

UPPER VERDE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION COALITION
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA
JUNE 27, 2007
MINUTES

A MEETING OF THE UPPER VERDE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION COALITION WAS HELD ON JUNE 27, 2007 in the Prescott Municipal Building, 201 S. Cortez Street, Prescott, Arizona.

Chairman Fann called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

ITEM NO 1. Introductions, Awards and Presentations

Members present:

Mayor Karen Fann, Town of Chino Valley, Chairman
Vice-Mayor Mike Flannery, Town of Prescott Valley, Vice Chairman
County Supervisor Carol Springer, Yavapai County
Mayor Rowle P. Simmons, City of Prescott

Members absent:

Ernie Jones, Sr., Prescott-Yavapai Indian Tribe
Dewey-Humboldt Representative

Staff present:

John Munderloh, Town of Prescott Valley
Mark Holmes, Town of Chino Valley
John Rasmussen, Yavapai County
Chris Moss, Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe
Jim Holt, City of Prescott

Guests present:

Chip Davis, Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Chairman (2:10 p.m.)
Bob Luzius, Prescott City Council
Jim Lamerson, Prescott City Council
Bob Roecker, Prescott City Council
Dianne Joens, Cottonwood City Council
Vice Mayor Moore, Jerome Town Council
Gloria Moore, Chino Valley Town Council
Ron Romley, Chino Valley Town Council
Dr. Minnich, Immediate Past Chino Valley Town Council
Mayor Doug Von Gausig, Clarkdale Town Council
Lora Lee Nye, Prescott Valley Town Council

Chris Moran
Harry & Debbie Allen
Beth Nichols Boyd
Leslie & Chris Hoy
Joanne Oellers
Tom Atkins
Diane Loens
John Olsen
Ed Wolfe
Bill Meyer
Richard B. Farnsworth, Citizens Tax Committee
Walt Anderson
Ron Romley
John Nystedt, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Dava Hoffman, Prescott Water Conservation Committee
Barbara Walrafen
Dick & Mary Jonas
Candace McNulty, Read It Here
Greg & Kathy Lindh
Joanna Dodder, Daily Courier

ITEM NO 2. Call to the Public

None.

Chairman Fann said that Howard Mechanic was going to give a presentation today, but because of the length and complexity of the rest of the agenda, he said he would wait to the next meeting so he can have the due time he needs for his report.

ITEM NO 3. Approval of Minutes – May 23, 2007 Meeting

MEMBER SIMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 23, 2007, MEETING; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRMAN FLANNERY; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM NO 4. Presentation & Discussion– Review of USGS Reports
[Ed McGavock, Montgomery & Associates]

Chairman Fann stated that they had a preview of the presentation a week ago and it was very easy to get side tracked with a lot of questions, so she asked that the presentation be given, and then questions would be allowed at the end.

Mr. Munderloh said that Ed McGavock was present from the Montgomery & Associates to give a presentation on their findings. He said that they

began this process as a joint effort with Chino Valley, Prescott Valley and Prescott, after staff read through one of the USGS reports that had errors which questioned the extent of such errors. They thought it would be valuable for someone to review both of the reports.

Mr. McGavock said that his firm was asked to perform this review because (1) they didn't have any points to make with any of the communities; and (2) they have a reputation for telling it like it is. They have a niche in the community for telling things the way they see them. He said that both of the reports were reviewed and re-reviewed. Both were intended to be revised and some of their review comments are being incorporated into the reports; others are not.

Mr. McGavock then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof by this reference

Member Springer, in referring to Slide 26 (last), said that much of the past discussion has had to do with the degree of pumping and its impact on the base of the Verde River. She asked, since he was saying that the reports were not intended to be predictive, if that meant there was no conclusion drawn.

Mr. McGavock said that they did not draw any conclusions, but they were not intended to. The ADWR intends to have a study done and build a model that will better assist in drawing a conclusion.

Member Springer said that they have a number of people who are taking those reports and drawing conclusions from them that 86% of the water in the river comes from the Big Chino. Mr. McGavock said that their review says maybe 80% comes out, but neither was established by the model regarding pumping.

Member Springer said that her understanding is that where pumping occurs in the Big Chino, it may or may not have an effect at the end of the Valley at the Paulden Gage. Mr. McGavock said that if the entire Big Chino basin acts as one aquifer, they will eventually impact the springs. If they speculate that most of the water moves down to the springs, and it is not connected, there would be little impact; at this point it is unknown. He said that no one knows if the basins are connected.

Member Springer asked what type of tests could be done to prove that point. Mr. McGavock said that they could address the question by drilling some holes. He said that the Bureau of Reclamation has drilled a few holes in the past as well as the City of Prescott, but neither agency took any water level measurements or water quality data. He said that they would have to do it all over again, but it would gather other information,

more than geological. He said that it would probably take two or three holes for most technical people to agree. They could drill a hole at the Big Chino water farm and determine if the limestones are artesian (under pressure). If they are, it would imply that they are not well connected to the basin field.

Vice Chairman Flannery said that he would like a better explanation of the difference between an open file and public report. Mr. McGavock said that to him an open file is one that has been reviewed, checked and ready to be published. Vice Chairman Flannery asked if the Blasch report was a final report. Mr. McGavock said he didn't know; there is a second version report on the Internet. Vice Chairman Flannery asked at what point they accept a report as final and believe in it. Mr. McGavock said that his opinion was that once a report is published as a professional paper, he would hope the USGS would stand behind it.

Chairman Fann said that one of the problems they had was that one report states that 80% of the water from the Big Chino goes into the Verde River; the other says 70%. She asked where the water comes from in the Partridge Creek. Mr. McGavock said that some of the water comes down the drainage under Partridge Creek (if it ever flows) and some of it probably comes down Big Chino Wash when it flows. The question is whether a lot of the water comes from the limestone and then moves out into the basin field. He said that they need a better handle on how the water moves to the Springs, and how it moves through the aquifer.

Chairman Fann said that the Wirt study indicated that 80% of the base flow came from the Big Chino. She asked if Mr. McGavock was saying that most hydrologists would be comfortable stating that most of the water comes from the Big Chino. Mr. McGavock said that most would probably be comfortable with the statement that 75-90% comes from the Big Chino, but there is no data to back that up. He said that they had a scientific analysis from the IGM in the Wirt report. He said that if it had been done properly, or if they did it properly in the future, they would have a better answer to that question.

Chairman Fann said that if it goes past the Upper Verde River headwaters at 75-80%, she asked if it still is at 75-80% when it reaches the Verde River. Mr. McGavock reviewed the charts, and said that if they totally dried up the springs, they might see a 0-5% change in the base flow going into SRP's reservoirs, but the base flow is negligible; SRP told him they don't care about the base flow. He said that the people that would scream would be the irrigated lands in the Verde Valley, and the riparian habitat is what would be impacted.

After review of the charts, Chairman Fann said that they need to be concerned about the upper 20 miles but as equally important they need to look at the other areas to be sure that the Verde Valley doesn't dry up. Mr. McGavock said that there are endangered species, legal issues and environmental reasons for not having an impact.

Jack Wilson – He attended a Verde River Water Association presentation on June 20 by John Hoffman, and he said that the USGS stands behind the significant conclusions of both of the reports. He asked if Mr. McGavock agreed. Mr. McGavock said that he agreed that John Hoffman stood behind both of them and he also agrees that they are redoing both of them. He said that he knows it was not a comfortable situation for Mr. Hoffman to be in, to stand behind reports over which he had no control.

Mr. Wilson asked Mr. McGavock if in his opinion the study specified by the Verde River Basin Partnership would provide the data needed to fill in the gaps. Mr. McGavock said that he does not know what they are proposing to do.

Joanne Oellers, representing the Center for Biological Diversity, said that she is concerned about the results of this study. She said that it has been difficult for some people to understand the need to worry about the Verde River because the water still flows. She asks that the Coalition look at the analysis and realize that their situation has not changed. They still need to save the Verde River; it is something that they need to stand behind and any possible threat to the River needs to be addressed.

Joanne Oellers asked if the Coalition and other entities would agree that the information is not giving them any reason to predict that there would not be any impact to the River. Chairman Fann said that was a given.

Chairman Fann said that the report was not done to say that pumping will or will not impact the river; it was done to review the Wirt and Blasch reports. She heard that a good portion of the information from this study says that they are able to back up the 75-80% figure. There is 20% of both of the reports that were not based on scientific data, where assumptions were made, so they need further studies. She asked if that was correct. Mr. McGavock said that he didn't believe that was what he said.

He said that they have two reports. The Blasch report was intended to be assembling the data so they could start doing a model, and they pretty much succeeded. It was very careless in what they presented and how they presented it, but it was only the first step. They got ADWR to do more studies and in comparing the 1995 to the most recent study, there

was a 2' difference, which shows that not a lot has happened. He was disappointed in the quality of review and editing of the report.

Mr. McGavock said that the Wirt report had the potential to provide information that would be useful in monitoring and mitigation. He said that it pointed toward that model to look at the source of water going to the springs, but there are no answers.

Bev Boyd – She was speaking today as a private citizen, not in her position of the Geology Chair at Yavapai College for the past 24 years. She said that at the time when both of the studies were done, they were the gold standards, and Mr. McGavock has raised some reasonable points as well. She asked Mr. McGavock if he was aware that at the Juniper Mesa the limestones were exposed and there is no recharge available in that area. Mr. McGavock stated that his report was referring to the Juniper Mountains, north of Walnut Creek around Pine Creek. He said that when they are south of Walnut Creek where the granite is, the surface can't recharge, but if they go six miles up to around Pine Creek, with the same storm nothing comes out, and as a scientist you understand that it all went into the limestone.

Ms. Boyd said that she is frustrated that it appears that the majority of City leaders continue to doubt the reality of the impacts. She asked Mr. McGavock if there was any reason he thought that further studies will change the conclusion that the majority of the base flow of the Upper Verde comes from the Big Chino. Mr. McGavock replied he did not.

Bill Meyer asked Mr. McGavock how sure he was that the model he used was an appropriate analogy in the way things might work at the Big Chino. Mr. McGavock said that he is not sure, he never was sure, and that is why he talked with the hydrologist in Nebraska who studies it. He said that he is not sure that they understood each other, but he is inclined to think that it might. He said that there is someone else that disagrees with him, a scientist in Tucson.

Mr. Meyer said that when it comes to pumping of water from a well, there are several concepts about the impact, one of which that says that all water pumped from a well results in a loss of water from somewhere else. At this time a debate took place on this issue.

Mr. Meyer asked Mr. McGavock if he would agree that for water to move back and forth between two different aquifers, the water level would have to be different. Mr. McGavock said that he would assume that.

Doug Kearney, asked if he heard correctly that Mr. McGavock said that pumping will at some time have an effect on the Springs. Mr. McGavock

said that what he meant was that if the entire basin acts as one aquifer and they are connected, eventually pumping in the basin must affect the discharge.

Howard Mechanic, said that Mr. McGavock had mentioned that Mr. DeWitt had submitted some written comments, and he if those were available to the public. Mr. McGavock said that Mr. DeWitt sent some written responses to the Coalition indicating that an official response from the USGS would follow, and those would be available to the public. Mr. Mechanic asked when they would be public. Mr. McGavock said that if they don't get an official response from Mr. DeWitt, they would then let the comments go public.

Mr. Mechanic said that he heard Mr. McGavock state that if there was pumping in the Upper Big Chino, he didn't know if there would be an effect on the Springs at the headwaters. He said that if they start getting 50,000 homes developed, and a pipeline, he asked Mr. McGavock if he was not in a position to say that there wouldn't be an effect. Mr. McGavock said that was correct.

Mr. Mechanic said that he heard Mr. McGavock refer to the need to mitigate if there was an impact, and he asked what type of mitigation that would be. Mr. McGavock said that in order to mitigate, they would need to know what aquifer they are going to affect. Mr. Mechanic said that he is at a loss of how to mitigate other than stopping the pumping.

Mr. Mechanic said that Mr. McGavock suggested drilling three wells into the limestone. He asked if anyone was going to do that and how much it would cost. Mr. McGavock said that he didn't know, but it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. He said that they are going to take what data they have a put it into a model, but computer models make mistakes as well.

Chairman Fann said that Chino Valley is hiring the Morrison Institute and that might be something they can talk to them about.

Linda Howser of Camp Verde, said that they pump both ends of the Verde, but they were just told by Chino Valley that they had to stop at one end. She said that if they are discrediting the reports, it appears it would be wise to not start pumping until they have the needed information. Mr. McGavock said that the reports were not intended to predict the effect of pumping. He said that he doesn't mean to discredit the reports; he means to discredit the review process of the Blasch report. He said that there were definite conclusions drawn in the other report and those were not supportable, but it didn't say anything about pumping.

Clarkdale Mayor Doug Von Gausig, said that he appreciated everything done in this report and what he is struck with mostly is that they don't have the data needed. He said that these two reports are part of the data gathering process. He said that they need to understand all of these reports and he hopes they all take them seriously and try to gather the information. Mr. McGavock asked Mayor Von Gausig if he found the information useful. Mayor Von Gausig said yes; he thinks they are not serving their communities if they don't take the threat to the Verde River seriously.

Mayor Von Gausig said that the Camp Verde Gage is running under 30 CFS and if the flow from the headwaters of the Verde (22 CFS) might represent only 12-15, that is still half the water running past the Camp Verde Gage so everyone is concerned.

Chairman Fann asked, until such time as their groups were joined together, if they can work together on suggested studies. Mayor Von Gausig said that the one big question is whether the basins are connected, and what happens in the limestones. Mr. McGavock said that he would ask why they have embarked on the watershed studies. He said that anyone downstream can't look at their water quality and say, "what happens in the Upper Verde stays in the Upper Verde except for the base flow," but the base flow is determined by the Upper Verde. He said that it will be a long time before they have the answers.

Chairman Fann thanked everyone for attending the meeting, especially those that drove over from the Verde Valley area.

ITEM NO 5. Discussion & Possible Action – Direct Staff to Post a Request for Qualifications for Consulting Services
[Committee & Staff]

MEMBER SIMMONS MOVED TO POST A REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR CONSULTING SERVICES AS OUTLINED BY STAFF; SECONDED BY MEMBER SPRINGER.

Mr. Munderloh said that staff was suggesting an interview team made up of staff members, the Coalition Chairman and Vice Chairman.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM NO 6. Next Meeting Time / Location / Agenda Items
[Committee]

The next meeting would be held on July 25, 2007, at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting of the Upper Verde River Watershed Protection Coalition held on June 27, 2007 adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

KAREN FANN, Chairman

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, Clerk