



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

July 1, 2014

Resolution No. 2014-_____

Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program Application for the Tucson Mountain Park Expansion Trails End-Robles Pass Arizona Preserve Initiative

Background

With the adoption of Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 2008-267 authorizing the submittal of applications to the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) and Arizona State Parks (ASP) for acquisition of remaining reclassified Arizona Preserve Initiative (API) State Trust lands with Growing Smarter matching grant funds, the County has successfully acquired 2,600 acres of reclassified State Trust land at public auction; leveraging \$6 million in matching Growing Smarter grant funds from ASP, essentially paying for half of acquisition costs.

Through these efforts, the County has been working to secure our fair share of ASP Growing Smarter grant funds for acquisitions, while also benefitting from current market land values. Most recently, in December 2013, the County successfully acquired at auction approximately 800 acres of reclassified State Trust land as part of the second phase of Tortolita Mountain Park's expansion. It was our understanding from ASP that their 2013 grant cycle was to be their last due to lack of funding. However, ASP Director Bryan Martyn stated at the last 2013 grant award hearing that about \$700,000 would still remain, and a 2014 grant cycle would have to be held in order to deplete the funds and complete the program. It is my understanding the City of Phoenix will be applying for grant funds again this year. It is important to note that no more than 50 percent of grant funds can be awarded to any one County. With only the City of Phoenix applying, about \$350,000 would be available.

Remaining Reclassified State Trust Lands in Pima County

With the passage of Proposition 303 by the voters in 1998, the Land Conservation Fund was established by the State to be used toward the acquisition of reclassified API State Trust lands in Arizona identified as suitable for conservation and eligible for this conservation grant funding. The table below lists State Trust land properties reclassified in Pima County:

Reclassified State Trust Lands in Pima County.

Property	Acres	Reclassified	Acquired
Tumamoc Hill	320	May 1997	2008
Valencia Archaeological Site	67	March 2003	2009
Tucson Mountain Park API	100	June 2003	
Tortolita Mountain Park API	4,519	August 2003	2010/2011 (Portion – 2,216 acres)

The County has acquired 2,600 acres, or 52 percent, of reclassified State Trust lands in Pima County. All of these acquisitions were completed with 50 percent grant matches from ASP. There are about 2,300 acres of reclassified State Trust land remaining east of the County’s Tortolita Mountain Park, but there are currently no County matching funds available for this site. The only other reclassified land available for purchase is the Tucson Mountain Park State Trust land, which consist of two separate parcels totaling 100 acres (see attached map), which have possible matching funding sources.

Tucson Mountain Park Expansion

Home to some of the densest stands of Saguaro cacti recorded and monitored, Tucson Mountain Park (TMP) is the County’s oldest mountain park, created by the Board of Supervisors in 1929, and serves as the beginning of Pima County’s mountain park system. Located west of Interstate 10 at the end of Speedway Boulevard and adjacent to Saguaro National Park West, TMP is one of the most visited sites in Pima County with over one million visitors annually. At 22,000 acres today, it is one of the largest natural resource parks owned and managed by a local government in the U.S. Through lease inholdings in the park, TMP is also home to both the world-renowned Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, founded in 1952 and ranked by TripAdvisor.com as the top ninth museum in the world for 2013 with over 400,000 visitors annually; and Old Tucson Studios, founded in 1939 and the setting for hundreds of the most iconic western and other movie/TV location filming, with over 200,000 visitors annually.

TMP is a unique natural resource based park. There are no other parks in the Sonoran desert in the U.S. that have the size, historic/cultural foundation, plant and animal diversity, immediate access from a large urban environment, unspoiled natural resources, public visitation numbers and world class inholdings together in one location. Major elements of the park include:

- Only three main paved road segments through the 36 square miles of the park
- Gilbert Ray campground with over 30,000 visitors annually and over 6,500 camper nights annually
- Over 22,000 people picnic in the park annually
- Over 100 miles of hiking/biking/equestrian trails with over 150,000 users of the trail system
- An intact wildlife diversity that ranges from talus snails to desert insects to top carnivores like the mountain lion
- A significant amount of early infrastructure work in TMP was completed during the Civilian Conservation Corps era in the 1930s; and those efforts are an important historic resource being protected today
- Over 10 endangered, candidate or sensitive plant species are found in TMP, including the Pima pineapple cactus, Pima Indian Mallow and Tumamoc Globeberry
- Significant archaeological and cultural resources have been found in the park forming a history of habitation and use going back over 2,000 years

TMP has withstood the diverse challenges over the past 100 years of early homesteading, mining and the continual increase of a growing population of Tucson as an urban environment. Tucson will continue to grow and so will the urban related pressures on the park. TMP is practically surrounded by development today, and every effort is being made to mitigate those impacts through management and by strategically acquiring parcels of land to create buffers to encroachment and intrusions on the park.

Using voter-approved 1997 and 2004 Bond funds, the County has acquired over 1,800 acres since 1998 that expanded and protected TMP's boundaries and natural areas and added more trail and recreation opportunities for visitors. These acquisitions create opportunities to meet demands and provide managed recreational use of the park while still conserving the core environment of the park. With possible matching fund sources and assistance from ASP grant funding, the County can pursue acquisition of the two remaining reclassified State Trust land inholdings in TMP. Acquisition of these two parcels by the County will consolidate ownership of these two State land inholdings, which will allow for better planning and management in these areas of TMP.

AZ State Parks 2014 Growing Smarter Grant Cycle and County Matching Funds Options

With only a limited amount of funds left in the State's Land Conservation Fund for Growing Smarter grants, this last grant cycle would assist the County in purchasing the remaining reclassified lands in TMP. The ASLD has accepted our application to purchase the 100 acres of State Trust land and appraised the properties at \$1.175 million. If the County

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Resolution No. 2014-_____ Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program
Application for the TMP Expansion Trails End-Robles Pass Arizona Preserve Initiative
June 17, 2014
Page 4

would once again be a successful grant recipient, about \$350,000 could be applied toward the cost of the purchase, leaving an approximate balance of \$825,000.

The most viable funding match for this acquisition that I would offer is the use of the Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Fund, which was created as part of the negotiated agreement with the development of the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort. The purpose of this fund is the continued management, protection and expansion of TMP. The acquisition of these two State parcels meets the criteria for use of these funds.

Recommendation

With another opportunity to utilize State funds toward acquisition of State Trust lands to expand and enhance one of the most visited and recognized sites in Pima County, I recommend the Board of Supervisors 1) approve Resolution No. 2014-_____ for the acquisition of reclassified State Trust land in Tucson Mountain Park, 2) approve the application to Arizona State Parks for a matching grant, and 3) approve matching funds of approximately \$825,000 from the Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



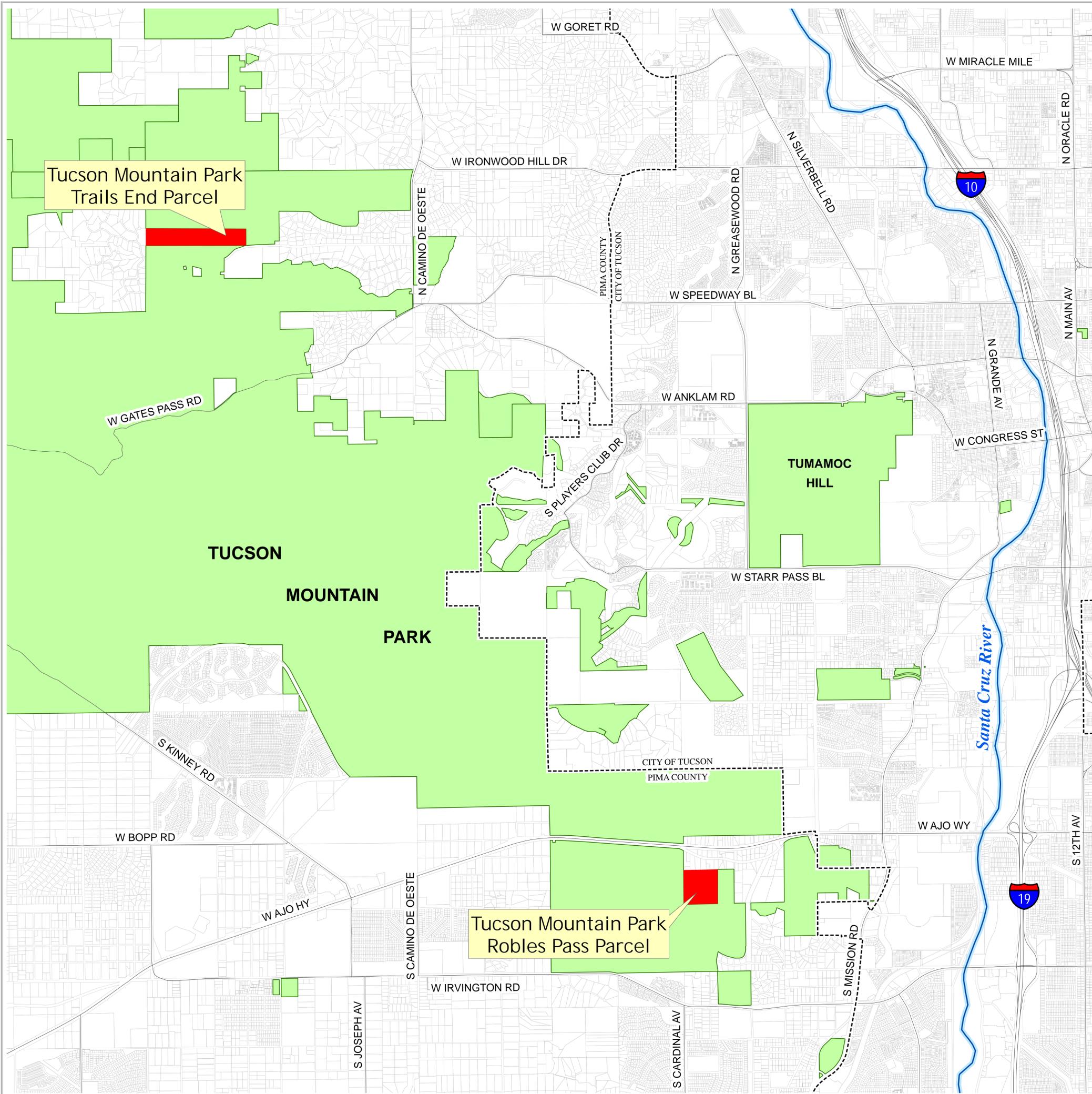
C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mjk – June 17, 2014

Attachments

c: Diana Durazo, Special Staff Assistant to the County Administrator

TUCSON MOUNTAIN PARK RECLASSIFIED PARCELS

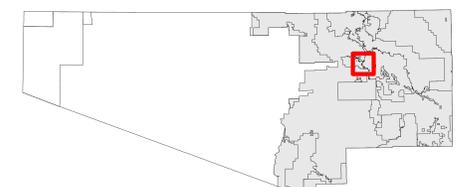


Tucson Mountain Park
Trails End Parcel

Tucson Mountain Park
Robles Pass Parcel

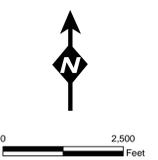
-  Subject Reclassified State Trust Land Parcels
-  Conserved Lands
-  Incorporated Boundary

Pima County Index Map



Index Map Scale 1:1,500,000 for Arch E Print

The information depicted on this display is the result of digital analyses performed on a variety of databases provided and maintained by several governmental agencies. The accuracy of the information presented is limited to the collective accuracy of these databases on the date of the analysis. Pima County Information Technology Department Geographic Information Systems makes no claims regarding the accuracy of the information depicted herein. This product is subject to the GIS Division Disclaimer and Use Restrictions.



10/10/2013

RESOLUTION NO. 2014 - _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GROWING SMARTER STATE TRUST LAND ACQUISITION GRANT FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF 100 ACRES OF RECLASSIFIED STATE TRUST LAND AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO EXPAND TUCSON MOUNTAIN PARK

WHEREAS, Tucson Mountain Park is one of the most visited sites in Pima County with over 1.5 million visitors annually and recognized for its abundant and diverse ecological values and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature under A.R.S. § 41-511 has authorized the establishment of the Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program providing funds to the State of Arizona and other eligible applicants for the purpose of conserving reclassified State Trust land in or near urban areas experiencing high growth pressures; and

WHEREAS, Arizona State Parks Board (BOARD) is responsible for the administration of the program within the State, setting up necessary rules and procedures governing application by local agencies under the program; and

WHEREAS, said adopted procedures established by the BOARD require the application to certify by resolution the approval of applications, signature authorization, the availability of local matching funds, and authorization to sign a Participant Agreement with the BOARD prior to submission of said applications to the BOARD;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an application for FY 2014 Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition grant assistance, subject to approval of the final appraisal by the County Administrator, for acquisition of 100 acres of State Trust land to expand Tucson Mountain Park at Trails End and Robles Pass; and
2. Agrees to comply with all applicable procedures, guidelines, and requirements established by the BOARD as a part of the application process; and
3. Certifies that Pima County will comply with all applicable state and federal regulations, policies, guidelines, and requirements as they relate to the application; and
4. Certifies that Pima County will provide matching funds of at least 50 percent of the acquisition costs, subject to the County's approval of final appraisal; and
5. Appoints the County Administrator as agent of Pima County to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to, the application, the Participant Agreement and any other documents that may be

necessary for the completion and submission of the grant application and receipt and use of grant funds according to the terms of the grant.

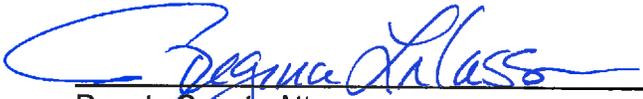
PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors

Attest:

Clerk of the Board

Approved as to form:



Deputy County Attorney
REGINA NASSEN

Approved as to content:



County Administrator