



NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CLARKDALE AND THE CLARKDALE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 6:00 P.M.
Clark Memorial Clubhouse, Men's Lounge**

PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §38-431.02, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the members of the Common Council of the Town of Clarkdale, the Clarkdale Parks and Recreation Commission and to the general public that the Town of Clarkdale Common Council and the Clarkdale Parks and Recreation Commission will hold a Special Meeting open to the public on **Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 6:00 P.M.** in the **Clark Memorial Clubhouse, Men's Lounge, 19 N. Ninth Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.** Members of the Clarkdale Common Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission will attend either in person or by telephone, video or internet conferencing. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03, the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission may vote to recess the meeting and move into Executive Session on any item, which will be held immediately after the vote and will not be open to the public. Upon completion of Executive Session, the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission may resume the meeting, open to the public, to address the remaining items on the agenda.

Supporting documentation and staff reports furnished to the Common Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission with this agenda are available for review on the Town website at www.clarkdale.az.gov and the Town Clerk's Office.

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of this notice was duly posted on the Community Development Building bulletin board, located at 890 Main Street, Clarkdale, Arizona on December 10, 2014 at 1:00 P.M.

Kathy Bainbridge
KATHY BAINBRIDGE
CLERK/FINANCE DIRECTOR

As a reminder, if you are carrying a cell phone, electronic pager, computer, two-way radio, or other sound device, we ask that you turn it off at this time to minimize disruption to this meeting.

ALL ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA ARE SCHEDULED FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER BY THE CLARKDALE TOWN COUNCIL**
- 2. CALL TO ORDER BY THE CLARKDALE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**
- 3. DESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THIS JOINT MEETING** – Consideration of designating Vice Mayor Richard Dehnert as the Chairman for the Joint meeting between the Clarkdale Town Council and the Clarkdale Parks and Recreation Commission.
- 4. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**
- 5. PUBLIC COMMENT** – The Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission invite the public to provide comments at this time. Members of the Council and Commission may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S.

§38-431.01(G), action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date. Persons interested in making a comment on a specific agenda item are asked to complete a brief form and submit it to the Town Clerk during the meeting. Each speaker is asked to limit their comments to five minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

6. **JOINT WORKSESSION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNER CAPACITIES FOR THE VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE** – Discussion of the information and recommendations submitted by Town Staff relating to Commercial River Runner Capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Persons with a disability may request reasonable accommodations by contacting the Town Hall at 639-2400 (TTY: 1-800-367-8939) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.



Staff Report

Agenda Item: **DESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THIS JOINT MEETING –**
Consideration of designating Vice Mayor Richard Dehnert as the Chairman for the Joint meeting between the Clarkdale Town Council and the Clarkdale Parks and Recreation Commission.

Staff Contact: Gayle Mabery, Town Manager

Meeting Date: December 16, 2014

Background: As referenced in the Clarkdale Public Service Handbook the Chairman of our public meetings has the important responsibility of ensuring that the meeting operates efficiently and that decorum is maintained. During Joint Meetings of the Town Council with appointed Boards and Commissions, the Mayor acts as the chair of the Joint Meeting.

Mayor Von Gausig has declared a Conflict of Interest on the subject of tonight's meeting, and will not be participating in the meeting. As such, pursuant to Section 2-2-2 of the Clarkdale Town Code, the Vice Mayor shall perform the duties of the Mayor during the Mayor's absence.

To make the record clear, a motion, second and vote on this topic is appropriate during the meeting. The votes of all members of the Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission will be recorded in the minutes for this Joint Meeting.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission designate Vice Mayor Dehnert as the Chairman for the December 16, 2014 Joint Meeting.



Staff Report

Agenda Item: **JOINT WORKSESSION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNER CAPACITIES FOR THE VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE** – Discussion of the information and recommendations submitted by Town Staff relating to Commercial River Runner Capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

Staff Contact: Gayle Mabery, Town Manager

Meeting Date: December 16, 2014

Background: After launching the Verde River @ Clarkdale project in 2011, the Town of Clarkdale opened the 110-acre Lower TAPCO River Access Point on June 18, 2014, providing the public with access to diverse year-round recreational activities on the river. As expected, the site quickly became popular as a kayak launch point for boaters who wanted to float the 3-mile stretch of river between the boat launch areas of Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the downstream Tuzigoot River Access Point. In addition, the Town of Clarkdale and Arizona State Parks issued the first special use permits to allow commercial outfitters to operate at the Lower TAPCO RAP and the Tuzigoot RAP in 2014, resulting in approximately 6,800 commercial customers either kayaking or tubing this stretch from April – December, 2014. During peak boating season (from June 1 – September 30) in 2014, we experienced an average of 250 commercial customers per week launching from the Lower TAPCO RAP.

With requests for issuance of additional commercial permits increasing, the Town of Clarkdale has determined the need to establish commercial river runner capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale between the Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the Tuzigoot River Access Point.

Staff at the Town of Clarkdale have developed a report (which is attached as part of your meeting packet) that outlines the information they considered in recommending commercial outfitter capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

The following commercial river outfitter capacities are recommended as part of the report:

- Maximum guided trip size of sixteen (16) people, including trip guides.
- Maximum of eight (8) guided kayak/canoe/stand-up paddle board trips per day, with at least two (2) of those trips being reserved specifically for tours that operate under a separate permitting structure and receive pre-approval as official interpretive trips by the Town of Clarkdale.
- Maximum of one (1) guided trip launching per hour, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (which may be extended to include a 5:00 p.m. launch during certain seasons).
- Maximum of up to thirty (36) unguided customers (in a vessel that meets the Arizona definition of a watercraft) per day.
- Maximum of six (6) unguided customers launching per hour, between the hours of 9a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Based on the comments and input received during the December 16th Joint Worksession, Staff will make revisions to the Capacity Recommendations, and present those for formal consideration by the Town Council at their January 13, 2015 Regular Council meeting. If the Parks and Recreation Commission



Staff Report

would like to make a formal recommendation to the Town Council on this subject, a special meeting will be scheduled prior to January 13th in order for them to do so.

After the Council takes final action on establishing the commercial capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale, staff will begin the process for soliciting bids for the outfitter permits that will be available in 2015. Staff hopes to begin advertising in January and award the first sets of outfitter permits in February. Given that there are several different categories of permits that will be available, we anticipate that we'll be letting bids for different types of permits as we get them developed over a period of a couple of months.

The 2015 Outfitter Permit has not yet been drafted, as staff's focus has been on developing the capacity recommendations for the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission's consideration. Establishing capacities on the river is a necessary first step in the process.

Staff has invited representative from Arizona State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service to attend the meeting. Both of these agencies have reviewed and provided input on the report that has been developed by the Town Staff. If desired, these public land managers will be prepared to offer comments and/or address questions from the Council and Commission.

Staff also anticipates that members of the public may have comments to share on this topic. While this Joint Worksession is an opportunity for discussion between the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission, it is appropriate to open the agenda item for Public Comment at some point in the meeting.

Recommendation: This Joint Worksession is agendized for discussion only, and no formal action can be taken. Town staff looks forward to receiving input from both the Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission so that we can further refine the capacity recommendations before formal action is considered in January, 2015.

Commercial River Runner Capacity for the Verde River @ Clarkdale

Report Dated: December 10, 2014

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Clarkdale opened the 110-acre Lower TAPCO River Access Point on June 18, 2014, providing the public with access to diverse year-round recreational activities on the river. As expected, the site quickly became popular as a kayak launch point for boaters who wanted to float the 3-mile stretch of river between the boat launch areas of Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the downstream Tuzigoot River Access Point. In addition, the Town of Clarkdale and Arizona State Parks issued the first special use permits to allow commercial outfitters to operate at the Lower TAPCO RAP and the Tuzigoot RAP, resulting in approximately 6,800 commercial customers either kayaking or tubing this stretch in 2014. During peak boating season (from June 1 – September 30) this first year, we experienced an average of 250 commercial customers per week launching from the Lower TAPCO RAP.

With demand for commercial permits increasing, the Town of Clarkdale has determined the need to establish commercial river runner capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale between the Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the Tuzigoot River Access Point. Commercial operations in 2014 included both guided and unguided operations, and, due to the distinct differences between these two types of operations and potential resulting impacts from each, staff feels it is prudent to establish capacities for both categories going forward.

Based on current data, private boater usage accounts for approximately 25% of the usage on the river. While Town staff is not recommending the implementation of total capacities (which would include both commercial and private boaters) at this time, we will continue to collect data as indicated in the “Key Management Actions to Monitor Indicators” section of this report and take steps to adjust river use capacities over time should it become necessary.

In evaluating appropriate capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale, Clarkdale Town Staff took the following into consideration:

- Consultation with outfitter permit managers on other public lands in the Verde Valley;
- Review of the management standards for recreational activity in the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the Verde Wild and Scenic River;
- Review of the U.S. Forest Service recreation and wilderness experience criteria that can be appropriately expected on the Verde River @ Clarkdale;
- Social encounter levels for paddlers as they float the 3 miles between the launch sites at the two river access points on the Verde River @ Clarkdale; and,
- The characteristics of this section of river, including the need for boaters to portage at the Brewer’s Tunnel Diversion Dam, and the safety practices used that require boaters to congregate in groups in the large pools that precede significant rapid sections (allowing boaters to proceed single-file and with appropriate spacing between boaters through more technical sections).

Clarkdale Town staff recommends that the following commercial river outfitter capacities be set for the Verde River @ Clarkdale beginning April 1, 2015:

- Maximum guided trip size of sixteen (16) people, including trip guides.
- Maximum of eight (8) guided kayak/canoe/stand-up paddle board trips per day, with at least two (2) of those trips being reserved specifically for tours that operate under a separate permitting structure and receive pre-approval as official interpretive trips by the Town of Clarkdale.
- Maximum of one (1) guided trip launching per hour, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (which may be extended to include a 5:00 p.m. launch during certain seasons).
- Maximum of up to thirty (36) unguided customers (in a vessel that meets the Arizona definition of a watercraft) per day.
- Maximum of six (6) unguided customers launching per hour, between the hours of 9a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

2 PROJECT HISTORY

The Verde River corridor is one of Arizona's most important resources, both in its richness and in its usefulness. It provides innumerable benefits to the state's economy, its residents' quality of life, and the natural, cultural, and scenic environment. The Verde is known for its beauty and diversity of landscape, its opportunities for recreation, the bounty of its water and riparian lands, for fish and wildlife populations as well as for human communities, and for the link it provides with the past and the path it opens to the future.

In 1991, a grassroots effort was initiated by community leaders and individuals who recognized a need for coordinated planning and management along the Verde River Corridor. Local residents and organizations, with assistance from the Arizona State Parks Board and the Arizona Department of Commerce, established the Verde River Corridor Project to take a closer look at the issues facing the Verde River, and to develop recommendations and a plan of action for dealing with them.

The Action Plan for the Verde River Corridor Project, compiled after extensive citizen-based participation in all phases of the plan's development, included a project Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Priority Actions, Subcommittee Recommendations, and Major Goals. The entire plan can be viewed at <http://verderiverinstitute.org/VRCP1.pdf>.

20 years later, in 2011, Clarkdale identified the 2.2 miles of the Verde River that flows through the Town as a key resource that was under-utilized, inaccessible, and as a result, economically, socially and culturally undervalued by the Town, its residents and the entire State.

With many of the issues identified in the 1991 Verde River Corridor Project still facing the Verde River, the overarching principle of the Verde River @ Clarkdale project is that public knowledge and understanding is vital to the protection and preservation of the Verde River. Simply stated; getting people onto the river to form personal connections is key to its future sustainability.

From its inception, Clarkdale's project dream was that it's possible to protect, preserve and restore the river and its habitat, while:

Honoring existing water rights;
Enhancing the public's experience; and,
Improving the economy of Clarkdale.

The first major milestone of the Verde River @ Clarkdale project was the approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement in July, 2012 between Arizona State Parks and the Town of Clarkdale wherein the two agencies agreed to cooperatively manage the 69 acre Tuzigoot River Access Point. The agreement was embraced as a benefit to both agencies, offering them to join together in the face of limited resources to manage the site.

In April, 2013, the Town of Clarkdale and the landowner Freeport McMoRan, Inc. entered into a Verde River Access License Agreement, designating a portion of private property on the river that was once restricted access as public park land under the management of the Town of Clarkdale. In February, 2014, that agreement was amended to move the site to a 110 acre piece of property located approximately 3 miles upstream from the Tuzigoot River Access Point.

The Town of Clarkdale opened the 110-acre Lower TAPCO River Access Point on June 18, 2014, providing the public with access to diverse year-round recreational activities on the river. As expected, the site quickly became popular as a kayak launch point for boaters who wanted to float the 3-mile stretch of river between the Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the downstream Tuzigoot River Access Point. Coinciding with the establishment of the Lower TAPCO River Access Point, the Town of Clarkdale and Arizona State Parks issued the first special use permits to allow commercial outfitters to operate at the Lower TAPCO RAP and the Tuzigoot RAP, resulting in approximately 6,800 commercial customers either kayaking or tubing this stretch in 2014. During peak boating season (from June 1 – September 30) this first year, we experienced an average of 250 commercial customers per week launching from the Lower TAPCO RAP.

Only one commercial outfitter expressed initial interest in operating on the Verde River @ Clarkdale at the beginning of the project, and Arizona State Parks and the Town of Clarkdale worked together to draft a permit that provided for the approval of an Annual Operating Plan for the outfitter, compliance with State Natural Area Policies and Guidelines, River Guide Standards, Appropriate Insurance Coverage and Indemnification, and a Fee Schedule to Guarantee Appropriate Compensation for Commercial Use of Public Lands. That outfitter, Verde River Adventures, Inc., offered both guided kayak tours and unguided inner tube rentals from April – November, 2014.

The Verde River @ Clarkdale quickly became recognized as an ideal year-round boating opportunity due to its consistent river flows that are relatively free from the impacts of summer irrigation diversions. By the third quarter of 2014, numerous other commercial outfitters began expressing interest in operating commercially on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

3 VERDE RIVER GREENWAY STATE NATURAL AREA

The Tuzigoot River Access Point (RAP), which serves as the downstream anchor for the Verde River @ Clarkdale project, is part of the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area. Recognizing the Verde River as a significant resource, and one of the Arizona's last free-flowing rivers, Arizona State Parks began purchasing land along this important riparian resource beginning in 1986. The Verde River Greenway State Natural Area now encompasses nearly 480 acres, is six miles long and lies generally between the Tuzigoot and Bridgeport bridges. The Greenway sustains a large regional wildlife population and a lush riparian community.

The most significant natural resource in the Greenway, besides the year-round flowing river, is the dense forest of riparian trees and shrubs along its riverbank. This Fremont Cottonwood & Gooding Willow Riparian Gallery Forest is one of five remaining stands in Arizona and one of 20 such stands in the world.

According to the Arizona State Parks website, the 3,300 foot elevation means mild temperatures for hiking along the Verde River, kayaking, canoeing, picnicking, fishing, or just wading in the cool water. Life along the river changes with the season, giving visitors a glimpse of great blue heron, black hawks, coyotes, raccoons, mule deer, beavers, ducks, frogs, and toads. The Verde River and surrounding riparian corridor support nearly twenty threatened or endangered species including river otter, southwestern bald eagles, southwestern willow flycatchers, and lowland leopard frogs.

The State Natural Area designation of the Greenway exists to keep the Verde River riparian corridor in its most natural state, and to protect the fragile ecosystem that exists therein. "Soft" recreation that has minimal impact on the environment is allowed, and a "pack it in, pack it out" philosophy is encouraged so that visitors pick up litter and leave nothing behind after visiting the area. Park rules include:

- Keep pets on a leash.
- Damaging or removing the natural rocks, vegetation or public property on the park is prohibited.
- Obey all hunting and fishing regulations.
- Prevent loud, nuisance noises.
- No overnight camping.
- No fires.
- Off road vehicles are prohibited.

Arizona State Parks points out that the Verde River is a fantastic place to canoe/kayak, and directs visitors to the Tuzigoot River Access Point as a place for put-in and take-out. In April, 2014, Arizona State Parks issued their first Special Use Permit for a commercial outfitter to operate guided hikes, tours, river trips, canoeing, bicycling, and hiking on roadways and trails within the Tuzigoot River Access Point and other Arizona State Parks properties.

4 RIVER CLASSIFICATIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created by Congress in 1968 (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The Act is notable for safeguarding the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. It encourages river management that crosses political boundaries and promotes public participation in developing goals for river protection.

Rivers may be designated by Congress or, if certain requirements are met, the Secretary of the Interior. Each river is administered by either a federal or state agency. Designated segments need not include the entire river and may include tributaries. For federally administered rivers, the designated boundaries generally average one-quarter mile on either bank in the lower 48 states and one-half mile on rivers outside national parks in Alaska in order to protect river-related values.

Rivers that are classified under The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are designated as *wild*, *scenic*, or *recreational*.

Wild River Areas – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic River Areas – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational River Areas – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

A forty-one (41) mile segment of the Verde River has been federally designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Due to low levels of development present along the Verde River at the time of its designation in 1984, the Arizona Wilderness Act divided the 41-mile stretch of river into a Wild segment and a Scenic Segment. The Scenic River area begins near Beasley Flat, and continues downstream about 18.8 miles to the boundary of the Mazatzal Wilderness. The Wild River area lies within the Mazatzal Wilderness, beginning at the wilderness boundary and continuing downstream about 22.2 miles to the confluence of Red Creek. There is no federally designated Recreational classification along the Verde River.

As required under the Arizona Wilderness Act, the Coconino, Prescott and Tonto National Forests completed a Comprehensive River Management Plan for the Verde Wild and Scenic River in June, 2004.

Among many other things, the CRMP includes management standards for commercial and private recreational activity in the Verde River's Wild and Scenic river segment, including a

limit of up to 60 persons launching per day in the stretch designated as a “Wild River” and 250 persons launching per day in the stretch designated as a “Scenic River”. In the “Wild River” section, the maximum trip size is 12 persons per trip. In the “Scenic River” section, the maximum trip size is 25 persons per trip.

5 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM (ROS)

The U.S. Forest Service has established a classification system for describing a variety of recreation experience opportunities. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum categorizes these opportunities into six classes on a continuum from primitive to urban. Each class describes the type of recreation experience one is likely to have in these areas. This is measured based on the extent to which the natural environment has been modified, the type of facilities provided, the degree of outdoor skills needed to enjoy the area, and the relative density of recreation use. (FSM 2311.1 and USDA Forest Service, 1982, ROS User Guide) The six classes are:

Primitive - Area is characterized by an essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low, and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of management restrictions and controls. Motorized use within the area is not permitted.

Semi-primitive Non-motorized - Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum onsite controls and restrictions may be present, but subtle. Motorized recreation use is not permitted.

Semi-primitive Motorized - Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum onsite controls and restrictions may be present, but subtle. Motorized recreation use of local primitive or collector roads with predominantly natural surfaces is permitted.

Roaded Natural - Area is characterized by predominantly natural-appearing environments with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of humans. Such evidence usually harmonizes with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be moderate to high, and evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is allowed and incorporated into construction standards and design of facilities.

Rural - Area is characterized by a natural environment that has been substantially modified by development of structures, vegetative manipulation, or pastoral agricultural development. Resource modification and utilization practices may be used to enhance specific recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking are available.

Urban – Area is characterized by a substantially urbanized environment, although the background may have natural-appearing elements. Renewable resource modification and utilization practices are often used to enhance specific recreation activities. Vegetative cover is often exotic and manicured. Sights and sounds of humans are predominant onsite and in nearby areas. Facilities for highly intensified motor use and parking are available with forms of mass transit often available to carry people throughout the site.

While ROS designations do not apply to the Verde River @ Clarkdale section of the river, they do provide a framework for comparison. During a Master Planning workshop hosted by the Town of Clarkdale in May, 2014, participants voiced preference for the river access points on the Verde River @ Clarkdale to remain predominantly in their natural state. On review of the USFS's ROS categories, the Verde River @ Clarkdale project best fits the definition of a "Roaded Natural" area, and also includes some elements of what would be described as a "Rural" area under the ROS system.

6 KEY INDICATORS IN DETERMINING CHARACTER OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Verde River and its lush riparian habitat provide a great diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and connect residents and visitors with nature in a beautiful setting. From its inception, Clarkdale's project dream was that it's possible to protect, preserve and restore the river and its habitat, while honoring existing water rights; enhancing the public's experience; and, improving the economy of Clarkdale.

In order to ensure that the character of recreational opportunities remains consistent with the commitments outlined in our original project dream, the following are key indicators that should be monitored over time:

Waste Removal and Vehicle Restrictions – The Town of Clarkdale should continue to monitor visitors' adherence to regulations on waste removal and vehicle restrictions. Impacts (trash, compacted soils, and damaged vegetation) associated with higher use in the developed recreation areas should not expand to dispersed recreation areas.

Social Encounter Levels – Overall, social encounter levels should be monitored to ensure they continue to be consistent with the levels identified for Roaded Natural or Rural recreation area (i.e. interaction between users may be moderate to high in dispersed recreation areas; whereas, sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high in developed recreation areas).

Resource Condition – Landscape is natural appearing and built improvements in the developed recreation areas are limited in scope. Presence of human feces, trash and charcoal and/or fire pits are at levels consistent with a managed recreation site and violations of regulations are the exception, not the norm. High use areas and their

adjacent environment are properly managed to protect natural and cultural resource values, while allowing for recreation use.

Key Management Actions Going Forward – Key actions need to be taken as the Town of Clarkdale continues to sustain the character of the recreation opportunities of the Verde River @ Clarkdale. Recommended actions to be phased in over the next 3 years include:

- Capacity studies including vehicle and visitor counts should be conducted at launch points, on the river and on roads.
- Use of a registration system for kayak/boat launches at all developed river access points on the Verde River @ Clarkdale should be implemented.
- Condition surveys should be conducted annually to sample dispersed recreation use areas.
- Visual observations and photo points should be established within and adjacent to high use areas for visual comparisons over time.
- An inventory of motor vehicle track locations should be developed and thereafter be monitored and updated at least annually.
- Inventory and map adjacent riparian zones and any commercial operations in those areas to determine distance to non-commercial segments of river for wildlife and non-commercial human recreation.
- Establish an active volunteer program.
- Apply management practices on the Verde River @ Clarkdale that align with and balance the goals of preservation, restoration, recreation, and economic development.
- Collaborate with other regional land management partners, citizens, organizations and other local governments to ensure stewardship for well-managed recreational and educational opportunities that sustainably connect people to nature along the Verde River and upland ecosystems.

Management Actions In the Future – The Town of Clarkdale should stay committed to an adaptive management approach to the Verde River @ Clarkdale project, which will allow it to simultaneously meet existing resource management objectives while accruing information and experience needed to improve future management. Some types of management actions that should be considered when addressing issues in the future include:

- Increase visitor information through multiple venues, both at developed and dispersed recreation sites;
- Sponsor interpretative and education programs at the project sites;
- Implement/expand river launch site check in/registration procedures;
- Increase patrols and enforcement at developed and dispersed river recreation areas;
- Adjust river use capacities; and,
- Further restrict vehicular access in sensitive areas.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNER FEE SCHEDULE

Three different types of fee schedules are being used by different land management agencies in the Verde Valley when issuing commercial permits for boating outfitters on the Verde River.

The U.S. Forest Service uses a percentage of gross revenue schedule and relies on accurate outfitter reporting to determine the payments under the fee schedule. Audit provisions are provided in the permits, but can be difficult to navigate.

Arizona State Parks established a flat annual permit fee of \$3,750, payable quarterly. With the flat annual fee, audits are unnecessary, as the payments do not depend on usage or gross revenues. However, this system does not recognize increasing impacts to river access points as the volume of commercial use increases.

The Town of Clarkdale established a fixed rate of \$5 per commercial customer in our 2014 permits. Although the fixed rate per customer system still relies on accurate outfitter reporting, it is relatively easy for the Town to perform random audits through on-site observations and data collection by our Verde River Ambassadors. Additional on-site registration of launches and changes in the reporting system can be implemented in future years to aid in additional audit accuracy. The fixed rate per customer system provides revenue streams to match increased impacts on management of the river access points (i.e. commercial outfitter revenues increase to correspond with increased customer usage and increased resource demands at the project sites).

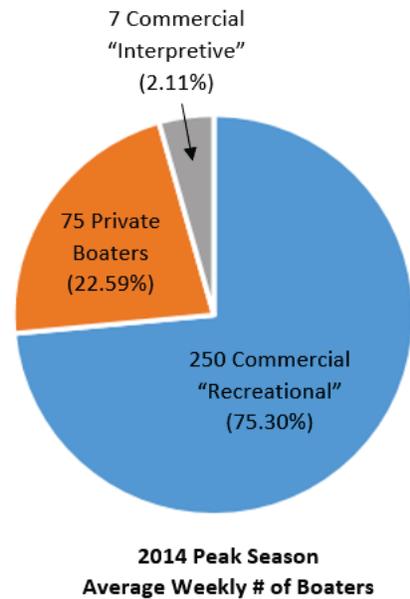
Clarkdale's 2014 permits required that the outfitters report and pay their fees on a quarterly basis, due immediately after the activity for the quarter was complete.

Clarkdale Town Staff supports the continued use of the \$5 per customer fixed rate fee for 2015. Changes to the payment schedule will be modified in the 2015 permits to require monthly usage reporting, and some sort of advance payment system as opposed to the delayed payment system that was used in 2014. This change to the payment schedule will reduce the risk of default payments for use of public lands by the commercial outfitters.

8 VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE 2014 USAGE DATA

Commercial and Private Boater Usage - Commercial outfitters were permitted to operate at the TAPCO RAP and the Tuzigoot RAP beginning in April, 2014, resulting in approximately 6,400 commercial recreational customers and 181 commercial interpretive customers either kayaking or tubing this stretch from April-December, 2014. During peak boating season (from May 1 – September 30), we experienced an average of 250 commercial recreational customers and 7 commercial interpretive customers launching per week from the Lower TAPCO RAP.

Visitor data collected at the Lower TAPCO River Access Point’s Self-Pay Station indicates peak season visitation from private users at approximately 600 individual visitors per month. The Town of Clarkdale did not start collecting data on the primary purpose for visitation until October, 2014. During that month, 48% of visitors listed kayaking/canoeing as their primary reason for visiting the park. Other responses included: photography (16%); picnicking (13%); fishing (10%); swimming/wading (6%); dog walking (3%); special event/education (3%).

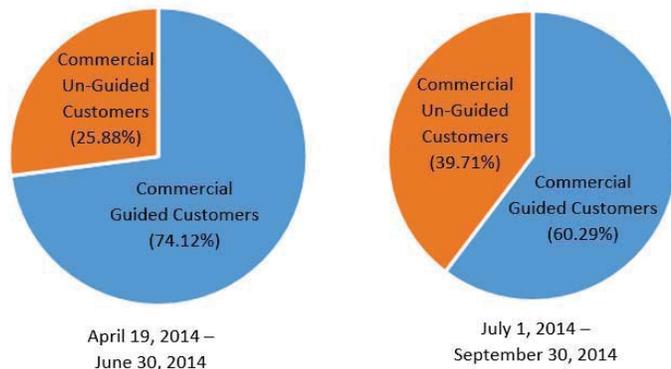


Collection and analysis of the statistics of private boaters will continue as part of our future management action plan. Based on currently available information, we assume that 50% of the private individuals visiting the Lower TAPCO RAP are there to canoe/kayak, which adds approximately 75 boaters per week during peak season. The heaviest usage occurs on Friday, Saturdays, Sundays and major holidays, and we do not have current data on peak daily usage, although measurement tools to capture that data in the future will also be added.

Guided vs. Unguided Commercial Users - Commercial recreational users fell into two categories during 2014 operations. Guided commercial trips consisted of kayak tours for customers in either single or tandem kayaks, led by professional guides with no more than a 1 to 8 guide-to-client ratio. Guided trip customers met at an off-site location and were transported by shuttle both to and from the launch/landing sites.

Unguided trips consisted of customers who rented a standard inner tube or “Tube Trackers” from the outfitter and were transported by shuttle both to and from the launch/landing sites, but no professional guides accompanied these customers.

It should be noted that Arizona law and Arizona Game and Fish Commission



rules classify “watercraft” as “any boat designed to be propelled by machinery, oars, paddles...”, and the laws state that everyone in/on a watercraft must have a properly-fitted and serviceable US Coast Guard-approved PFD (personal floatation device) available aboard the watercraft, and that those passengers 12 years of age or younger must wear their PFDs whenever the watercraft is underway. Because of the manufacturers design, the “Tube Trackers” that were used on the Verde River @ Clarkdale in the 2014 season are classified as “watercraft” in Arizona. However, standard inner tubes, which are not designed to be propelled by oars or paddles, are classified as “water toys” and are not subject to the state requirements for use of PFD’s.

During late spring and early summer, guided tours accounted for approximately 74% of the commercial customer base. As summer progressed, the number of unguided customers increased, resulting in approximately 60% of customers on guided tours and 40% on unguided tubing customers.

Observations Relating to Unguided Commercial Trips - While the unguided tubing operations were a popular recreational activity for commercial customers, several observations were made during the 2014 season that weigh into the staff’s recommendations relating to unguided commercial operations in the future:

- The 3-mile length of the Verde River @ Clarkdale generally includes a series of long, still pools of water followed by a rapids chute. These long pools result in slow progress for anyone that using a watercraft equipped with a paddle or oar for propulsion. During windy days, forward progress can be challenging on some stretches of the river for watercraft equipped with paddles, and extremely difficult for people on water toys (i.e inner tubes), which delays total trip time.
- Watercraft that are propelled with paddles/oars experience an average trip length of two-three hours, depending on the type of watercraft and the experience level of the boater. Trips taken strictly on water toys (like inner tubes) can take up to 4 hours.
- Many unguided boaters are unfamiliar with this section of river, and having no guide to rely on, can be more easily confused about their location on the river and the distance to the landing site at the Tuzigoot River Access Point. We had several reports of unguided commercial customers trespassing on private lands along the river as they tried to establish their location.
- The alcohol restrictions and lifejacket requirements that are required in the outfitter permit are more difficult for commercial outfitters to enforce with unguided customers (because of a lack of supervision along the route).
- Having large percentages of un-guided commercial customers can, and did, lead to higher social encounter levels for commercial and public boaters on the river due to the difference in speed of travel.
- Children in unguided groups can get more easily separated from supervising adults than they can on guided trips.

While the unguided trips experienced on the Verde River @ Clarkdale this year were all as a result of “Tube Tracker” and inner tube rental operations, other land management agencies along the Verde River report increasing demands for other forms of unguided commercial river trips.

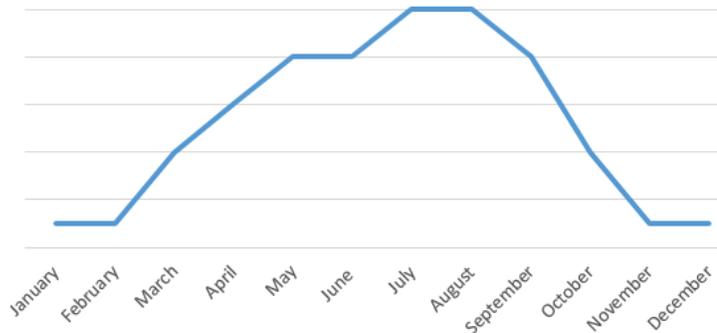
Local citizens and visitors are increasingly expressing interest in unguided opportunities to rent kayaks and canoes from outfitters who provided shuttles to launch and landing sites. Similar to tubing activities, these types of operations would be classified as unguided commercial operations.

Taking all observations into consideration relating to unguided trips, staff believes it is prudent to limit future unguided trips to vessels that meet the definition of “watercraft” under Arizona law. In doing so, trip time for customers will be more reasonable, and requirements for use and availability of PFD’s will be clear.

Seasonal Demands for Commercial Operations - Some of the more technical rapid sections on the Verde River @ Clarkdale make boating during cold weather/cold water months less desirable. As a result, commercial and private boater use of the river, while permitted year-round, is expected to be very limited during the months of January, February, November and December.

May through September are generally categorized as “peak season” for on-river recreation, with July and August having the highest volumes of visitors.

The chart at right is a depiction of the annual trends for on-river recreation.



9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNER CAPACITY

In evaluating appropriate capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale, Clarkdale Town Staff took the following into consideration:

- Consultation with outfitter permit managers on other public lands in the Verde Valley;
- Review of the management standards for recreational activity in the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the Verde Wild and Scenic River;
- Review of the U.S. Forest Service recreation and wilderness experience criteria that can be appropriately expected on the Verde River @ Clarkdale;
- Social encounter levels for paddlers as they float the 3.0 miles between the two river access points on the Verde River @ Clarkdale; and,
- The characteristics of this section of river, including the need for boaters to portage at the Brewer’s Tunnel Diversion Dam, and the safety practices used that require boaters to congregate in groups in the large pools that precede significant rapid sections (allowing boaters to proceed single-file and with appropriate spacing between boaters through more technical sections).

Clarkdale Town staff recommend that the following commercial river outfitter capacities be set for the Verde River @ Clarkdale beginning on April 1, 2015:

- Maximum guided trip size of sixteen (16) people, including trip guides.
- Maximum of eight (8) guided kayak/canoe/stand-up paddle board trips per day, with at least two (2) of those trips being reserved specifically for tours that operate under a separate permitting structure and receive pre-approval as official interpretive trips by the Town of Clarkdale.
- Maximum of one (1) guided trip launching per hour, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (which may be extended to include a 5:00 p.m. launch during certain seasons).
- Maximum of up to thirty (36) unguided customers (in a vessel that meets the Arizona definition of a watercraft) per day.
- Maximum of six (6) unguided customers launching per hour, between the hours of 9a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Taken at maximum levels, the capacities outlined above would result in 164 commercial persons (132 on recreational trips and 32 on interpretive trips) launching per day, with a maximum guided trip size of 16 and unguided trip size of 6. For comparison, the Comprehensive River Management Plan for the Verde River's Wild and Scenic segment includes a limit of up to 60 persons launching per day and a maximum trip size of 12 person in the stretch designated as a "Wild River" and 250 persons launching per day with a maximum trip size is 25 persons per trip in the "Scenic River".

Forest Service Recreation Opportunity Spectrum categorization and the Verde River @ Clarkdale's proximity to developed infrastructure and populated areas would likely suggest that higher daily capacities would be warranted here in comparison to the "Scenic" portion of the Verde River. However, Town staff believes it is appropriate to keep the daily capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale more conservative than those listed in the Comprehensive River Management Plan for the "Scenic" portion of the Verde River at this time. As we gain additional information and experience through adaptive management of this stretch of river, adjustments to the capacities may occur.

Our recommendations are designed to put a strong emphasis on creating capacity in our system for additional interpretive tours. While only 2.11% of the commercial activity on the Verde River @ Clarkdale was the result of interpretive tours in 2014, an increase in that percentage would be in keeping with the principles of the Verde River @ Clarkdale project. With that in mind, our capacity recommendations are structured to allocate 25% of the guided commercial tours to be used for interpretive tours. We understand that much of the capacity designated for interpretive tours may go unused for a number of years, but feel it is important to reserve this capacity early in our process and work with outfitters to grow the demand for these important types of tours.

We also recognize that there is a public demand for unguided commercial opportunities, both for tubing and kayak/canoe rentals. The capacity recommendations for unguided operations contained in this report are designed to balance the demand for these activities with the inherent differences between unguided and guided trips, and require that unguided trips be taken in vessels that meet the Arizona definition for “watercraft”.

The recommendations for the Verde River @ Clarkdale do not include capacities for private boaters at this time. Based on current data, we could reasonably expect an additional 25% impact from private boaters, bringing a possible total usage on a peak season day to approximately 219 people.

Town staff is not recommending the implementation of total capacities (which would include both commercial and private boaters) at this time, but will continue to collect data as indicated in the “Key Management Actions to Monitor Indicators” section of this report and take steps to adjust river use capacities over time should it become necessary.

Finally, staff recommends that they be given the administrative latitude to issue use permits for special events or other group uses that may exceed individual daily capacities, as long as resource protection measures are considered and steps are taken to reduce other commercial activity during the time of the special event. This would allow us to work with commercial operators who might want to put on special events, similar to the Verde River Poker Run that the Town of Clarkdale hosted in 2014, without the need to strictly adhere to the daily capacities as recommended in this report. Such events, however, need to be balanced against seasonal and annual usage from commercial and private boaters.

2015 Commercial Capacity Ratios

