

Requestor: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation
Revised: January 2015

Future Bond Election Proposed Projects

Project Name: Agua Caliente Park Pond Restoration

PR28

Location: 12325 East Roger Road

Scope: This project will address the failure of the natural spring at Agua Caliente Park and inability of supplemental well water to maintain the water level in the historic Pond one. The project will include the draining, dredging and contouring of Pond one to reduce its overall footprint to approximately 2 acres from the current 3.5 acres. Most of the pond will be deepened to remove built up sediments and invasive cattail infestations will be reduced to a more manageable size. Wildlife loafing islands will be added inside the pond. The pond will have a liner installed to eliminate water loss through the sides and bottom. The existing well system will be upgraded and water piped to additional locations in the park including the spring area and Pond two for smaller dependable wildlife waters. Access to the historic Island will be restored with an ADA accessible pathway. The landscaping will be renovated to reduce over-population of some trees and the addition of new native species of trees, shrubs and aquatic plants. Pond two will get additional plantings of wildlife-friendly native plants.

Benefits: Agua Caliente Park is one of the most unique of the Pima County parks. Well over 150,000 visitors enjoy the park on an annual basis. It has been a favorite community park for decades because of its water features, lush vegetation, historical buildings and abundant wildlife. Its historic importance in the Tucson region is also well documented and the site is on the National Register of Historic Places. For more than a decade of continuing drought, the natural water source for the ponds has been declining. Natural flows dropped from 120+ gallons a minute in 2000 to the point now where the spring has dried up and does not flow for a good part of the year. Significant supplemental well water additions cannot keep even Pond one filled within the capabilities of the water system and water rights available at the park. Well over 40% of the surface of Pond one is now unsightly exposed mud flats. The aged pond system needs to be renovated now and a new water budget consistent with existing water resources is established for the site that will maintain the character of the ponds, provide diverse wildlife habitat and the lush environment visitors have come to expect when visiting the park. Such renovations will be necessary in the very near future or we can expect water quality or quantity issues that could severely impact the fish and amphibians in the pond and plants around the pond. The project will give new life to the pond system at Agua Caliente Park for decades to come and restore the site to a favorite place for local residents to visit, walk and enjoy a slower paced and natural environment experience.

Total Cost Estimate: \$1,000,000

Bond Funding: \$1,000,000

Other Funding: None.

Total Cost Estimate by Major Task: \$0 for land acquisition, \$75,000 for planning and design, \$925,000 for construction.

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: TBD.

Project Schedule by Major Task: Land acquisition at 0 months, planning and design at 6 months, construction at 24 months.

Project Management Jurisdiction: Pima County.

Operating Jurisdiction: Pima County.

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: \$30,000 per year.

Regional Benefits: This project will positively impact users from across the Tucson metro area and visitors from around the country. Park visitors routinely come from all parts of town. This iconic park is considered by many as a community treasure and is recognized nationally for its historic roots. To let the system die as many have known it for a lifetime when capital improvement options exist seems to be a valid Bond project justification.

Supervisor District of Project Location: District 4 – Raymond Carroll