

SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN

***Community Meeting Summary Notes
Thursday, January 30, 2003***

Attendees/Affiliation

Brian	Gretchen Mills, <i>Black Mountain Conservancy</i>
Usama Abujbarah, <i>Town of Cave Creek</i>	Bonnie Mooreman
Jerry Ardens, <i>ASHA</i>	Patricia Mozilo, <i>AAS, Site Steward, Cave Creek Saddle Club</i>
Ron Barcha, <i>Resident</i>	Ralph Mozilo, <i>Town of Cave Creek</i>
Lu Cartharius, <i>Town of Cave Creek</i>	Barbara O'Brien
John Caughlin	Tom O'Reilly, <i>Cave Creek Saddle Club</i>
June Clark	Jean Paisley
Thom Clark	Jim Paisley
Bill Creighton, <i>Resident</i>	Jean Pearson, <i>Resident</i>
Jim Crook, <i>ASHA</i>	Scott Peters, <i>Resident</i>
Judy Darbyshire, <i>AAS, FOS, SHPO/Site Stewards</i>	Brenda Poulos, <i>Cave Creek Branch of Arizona Archaeological Society</i>
Marcus Dell'Artino, <i>Maricopa Parks</i>	Jay Reams, <i>Arizona State Parks</i>
Mike Doyle, <i>MCSO Search & Rescue</i>	Alan Richardson, <i>Desert Advocate</i>
Cindy Foster	Johnny Ringo, <i>Carefree Adventures</i>
Gary Foster	Donna Russ, <i>Cave Creek Saddle Club</i>
Norman Foster, <i>Resident</i>	Mary Alice Sams
Joe Freedman, <i>Resident</i>	William Scalzo, <i>Maricopa County Parks & Recreation</i>
Rita Gosnell	Karl Siderits, <i>Tonto National Forest</i>
John Gunn, <i>M CPRD</i>	Frank Sigmund
Jonathon Iger	Terry Smith, <i>Cave Creek Westside Trail Coordinator</i>
Deborah Kingham, <i>AQHA, Happy Hoofers, AZ Cowgirls</i>	Carl Taylor, <i>Tonto National Forest</i>
Gary McCormick	Bill Van Ausdale, <i>M CPRD</i>
Sandy McCormick	Dave Wilson
Thomas McGuire, <i>Docent and Cave Creek Resident</i>	Frank Ziskovsky, <i>Cave Creek Saddle Club</i>
Grace Meeth, <i>Town of Cave Creek</i>	
Patsy Miller, <i>Foothills Community Foundation</i>	
Dave Mills, <i>Black Mountain Conservancy</i>	

Consultant Team

Michael Park, URS
Richard Knox, URS
Dan Lare, URS
Curt Dunham, Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.

Introduction

Michael Park with URS welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance. He gave an overview of the project and progress completed to date. The purpose of the second community workshop is to receive input about the work completed to date on the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA) Master Plan. The purpose of the master plan is to evaluate how to maintain, protect and preserve the resources of the SCRCA while allowing appropriate use.

Mike explained two key concepts and presented three alternatives. The two concepts are “Management Zones” and “Opportunity Classes.”

A “**Management Zone**” is defined as an approximate land area, which allows for specific opportunity classes to occur within its boundaries.

“**Opportunity Classes**” provide a qualitative description of the kinds of resources (e.g., cultural, biological, hydrologic, etc.) and social conditions (e.g., hiking, equestrian, biking, other day use) to occur within a management zone. SCRCA managers will utilize adaptive management protocols to achieve desired conditions in SCRCA.

Based on the “Management Zones” and “Opportunity Classes”, three draft alternatives have been developed for SCRCA. The difference between Alternative #1 and Alternative #2 is the alignment of the regional trail. Alternative #3 can be Alternatives #1 or #2 with the combining of one of the management zones to create the “Primitive Desert Uplands.”

Public Involvement

Following the presentation, Mike took questions from the stakeholders in attendance. Following is a summary of the questions/answers and comments.

Question: Would a trail be more restricted if it is in the backcountry?

Response: Lower usage criteria may be used.

Comment: Our concerns related to SCRCA are for resource conservation and cultural preservation, not restricted access.

Question: Is there going to be animal reintroduction to SCRCA?

Response: That is not part of this study.

Comment: Special designations will tend to draw more people.

Question: What is the liability situation? Who has liability?

Response: Maricopa County Parks

Question: When will the next report come out?

Response: The next public meeting is currently scheduled for August 2003.

Comment: The Maricopa County Regional Trail will be 4 feet.

Question: How can we protect SCRCA from an individual making decisions regarding SCRCA (e.g., closing a trail)?

Response: The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process and protocols will take precedence.

Question: What type of quotas will be instituted?

Response: There are no quotas, but use will be monitored.

Question: What is the registry for?

Response: To monitor the amount of use and the users of SCRCA are going.

Question: Has there been any thought about separating bikes and pedestrian as well as horse trails?

Response: Yes, we have attempted to keep user groups separated to avoid conflicts and resource degradation. We also recognize that “intersection” areas may require additional management strategies to direct use.

Question: Will the dirt part of the road be paved?

Response: As a result of Maricopa County’s Department of Transportation’s (MCDOT) planning is to do that in two years.

Question: Will there be multiple entry sites to SCRCA?

Response: Yes, when it is re-opened.

Comment: Partnerships with the Forest Service will be offered such as fire protection, wildlife surveys, watershed management, trail management, etc. We would like these efforts be done together through a formal process.

Question: The Museum is considering moving to Spur Cross. Are there opportunities for coordination?

Response: They are looking at the adjacent area and yes there are opportunities for joint facility planning.

Question: Has grazing been eliminated?

Response: Yes.

Question: Is there a role for citizens to be involved in resource management? Is there a way to be heard?

Response: Public input is very important to the process of developing the SCRCA Master Plan. Please contact Maricopa County Parks to submit your comments.

Comment: There needs to be an advisory board in coordination with the Town and Maricopa County Parks. There are a lot of ways to be heard.

Question: What is the surface of Maricopa County Regional Trail?

Response: The designation in the backcountry area will be granite.

Question: How will active decisions regarding SCRCA be managed after the plan is completed?

Response: Through Maricopa County Parks.

Question: Is Spur Cross Road a public road or not? It is not clear?

Response: At the present time Spur Cross Road is closed to the general public for private vehicular traffic.

Comments:

- The plan must figure out a way to get access to Tonto National Forest.
- It seems contradictory purposes to have the public enjoy SCRCA, but access is very limited.
- Paying for Spur Cross was “sold” to the taxpayers of Cave Creek because it would keep development out and allow the community to enjoy the area.
- Conservation is first, recreation second. Town, state, and city people should be able to use SCRCA. We need to have access through SCRCA to the federal lands.
- Trails need to remain open with no quotas.
- Trails on State land should be able to be accessed through Spur Cross.
- We have always been the “eyes and ears” and clean up of SCRCA and without vehicles, this is not as effective. We cannot haul out a lot of trash without vehicles.

Question: What’s the difference between the pink and brown areas? Uses are the same.

Response: The experience in these areas are different (i.e., one is a more primitive experience).

Question: Are there going to be any more trails in the backcountry area?

Response: Not planned.

Question: There are four parcels in the northeast corner that are privately owned. Is there some consideration for right-of-way for property owners? There is only deeded access to one parcel?

Response: There is only one parcel that has a deeded access via Spur Cross Road. No parcels are entirely land locked by the partnering agencies that own SCRCA. Their access will likely need to occur from other neighboring private parcels.

Comment: The alternatives not only allow vehicles limited access but a lot of people will have limited access to the national forest.

Comment: The Tonto National Forest would like to know how the “no vehicle” policy was made. This is against State law.

Comment: Pets on leashes are a hazard for equestrians.

Question: What is definition between primary and secondary trails?

Response: A primary trail is the Maricopa County Regional Trail.

Question: How is coordination carried out with physically challenged and equestrians to come up with levels of horse trail use? Public and agency input have framed issues associated with both equestrian and ADA considerations. Clearly all of SCRCA will not be accessible to either group. Areas within SCRCA that are most compatible and accommodating to various users groups will be managed as such.

Question: There is no hunting allowed in all classes, is that correct? Will this policy be developed with input from the Arizona Game and Fish and the National Forest? Is there a possibility of hunting in the future?

Response: No. The area is within in the town limits.

Comment: Important areas (i.e., northeast corner into the Tonto National Forest) have been shut out for responsible Jeep users.

Next Steps

Mike thanked everyone for his or her input. He encouraged everyone to sign up on sheets in the lobby regarding partnering efforts on various aspects of the planning and implementation of the SCRCA. He mentioned that it will take a lot of individuals and entities working together to create an effective implementation program to protect the resource. He also encouraged everyone to complete the community survey and return it by February 15, 2003.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.