Sustainable Recreation Collaboration:
Examples and Lessons in Central Arizona

National Outdoor Recreation Conference
May 2017
Session Outline

1. Introductions

2. Presentation
   • Background and Overview
   • Greater Prescott Trails Planning
   • Verde Front
   • Lessons

3. Questions and Discussion
   • Questions?
   • How have you addressed similar challenges and opportunities? Other methods/ideas?
Verde Front
A small facilitation and collaboration group based in Arizona

We work with partners on complex planning, decision making and problem solving processes, primarily in natural resources.

Our mission -- broad participation, inclusive and informed process, higher quality outcomes, and more lasting solutions.
Where?

Central Arizona
1) **PNF Forest Plan Revision**
   - Social network mapping
   - Community landscape visioning
   - Developing a shared vision

2) **Place-based collaboratives develop around shared vision**
   - Stewardship Forum (west side)
   - Verde Front (east side)
   - 2 pre-existing local partnerships (south side)

3) **Sustainable recreation - PNF national pilot (2009-2011)**
   - Place-based recreation planning
   - Recreation priorities
   - Central AZ Sustainable Recreation Strategy (2011)

4) **Place-based and topical collaborative work**
   - Prescott area (west) – Stewardship Forum: Trails
   - Verde Valley (east) – Verde Front: Multiple
Central Arizona Sustainable Recreation

Greater Prescott

Verde

Southern Zone

Larger Context
Greater Prescott Trails Plan
What is G PTP?

- Comprehensive trails system in the greater Prescott area
- Convened by collaborative Stewardship Forum
- 5 jurisdictions
- User organizations: Motorized, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, others – high level of participation
- Collective priorities – inform agency decisions
- Ongoing
Planning Process

Getting started:

- Convening: Stewardship Forum (all user interests)
- Geographic Sub-Areas
Planning Process

Getting started:
- Process Design

**Process Overview**

- **Step 1: Getting organized**
  *Fall 2012 to Spring 2013*
  Gather info, create baseline maps, initial engagement, design the process

- **Step 2: Community engagement**
  *May to Sept 2013*
  Community wide and sub-area workshops to work on trail system issues, needs, and priorities. Prioritize project proposals.

- **Step 3: Implementation of initial projects, continue work on higher conflict/complexity issues**
  *Oct 2013 - 2014*
  Collaborate with land managers to approve and implement projects
Planning Process

1st Community Workshop: Where Do You Want To Go?

- Public review and comments/ideas on Concept Trails Map
- Skilled community partner on Stewardship Forum did all mapping
Planning Process

2nd Community Workshop:
Trail Priorities (Part 1)

- Trails, trail heads, trail systems important to community (dots and comments)
Planning Process

Coordinating Team work

Trail Evaluation Criteria

- Draft trail evaluation criteria, public input, finalize criteria

1. Opens up a new area
2. Proximity to an existing trailhead
3. Offers a variety of user experiences
4. Offers points of interest and education
5. Provides for a balance of user interests
6. Reduces or is low impact
7. Low impact to private property
8. Low level of controversy or complexity
9. Water availability
10. Connectivity
11. Increases loop options
Planning Process

Applying the Criteria - Trail Priorities Part 2

- By Sub-area (small groups) - Apply trail evaluation criteria to determine highest priority trails

Greater Prescott Trails Planning Process
Trail and Trail System Evaluation Form

Sub Area:__ Trail or Trail System (circle one)_____

1. **Opens up a new areas**
   Rationale:
   1 2 3

2. **Proximity to an existing trailhead**
   Rationale:
   1 2 3

3. **Offers a variety of user experiences**
   Rationale:
   1 2 3
Planning Process

2nd Annual Workshop: Trail Forward!

- Presented Project Maps
  - Ongoing Projects
  - Short Term Projects (1-2 years)
  - Mid Term Projects (2-5 years)
  - Long Term Projects (5-10 years)
Planning Process

3rd Annual Workshop: Moving Ahead

- Agency and jurisdictions present which prioritized trails moving forward
- Input on mid-term projects
Implementation

City of Prescott and Prescott National Forest

Have now implemented short term trails and now working on mid-term

60 miles of new non-motorized
10 miles of new motorized
8 trailheads

One of three trail areas prioritized by the Southwestern Region for potential National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act funding
Lesson: Co-convening

- Collaborative group is convenor (also helps with FACA)
- Diverse leaders share welcome at workshops - builds trust, walks the talk
- Bring their constituents
Lesson: Closing the loop

Land managers budget for and **implement** these priorities

Multi-stakeholder engagement and Planning

Collaborative Prioritization
Central Arizona Sustainable Recreation

Greater Prescott

Verde

Southern Zone

Larger Context
Verde Front

Working Together for a Healthy Verde River and Vibrant Communities Since 2008
The Vision

Who: Citizens, organizations, businesses, local governments, agencies, and the tribe

What: Collaborate to:
- Protect ecosystem health
- Protect natural and cultural resources
- Promote robust economies

Emphasize well-managed recreation, education, and restoration that sustainably connect people to the land.
Diverse Partners

**Local Government**
- Town of Camp Verde
- City of Cottonwood
- Town of Clarkdale
- Town of Jerome
- City of Sedona
- Yavapai County

**Agencies**
- AZ Game and Fish Department
- Arizona State Parks
- Coconino National Forest
- Prescott National Forest
- National Park Service
- US Fish & Wildlife Service

**Organizations**
- American Rivers
- Beaver Creek Trails Coalition
- Friends of Verde River Greenway
- Oak Creek Watershed Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Verde Valley Cyclist Coalition
- Yavapai College

**Local Business**
- Alcantara Vineyards
- Cottonwood Econ. Dev. Council
- Out of Africa Wildlife Park
- Sedona-Verde Tourism Council
- Verde Canyon Railway

**Tribe**
- Yavapai-Apache Nation

**Facilitation**
- Southwest Decision Resources
Verde Front
Structure (Adopted 2013)

Leadership Council
Coordinating Team

Watchable Wildlife
Economic Development/Geotourism
Trail
River Recreation
Fossil Creek
Youth Pathways
Cultural Resources

Facilitation by: Southwest Decision Resources

Leadership Council
Coordinating Team
Working Groups
Action Teams
Verde Front Participants (full group)
Verde Front
Leadership Council

Verde Valley Cities and Towns
All Mayors

Yavapai County
2 County Supervisors

Yavapai Apache Nation
Chairwoman

Arizona State Parks
Manager

US Forest Service
District Rangers from 2 Forest

National Park Service
Superintendent

At-Large Community Members
1 - Regional Tourism Council
2 - The Nature Conservancy
3 - vacant
Verde Front
Coordinating Team

Friends of the Verde River Greenway
President

Arizona State Parks
Park Manager

Prescott National Forest
Recreation Staff

Town of Clarkdale
Town Manager

Town of Camp Verde
Econ. Dev. Director

City of Cottonwood
Long Range Planner

National Park Service
RTCA Program

American Rivers
Local consultant

Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition
Program Manager

Facilitation: Southwest Decision Resources
Verde Front
Working Groups and Action Teams

- Watchable Wildlife
- Youth Pathways
- Recreational Shooting
- Cultural Resources
- Economic Development/Geotourism
- Trails
- River Recreation
- Fossil Creek

- Partner Organizations, Agencies, Local Governments, Tribe, Businesses and Citizens
- Sustainable Funding
- AM & Monitoring
- Education & Partnerships
- Interpretation & Signage
- Sheep Driveway
- Mingus Ave

Working Groups
Action Teams
Verde Front
Working Groups and Action Teams

Co-Convenors:
Shared leadership

Friends of Verde River Greenway
[AZ Game & Fish]

Verde Front
Economic Development/Geotourism

Watchable Wildlife

Prescott NF
AZ State Parks

Trails

Sheep Driveway

Mingus Ave

Prescott NF
AZ Game & Fish Dept.

Partner Organizations, Agencies, Local Governments, Tribe, Businesses and Citizens

Yavapai College
AZ Conservation Corps

Recreational Shooting

Cultural Resources

Coconino NF
AZ Game & Fish Dept.

Town of Clarkdale
AZ State Parks

River Recreation

Fossil Creek

Education & Partnerships

Interpretation & Signage

Sustainable Funding

AM & Monitoring

Working Groups
Action Teams
“String of Pearls” Framework

- **“Pearl”**
  - Recreation amenity
  - More locally managed
  - *Examples*: state park, town park, riverfront event, river access point, etc.

- **“String”**
  - *Connectivity* between “pearls”
  - *Regional collaboration*
  - *Examples*: trail connectivity; regional signage, maps, website, shared funding, etc.

**Shared Leadership**  **Shared Funding**

(& Shared Credit)
The Verde Front is a regional collaborative fostering proactive dialogue, coordination and collective action on stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

The Verde Front began in 2008, stimulated by landscape visioning and subsequent sustainable recreation planning process initially convened by the Prescott National Forest. The collaborative effort served as a catalyst for a landscape scale “all hands, all lands” approach to addressing common outdoor recreation challenges and enhancing the joint capacity of land managers, communities and recreationists to implement shared recreation goals. The Verde Front is part of the larger Central Arizona Sustainable Recreation Coalition.
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Town of Clarkdale
Gayle Mabery, Town Manager

Leadership Council

Coordinating Team

River Recreation
Incorporated: 1957

Population: 4,100

Full-Time Staff: 39
Part-Time Staff: 16

# of River Access Points: 2
# of Public Parks: 4
# of Natural Areas: 1

Trip Advisor - Things To Do:

Arizona Copper Art Museum
Tuzigoot Nat’l Monument
Verde Canyon Railroad
Kayak Outfitters
Wineries/Tasting Rooms
Sycamore Canyon
Wilderness Area

www.ExperienceClarkdale.com
Vision

Community access to a healthy, flowing Verde River exists complete with a multitude of diverse outdoor experiences.

Goals

• Protect, Preserve and Enhance the Verde River and its Habitat
• Honor Existing Water Rights
• Enhance Public Understanding of the Importance of a Flowing River
• Improve the Public’s Experience with the Verde River
• Improve the Economy of Clarkdale
Incorporating Traditional Names
Yavapai-Apache Nation Cultural Department Collaboration

Tú Cho Ha Li’i‘
Big Spring

“As long as the river flows, life will be good.” – Mary Sine, Yavapai Tribal Elder

Chedeski
White Hills

Clarkdale-Jerome School
Water Conservation Education Programs
Incorporating Emotionally Intelligent Signage

- Quiet Zone Ahead
- Zona De Silencio Adelante
- Please be respectful
  Por favor ser respetuosos

Know Before You Go
- Cell service is intermittent on the river! The only thing you might get in touch with is nature.

Be Prepared
- Wear a lifejacket.
  They float ... you don’t!

You Are the Key to Your Safety
- Stay hydrated! It’s the only drinking game you should play on the river.
Larger Framework: Verde Watershed Collaboration

“Working Collaboratively for a Healthy Verde River and Vibrant Communities”
Value for participants: “One Stop Shopping”

- Efficient use of time – access to all key leaders at once
- Dedicated time for information sharing and networking
- Consistent message for multiple partners
- Sensing opportunity
  - Elected officials have strong sense of constituents’ interests
  - Can share feedback up and out to other stakeholders
- Makes this “the room where it happens”
  - Consistent participation
  - “Late adopters” will join when they see the relevance
Value for participants: Shared Challenges, Solutions, and Credit

- Gang up on the problem, not each other
- Leverage diverse strengths
- Common challenges that can’t be solved alone
- Intrinsic value of having others “show up” for your challenge
- Peer support
- Shared success
- Ex: West Mingus recreation area
Value for Participants: Prioritizing

- More efficient for everyone (especially public land agencies with multiple use mandate)

- Strive for mutual benefit
  - Sense one another’s priorities, challenges
  - How can we help each other “win” and what does “winning” look like for different partners?
  - Joint gains vs. compromise
  - Collaborate not compete

- Follow through is critical

- Examples:
  - Fossil Creek working group
  - Greater Prescott Trails
Professional Facilitation

- Investment in dedicated time for meeting management
- Tactics for “leading leaders”
- Signals all members are equal
- Helps people break out of expected roles for agencies, cities, etc.
- Facilitator as partner

- Collaborative design and strategy
- Trust and perceived fairness by all parties
- Long term relationships
- Capacity building
**Sustainability of the Collaboration**

- Personal and agency commitment
- Transcend agency/leader turnover
- Successional planning
  - Engage line officers/staff at different points
  - Alignment and continuity at strategic and operational level
- Multiple ways to participate and diverse roles – staff involved at different levels
- Shared support system
- Outcomes – Implement VF priorities
  - Deliver successes (and credit)
  - Fosters further collaboration and invites in “late adopters”

4th pillar of sustainability?
All Hands, All Lands

- Working across jurisdictional boundaries
- Aligning partners for collective impact
- Local government and land managers
- The big “we”
  - Shared ownership
  - Shared responsibility
  - Shared funding
  - Shared credit
- Interchangeability
- More effective, more fun
The next big things for the Verde Front

✓ Comprehensive river management plan
✓ Shared approach to monitoring
✓ Verde Valley Outdoor Volunteer Network
✓ Agreements, permitting and working on other structural obstacles
✓ Strengthening the economic sustainability
✓ Figuring out how to better engage non-local recreationists
✓ Strengthen the link between recreation and restoration
1. Your Questions?

2. Your feedback and ideas:

   - How have you addressed similar challenges and opportunities?
   - Other examples / methods / ideas?