



---

# MEMORANDUM

---

Date: July 13, 2020

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Pima County Multi-species Conservation Plan Progress Report 2020**

This is the fourth year that the County has operated under an approved US Fish and Wildlife Service Multi-species Conservation Plan (MSCP). An annual report is required and this report is available to the public on our MSCP website at [www.pima.gov/mscp](http://www.pima.gov/mscp).

Highlights of the report are included in the attached July 9, 2020 memorandum from the Office of Sustainability, Conservation and Historic Preservation Director and Environmental Planning Manager.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact my office.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Linda Mayro, Director, Office of Sustainability, Conservation and Historic Preservation  
Julia Fonseca, Environmental Planning Manager, Office of Sustainability,  
Conservation and Historic Preservation



**Sustainability ~ Conservation ~ Historic Preservation**

**Date:** July 9, 2020  
**To:** C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator  
**From:** Linda Mayro, Director *LM*  
Julia Fonseca, Environmental Planning Manager

**RE: Pima County Multi-species Conservation Plan (MSCP) Progress Report - 2020**

---

In this fourth year of the Multi-species Conservation Plan activities, we have much progress to report. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has approved our annual report, which will be made available to the public on the MSCP webpage at [www.pima.gov/mscp](http://www.pima.gov/mscp). Attachment A is an executive summary that provides further detail.

The Section 10 permit is proving useful in public and private development:

- The Section 10 permit covered impacts of 52 private development projects in 2019. A total of 220 private projects have received coverage to date.
- The MSCP has covered a total of 164 Capital Improvement Projects completed by the permittees to date.
- MSCP mitigation provided this year also streamlined compliance with Pima County's Native Plant Preservation for two private developments.
- MSCP mitigation also streamlined ESA compliance for three Army Corps of Engineers permits issued to the Regional Flood Control District completed during 2019.

We are helping maintain and restore species and their habitats:

- Species are still inhabiting the land. Staff made 623 separate observations on Covered Species; these were reported to the Arizona Game and Fish Department.
- The public is enjoying the endangered Gila topminnow and Huachuca water umbel at the Mission Garden.
- A stream of Pima County's M Diamond Ranch received Gila topminnow.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved a plan to augment populations of covered aquatic species on County parks and preserves.
- The Regional Flood Control District reported that 94.5% of applicants avoided impacting regulated riparian habitat.

We are caring for County parks and preserves:

- Pima County staff, contractors, and volunteers mechanically removed or chemically treated approximately 1,470 acres of buffelgrass on County preserve lands.

To: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

**Subject: Pima County Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) Progress Report - 2020**

Date: July 9, 2020

Page 2

- Tucson Audubon Society and the National Park Service established 21 plots where we will monitor vegetation and soils on County preserve lands.
- USFWS approved the methods by which we will monitor upland habitat, water resources, landscape pattern change, invasive aquatic and plant species, off-highway vehicles, and climate affecting County preserves.
- We are working with stakeholders on a new management plan for the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve and portions of Colossal Cave Park that serve as mitigation lands.
- We are working with the Arizona State Land Department to renew our annual permit to conduct ecological monitoring on County held grazing leases.

### **Summary**

Pima County is fulfilling the terms of the Section 10 permit to the satisfaction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. County and private construction projects are benefitting from the existence of the Section 10 permit in terms of reduced costs and elimination of potential delays due to the presence of federally listed species. New knowledge from monitoring of species and their habitats on County conservation lands is helping land managers and wildlife agencies to better manage these lands for a broad range of stakeholder interests.

Cc: Carmine DeBonis, Deputy County Administrator, Public Works  
Suzanne Shields, Director, Regional Flood Control District  
Chris Cawein, Director, Natural Resources Parks & Recreation

To: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

**Subject: Pima County Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) Progress Report - 2020**

Date: July 9, 2020

Page 3

## **Attachment A**

### **MSCP Progress Report Executive Summary**

### Executive Summary

Calendar year 2019 represents the fourth annual report for Pima County’s Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP). The MSCP represents the vehicle by which the County and certain developers may comply with the US Endangered Species Act (via Section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take permit issued July 2016). Pima County and the Regional Flood Control District are joint permittees.

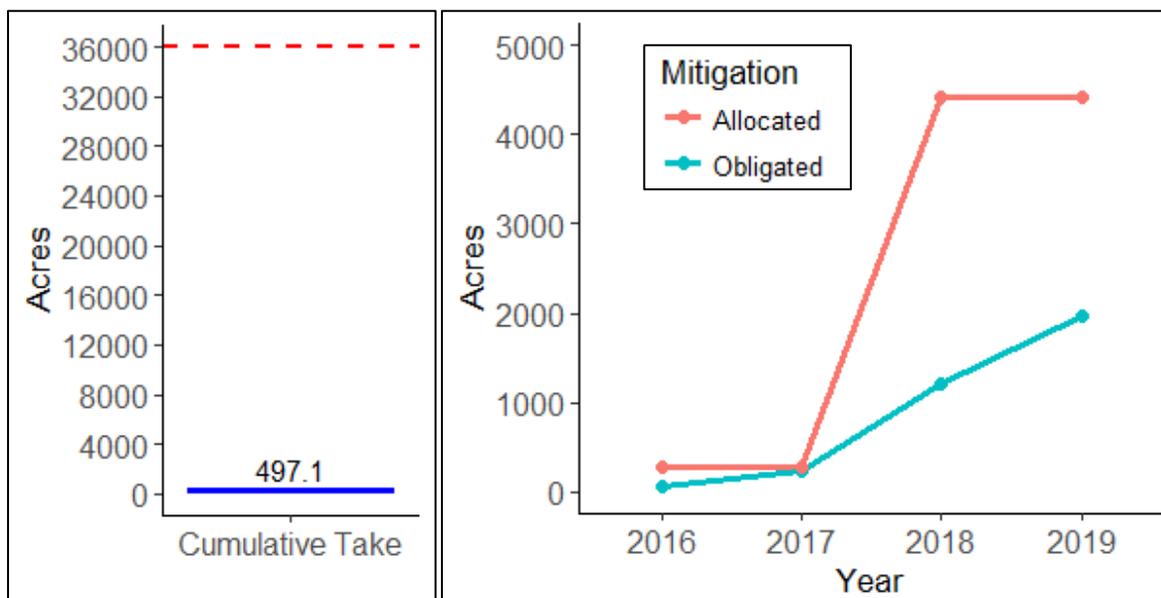
The Section 10 permit authorizes activities that may incidentally harm 44 species (i.e., Covered Species), otherwise known as “take.” Under this permit, the currency used to estimate take is acres of land impacted. Up to 36,000 acres of take is authorized for a period of up to 30 years, in exchange for avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures detailed in the MSCP. The reporting period for the annual report submitted March 1, 2020 is January 1-December 31, 2019.

### Take and Mitigation

The table and figures below summarize the number of projects and acres of impact and required mitigation for covered activities under the incidental take permit. Mitigation obligations are quantified using the acreage of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and private projects that acquired a Certificate of Coverage (CofCov).

**Table S1. Number of covered projects requiring mitigation, and acres of covered impacts and obligated mitigation by category for calendar year 2019.**

	# of Projects Mitigated	Total Take	Obligated Mitigation
<b>CIP</b>	6	59.9 acres	292.6 acres
<b>CofCov</b>	52	137 acres	475.1 acres
<b>2019 Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>196.9 acres</b>	<b>767.7 acres</b>



**Figure S1. Histogram of cumulative acres of take, 2016-2019 (left). Pima County’s Section 10 permit authorizes up to a total of 36,000 acres of take, shown by dashed red line. Graph of cumulative obligated and allocated mitigation credit by year, 2016-2019 (right).**

## **Notable Achievements**

### **Covering Projects**

- The MSCP has covered a total of 164 Capital Improvement Projects completed by the permittees to date.
- A total of 220 private projects have received coverage to date (Private sector coverage is voluntary).
- The MSCP streamlined ESA compliance for three Army Corps of Engineers permits issued to the Regional Flood Control District completed during calendar year 2019.
- The MSCP's take provision was used to stock the endangered Gila topminnow and Huachuca water umbel in a new aquatic feature at the Mission Garden.

### **Minimizing Habitat Impacts**

- The Regional Flood Control District reported that 94.5% of applicants avoided impacting regulated riparian habitat.
- The Pima County Board of Supervisors approved several land-use policies that promote reuse or infill instead of sprawl.

### **Managing Land**

- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved a plan for augmenting populations of covered species on our mitigation lands, and another for managing properties along the San Pedro River.
- A new population of Gila topminnow was established in a stream on the County's M Diamond Ranch.
- During 2019, the portfolio of potential mitigation lands increased by approximately 250 acres.
- Pima County staff, contractors, and volunteers mechanically removed or chemically treated approximately 1,470 acres of buffelgrass on County preserve lands.

### **Monitoring Species and Habitats**

- Office of Sustainability and Conservation staff made 623 separate observations on Covered Species; these were reported to the Arizona Game and Fish Department.
- County staff developed comprehensive monitoring protocols for seven monitoring elements, including upland habitat, water resources, landscape pattern change, invasive aquatic and plant species, off-highway vehicles, and climate.
- County staff in partnership with Tucson Audubon Society and the National Park Service established an additional 21 long-term vegetation and soils monitoring plots on County preserve lands.