

Department: Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Revised: **REVISED DATE**

Future Pima County Bond Election
Proposed Project

Project Name: River Bend Conservation Education Center at Brandi Fenton Memorial Park PR105

Location: Located on north side of Brandi Fenton Memorial Park, 8.4 acre parcel, adjacent to Davidson House and newly constructed Native Seed Search building at 3560 E. River Rd.

Scope: This project would add a Conservation Education complex to one of the Binghampton Rural Historic landscape properties. The historic Davidson House and barracks building in Brandi Fenton Memorial Park are currently the offices for the County's Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Environmental Education program. In 2009, Native Seed Search (NS/S) entered into an agreement with Pima County and constructed its office complex and conservation/research facility adjacent to the county offices. NS/S has invested over \$1.5 million dollars in Phase

1 and anticipates additional phases of construction to ultimately expand the facility and establish a small gift shop/education facility.

The Board of Supervisors approved a conceptual design for the River Bend Conservation Education Center back in 2008 and again in 2009 as part of the NS/S ground lease.

The project is designed to establish an educational center where the public, young and old, can come to learn about the importance of local farming to the past and future residents of Tucson. It will be a place where people can see first hand historic and current food plants and understand the importance for everyone to be connected back to land. They will be exposed to the importance of food crops and cultivation for the pre-historic and historical residents of Tucson. They will have a place to see how foods can be grown in urban contexts to provide sustainable and healthful supplemental foods for every day consumption. The facility will also be a place to highlight and celebrate the development and implementation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

The project will include construction of approximately 9000 square feet of new education buildings, food plant and native landscape interpretive gardens and displays, environmentally sustainable life choice opportunities, educational Ramadas, parking surfaces, demonstration kitchen, public courtyard and garden maintenance facilities. The facility will incorporate the historic character of the lands with new technologies to be more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Benefits: Development of the River Bend Conservation Education Center will provide an anchor facility for diverse educational outreach programs and activities. It will be a place where county residents and visitors can see good environmental practices in action and learn how to live a more healthy and sustainable lifestyle in Tucson and Pima County. The facility will also be a place where partners will join with the county to put on programs and events related to conservation and the environment. With the NS/S complex immediately adjacent and connected by an event plaza, tours of the work being done by NS/S can be incorporated into the facility outreach package.

Costs: \$ 2,500,000

Bond Funding: \$1,000,000

Other Funding: None identified at this time

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: TBD

Project Management Jurisdiction: Pima County

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: An initial supplemental package is estimated to be \$ 450,000 with approximately \$300,000 of that translating to permanent base budget, funded through the general fund.

Regional Benefits: This facility is expected to become a destination facility in Tucson. It will attract visitors and students from the region and out-of-state. NS/S has a worldwide reputation and connections that we anticipate the facility will benefit from. The project adds a dimension to the existing facilities at Brandi Fenton Memorial Park.

Supervisor District of Project Location: District 1 – Ally Miller