

MINUTES
of the
ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS (ASCOT)
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS (ASP)
Meeting of July 19, 2008
Alpine Community Center
Alpine, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Winslow called the meeting to order at 10:04am. Ms. Shulman called the role and noted there was a quorum present.

ASCOT Members Present: Bonnie Winslow, Chair
Don Applegate
Cate Bradley
Maureen DeCindis
Anne Ellis
Reba Grandrud
Daye Halling
Chris Hosking
Doug Potts
Stephen Saway
Linda Slay
John Vuolo
Sonia Overholser
Charles Scully
Kent Taylor
Irene Smith
Erik Wilson
Paul Schilke

ASCOT Members Absent: Jim Horton
Mark Gullo

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Annie McVay, State Trails Coordinator
Ruth Shulman, Advisory Committee Coordinator

Guests: Tom Hollender, White Mountain Conservation League

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members and staff introduced themselves.

C. ACTION ITEMS

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

Chair Winslow asked for a correction of a quote made by her on page three of the minutes, adding the words “asked for”. Ms. Ellis moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Overholser seconded the motion, which carried.

2, Discuss Trail Construction and Maintenance Cost Estimates for the Trails 2010 Plan.

Ms. McVay said that for the Trails 2010 Plan, one strategy is to add more resource references. One question frequently asked of Ms. McVay is how to estimate costs for trails projects. The question is difficult to answer specifically for any particular project, but it is an important part of any trails planning process. In the past, one way to answer this question was to compile information from the invoices associated with completed projects and provide a cost projection based on the type of trail, expressed as a per mile number. However, this creates difficulties for trails planner because it leads to concrete budget projections that may not be accurate or adequate for the planned project. Ms. McVay noted that the idea is to provide estimates for specific categories of trails (urban, equestrian, back-country, etc.) using the figures for the elements of each type of trail. Some examples would be whether the trail was composed of asphalt, what the terrain type was, what were the key factors in the scope of the trail, just to name a few. The cost amounts for the specific elements would be listed with the examples. Ms. McVay asked for feedback from the ASCOT membership on what would be important for them to know about the cost of a specific trails project, based on their experience budgeting, using general information.

Chair Winslow asked whether the feedback was needed during the meeting. Ms. McVay said that she was looking for members who could use her handout as a basis for “filling in” information on projects they have worked on. There would be a description of the type of trail, and a breakout, by line item, what part of that project had what cost. This would allow planners to pick and choose the elements and budget for them.

Ms. Bradley said that it would be important to add trailheads as a category. Trailheads have a number of components such as parking, signage, trash, etc.

Chair Winslow noted that the cost and proximity of various materials would significantly affect any budget. Ms. McVay suggested that members consider a specific trail project they worked on that has been completed in the last year. Planners have an idea of the elements a project should contain, but the dollar amounts are the information they most asked for.

Mr. Vuolo asked about how to “cost out” professional trails builders and volunteers. He noted that most of the work done on trails projects in his area is done by volunteers. Ms. McVay said that while volunteers are important, especially to the grants process, this exercise is meant to be unrelated to the Trails Heritage Trails grants. She said that trail-building using volunteers would make a good example by giving the number of volunteer hours. Also, when a trails crew works on the trail, that amount could be shown by the hourly rate.

Mr. Wilson asked who primarily needs this information. Ms. McVay said that most questions come from cities and municipalities.

Ms. Bradley noted that this might also be used as a glossary of terms to help clarify specific elements, for example, water bars, which may not be familiar to the new trails planner.

Ms. McVay said that she was looking for specific trails that are ongoing or recently completed, but the projects should be varied enough that every type of trail would be represented.

Mr. Hosking said that it might be useful to begin with the terrain of the trail, which would be base. From there a person could determine other basics. Ms. McVay said that real world examples would be most helpful. Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Wilson said that members should send their examples to Ms. McVay rather than trying to visualize a trail project at the meeting. The examples would show what elements, how many miles, and the total cost.

Ms. Overholser asked whether the categories were more important than providing examples. Ms. McVay said that she would like to receive enough examples to cover all the categories. Ms. Overholser asked whether Ms. McVay would like to have examples suggested during this discussion. Ms. McVay replied that she would. Ms. Overholser said that as no one likely has project costs to hand, that information could be provided later. Ms. McVay said that she would like to have the information compiled by the end of calendar year 2008.

Ms. DeCindis asked whether Ms. McVay needs to have unit costs, such as bags of cement. Ms. McVay noted that it would be best not to focus on unit costs, as they are often perceived as being “the” unit cost for budgeting purposes.

Mr. Saway asked whether the categories should also be tied to the trails standards. It was noted that at a previous ASCOT meeting, Bill Gibson of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) said that a national definition and standard of trails and trails criteria had been produced for use across the board.

Mr. Vuolo suggested providing a resource telephone to call for cost information along with the project descriptions given in the examples. Ms. McVay said that having a resource with description and general costs available on the ASP website would be most helpful. Chair Winslow asked how many people could provide examples. There were few, and Ms. McVay said that anyone who knew of an example that could be provided outside of the ASCOT membership, those examples should be included.

Mr. Schilke asked whether Ms. McVay had searched the internet for the sort of examples Ms. McVay is looking for, especially with trail costs. Ms. McVay said that she had found few useful examples.

Mr. Wilson noted that in the past, he had been one of the planners who contacted Ms. McVay for information. What would have been useful to him at the time was ballpark figures per mile of trail, paved and unpaved and what factors need to be investigated when you are planning the project.

Mr. Scully said that he had found a lot of information online regarding trails in Southern California while he was working on his area plan.

Mr. Potts asked about the trail crews performing maintenance on existing trails and how they bid the jobs. Ms. McVay said that those crews are paid a flat amount per week, and the amount of work per week varies depending on the project.

Ms. Bradley asked that those with examples list what they will be sending to Ms. McVay. The list is:

Ms. Overholser – Black Canyon Trail, single track with trailhead

Mr. Vuolo – back country trail with trailhead.

Mr. Wilson – urban mountain trail with parking lot and restroom, paved river trail

Mr. Hosking – Verde River Greenway trails extension, downtown Prescott

Mr. Applegate – Arizona trail/back country; wooden trail through riparian area

Mr. Halling – Urban linear through housing development

Mr. Potts mentioned that Mr. Hosking may also have examples of rails-to-trails and pedestrian bridge projects.

Ms. McVay would like to receive these examples prior to the scheduled ASCOT meeting in October.

3. Subcommittee Breakouts – The several subcommittees of ASCOT met at 10:00am to discuss the work of the subcommittees and prepare for reports back to ASCOT during the reports section. Ms. McVay noted that ascot members serving on multiple subcommittees should have to time to sit in with each committee, however the State Trails System nomination subcommittee would be the first priority for members serving there.

(Adjourn for lunch at 12:00pm; reconvene at 12:31pm. Prior to reconvening, Chair Winslow announced that she will be taking a new position with the BLM in Washington DC.)

4. Update on Trails Heritage Fund Match Reduction.

Mr. Taylor briefly recapped the history of the Match Reduction effort. Approximately 3.5 years ago, ASCOT began the effort to lower the match on Trails Heritage Fund grants as part of recommendations on the State Trails Plan 2005. This effort was unsuccessful, as was another effort approximately a year ago. ASCOT then took a plan to lower the match to 25% from 50% to the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Commission (AORCC) earlier in 2008. AORCC at this time approved of the plan and recommended that the ASP Board pass the plan. The first time this proposal went before the ASP Board, they asked ASCOT to review the proposal and return with changes. The ASP Board agendaized the match reduction discussion for their July 18, 2008 meeting. ASCOT members attended the meeting to make a case for a 25% match reduction across the board. The Board reviewed, and passed the proposal as per the Staff recommendation, lowering the match amount to 25% for all applicants with the exception of Federal entities, whose match remains at 50%. Mr. Taylor went on the note that despite the 3.5-year timeline, ASCOT had achieved a major policy change to the Trails Heritage grant rules.

Mr. Potts asked why the ASP Board elected to exclude Federal entities from the reduction. Ms. McVay responded that she felt the ASP Board did not want to absolve the Federal agencies of their duty to provide recreation. She went on to commend ASCOT and the trails community for attending, in force, both the recent AORCC meeting and the two ASP Board meetings at which this issue was discussed. She noted additionally that the proposal passed by the ASP Board on July 18, 2008 was a three-year trial, and would be revisited at that time. The trails community will need to demonstrate that the change was positive, probably resulting in more grant applications from smaller communities.

Mr. Vuolo said that, in the case of Pinetop-Lakeside and other small community surrounded by Federal lands, this would make applying somewhat more difficult. Ms. McVay noted that this point had been brought before the ASP Board.

Ms. Bradley thanked Mr. Taylor for his leadership on this issue. Mr. Taylor said that the process also accomplished educating the ASP Board about trails and issues with the trails community. Mr. Saway asked why there is no trails member on the ASP Board. It was explained that the ASP Board consists of recreation professionals, ranchers, and at-large members of the public.

Ms. Bradley asked if the ASP Public Information Officer could provide a press release on this policy change, especially to smaller communities. A member said that it would be helpful for Ms. McVay to eMail the press release to ASCOT members for dissemination through other channels.

Mr. Schilke whether if a community wants to build a trail, and there is no land within the community itself, but rather on USFS or BLM land, would that match be restricted to the 50% match or would the match be the 25% intended to help smaller communities. Mr. Vuolo said that because the land would be Federal land, it would likely be the 50% match. Ms. McVay said that she would refer the question to the Trails Heritage Fund grant coordinator, Mr. Bob Baldwin. Mr. Vuolo said that in his experience, the land owner must ultimately prepare and submit the grant application. Ms. Bradley said that the challenge of a split match would lead to creative thinking on the part of applicants. Mr. Potts noted that in the past, Pima County had partnered with the Bureau of Reclamation; therefore partnering with Counties might be a possibility.

D. REPORTS—Committee and staff reports may be written or verbal and followed by brief discussion.

1. Reports

a. Staff Reports

Trails 2010 Plan Update – Ms. McVay noted that the planning process is moving along. The statewide phone survey has been completed, however the results have not yet been compiled. Both the land manager survey and the targeted-user surveys are on their way, if not already received. The survey period will cease at the end of summer. Focus groups of motorized and non-motorized trails users and land managers will begin in the fall. These focus groups will held at disbursed areas across the state at Flagstaff, Pinetop-Lakeside, Lake Havasu, Yuma, Tucson, Sierra Vista, Phoenix and the Verde Valley.

Arizona Parks and Recreation (APRA) Annual Conference – Ms. McVay noted that the conference is August 25-29, 2008, with keynote speaker Richard Louv (“Last Child in the Woods”) speaking on Thursday. The theme of the conference is Leave No Child Indoors. The speaker on Wednesday will be Richard Martin, speaking on alleviating parents’ fear in letting their children into the outdoors.

OHV Bill – Ms. McVay said that the OHV Bill, which has been before the State Legislature in various forms for three years, recently passed. The Bill requires safety equipment and noise abatement equipment for vehicles, riders under 18 to wear a helmet, and acts of trespass or vandalism on the part of riders is a class 3 misdemeanor. Funding for

enforcement is part of the Bill. Also required is a license plate on each vehicle, and vehicle owners must purchase an annual sticker.

Partnership with Arizona Office of Tourism on Potentially Hosting the State Trails System Online – Ms. McVay said that the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) has agreed to host the Arizona State Trails System (STS) online in searchable form. The website will be www.AZPassages.com however the STS is not up and running as of yet. Hopefully it will be up by the next ASCOT meeting. Ms. McVay went on to thank Liz Krug, Chief of Research and Marketing for ASP, with initiating contact with AOT.

b. Historic Trails Task Force

Ms. Grandrud noted that Ms. Ellis had taken notes at the subcommittee meeting and would speak. Ms. Ellis said that one emphasis in the subcommittee is interfacing with the STS Nomination subcommittee to review any applications dealing with historic trails that might be received. She also noted that a compilation of all historic trails in Arizona is a goal of the subcommittee, as there is no single source for this information now. She also said the subcommittee discussed encouraging STS nominations for historic trails. There isn't yet a concrete idea of how to accomplish that. The Cochise Trails Association is looking into information on the Butterfield, Coronado and Mormon Battalion trails in Cochise County, and the subcommittee may be able to help them work on that. Mr. Potts noted that there are no historic trails nominated this year. Further discussion followed on whether recreation trail nominations had ever reflected a historic trail, the interface between the two subcommittees and working on getting parts of the Anza Trail ready to submit an application. Ms. Grandrud asked to receive a copy of the STS nomination criteria.

c. State Trails System Task Force

State Trails System Nomination – Mr. Taylor noted that the process leaves it up to the agency to determine what category in which their nominated trail falls. He asked whether the Historic Trails subcommittee would like to receive a list of the nominations applications or copies of the applications. Ms. Grandrud noted that she would like to receive both, and subcommittee members will review them. Mr. Taylor went on to say that there are 44 applications to review for this nomination cycle of various types from multiple agencies across the state. The review meeting will be held on September 4, 2008.

Trails Monitoring Report – Ms. DeCindis said that as previously mentioned, the STS website with trails monitoring form is imminent. The subcommittee also discussed some concepts for the next year, such as that ASCOT begin to look at how to promote state trails,

especially at meeting sites around the state. This would provide a chance to do outreach, marketing and education to local groups. This would also allow for a chance to gather information on trails monitoring in the area. This would allow ASCOT to become a liaison to the trails community, to the networking groups, best practices and information sharing. ASCOT could then take on a larger role in the state parks and trails systems. At the end of the year, this would help ASCOT structure their goals for the coming year. Chair Winslow noted that the mandate for ASCOT covers two areas, which are STS nominations/monitoring and providing a liaison to the Trails Heritage grant rating team. ASCOT has worked in the past on other goals, and a new way to approach these goals will be welcome. When the monitoring form becomes available on the website, this will help the STS monitoring subcommittee also look at the task in a new way.

d. Public Outreach Task Force (including Member Recruitment subcommittee.)

Ms. Smith said that the fall Trails Special Event will be sponsoring a table at National Public Lands Day. The event will be held at Lost Dutchman State Park in Apache Junction in late October, possibly October 25. This will allow for publicity for the event to begin early. They are planning on hikes of various skill levels, a speaker, and other features. The subcommittee will meet again to formulate a concrete schedule.

Member Recruitment – Ms. Grandrud noted that the subcommittee had met via conference call in June. At today’s meeting, the subcommittee looked at the member “category” openings as well as the geographic representation of members. They also discussed some potential changes to ASCOT as the group downsizes. She also noted that member recruitment fliers are available for members to take for distribution. Applications for new members and/or current members who would like to reapply are due September 26, 2008 (the final Friday in September.) Ms. Grandrud also noted that the subcommittee discussed the concept of ASCOT becoming a “Committee of the Whole” and electing only a Chair and Vice-Chair. In that way, members could participate in whatever activity they choose at any time, rather than having structured subcommittees. Ms. Bradley asked for clarification. Ms. Grandrud said that currently, in addition to Chair and Vice-Chair, there are chairs for the two subcommittees (State Trails System and Public Outreach). The subcommittee’s idea would be to simplify the structure, conduct some mentoring and also to recruit some younger people. She also noted that Mr. Vuolo had brought out that those at the beginning of their careers may not enjoy the ability to attend meetings on regular basis. It may be easier if there were a more relaxed structure. Mr. Vuolo also noted that during the subcommittee’s discussion, it was brought up that there needs to be more communication in light of the downsizing of ASCOT. Thinking of past ASCOT members as one category among a few, he thought ASCOT might recruit “assistants” to not only attend meetings, but to provide feedback and information in between meetings. This communication would work both ways, as in the case of policy changes. Ms. Grandrud also noted that the subcommittee felt that the existing “categories” of membership should be retained with the citizen-at-large representing more volunteer organizations. Mr. Hosking spoke briefly on the

importance of trails volunteers. Ms. Bradley noted that it must be kept in mind that not all trails-builders are interested in policy meetings, and this is a policy group.

E. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Tom Hollender of the White Mountain Conservation League (WMCL) talked about his organization. The League has been in existence for 18 years and covers both the east and west side of the White Mountains. Recently the organization has become renewed over some of the issues around motorized use of non-motorized trails. Mr. Hollender recently became a member of the League board. He went on to list the League's alliances with state and national organizations such as the Sierra Club, Arizona Wilderness Association, Sky Island Alliance, and, hopefully, ASCOT, the Wilderness Society. There are also alliances with local and tribal governments.

The League is looking for new members. They are especially looking for a cross-over with Tracks in Pinetop-Lakeside.

Mr. Hollender distributed brochures for the League, on which discusses the mission of the organization, and another discussing the OHV issue. He mentioned that the League's website is listed in the brochures.

The League is currently working with the US Forest Service regarding their travel management plan, which is ongoing nationally in all forests. WMCL is working with OHV recreationists to achieve a balanced plan allowing for both motorized and non-motorized recreation in the forests. One focus of the balance would be to maintain "quiet" recreation areas.

Another area the League is working on is new trails within the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest. They are also looking to get more of the USFS trails on to the State Trails System.

The WMCL is also working on adding acres to the Escudilla Wilderness. At the moment, the Wilderness is 5200+/- acres. They are doing surveys of the areas to add, and should be finished by September to submit the proposal to the Forest. One reason for this project is that the Forest has already proposed routes in their travel management in the Wilderness area. They would like to ask for ASCOT's support of this proposal once it is finished and reviewed by ASCOT. Chair Winslow asked that the proposal be furnished to allow sufficient time for ASCOT to review. The next ASCOT meeting is in October; the proposal must be completed and given to the Forest by September. Mr. Hollender will supply a copy to Ms. McVay by mid-September for distribution to ASCOT. Mr. Hollender also supplied a phone number (928-339-4969) and an eMail address (Tom@AZWMCL.org).

In response to an almost question by Ms. Grandrud, Mr. Hollender noted that there was a historic trail in the Wilderness. He feels it was one of the old access routes from the north end. Ms. Grandrud also noted that ASCOT has for some time discussed becoming an umbrella organization, and she wanted to know how Mr. Hollender's organization would fit under such an umbrella. Mr. Hollender said he sees WMCL, Tracks, and organizations that type in Coconino County, into Prescott and into southeastern Arizona could form substantial political clout. This is why WMCL has formed the statewide and national coalitions it already has.

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

Chair Winslow said that she had a request for a “Current Events” discussion, which was the Make a Difference award the Black Canyon Trail Coalition received from the BLM, and Ms. Overholser’s/Ms. Slay’s attendance at the award ceremony. Ms. Slay said that the trip was great, and that there had been only eight other award-winners nationally. Ms. Overholser commended the BLM on their efforts to recognize volunteers in a meaningful way. She enjoyed the trip and felt that BLM treated the award winners very well.

Mr. Taylor noted that the Bill before the US Congress to recognize the Arizona Trail as a National Scenic Trail, which has already passed the Senate, recently had a hearing in the House Natural Resources subcommittee. The Bill should now move through the House, and hopefully be voted on soon.

Ms. McVay said that ASP annually evaluates the performance of its various departments. This month, Resource Management is evaluated, and Ms. McVay handed out “rating cards” on which ASCOT members can rate and comment on ASP staff performance.

Future agenda items: review and discuss WMCL Escudilla Wilderness proposal, discuss what ASCOT can do differently, to become more relevant to the trails community, including a resurvey of the ASCOT structure. Ms. Bradley asked for more detailed presentations from the subcommittees that mentioned ideas along these lines. Ms. McVay suggested that anyone with ideas on how this discussion should proceed eMail her with their ideas; review the STS Nominations for ASCOT’s recommendations; update on the AOT/ASP partnership on the website for the STS.

H. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday, October 3 at a location to be determined.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Winslow called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. DeCindis moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Applegate seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 1:32pm.