



Staff Report

Agenda Item: VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE (VR@C) MASTER PLAN - Discussion and consideration of the Verde River @ Clarkdale Master Plan.

Staff Contact: Jodie Filardo

Meeting Date: June 26, 2012

Background:

In May 2011, Mayor Doug Von Gausig and Town Manager Gayle Mabery set a project in motion envisioning a world in which community access to a healthy, flowing Verde River exists complete with a multitude of diverse outdoor experiences. And thus, the Verde River @ Clarkdale project of (VR@C) was created.

Over the last year a series of meetings with a variety of stakeholder has informed the project's direction resulting in the enclosed Verde River @ Clarkdale Master Plan presented for your consideration and approval this evening.

The mission of this project is to provide the experiences, services, infrastructure and outreach necessary to achieve the vision. In support of this mission, the project goals are as follows:

1. Protect, preserve and restore the river and its habitat
2. Honor existing water rights
3. Enhance the public's experience with and understanding of the importance of the river and its surrounding habitat, and
4. Improve the economy of Clarkdale.

Should Council approve this Master Plan this evening, the plan will be submitted to stakeholders and funders alike to further the vision of the project.

Recommendation: Approve the Verde River @ Clarkdale Master Plan

Attachment:

1. Verde River @ Clarkdale Master Plan

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Verde River @ Clarkdale

Master Plan

Town of Clarkdale, Arizona

Community Development Department

June 2012



A relaxing day on the Verde River – courtesy of Doug Von Gausig

In a perfect world, community access to a healthy, flowing Verde River exists complete with a multitude of diverse outdoor experiences.

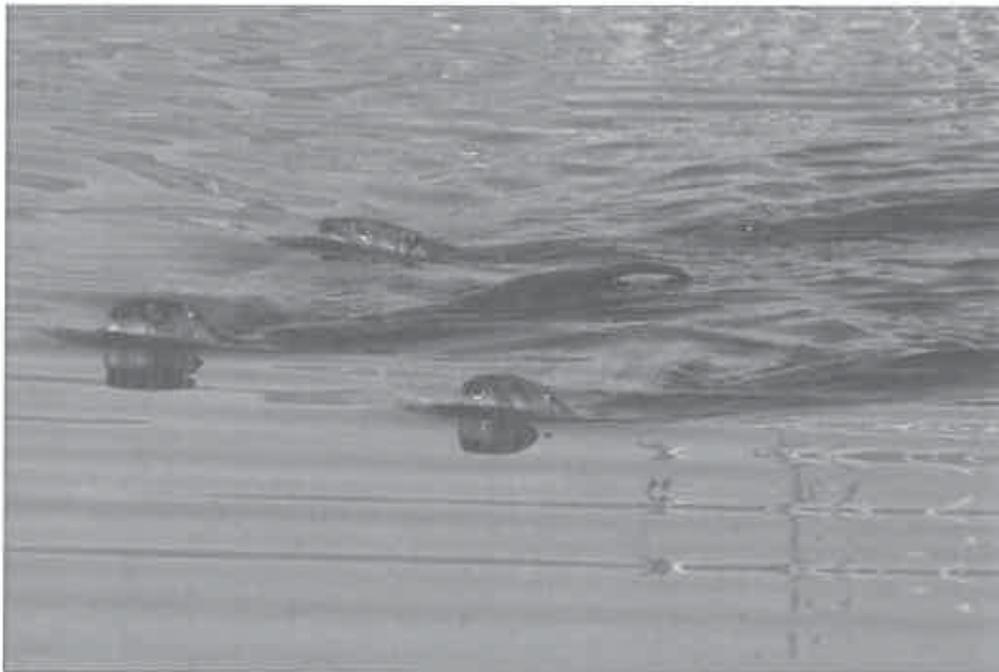


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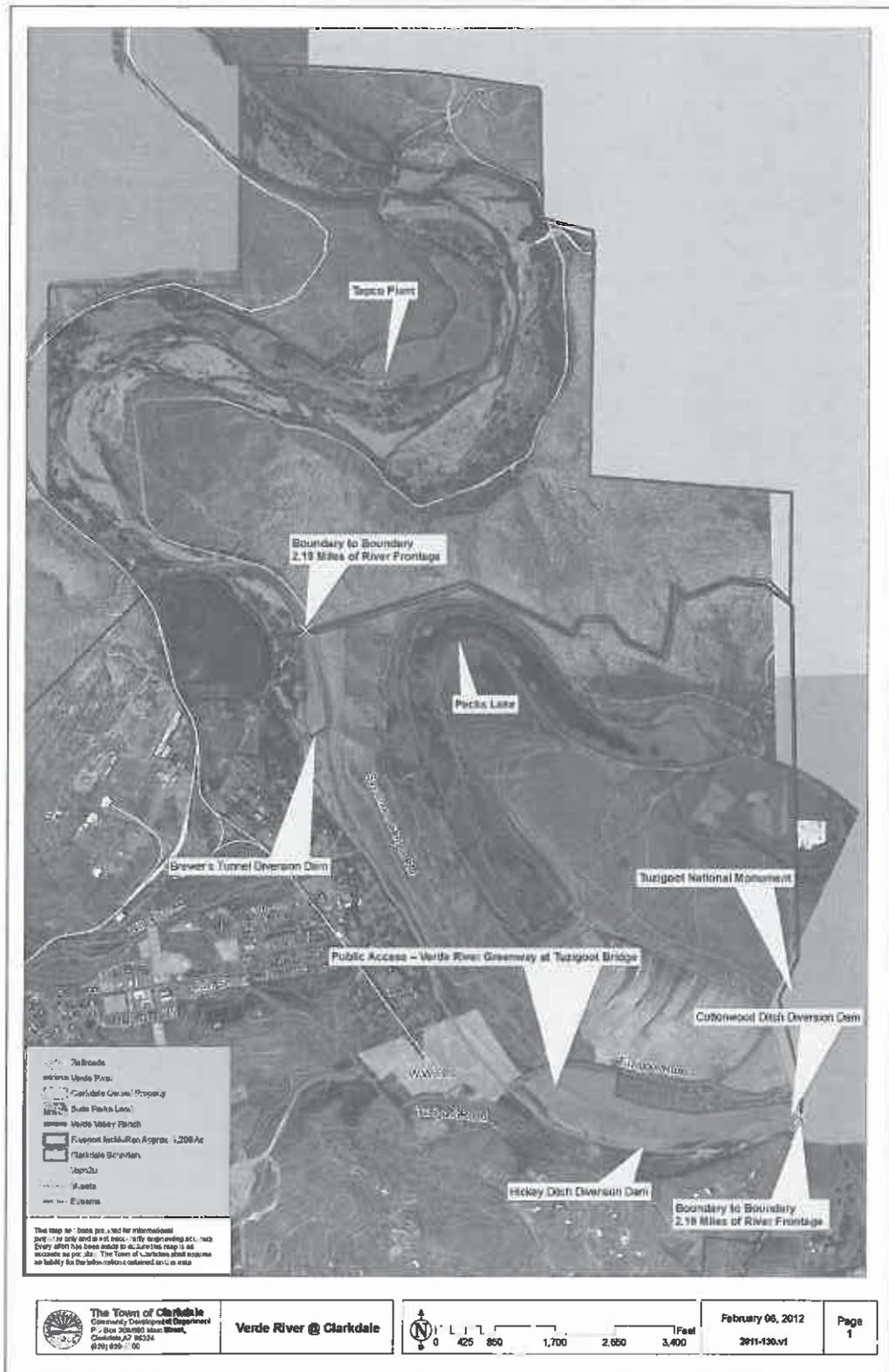
Hickey Ditch Diversion at Peck's Lake



Otters on the Verde River

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VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE PROJECT AREA



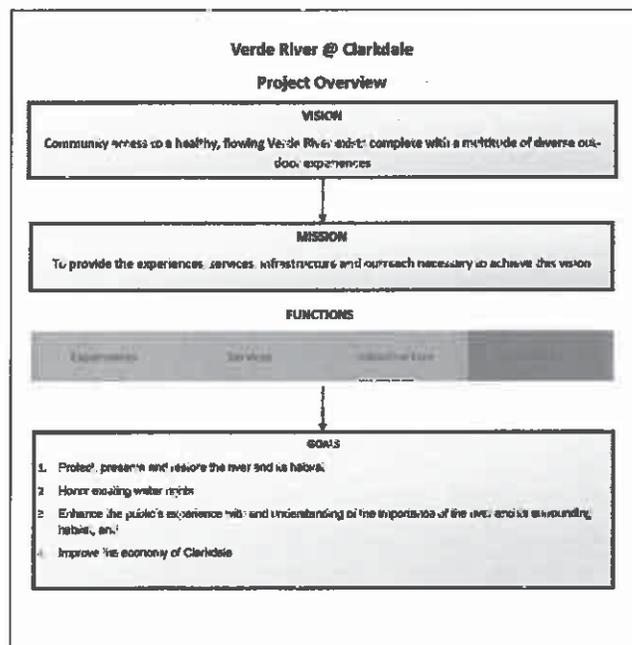
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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

One of Arizona's best kept secrets is the 2.2 mile stretch of the Verde River existing within the northern boundaries of the Town of Clarkdale, Arizona. This healthy stretch of river provides opportunities for interactions with riparian habitats, multitudes of birds, fish and wildlife as well as scenic beauty to enrich the soul. Unfortunately, many of the residents and visitors who do know of the beauty don't have an understanding of its importance as a bell weather for their drinking water resource within the Verde Valley. The Verde River @ Clarkdale (VR@C) project asserts that improving access and recreation opportunities on the river will provide the community with the opportunity to personally connect with the river thereby further enhancing their understanding of the necessity for stewardship of this precious resource.

On March 13, 2012, the voters of Clarkdale ratified updates to the Town's General Plan. Through this action, key planning elements such as water use, sustainability and economic development were adopted. The VR@C project addresses several aspects of building the Town's desired future, and this master plan outlines the major sub-projects to be completed as part of the VR@C. The Town envisions a world in which community access to a healthy, flowing Verde River exists complete with a multitude of diverse outdoor experiences. The mission of this project is to provide the experiences, services, infrastructure and outreach necessary to achieve this vision. In support of this mission, the project goals are as follows:

1. Protect, preserve and restore the river and its habitat
2. Honor existing water rights
3. Enhance the public's experience with and understanding of the importance of the river and its surrounding habitat, and
4. Improve the economy of Clarkdale.



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VR@C seeks to build an array of experiences in and around the river such as kayaking, swimming, fishing, photographing, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, and birding. To do this, partners will come together based on a business model of enlightened, mutual self-interest to create ways in which the public may interact with the river. In support of these experiences, an array of services is required such as site maintenance, public safety, food concessions, equipment rentals, and transportation. To house and support the experiences and necessary services while managing public access, infrastructure improvements are required such as parking, trails, signage, restrooms, vehicle control, resource protection policies and procedures, storage for safety, maintenance and rental equipment, possible offices, improvements to ditch diversions – ways in which those with grandfathered water rights remove water from the river for a variety of uses, and of course, upstream public ingress/egress locations for boaters enabling float trips down to Clarkdale. To get the word out, broad outreach to interested parties must occur. Targeted partners in this effort include the media, schools, non-profits, local businesses, and citizens of and visitors to Clarkdale and the Verde Valley.

Presently, there is only one public river access point in Clarkdale, located on land owned and operated by the Arizona State Parks Board at the Tuzigoot River Access Point or “Tuzi RAP”. With grant support from the Walton Family Foundation, planning has taken place over almost a year to assess the situation, garner stakeholder feedback and support, plan the elements of the project and take initial steps toward providing accessibility to the river.



To address the need for adequate signage, facilities and personnel to manage the site, the Town of Clarkdale is finalizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Arizona State Parks Board for shared site management of the sixty-one acres along the river¹. In addition, the Town is in the final stages of securing a \$40,500 grant through the Arizona Game and Fish Heritage Fund Grants Program. These funds will be used to improve accessibility to the river for mobility-challenged individuals. In addition, project planners received training in the value chain model of project management, creating a demand-driven project model targeting measurable results. This training was sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation. Each of these is just a beginning step towards realizing the project's vision. Furthermore, representatives from the Walton Family Foundation also connected the Town to the Blue Trails program led by American Rivers resulting in additional support and expertise in elevating the visibility of the river to a national audience.

Public engagement, critical to the success of the project has already started as well. From meetings with stakeholders to public project presentations to meetings with other organizations working on river-related projects, those interested in this project and its vision are already working together to converge thinking and hard work towards common goals. One such project is a community conversation on the Verde River and its connection to economic development spearheaded by the Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization. This effort brings together a variety of individuals and organizations interested in expanding the understanding of the importance of a healthy river and its connection to a vital economy.

As work on this project is over and above the traditional services offered by the Town of Clarkdale, grant funding and stakeholder support are expected to influence the specific activities undertaken and the timing of those activities. That said, the following pages outline the VR@C Value Chain, Project Functions, Activities, and Timeframes, and targeted metrics.



¹ The parcels in questions are in Yavapai County: 400-07-003H, 400-07-001A, and 400-07-004C.

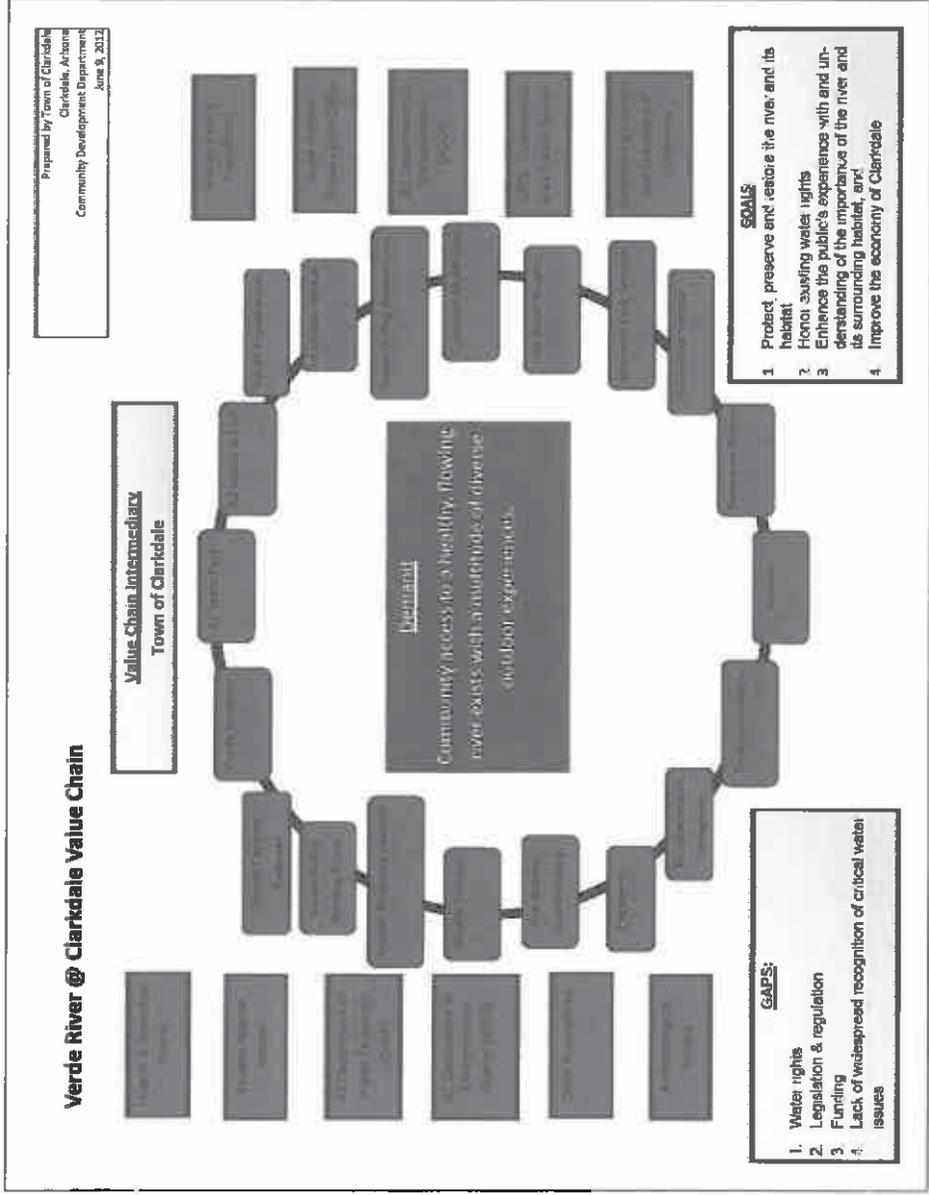
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Verde River @ Clarkdale in the Fall – courtesy of Doug Von Gausig

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VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE VALUE CHAIN

This value chain represents project stakeholders with a vested interest in project success (denoted by the red boxes), project supporters providing some form of capital to the project such as individual, intellectual, social, built, natural, political or financial (denoted by green boxes) and includes goals for the project and current gaps which need to be filled.



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PROJECT FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES & TIMEFRAMES

For the VR@C, the Town of Clarkdale is serving as the project intermediary – the keeper of the big picture and the vision. Some may also call this role that of project manager. For each of the project functions and their related activities, a variety of partners and supporters will engage as determined by their individual interests and anticipate rewards from participating.

ROLES/FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED TIMEFRAMES
INTERMEDIARY	Complete Intergovernmental Agreement with Arizona State Parks Board	JUL 2012
	Design and implement routine site maintenance of Tuzigoot RAP	AUG 2012
	Design and implement ongoing public safety protocol	SEP 2012
	Convene first meetings of each of the functions: Experiences, Services, Infrastructure, and Outreach	SEP 2012
	Seek grant funding	Ongoing
	Coordinate and communicate with other functions as required	Ongoing
	Design and implement mobility-challenged accessibility to Verde River at Tuzigoot River Access Point (RAP)	JUN 2013
EXPERIENCES	Convene first meeting of these stakeholders	SEP 2012
	Establish a list of project activities and timeframes for creation of each experience	NOV 2013
	Coordinate and communicate with other functions as required	Ongoing
SERVICES	Convene first meeting of these stakeholders	SEP 2012
	Establish a list of project activities and timeframes for creation of each experience	NOV 2013
	Coordinate and communicate with other functions as required	Ongoing
INFRASTRUCTURE	Convene first meeting of these stakeholders	SEP 2012
	Establish a list of project activities and timeframes for creation of each experience	NOV 2013
	Coordinate and communicate with other functions as required	Ongoing

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ROLES/FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED TIMEFRAMES
OUTREACH	Convene first meeting of these stakeholders	SEP 2012
	Establish a list of project activities and timeframes for creation of each experience	NOV 2013
	Coordinate and communicate with other functions as required	Ongoing



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PROJECT METRICS

Essential to the completion of a successful project is determining key measurements which reflect a positive result.

Possible metrics for use in evaluating the overall success of this project are as follows:

Implementation of a solution to the navigation barrier at the Brewer's Tunnel diversion for Peck's Lake

Increase in the number of Verde River kayaking trips taken within one year either originating from or terminating at the Tuzigoot River Access Point

Reduction in the number of portage stops required to float the Verde River from upstream to Tuzigoot River Access Point

Increase in the number of events occurring at the Tuzigoot RAP over a one year period

Increase in the number of river-related businesses located in Clarkdale

Increase in the number of school-sponsored visits to the Verde River by the Clarkdale-Jerome Elementary School

Increase in number and types of tours offered and booked

Tons of material removed, recycled or repurposed from the river

Increase in sales tax collected for key North America Industrial Classification System codes

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PROJECT CONTACTS



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