

PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2010  
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE held on Friday September 17, 2010 in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS located at 201 SOUTH CORTEZ STREET, Prescott, Arizona.

A. Call to Order.

Chairman Lamerson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

B. Roll Call.

COUNCIL WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Present:

Chairman Jim Lamerson  
Member Mary Ann Suttles  
Member Steve Blair arrived at 9:03 a.m.

Leslie Graser was present from the staff.

C. Approval of the minutes of the July 9, 2010, July 27, 2010 and August 13, 2010.

Minutes of July 9, 2010, July 27, 2010 and August 13, 2010 were approved by unanimous consent.

Member Suttles noted that she had a 10:00 a.m. meeting at the Veteran's Administration. Ms. Graser noted that she also had another meeting to attend at 10:00 a.m.

D. Presentation by Amanda Richardson, Watershed Improvement Project Coordinator, Prescott Creeks, and discussion of relationship to enhancement goals for Watson Lake.

Ms. Richardson presented a Powerpoint which included:

- **Mission Statement** – they work to preserve, restore and celebrate the unique resources of the area
- **Granite Creek Watershed** – part of the Upper Verde Watershed System

- **Local Water Quality Issues**
- **Targeted Watershed Improvement Plan Grants** - started by Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to address specific pollutants causing impairments within targeted drainage areas around the state. Granite Creek and Watson Lakes were both impaired water bodies. Granite Creek, for low dissolved oxygen and Watson Lake for excessive nutrients, ph and low dissolved oxygen. Neither water body was currently impaired for bacteria, but they did regularly exceed State standards.
- **Upper Granite Creek Watershed Improvement Plan** – their goal was to try to identify the primary sources of nutrients and E.coli in the watershed, develop a plan and prioritize projects in the future to reduce pollutant concentration.
- **Project Area** – the upper part of the Granite Creek Watershed, which are Watson Creek, Granite Creek and Granite Creek’s main tributaries.
- **Granite Creek Watershed Improvement Council** – had representatives from the City of Prescott, Arizona Department of Transportation, Yavapai County, Prescott National Forest and Prescott Creeks.
- **Granite Creek Watershed.org**
- **Work Plan**
- **Existing data compilation**
  1. Water quality monitoring
  2. Physical survey
  3. Social survey
  4. BMP identification and prioritization (best management practices)
  5. Financial survey
  6. Watershed Improvement Plan
  7. Project implementation
- **Water Quality Monitoring**

They were guided by the impairments – E.coli bacteria originated in the intestines of warm blooded animals, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), ammonia, bacteroides DNA. Nitrate would be the main contributor from septic systems. Functioning septic systems would only

remove 20% of the nitrate. They would be able to tell human sources from animal bacteria.

There would also be the measuring of dissolved oxygen, ph, turbidity and water temperature. They use volunteers, who are a diverse segment from the community

- **Water Quality Findings-** based on their findings combined with those of ADEQ

1. Ascendances, (spikes in nutrient and bacteria levels beyond the Arizona State standard) occur mostly during runoff events and high flows in the creeks.
2. Critical conditions occurred in December and January; the low dissolved oxygen levels were not tied to nutrient loading. It seemed that low dissolved oxygen was related to low flows. The sources of the nutrients were coming from many places, which was non point source pollution.
3. Riparian areas may not be functioning properly due to overland run off.

One of the services that they did provide was that they could intercept overland flow. If they were in good condition they should be able to provide that service.

There was no evidence of point discharges, like a failing septic system. They did not seem to be contributing a lot to the ascendances.

- **Physical Survey**

1. Collect physical information relevant to water quality
2. Riparian buffer disturbances
3. Inflows from pipes ditches and culverts
4. Potential pollutant sources – camping, animal scat

They had walked 17 miles of creek and were in the process of entering their findings.

- **Riparian Buffer Assessment**

They collected physical and botanical data related to the riparian condition and ability to intercept surface flow. They did not have as much vegetation as they would like.

- **Map of Transect for Riparian survey**

- **Next Steps**

Mr. Worob asked if Ms. Richardson had done mapping of where the septic systems were in relation to the creeks. Ms. Richardson said no, but they had received some data from the County. The data did not address their condition. The septic systems removed a lot of bacteria. She did not think septic systems were contributing to the big spikes.

Chairman Lamerson noted that using red on a graph always alerted him. Ms. Richardson noted that the color was chosen at random. Chairman Lamerson said that it seemed that there were some negative consequences to an already challenged eco system. He asked if they were going to make recommendations with regards to the potential cause and effect of exotic conditions.

Ms. Richardson said that riparian buffers provided a host of services. Exotic vegetation could have a negative impact on the buffer. For the purposes of this project, they had to be narrow. They were not considering the exotics a problem for this study. It did not matter what type of vegetation was there, as long as there was vegetation.

Chairman Lamerson asked how, if they do not belong there, they got there. Ms. Richardson said that there were private land owners who plant whatever they wanted. There were also regional problems with tamarisk and salt cedar.

They were doing the assessment with hopes that the findings could be used elsewhere, outside of the project.

Mr. Byrd noted that they tended to look at native vegetation preferentially. It functioned better and provided great eco system services. They were trying to show how much vegetative vs. non vegetative cover they had. The chart showed that there were a lot of areas that did not have a vegetative cover. There was a local noxious weed management group that the City may be involved with.

Member Suttles left the meeting at 9:31 a.m.

Mr. Bean asked how they defined their buffered areas.

Ms. Richardson answered that the transects went from the middle of the creek out a maximum of 10 meters. In some areas, a riparian buffer may have gone beyond that. Research showed that 10 meters next to the bank was the critical area for a buffer.

Mr. Worob asked who the botanist was who they had worked with. Ms. Richardson answered, Dr. Baker with ASU, Southwest Botanical Research was his firm, based out of Chino Valley. Mr. Byrd noted that each state kept a list of noxious weeds. Mr. Worob said that they were lacking in knowledge of plant life in the lakes.

Member Blair left the room at 9:33 a.m.

Jay Crocker said that there were two transport mechanisms for aquatic plants, migratory birds and boats. Plants did not go from one habitat where they could live to where they could not live.

- **Watershed Residents' Survey** – to understand public knowledge, perception and attitudes towards watershed protection and restoration.

Ms. Richardson said they received 1500 surveys back and they needed 400 responses to get statistical confidence.

- **Preliminary Findings**

78% of the respondents knew what a watershed was.

88% of respondents thought it was important to restore the waterways.

Over 50% said they would pay extra to improve the watershed, approximately \$1 – 1.50 per month.

69% were willing to pay a fee and could name the watershed in which they lived and wanted to learn more. 31% would not pay a fee and could not name the watershed and did not want to learn more. Ms. Richardson felt that there was a big link between the public's knowledge and the information that was available. She felt that if the public knew more about the fee and how it would work, they might be willing to endorse it.

- **Community Voices**

Ms. Richardson said that there was a lack of knowledge in the community. The public must feel that the watershed and riparian areas were important.

- **Desired Outcomes**

1. BMP
2. Riparian buffer restoration
3. Vegetative filter strips
4. Constructed wetlands
5. Detention/infiltration basins
6. Bio-swales
7. Rain gardens

- **Public Outreach and Education**

1. Marked the storm drains in 2007
2. General non point source pollution program
3. Pamphlet for property owners for stream care to prevent erosion
4. Land owners guide to fix streams on working land
5. Educate dog walkers –dogs have higher concentration of E.coli
6. Septic education

Chairman Lamerson was impressed with how important the creeks and lakes were according to the number of respondents. He thought that people understood the relevance of taking care of the aquifer.

Ms. Richardson said that they had written an article for the Prescott Creeks newsletter to summarize water quality findings which she left behind for all to have.

Mr. Budinger said that what stood out for him was that so much of what got into the creeks was not from point areas. There were many sources across the watershed. He was struck by how much people had closed in the creeks.

Ms. Richardson said that it was a multifaceted challenge. The creeks and lakes were connected. With a lot of private land ownership along the creeks, it came down to education, which was a hard piece and took years, but it was something that could be done.

Leslie Graser left at 9:58 a.m.

- E. Presentation and discussion of Watson Lake Enhancement Research and Plan Outline drafted by Lakes Sub-committee.

Mr. Worob handed out an outline that was drafted by Mr. Bean and Mr. Budinger.

Chairman Lamerson noted that there was not a quorum. He asked what the next recommendation was from the subcommittee.

Mr. Worob said that he met with Mr. McConnell. Mr. Worob said that he and Ms. Richardson worked on a sampling process at Watson Lake with Susan Fitch from ADEQ and City staff. He said that Public Works was much more competent at doing sampling with guidance from ADEQ and that there was equipment needed. He told them that the committee had approved \$25,000 for sampling. He said that it was going to be very helpful in the sampling process.

Chairman Lamerson asked if it was the \$25,000 they recommended to the Council and the Council approved and put in the budget. Mr. Worob said yes. He said that Susan Fitch would make a list of necessary equipment. She brought up Dr. David Walker from Tucson who was excited to be a part of the process. Ms. Fitch and Walt Anderson and Prescott College were also working with them to move the process forward.

- F. Discussion of Lakes Subcommittee planning process.

Mr. Worob noted that the committee knew that there were areas where they were lacking knowledge about the lakes and that they would like to have workshops in the future. He felt that they needed an expert to speak about the wetlands and nutrient farming. He suggested that perhaps Dr. Walker could speak and maybe bring Mr. Anderson back for a full day workshop.

They needed to know what it took to do a lake management plan. He asked what process they should apply. They would ask Council to pay experts to come in for a few days to educate the group from the \$25,000.

The Audubon Society had been doing years of research on birding in the area. They wanted to take advantage of that and improve on it.

Councilman Lamerson noted that one shoe did not fit all. When they talked about lake management, there were many things involved. They may do different things for different lakes. When they talked about tourism, they wanted to make sure that people got good water quality in the lakes.

He thought that there was positive reinforcement about the water quality and water rates. At some point they were going to have to look at applying the .75 to the water bill to take care of the lakes.

He would like to hear who the next speaker might be. He thought that the current Council knew that they could not depend on grants and they may have to take care of the problems themselves. Mr. Worob said that the two workshops that the mayor pushed were very well attended. Mr. Budinger said that as far as speakers went, they wanted to take the outline and fill it in. He did not know if they were ready for another speaker.

Councilman Blair returned at 10:09 a.m.

Mr. Worob said that he would like to talk to Susan Fitch again. He was not present for Dr. Walker, but thought that perhaps he had a recommendation.

Mr. Byrd said that he hosted a meeting at the Prescott Creeks office the previous week. He said that Dr. Walker and Ms. Fitch were both there. Two representatives from Prescott National Forest and Craig Dotseth were also there to talk about the work that Ms. Fitch had been doing with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and the approach to the process. The group agreed that TMDL either sailed over everyone's head or it was something that carried a lot of negativity. They had been used as adversarial processes in other parts of the country. Ms. Fitch would like to make it a collaborative effort. They would like to know what the realistic goal was that they would be able to achieve to meet the standards. He felt that it was a good meeting and that momentum was building in the community.

Regarding the next speakers, he said that the next steps that may come into play went back to the process they had proposed in June. It would be regarding technical support. He was not sure where that would come from. He felt that the workshops would fall into that slot. He would like to pull in more public and Council and dive deeper into how the lakes worked.

Mr. Worob asked what they would like to tell the public about the process that was going on with the committee. He asked if they were ready to go to the media. He said that he had great success in continually informing the public about projects that he had been involved with so there were no surprises. He thought they should do some type of expose, but not sure when they should deliver it.

Chairman Lamerson asked Member Blair if he had any comments. Member Blair said that it depended on how much they wanted to give the public. He said that visual presentations would be more readily received than just a verbal presentation. He thought that they could give four 15 minute presentations to Council on what the committee thought the four most important parts of the puzzle were and a conclusion of where they were going.

Mr. Worob said that they had talked about the necessity for workshops in four areas; lake liminology, wetlands, lake management, and wildlife. He had a hard time with the newspaper media here. He liked to write his own stories. He thought

that someone from the paper should have been at the meeting and written a story about what they were doing.

Mr. Budinger asked if that was what Talk of the Town was for.

Chairman Lamerson said that the newspaper made space available to Talk of the Town and Letters to the Editor. He did not see why any of the subcommittee members could not write something about the committee and see if the paper would publish it. He said that the paper had been sensitive to water quality problems.

Member Blair said that they should mention at the end of the article that there would be a public workshop.

Mr. Byrd said that if they had the workshops, part of the planning process might be to sit down with the editor to run a series to follow the process. Prescott Creeks followed up with Cindy Barks who said that the past editor wanted to do a follow up on the water quality.

Chairman Lamerson said that he thought the publisher had always been sensitive to those issues. He thought it would be better received from the subcommittee than the City. He said that they did not want to tell everyone that the lakes were impaired and scare them off. He did want to say that the lakes were impaired from an informational standpoint so they were not wading and drinking from the lake.

Mr. Budinger thought that timing was important and they should not jump out too far ahead. They should fill in their outline and understand how they wanted to develop the workshops before they went to the paper. There should be a timeline that was discussed with the committee.

Chairman Lamerson suggested that they did that at the next meeting. Member Blair thought they should find out if the presentation would be more beneficial at 2:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Lamerson said that he had heard that there might be an opportunity for a grant.

Mr. Budinger noted that there was money out there but they needed to define a task that was the grant and who would be supplying it. Mr. Worob said that the four workshops would be good. They would be better getting away from doing grants. The City had already allocated \$25,000. They were also talking about a possible .75 being added to the water bill for the lakes. He thought that when they did the outline, they would further define where the money should go. They needed to look at monies for the workshops and moving the process forward. He said that money had been appropriated for sampling equipment. They knew that some of the monies from the \$25,000 should go towards those workshops. They did not see

that as a lot of money, but they did not know yet. He had done research on foundations and they had tremendous support in the community through 21 foundations. He thought they should go to the foundations and tell them the processes the committee was looking at. Also that it was a community involvement and that they were part of the community and the committee would like to get money from them. He did not want to state the names of the foundations but said that he had found local money potentials for the projects.

Mr. Byrd noted that with fund raising and looking at sources of funding for the long term, looking at foundations and self funding mechanisms, it was worth noting that there was a foundation forming in the community that was still in process and was interested in the upstream watershed work. They were looking at that as some of their initial perspective on where they wanted to use their money, as it came into the foundation.

Mr. Worob said that they should not forget that they had already been told by Fish and Game that if they looked at dredging and no wake motors, they would provide grants.

Chairman Lamerson said that at some point they would have to acknowledge the fact that it did not matter what they did on the lakes, they were dealing with surface and run off water. They needed to make the connection with Salt River Project (SRP). There were some people who thought that water needed to be handled differently. He said that public health and safety was the issue. Member Blair asked if they should plan a meeting. Chairman Lamerson said yes. Mr. Worob said that they were really anxious for that to happen, but not so anxious as to have it take place too fast.

Mr. Bean said that they wanted to have some specific recommendations so they could talk intelligently to SRP.

Chairman Lamerson noted that they were talking about playing with SRP's water and SRP needed to be involved in the process.

Mr. Worob agreed and said that timing was now. Member Blair agreed. He said that they could put a list together of all of the things the group had done, including the presentations.

Mr. Bean said that rather than have a blank slate meeting with them, he would rather tell them what the committee's proposal was and how they understood the regulations that they would be dealing with and that the committee would not cross the line when managing the lakes. He wanted SRP to know that the committee wanted them on board, rather than saying that they had some vague ideas. He felt that they needed to be specific in their proposal.

Member Blair said that he thought that they should ask SRP for their opinions and leave it at that.

Mr. Budinger said that he recalled the agreement between the City and SRP was that nothing could be done unless there was a plan and they were brought in. He wanted a sketched out lake management plan and a few more discussions. He would like to wait until the first of the year. Member Blair said that they might have expertise and funds that could help with the plan. He said that they would have to respect the level that the committee had gone to. They had a lot of funds to do good neighbor things to get their name out in the system.

Mr. Worob said that he had a mental list of funding that SRP and APS was on, with a lot of other people. Mr. Byrd agreed and said that they should initiate the dialogue and let SRP know that the community was interested in a collaborative effort.

Mr. Budinger said that he did not disagree, but felt that the timing was not exactly right. If the others thought it was the right time, it was OK with him. There were some great ideas that they were sketching together as an outline.

Chairman Lamerson said that nothing irritated the associates that he had in the area more than the City government planning on how to use their property and not including them in the process.

Jim Lawrence, 345 High Chaparral Loop, said that the Granite Preservation Foundation was new. They had talked with Mr. Byrd and Ms. Richardson about the Prescott Creeks project and supplemental funding. The projects would require substantial funds. They needed to get funds beyond what the City could provide. He talked to Council members about the foundation assisting in gathering the information. The future activities would require plans. The foundation would like to assist in getting the information. He felt that it would be a good idea to do the presentations for the community and solicit funds from them at the same time.

Chairman Lamerson asked if he was suggesting a road show type approach to educating the public. Mr. Lawrence said that it was a possibility and they would like to help acquiring the funding for that.

Mr. Worob said that Eric Smith from Parks and Recreation was on the State Trails Association. He thought that they should be active in the funding process for wetland restoration. He said that he was available to show them where the money was and that there was a lot of money to be had. He was also excited about working with Walt Anderson.

Member Blair said that they should take the opportunity to address each foundation and give them an invitation to the workshops.

Chairman Lamerson said the quorum would get in touch with SRP. He would appreciate having someone talk to the committee about some of the other issues like the Environmental Protection Agency and wildlife.

Mr. Worob noted that it was said that some money from the \$25,000 could be used for increased sampling and the equipment needed to do that. The four workshops were also part of that process. He did not think that they would need a lot for the four workshops, but they did not know because they were not sure who the speakers would be. They extended the term "sampling" to include what affects the waters and how to improve them.

Chairman Lamerson said that there should be clarification on that. He thought that in the budget process, the \$25,000 that was set aside was algae specific. It had something to do with the algae study. Mr. Worob said that he had questioned that to see if they could not limit that to just the algae, because the lakes needed more involvement than just those areas. Chairman Lamerson said that he wanted to get clarification first.

Mr. Byrd said that he thought that the committee had recommended that the scope of the funds be broadened and transferred to Public Works.

Chairman Lamerson said that the committee might use the broadcast capability of Member Suttles and Member Blair's radio shows. He mentioned getting together again in a couple of weeks, to talk about what would go in the newspaper and on the radio.

G. Adjournment

There being no further business to be discussed, the Water Issues Committee meeting of September 17, 2010, adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

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JIM LAMERSON, Chairman

ATTEST:

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KIM WEBB, Assistant City Clerk