

# ARIZONA

## STATE PARKS & TRAILS

### Arizona State Parks Board

November 14, 2024

**Dale Larsen– Chair**

John Sefton – Vice Chair,

Jeffrey Buchanan, Sarah King, Terri Palmberg

# AGENDA – A

## Call to Order

# AGENDA – B

## Pledge of Allegiance

## Member Roll Call

Dale Larsen (Chair)

John Sefton (Vice-Chair)

Jeffrey Buchanan

Sarah King

Terri Palmberg

# AGENDA – C

## Mission Statement

“As Board members we are gathered today to be the stewards and voice of the Arizona State Parks and its Mission Statement to manage and conserve Arizona’s natural, cultural and recreation resources for the benefit of the people, both in our parks and through our partners.”

## Approval of Minutes

The Board will review and may consider action to approve the meeting minutes from October 17, 2024

## ***Motion:***

*I move to approve the the meeting minutes from October 17, 2024 as presented.*

## *Office of Outdoor Recreation*

*Presentation on the objectives and priorities of this new office, focusing on its alignment with Arizona's SCORP (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan) to expand sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for Arizona residents, our visitors, and future generations.*

*(Presenter: Neil Large, Program Administrator of the Arizona Office of Outdoor Recreation)*





**Office of Outdoor Recreation**

# History and Overview



*Confluence of States*



*Arizona Office of Tourism*



*Arizona State Parks and Trails*

# SCORP Priorities and Confluence Pillars

- Conservation and Stewardship
- Education and Workforce Training
- Economic Development
- Public Health and Wellness
- Opportunities and Experience

# Celebrating Outdoor Recreation



## The DATA...

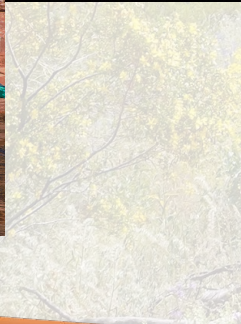
- Contributes \$11.7 Billion annually to our GDP
- Creates 106,571 jobs throughout the state
- Outdoor recreation participation rate is 52%
- Ranked 17th in nation

## The ACTION!

- Tell the story of outdoor recreation
- Promote opportunities and successes
- Industry and Communities
- Empower the public with knowledge
- Create/Retain strong partnerships

# Let's Make a Difference!

Each one of you has an important voice and I'd love to discuss the future of outdoor recreation with all of you!



**Contact: Neil Large**

**[nlarge@azstateparks.gov](mailto:nlarge@azstateparks.gov)**

**(480) 721-2115**

## ***Greater Sedona Collaborative***

*Southwest Decision Resources will provide a presentation on the OHV Grant Funded Greater Sedona OHV Management Facilitation Project.*

*(Presenter: Mark Loeth, Southwest Decision Resources)*

# Greater Sedona Recreation Collaborative

## Overview, Proposed Strategies, and Next Steps

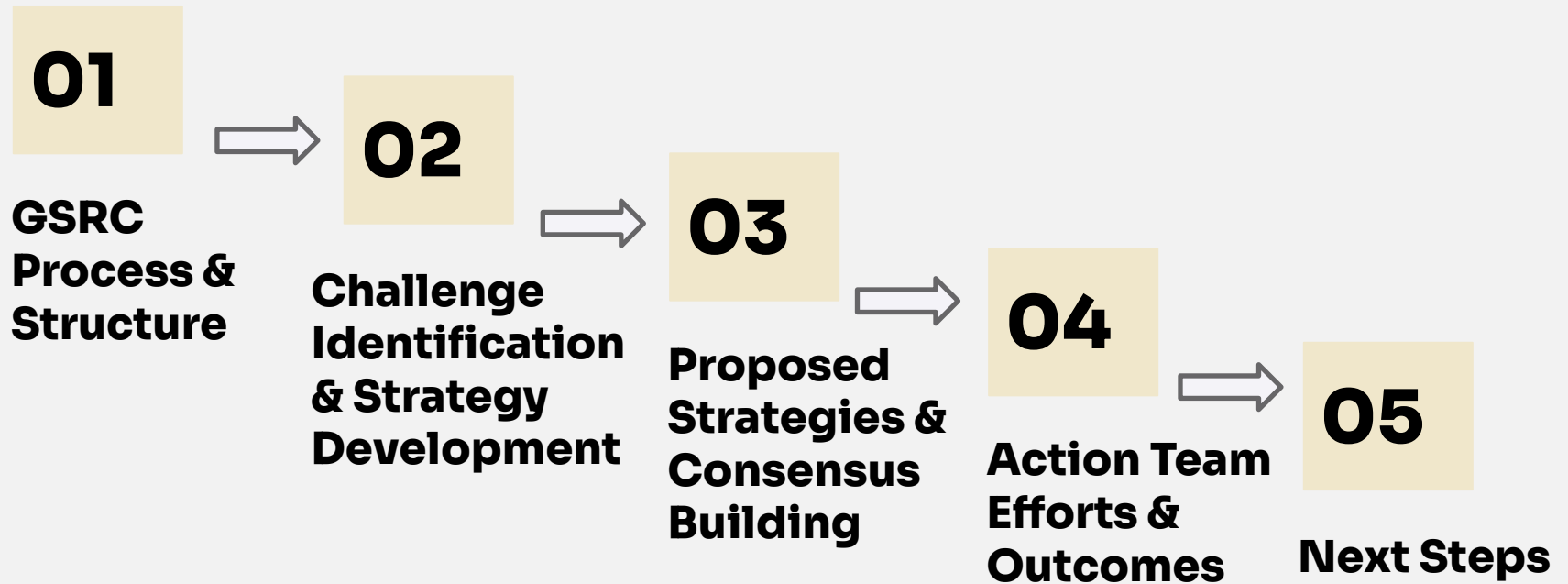
**11.14.24 State Parks Board Meeting**

Presented by: Mark Loeth

*Southwest Decision Resources - GSRC Facilitator*



# Presentation Overview





# Greater Sedona Recreation Collaborative

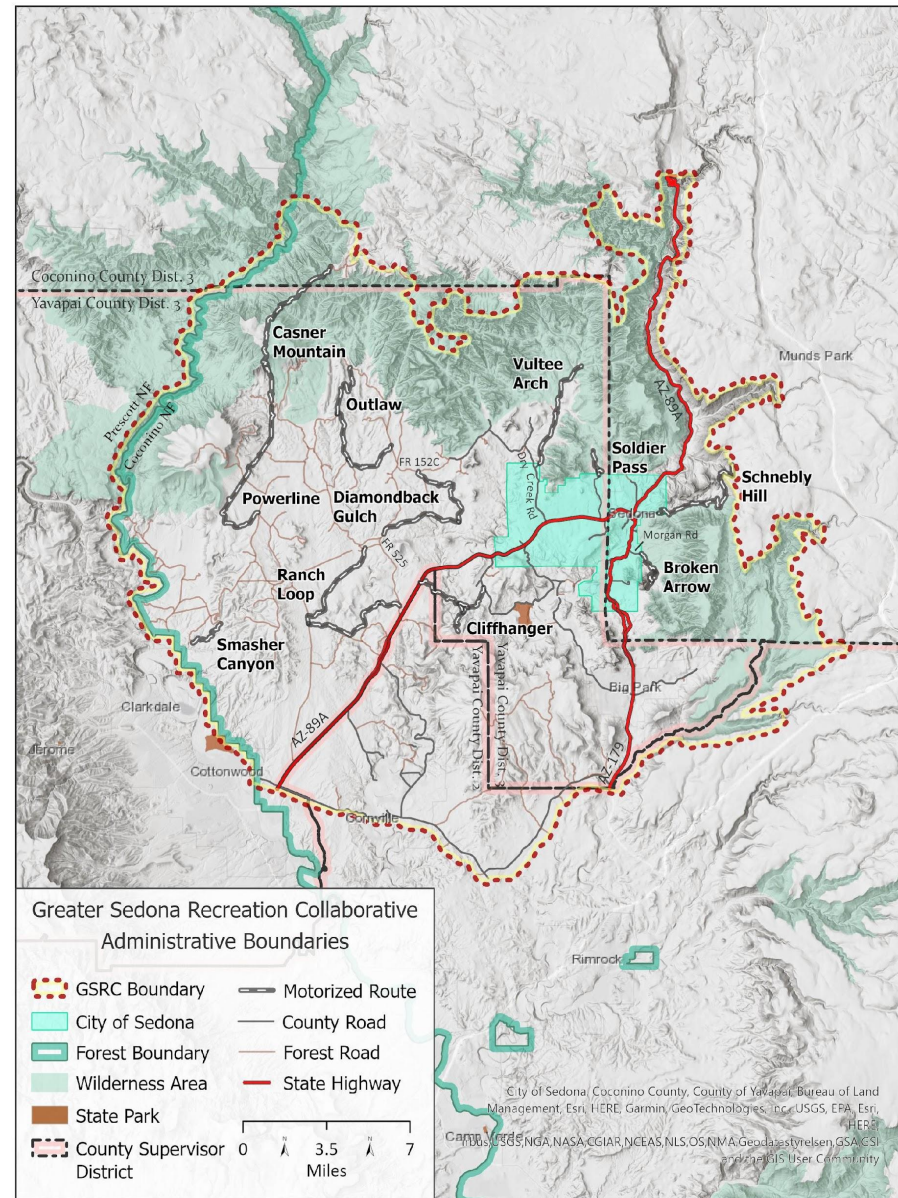
- Emerged from growing concerns, changing conditions, recognition of recreation's cross-jurisdictional nature, and the value of collaborating with diverse partners

## Key objectives

- Identify and provide input on short- to long-term strategies
- Encourage broad participation, collaboration, and consensus
- Provide a platform for shared learning, analysis, and discussion
- Build upon, not replicate, previous efforts
- Utilize a holistic and balanced perspective

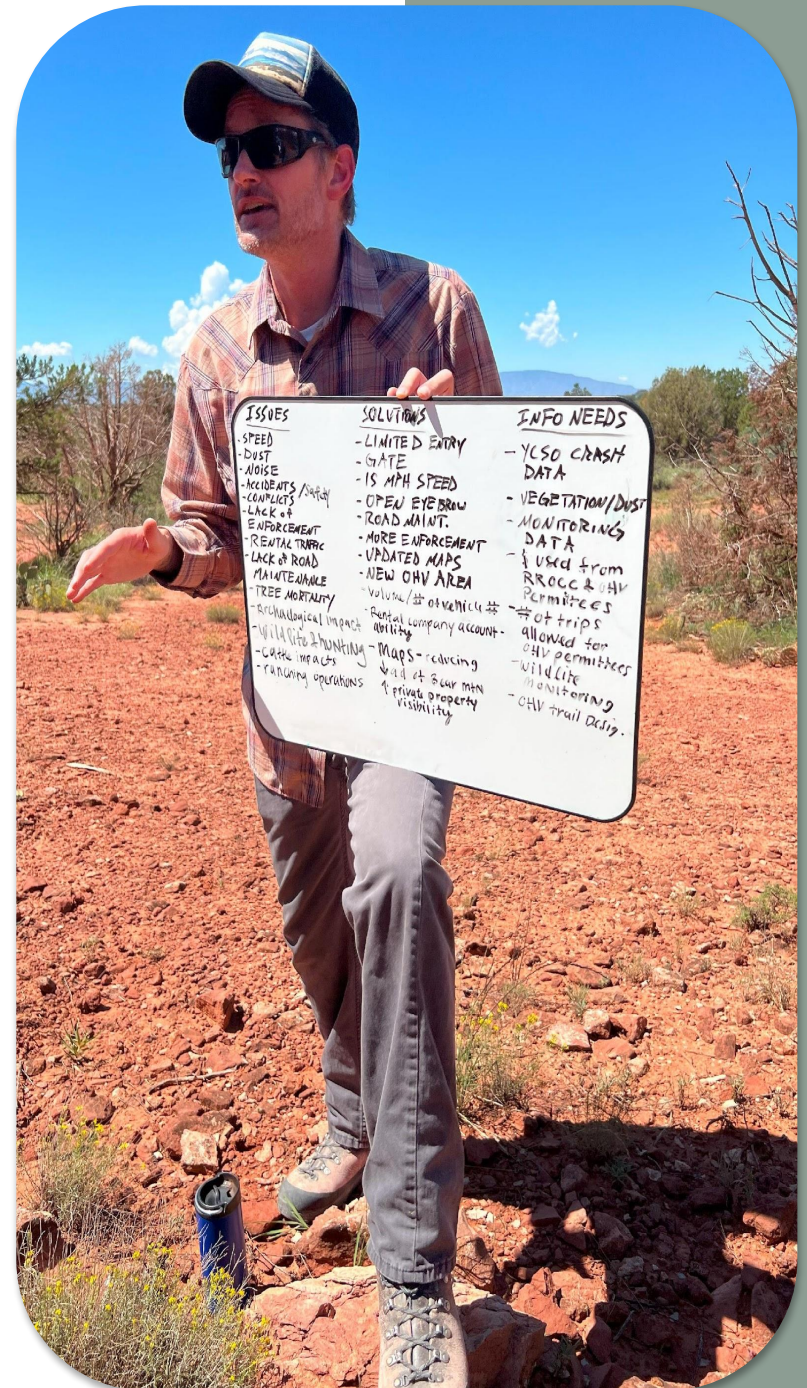
# GSRC Geography

- Western boundary of Red Rock Ranger District (west of FR 525)
- South to Cornville Rd.
- East to eastern boundary of RRRD (Munds Mtn Wilderness)
- North to Red Rock Secret Canyon Wilderness



# 01

## GSRC Process and Structure



# GSRC Co-Conveners



**Arizona Game & Fish:** Tim Holt, Field Supervisor



**Arizona State Parks & Trails:** Matt Eberhart,  
State Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator



**City of Sedona:** Melissa Dunn, City Councilor



**Coconino National Forest:**

Red Rock Ranger District: Amy Tinderholt, Alex  
Schlueter, Philip Walrod  
Supervisor's Office: Brian Poturalski, Kevin Lehto



**Yavapai County:** Charley Pitcher, Planning &  
Zoning Commissioner



## Planning & Assessment

- Established Co-Convening group
- Extensive assessment
  - 43 interviews with diverse partners
  - 4 site-specific analyses:
    - Broken Arrow, Dry Creek, Soldier Pass, Western Canyons
    - Fostered mutual understanding and strong collaborative foundation
- Established balanced Motorized Recreation Working Group (WG) as first action

# GSRC Working Group Members

## Environmental Organizations

**Annie Glickstein**, Friends of the Forest

**Craig Swanson**, Keep Sedona Beautiful

**Melissa Pontikes**, Friends of the Forest (*Alternate*)

## Law Enforcement

**John Johnson**, Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

**Steven Warburton**, Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

## Ranching Permittees

**Becki Ross**, Windmill Mountain Ranch

**Dustin Ross**, Windmill Mountain Ranch (*Alternate*)

## Recreation User Groups

**Amanda Maxwell**, Sedona Westerners

**Heather Klomparens**, Verde Front Trails, Yavapai County Community Health (*Alternate*)

**Kelley Malek**, Sedona Westerners (*Alternate*)

**Pete Sanders**, Sedona Metaphysical Association

**Stephanie Giesbrecht**, Backcountry Horsemen, Verde Front Trails

## Recreation NGOs

**Kevin Adams**, Red Rock Trail Fund  
Verde Valley Trail Fund

**Matt Caldwell**, Tread Lightly!

## Red Rock OHV Conservation Crew

**John Fitzgibbons**, RROCC, Pink Jeep

**Nena Barlow**, RROCC, Barlow Adventures(*Alternate*)

**Tim Angus**, RROCC, Outback ATV

## Residential Representatives

**Carl Jackson**, Broken Arrow Resident

**Cliff Hamilton**, Dry Creek Resident

**DeAnna Bindley**, Bear Mountain Resident

**Janet Johnson**, Bear Mountain Resident (*Alternate*)

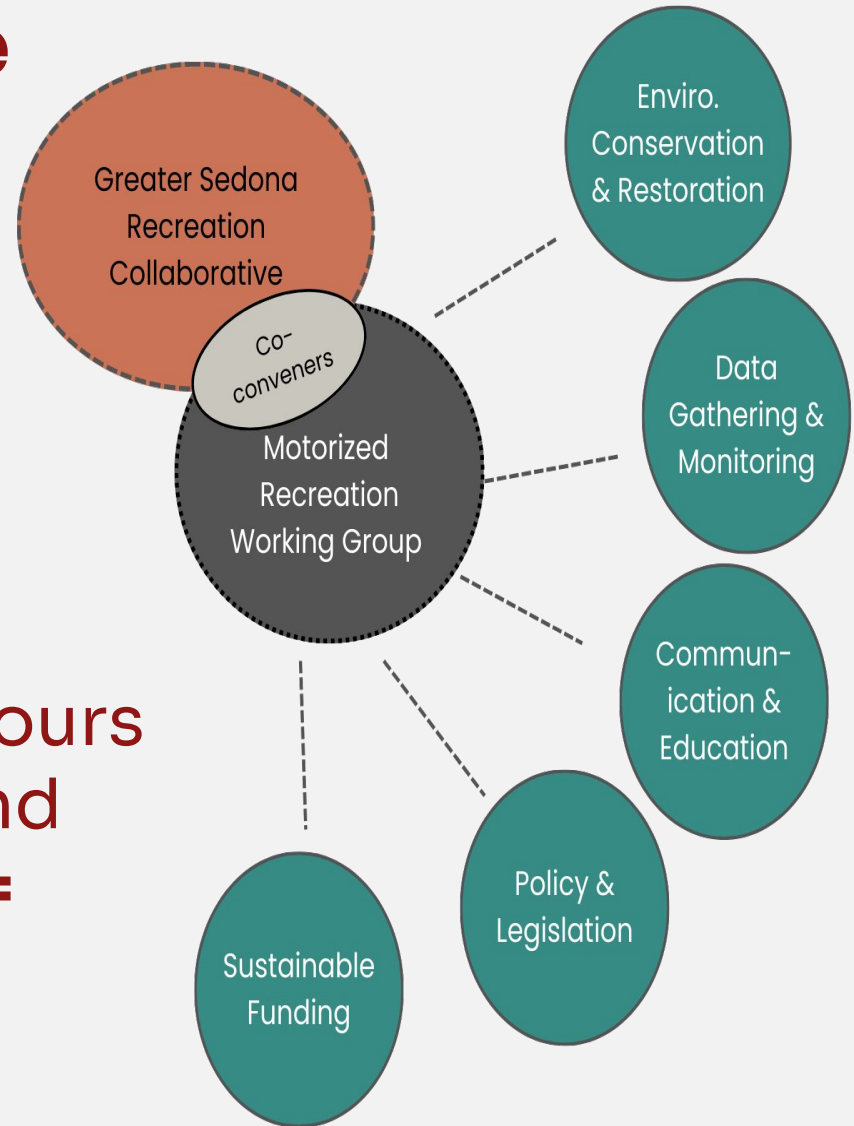
**Pandora Harris**, Schnebly Hill Resident

**Rob Adams**, Broken Arrow Resident (*Alternate*)

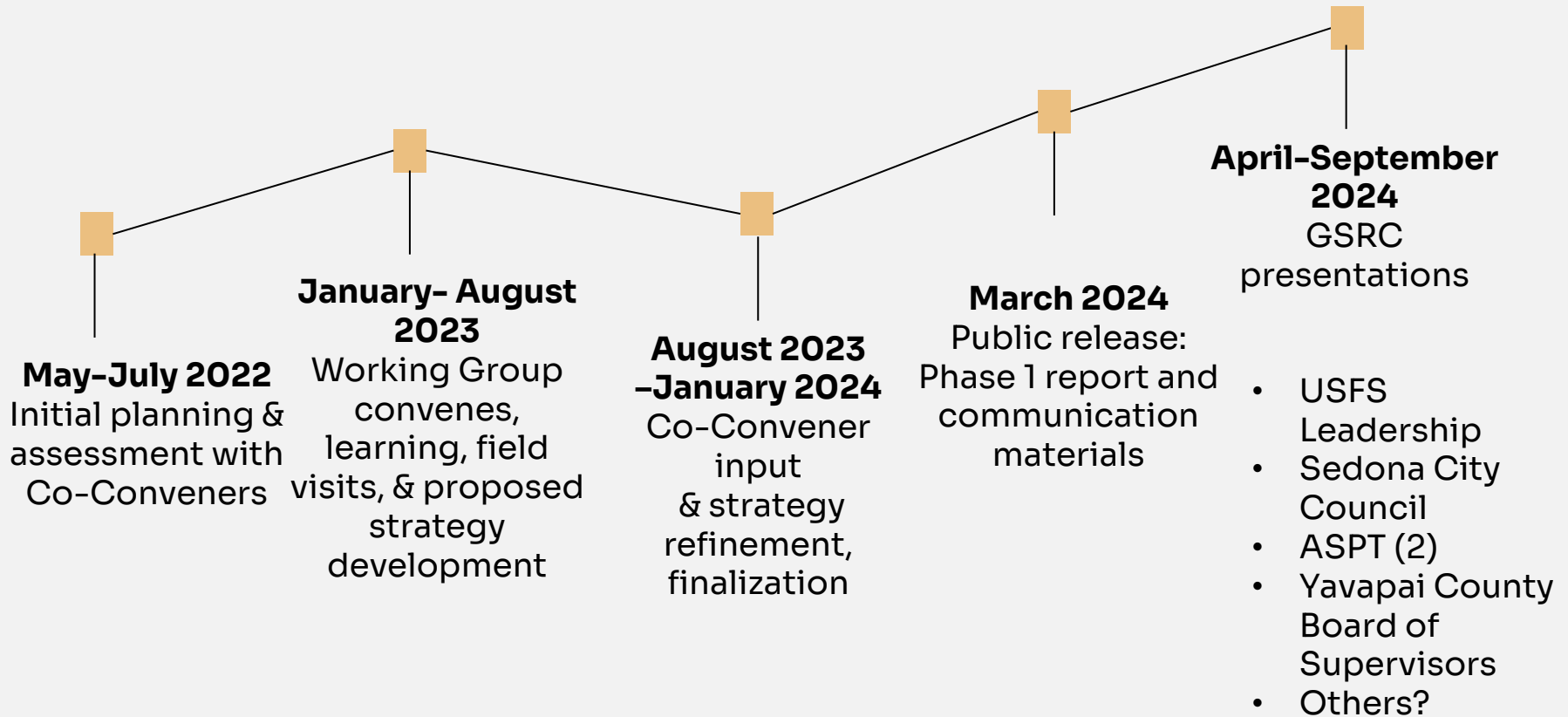
# GSRC Collaborative Structure

- Co-Conveners
- Motorized Recreation Working Group
- 5 Topical Action Teams

17 WG members x 150 hours each in WG meetings and Action Team meetings = **2,500 hours**



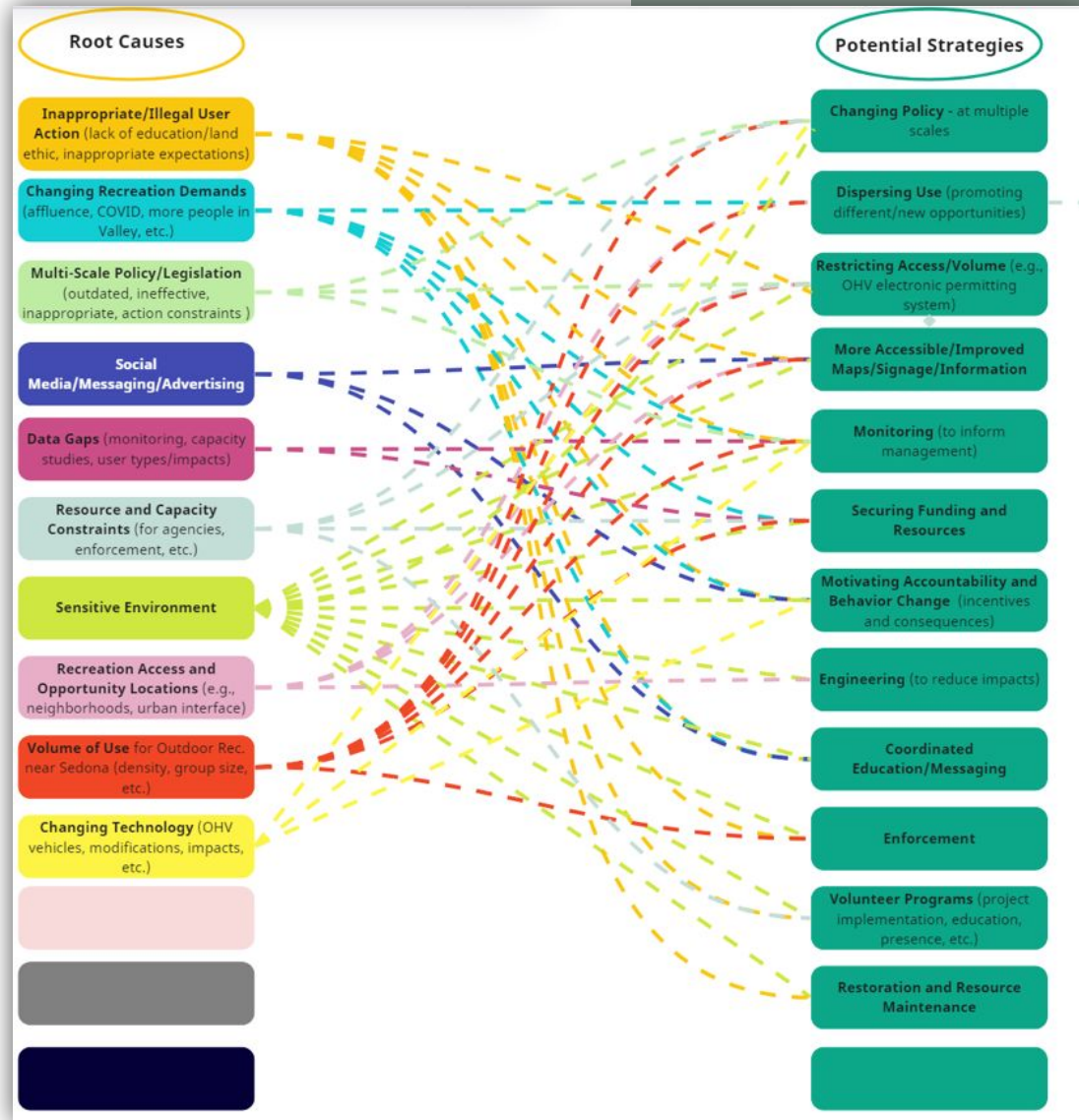
# Collaborative Process To Date





# 02

## Challenge Identification & Strategy Development



# WG Shared Learning

- Past & current motorized recreation management
- Policy & legislation, sideboards
- Rental education processes
- Best-practices for management/conservation
- Lessons/examples from other places



# Challenges and Root Causes Addressed

## **Volume & Recreational Demand**

- Proximity to residents & fragile ecosystems
- Popularity of area
- Day users (rentals) may lack education
- Lack of data
- Noise impacts

## **Physical Infrastructure & Environment**

- “Routes” locations (near residential, natural/cultural resources)
- “Routes” not designed for recreational use
- Fragile ecosystem
- Use intensity

## **User Behavior**

- Social media/ advertising
- Lack of ethics/ understanding
- Insufficient enforcement
- Lack of effective signage/barriers

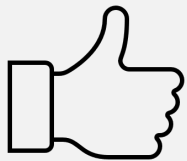
03

# Strategies & Consensus



# Seeking Consensus

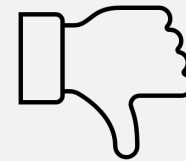
- General agreement among the members of a group after robust and balanced discussion
- “Everyone can move forward with the current decision” - *allows everyone to acknowledge that while the decision they're making may not be perfect, it is acceptable*
- Where consensus was not achieved, reservations or dissensions were documented



**Support**



**Support with  
Reservations**



**Do not  
support**

# Proposed Strategies: Overview

Challenge	Strategies	Consensus
<b>Volume/Demand</b>	Speed Limits	Partial most
<b>Volume/Demand</b>	Permit System	Partial most
<b>Volume/Demand</b>	Continue to Coordinate Voluntary Efforts with RROCC & Others	Full
<b>Infrastructure/Environment</b>	Conduct Short- & Long-Term Motorized System Planning	Partial Most
<b>User Behavior</b>	Increase the Visibility of Existing Educational Programs & Create New	Full
<b>User Behavior</b>	Increase Effectiveness/Consistency of Signage & Barriers	Full
<b>User Behavior</b>	Increase Enforcement	Full

# Rejected Strategies

- **Status Quo** – would not address challenges/root causes
- **Banning OHVs** – not in line with multiuse mandates, biased access restriction
- **Increasing Motorized Recreation Use** – would exacerbate challenges
- **Paving Forest Roads** – high cost and maintenance burden, potential for increased use and speed
- **Dust Abatement** – high cost and frequent reapplication need, potential negative environmental impacts

# Speed Limits

**Define and enforce a 15 MPH speed limit on Schnebly Hill Road, Morgan Road, and Forest Roads 525 and 152C.**

**Working Group Consensus:** Partial (most). Dissention from 4 members

- Previous engineering study suggests 25 MPH more appropriate.
- Some proposed roads are major thoroughfares (e.g., FR 525)

## **Tactics**

1. Conduct relevant studies and processes to implement speed limits.
  - For Forest Service roads:
    - Contract an Engineering/Speed Study with routine re-evaluation
    - Re-evaluate desired conditions for speed limits and Road Maintenance Objective/Level
  - For roads within COS and/or County limits, complete any other required analyses



# Permit System

**Implement a permit system that, in conjunction with the other proposed strategies, will reduce adverse environmental and social impacts.**

**Working Group Consensus:** Partial consensus (most). Dissention from 1 member – concern about impact to existing permitted businesses

## Tactics

1. Include and define quotas for volume; when determining new quotas, consider volume holistically including permitted and non-permitted use.
2. Adaptively manage considering volume, environmental and social impacts, and seasonal trends
3. Effectively enforce the permit system with strong recommendations for the following tools:
  - Gates, intermittent law enforcement, future video/electronic capture
4. Investigate funding opportunities to support motorized recreation management (e.g., permit fee)

# Voluntary Efforts

**Continue to work with RROCC members, other OHV rental companies, and residents to implement the following voluntary elements:**

**Working Group Consensus: Full consensus**

## **Tactics**

1. Modify vehicles (mufflers, governors) to reduce noise and speed levels where possible
2. Explore options to direct rental users to go down Diamondback, then up to 525 to reduce the number of people on 152C
3. Implement a “voluntary” speed limit of 15 MPH on all dirt roads for rental companies and outfitters/guides
4. Explore and potentially develop a voluntary commercial permit system for OHV rental companies

# Motorized System Planning

**Pursue route planning to address existing use without attracting new users or creating a high volume “destination”. Work with a motorized recreation system planner and the WG to plan a system that align with specified criteria.**

**Working Group Consensus:** Partial consensus (most). Dissention from 2 members - Concern over uncertainty of future locations, and the complexity of managing the system so as not to become a destination.

## Tactics

1. Pursue managed route system, road, trailhead, and/or signage and barrier modifications that:
  - Enhance safety, keep users on the trail, reduce speed
  - Maximizes safety
  - Includes options for 2-hour, 4-hour, and full-day experiences
  - Maintains an appropriate speed limit
  - Directs users away from 525 and 152C where practical

# User behavior – Education

**Increase the visibility of existing positive educational programs and create new educational programs.**

**Working Group Consensus: Full**

## **Tactics**

1. Require periodic, AGFD-managed motorized recreation education prior to OHV operation
2. Expand the use of current and create new channels, platforms, and campaigns for positive messaging and education
3. Develop or support existing brand standards for messaging
4. Convey stewardship messaging by using positive restoration and landscape management techniques.
5. Allocate more resources (funding, staff, administrative support) for ambassador, volunteer, and educational programs

# User behavior – Signage/Barriers

**Increase the effectiveness and consistency of signage/barriers to encourage improved user behavior.**

**Working Group Consensus: Full**

## **Tactics**

1. Identify gaps in signage and barrier effectiveness and consistency
2. Work with a motorized recreation system planner to implement a signage and barrier plan that:
  - Is consistent where possible while still meeting location-specific needs
  - Includes both responsive and preventative options.
  - Follows defined effectiveness and best practices
  - Utilizes simple messaging that conveys preferred behavior
3. Identify additional funding to support effective signage and barrier implementation

# Law Enforcement

**Increase enforcement in the GSRC footprint to cite illegal behavior and provide a presence to encourage positive user behavior.**

**Working Group Consensus: Full**

- Tactics**
1. Secure sufficient resources for increased law enforcement
  2. Increase interagency coordination and pooling of resources

04

# Action Team Efforts & Outcomes







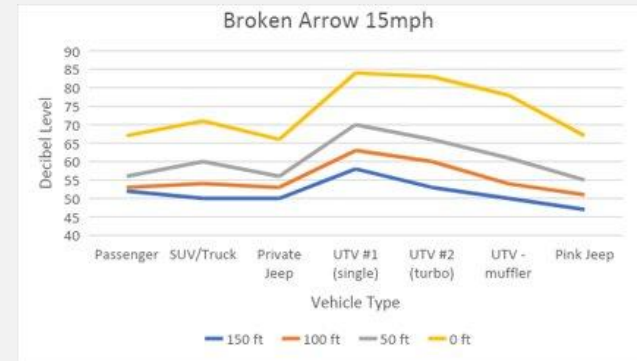
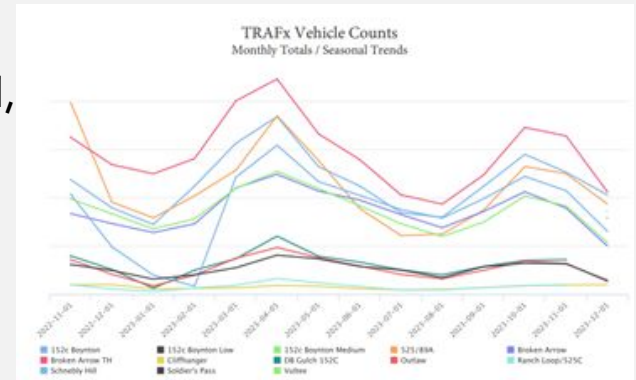
# Key Action Team Outcomes

## Data Gathering and Monitoring Efforts

- Research and implemented vehicle counts (manual, TRAFx, game camera)
- Conducted monitoring on dust and air quality with vehicle type/speed
- Conducted monitoring vehicle noise and speed monitoring

## Data Gathering and Monitoring Key Proposed Strategies

- Establish monitoring team to monitor volume for at least 1 year
- Install mufflers (they work!), reduce single-seaters
- Conduct further dust and air quality monitoring with ADEQ



# Key Action Team Efforts and Outcomes

## Policy and Legislation Proposed Changes\*

- Adding “operate or ALLOW a minor child to operate” to several statutes to hold parents accountable who allow their children to drive a vehicle
- Adding a 35 MPH speed limit unless otherwise posted while driving an OHV across the State, unless otherwise posted
- Allocating jurisdiction to local authorities for setting decibel limits for OHV operation
- Requiring mandatory education for OHV operation with standards set by AGFD

*\*Many of these recently passed in the legislature*

**05**

**Next  
Steps**



# Next Steps: Continued WG Engagement

New action teams to coordinate work in 3 key areas:

**Communication and Education:** inventory, evaluation, distribution, informing on-the-ground enforcement needs

**Monitoring:** continued volume monitoring, establishing thresholds/indicators and a monitoring plan

**Route planning and Speed limits:** route inventory (condition, signage/barriers, monitoring for new impacts), inform maintenance/needed changes, speed limit policy analysis, informing speed/engineering study

# Implementation Next Steps:

## Short-Term

- **Bringing on additional capacity**
  - Enforcement - AGFD new hire
  - Planning - FS ACES, Enterprise Team (on board now)
- **Route planning:** Broken Arrow TH modifications, FR 152C Realignment, route closure/rehabilitation efforts
- **Education:**
  - ASPT Ambassador Program, Dealer backpacks
  - AGFD educational materials, education with the Courts
  - Appreciate AZ messaging toolbox
  - FS developing OHV Program communications plan
- **Implement recent legislation changes (education, etc.)**

# Implementation Next Steps: Mid-Term

- **Monitor** effectiveness and impacts of efforts
- Complete **project management plan** for FS driven actions, and **potentially implement capacity analysis** for targeted areas
- If new engineering/speed study suggests necessary, **consider speed limits**
- Develop scope of work and bring on capacity **for motorized system planning process**

# Implementation Next Steps: Long-Term

- **Implement motorized system plan**
  - Seek funding to implement
- **Consider permit system**
  - If capacity analysis and monitoring suggests necessary
- **Continue ongoing efforts**
  - Education
  - Monitoring
  - Restoration

# Thank you! Questions? Feedback?

**Jessica Archibald**

**[jarchibald@swdresources.com](mailto:jarchibald@swdresources.com)**

**Mark Loeth** **[mark@swdresources.com](mailto:mark@swdresources.com)**

**Andi Rogers** **[andi@swdresources.com](mailto:andi@swdresources.com)**





## AGENDA – D4

# ***Growing Smarter Observatory Mesa Proposed Amendment to the Existing Observatory Mesa Right-of Way***

*The Arizona State Parks Board Will Consider and May Take Action on a Recommendation to the proposed amendment of Right-of-way easement #16-88092 to enable the construction of an access road through Observatory Mesa Natural Area to private properties on the eastern side of Section 6.*

*(Presenter: Mickey Rogers, Chief of Grants and Trails)*

# AGENDA – D4 History

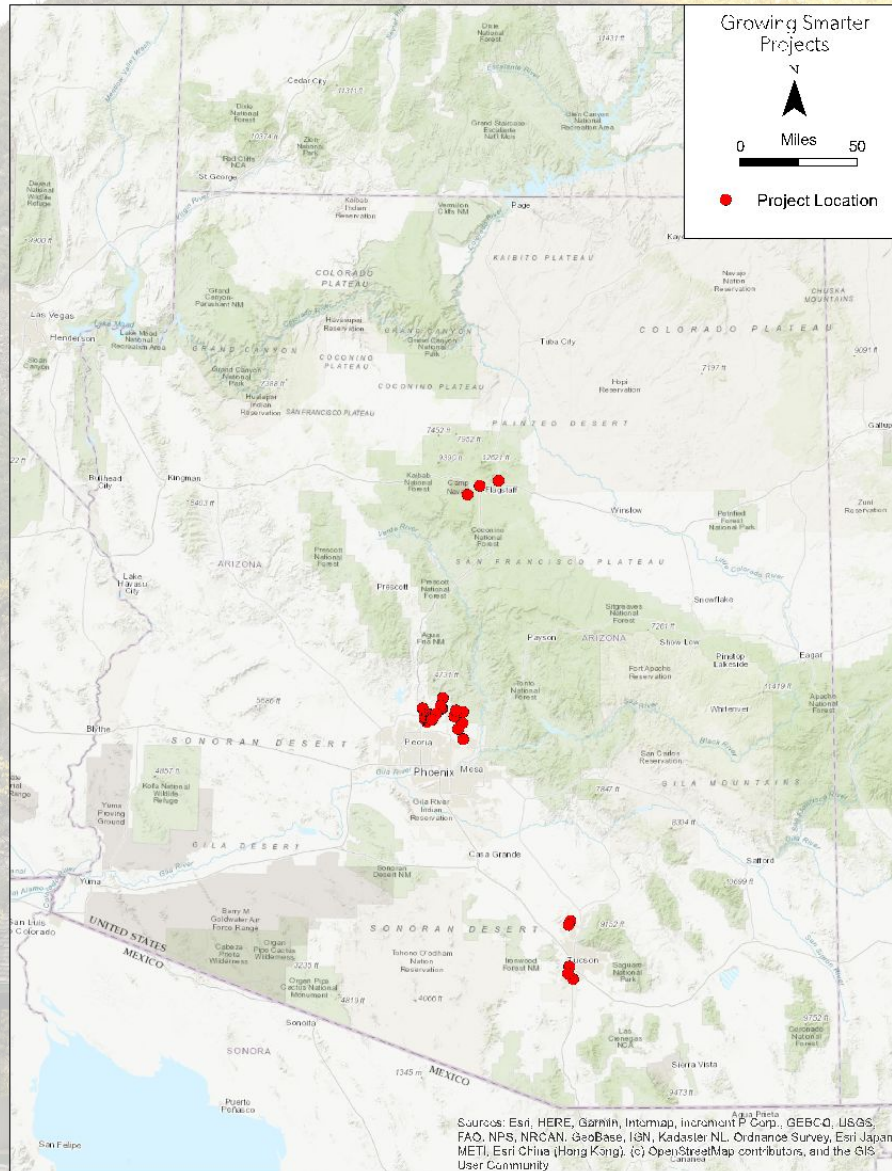
## History

The Growing Smarter Act consists of comprehensive municipal, county and State Land Department land use planning and zoning reforms, provides for the acquisition and preservation of open spaces and establishes a program for continuing study and consideration of pertinent issues relating to public land use policies, all in order to further the best interests of our citizens by protecting our natural heritage and wisely managing the growth of our communities.

The purpose of the Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program was to fund grants from monies in the Land Conservation Fund “to conserve open spaces in or near urban areas and other areas experiencing high growth pressures.”

The Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program and the Land Conservation Fund are designed to encourage the conservation of Arizona’s open spaces and the preservation of select parcels of State Trust land in and near urban areas for open space to benefit future generations. This will be accomplished by awarding grants for the purchase or lease of State Trust land that has been classified as suitable for conservation purposes by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD).

# AGENDA – D2 History



# AGENDA – D2 History

All properties acquired with Growing Smarter properties to convey a conservation easement in perpetuity over the Property of the nature and character set forth in the easement.

Arizona State Parks and Trails holds these easements and is responsible to ensure the property acquired remains to those conservation values in perpetuity.

No more than 10% of the acquired land, up to a limit of 20-acres total, may be eligible for alteration or development and all such proposed work must be approved by the Arizona State Parks Board in advance.

# AGENDA – D4 Background

## Background:

- In 1986, the Right of Way (ROW) was purchased from the Arizona State Land Department for the development of "a public roadway." To date, it has not been developed and remains a primitive dirt road approximately 10-15' wide. It provides a legal access to a series of private property.
- In 2014, Flagstaff accepted a \$6 million-dollar grant (Grant 231303 - Observatory Mesa: Observatory Mesa Growing Smarter) award from Arizona State Parks for a Deed of Conservation Easement to protect and preserve the Observatory Mesa Natural Area. Because the ROW was created prior to the Deed of Conservation Easement, Arizona State Parks recognizes the rights of the holders of the ROW to access private properties. The ROW allows for the construction of a public roadway on property protected by the Deed of Conservation Easement
- The City has been informed that certain individuals seek to develop currently undeveloped private properties that use the ROW for access. The landowners of seven parcels totaling 114 acres abutting Observatory Mesa Natural Area (Parcel Numbers 11105002C, 11105002E, 11105002F, 11105002H, 11105002J, 11105002K, 11105002L) are seeking improved access to their properties to construct a driveway, which is required before building permits can be granted. The proposed driveway would extend from Hidden Hollow Road approximately one mile through the Observatory Mesa Natural Area.

# AGENDA – D2 Background

- The deed of conservation easement dictates what types of improvement projects are allowed within the Natural Area. This is a legal mechanism to protect the natural resources and baseline documentation conditions of the property (condition of the property at the time of acquisition). According to the deed of conservation easement, Arizona State Parks is required to approve all improvements and development on the property in writing. Arizona State Parks has 60 days to review these written requests and provide a response. If a response is not received, it is considered a denial. Additionally, the City is allowed to improve up to 20 acres of the Natural Area with trails, trailheads, parking areas, signs, etc. After several public meetings, the Flagstaff City Council approved an amendment of ROW easement #16-88092 to allow construction of an access road through Observatory Mesa Natural Area. A request was made from Flagstaff for board review was made on September 18, 2024
- Observatory Mesa Natural Area is deemed to be used for a) protection of wildlife habitat; b) preservation of rare native plant communities; c) environmental education; d) scientific research; and e) provision of controlled public access for passive recreation such as wildlife viewing and non-motorized use of trails as well as continuation of traditional uses including hunting.

# AGENDA – D2 Background

- Facility development will consist of low-impact trails, interpretive facilities, and the most basic visitor amenities such as a parking area and restrooms. In the long-term, an educational facility may be developed to support education and research activities on Observatory Mesa. In accordance with the conservation easement, no more than 10% of the acquired land, up to a limit of 20 acres total, may be eligible for alteration or development, and no changes may be made to the parcel that would seriously or negatively affect its conservation and open space values.



# AGENDA – D4 Background

## Background:

- According to information shared with the City by the engineering consultant working with the private property owners, the construction of the driveway within the boundaries of the existing ROW would be difficult due to topography constraints.
- City staff have met with the private property owners on multiple occasions and provided recommended changes to their construction plans to reduce the impact to the Observatory Mesa Natural Area, and those changes are reflected in the attached concept plan set.
- All weather surface to withstand a minimum weight of 80,000 gross vehicle weight
- Minimum width of 20 feet
- Access turning radius to accommodate a 47-foot fire truck
- Minimum clearance of 13'6"
- Grades not to exceed 10% longitudinal, 5% lateral
- Minimum 45' on center turning radius. This is the minimum dimensions permitted to allow turning and maneuvering through the site.



# AGENDA – D4 Area Impacted

**The existing ROW does not provide the design criteria required by Flagstaff**

Areas Impacted:

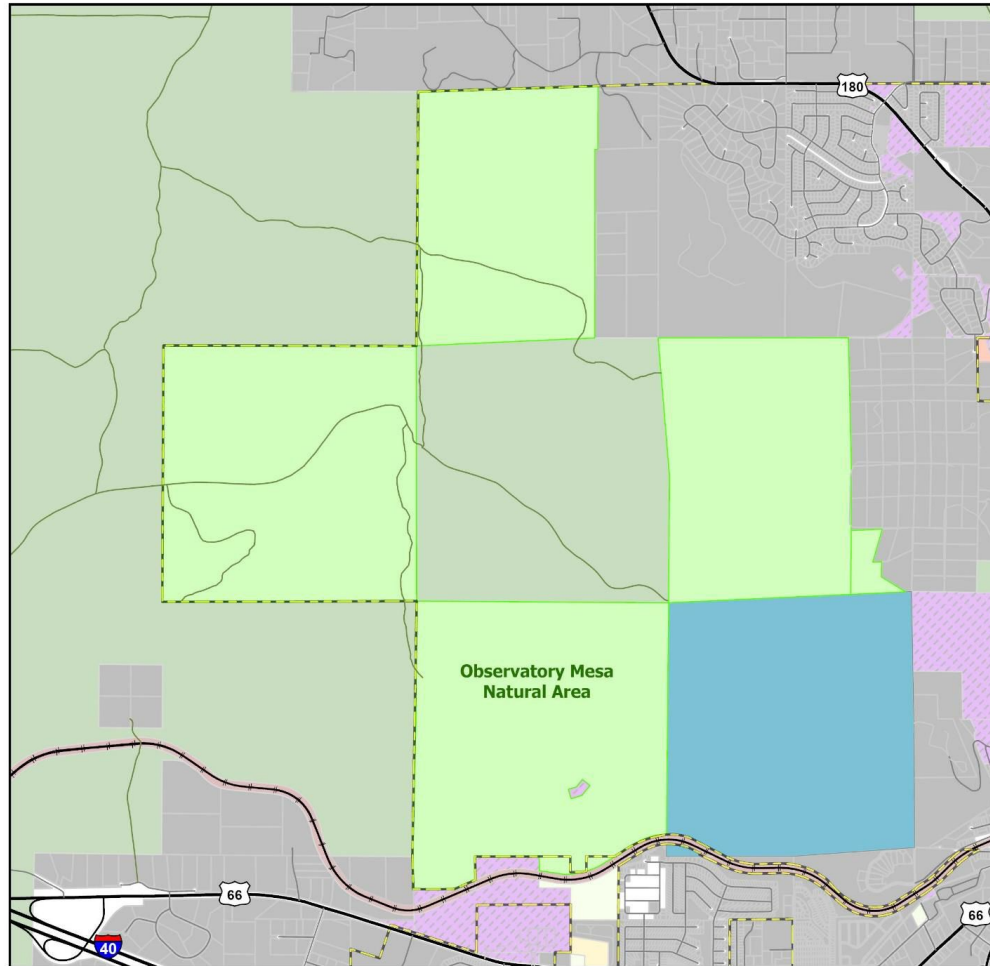
The legal description for the current ROW alignment encompasses 3.52 acres. The proposed revised ROW alignment for the 20-foot wide driveway would encompass 2.7 acres. However, the total estimated area to be impacted during construction of the driveway is 3.75 acres. The additional 1.05-acre area impacted by construction would be rehabilitated by the private property owners as a condition of the amended ROW easement.

If the ROW was revised, it would permit a 20-foot wide driveway plus the area needed for engineering the driveway, such as slope cuts and fill. The slope cuts and fill could be revegetated as a condition of the amended ROW easement but would impact the condition of the Natural Area.

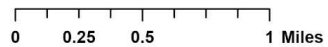
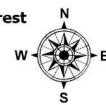
Approximately 48 acres are located to the East of the current ROW easement. A well-traveled driveway could have impacts on wildlife use of that acreage.

# AGENDA – D4

## Overview Observatory Mesa Natural Area

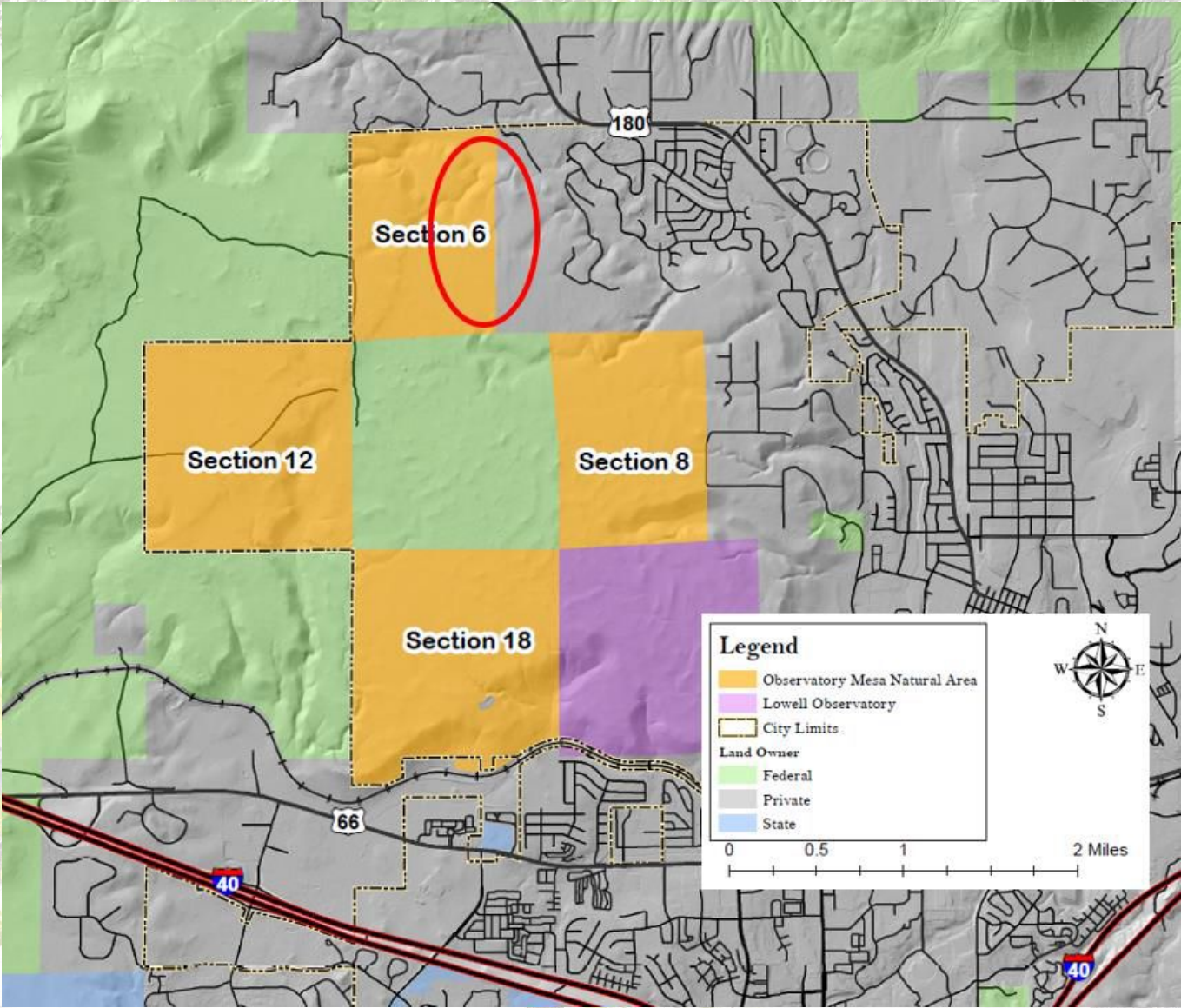


- Observatory Mesa Natural Area
- City Boundary
- BNSF
- Coconino County
- Coconino National Forest
- Private Ownership
- State Trust
- State of Arizona
- Lowell Observatory



4/29/2020

# AGENDA – D4



# AGENDA – D4



# AGENDA – D4



Current Condition of existing  
ROW, entering from the Hidden  
Hollow neighborhood

# AGENDA – D4



Terrain along alignment



Grade  
e

# AGENDA – D4



Approaching Private Property



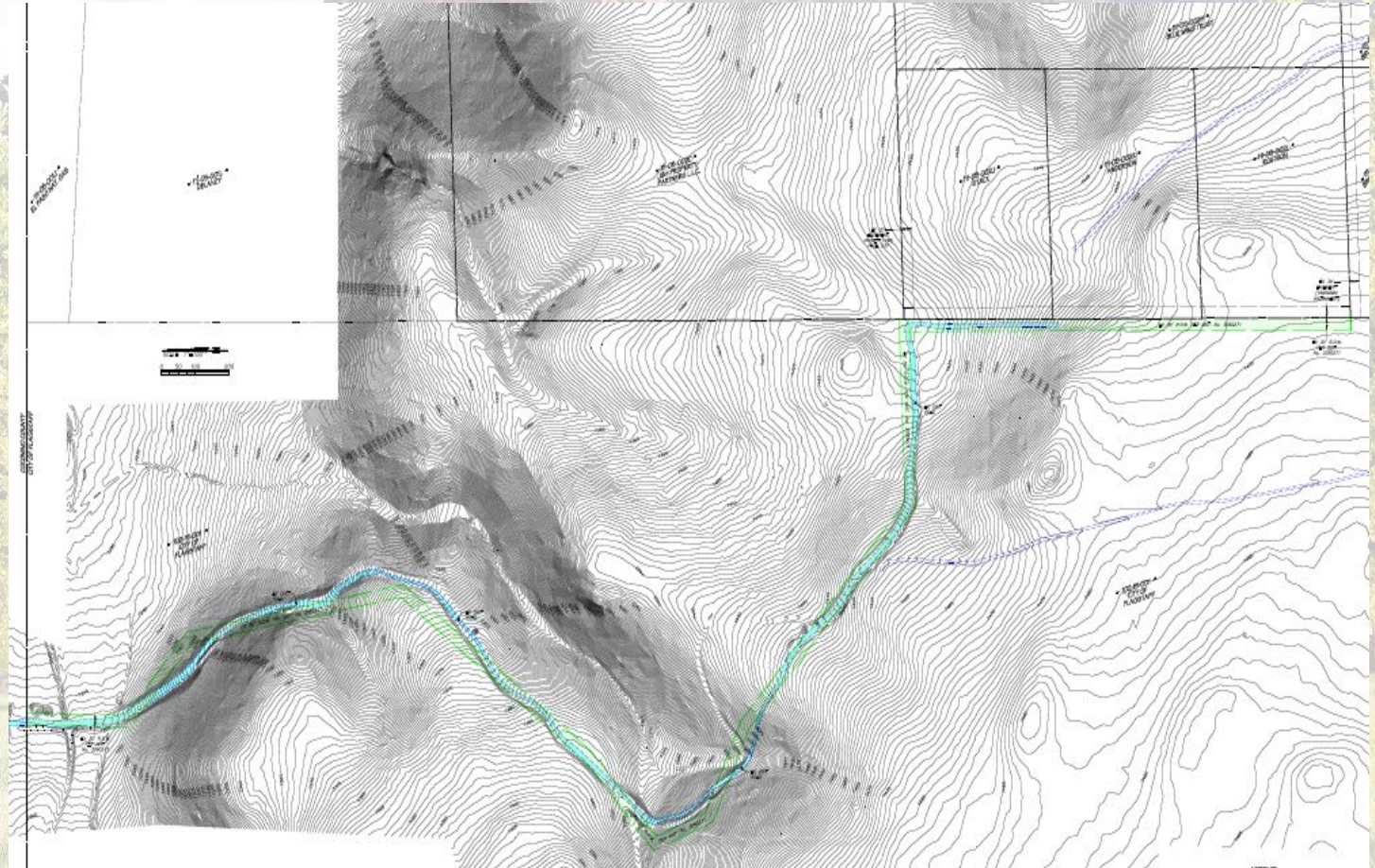
Private Property Boundary

# AGENDA – D4

Current ROW 3.52 acres

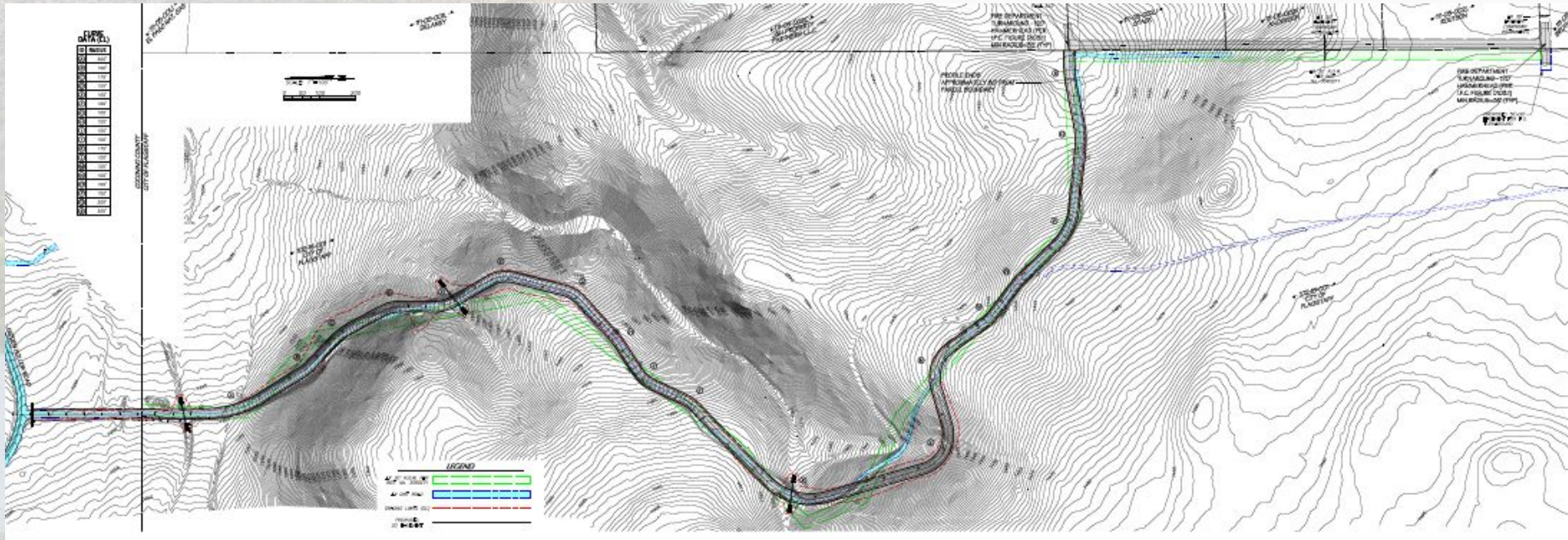
Proposed ROW 3.75 acres, includes 1.05 impacted during construction

Completed revised ROW 2.7 acres





# AGENDA – D4



# AGENDA – D2

*Motion:*

*I move that the Arizona State Parks Board \_\_\_\_\_  
the proposed amendment of Right-of-way easement  
#16-88092 to enable the construction of an access road  
through Observatory Mesa Natural Area to private properties  
on the eastern side of Section 6.*

## FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Board members may identify items or issues they wish to be considered for inclusion on a future agenda.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT ON CURRENT EVENTS

The Executive Director may present a summary of current events and/or recent experiences of interest to the outdoor recreation community and/or the status of any projects with which they are currently involved. The Board will not discuss or take any action on any current event summary.

# AGENDA – F

## Historic Brewing-Oracle State Park



# Kartchner Caverns 50th/25th Celebration



## CURRENT EVENTS

Board members may present a brief summary of current events and/or recent experiences of interest to the outdoor recreation community and/or the status of any projects with which they may be involved. The Board will not discuss or take action on any current events.

# AGENDA – H

## CALL TO THE PUBLIC

The Chair will recognize those wishing to address the Board.



# AGENDA – I

## FUTURE MEETING DATES

### Arizona State Parks and Trails 2024 Tentative Meeting Schedule

Date	Location
December 12, 2024	Central Office



# THANK YOU!!