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Director

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Water Resources Development Commission (HB 2661) Environmental Committee – Notes: November 10, 2010 Meeting

IN ATTENDANCE:

Brenda Burman (TNC co-chair)
Warren Tenney (Metro Water co-chair)
Linda Stitzer (ADWR)
Christine Dawe (USFS)
Josh Avey (AZGF)
Dave Weedman (AZGF)
Wolfgang Grunberg (AZGF)
Doug Kupel (City of Phoenix)
Jim Renthall (BLM)
Rebecca Davidson (SRP)
Ron Solomon (Town of Taylor)
Rob Marshall (TNC)
Jocelyn Gibbon (SSD)
Karen Nally
Christine Nunez (City of Surprise)
Philip Bashaw (AZFB)
Sharon Masek Lopez (NAU)

INTRODUCTIONS AND UPDATES:

Co-chairs Warren Tenney (Metro Water) and Brenda Burman (TNC) welcomed the committee members and introductions were conducted. Brenda mentioned that making the products from the Committee useable in the future is key. The focus of this meeting will be continuing to identify available resources and environmental information.

APPROACHES TO GATHERING ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES INFORMATION:

Josh Avey, Arizona Game and Fish Department, made a presentation on Arizona Game and Fish (AZGF) wildlife data and geospatial tools for project planning. (The presentation will be posted on the ADWR website). The planning approach identifies crucial habitats and wildlife corridors with an underlying approach to keep common species common. Many data sources were incorporated into the effort including TNC priority conservation areas, Important Bird Areas, the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and others. Over 250 species of greatest conservation need were identified including 13 species of economic and recreational importance. There is a separate dataset for each species. There is an abundance of data; the challenge is to refine and focus on what is most important for the workgroup's effort. The geospatial planning tool could be integrated with other GIS layers and will need to be discussed. This has been a five-year effort with a January 2011 end date for the tool to be posted on the web. The web application objective is not focused on water resource data.

The USFS has identified high priority areas for risk, e.g. fire, and has weighted these risks to produce a map of areas of highest priority for landscape restoration.

PRESENTING NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION IN USEABLE FORM AND EXPLORING A WAY TO ADDRESS THE WATER NECESSARY TO SUPPORT NATURAL RESOURCES:

Rob Marshall, The Nature Conservancy, made a presentation on an approach to identifying conditions necessary to support environmental resources. (The presentation will be posted on the ADWR website). He consulted with a number of experts about the most important components and four primary drivers emerged: baseflow, groundwater underflow, flood flows and evapotranspiration (ET). Examples of where these data are available were presented as well as a summary table using the Sierra Vista Subwatershed as an example. The table is a good way to display what information is available and where research is needed and includes a section to document environmental resource values and environmental flow needs. It may be desirable to use a range of environmental flow needs rather than a discreet number. Other water resources such as springs and reservoirs and other environmental resources could be included.

The table format needs to be developed including how the information will get plugged into the water supply and demand analysis (Objective 3 of the Commission Workplan). There was discussion that any quantified volumes of water identified for environmental purposes don't necessarily reflect the desired environmental condition and that the workgroup might want to identify where restoration work is needed.

Three subgroups were identified to work on the mapping, table format and water needs tasks consisting of:

Table Group (to develop the draft table presented by Rob Marshall); Linda Stitzer (lead), Rob Marshall, Rebecca Davidson, Christine Dawe, Bill Wells

GIS/Mapping Group; Rebecca Davidson (lead), USFS, Wolfgang Grunberg, ADWR/Linda Stitzer, Sharon Masek-Lopez

Water Needs Group (to work on quantifying environmental water needs); Rob Marshall (lead), Linda Stitzer, Rebecca Davidson, Doug Kupel

NEXT MEETING:

Tentative meeting dates are November 30th or December 9th, both beginning at 1:30. The final date will be posted on the ADWR website.