What Is The Expert Forum?

1-24-2011

Thanks for asking!

Q: What is the Expert Forum?*

A: The Expert Forum is a group of local scientists who volunteer their time and professional expertise to review draft text, goals, policies and maps during the revision of the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan to ensure that they are informed by current scientific consensus and use appropriate vocabulary.

Q: What are the origins of the Expert Forum?

A: In early 2000, a group of local scientists responded to the call for public input on the original Regional Plan. Pooling their expertise, they identified and mapped areas of natural, historic, and cultural significance. Following review by city staff and further public comment, planning staff incorporated much of the group's information into the Urban Open Spaces Plan.

Habitat Harmony revived the 2000 group — now known as the Expert Forum — to provide scientific information that could be useful in the current revision of the Regional Plan. Flagstaff Development Services Director Jim Cronk met with members of Habitat Harmony as well as representatives of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Coconino Parks and Recreation on November 14, 2007. The Expert Forum was advised to get into the revision process on the ground floor.

Habitat Harmony has been addressing wildlife and open space issues in northern Arizona since 2000 and continues to facilitate the activities of the Expert Forum. The stated mission of Habitat Harmony is:

> *. . . []to assist humans to live in harmony with wildlife. It is the policy of Habitat Harmony to seek consensus and to build cooperative relationships. It is our goal to pursue our mission in a manner that promotes a sense of community. We believe that greater good may be accomplished by a respectful approach to issues.*

Q: What has the Expert Forum contributed so far?

A. (1) 3/23/09: Met with the Regional Plan Core Planning Team; assigned Dr. Larry Stevens to map plan area vegetation/habitat types for city and county GIS mapping.

(2) 2010: Worked with Kimberly Sharp to find and digitize the group's original maps done in 2000

(3) 2010: Working with Susan Bean to compile information about the FMPO area's natural and cultural resources for an online environmental atlas, The Resource Inventory of the Flagstaff Area (RIFA), hosted by NAU's Geospatial Research and Information Laboratory (GRAIL).

(4) 2010: Submitted comments on the draft Environmental & Conservation Element and the Open Space Element for the Regional Plan

(5) 2010: Reviewed the City of Flagstaff Green Space Inventory map

Summary: The Expert Forum provides scientific information for the RIFA.

The Expert Forum submits comments on the draft Elements of the Regional Plan that cover natural and cultural resources and open spaces.

The Expert Forum gives professional input for mapping natural and cultural resources and open spaces.

*Since Expert Forums on a variety of topics could take part in the revision of the Regional Plan, it seems appropriate to expand the name to The Expert Forum for Natural and Cultural Resources and Open Spaces.

Expert Forum for Natural and Cultural resources and Open Spaces

Richard Miller- Expert Forum Project Manager for mapping, Wildlife Manager
Participant in 1998 Open Spaces & Greenways Plan and 2002 Regional Plan

Susan Lamb Bean- Expert Forum Project Manager for RIFA, naturalist writer, current CAC member

Tish Bogan-Ozmun- Expert Forum Project Manager for Regional Plan comments, retired real estate broker, Participant in 2002Regional Plan

Erika Nowak- Herpetologist, Northern Arizona University (NAU) faculty,
Participant in 2002 Regional Plan

David Wilcox- Archaeologist, Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA)
Participant in 1998 Open Spaces & Greenways Plan and 2002 Regional Plan

Marie Jackson- Consulting Geologist. Participant in 2002 Regional Plan.

Randall Scott- Botanist, NAU faculty. Participant in 2002 Regional Plan.

Barbara Phillips- Zone Botanist, U.S. Forest Service. Participant in 2002 Regional Plan.

Gwen Waring- Biologist, writer, artist. Participant in 2002 Regional Plan.

Larry Stevens- Curator of Ecology, MNAand Senior Ecologist, Grand Canyon Wildlands Council

Bruce Higgins- retired U.S. Forest Service Planner, Consultant

Peter Pilles- Archaeologist, Coconino National Forest

Susan Olberding- Historian, Fort Valley Experimental Station

Hiram (Doc) Smith- retired Forestry professor, Ecological Restoration Institute, NAU faculty

Nat White- retired Astronomer Lowell Observatory, CAC 2002 Regional Plan, CAC 2012 Regional Plan

Paul Jones- part time NAU faculty, retired City of Flagstaff planner

Zach Zdinak- President, Flagstaff Chapter Audubon Society, graphic artist and naturalist

Emily Nelson- Wildlife Biologist, Project Director Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project

Nathan Renn- Forester, GIS technician and NAU graduate student

Roberta Fitzgibbon- retired U.S. Forest Service Entomologist

Sat Best- Expert Forum process advisor, Participant in 2002 Regional Plan