



Northeast Focus Group

Meeting Summary
Date: January 25, 2021
Time: 10:30 AM

Introduction

The four regional focus group meetings commenced with a presentation outlining the history and purpose of the Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan. Following the presentation, meeting facilitators introduced topics for an open conversation about priorities, opportunities and challenges related to the regional and local park systems.

Representatives from municipalities and major landowners within the northeast region of the County were invited to attend the Northeast Focus Group. Attendee representation included:

- Anthem
- City of Phoenix (Phoenix)
- City of Scottsdale (Scottsdale)
- Friends of Daisy Mountain Trails
- Tonto National Forest (TNF)
- Town of Cave Creek (Cave Creek)
- Town of Fountain Hills (Fountain Hills)

Summary

- Scottsdale has short and long-term plans
 - McDowell Mountain Preserve: The public isn't concerned about whose land they're on; people want access to the open space areas because they get opportunities and convenience
 - They want to know where to park, how to access the trails, etc.
 - Scottsdale must balance natural and cultural resource management with recreation access and opportunities
 - City would like public to know and use other parks/open spaces in the region to avoid over-burdening a particular park
 - Largest threat is over-use of trails and trail heads; opportunity in working with the other agencies in this group
- Fountain Hills is largely landlocked and growth/development is limited
 - Northeast ASLD land may be an opportunity
 - Looking at opportunities to improve multi-modal system within the town; trying to give residents non-vehicular options
 - Just opened paved access to two-year old trailhead and it has been overwhelmed
 - Parking and people have impacts on neighborhoods around trailhead, and facilities maintenance has difficulty keeping up
 - Seeking an opportunity for non-vehicular connection to McDowell Mountains
 - There is an opportunity to provide a system map that is consistent between agencies and trailheads
 - Simplify visitor experience by eliminating the need for a different map at each trailhead location



- Fountain Hills doesn't have the resources to keep maps in stock
- May be an opportunity for City to work with Fort McDowell
 - Online access has helped, but many don't have cellular service in the park
- Biggest challenge to open space and trails is funding and budgetary concerns, as well as community support
 - Deep divide between people who want connectivity and developing multi-model transportation and people who don't want to invite others in and through their community
- County Parks sees an opportunity to develop the Maricopa Trail "2.0" that includes community connections
- TNF has seen that the type of wildlife corridors and width of corridors matters to maintain; different species have difference needs
 - It's not as simple as a single line connecting areas
 - Climate change and drought is affecting biotic communities and the wildlife that depend on them
 - Source and Sink population land use – some corridors provide access out of urban areas
 - A "sink" pulls wildlife out of urban areas into the natural areas
 - The various habitats inhabited by a given species are never of the same quality. When demographic models take into account this habitat heterogeneity, the source-sink concept naturally emerges: a local demographic surplus arises in good quality habitats (source), and a local demographic deficit occurs in habitats of poor quality (sink).
 - Wildfire has impacted TNF including Spur Cross Ranch
 - Opportunity to cooperate with Cave Creek to share resources and information
- Cave Creek views Spur Cross as the "front porch" into the TNF
 - Ultimately would like to see a land bridge of open space between Town's trail system and Spur Cross
 - Biggest challenge is getting the formal dedications of trails and getting across the Cave Creek wash without upsetting existing residences
 - Community loves the trail system, whether on foot, bike or horseback
 - Cave Creek is the land bridge between TNF and Phoenix preserves
 - Cave Creek has an agreement to purchase certain ASLD properties for conservation between CCRP and SCRCA but ASLD will not sell those properties at a conservation price.
 - Subdivision ordinance requires the dedication of trails and open space
 - The challenge is breaking down the disconnect between residents who value the connectivity and others who don't
- Phoenix finds one of the Sonoran Preserves biggest challenges is existing and future development of housing
 - Must strike a balance between adhering to the overlay district parameters and working with developers
 - Phoenix attempts to "match" development by preserving land through purchase
 - Works with developers to integrate trail connections
 - Constant mountain rescues strains emergency resources; addressing with safety messaging across all trails



- There is an opportunity for Phoenix, Cave Creek and TNF to work together to understand and protect wildlife corridors
- The land where the Friends of the Daisy Mt. Trails group have proposed trails is ASLD land. Their challenge is the process of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation obtaining the Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) for the trail easement agreement from ASLD in which they would then maintain the trails.
 - Organization would like to formalize the trail(s)
- Maricopa Trail goes through Anthem and the residents love it
 - Latest challenge with the trail is motorized vehicles on the trail; Anthem would like to work with the County to mitigate
 - Connectivity with the trail is great, as it provides access to Cave Creek to the east and past lake pleasant to the west
 - Most worried about commercial development around Anthem
 - Will Phoenix build enough open space with the new developments going in?

Northeast Focus Group Sign-in Sheet

Team

Name	Organization	Email
Albert Granillo	GCI	agranillo@gciaz.com
Alexis Amezquita	GCI	aamezquita@gciaz.com
Brock Barnhart	GCI	bbarnhart@gciaz.com
Eileen Baden	County Parks	Eileen.baden@maricopa.gov
Jay Hicks	Dig Studio	jay@digstudio.com
Ken Vonderscher	County Parks	ken.vonderscher@maricopa.gov
RJ Cardin	County Parks	rj.cardin@maricopa.gov

Meeting Attendees

Name	Organization	Email
Alan Muller	Daisy Mountain Trails	4DaisyMountain@gmail.com
Alonso Avitia	City of Phoenix	alonso.avitia@phoenix.gov
Adam Yaron	City of Scottsdale	ayaron@scottsdaleaz.gov
Bambi Muller	Town of Cave Creek	bmuller@cavecreekaz.gov
Vivian Decker	Daisy Mountain Trails	daisymountaintrails@gmail.com
Devin Quintana	Tonto National Forest	devin.quintana@usda.gov
Drew Ullberg	Tonto National Forest	dullberg123@gmail.com
Rachel Goodwin	Town of Fountain Hills Community Services	fountainhillsrec@gmail.com
Greg Schuster	Tonto National Forest	gregory.schuster@usda.gov
Kroy Ekblaw	City of Scottsdale	kekblaw@scottsdaleaz.gov
Kristi Northcutt	Anthem	knorthcut@anthemcouncil.com
Luke Kautzman	Town of Cave Creek	lkautzman@cavecreekaz.com
Micah Grondin	Tonto National Forest	micah.grondin@usda.gov
Roger Willis	Daisy Mountain Trails	roger@willis-home.com
Terry Mullarkey	Anthem	tmullarkey@anthemcouncil.com
Tracee Hall	City of Phoenix	tracee.hall@phoenix.gov