative transportation pathways have become a large part of the connectivity landscape. Mr. Sanders will be writing a section on Transportation Enhancements for the Trails Plan 2010.

D. ACTION ITEMS

1. Approve the Minutes of the February 2, 2008 ASCOT meeting.

Mr. Horton moved that the minutes of the February 2 ASCOT meeting be approved. Ms. DeCindis seconded the motion. Ms. Grandrud noted that she had a minor correction to page five of the minutes regarding the Historic Trails Workshop, which she will provide “off-line” to Ms. Shulman. The motion was amended to state that the minutes be approved as amended, which carried with no further discussion.

2, Consider Appointing a Liaison to the Trails Heritage Fund Grant Rating Team.

Chair Winslow asked for self-nominees for this position. Ms. McVay noted that at an earlier ASCOT meeting, Mr. Halling, Ms. Bradley, and Ms. Overholser had nominated themselves. Mr. Horton described his experience serving as a liaison as being informative and important to his understanding of the grants process. He said he feels that the liaison role should be held by someone who has not yet had the privilege.

Ms. McVay described the voting process as follows: each ASCOT member will be issued a green adhesive dot which they will initial, and put near the name of the person they vote for as liaison. Ms. Overholser withdrew her self-nomination in favor of Mr. Halling and Ms. Bradley who have not served. No other members nominated themselves.

Ms. Bradley and Mr. Halling were asked to give a brief “campaign speech”. Ms. Bradley said the she had held a number of positions on ASCOT in the past, and she can, in her professional capacity, bring the information she garners on the application process to communities throughout the state. Mr. Halling said that he comes from the different perspective of the private development arena, which is an important perspective, especially for collaborations in the future.

ASCOT elected Ms. Bradley as the liaison to the Trails Heritage Fund Grant Rating Team for 2008.

3. Review of the ASCOT Subcommittee Goals for 2008.

ASCOT, at the February 2, 2008 meeting, discussed goals and membership for the subcommittees. This item is to review those goals discussed in February, and affirm which will be adopted to work on.

Mr. Taylor is the Chair of the State Trails System (STS) Nomination Committee. Adding trails to the STS is the single statutory mandate of ASCOT, so the work of this subcommittee is crucial. Mr. Taylor gave a brief explanation of the review process. Chair Winslow asked if anyone would like to join the subcommittee. Ms. Overholser volunteered.

The Trail Monitoring subcommittee, chaired by Maureen DeCindis, is not mandated, but is closely tied to the work of the STS, in order to maintain the quality of the STS. This subcommittee has already held one meeting in 2008. Mr. Horton asked whether it would be helpful to complete trails monitoring sheets to provide to the subcommittee members. Mr. Vuolo responded that Tracks, the trails group he represents on ASCOT, completes the monitoring sheets, but the standards for trails have not yet been set. That makes it difficult to determine whether the trail meets the standard, or is above or below standard. They mostly focus on safety concerns. He feels that the work is useful because of the over 600 trails currently in the system. Ms. Overholser asked about whether the monitoring form and the STS information will become an interactive part of the ASP website. Ms. McVay explained that the difficulty in making an STS database online and searchable is that doing so would create a breach in the State of Arizona data

and computer security standards, particularly in regards to allowing the public behind the “firewall”. Ms. McVay is researching partnerships that could allow for a searchable online database in the future; the process is lengthy, but the issues could be worked around. It takes time. Ms. Overholser will pursue the topic as a member of the subcommittee. Further information on this subcommittee will be given during the Reports section.

Ms. Grandrud asked about the chairs of the umbrella subcommittees, such as Outreach, and whether the “smaller” subcommittees could be listed under the umbrella groups as a point of clarity. Ms. McVay will organize the list.

Ms. Grandrud chairs the New Member Recruitment subcommittee; the current members are Cate Bradley, Chris Hosking, Paul Schilke, John Vuolo, and Jim Horton. This group will meet briefly following the main ASCOT meeting. Mr. Horton asked how many openings will occur. Ms. McVay said there are currently five openings; there may be a sixth. Ms. Shulman noted that the deadline for applications is the last Friday in September. The applications will be available online beginning in mid-June.

Ms. Grandrud also chairs the Historic Trails subcommittee, with members Steve Saway and Jim Horton. There are also members of this subcommittee who are not members of ASCOT, but who are active and contributory. Their goal is produce a brochure and map on historic Native American trails similar to the existing brochure on Arizona historic trails. Ms. Grandrud also discussed the historic trails preservation workshop held this past March, and the nationwide historic trails workshop that runs May 6-8, 2008. The large attendance at the March workshop shows that interest in historic trails is growing. Ms. McVay noted that there will be nominations of sections of the Anza Trail into the STS, so historic trails expertise will be necessary in reviewing those applications.

Under the umbrella Outreach subcommittee of ASCOT, one goal is to hold a Trails Event, possibly around National Public Lands Day. Irene Smith had volunteered to chair that subcommittee, and the members are Daye Halling, Anne Ellis and Linda Slay. Chair Winslow asked the members if they would like to continue with the event goal. Ms. Slay said that she would like to see it go on. In Ms. Smith’s absence, however, there is no new information. This topic will be revisited in July, and Chair Winslow will contact Ms. Smith.

4. Brainstorm Existing Trails Plans in Arizona.

Ms. McVay said that a goal for the Trails 2010 plan is to compile a library of as many existing trail plans within Arizona as possible. One function of the library will be to help new planners with their trails plans, as a “how to” guide. This library is being compiled with the assistance of Donna Meyers, an Arizona State University graduate student. She asked ASCOT members to list those plans of which they are aware. The following plans were listed:

Pima County
Pinal County
Town of Payson Master Plan
City of Peoria Master Plan
Maricopa Association of Governments Master Plan
Navajo County*
Town of Show Low*
Town of Pinetop-Lakeside* *joint Southern Navajo County plan
McDowell Mountain Conservancy
Prescott National Forest (in preparation)

Yavapai County (being updated)
Verde Valley Regional Trail Plan (committee forming)
Town of Desert Hills
Mohave County
Town of Cave Creek
City of Sedona Pathways Plan
City of Flagstaff/Coconino County (bike and pedestrian plan)

If there are other plans that people know of, please contact Ms. McVay via eMail:.

E. REPORTS

1. Staff Reports

A: Trails Heritage Fund Match Reduction: ASCOT presented the match reduction request to the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission (AORCC). Both members of ASCOT and others from the trails community attended the meeting to speak on behalf of the reduction. AORCC unanimously supported the reduction; a comment by a new AORCC commissioner regarding her experience with the match was helpful. The recommendation from AORCC goes to the ASP Board on May 16, on the consent agenda. However, attendance at the Board meeting, and letters of support are still important.

B: Update on Trails Heritage Fund Grant Program Applications: The list of current applications appears on p14 of the agenda packet. None of these applications have been reviewed. For the first time in at least the past ten years the program is oversubscribed.

C: Update on Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Annual Conference. This conference will be held in Phoenix at the Camelback Inn during the last week in August. Registration will open shortly, and the conference theme is “Leave No Child Inside” about reconnecting children and nature. One keynote speaker is Richard Louv who wrote the book Last Child In The Woods. The second keynote speaker is Robert Martin, who will speak on why parents are reluctant to allow their children outdoors. On the Tuesday before the conference, John Crompton of Texas A&M will speak on his research into the economic benefits of open space and parks, and how to position those benefits with legislators. Mr. Vuolo spoke highly on Mr. Crompton’s information and recommended that ASCOT members attend his talk.

Ms. Bradley suggested that the member recruitment committee staff a table at the conference, following Ms. McVay’s note that ASCOT could probably get a table if someone were willing to staff it.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Historic Trails-Report on Trails Preservation Training

Ms. Grandrud noted that the historic trails preservation training had been discussed briefly earlier; it was very successful. Mr. Horton attended the training and found it helpful.

B: Trails Monitoring

Ms. DeCindis is chair of the Trails Monitoring subcommittee, and reported on their meeting of Thursday, May 1, 2008 at the Tempe Public Library. She noted that the group addressed the question of trails monitoring from every angle – who gathers the information, what information do they gather, to whom does the information go and what will be done with it. The subcommittee discussed several different models of the “information circle” and devised

a multi-prong approach using the current technology, and also looking toward the future with more interactive technology. The first prong is to provide a survey to land managers, which includes information on the current inventory of trails in their areas that need repair. The inventory could then become part of the documentation for an RTP trail maintenance grant application. Ms. DeCindis turned the discussion over to Chair Winslow.

Secondly, the committee will develop a strategy for the program. Chair Winslow discussed “the nirvana piece” which would be a fully interactive online database of each trail in the STS and a trail monitoring form that could be completed online as well. As noted earlier in the meeting, this will be a time-consuming process but the subcommittee is confident it can come to fruition.

Thirdly, the group will update the current trail monitoring form to be completed online and sent electronically to Ms. McVay. The upside of this will be that the public will be able to more easily complete the form.

Fourthly, the group will develop a survey form to be completed by those within the “information circle” to determine whether the monitoring form information is helpful, and which information is most helpful.

Lastly, under discussion, is what to do with the trails monitoring forms once they are received electronically (or otherwise). One solution promoted by the subcommittee is to provide an annual report with all the information received to ASCOT and land managers.

Chair Winslow challenged each ASCOT member to speak to a local group of their choice, trails oriented or not, about trails in Arizona and the work of ASCOT. She mentioned that roll call at the July ASCOT meeting in Alpine will consist of which ASCOT member spoke to what group.

Mr. Vuolo asked Ms. McVay if non-profit organizations and corporations had been explored as resources to host the interactive website. Ms. McVay said that idea can be explored, particularly with a non-profit group.

C: Member Nomination Subcommittee

This subcommittee will meet in the lobby of the Carnegie Center immediately following the ASCOT meeting.

F. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None

G. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS.

Chair Winslow thanked Ms. DeCindis for hosting the social hour for the trails monitoring subcommittee.

Ms. Overholser noted that the Black Canyon Trail Coalition recently won the second national “Making a Difference” award from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). She, Ms. Slay and other members of the coalition will travel to Washington D.C. to accept the award and discuss land management issues with senior executives of the BLM. Of particular concern to the

Coalition is the issue of firearms and shooting on public lands, particularly in the Table Mesa area.

Ms. Overholser also noted that the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) trail crew will be Flagstaff May 3-4, 2008. The IMBA Summit is being held in Park City, Utah this year beginning on June 18, 2008.

Ms. Thornburg noted that the Black Canyon Trail is an example of perseverance on the part of trail builders since ASCOT was involved in that trail back in 1979 and earlier.

Mr. Applegate noted that the White Canyon passage of the Arizona Trail has been identified as a project in need of additional funding with the BLM. This funding, if received, will be in addition to the grant application submitted to ASP.

H. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

July 19, 2008 in Alpine, location to be determined. Information on lodging in the area will be provided as soon as possible by Ms. Shulman.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Winslow adjourned the meeting at 2:50pm.