

Recreation Summit – August 12, 2021

An event hosted by Diablo Trust

Note taker: Michaela Gold, NAU Graduate Student

9:00 am – 12:30 pm, Elks Lodge Flagstaff, AZ

Welcome Introductions

- Tabi Bolton, Facilitator
 - Ground rules: respect others, allow notetaker to record everything so we can move forward to actions/solutions
- Lisa Bolton, Diablo Trust Program Manager
 - Participants introduced themselves – name and affiliation. Participant list coming soon.

Recreation Working Group (Ellen Parish, Diablo Trust VP)

- About a year of work for Diablo Trust (DT), but not a new issue
 - 2020 spurred on the issue with huge increases of recreation
 - Started this working group in January 2021 with zoom meetings leading up to this point
- Group has made a chance to connect with other groups/areas dealing with similar issues

Recreation on the Ranches (Kit Metzger, Flying M Ranch; Bob Prosser, Bar T Bar)

Kit Metzger

- Telling the story of what they've seen leading up to today, increases in cars on the roads, campers, and creating more roads with their recreational vehicles
- Described them as little towns with these new camps
- The new roads being created and widened by this increase in recreation; it's a question of making the roads better if it's going to continue
 - USFS has tried to block off certain places but now it's more compacted
- Speed is now a big issue, people go much faster and because of that cattle are getting hit
- Disturbance -> the noise, dust, etc. is keeping wildlife out of the area which is a problem
- It's not about people being malicious, they just don't know who is out there and that there are ranches, cattle, etc. that they are impacting
- A consequence is that there isn't any firewood nearby and so they are cutting down trees in other areas nearby
- Important note: not against it, but we have to find solutions so we don't get to that point. It's not an increase in people it's purely an increase of people in Arizona.

Bob Prosser

- Main roadways around the ranches came about because of logging and timber, they used to maintain those roads at the time which keep them in good condition
- When logging went away, FS was supposed to help maintain those roads but it became a challenge
- It was hard to predict the volume that was out there, and everyone underestimated that
 - o Including FS that made places for camping
- It's not just the tent campers anymore and the new recreators have a bigger impact because of the vehicles
- Everyone expects the other folks to do something about it, but DT is the place to bring us together to work on it
- There is common ground, the ranches do need the roads to be maintained and want to work to find these solutions alongside hunters, FS, recreators, etc.

Off Road Vehicle Traffic & Safety (Sheriff Jim Driscoll and Chief Deputy Bret Axlund)**Sheriff Jim Driscoll**

- Talking about ATVs and the cluster camps that they create
 - o Add in the dogs, loud music, dust, kids, etc. + alcohol is why the sheriff department get involved
- They don't have enough police out there, it becomes a problem to then have to deal with the issues of those camps
- Asking for more field resources to help
- Needs a combo of enforcement, regulation and education

Chief Deputy Bret Axlund

- OHV's are a big concern for the Sheriff's office
- Inexperienced drivers and going too fast
- Do a lot of education, go talk to groups to explain the safety and rules
- Enforcement, done giving warnings like they did in the past because of how big the problem is now
- Search and Rescue is big to go save people from OHV accidents
- Very strict on fires these days, they give tickets for illegal fires
- Use safety check points in popular areas to explain the rules to OHVs

Coconino National Forest Recreation Management (Matt McGrath, USFS Flagstaff District Ranger)

- Thanks DT for bringing this together to think of solutions before we have to just close the roads
- Travel management rule in 2005, made it so that you couldn't drive unless it said it was open to them
- For Flagstaff, there is an official document that shows which areas are open and which are closed

- There are special use permits and exceptions (game retrieval, livestock grazers, car camping, firewood collection, etc.)
- There are dispersed camping corridors in Flagstaff area, the problem is that people keep driving down the same path which makes it look like a road when it's actually closed
- E3s for the Forest Service -> Education, Engineering, Enforcement
 - The only real way to get people to not go in the wrong places is to build fences but it's not super practical
 - Enforcement is hard because there is too much forest to manage, always going to be more visitors than their enforcement can get to
- There are a number of trail systems made for motorized vehicles, trying to build these places for them to go but they want to go to places that people aren't and make their own roads
- Current mitigation for the Forest Service
 - An application to try to get people to follow the 14 day stay limit
 - Making designated dispersed sites rather than camping anywhere
 - Working with NFF on education (ex. Leaving trash, human waste they expect the FS to clean up)
 - Tread Lightly national initiative
- It is hard to capture use of dispersed but do capture developed campground use

Q&A

- How they decide how to maintain roads? Only able to do maintenance and repairs to about 10% of the level 2 roads that are in Coconino, prioritize by use, whether it's impassable, if there is something important further down those roads
- How do you do education? Social media based, map tools, KAFF News is actually what people from Phoenix listens to as they drive up
- What about the interaction between state land, federal, private? There is generally very good collaboration on management of lands with the state, state is a good partner for prescribed fire, but state has even less funding for recreation issues
- Are new campgrounds being built? No, because of how expensive they are to build. But also, because the issues from recreation won't be solved by a developed campground, people want the dispersed experience
- What efforts are you doing for common messages, with other orgs, local government, etc.? Yes, we need more messaging. And DT is helping to work on that. Snow play is a good example of strong messaging of where they can and cannot go with the chamber of commerce sending the same message

Who's there? Forest Visitors – a big data analysis (David Wessel, MetroPlan Transportation Planning Manager)

- A lot of promise from big data but also problems; this data is from cell phone users that allow location tracking

- The report is from the Mogollon Rim District
- The greatest use is from Gila County, which differs from most people thinking they are from Maricopa county
- Our perceptions might not be what's really happening, did activity really grow as big as we thought in 2020?
- There is growth of activity in the DT planning area, though it is a little bit more remote
- One person questioned whether things are so busy that people are just going elsewhere, is it just maxed out? David said it is possible but we can't tell from this dataset
- Lake Mary Road saw a big increase in speed in 2017, and that was because of a big road improvement
- What can we do with the data?
 - o This data, which knows what zip codes these people come from, can be used to target those populations
 - o Can compare visitation use levels with resource impacts
 - o Road design for speed management

Sonoran Insiders: Leveraging Social Media for the Good of Natural Open Spaces in Arizona (Aireona Raschke, Central Arizona Conservation Alliance)

- Using social media to promote natural open space mostly in central Arizona, showing at this meeting as a model to use in other spaces
- Resources are really limited and social media is its own field so utilized experts to work on the campaign
- Collaboration is essential to doing a big campaign, this one is working with USFS, NFF, CACZA, etc.
- Instead of using paid influencers, they called them insiders and found people that really cared about this work and wanted to join the events and social media posting
- Also provided them with special events, learn from experts and the partners involved

Q&A

- Do you think there is a place for paper brochures? Yes, but they have different uses and audiences
- What is the next step? We are going to invest more in the metrics, hire someone to devote more time to the work and improve (intern)
- Do you communicate in more than one language? Currently just one, but we are looking at it and something to improve in the future
 - o Woman who asked the question noted that having signs in both languages has helped to keep people only on public land
- Will you share the information you learned today back with your group? Yes, that would be the idea to get better at working together and sharing information. We want to be opening a collaboration to anyone.
- There are a lot of good cooperators and operators in this room, how do we determine a group message? Build relationships helps, talking with one another

Small Group Discussion

Introduce yourself, who you are, why you are here, discuss the presentations, share potential solutions/ideas, discuss next steps

We want to work toward a solution.

Groups: (1) technology solutions, (2) funding opportunities, (3) policies, (4) education/signage, (5) ambassadorship, (6) waste management solutions

Suggested that based on these discussions – are there new groups that come out of them?

Lisa will collect the notes to write up from the small group discussions.

Small Group Reports

- Tech Solutions (Lead: David Wessel)

- Participants: Lou Horvath, Liz Krug, Steve Mongrain, Ron Tiller, David Wessel, Nick Mustoe, Joe Miller
- Try to have a marriage but high tech, low tech, or even no tech
- What we want to hear and learn more about – what are the ethics we are trying to convene? What are management solutions out there?
- Using social media and communication to get the information out there
- Geofencing as an opportunity (ex. When you cross into private property it alerts you)
 - People management if we have better cell service to know when we reach capacity for areas
 - Could also alert people when they are in important conservation areas, connect them to organizations they can support and learn from
- Use of drones, to help with enforcement
- Missing: ethics, mgmt. solutions
- Public work presence
- Opportunities for increase user education with purchases
- Tech influencing demand but doesn't provide solution
- How to change the ethics of these users
 - Geofence & other solutions
 - Education, social media
 - Enforcement
- Ethics & tools
 - Education – geofence of crossing property

- Fee systems/rates – automatic
 - Cause related marketing items
- Communication
 - Social media & how to get people to talk with each other
 - Partner with user groups
 - Drones
 - Digital message board
- Future tech opportunities – satellite coverage
- Funding (Lead: Rob Nelson)
 - Participants: Bob Prosser, Carl Taylor, Brian Poturalski, Rebecca Antle, Sasha Stortz, Rob Nelson, Matt Eberhart, Bruce Johnson, Matt Ryan, Michaela Gold, Mandy Metzger
 - Focused on big areas that need funding
 - Knowledge sharing of different funding opportunities, like state parks funding (totals \$22M), county level possible funding for enforcement
 - Public-Private partnerships could be key, help with match components, volunteers, manufacturing
 - Could we look at user fees? Voluntary or required
 - Legislative grants, heritage funds
 - Historic preservation projects, local, regional, trail maintenance, education
 - Need to promote these funding mechanisms, for stakeholders to take advantage of
 - 5 areas in need of funding: trash, education, enforcement, how to manage roads, safety
 - Legislative proposals for dedicated funding for enforcement. Need more state & federal funds dedicated to this component
 - Partnerships to help with “match”, also use a model such as “adopt a road”
 - Opportunity for public private partnerships
 - Fee’s: such as fossil creek in high use areas
 - Manufacturing funds - education
- Policy (Lead: Spencer Prosser)
 - Participants: Patrice Horstman, Todd Madeksza, Donna Michaels, Harry Oberg, Carol Harder, Spencer Prosser, Will Kessler, Becki Ross, Judy Prosser, Bridget Roth, Gregory Nelson, Helen Fairley
 - Agencies & landowners are feeling the impact and costs incurred, the users for recreation are not (“free rider”)
 - Do you need to look at charging people differently? A big rig v a small car and a tent, etc.

- Whatever the solution is, it needs to be simple in terms of a policy to make
- Could you look at climate change efforts to charge for emissions?
- Collaborate with different counties, etc. for more wide spread effort
- Huge, comprehensive plan, OHVs, jurisdictions
- Permitting, collaboration, Yavapai – CSA, permitting
- Market failure: (tragedy of the commons)
 - Roads destroyed
 - User fees
 - Recreational toys-tax
 - OHV
 - Enforcement – 5 federal LEOs
 - Colorado model
 - Demand v supply
 - Permit enforcement
- Fixing roads, 3rd largest expense
- Hatch act
- What is existing:
 - TMR
 - Forest service listen to AZ game and fish/sheriff
 - MOUs/MOAs – jurisdictions
 - 3rd entity? Funded entity
- Recreation enhancement act – board/collect fees
 - Social justice
 - Equity/access
 - National management
- Sealed fees based on type of vehicle
- Address as regional
- Side by side use difference
 - Use component
 - Liberty arguments
 - simple

- Education/Signage (Lead Marcie Ellis)

- Participants: Alan Kessler, Shawn Redfield, Rose Houk, Marcie Ellis, Wolf Gumerman, Victoria Allen, Shawn Western, Mike Macauley, Judy Begay
- So many different kinds of land in Arizona, complex make up with different rules
 - Pointed out that need to educate difference between state land and public land and private land
- What do you do about the people that don't care even if educated? Need the enforcement
- What about standard signage? Needs to work across landownerships for a common message, so find the common problems
- Involve state education in the schools on the proper use of land, get kids involved
- Compact ranch – sign in kiosks violations can be permanently banned
- Standard signage on gates, tanks, etc. for hunters & recreationists
- Make land ownership more explicit = involve state education in schools
- Pop up messages and other digital tools
- Personal meetings at season openers
- G&F communications issued with hunting tags
- This group felt: Missing voices that need to be here is the ATV community, they need to be part of the efforts
 - Ellen Parish mentioned that they have tried, and several folks echoed that they are not really an organized group and hard to get involved
 - A bunch of folks commented that the rental companies and manufacturers are the place to go
 - Could you get information put on the rental agreements that provide the rules
 - Rep from Arizona State Parks is working on this statewide and will present at annual meeting tomorrow
- Create a map that shows the different landownerships in prominent places
- Ambassadorships (Lead: Tempy Wessel)
 - Participants: Diana Kessler, Stephanie Teskey, Billy Thoi, Aireona Raschke, John Neff, Heather Green, Tempy Wessel)
 - Important to get people from the different niches (jurisdictions, rec groups, etc.)
 - Information available would not be just about OHV
 - What about data privacy? Decided it depends on what the ambassador is doing
 - Influencers do like to grow their own brand and have their own following
 - Could be a negative view for certain ambassadorships, need to keep that in mind

- Opportunity, there isn't a lot of information out there on ranching to the public so DT could build that
- Early effort – ambassador prog-woods watch
- Get people from niche group (sub group of rec users)
- Opportunities to nudge people in deserved direction
- Realize that one picture can create a following
- Idea: plan an event with CAZCA with their insiders to safe info and tap into their expertise, people to reach out
- Waste Management (Pat McGervey)
 - Participants: J.R. Murray, Karen Riggs, Cynthia Nemeth, Jay Christelman, Kit Metzger, Scott Gold, Pat McGervey
 - Problems: Solid waste from camping, RV dumps, human waste
 - There are some efforts to give the wag bags, etc. to the public
 - Most important thing to do now, figure out where people can take their waste and provide that to the users
 - But we'll discover that there aren't enough places; need to create those places with partnerships
 - What to do with camping waste
 - Education – where to take it
 - Apps – geofence to keep simple
 - Signage
 - Burn waste – educate
 - Reduce camping waster
 - Wildlife impacts
 - Bear/raven proof
 - Develop transfer stations? Fees, at portals
 - Human waste
 - RV – black tanks, private land pumpstations
 - Wag bag campaign, Colorado examples
 - Funding - shared impacts & shared costs, multi-agency, private

Adjourn

- Lisa closed, continuing the momentum by providing the contact lists, annual meeting tomorrow
- Suggested inviting Kaibab National Forest and State Land Department

Key Follow-up

- Next Recreation Working Group Virtual Meeting – September 20th 11-noon over zoom
- Sending out contact lists for each small group for continued conversation and updates given at Recreation Working Group meetings
- Need to summarize the small group discussions (some key contacts will take them home, others will be summarized by Lisa)