



MEMORANDUM

Date: July 25, 2017

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Public Review of the Establishment of the Ironwood Forest National Monument**

There have been discussions regarding the President reversing a number of national monument designations. Among those is the Ironwood Forest National Monument.

The Board of Supervisors has already passed resolutions supporting the Monument and opposing any modification to the designation.

It is important to note the Ironwood National Forest was an integral part of the very detailed planning process associated with the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Critics of national monument designations often cite the lack of public review and/or input on the designation from local elected officials. In the Ironwood National Forest's case, the designation received the support of local elected officials, as well as significant public support.

The Ironwood Forest National Monument was designated by former President Bill Clinton on June 9, 2000. Planning for the national monument began in April 1998.

For your information, I have attached a brief two page summary of the public review process associated with the establishment of the Ironwood Forest National Monument.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Linda Mayro, Director, Office of Sustainability and Conservation

Ironwood Forest National Monument: Time Line & Public Input into the Original Designation

- **April 1998 – Ironwood Preserve 1st proposed by Pima County Parks & Rec:** County parks agency proposes a mountain park system including state and federal land in the Silverbell, Waterman and Roskruge Mountains. (*“Creating a monument,” Arizona Daily Star, June 25, 2000, at A6.*)
- **Commencement of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan:** The idea of establishing a preserve originated in Pima County’s regional conservation planning process that commenced in 1998 and was designed to respond to the pressures of rapid urban growth. The resulting Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan [SDCP] balances protection of historic and natural resources with “efforts to maintain an economically vigorous and fiscally responsible community.”
- **October 1998 – 1st Draft of the SDCP proposes to save the Waterman and Roskruge ranges.** The Silverbell Mountains are added later. (*Id.*)
 - **Result of Extensive local outreach:** Development of the conservation plan and of local proposals for the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) were the products of extensive outreach and planning that involved landowners, ranchers, conservationists, preservationists, scientists and historic resource experts, as well as the Tohono O’odham Nation.
 - **Composition of Public Steering Committee:** “Seventy-seven (77) non-governmental organizations or individuals have specifically asked to have a role in developing the plan. ... parties interested in working on the [SDCP] reflect constituencies as diverse as the conservation community, neighborhood groups, ranchers, miners, landowners, private property advocates, developers, home builders, the real estate industry, and water interests. A rough approximation of interest group participation is that 28 (36%) of the candidates represent neighborhood and environmental groups; 24 (31 %) represent the business, real estate, and development community; 10 (13%) represent landowners and private property advocates; 9 (12%) represent ranching and mining interests; and 6 (8%) represent consulting, water or other interests.” (*Chuck Huckelberry, Board of Supervisors Memorandum: Report on Public Comment, Update and Recommendations on the Draft Sonoran Desert Conservation Concept Plan, March 2, 1999.*)
- **February 2000 – Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum releases study calling for protection of ironwoods:** the Museum’s study, “An Ironwood Primer,” identifies the Silverbell Mountains as host of the country’s densest stand. (*“Creating a monument,” Arizona Daily Star, June 25, 2000, at A6.*) This report, like all the other reports prepared for the SDCP, was disseminated to the SDCP Public Steering Committee for their review and comment.
- **March 21, 2000 – Board of Supervisors supports designation of IFNM:** The Pima County Board of Supervisors asks the U.S. Department of Interior to set aside 96,000 acres of federal and state land in the Silverbell, Waterman and Roskruge mountains as a national monument. (*Id.*)
 - **Then-Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt addressed the Board and “welcome[d] comments regarding Ironwood preservation** and hopes to make it part of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. He plans to ensure the public lands

are aligned in a way which will give maximum boost to getting the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan completed.” (See 3-21-00 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes at 24-25; emphasis added)

- **RESOLUTION NO. 2000- 63, a Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Pima County, Arizona, to Pursue the Establishment of a Ragged Top and Silverbell Mountains Ironwood Preserve consistent with the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.** On consideration, it was moved by Supervisor Grijalva, seconded by Supervisor Carroll, and unanimously carried by a five to zero vote, to pass and adopt Resolution No. 2000-63. (See 3-21-00 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes at 27.)
 - **Call to the public: Amy McAllister, Attorney representing ASARCO Inc.,** spoke regarding their mine on Silverbell Road. She had read in the newspaper the Board is considering protecting the ironwoods. ASARCO would like to participate in the decision process and also assess any impacts on mining operations. (See 3-21-00 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes at 21.)
 - **April 2000 – Neighborhood and conservation groups propose larger monument boundaries:** The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection proposes a 480,000 acre monument in northwest Pima County and southern Pinal County. (“Creating a monument,” *Arizona Daily Star*, June 25, 2000, at A6.)
 - **April 29, 2000 – Pima County officials host public meeting to discuss the Proposed IFNM:** the meeting was held from 9a-12p at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. (*AZ Daily Star*, Saturday, April 29, 2000; at A19.)
 - **May 2000: Tohono O’odham Nation and Pinal County Board of Supervisors endorse the proposal,** going so far as to support the larger boundaries proposed by the coalition of neighborhood and conservation groups. (See “Creating a monument,” *Arizona Daily Star*, June 25, 2000, at A6.)
 - **June 9, 2000 – Designation of the Ironwood Forest National Monument:** President Clinton designates 129,000 acres as the IFNM. (*Id.*)
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- **April 8, 2001 – Arizona Republic on IFNM grassroots origins:**

“What may help keep the Ironwood monument in existence and complicate any federal settlement is its grass-roots nature. County supervisors in both affected counties, Pinal and Pima, requested the monument after working with a coalition of other groups. Norton has stressed that she wants monuments decided by local elected officials, a crucial difference between Ironwoods and many other monuments. “I think that it will be all-out fight, certainly in Pima County,” Supervisor Ann Day said. “I think the Board of Supervisors is fully in agreement about keeping the boundaries as they are. “We’re not going to let the current administration come in and try to undo it.” (Judd Slivka, “Monument’s boundaries may be pared,” *Arizona Republic*, April 8, 2001 at 34; emphasis added.)