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# Dialogue San Pedro

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February 2000

## **Watershed group speakers urge single, inclusive effort**

Larry Handy, coordinator of the Upper Arkansas Watershed Council(UAWC) in Colorado, and Tom O'Halleran, chairman of the Verde Watershed Association (VWA) in Arizona, addressed the Dialogue San Pedro group on February 5. Their presentations stressed the importance of coordinating all groups working with water issues in a watershed and addressing everyone's interests and concerns.

### ***Outreach activities***

Both the UAWC and the VWA hold regular meetings, produce a newsletter, conduct educational programs on issues ranging from regional hydrology to water quality and water law, and organize annual watershed-wide information-sharing forums. The Verde Watershed Association also maintains a World Wide Web site <<http://wva.southwest-water.org>>.

### ***Decisionmaking processes***

The UAWC's decisionmaking process allows one vote per dues-paying member organization. Decisions are made by consensus, which he defined as a willing minority agreeing to support the majority. If members can't reach consensus, they return to the issue at the next meeting and, if necessary, form a task group to address the problem.

By contrast, the VWA does not have structured voting rights. Anyone who attends a meeting can vote on an issue. But the VWA also operates by consensus. "We leave in agreement or without a solution." Tom O'Halleran defines consensus decisionmaking to mean "don't leave the room without an agreement." On every issue, he asks the members, "Where do we agree?" and "Where do we disagree?" The group will return to areas of disagreement at the next meeting. Frequently, O'Halleran says, disagreements boil down to semantics and lack of communication.

### ***Addressing everyone's interests***

The Verde Watershed Association takes a proactive approach to stakeholder involvement. "If you don't come to us, we'll go to you," O'Halleran says. "We'll invite you to our meetings, and if you don't come,

we'll send you the minutes. If you don't reply after getting the minutes, we'll send a letter asking if you got them. We don't ever give anyone a chance to say they weren't included."

Handy similarly stressed that all stakeholders must be at the table in a watershed group. "If you want roadblocks, exclude one of the stakeholders," he said, explaining that those who aren't invited to meetings and kept informed will wonder what's going on and why they have been excluded. Handy defined stakeholders as "those who have an interest in the area."

### ***Lessons for Dialogue San Pedro***

Both speakers recommended organizing a two-day forum for groups working in the Upper San Pedro partnership to identify common issues and identify ways to work together. In the case of the UAWC, two such forums led to the development of the watershed council.

The speakers agreed "there are too many we's" in the Upper San Pedro basin. They said there should be one organization addressing watershed issues in the basin, not two or three or four.

### ***Reconsidering public information center***

After listening to the presentations, some Dialogue San Pedro participants questioned the utility of a public information center as a primary outreach tool. Both guest presenters at the meeting agreed that the Dialogue group should look closely at the costs of an information center. Tom O'Halleran said, "Brick and mortar is not the future. Think about a Web site." The speakers also noted that an information center would require considerable staff time that might be better spent on other activities.

## **Dialogue San Pedro meeting**

*Time:* Friday, March 24, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

*Place:* Sierra Vista Public Library

*Topics:* Water issues survey, Coordinating with other groups in the basin

*Guest speakers:* Ken Jones and Patti Tellez, Cochise College Center for Economic Research

## Upper San Pedro Partnership developing new structure

The Upper San Pedro Partnership's executive committee has drafted a new structure for the Partnership that includes an advisory commission, a coordinating committee, and three subcommittees. The subcommittees will work on open space, public outreach, and technical review.

Two other groups working on water and resource management issues in the basin may merge with the Partnership. At the February 17 meeting of the San Pedro Technical Review Committee (TRC), members expressed interest in joining the Upper San Pedro Partnership's new technical review subcommittee. The TRC, which has been meeting for 10 years, is charged with keeping the Cochise County Board of Supervisors informed on water issues and played a key role in reviewing the Arizona Department of Water Resource's groundwater model of the Sierra Vista subbasin. The San Pedro Open Space Working Group may similarly merge with the Partnership's open space working group.

The Partnership will review the proposed organizational structure at its March 29 meeting. Individuals interested in reviewing the draft structure should contact George Michael, Upper San Pedro Partnership coordinating manager, at 520-378-4046 or at <gmichael@primenet.com>.

## New Arizona Watershed Alliance

The Upper San Pedro Partnership is a member of the recently-formed Arizona Watershed Alliance, a group of nine rural watershed groups from throughout Arizona. The Alliance will work to promote public education on watershed issues, inform legislators of water management concerns, and identify water management needs based on watershed principles. The Alliance is currently developing mission statements, goals, and objectives. For more information, contact Tom O'Halleran at <obarc@sedona.net>.

## It's back! Udall Center revives San Pedro News & Comment

The Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy has revived the *San Pedro News and Comment*, a weekly compilation of news articles relating to the Upper San Pedro Basin that was formerly compiled and distributed by Bruce Goff of the Semi-Arid Land-Surface-Atmosphere (SALSA) program. To receive this weekly email posting, send a request to <rachely@u.arizona.edu>.

## Community-based science in the Upper San Pedro River Basin

The Upper San Pedro Community Monitoring Network is a collaborative effort among dozens of local citizens, landowners, decisionmakers, and scientists to provide unbiased information to the public regarding the status and trends of surface flows in the Upper San Pedro River. The initial goal of the Network is to document the spatial extent of pre-monsoon surface flow in the river between the U.S.-Mexico border and the northern end of the San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area. The Network plans to collect streamflow information on an annual basis to help determine where the river remains perennial.

If you are interested in participating in the Upper San Pedro Community Monitoring Network or would like more information, contact Holly Richter at The Nature Conservancy at 520-803-0881 or <hollyrichter@theriver.com>.

## Upcoming events

**San Pedro Joint Task Force meeting.** March 14, 7:00 p.m., Sierra Vista City Hall. Contact: Rick Koehler at 520-432-9674 or at <rkoehler@co.cochise.az.us>

**Dialogue San Pedro meeting.** March 24, 11:00 a.m., Sierra Vista Library. Contact: Ann Moote at 520-884-4393 or <moote@u.arizona.edu>.

**San Pedro Open Space Working Group meeting.** March 27, 10:00 a.m., Sierra Vista City Hall. Contact: Rick Koehler at 520-432-9674 or at <rkoehler@co.cochise.az.us>

**Upper San Pedro Partnership meeting.** March 29, 10:00 a.m., Sierra Vista Public Library. Contact: Ellen Endebrock at 602-417-2460 or at <egendebrock@adwr.state.az.us>.

**Dialogue San Pedro** is a collaborative effort to improve knowledge exchange on water issues in the Upper San Pedro River basin. It is funded by the Ford Foundation and facilitated by The University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy. The working goal of Dialogue San Pedro participants is *to inspire and enable every community member to contribute to water-wise planning and management activities in the Upper San Pedro River basin.*