

Implementing A Verde Valley Open Space Plan

Verde Valley Forum 2002

“We’ve been talking too much about open space – it’s time to act.”

– State Rep. Tom O’Halloran



Plenary Session Final Report

Camp Verde, Arizona
Sunday, March 3rd, 2002

Acknowledgments

*The following contributors are responsible for underwriting
a portion of the research and production costs for the
Northern Arizona University Background Report
and for the publication of this
Verde Valley Forum 2002
Public Report*

City of Sedona

Coconino County

Hansen LightWorks

Northern Arizona University

Sedona Stationer and Office Supply

Jean Marie Swalm

United States Forest Service

Dear Reader,

Our seventeenth Forum, and our second Verde Valley Forum was by all accounts a smashing success. Successful staging of a regional forum of this magnitude required a major commitment from more than one hundred citizens from the communities of Camp Verde, Cottonwood, Jerome, Sedona, Big Park, Cornville/Page Springs, Lake Montezuma/Rimrock, Verde Village, and the Yavapai-Apache Nation. These citizens were willing to invest three days of their time and energy to come together to discuss a challenging task facing our communities: Implementing a Verde Valley Open Space Plan.

Just prior to the Forum a series of focus group sessions were conducted involving a cross-section of people in the Verde Valley. Feedback from these discussions verified that most people value the existence and preservation of open space and see it is as vital to maintaining and enhancing our quality of life in the future. They also underscored the importance of developing and implementing open space plans that are research based, thorough and inclusive. This report, which summarizes the Forum's deliberations and recommendations, offers a rich resource to help inform our future public open space planning processes.

Verde Valley Forum 2002 was made possible by a number of sponsors who deserve recognition and appreciation. We especially wish to acknowledge Northern Arizona University and The U.S. Forest Service for major commitments of intellectual and financial support. Arizona Public Service and Hansen LightWorks contributed in many important ways as did the City of Sedona and Coconino County.

Members of the Sedona Academy of Public Affairs are already planning the next Verde Valley Forum which will be held in the Spring of 2004 and will address the topic: "Achieving a Sustainable and Diversified Economy in the Verde Valley." Like all previous forums, the goal will be to improve the quality of life for all in our part of the world.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Frank Besnette and Dick Dahl in cursive script.

Frank Besnette and Dick Dahl, Co-Chairmen of VVF '02

Introduction

On February 28, 2002, a group of 117 citizens met at the Cliff Castle Conference Center to discuss Implementing an Open Space Plan for the Verde Valley. This second all-Verde Valley Forum was designed to be Phase Two of an effort begun at the 1999 conference, whose title was Controlling Our Destiny — Regional Planning and Growth Management.

Attendees came from the Big Park area, Bridgeport, Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cornville, Cottonwood, Jerome, Lake Montezuma, Page Springs, Rimrock, Sedona, Verde Village, and the Yavapai-Apache Nation. The US Forest Service, Arizona State Land Dept. and Arizona State Parks were also represented.

The participants were prepared after reading a comprehensive Research Report prepared by Northern Arizona University, assisted by a team of local residents. The report gave participants a concise overview of the issues involved and a comprehensive factual background to encourage informed deliberation. This complete background report is included in the Forum Final Report.

A keynote address by Councilman Robert C. Pettycrew of the City of Scottsdale led off the meeting. He spoke on Scottsdale's success in having 13,300 acres of State Trust lands in the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert reclassified as suitable for conservation under the Arizona Preserve Initiative.

The next morning, after an address by Nick Simonetta of the State Land Department the participants were divided into four discussion panels, guided by questions on a prepared discussion outline. Each panel was led by a moderator, while a recorder summarized the thoughts of the participants on a laptop computer.

Every panel had a diverse cross section of concerned citizens, elected officials, governmental staff members, land use planners, and high school students. They were chosen to represent, as closely as possible, the population from the standpoints of career status, gender, residence location etc. The roster of the discussion panels appears in Appendix II and includes a listing of the communities represented by the participants. They looked closely at the philosophical foundations, issues, visions and solutions involved in preserving open spaces.

As these discussion sessions progressed, the summaries by the four panel recorders were sent to the writing committee, where they were combined into a single draft. After panel sessions over a two-day period, the group reassembled in plenary session on Sunday to review this draft, debate and arrive at a consensus. Even though every participant may not agree with each of the specifics of this report, it does reflect a significant level of consensus.

Throughout the Forum, participants stressed the need to develop and implement a regional open space plan, with uniform selection criteria and prioritization methods for properties selected for preservation as open space.

Based on experience with previous forums, Verde Valley Forum 2002 will inspire a continuation of the open-minded dialogue and sharing of ideas and visions. Often, participants have been inspired to act and find new solutions to issues of communities and the entire region. (For results of past Forums, see Appendix VI.)

Following is this Final Report which was produced by the participants. The Sedona Academy is confident the Forum experience will inspire a continuation of the open-minded dialogue and sharing of ideas and attitudes created in the Forum process. The visions and recommendations developed in this process will continue to grow in our communities and the entire region, facilitating a cooperative effort to plan our future – before someone else does it for us.

Session I

Identifying the opportunities and challenges to successful implementation of open space planning in the Verde Valley.

Question 1

Discuss how the values and opinions of our resident population are apt to influence the ultimate success of efforts to preserve open space in our region

The gray box sidebars appearing throughout this report are excerpted from the mealtime speakers' presentations over the Forum weekend. Their presentations provided valuable new facts and insights for the discussion panels during their meal breaks. See Appendix IV for more on the speakers.

"Just think...a lot of the time spent improving your golf swing could be spent improving your community."

– Jim Eaton

The Verde Valley is home to five incorporated communities, several unincorporated communities and the Yavapai-Apache Nation. As residents are aware, the Verde Valley is experiencing significant population growth and increasing diversity. Successful open space planning will require that those people committed to and responsible for preservation efforts have a deep understanding of how Verde Valley residents think about open space preservation and their values.

The term open space can have a different meaning for each person. To fulfill the variety of expectations for open space in the Verde Valley, there is a need to achieve a balanced relationship among preservation, environmental quality, the sustainability of environmental resources, wildlife, riparian ecosystems, other ecologically-sensitive areas, the economic vitality of the valley, private property rights, monetary costs and residents' values. Additionally, there is a need to recognize that open space has inherent values in and of itself, and that these inherent values need to be considered whether they can be represented and reflected monetarily or not.

To accommodate the diverse values of the population, citizen participation is essential to successful open space planning. Education and enthusiasm will be key to successful open space planning. It will garner public support, informed decision making and, in particular, it will be critical to achieving the financial support necessary for successful implementation.

The Importance of Regional Cooperation

Question 2

Discuss the importance of regional cooperation in open space planning and implementation. How can we accommodate the desire for local autonomy in land use planning with the need to achieve regional cooperation?

"It's not what I can tell you [about open space], it's what you can tell me!"

– State Rep. Henry Camarot

While recent Growing Smarter* legislation mandates open space planning at the local level, regional cooperation in planning for open space is essential. It is imperative to establish a high level of cooperation, education, communication and trust among all the stakeholders to establish trust between the various entities. Open space can be the catalyst to this cooperation.

Watershed areas can be used as the central planning units for achieving regional open spaces.

Open communication is essential between representatives of the municipalities, unincorporated communities, counties, state, federal and tribal agencies and the public at large. Only then will common interests, mutual benefits and issues be identified and addressed. Working together will give the Verde Valley more clout at federal, state and local levels.

Regional cooperation and local autonomy are not mutually exclusive. While there are concerns for local autonomy, open space issues transcend political boundaries and make regional planning a necessity.

Dealing With Conflict

It is important to establish preservation criteria which will apply to all properties – public and private. This will enable open space planners to identify those properties that meet preservation criteria and promote fair treatment of all property owners.

* The Arizona Legislature passed the "Growing Smarter" act in August 1998, and adopted additional provisions ("Growing Smarter Plus") in February 2000. This legislation created a new framework for the land planning process in Arizona cities and counties, with the intent of providing local governments with more opportunities to manage growth. "Growing Smarter" requires changes to community plans, and affects how such changes are made.

*"Don't let anybody tell you
open space is not valuable."*

– Tom O'Halleran

The Forum recognized the need to respect private property rights in designing an open space plan. Communities need to be more active in identifying private properties to be preserved. They need to prioritize potential acquisitions and communicate with private property owners on a timely basis.

Compensation needs to be just and reasonable. A high premium is placed on developing willing buyer and seller relationships. To do this, communities should be creative in dealing with individual property owners on a case-by-case basis in a timely and cooperative manner. Creative acquisition mechanisms and tools proved successful by other communities should be investigated. For instance, land donations, conservation easements, property and sales taxes, and purchase of development rights could be employed.

Lot split issues must be resolved.

Open space preservation is sometimes misconstrued as resulting in economic loss to private land owners and/or communities. In fact, effective open space planning has often proven to increase private property values, both by closer proximity to open space and enhanced desirability of the community as a whole.

Integrating National Forest Land

Local communities and the Forest Service must work together to develop compatible management strategies, effective understanding of roles and responsibilities, and coordinated education programs to address issues such as degradation of the urban interface. There was concern that landlocked parcels of land will not be accepted by the Forest Service, that the land exchange process can take five years or longer and that property traded must be seen as providing a major benefit by the Forest Service.

Question 4

What specific challenges and opportunities can we anticipate in integrating National Forest land in our open space planning and implementation process?

"I am currently working on an amendment that will require two local meetings and economic/financial impact assessments before state Land trades can be completed."

– Tom O'Halleran

"On behalf of the students, faculty, staff and alumni of Northern Arizona University, I offer greetings to the Verde Valley Forum participants and distinguished guests.

Initially, I want to acknowledge the impressive history of good work the Sedona Academy has done over the almost two decades it has existed. I am especially proud that Northern Arizona University has played a key support role for this organization and its forums over the years. I am told that since 1985, the Sedona Academy has sponsored 17 Forums and NAU faculty have participated in all but four.

Continues next page...

Question 5

What specific challenges and opportunities can we anticipate in integrating State Trust lands in our open space planning and implementation process?

Over 80 percent of all lands in the Verde Valley are managed by the federal government. Integration of identified National Forest land into the open space planning process first needs to take into account the criteria developed in the regional open space plan. Land adjustments including trades, sales and acquisitions can serve as opportunities for implementation. The challenge is to reconcile the nationwide mission and policy mandates of the United States Forest Service with local goals and priorities. A further challenge is that the forest-urban interfaces must be protected. The opportunity for the Forest Service is to obtain inholdings and secure its border areas. Regional open space plan goals should be incorporated into Forest Service management plans where feasible.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a federally-mandated process for land exchanges. It requires identification of access points and ecologically-sensitive habitats such as riparian areas and key wildlife corridors. Public involvement is a key part of this process. It is important that the public understand the NEPA process, to dispel the frequent perception that public participation is really only an attempt to validate a "done deal."

All land trades should use the administrative (NEPA) process, rather than trades processed through Congress ("legislative trades") which could avoid NEPA and public participation.

The planning process that resulted in the Coconino National Forest Plan, Amendment 12 could be emulated in creating a cohesive regional open space plan which would encompass all private lands, municipal holdings, Arizona State Parks, State Trust lands, tribal lands and the National Forests.

Integrating State Trust Land

The Verde Valley contains approximately 20 sections (12,800 acres) of State Trust Lands. Almost all of the sections are currently under

Again this year, a strong contingent of my NAU colleagues are here to work with you on this important community process. Their presence underscores NAU's and my personal commitment to community outreach. It is also consistent with one of my foremost institutional and personal commitments which is: strengthening ties between NAU and local communities. By building collaborative relationships with schools, businesses, community and county officials and government agencies, NAU will become "the university of the Verde Valley."

I also want to congratulate Yavapai Community College for its sustained and growing service to Yavapai County. They have made significant contributions to the educational needs of the area.

In closing, I wish you well in your discussions over the next several days. I look forward to seeing your final report, and - by working with others - to fulfill NAU's commitment to "reach out" and serve Verde Valley residents."

– John Haeger, President, NAU

grazing permits or leases, with the exceptions being a few apiary sites and a small commercial lease to APS. Two of the sections are classified as commercial, one section is classified for multi-purpose use, and the remaining 17 sections are classified for grazing.

Dealing with State Trust lands for open space preservation presents a unique set of challenges. State Trust lands were granted to Arizona by the federal government at statehood. They are not available for public use. Their revenues belong to the state institutions for which they were granted, primarily our public schools. The 1910 Enabling Act, which provided Arizona's land grant, mandated that the State hold the land in trust, and lease, sell and manage such land for its highest value to benefit those public institutions. A change in this mandate will require a constitutional amendment at the state level and congressional action.

Inclusion of State Trust lands in the regional planning process is critical. The desire for open space preservation on State Trust lands has been accommodated in Maricopa County by the new Arizona Preserve Initiative (API). While it is not yet applicable here, some legislation is being considered to extend its provisions to rural areas. A continuing dialogue with the State Land Department is needed to identify areas with high potential for development. Regionally-identified preservation criteria should be applied to determine which State Trust lands need to be preserved.

Some lands will also need to be considered for trail use, historic preservation, watershed protection, maintaining wildlife corridors and other specific purposes such as agriculture and ecologically-sensitive areas.

Information and planning are key – the public needs to understand the regulations and processes used in open space planning to effectively influence outcomes.

Session II

Creating an achievable vision for the future.

Question 1

Your discussion panel will be divided into smaller working groups and each group will be asked to discuss and create a vision for the future pertaining to open space preservation in the Verde Valley.

- What do you see as the “best case” attainable scenario for the Verde Valley in the next 20 years?
- What will be the open space experience for people living and visiting in the Verde Valley in the year 2022?
- What is it like to travel around the Verde Valley and experience open space?

Please respond to the above questions in a series of first person vignettes. These working groups will then reconvene to reach consensus vision for the entire discussion panel. Each panel’s vision statement will be included verbatim as an Appendix to the final Forum Report. The report writing team will synthesize the four panel vision statements into a singular vision statement which will be debated and revised at the plenary session on the last day of the Forum.

Each discussion panel was divided into smaller working groups, and each group was asked to discuss and create a vision for the future pertaining to open space preservation in the Verde Valley. They were asked to respond to the following questions in a series of first person vignettes:

- *What do you see as the best attainable scenario in the next 20 years?*
- *What will be the open space experience for people living and visiting in the Verde Valley in the year 2022?*
- *What is it like in 2022 to travel around the Verde Valley and experience open space?*

These working groups then reconvened to reach consensus vision for the entire discussion panel. Each discussion panel’s vision statement is included verbatim as an Appendix VI in this Final Forum Report.

The report writing team then synthesized the four panel vision statements into a singular vision statement for the year 2022, as follows:

In the year 2022, the Verde Valley is dominated by wide vistas, open spaces, the riparian areas of the Verde River, the majesty of Mingus Mountain and the red rocks of Sedona.

The Verde Valley has successfully integrated its developed lands with its open spaces. Greenbelt buffers between and within individual communities support preservation of wildlife habitat and corridors, provide opportunities for environmental education and outdoor recreation-

“Open space preservation is the ultimate to stop growth. You buy land, you stop growth.”

– Robert C. Pettycrew
Scottsdale City Councilman

al opportunities where appropriate. Uniform lighting ordinances have maintained the Valley’s spectacular night skies.

Trail systems weave throughout the Valley, connecting the communities. Regional transit and other alternative transportation systems bring communities and mixed-use, environmentally-sensitive clustered developments closer together while extensive use of alternative fuels helps keep our air clean and clear.

Riparian area ecosystems and mountain watersheds and viewsheds have been preserved with a positive effect on the quantity and quality of our water supply. Valley-wide conservation programs further extend the viability of this most important of our natural resources. The Verde River still flows full and freely throughout the Valley. The forest-urban interfaces have been protected.

Preservation and restoration of historic and cultural sites and trails along with revitalization of “old town” areas and parks within communities enriches the Verde Valley experience. A balance between economic and open space considerations has resulted in a more sustainable and more diverse regional economy, including industry, agriculture and tourism. We have maintained a balance between natural resources and population by encouraging responsible growth.

Ongoing cooperation among autonomous local, state, federal and tribal entities has resulted in a “living” regional plan document. Each community within the Valley, while separated by open space along highway corridors, is interconnected with all of the others through cooperative transportation systems. Communities share their environmental concerns. Each has retained its unique identity and preserved its individual character. Easy, convenient, responsible access to open space has been established.

Session III

Identifying goals for success in implementing open space preservation.

Private Land Goals

Question 1

What should be the open space preservation goals and objectives for private land holdings in the Verde Valley?

Private land holders should be represented in a cooperative effort to establish Valley-wide preservation objectives. Key elements of the plan begin with identification of criteria and the prioritization of goals.

Privately owned lands identified as desirable for preservation should be prioritized for acquisition, either as being ecological sensitive, suitable for public access to recreation and trail systems, to preserve open vistas, or for other reasons. Private property rights, however, must be respected while balancing those rights with the sustainability of the natural resources – especially water.

Information resources should actively be made available to private land holders. Finally, particular attention must be given to fair and equitable compensation in the event of land sales or trades.

Increased public awareness and collaboration with private land holders can contribute to preservation of wildlife habitat, riparian areas and scenic corridors, viewsheds, historical and natural resources, and agriculture. Private lands that interface with open space lands are also important to consider in the education and planning process.

New developments should be required to connect with existing trails for local neighborhoods.

“1/3 of Scottsdale land is preserved as open space. They eliminated vehicle use in preserves. Eminent domain is a useful tool to use, if necessary.”

– Robert C. Pettycrew

National Forest Land Goals

Question 2

What should be the open space preservation goals and objectives for National Forest lands in the Verde Valley?

"The goal of the Scottsdale open space preservation efforts is to preserve 16,400 acres. They've preserved 16,000 so far and have 400 to go. They've also added a goal of preserving 19,900 acres of Sonoran desert floor."

"We put on the ballot a tax to preserve land The tax is .2%."

"Open space preservation efforts in Scottsdale have eliminated 74,000 people from living in Scottsdale."

– Robert C. Pettycrew

The Coconino and Prescott National Forests collectively account for approximately 80 percent of Verde Valley lands. For much of its length the Verde River is the boundary between the two forests. Both forests must adhere to the mission and policies set by the US Congress and Department of Agriculture. Each forest has developed a management plan which prescribes site-specific or area-specific practices. Through their respective plans, the forests seek to provide benefits in an environmentally-sound manner to the general public and to local communities. It is vital that regional planners work with the Forest Service to integrate our open space goals into the Forest management plans.

In updating its management plans which include the Verde Valley, the USFS should give special attention to issues of urban-wildlands interface. The primary uses of National Forest lands in the Verde Valley are to provide recreation, wildlife habitat, ecosystem preservation and watershed protection.

In some cases, fingers of forest land close to developed areas can still serve these uses. The USFS should be encouraged to retain some of these parcels. To help offset increasing costs to the USFS due to growing usage, intergovernmental agreements for collective management should be developed with municipalities and counties.

The USFS and local communities should be encouraged to support advance planning for parcels deemed appropriate for exchange. This process would determine which portions are suitable for development and which should be retained as open space. Further, it should identify economic and zoning strategies to help communities achieve their planning goals, while maintaining full value for the USFS in their exchange.

Communities need to create an effective communication process so interested parties can work cooperatively to resolve issues and conflicts. Region-wide agreements will influence the development of forest management plans.

With cooperation between communities and the USFS, preservation of forest lands should continue, maintaining scenic vistas, protecting watersheds and sensitive ecological areas, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities and responsible use of those lands. Cooperation will also support efforts to acquire private inholdings that meet open space preservation criteria.

State Trust Land Goals

Ecological integrity of riparian and wildlife corridors, preservation of scenic vistas, and public access to quality outdoor recreation opportunities are common goals. Others are to maintain the feeling of open space and preserve the natural, cultural and historical resources of the Verde Valley. Another goal is to identify specific resources such as sensitive plant communities, historic trails (e.g. Lime Kiln Trail), and significant archaeological resources and ruins.

Regional open space planning for State Trust Lands faces formidable constraints. The Arizona Preserve Initiative pertains only to preservation of State Trust Lands in urban areas, so currently is not an option for rural areas like the Verde Valley. We should continue to lobby our state legislators to broaden the scope of API to include growing rural communities such as ours.

Dealing with the preservation of state lands in the Verde Valley will be largely determined by the passage of the fall 2002 Statewide Ballot Referendum, which would give the State Land Commissioner authority to utilize land exchanges for conservation purposes. If voters grant this authority, it will be crucial for our open space efforts to target resources such as

Question 3

What should be the open space preservation goals and objectives for the State Trust Lands in the Verde Valley?

"This state land is more akin to private lands as it's related to the schools."

"The notion that State Trust land is being sold in large chunks is not true."

– Nick Simonetta
Arizona State Land Department

"The value of State Trust land is eye-popping. The sale of State Trust land is judicious."

"State Trust land doesn't create growth, it responds to growth."

– Nick Simonetta

Question 4

Discuss how these goals can best be incorporated into county and local community planning efforts.

"One thing I take issue with is that State Trust land doesn't make a difference for Arizona schools."

"There's no such thing as free land. If you set aside a piece of State Trust land, the Trust is paying for it."

– Nick Simonetta

wildlife habitat and corridors, archeological sites, ecological sensitive vegetation, scenic corridors, view sheds and non-vehicular trails. It will allow State Trust lands to be transferred into the National Forest.

As with all other lands, planning efforts on State Trust lands should begin by applying publicly-identified preservation criteria to determine which State Trust lands are appropriate for preservation. Planning efforts should focus also on developing an early warning system when state lands may be targeted for acquisition by the private sector. An ongoing relationship should be forged with the State Lands Department to help assure that Verde Valley open space planning goals and objectives are given due consideration in its administrative process.

Incorporating These Goals in County And Local Community Plans

Goals would best be incorporated into county and local planning efforts through creation of a new open space regional council, comprised of representatives of all Verde Valley communities, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, the Forest Service, ADOT, parks and other federal, state, and county agencies. This coalition, to be staffed and funded by participating communities, could achieve regional consensus. This agreement would be the first step in communicating local planning goals to the federal level. Stakeholders at all levels should be encouraged to acknowledge this Forum Report and to embrace the concept of a regional comprehensive open space plan.

Local media can assist with informing the public of the Forum's open space vision. A networking system should be developed to facilitate partnering and working together. Homeowners' associations, community groups and individuals should be encouraged to strengthen their relationships with local, state and congressional offi-

"There is a value to the greater economy from the State Trust lands."

– Nick Simonetta

Question 1

What specific strategies and tactics are needed to assure successful adoption and voter ratification of open space plans at the local and county level?

"Another ingredient [to successful open space planning in the Verde Valley] is a substantial financial and intellectual commitment from major universities."

– Frank Besnette

cial to influence the fulfillment of the Verde Valley regional open space plan.

Communities and local governments can agree on growth boundaries for the future. Municipalities and counties should use incentives such as agricultural zoning, tax incentives, and other techniques to preserve agricultural lands.

Session IV

Strategies and tactics needed to assure successful open space planning and implementation.

These strategies and tactics include:

- ✓ Develop a broad-based citizen-driven, Valley-wide planning process.
- ✓ Define the attributes and characteristics of properties targeted for preservation.
- ✓ Identify types of lands and ownerships that meet the criteria, and stress the economic benefits to the adjoining communities.
- ✓ Inventory current governmental and citizen planning processes, and establish a method to incorporate them in the regional planning effort.
- ✓ Monitor timetables for development and adoption of open space provisions in community planning.
- ✓ Raise public awareness of urgent need for change.
- ✓ Find adequate funding mechanisms.
- ✓ Keep everyone informed as land is proposed for designation.

"Trust Lands can be an economic engine."

– Nick Simonetta

"The commission can determine special areas that can be preserved under Arizona Preserves Initiative."

– Nick Simonetta

- ✓ Educate all generations to instill appreciation of open space values, and spread the word (through schools, service clubs, community associations, and neighborhood groups) about recent open space successes.
- ✓ Design an effective media campaign to promote all aspects of open space planning and preservation.
- ✓ Form a speakers bureau and a central clearing house for public information, collection and distribution.
- ✓ Create a website and Email list.
- ✓ Use Verde River Days, Ft. Verde Days and other Valley events as venues for dissemination of information (in a professionally-produced exhibit).
- ✓ Develop an open space Vision Statement to be endorsed by county and local governments.
- ✓ Emphasize use of creative development standards by the planning and zoning bodies of Valley governments.
- ✓ Join like-minded groups statewide to effect legislative change. Develop a broad-based citizen-driven, Valley-wide planning process.
- ✓ Define the attributes and characteristics of properties targeted for preservation.
- ✓ Identify types of lands and ownerships that meet the criteria, and stress the economic benefits to the adjoining communities.
- ✓ Inventory current governmental and citizen planning processes, and establish a method to incorporate them in the regional planning effort.
- ✓ Monitor timetables for development and adoption of open space provisions in community planning.
- ✓ Raise public awareness of urgent need for change.

"I'll take them [open space recommendations generated in this Verde Valley Forum] seriously."

– Henry Camarot

- ✓ Find adequate funding mechanisms.
- ✓ Keep everyone informed as land is proposed for designation.
- ✓ Educate all generations to instill appreciation of open space values, and spread the word (through schools, service clubs, community associations, and neighborhood groups) about recent open space successes.
- ✓ Design an effective media campaign to promote all aspects of open space planning and preservation.
- ✓ Form a speakers bureau and a central clearing house for public information, collection and distribution.
- ✓ Create a website and Email list.
- ✓ Use Verde River Days, Ft. Verde Days and other Valley events as venues for dissemination of information (in a professionally-produced exhibit).
- ✓ Develop an open space Vision Statement to be endorsed by county and local governments.
- ✓ Emphasize use of creative development standards by the planning and zoning bodies of Valley governments.
- ✓ Join like-minded groups statewide to effect legislative change.

Strategies For Acquisition

Numerous strategies and tactics are available to help fund acquisition of private and public lands for open space preservation. It is necessary to develop relationships with organizations such as the US Forest Service, the State of Arizona, the Nature Conservancy, the Heritage Fund, the Central Arizona Land Trust, the Trust for Public Lands, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other nonprofit organizations.

The Forum encouraged use of conservation

Question 2

What specific strategies and tactics are need to help fund acquisition of private and public lands for open space preservation?

"How did [Keep Sedona Beautiful and the U.S. Forest Service] begin? It started with cooperation."

– Judy Adams

Question 3

What type of organizational structure(s) will be needed to facilitate the implementation of open space planning?

"It's harder to give land to the U.S. Forest Service than you think!"

– Bill Eich

easements by private property owners. This option separates development rights from land ownership, but is typically less expensive than outright purchase and provides the current land owner with substantial tax advantages. Such transaction is binding on all future landowners.

Possible revenue sources include sales taxes and real estate transfer taxes. Tax incentives can be offered to developers and land owners for open space concessions. Verde Valley communities should explore a full range of other creative ideas, such as working with nonprofit organizations to purchase key properties, pre-planning for open space development scenarios, and perhaps even re-selling to achieve community goals.

Communities and counties should also explore the potential of establishing a Transfer of Development Rights Bank ("TDR Bank") for the purpose of acquiring and selling specific development rights.

Organizing For Open Space Planning

The Forum recommended that two organizational entities be formed. The first should be a non-profit organization to facilitate open space planning, public education, grant development and fund raising.

The recommended structure of the second organization differed among the Forum panels. Two panels agreed that a Verde Valley land trust should be formed to accept land donations and hold preservation properties. One panel recommended that a political action group was needed to facilitate the open space plan agenda. Another panel thought it appropriate to establish a governmental steering committee to achieve regional consensus.

In addition to these options, one panel also emphasized the need for (a) inclusion of the unincorporated communities in this effort and (b) assessment of existing organizations to deter-

"Support is king"

– Bill Eich

mine their potential role in this process. Broad based community support should include students and others who have leadership skills, passion and knowledge.

The need to develop and utilize an effective volunteer network was recognized, but different approaches were recommended. Two panels identified the organizational model for the Open Space steering committee as a possible guide (see Appendix C of the Background Report on our web site). Another panel voiced concern about too much bureaucracy. One panel proposed following the Placer County Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program model, also described in Appendix F of the Background Report.

Appropriate Roles And Responsibilities

Individuals need to become informed and be involved. They should be encouraged to attend meetings and make a positive contribution. The planning process must be citizen-driven, addressing concerns about unrestricted growth. Citizens should contribute leadership, motivation, inspiration and communication to execute and implement any open space plan. Advisory committees should share committee information with all interested parties and groups. Citizens should participate more in the processes of governments, and insist that decisions made are based on analysis, rather than purely political or emotional agendas.

Question 4

Describe the appropriate roles and responsibilities of (a) individuals, (b) business interests, (c) government agencies and (d) local communities in this process.

Business interests must be encouraged to become involved and contribute their expertise and support. The Forum emphasized that long-term economic vitality is tied to open space preservation in the Valley.

The government sector may provide seed money to start the planning process, and should also participate in the search for permanent

"Everyone in Sedona from the school kids to businesses supported [Keep Sedona Beautiful]."

– Bill Eich

Question 5

How can we develop and nurture the level of trust essential to achieving the collaborative effort needed for successful implementation of open space planning in the Verde Valley: (a) between communities and the USFS, (b) between communities and the State Land Dept., (c) between communities and their respective counties, and (d) between communities and the public at large?

funding. Government agencies should provide staff support and designated representatives to participate in the process. Elected and appointed officials should facilitate public hearings that include consideration of open space issues, and listen and respond to citizen input.

Unincorporated communities should work together to initiate collaboration with the USFS, to assure that forest plans address community and Verde Valley interests.

Participation on the regional level is needed to stay informed and involved in the process. Designated representatives must communicate effectively, gather and provide information, and act as a facilitators and consultants to others. Communities should work with news media and make sure that their material is correct. Numerous public meetings may be needed to make the issues understandable, and give citizens opportunities to ask questions and participate in the process.

Developing Trust

Early and ongoing citizen participation and education are essential to developing the trust, cooperation and support needed for successful implementation. Regular public meetings need to be held, with information disseminated by knowledgeable competent staff via press releases, websites and other methods. Adequate time should be allotted to address issues and concerns. Although agreement will not always be unanimous, respect for each other's honest opinions and plans must be incorporated into all discussions and encounters.

Effective leaders are vital for communicating objectives and forging strong working relationships with communities, agencies and the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Partnerships that share common goals will form. Achieving those goals will enrich our lives and those of generations to come.

Appendices

I - Forum Discussion Outline

II - Forum Panel Members

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IV - Forum Conference Speakers

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Appendix I - Forum Discussion Outline

VERDE VALLEY FORUM 2002

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Session 1 - Friday Morning

IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SPACE PLANNING IN THE VERDE VALLEY

- 1-1** Discuss how the values and opinions of our resident population are apt to influence the ultimate success of efforts to preserve open space in our region.
- 1-2** Discuss the importance of regional cooperation in Open Space planning and implementation. How can we accommodate the desire for local autonomy in land use planning with the need to achieve regional cooperation?
- 1-3** How can we best deal with the historic conflict between private property development rights and open space preservation.
- 1-4.** What specific challenges and opportunities can we anticipate in integrating National Forest land in our open space planning and implementation process?
- 1-5** What specific challenges and opportunities can we anticipate in integrating State Trust lands in our open space planning and implementation process.

Session 2 - Friday Afternoon

CREATING AN ACHIEVABLE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Your discussion panel will be divided into smaller working groups and each group will be asked to discuss and create a vision for the future pertaining to open space preservation in the Verde Valley. What do you see as the “best case” attainable scenario for the Verde Valley in the next 20 years? What will be the open space experience for people living and visiting in the Verde Valley in the year 2022? What is it like to travel around the Verde Valley and experience open space? *Please respond to the above questions in a series of first person vignettes.*

These working groups will then reconvene to reach consensus vision for the entire discussion panel. Each discussion panel’s vision statement will be included verbatim as an Appendix to the final Forum Report. The report writing team will synthesize the four panel vision statements into a singular vision statement which will be debated and revised at the plenary session on the last day of the Forum.

Session 3 - Saturday Morning

IDENTIFYING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN IMPLEMENTING OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Yesterday you generated a vision for the future - now identify realistic and attainable goals and objective necessary to achieve that vision.

- 3-1 What should be the open space preservation goals and objectives for private land holdings in the Verde Valley?**
- 3-2 What should be the open pace preservation goals and objectives for National Forest Lands in the Verde Valley?**
- 3-3 What should be the open space preservation goals and objectives for the State Trust Lands in the Verde Valley?**
- 3-4 Discuss how these goals and objectives can best be incorporated into county and local community planning efforts.**

Session 4 - Saturday Afternoon

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS NEED TO ASSURE SUCCESSFUL OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 4-1 What specific strategies and tactics are needed to assure successful adoption and voter ratification of open space plans at the local and county level?**
- 4-2 What specific strategies and tactics are need to help fund land acquisition private and public lands for open space preservation?**
- 4-3 What type of organizational structure(s) will be needed to facilitate the implementation of open space planning?**
- 4-4 Describe the appropriate roles and responsibilities individuals, business interests, governmental agencies and local communities in this process.**
- 4-5 How can we develop and nurture the level of trust essential to achieving the level of trust needed to assure the successful implementation of open space planning in the Verde Valley: between communities and the USFS, communities and the State Land Dept.. between communities and their respective counties, between communities, and with the public at large?**

Appendix II - Forum Panel Members

<p>Camp Verde Panel "The Red Panel" Chair: Kathy Cruz-Uribe Recorder: Carol Holland</p> <p>Judy Adams Mary Beth Carlile Stephan Block Sandy Boothe Nancy Buckel Bill Cowan Bill Eich Terry Fisher Zona Fink Marshall Whitmire Jim Golden David Haskell Bill Jackson Young Ho Kim Justine Kusner Elise Link Anita MacFarlane Carol Mackler Robyn Prudhomme Del Richards Mindy Schlimgen-Wilson Dottie Simonis Diane Smith Alexandra Thorne Jene Vredevoogd Chris Watkins</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ron Gunderson Technical Representative</p>	<p>Cottonwood Panel "The Green Panel" Chair: Ronald Evans Recorder: Melissa Miller</p> <p>Ken Anderson Doug Braly Ara Call Bob Carabell Billy Dabbs Dick Byrnes Mitch Dickinson Jodie Filardo Jim Gibson Jim Gillespie Ben Goldsmith Brenda Hauser Garrett Hicks Stephanie Hoff Carol Johnson Steven Jones Mike King Curtis Lindner Diane Lovett Karen McClelland Ben Miller Judy Muller John O'Brien Vince Randall Ray Selna Nick Simonetta Joseph Smyth Jane Whitmire Tony Gioia</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sean Downey Technical Representative</p>	<p>Jerome Panel "The Blue Panel" Chair: Roger Short Recorder: Christa Roughan</p> <p>Mike Baca Catherine Balzano Bob Carlile Max Castillo Pud Colquitt Sally Davidson Bryan Detwiler Wendy Escoffier Tom Evans Rex Funk Bob Gillies Kevin Jackson Bob Lau David Leibforth Eric Levitt Max Licher Doug Longfellow Michael Mongini Jane Moore Sean Morris Tammy Naef Chris Nelson Matt Ryan Steve Sams Gerald Shanks Belle Starr Ruan Van Benthuyssen Jane Winiecki</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Walter Vannette Technical Representative</p>	<p>Sedona Panel "The Yellow Panel" Chair: Ray Newton Recorder: Diane Wahlbrink</p> <p>Sarah Allen Maria Baier Pat Bartmus Kerrie Bluff James Book Tom Bonomo Judy Cooper John DiBattista Erin Diehl Donna Gillespie Billy Garner Carol Hulise Bill Kusner Gayle Mabery Van McDonald Kelly Moffitt Tom O'Halleran Karen Pfeifer Bill Pumphrey Diane Prescott Diane Rapaport Ned Russell Deidre St. Louis Jim Sullivan Tom Taylor Fran Whetten</p>
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Appendix III - Forum Committees and Staff

Conference Steering Committee

Frank Besnette, *Conference Co-Chair*
Dick Dahl, *Conference Co-Chair*
Morrey Shifman, *Budget and Accounting*
Marshall Whitmire, *Research Committee Chair*
Chris Coder, *Research Committee*
Sheri Graham, *Research Committee*
Dave Haskell, *Research Committee*
Jeanette Rodda, *Research Committee*
Kent Jones, *Participant Selection Chair*
Lisa Hirsch, *Student Participant Coordinator*
Jim Eaton, *President*
Ed Southwell, *Immediate Past President*
Joyce Forney, *Secretary*
Bea Axline, *Staff Member*
Joan McClelland, *Staff Member*
Sandy Moriarty, *Staff Member*
Margo Running, *Staff Member*
Tom Shuman, *Staff Member*

Plenary Session Committee

Frank Besnette, *Plenary Session Report Caster*
Kathy Shriver, *Plenary Session Recorder*
Jim Eaton, *Plenary Session Recorder*

Conference Report Committee

Virginia Duncan
Jim Eaton
Steve Hansen
Coleman Greenberg
Kathy Shriver

Report Design and Production

Steve Hansen

Appendix IV - Forum Conference Speakers

Keynote - Councilman Robert Pettycrew
Scottsdale City Council

Henry Camarot
Arizona State Representative

Tom O'Halleran
Arizona State Representative

Dick Dahl and Frank Besnette
Co-Chairmen, Verde Valley Forum 2002

Nick Simonetta
Arizona State Land Department

Judy Adams
Sedona Ranger District, United States Forest Service

Bill Eich
Keep Sedona Beautiful

Rex Funk and Jane Whitmire
"Verde Valley Update"

Jim Golden
Supervisor, Coconino National Forest

Mike King
Supervisor, Prescott National Forest

Appendix V - The 2002 Sedona Academy Board

Executive Committee

Judy Adams	Gene Holloway
Frank Besnette	Kent Jones
Dick Dahl	Sandy Moriarty
Jim Eaton	Morrey Shifman
Joyce Forney	Tom Shuman
Louis Getoff	Ed Southwell
Sydney Lee Hall	George Tice
Steve Hansen	Marshall Whitmire

Board Members

Bea Axline	Joan McClelland
Virginia Duncan	Donna Michaels
Ken Fread	Russell Moker
Kevin Garland	Ashley Muhl
Isabelle Getoff	Sheryl Olson
Cole Greenberg	Iman Omar
Jan Grutzius	Margo Running
Stephen Grutzius	Barbara Schay
Lisa Hirsch	Harry Schoenberg
Judith Keane	Kathy Shriver
Bill Kusner	Ed Southwell
Tom Leenhouts	Jean-Marie Swalm
Kathy Levin	Denise Tallman
Lewis Levin	Armor Todd
Anita MacFarlane	Al Wolfe

Appendix VI - Panel Vision Statements

YELLOW PANEL Vision Statement

Coming into the Verde Valley in 2022 we will see thriving communities containing and surrounded by riparian ecosystems, wildlife habitat, natural vegetation, cultural and historic sites and mountain vistas. These communities will be separated by open space buffer zones and connected to one another through an enhanced highway, public transportation and trail system.

There will be alternative modes of travel such as walking, biking, and horseback riding with easy access to open space and providing mixed types of responsible use. We will notice an improvement in the quality of our air and water, and enjoy the aesthetic value of dark starry skies in perpetuity.

RED PANEL Vision Statement

There is a fact-based complementary regional plan in place. It identifies high priority areas and includes mechanisms to implement; this includes the biological, social and physical aspects. Open space around communities maintains their individual distinctiveness. There is interconnected non-motorized open space, greenways and trail systems within and around communities with specific designated uses with linkage between communities. There is an interconnected trail system between communities. These open spaces enhance quality of life, provide access between nodes, buffering activities. These open spaces define characteristics of the Valley – riparian and mountains, agricultural and general open space in dominant, ecologically sensitive areas. Open space achieves a pleasant mosaic. The Valley has a robust and diverse sustainable economy.

Park-like buffers line highways. There is valley-wide mass transit within and between communities. There are also other alternatives to using individual cars which are tied to community design. Bike corridors exist and interconnect to key areas. New developments are predominantly of new urbanist design. Neighborhood, and commercial multi-use zoning is in place that addresses the core portions of our communities.

GREEN PANEL Vision Statement

The Green Panel envisions a citizen-driven grass roots effort to deal with development and ensure complimentary balance of economic values and open spaces. While we understand that individual communities may have differing goals, they will be welcomed to the process and encouraged to share a common vision for open space preservation. This will require mutually-supportive stewardship between all groups, such as the United States Forest Service, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, towns, cities, unincorporated communities, and the State Land Trust.

Planning that provides open spaces between communities is envisioned. It is important to the Green Panel that distinct community characters are maintained. Within urban settings, we see open space and parks as a part of any development. Open space is a vital contribution to our water resources. Planning must consider the finite nature of our water resource.

We see protected, broad scenic valley and mountain vistas, and riparian areas. We see the Verde River and its tributaries as free flowing and clean. Local agriculture is still a part of the Verde Valley landscape. The Verde Valley will continue to enjoy clean air and a Dark Night Sky. We will maintain the integrity of historical and cultural properties. In the Green Panel we envision Verde Valley Gateways will be located at major entrances into the Valley. Use of public transportation will be encouraged.

BLUE PANEL Vision Statement:

During the last 20 years the Verde Valley has found its niche as a region consisting of individual sustainable communities. Each individual community within the whole, promotes mixed use and clustered, environmentally sensitive development that serves local communities and promotes intergovernmental and agency cooperation.

Each community is separated from its neighbor with wildlife corridors and open space greenbelts. As I travel within the Verde Valley, I notice and enjoy each community's distinct identity marked not only by hard boundaries but a sense of entry and community open space that gives that community its own unique sense of place. The historical aesthetics of the area are preserved by the scenic vistas surrounding the Verde Valley and within each community. Native peoples attitudes and beliefs toward sacred sites is respected and considered in current and future development.

There are many bike and pedestrian paths and local trail systems. Regional and local transit systems that use clean fuels to preserve air quality As a popular destination for new comers to Arizona, the Verde Valley has preserved its original identity by encouraging responsible growth, supporting small-scale agriculture, and by maintaining a balance between natural resources such as water and population. Conservation and recycling of resources, especially water, refuse and effluent, is a part of everyday life for Verde Valley residents. Wetlands to remediate waste-water effluent as well as wetlands along the Verde River and other natural watercourses are encouraged and maintained as a way of protecting open space.

Communities in the Verde Valley are pedestrian friendly and connected by regional provide further connection to each community and recreation destinations.

Appendix VI - Information on Past Forums

- Sedona Forum I: January 1985*
The Challenge of Growth and Development to the Greater Sedona Area
- Sedona Forum II: January 1986*
Water Quality/Quantity and Sanitation in the Sedona Area
- Sedona Forum III: February 1987*
Growth Management and Land Use Planning
- Sedona Forum IV: January 1988*
Sedona – Assuring a Quality Future
- Sedona Forum V: January 1989*
Achieving a Unified Community in the Greater Sedona Area – Maximizing Opportunities and Resources
- Sedona Forum VI: January 1990*
Our Cultural Values – Past, Present and Future
- Sedona Forum VII: January 1991*
Environmental Quality in the Sedona/Verde Valley Area
- Sedona Forum VIII: February 1992*
Sustaining the Sedona Area's Economy
- Sedona Forum IX: February 1993*
Building Community through Citizen Involvement
- Sedona Forum X: March 1994*
Building Partnerships with the U. S. Forest Service
- Sedona Forum XI: March 1995*
Congestion or Conservation – Do We Have Choices?
- Sedona Forum XII: March 1996*
Tourism Management for a Sustainable Future
- Sedona Forum XIII: March 1997*
Creating a Healthy Community for Children and Youth
- Sedona Forum XIV: March 1998*
Issues and Impacts
- Verde Valley Forum 1999: June 1999*
Regional Planning & Growth Management
- Sedona Forum 2000: December 2000*
Aging in Sedona – Challenges and Opportunities
- Verde Valley Forum 2002: March 2002*
Implementing a Verde Valley Open Space Plan

Background Research Reports and Final reports are still available for most, but not all, of the past Sedona and Verde Valley Forums. A full collection is available at the Sedona Library. Copies of the available printed reports may be obtained from the Sedona Academy by writing to: Sedona Academy, PO Box 2696, Sedona AZ 86339-2696. As time and resources permit, past reports are being converted and made available for review and printing at our website: www.sedonaacademy.org.

16 Previous Forums Have Produced Valuable Results

The 16 previous Forums have brought about 2,000 people together, with positive results which are helping to make our lives better today.

1985 Forum 1, The Challenge of Growth and Development: Discussions guided citizens for Incorporation Group, which conducted successful campaign to incorporate Sedona where previous trys failed.

1986 Forum 2, Water Quality, Quantity and Sanitation: Heightened community awareness of problems from reliance on individual wastewater disposal systems, threat to water supply.

1987 Forum 3, Growth Management and Land Use Planning: Stirred widespread follow-up action and public workshops which developed strong consensus for professional approach to community plan.

1988 Forum 4, Assuring A Quality Future: Developed consensus for new City on what a Parks and Recreation Department should be. (The City Parks and Recreation department and Commission were formed that year.) Analyzed economic development, transportation and environment.

1989 Forum 5, Achieving A Unified Community: Called for establishment of a volunteer office to coordinate activities, which City did in 1990, including a mediation service for conflict resolution. this Forum's Report was recognized by the National Civic League.

1990 Forum 6, Our Cultural Values – Past, Present, Future: Arts and culture became a City department, programs included Education in Arts and Culture, Arts in Public Places, and Economic Development and the Arts.

1991 Forum 7, Environmental Quality: Began a more constructive dialogue with the US Forest Service.

1992 Forum 8, Sustaining the Sedona Area's Economy: Led to Regional Economic Development Agency, Business Retention and Expansion, Focused Future.

1993 Forum 9, Building Community Through Citizen Involvement: The City Desk newsletter was established to improve communication with citizens.

1994 Forum 10, Building Partnerships With The Forest Service: Began new era of relations with USFS and resulted directly in founding of Friends of the Forest. Led to strategic adjustments of the forest plan and networking with municipalities.

1995 Forum 11, Congestion or Conservation – Do We have Choices?: Explored traffic issues, e.g. public transit and alternate routes. Improved relations with ADOT, led to formation of Action Coalition for Transportation Solutions.

1996 Forum 12, Tourism – Management for a Sustainable Future: Developed consensus that tourism is beneficial to the community, both economically and socially, but explored impacts such as increased traffic, unattractive signage, pollution and litter. Made recommendations for reduction of adverse impacts.

1997 Forum 13, Creating a Healthy Community for Children and Youth: Gave young people a sense of participation and increased involvement in the community, including those who attended as well as many who didn't attend. Improved understanding between teens and adults. Planted seed for Teen Center.

1998 Forum 14, Issues and Impacts: Identified issues to be faced by Sedona over the next five years; also took a fresh look at the process and structure of forums.

1999, Verde Valley Forum I, Regional Planning and Growth Management: A cross-section of resident from all Verde Valley communities analyzed regional planning and growth management. Several groups began meaningful participation between communities and County officials.

Sedona Forum 2000, Aging in Sedona: Analyzed challenges facing the elderly and opportunities for improvement. resulted in formation of Sedona-Verde Valley Task Force on Aging.

In addition, the Academy has co-sponsored Sedona Town Halls, fostered Youth Forums conducted by and for students at Sedona Red Rock High School.