



# ROCKIN' RIVER RANCH MASTER PLAN TAC MEETING NOTES - DRAFT

<b>Project Info:</b>	Meeting Notes	<b>Meeting No.:</b>	01
<b>Re:</b>	Technical Advisory Committee Workshop #1	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	May 16, 2017
<b>Attachment(s):</b>	Project Area Map, Floodplain Map, Water Rights Map, Schedule, Trails Map within 5 miles, Camp Verde River Recreation Planning Map	<b>Meeting Time:</b>	9:00 am
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	675 Dead Horse Ranch Road, Cottonwood, AZ, 86326, VRG Studio	<b>Location:</b>	Dead Horse Ranch State Park

### ATTENDEES:

Anna Schrenk	Friends of the Verde River Greenway	Wayne Colebank	Logan Simpson
Laura Jones	Friends of the Verde River Greenway	Brad Remme	Logan Simpson
Tom Palmer	Prescott National Forest (PNF)	Eileen Baden	Logan Simpson
Steve Ayers	Town of Camp Verde		
Elaine Theriault	Concessionaire		
Tom Bagley	Arizona Game and Fish (AGFD)		
Kim Schonek	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)		
Keith Ayotte	Arizona State Parks and Trails (ASPT)		
Dusty Humphreys	Arizona State Parks and Trails		

### PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Workshop #1 was to introduce the members of the TAC and their respective organizations, to discuss how the TAC will participate throughout the master plan process to develop effective strategies for the Park, and to gain support for the project. The TAC developed recommended project goals and objectives plus commented on the proposed planning process, schedule, and public participation strategy. At the end of the meeting a summary of future steps and TAC workshops was presented.

### MEETING NOTES

1. Introductions (self, organization)
2. Review Site Map
  - ▶ **Access Point:** May want to move access point away from curve; it's near the top of the hill. Will likely need to add turn-lane into Park. ADOT may support funding for roads projects that improve access to Arizona state parks. The project may need a new/modified easement from the Forest Service for access road. No potential to access site via Winchester Trail.
  - ▶ **Site:** Upon entering the site from Salt Mine Road there are large horse pastures, a pond, and multiple buildings. The south central portion of the site was formerly farmed (winter wheat) and now has low grasses/weeds. The southern portion is natural, undeveloped and contains a mesquite bosque.
3. TAC Roles/Responsibilities
  - ▶ Recommended goals and objectives for the Park:
    - ▶ Goal #1: Maintain the historic and natural character of the ranch.
    - ▶ Goal #2: Integrate project goals/objectives with other local/regional planning efforts.

- ▶ Goal #3: Provide camping (cabins, tents, float-in by reservation, RVs, horse camping).
  - ▶ Goal #4: Consider public access points to the Verde River.
  - ▶ Goal #5: Maximize uses within the floodway.
  - ▶ Goal #6: Keep the ranch horse-friendly.
  - ▶ Goal #7: Strike a balance between multiple program of uses and activities.
  - ▶ Representing community interests
    - ▶ Partnerships will be very important to the project, per Skip.
4. Consultant Scope of Work Review
- ▶ Wayne Colebank, Logan Simpson reviewed the scope of work for Logan Simpson Team for development of the Rockin' River Ranch Master Plan.
  - ▶ Ballard King will identify recreation users and users groups, help to identify program of activities that may go on site, and also will do a business plan for the Park. They'll evaluate whether the program is fiscally viable over the long-term.
  - ▶ From ASPT, James Meza, Water Resources Specialist will provide guidance on water rights. Geo-hydrologists may be needed to identify and analyze well issues.
  - ▶ Terracon, a geotechnical firm, will provide soils information and can test soils for underground structure design (and cost for them), during design phase of project.
  - ▶ Wilson Engineers will address water and wastewater needs.
  - ▶ Topographical survey should be completed soon.
  - ▶ Logan Simpson will look at biological issues, visual resources (identify important characteristics of the site), existing structures (not a full architecture analysis), and what would it take to get them up to the level of safety needed.
  - ▶ Cultural resources have not been evaluated yet. No cultural survey has been done.
  - ▶ No geotechnical drilling will occur at this time since we're in the planning process. Data will be used from existing projects near the project vicinity.
  - ▶ Demographic data: Types of uses at other state parks in the area as well as visitor data will be reviewed. Logan Simpson will review data from ASPT from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), as well as data from the recent NAU recreation study done for the Verde Valley area.
  - ▶ Major overhaul on existing water distribution is expected. Logan Simpson to review ASPT analysis completed for water resources and wastewater systems, roads and buildings. Building assessment may include cost estimate for updating the buildings. Buildings may need 5 ft. of water proofing if they're in the floodway.
  - ▶ Hydrological analysis of the River (to know how it operates in and around the site) will be completed by Wood Patel.
  - ▶ Septic systems will likely go away. A small wastewater treatment plant may be needed on-site.
5. Community Outreach
- ▶ Public Outreach Objectives were discussed – open, honest engagement of public.
  - ▶ Discussion of Public Meeting #1
    - ▶ Public meeting: Open House format, no formal presentation. Large site maps will be printed with people to draw on or add post-it notes. Boards will include a large map with 1 mile-buffer showing land uses and zoning, large map with 5-mile boundary showing existing and planned trails, multiple boards covering the site resources inventory including biology (vegetation and wildlife), historic buildings and visual characteristics of the site, a board with images of different activities including another large board with list of potential programming activities and site uses in alphabetical order-people can add dots for the activities they like, as well as a board with a diagram with the master

plan process broken out with critical dates/schedule. A PowerPoint will be used that will scroll through images of different activities and images of the site.

- ▶ Glenn Schlottman of ASPT will send out public meeting notices. No information on whether specific letters will be sent to adjacent landowners.
6. Schedule (TAC meeting dates, public meeting dates, Master Plan preparation, etc.) was discussed.
7. Context for Development of Goals and Objectives for the Park
- ▶ Key Issues (flood, noise, target audience, fiscal considerations, etc.)
    - ▶ **Floodway:** Majority of eastern portion of site is located within a floodway. Team discussed that floodway will present significant difficulties for development. There are several options to address this condition, including building flood berms and flood proofing structures. Steve mentioned that the new town library was just constructed in a floodway, so development restrictions may not be a hindrance for Park. Steve to provide Logan Simpson with information. Logan Simpson to follow up with the Yavapai County Flood Control District (FCD).
    - ▶ **Noise:** Adjacent neighbors may submit complaints if noisy activities occur, especially into the evening. Steve identified that generators are required to be off by 10:00pm
    - ▶ **Night Lights:** There may be concerns from neighbors about too many bright lights.
    - ▶ **Fiscal Considerations:** Question arose about the financial target (profit) for the Park. At this time, no performance requirement has been identified by ASPT. ASPT to provide clarification/information on this item.
    - ▶ **Threatened & Endangered (T&E) Species:** T&E species occur or have habitat within the Verde River corridor (within riparian vegetation and River). A cursory evaluation will be completed for these species. River uses, including boat/float-in camping and tent camping, could occur in the mesquite bosque, depending on coordination with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
    - ▶ **Mesquite Bosque:** Anna mentioned the mesquite bosque is an important habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo and that they depend on it for food.
    - ▶ **Clear Creek River Access Point** (the Forest Service facility just north of Rockin' River site) may be closed down once the Park is open. Steep area to get boats into the water, there are erosion issues, and the bathrooms were taken out due to vandalism. This may also remain open to concessionaries for kayak trips (PNF decision).
    - ▶ **Water Rights:** Kim questioned ASPT's stated objective to maintain all water rights for the property. She indicated that the Water Settlement Agreement between ASPT and TNC anticipated/expected that some ASPT water rights would be given up so that more water could be delivered from the Verde Ditch to the Verde River. Steve mentioned that Camp Verde is also taking actions to keep/put water in the River. Dusty replied that this matter would be reviewed but we need to consider what activities will occur in the Park to see if returning additional water to the River is even a possibility. Kim indicated that TNC had to forfeit some water rights in southern AZ due to poor planning; ASPT wants to avoid this result so the issue will be considered throughout the planning process but not addressed immediately. Wayne mentioned the site may need to continue irrigating the pastures to keep the ranch character. Kim stated that the site would need water rights for Park features and amenities including bathrooms, showers, RVs, but suggested consulting SRP about management of the water and asked to consider options besides flood irrigation for the pastures.
    - ▶ **Water Rights Map.** A map showing the Park lands with and without water rights was shown. It was agreed that the boundary of those lands could be moved/adjusted as desired through a DWR Severance Transfer process.
  - ▶ Potential Park Uses for Consideration (Note: Park may be implemented in phases. Need to attract diverse user groups, plus get locals interested in the site activities and uses)

- ▶ **Program for the site** (activities and uses): Recreational activities may include: hiking, biking, swimming, camping, wildlife viewing, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, picnicking, trail riding, bird watching, and educational components associated with the environment and history of the area.
- ▶ **Festivals/Events:**
  - Could the pasture be used for certain festival activities? The kayaking festival along the Verde River needs more parking.
  - Birding Festivals, Food & Wine Festivals, Farmers Markets
- ▶ **Trails:**
  - PNF is interested in connections that would improve access points to trails and parks in Coconino and Prescott National Forests. Tom (PNF) identified May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> public meetings relating to trails planning on PNF.
  - Rockin' River Ranch could serve as a home base for people to stay and then provide information to users about local hiking, biking, equestrian, OHV trails.
  - Parking is an issue for PNF and CNF trails. Tom Palmer, PNF, is working on plans to provide more parking.
  - Possible equestrian underpass on Salt Mine Road would be needed to provide access from Rockin' River Ranch to PNF trails. Possible expansion of equestrian trail along Verde Ditch irrigation right-of-way and it would help keep vegetation down (this portion may go through the Truswell Forest Service property).
  - The Verde River is considered a trail. Steve Ayers, Camp Verde, mentioned they consider Dead Horse Ranch State Park and Rockin' River Ranch two bookends in their planning processes.
- ▶ **Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV):**
  - No OHV uses within the Park. May serve as good place for OHV users to base camp and take their OHV's to nearby areas. Steve mentioned Camp Verde has great OHV trails (260 Hayfield Draw Area, trailhead at Copper Canyon-can drive under the Freeway to Box T and Ryan Canyon).
  - Per Skip, the Park may be able to receive OHV funding if OHVs are allowed to camp within the Park. ASPT receives approximately \$3 million dollars/year from OHV-specific funding sources.
- ▶ **Camping & Cabins:**
  - **RV's:**
    - According to the feedback that Logan Simpson had previously received from the FCD, the RV area, if located within the floodway, would need to have all electrical, pipes, etc. water-proofed. An evacuation plan may be needed so RV's could exit the Park within a 2-hour notice.
    - Too many RV's would contribute to a loss of ranch-like character.
    - There are lots of variables related to the desirability and viability of RVs, including the safety condition of SMR (and the size of RVs that can access the Park) – may need to restrict large (Class A) motorhomes.
  - **Tent Camping**
    - The Verde Valley needs more tent camping. The only campground in that area is Clear Creek.
    - Camping would provide a steady stream of revenue without much upfront cost.
    - Camping area for large groups, such as the boy scouts would seem a viable use.
    - Attendees mentioned they would like to see dispersed camping options – remote, tent, etc..
  - **Cabins**
    - Pre-fabricated log cabin – ASPT has 6 models (one used the most is 11 ft. wide by 20 ft. long with a 5 ft. porch). The larger model is 13 ft. wide. They accommodate 4-6 people.
    - Cabins will have a visual effect, depending on the locations and densities.
    - Previously farmed area, may want to consider cabins there.

- Cabins along the River may not be a possibility due to the floodway concern.
- ▶ **Equestrian Activities:**
  - There was a substantial discussion on the market for 'horse camping' – visitors bringing horses and horse trailers to the Park as a base for further travels and/or for utilizing adjacent trails and resources. Apparently, there is an established market for these uses.
  - The Park would need an improved system of trails outside of the Park.
  - Skip mentioned that multi-use paths have been developed by ASPT for combined OHV and equestrian uses. The shared trails have worked well together (this item relates to trails that would be outside of the Park).
  - There was a discussion about having an arena and holding equestrian events such as rodeos or clinics to teach people about training horses. Verde Fairgrounds has a big equestrian show in Cottonwood. Horse Lovers Park in Cave Creek and WestWorld were also mentioned, although possibly those are at a larger scale than would occur here. Catalina State Park also has equestrian area.
  - It would be a desirable experience for visitors, particular Phoenix visitors, just to visit the Park and see the horses and related activities - don't necessarily need to ride them.
  - Horses from multiple groups (if equestrian events are occurring) can't be penned together in a single corral. Corrals would need to be set up to separate horses from different owners to protect the equines from acquiring diseases from other stock. Elaine stated that it takes 1 acre per horse to keep these animals on a permanent basis.
- ▶ **Conference Center**
  - Conference Center: Large groups (businesses, environmental groups, family reunions, weddings) could come rent conference and hotel rooms and stay for a few days for retreats. Scale of potential conference center was discussed. Highland Center in Prescott with trails around it was brought up as a good example as it focuses on environmental education. It may be worthwhile to consider discussing teaming opportunities with the Highland Center – maybe they would want to operate a branch out of Rockin' River Ranch. The Audubon Society building in Phoenix was mentioned for comparison, it is approximately 9,000 sq ft. The new library in Camp Verde is 17,000 sq ft and built within the Verde River floodway. A moderate-sized conference center would be anticipated to be 15,000-25,000 sq ft, depending on whether sleeping quarters, kitchen, and other facilities would be included.
  - Kim mentioned that conference space in the Verde Valley is not limited, so maybe other uses/activities at the Park would make better sense (such as camping).
  - ASPT is not aware of conference centers in many other parks.
- ▶ **Kayaking/Tubing:**
  - The general sense would be to restrict River outfitters from putting in/taking out in RRRSP due to potential conflicts with Park users and potential maintenance concerns.
  - May want to consider Park launchings from Clear Creek site on PNF land as a way to discourage outfitters and others from traversing Park lands to launch.
  - Kayak/tubing "loop" could be developed (launch at upper end of Park and take out a lower end) with potential to provide a hayride, horseback ride, or other motorized vehicle to bring kayakers and canoers back to the put in location/rental spot.
  - Tubing will take maybe an hour; those people could also walk back to the launch point via a combined hiking/equestrian/buggy trail developed along the River.

- The question came up about number of people allowed to use the river. Tom (PNF) mentioned there are requirements for the Wild and Scenic portion of the river, but Rockin' River Ranch is not located within that portion. Tom mentioned the USFS is looking into capacity of the river.
  - From White Bridge, if River runners end at Beasley, the half-way point is at Clear Creek. It may be a 4-hour float from White Bridge. Beasley Flat river access point has no amenities except parking. As use continues, the FS may convert to a reservation system for day use.
  - ▶ **Concessions:**
    - Concessions can help with operations of the Park, although a limited number is preferred. Concessionaires can contribute positively, for example, shuttle services can reduce the number of cars for certain activities. Possibility of shuttle service to transfer OHV's to different locations.
    - There is a potential to turn historic buildings into gift shops, ice cream parlors, restaurants, bars, B&Bs, etc.
  - ▶ **Additional Potential Activities:**
    - Zip lining
    - Weddings and photo shoots.
    - Archery events, Virtual Reality studio (to compliment already occurring movie and photography activities) - locals may be interested in these.
    - No paintball. No target shooting (guns).
8. Communication Protocols-TBD. Logan Simpson to discuss with Russell Moore, Project Manager, ASPT. Communication with TAC can occur without restriction or via a single individual appointed by ASPT as the TAC spokesman.
9. Action Items (see below)

Action Items				
Action Item	Lead	Due Date	Representing	Status
Send Logan Simpson and ASPT the Northern Arizona University Recreation Study of the Verde Valley	Steve Ayers	5/26/2017	Camp Verde	
Send Logan Simpson and ASPT the Focus Future 2 Plan (Economic and Community Development Strategy)	Steve Ayers	5/26/2017	Camp Verde	
The Camp Verde Library Construction Plans and requirements from Yavapai County Flood Control District	Steve Ayers	5/26/2017	Camp Verde	
Send a copy of the Water Settlement Agreement with SRP on this property to Logan Simpson and ASPT.	Kim Schonek	5/26/2017	TNC	
Send Logan Simpson analysis of roads, historic buildings and water and wastewater systems completed by ASPT.	Skip Varney	5/26/2017	ASPT	
ASPT to provide information from the state governor's office on the proposed budget.	Keith Ayotte/Dusty Humphreys	5/26/2017	ASPT	

<b>Action Items</b>				
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Status</b>
Add river as a trail on the trails map and include river access points.	Eileen Baden	5/22/2017	Logan Simpson	
Send copy of public meeting announcement to TAC.	Eileen Baden	ASAP	Logan Simpson	
Follow-up with Russell Moore, ASPT, about communication protocols for the TAC.	Wayne Colebank	5/26/2017	Logan Simpson	
Send Logan Simpson and ASPT information on the Truswell property.	Tom Palmer	5/26/2017	PNF	
Send Logan Simpson and ASPT invasive species projects on Rockin' River Ranch.	Anna Schrenk	5/26/2017	Friends of the Verde River Greenway	

**10. Upcoming TAC Workshops & Public Meetings**

- ▶ TAC Workshop #2 – Presentation of Findings – Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> 2017
- ▶ TAC Workshop #3 – Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives – Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- ▶ TAC Workshop #4 – Preliminary Master Plan Presentation – Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017
  
- ▶ Public Meeting #1 – Information Gathering – Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017
- ▶ Public Meeting #2 – Open House on Alternatives – Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- ▶ Public Meeting #3 – Presentation of the Master Plan – Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

*The above meeting notes summarize the substantive items discussed or issues resolved at the above meeting. Participants are encouraged to review these notes and respond to Wayne Colebank within five calendar days of the distribution date of these notes if any discrepancies exist. If no comments are received by this time, it will be assumed that these notes accurately reflect the substantive content of the meeting.*