Apache County Trail Planning Meeting
March 30, 2016 Town of Eagar Town Hall

Attendees: Mel Schweigert, Ron Shephard, Dave Swietanski, Chris Chiesl, Ben Dugdale, Steve Rogers, Kevin Burk, Nancy Huser, Jeremiah Loyd, Cate Bradley

Agenda:
- Confirm representatives from each jurisdiction
- Update on Recreation Trails Program (RTP) resolutions from each jurisdiction
- Discuss talking points to engage public and stakeholders
- Review/revise Vision and Mission statements
- Review map updates
- Update/discussion on multi-use trails
- Next steps

Confirm Representatives from Each Jurisdiction

Based on the discussion from the February meeting about the need for each jurisdiction to have a designated representative in this process, Ron presented information about this trails planning process to the St. Johns Planning and Zoning Committee. He said Tony Raykovitz, councilmember from St. Johns will be attending future meetings but could not attend today. The other designated representatives are: Ben Dugdale and Dave Swietanski for the County, Chris Chiesl for Springerville, and Ron Shepherd and Debra Seeley for Eagar. All other participants are critical to this process as well, for their information, knowledge and their input.

Update on Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Resolutions from Each Jurisdiction

Jeremiah said Apache County and Town of Eagar provided resolutions of support for the submittal of the RTP application to AZ State Parks. He said there will be an application review meeting with the Off Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee (OHVAG) in Phoenix on 4/9/2016. OHVAG is an advisory Committee to AZ State Parks (ASP) appointed by the State Parks Board (from applications). They review all grant applications for any funding program administered by ASP. The agenda will be posted on the ASP website soon. Cate suggested that someone from this group may want to look into serving on OHVAG. More information is available on the ASP website.

Discuss Talking Points to Engage Public and Stakeholders

Cate said the process needs an Information Plan to help increase awareness of this process and gather public input about the concepts so far, to build public support for the whole plan. Following are the possible avenues to get information out into the community:

- Eagar, Springerville, St. Johns, Apache County websites (there needs to be one point of contact identified that each site can be hot-linked to, the Town of Eagar internet site may be limited for this by regulations) – Jeremiah is now the point of contact for the process
- White Mountain Independent (Cate will write an article for submission)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Outdoor Magazine (Chris will arrange to have articles included in their quarterly issues)
- Maverick Magazine (Chris will contact them about coverage)
- Community bulletin boards
- Post Office
- Schools **(Early on it was agreed to ask the area 4th graders to help name the trail. St. Johns students proposed names, but the schools in Springerville and Eagar have not submitted suggestions. Jeremiah and Cate will re-contact those schools to encourage participation.)**
- **Handouts (It was agreed that creating a general handout for wide spread use will be the next focus of this group to have them ready for large community events.)**

- **Big community events (John Wayne Days- June 3-4; 4th of July; Eagar Days- Aug. 5-6; County Fair- Sept. 7-10). It was agreed these would be the target outreach events) and the Chamber of Commerce would be asked to partner on these and share their booth and help hand out information.**

Tabling at the large community events would aim for four main goals:

1. To provide information about this planning process
2. To gather community input about the planning concepts
3. To help "name the trail"
4. Get more people involved in the planning meetings

Information handouts will be available at each event. A survey will be handed out to ask input about this effort and to get contact information to stay informed or become involved. And participants can vote for their favorite trail name proposed by the 4th graders from Springerville/Eagar and St. Johns.

Other possibilities for later in this process include:

- Field trips
- "Put Your Town On The Map" – a Google promotional program
- Make maps available for self-tours
- Providing give-away gifts as reminders about the proposed trail

The Information Plan is intended to increase participation in the next phase of the county-wide trail planning process. Local residents could help fill some information gaps in the current process, such as:

- How to engage the hiking and mountain biking communities in this process
- Need to define what the limits/rules and restricted areas are for this non-motorized/motorized trail system
- How to increase public awareness and interest in the trail plan, implementation and use
- What sites should be highlighted and what are the interpretive stories for those sites

Review/Revise Vision and Mission Statements

After some discussion, the group came to the following draft statements that will be presented at public meetings for final input:

Vision Statement

Create a trail system that allows all users to experience the unique natural, cultural and historical features in Southern Apache County.

Mission Statement

Invite outdoor adventurers to a unique western experience by providing access on a regional trail system.

The group also used the Mission statement to develop DRAFT goals and objectives for this effort. They are:

DRAFT Goals

Goal 1. Invite the communities and residents to get involved in and support planning and implementing the proposed county-wide trail.

Objective 1.a. Outreach to all communities and adjacent counties to increase awareness of the planning effort.

Objective 1.b. Promote the trail in all available venues, and encourage community discussion about how to best involve residents and business owners in its success.

Objective 1.c. Produce and provide information materials and maps to increase awareness about possibilities for a regional trail.

Goal 2. Identify the needs, interests and desired outcomes for outdoor adventure from the potential trail user groups.

Objective 2.a. Understand the needs of hikers, mtn. bikers and OHV recreation users regarding the county-wide trail.

Objective 2.b. Encourage business owners to provide rental equipment needed for trail user for visitors that come from national and international places.

Objective 2.c. Encourage local lodging establishments to accommodate the needs of trail users and to promote the trail to their visitor customers.

Objective 2.d. Coordinate with the Visitor Center to provide trail related information to visitors and to promote trail use in the area.

Goal 3. Establish a Regional Trail System in southern Apache County.

Objective 3.a. Identify trail segments and alignments that create an interconnected trail system between Eagar, Springerville, St. Johns and unincorporated Apache County, and connecting to unique sites and destinations that showcase this region.

Objective 3.b. Encourage local business owners and other venues to provide resources and amenities necessary for re-supply and rest along the trail for long-distance trail users.

Objective 3.c. Identify initial phases of trail development based on realistic assessments of available resources, funds and community readiness.

Goal 4. Highlight the unique western experience of this area.

Objective 4.a. Research the unique stories and sites of this area and locate them on a map.

Objective 4.b. Include the unique sites on tourism and trail maps for this area.

Objective 4.c. Develop interpretive signage and/or plaques to mark the unique sites.

Goal 5. Provide access to trail segments and unique sites of this area.

Objective 5.a. Establish trailheads at convenient access points along the trail to the unique sites, to other trail segments, and to the regional communities.

Objective 5.b. Where ever possible, provide ADA access at trailhead areas and to unique sites.

Objective 5.c. Establish directional signage and symbols with location markings for way-finding along all segments of the trail and to aid Search and Rescue efforts, when needed.

Goal 6. Forge strong and effective partnerships to plan and implement the trail.

Objective 6.a. Establish collaborative partnerships, resolutions, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) among the Towns of Eagar, Springerville and St. Johns and Apache County to complete a county-wide trails master plan and create or seek funding to implement the plan.

Objective 6.b. Establish working partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service Apache-Sitgreaves NF, and the National Park Service Petrified Forest NP, and the AZ State Land Department to connect with existing trails or recreation areas and acquire necessary right-of-way easements to implement the trail plan.

Objective 6.c. Develop working partnerships with necessary private land owners to establish trail easements, where necessary, across property of willing land owners.

Goal 7. Create and seek funding to implement the county-wide trail plan.

Objective 7.a. Submit grant proposals to state, federal and private sector programs for trail implementation on an annual basis.

Objective 7.b. Track and maximize in-kind services (volunteer hours, staff time, contributions from all jurisdictions, etc.) to be used for grant writing and implementation of the trail plan.

Objective 7.c. Build support for appropriation of a percentage of the regional "bed" tax to be allocated for implementation of the trail plan.

Goal 8. Commit to on-going trail maintenance to protect this regional resource and investment.
Objective 8.a. Each jurisdiction contributes to maintenance of the trail, in some way, annually.
Objective 8.b. A volunteer stewardship group if formed to oversee the care and condition of the trail system.
Objective 8.c. Regional youth are encouraged to become trail stewards, as volunteers or paid when funds are available, to foster community commitment and leadership.

Review Map Updates

Steve provided maps that included data layers from Mel for the region east of Springerville and Eagar and north of Hwy 60. The possible routes included a general indication of the proposed alignment for the Kinder-Morgan right-of-way corridor. The suggested routes help with discussions about connectivity, recreation opportunity and user experience. There will be more work to understand possibilities south of Hwy 60 and north towards St. Johns and Petrified Forest National Park.

Update/Discussion on Multi-Use Trails

Tabled until next meeting.

Next Steps

Jeremiah and Cate	Contact Springerville and Eagar schools for 4th grade participation in naming the trail (Each class narrows down the 3 best suggestions. All trail names presented at outreach/ information booths for public voting. Trail planning group makes final decision from this whole process.)
Cate	Draft text for fliers and write article for local publications and water bill inserts (edits by the trail planning group)
Mel, Ben	provide photos to Jeremiah for flier of hikers, mtn. bikers, OHV trail users
Doug	provide photos to Jeremiah of points/sites of interest
Mel	provide a general map to Jeremiah
Chris	layout the flier and print 200 to 300 copies
Steve	create a large scale poster of the flier for use at information booths
Chris	ask Becki if the Chamber of Commerce booth can be used for information about the trail planning process at the John Wayne Days- June 3-4; 4th of July; Eagar Days- Aug. 5-6; County Fair- Sept. 7-10

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on Monday April 18, 2016 at Eagar Town Hall from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. to review and finalize information flier.

Next Agenda

Finalize flier
Schedule for outreach events