



## COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER  
130 W. CONGRESS, TUCSON, AZ 85701-1317  
(520) 740-8661 FAX (520) 740-8171

C. H. HUCKELBERRY  
County Administrator

July 7, 2006

Mary Kidwell  
Empire-Fagan Coalition  
P.O. Box 812  
Vail, Arizona 85641

Re: **Your Letter Regarding Rosemont Ranch**

Dear Ms. Kidwell:

Thank you for your letter regarding conservation of the Rosemont Ranch. Your letter has been forwarded to Bill Roe, Chairman of the Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission. The Commission is charged with overseeing the spending bond funds authorized by voters in May 2004 to be spent on acquiring natural open space properties. In December of 2004, the Rosemont Ranch was offered to the County at a cost of \$11.5 million. I forwarded the offer to the Conservation Acquisition Commission for their consideration. The Commission discussed the offer at their February 10, 2005 meeting, and took no action on the offer for a variety of reasons. The meeting summary is attached. On April 3, 2006, the ranch was sold to Augusta Resource Corporation for \$20.8 million. It is my understanding that Augusta intends to submit a mining plan of operations to the Forest Service this summer. Augusta's web site is [www.augustaresource.com](http://www.augustaresource.com), and phone number is (303)300-0134. You can reach the Coronado National Forest Service at (520)388-8300. I encourage you to be actively involved in providing comments on the plan of operations when it becomes available.

Thank you again for your conservation efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Huckelberry".

C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

CHH/dr

Attachment

# Empire-Fagan Coalition



PO Box 812  
Vail, AZ 85641  
(520) 762-1962  
<http://www.empirefagan.org>

June 27, 2006

Bill Roe, Chair, Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission  
130 W. Congress St., 10th floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to on behalf of the membership of the Empire-Fagan Coalition to urge you to consider adding the Rosemont Ranch properties to your list of acquisitions for the 2008 Open Space Bond package. Our Coalition is comprised of a group of concerned citizens focusing on issues affecting the Empire-Fagan Valley just north of Sonoita. This valley encompasses the area south of I-10 from the northern Empire Mountains to the east, west to Mount Fagan (in the Santa Rita Mountain range), and northwest to Houghton Road just south of the freeway. Thus the future of the Rosemont Ranch properties is of great concern to us.

As you may know, this area is currently under threat of development for an open pit copper mine by Augusta Resource Corporation (Vancouver, Canada). There are many people in the community who are working in opposition of such development for this very special area, our group included. Although the property is not currently for sale, inclusion in the 2008 Open Space Bond package could send a strong message to Augusta Resources and others of the value the community and the County puts on preserving this resource. Should it become available for sale in the future, we feel that Rosemont would be an incredible asset to the community and add to the legacy of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

It is our understanding that Rosemont would qualify under the Community Open Space category. The Rosemont Valley is used extensively for many forms of recreation, such as hiking, camping, hunting, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, bird and wildlife watching, and picnicking. In addition, it is a major part of the viewshed from Scenic Highway 83, and is important for open space, wildlife habitat and migration corridors. These lands are also within the watershed of the County's proposed Davidson Canyon Natural Preserve under the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very Sincerely,

Mary Kidwell, President  
The Empire-Fagan Coalition

*Ensuring the Quality of Life in the Empire-Fagan Valley*

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission  
Meeting**

**Manning House  
450 West Paseo Redondo  
Thursday February 10, 2005  
3:00 p.m.**

**A. Motions at the February 10 Meeting**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, not to take any further action on these non-bond properties (Winterhaven Ranch, Arivaca Twin Peaks, and Donnelly Trust). Motion approved 10-0. This is the final Commission action on these properties.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Pettis moved Mr. Huckelberry's recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Corey (that the Commission ask staff to identify those parcels in the Camino de Oeste project area with an asking price near \$6,500 an acre or less, and have staff provide the pros and cons of creating an inholding with regard to management costs). Motion was later amended to include beginning due diligence for the parcels near \$6,500 an acre or less. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. Motion approved 11-0.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Shattuck, to recommend the purchase of Rancho Seco to the Board of Supervisors. Motion passed 11-0.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to place the Curtis Trust due diligence on hold as well as the Petrowski application until it is known whether surrounding landowners are interested in selling, and to reevaluate the benefits, if any, that these properties can provide in building a viable biological reserve. Motion passed 10-0. Commissioner Arnold abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest on the Curtis Trust parcel.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, to begin due diligence on the Carpenter Ranch application. Motion approved 11-0

**B. Direction to Staff**

Regarding the Avra/I-10 Critical Landscape Linkage, Chairman Roe suggested that staff continue the process of discussing development set aside options with Marana, and discussions with owners/representatives regarding the asking price of the Continental Ranch parcels.

Commissioner Wilson submitted a written request to ask staff to prepare a report on the restoration of ranch lands purchased by the County, including type of restoration, costs, time frames, and funding source, to be placed on the April agenda.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the February 10, 2005 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

### 1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. with a quorum.

#### Commissioners Present - ALL

Bill Arnold (Arrived at 5pm)

Les Corey

Trevor Hare

Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair

Rob Marshall

Chuck Pettis

Tim Prouty

Bill Roe, Chair

Wanda Shattuck

Tom Sheridan

Helen Wilson

### 2. Applications for the Sale of Open Space – Properties NOT included in Question 1 of the 2004 Bond Ordinance – Final Action

Per Commission policy, after initial discussion the Commission must wait 30 days or until the next meeting, whichever occurs first, to make a final decision on non-bond properties. The following three properties were discussed initially at the January 11 meeting, with a staff recommendation not to acquire the properties:

- Winterhaven Ranch (may reconsider in 12 months)
- Arivaca Twin Peaks
- Donnelly Trust

At the January 11 meeting, the Commission voted to place these three applications on the do not acquire list for final action at this February 10 meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, not to take any further action on these non-bond properties (Winterhaven Ranch, Arivaca Twin Peaks, and Donnelly Trust). Motion approved 10-0. This is the final Commission action on these properties.

### 3. State Land Department and School Trust Lands

Chairman Roe announced that the State Land Commissioner will likely be attending the March 8 Conservation Acquisition Commission meeting.

Jean Emery, Director of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation, presented information on the Arizona State Land Department and State Trust lands, along with possible questions to ask the State Land Commissioner at the next meeting. A handout summarizing this presentation and the list of questions is attached to this meeting summary.

4. Camino de Oeste Project Area

At the January 11 meeting, staff recommended that the owners of four additional parcels in the Camino de Oeste project area be contacted to determine their willingness to sell, before recommending the County begin due diligence for the nine other Camino de Oeste parcels.

Diana Freshwater, Director of the Arizona Open Land Trust, reported that the owners of these four parcels have much higher asking prices than others in the area. Ms. Freshwater did not feel that much progress could be made in the short term in obtaining lower prices. If the County pursued the surrounding parcels, these four parcels would be left as inholdings.

Mr. Huckelberry, County Administrator, recommended that the Commission ask staff to identify those parcels with an asking price of \$6,500 an acre or less, and have staff provide the pros and cons of creating an inholding with regard to management costs.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Pettis moved Mr. Huckelberry's recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Corey (that the Commission ask staff to identify those parcels with an asking price near \$6,500 an acre or less, and have staff provide the pros and cons of creating an inholding with regard to management costs). Commissioner Pettis later amended the motion to include beginning due diligence for the parcels near \$6,500 an acre or less. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. Motion approved 11-0.

5. Approval of January 11 Meeting Summary

Meeting summary was approved 11-0, with a spelling correction.

6. Conservation Opportunities in Connection Analysis Areas - Avra/I-10

At the January 11 meeting, Chairman Roe directed staff to come back to the Commission at the February or March meeting with specific recommendations for Critical Landscape connections. Julia Fonseca provided an overview of the biological importance of the Avra/I-10 wildlife corridor. Ms. Fonseca also reiterated ADOT's commitment to keep the overpass open, Pima County's already significant investments in floodprone lands along the Santa Cruz and investments in archaeologically significant lands in the Los Morteros area, Pima County's restoration goals for the area through the Tres Rios project, and the Town of Marana's purchase of the parcels in the area for habitat mitigation.

There were discussions regarding the impact of the frontage road, the status of properties on the eastern side of I-10 leading to the Tortolitas, the biological importance of the corridor, and the high cost of properties in this area.

Chairman Roe suggested that staff continue the process of discussing development set aside options with Marana, and discussions with owners/representatives regarding the asking price of the Continental Ranch parcels.

7. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe distributed an update of the 1997 and 2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures as of January 31, 2005.

8. Rancho Seco Acquisition

Mr. Huckelberry explained the terms of the acquisition: \$18.5 million for 9,500 acres of fee land and a conservation easement over 400+ acres total around both of the ranch headquarters limiting the number of lots to five per headquarters.

Commissioner Wilson submitted a written request to ask staff to prepare a report on the restoration of ranch lands purchased by the County, including type of restoration, costs, time frames, and funding source, to be placed on the April agenda.

The issue of recreation and working landscapes was discussed. Mr. Huckelberry explained that the first priority for this property is it's continued use as a working landscape, and that other complimentary uses would be identified at a later date.

Commissioner Arnold expressed concern about potential pollutants and waste dumps related to past or present mining uses on or adjacent to the property, as well as whether the County would be getting the mineral rights with this property. Staff confirmed that a Phase 1 environmental assessment was underway and that so far nothing of concern had been reported.

Four members of the public spoke at this time regarding mining claims, the mineral potential of the Cerro Colorado area, and potential liabilities to the County regarding minerals and waste dumps related to mining activities: Glen G. Burkhardt, Glen A Burkhardt, Charles Miller, and Carl Rice. All four individuals opposed the creation of Cerro Colorado Reserve via the County's purchase of the Rancho Seco. Glen G. Burkhardt submitted a written statement regarding the proposed Pima County Cerro Colorado reserve.

Chairman Roe and Mr. Huckelberry explained that it is common in Arizona for most lands to have subsurface rights separate from surface rights, and this is in fact the case with Tucson Mountain Park. Mr. Huckelberry also stated that the County's due diligence for the Rancho Seco property was ongoing and that the property would not be acquired until this research was completed to the County's satisfaction.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Shattuck, to recommend the purchase of Rancho Seco to the Board of Supervisors. Motion passed 11-0.

9. Rosemont Ranch

Chairman Roe reported on a meeting he had with two owners of the Rosemont property, Mr. Levy and Mr. Warne, as well as a meeting of the Science Technical

Advisory Team (STAT) subcommittee tasked with considering how to address a possible request by this Commission to review a non-bond property.

Each of the Commissioners made comments regarding the Rosemont Ranch proposal. Concerns included: whether the Commission was willing to amend the bond ordinance so soon after the election; whether the property had biological values equal to or exceeding those already identified as Habitat Protection Priorities in the bond ordinance; recreational management and public access issues with the property; the price of the property and the amount of profit for the seller; other funding options and the restrictions on staff using bond funds to research other funding options; mining claims; whether to forward to the STAT; and whether the Commission's policy to deal with non-bond proposals was sufficient.

Laney Levick, President of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas, spoke at this time. Ms. Levick spoke in support of preventing mining and/or residential development of the Rosemont property, and stated that if bond funds were not available that she would be willing to assist in pursuing other creative funding options.

Priscilla Robinson, member of the public, also spoke at this time. Ms. Robinson stated that much more research needed to be undertaken before an informed decision could be made with regard to this proposal.

No action was taken on the Rosemont Ranch proposal.

#### 10. Applications for the Sale of Open Space

##### A. Petrowski Parcels – Habitat Protection Priorities – Southeast Corridor

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to place the Curtis Trust due diligence on hold as well as the Petrowski application until it is known whether surrounding landowners are interested in selling, and to reevaluate the benefits, if any, that these properties can provide in building a viable biological reserve. Motion passed 10-0. Commissioner Arnold abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest on the Curtis Trust parcel.

##### B. Carpenter Ranch – Community Open Space

Steve Anderson, Natural Resource Parks and Recreation Planner, presented the Carpenter Ranch application to the Commission, as well as staff's recommendation to begin due diligence.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, to begin due diligence on the Carpenter Ranch. Motion approved 11-0

#### 11. Chairman's report on discussion with Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection regarding A-7 Management Proposals

Chairman Roe reported on his meeting with Carolyn Campbell and his suggestion that rather than tackling management issues on A-7 alone, that the discussion wait until the County completes acquisition of other similar properties. There was a discussion on whether the Science Commission was an appropriate group to

participate in this management discussion, or whether a separate group needed to be formed.

12. Updates:

Bee/Mordka: Christine Curtis reported that the County closed on the property on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Bar V Ranch: Nicole Fyffe reported that the Board of Supervisors approved the acquisition of the Bar V Ranch on February 8, 2005. The Board will be presented with the final version of the Management Agreement for ratification on February 15, 2005. The County plans to close on the property also on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

King98: Christine Curtis reported that the King98 acquisition will go before the Board of Supervisors on February 22, 2005.

Poteet: Diana Freshwater reported that no other owners surrounding this property are willing to sell at this time, and that the broker for the property is currently reviewing the County's appraisal.

South Corridor Project Area: Diana Freshwater reported willing sellers and asking prices for several parcels. Ms. Freshwater will continue working to acquire options on the properties, as directed by the Commission on January 11.

Michael Berard, property owner in the area, presented two large photos of the parcels under consideration, as well as a budget analysis showing that all the parcels could be acquired at asking price for \$2.3 million.

Belvedere: Diana Freshwater reported that due diligence was underway.

Green Valley Hills: Nicole Fyffe reported no progress on this property.

Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Sherry Ruther, Environmental Planning Manager for Development Services, provided updates on the following development proposals: Desert Rose Canyon (within the Community Open Space Painted Hills project area), Sumpter Road parcel (identified as a high priority Habitat Protection Priority in the Tortolita area), Rancho Grande (identified as a high priority Habitat Protection Priority in the Houghton/Speedway area), and Canoa Reserve (identified as a high priority Habitat Protection Priority north of the County's Canoa Ranch).

A joint study session for this Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled for March 30<sup>th</sup> in order to better familiarize both Commissions with each other's tasks.

13. Next Commission Meeting, March 8, 2005

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2005 at 3 p.m. A suggested agenda was distributed to the Commission. Commissioner Marshall requested additional time for the discussion with the State Land Commissioner. Vice-Chair Johnson requested that the subcommittee on conservation easements

and tax deductions be pushed back to April. Commissioner Wilson's request regarding restoration activities will be placed on the April agenda. Commissioner Corey requested that conservation opportunities in the area of Arthur Pack park be placed on the March or April agenda. Commissioner Hare asked that the discussion regarding management team issues be continued at the next meeting.

14. Call to the Public

Chris McVie spoke at this time. Ms. McVie stated that the County needs to acquire the Avra/I-10 parcels now, that she supports turning attention to Habitat Protection Priority parcels in the northwest, that she also supports acquisitions in the South Corridor project area, and that she applauds the decision to hold a joint Planning and Zoning and Conservation Acquisition Commission meeting.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.