



## COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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C.H. HUCKELBERRY  
County Administrator

March 5, 2014

Coronado Forest Plan Revision  
P.O. Box 1919  
Sacramento, California 95812

**Re: Pima County Staff Comments on the Coronado National Forest Draft Land and Resource Management Plan Revision**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Coronado National Forest (the Forest) lands in Pima County offer an invaluable variety of resources and experiences that enrich the lives of the County's citizens and environment. Just a few of the important roles played by Forest lands include recharging of desert aquifers, conservation of biodiversity, and recreation. Pima County has long recognized this; and as a result, the County and the Forest have a long history of working together on a variety of natural and cultural resource management issues. In this spirit of cooperation, I share with you Pima County staff comments on the Forest's Draft Land and Resource Management Plan Revision.

In 2008, Pima County and the Forest signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding our respective roles in the development of the Forest Plan. Our hope was that Pima County could work cooperatively with the Forest and other interested parties to craft a Forest Plan that would carry the Forest into a new phase of management; one that met the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an emphasis on management actions that could strengthen—or at the very least buffer—Forest resources from the myriad of threats now facing it. Unfortunately, the roles outlined in the MOU were not carried out; and though the Forest Plan is a step forward from the 1986 plan it is intended to supersede, protections for natural and cultural resources could be much stronger.

The following are among the progressive elements of the plan and the preferred alternative:

- Integration of climate change into management decisions;

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- Outlining desired conditions, outcomes, and management actions that can help guide project-specific actions;
- Creation of the Finger Rock Canyon Natural Research Area, the first area of its kind dedicated to the study of climate change;
- Greater protections against off-road vehicle use;
- Greater emphasis on partners and cooperators to achieve directed conditions.

Despite these positive steps, the proposed Forest Plan could be significantly improved. Suggestions for improving the plan include:

- Adoption of Alternative #1, which calls for designation of additional wilderness areas, including some in Pima County. Given the Forest Plan's apparent commitment to conservation (as outlined in the Forest Plan), this alternative seems most appropriate;
- Use mineral withdrawals to create greater conservation benefit. The Forest Plan appears to make mineral withdrawal more difficult;
- Place greater emphasis on water resources, including the protection of springs and sensitive riparian areas, preventing groundwater pumping, developing plans for the protection of groundwater resources, and finally placing greater attention on water quality through assessment and monitoring;
- Better integrate the Forest Plan with local plans such as the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

These elements and more are addressed in the attached document.

Given the deficiencies in this draft Forest Plan, it seems prudent to develop a supplemental Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. If additional scoping is part of that process, I hope the framework for County/Forest involvement (as defined in the 2008 MOU) will occur. County staff is available to assist in this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document. The continued protection of the Forest's natural, cultural, and recreational resources and opportunities are a high priority for Pima County and our citizens.

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Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

CHH/dr

Attachment

c: Linda Mayro, Director, Conservation and Sustainability  
Julia Fonseca, Environmental Planning Manager, Conservation and Sustainability  
Brian Powell, Program Manager, Conservation and Sustainability  
Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator

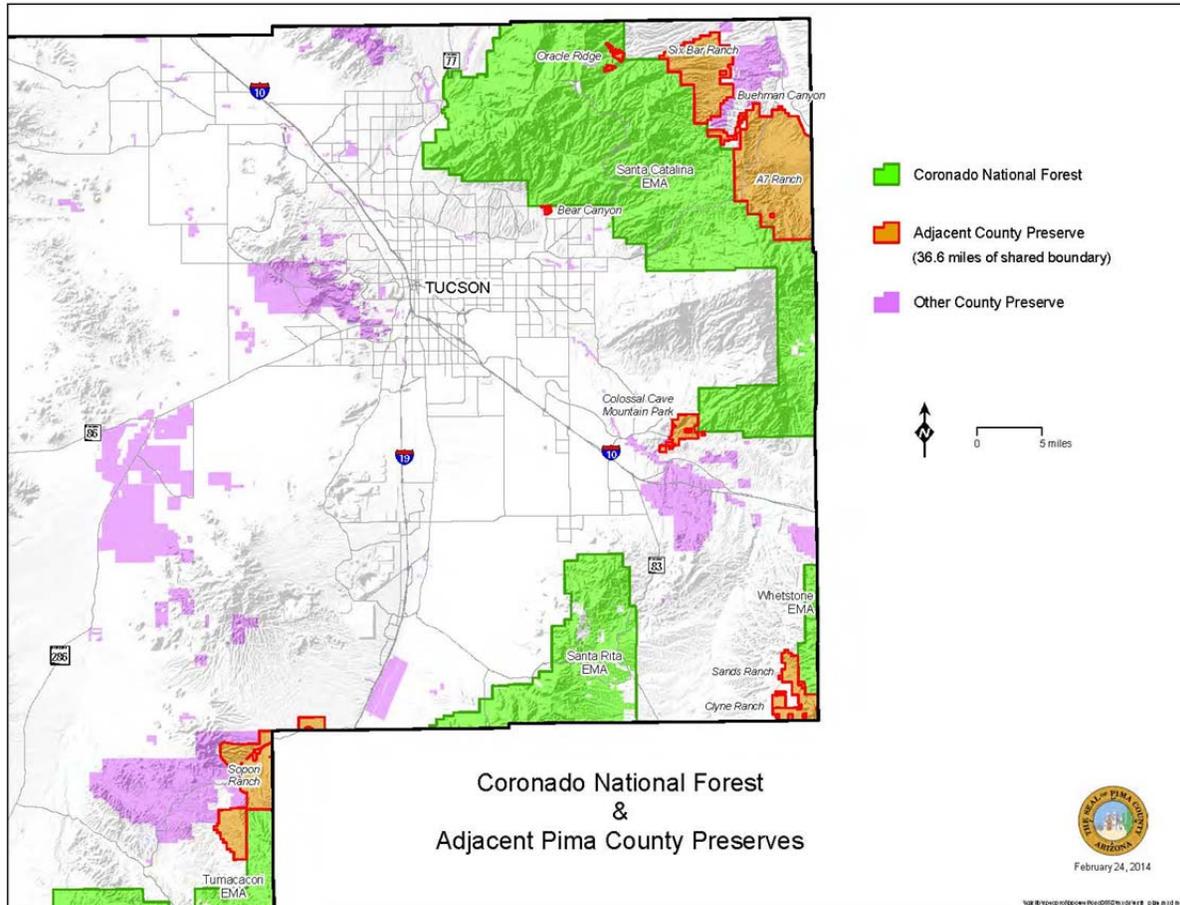
## **Pima County Staff Comments on the Coronado National Forest Draft Land and Resource Management Plan, 2013**

### **Introduction**

Pima County recognizes the importance of the Coronado National Forest (the Forest) to provide goods, services, and experiences that enrich the environment and well-being of the citizens of Pima County. Forest lands play a key role in providing ecosystem services that include groundwater recharge and flood control benefits. The Forest is a refuge for hundreds of wildlife species that inhabit the varied topography of the Forest, from deserts and grasslands to high-elevation forests. Waves of human history have also left an indelible mark in the hundreds of historic and prehistoric resources that are found throughout the Forest. Today, the Forest provides highly valued recreational opportunities for the citizens of Pima County and is an important tourist amenity. For these reasons and more, Pima County has a stake in ensuring that these resources, values, and benefits are retained and enhanced in the face of the many pressures that are present on the Forest and beyond.

Pima County has a long history of working with the Forest in land management, research, and resource protection activities. Though Pima County does not always agree with the Forest's resource management decisions (as evidenced by the County's comments on the Rosemont Mine Environmental Impact statement), in recent decades there has been a mutual recognition of common natural and cultural resource and recreation goals that are shared by each party. As recently as 2008 Pima County and the Forest entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on the development and implementation of the Forest Plan update (Supplement A) and associated letter to Forest Supervisor Derby (December 26, 2008; Supplement B). The need to coordinate and integrate County and Forest vision and goals is heightened by Pima County's land acquisitions activities of the last 10 years, which have resulted in a mutual land management boundary of over 35 miles (Fig. 1). In the interest of furthering this relationship and ensuring the highest level of protection of resources on the Forest, Pima County is pleased to have been provided the opportunity to comment on the revised Forest Plan and associated environmental impact statement.

Pima County believes that the proposed Land and Resources Management Plan (Forest Plan or Plan) is generally a positive step toward greater conservation of the Forest's natural and cultural resources. The Plan takes a more proactive, science-based approach to managing the Forest in the face of some threats such as climate change and in general provides greater clarity of desired ecological conditions, which are based on vegetation communities. Below are the County's suggestions for improving the clarity of the document (and associated Environmental Impact Statement; EIS) and strengthen the environmental and cultural resource protections that benefit the citizens and environment of Pima County.



**Figure 1. Pima County and the Forest share boundaries on some of Pima County’s largest land holdings. In other areas, Pima County lands provide an important corridor between Forest Ecosystem Management Areas.**

**Major Issues and Recommendations that Pima County Staff have Identified for Improving the Forest Plan**

Mineral Withdrawals. We applaud the Forest’s emphasis on the role that conservation should play in the future of the Forest going forward. The Forest has deemed that timber harvesting is no longer an acceptable land use on the Forest (EIS, page 431), yet consideration of actions that would reduce mining activities on National Forest lands is not given the same level scrutiny. Pima County recognizes that the Forest Service has no right to curtail mining on private lands within forest boundaries, but mining can be curtailed on Forest lands by way of mineral withdrawals and wilderness designation. It is for this reason that Pima County supports Alternative #1, which calls for mineral withdrawal via creation of the Tumacacori, Mt. Wrightson (addition), Mount Fagan, and Whetstone wilderness areas that are located wholly or partly within Pima County. Creation or expansion of these wilderness areas would be consistent with the designation of some or all of these lands as Biological Core in Pima County’s Conservation Land System.

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The EIS states that wilderness protection should not be conveyed to Mt. Fagan wilderness area because it requires “a significant Border Patrol presence...recommending the areas as wilderness may affect Border Patrol law enforcement activities by restricting its motorized activity to the pursuit of crimes in progress.” We disagree with this assessment of that area and are not aware of a significant amount of drug trafficking or Border Patrol activities there.

Mineral withdrawals are needed for other portions of the Coronado National Forest that may not meet wilderness condition. This has been requested by the Pima County BOS Resolution No 2007-33 (Supplement C). Considering that the MOU between the County and Forest state that the Forest Plan will “integrate(s) County and other stakeholder ideas and comment as the Plan is developed, working collaboratively with these entities to improve the Plan as it is implemented”, Pima County would like to know why this approach was not considered as an alternative in the EIS.

Pima County believes that the revised Forest Plan actually makes it harder for mineral withdrawals to occur. Much of the Coronado is covered with mining claims, and via policy the Forest Service relies on the assumption of validity. Therefore Forest policy deference means that only wilderness designation or Congressional action can test the validity of these claims and close sensitive areas to new mineral entries. The Forest Plan should include mineral segregations for sensitive areas and leave open the potential for testing the validity of claims as part of an Alternative.

Mining Practices. Given the number of proposals for mining in the Forest, and the breadth and depth of the 25,000 public comments that Rosemont mine proposal received during the preparation of the Forest Plan, it is surprising to see so little in the Forest Plan regarding mining practices. The Forest Service Organic Administration Act of 1897 (16 U.S.C. §551 and 36 CFR 228.8) requires the Forest Service to take all feasible steps to minimize adverse environmental impacts and require a mining operator take “all practicable” measures to “maintain and protect” fisheries and habitat (36 CFR 228.8). The Forest Plan should take advantage of the learning experience that the Rosemont Copper Project has provided by better defining the kinds of reclamation and closure outcomes that are expected when mining is allowed.

For instance, how shall pit lakes and their effects be avoided or minimized in the future? Can the Forest accommodate the public’s interest in seeing that adequate reclamation bonds or financial assurances are posted and maintained? Under what circumstances will unlined tailings be allowed? What responsibilities do miners have post-closure?

Climate Change. Pima County applauds the Forest for prominently integrating climate change into the Forest Plan framework. We agree that planning for conservation of water and response high-intensity of storms is important. Missing from the list of management approaches is a recognition that vegetation community boundaries (and subsequent disturbance patterns) will also change. Developing a management framework for when to halt, slow, or facilitate these shifts will be one of the Forest’s greatest challenges in the future. This is mentioned briefly as it related to storms, but this should be called out in its own section. To assist with this, we suggest that a management approach should be to work with adjacent land owners on issues such as prescribed fire, thinning, or wildland fire management, when possible. This “Firescape”

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approach will be important, but unfortunately, the Firescape program has retreated in geographic scope in the Santa Catalina EMU to exclude Pima County lands, for example. Finally, the acknowledgement of climate change should also include the planning for mega-droughts, which would call for reducing or mitigating for non-climate stressors such as groundwater pumping and mineral extraction.

Treating Vegetation Communities as Discrete Entities. The Forest Plan contains a set of desired conditions and management approaches for each of the vegetation communities. There is not a lot of discussion about the downside of considering these as discrete entities whose boundaries are constantly changing. Drought, climate change and other factors will result in a shift in vegetation community boundaries; how will these factors be considered?

Lack of Process for Prioritizing Management Actions. The Forest has many potential projects, but a limited budget. Theoretically, the Plan can help guide the Forest in deciding among the many competing priorities for those limited funds, but what is missing is a range of objectives and a structured process for choosing among objectives that would provide justification as to why a particular objective was chosen. For example, the Desert Communities section has the single objective to “suppress or eradicate buffelgrass on 1,000 to 1,500 acres of Sonoran Desert every year using herbicides and manual methods”. It is not clear: 1) why buffelgrass (instead of—or in addition to—fountain grass, arundo, etc.), 2) where did 1,000-1,500 acres come from (there are thousands more acres of infestation on the south side of the Santa Catalinas alone), and 3) what other resources needs are there that will not get accomplished if this project is funded? Perhaps these numbers came from the current eradication efforts (EIS, page 25), but even those efforts treat more acres (2,000 annually) than are indicated in the Forest Plan. Given the rapid rise in acres of invasive species infestation and catastrophic fires in recent years in multiple mountain ranges, these realities speak to the need to develop objectives that place greater emphasis on conservation and restoration actions that exceed the status quo in recent years.

While we applaud the plan’s focus on restoration, we note that the upper bounds of restoration activities would amount to treatment of less than 50,000 acres per year. If this number of acres were treated each year, it would represent a 36 year “rotation” of treatments for the 1,783,639 acre Forest. Given the much higher frequency of natural disturbance than this (5-12 years in the case of most vegetation communities in the Forest), a discussion about priorities for those vegetation treatments is warranted. At a minimum we recommend highlighting or referencing a process that will undertaken to prioritize treatment areas. This is important because the desired conditions cited for each vegetation community appear to represent community conditions of very healthy (i.e., restored) communities.

Range Management. Protection of springs and riparian areas should be a top priority. The Forest needs a good inventory of these resources and should have an objective related to the protection and restoration of these areas. An emphasis should be placed on provide livestock producers with alternative sources of water such as wells that do not use shallow groundwater. Finally, we suggest utilization rates be set to less than 40%, not the 45% suggested.

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Not enough emphasis on a Watershed Approach. The 1986 Forest Plan called for taking a watershed approach to land management action (EIS, page 25), but the EIS goes on to state that “few projects have been implemented to date towards this goal”. It appears that this fact has given the Coronado little incentive to take a watershed management approach; no mention of managing using a watershed approach is cited in the draft Forest Plan. Pima County would encourage Ranger Districts to participate in watershed planning efforts of other federal, state and local partners.

Lack of Integration with Local Planning Efforts and Use of Older Planning Rule. Pima County recognizes that the Forest has been working the revision of the Forest Plan for quite some time. However in 2012 the U.S. Forest Service revised the planning rule for land management planning. The Forest could have chosen to use the process and tenets of the new planning rule in the Forest Plan update, but chose not to. While the new planning rule changes the process for appeals, what is most of interest to Pima County is an emphasis in the new planning rule to open up the process of developing the Forest Plan revision to a wider group of stakeholders and to ensure that Forest Plans dovetail with local plans (36 CFR 219.3). Unfortunately, the Forest did not create an inclusive planning process, despite a memorandum with Pima County—signed in 2008—that demonstrated strong support for such an approach (Supplement A). Among the items of cooperation was that the Forest Service would provide “opportunities for the County to collaborate and participate openly and meaningfully in the planning process” including “developing Forest Plan direction,” “developing reports that document needed changes in Forest Plan management direction”, and “designing the Forest Plan monitoring program.” Finally, the MOU states that the Forest will “meet with and provide early opportunities for the County to be involved, collaborate, and participate in planning for management of NFS lands.” Despite this, we are aware of only one meeting between Pima County and the Forest in the last five years regarding the Forest Plan amendment.

The Forest Plan revisions does not mention the Pima County Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, Cultural Resources Element, or shared conservation and historic preservation goals with Pima County (in those Forest districts within, or partially within, Pima County) which could provide valuable resources and/or offer cooperative opportunities for historic preservation and public education. Pima County is absent from any discussions of cooperative management approaches, presenting a missed opportunity to combine preservation resources and efforts to meet shared goals.

Greater collaboration in land management priorities and activities. The need for greater collaborative approaches was recognized in the Forest Plan (p. 10, Appendix B). This is a good recognition and Pima County would welcome this approach considering that we own and leased thousands of acres of land adjacent to the Forest(Fig.1). Despite the recognized need and some more general discussion about target agencies, tribes, and organization, we urge more specific, district-level mechanisms within which these partnerships can flourish. A good start might be for each Ranger District to identify Pima County as a partner for wildlife habitat, watershed and fire management activities.

Use of Fire as a Management Tool. In Chapter 2, pp. 17-52, Forest-wide Management sections, briefly outline the relative utility of fire as a landscape management strategy, with varying goals and management strategies set per different vegetation communities including provision for planned and unplanned ignition fires. Localized or widespread fires are categorized as “extreme disturbance events” (p.17). Fire has the potential to negatively affect historic and prehistoric heritage resources. Fire has a much greater potential to negatively affect above-ground (usually historic) structures, but can also negatively affect archaeological sites, including lower-profile surface artifact scatters. Other negative effects on cultural resources result from firefighting and suppression actions, both in controlled burns and in emergency responses to wildfires. There is no discussion of cultural resources management strategies addressing unplanned ignition events, nor are there detailed discussions of management strategies employing planned ignition events. It is assumed a separate fire management plan exists to account for effects on all resources.

Eliminate Management Area 16. Management Area 16 is not part of the current Forest Plan or EIS, but instead part of the proposed Rosemont EIS and associated planning documents, but the Rosemont documents state that Management Area 16 will be an amendment to the Forest Plan. Pima County has provided extensive comments to the Forest regarding our opposition to the creation of Management Area 16 from a variety of perspectives, including the fact that its creation (along with operation of the Rosemont Mine) will effectively cut off the north end of the Santa Rita Mountains as a viable location for wildlife. Here we point out our perspective is upheld by language in the Forest Plan (p. 66), which states that a management approach is to “ensure habitat connectivity between sky islands is preserved, restored, and enhanced for wildlife using corridors between ecosystem management areas of the Forest. In particular, forest boundaries identified as being critical for wildlife ingress and egress (see Figure 3) are prioritized during coordinated efforts.” (Note: Figure 3 shows Management Area 16 as being critical for wildlife connectivity). The language in the Forest Plan speaks for the need to accomplish this by way of partnerships, but Pima County would like the Forest to be held to the same standard of management approaches as they would like upheld for partners. This would mean putting a higher level of protection on this area, not a lower level as designation of Management Area 16 would enable.

Cultural Resources, Objectives and Goals (Pp. 84-85).

1. The Forest objectives include inventorying 200 acres annually (this presumably to meet NHPA, Section 110 requirements). This is a modest goal that should be increased, with more specific goals of the inventory directed at the different resources in different Forest Districts.
2. Goals include nominating at least five sites or districts to the NRHP within 10 years of plan approval. Again, this is a modest goal, in particular considering the potential numbers of sites within the Forest.
3. The goal of conducting stabilization or preservation activities at one or more “priority heritage assets” is modest, but since this could depend on separate

funding, perhaps it is realistic. The definition of priority heritage assets is concerning, however; as given in the footnote on p. 84, significance is linked to whether the Forest has invested funding in a resource, rather than evaluating the archaeological or historical significance (and Register eligibility) of a resource, or its condition and/or vulnerability to threats from natural or human causes.

4. The goal of completing NAGPRA repatriation of pre-1990 collections is appropriate.
5. The goals for interpretive events, volunteer opportunities and the “Rooms with a View” program are appropriate and seem to be scaled to planned or existing programs.
6. The goal to inspect priority heritage assets on a five-year cycle is too broadly defined to make it feasible. Known Heritage Resources should be considered, by District, and should be categorized by significance/eligibility, condition, and vulnerability to impacts from natural and human causes, including development planning by the Forest. A hierarchical monitoring program might better suit the resources, based on condition and threat evaluations, with a graduated monitoring cycle ranging from an annual to a five-year interval (could use the NPS ASMIS system as a model – can adapt to the forest needs).

Tribal Recognition and Relations. The introductory chapter about the Forest discusses cultural resources, but only as it relates to the Apache tribe (page 5):

“The Coronado National Forest retains remainders from its complex historic and cultural legacy. From pictographs, petroglyphs, and pottery shards left by ancient peoples, to remnants of old mines and ranches, to present day Apache uses, the lands of the Coronado harbor a wealth of cultural values. Place names across the Coronado are reminders of cultures and people who have lived in the sky island region and shaped the character of the land. Apache interest in the region remains strong. Despite having been nearly pushed out of the area in the late 19th century, Apache families continue to travel into the mountains of the Coronado National Forest to collect food products, medicinal plants, and to visit sacred sites. Today, many of the mountains managed by the Coronado are regarded as Apache homeland, and as such, are meaningful and sacred.”

No mention is made of the importance, significance, and use of the Forest by (and for) the Tohono O’odham. This is a very serious omission that must be changed.

Elsewhere in the document, tribes are recognized to have a stewardship role in land management, but this remains generalized and unsupported in following text. Traditional Cultural Places (TCPs) are only briefly mentioned, but this term is not used in discussion of the Santa Rita Mountains and no specific mention is made of the *Cewi: Duag* Traditional Cultural Place, which is recognized by the Forest and Determined Eligible to the NRHP by the Forest and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A quick check to see if this was an oversight

revealed that the discussions of Mount Graham openly describe its status as a TCP, by name, and list the appropriate Tribal affiliation, so this omission is specific to the Santa Rita Mountains and the Tohono O'odham.

### **A Look at Issues Raised by Pima County in 2008:**

In December 2008, Pima County raised a number of issues that we felt were important to address in the revised Forest Plan (Supplement B). Below are the issues raised—in the form of direct quotes from the December 2008 letter) and how we feel each was addressed in the Forest Plan:

- Water Quality: “planning to identify future land uses that are appropriate near the streams; minimization of impacts from existing and future land uses; and regularly-scheduled monitoring to ensure that water quality and habitat of the streams is not degraded. We also ask that the Forest recognize the community's interest in protecting the water quality of Davidson Canyon.”
  - The Forest Plan does not call for monitoring of water quality or quantity.
  - Baseline information that relates water quality to existing Forest uses of streams and springs is needed for the EIS and to guide management subsequent to adoption of the Plan. If this cannot be obtained prior to the finalization of the EIS and ROD, then the Forest Plan should at least include the steps necessary to get this information.
  - National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (USDA Forest Service, April 2012) call upon the Forest Service to identify and evaluate the condition of streams, riparian areas and groundwater-dependent ecosystems; identify State-designated beneficial uses and water quality parameters that are critical to those uses; and the likelihood that proposed activities would contribute to current or future impairment of watersheds.
  - All federal agencies must comply with state water quality standards, including a state's antidegradation policy. 33 USC § 1323(a).
  - There was no mention in the Plan of Davidson Canyon.
- Groundwater. “We would like to see the Coronado National Forest Plan update prohibit the removal of additional groundwater in the Coronado National Forest for export off the Forest.”
  - Groundwater was not addressed in the Forest Plan or EIS. The EIS mentions only groundwater as it relates to the fact that pumping of groundwater the Forest takes place largely outside of the Forest. This is inadequate because pumping groundwater off of the Forest is not addressed. We recommend that groundwater resources be a specific resource addressed in the “Forestwide Management” section of the Forest Plan.
  - The Forest Plan should identify the forest uses and resources that are dependent on groundwater within each Ranger District. See Policy in Forest Service Manual 2541.03: include high priority non-consumptive stream flows and standing waters when determining National Forest water needs.

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- Identify where federally-reserved water rights and public water reserves exist by ranger district and define how these will be protected.
  - Identify areas of known groundwater depletion or contamination.
- Protection of lowland leopard frog and Gila chub: “It is critical to identify and protect key refuge sites, and to develop and implement conservation strategies in which current and developing land uses may be compatible with species preservation”.
  - There are no specific protections for these species in the Forest Plan, but we urge the Forest to protect and enhance key populations of lowland leopard frogs in Alder and Edgar canyons, in particular. Fencing to exclude cattle and providing alternative water sources for livestock would benefit these important populations and their habitats.
- Special status species. “We would request that the Coronado National Forest operationally include priority vulnerable species identified in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan to the list of USFS identified species”.
  - This was not done.
- Invasive species. “The update needs to address and give the Coronado National Forest the ability to utilize the full spectrum of strategies and techniques available to address current and future invasive species management needs.”
  - Invasive species are mentioned as a threat throughout the document. Pima County recognizes the difficulty of managing for invasive species, but given that the Forest is spending funds on invasive species control, the Forest should develop (or cite if one already exists) an invasive species management plan.
- Designation of special interest areas. Pima County supports the recommendations of the Sky Island Alliance's special interest areas in the Santa Catalina (Finger Rock Canyon Research Natural Area and Agua Caliente Zoological Area) and Santa Rita (Rosemont Valley Historical Area) districts.
  - See note above about support of wilderness designations in Pima County under Alternative #1.
- Recreational shooting. The Forest needs to provide designated sites with minimal safety enhancements that can be monitored and controlled and also be able to restrict use where unsupervised shooting results in a public health and safety issue, or compromises wildlife objectives.
  - Forest Plan does not have any management actions that relate to recreational shooting. This is a major concern for Pima County as recent closure of the recreational shooting sites at Reddington Pass have created conditions so that shooters are moving further east into the County's A7 ranch. Pima County suggests that management actions and approaches include Pima County in discussions about this issue.
- Trails. Current and future Forest trail systems should be integrated with the Pima County Regional Trail System wherever possible.
  - This is not addressed in the Forest Plan.

- Consultation with American Indian tribes. We encourage the Coronado National Forest to consult on a government-to-government basis with American Indian tribes that have cultural ties to the area regarding traditional cultural places of significance.

**MISC comments: Forest Plan Document**

State historic preservation registers. Discussion of National Register of Historic Places eligibility, nomination, and compliance actions could also include the relevant state historic preservation registers, depending in which state forest districts are located.

Natural Water Sources (Pp. 56-59). The general description indicates 400 springs and seeps in the Forest, but does not incorporate Native American Tribal links to springs as sacred places, or important resource gathering areas, and ignores the importance of springs as contributing resources to traditional cultural landscapes and TCPs. The discussion lacks any cultural resources component. Later text in the “Constructed Waters” section states that there are 400 “developed springs.” There is no distinction made between constructed features and natural springs and the numbers given are unlikely to be correct, both cannot be 400. There are no management approaches for Native American concerns regarding springs as sacred places, or as loci of important resource gathering areas.

Importance of Animal and Rare Plants to Native American tribes (Pp. 62-65). There is no discussion of plants and animals important to Native American tribes and no management approaches that consider Native American concerns about plants and animals.

Special Uses does not include Native American use (p. 81). There is no discussion of management approaches that consider allowing Native American Tribes access to traditional use and resource collecting areas, or sacred areas within the Forest.

Cultural Resources and Tribal Relations (Pp.84-87 Chapter 2). The General Description and Desired Conditions sections are too brief, presenting only broad generalizations and summary discussions. Similarly, the Objectives and Management Approaches are too general, in some management areas presenting rather modest goals for a 10-year planning period. The Tribal Relations section has a longer itemized list of Management Approaches, but they are over-generalized statements.

Arizona Trail (p.122). The General Description only briefly mentions that the Arizona Trail crosses adjacent county lands. Does not include cooperative management strategies with State or County agencies.

Chapter 6 Monitoring and Evaluation (p. 175). There is no discussion of cultural resources monitoring in this chapter although heritage resource “inspections” on a five year cycle were called out as a management goal in Chapter 2.

**MISC comments: EIS**

Page 19. Page 19 lists the host of resources and their conditions that would be the same for all alternatives. It is not reasonable to assume that Alternative 2, which would allow more off-road

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vehicles and essential eliminate climate change science, would have the same effect on water, soil, and provide for maintaining biodiversity.

Table 7. Indicates that 5,000 acres of desert would receive treatment, but there is no indication of a time frame on these actions. Under the Proposed Action column, it indicates that buffelgrass will be treated, but in the Forest Plan it says that fire will be used on 5,000-10,000 acres. Fire should not be considered a reasonable restoration tool in this vegetation community.

Supplement A. Memorandum of understanding between the Forest Service and Pima County for the update to the Coronado Forest plan update.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

between  
**USDA FOREST SERVICE, REGION 3,  
CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST**  
and  
**PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,  
PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA**

This **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** is hereby entered into by and between the USDA Forest Service, Region 3, Coronado National Forest, hereinafter referred to as the Forest Service, and the Pima County Board of Supervisors, Pima County, Arizona, hereinafter referred to as the County.

### **A. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to provide the framework for a mutually beneficial, cooperative, and productive intergovernmental relationship between Pima County and the Forest Service with regard to the development and implementation of the Forest Service's Land and Resource Management Plan, hereinafter referred to as the Forest Plan, and amendments to such. Further, this MOU is intended to define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Forest Service and the County as they relate to both Forest Service and County planning processes.

### **B. BACKGROUND:**

The Forest Service manages the Coronado National Forest in accordance with the Bankhead-Jones Act, the Forest Reserve Organic Act of 1897, the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act, the Federal Land Planning and Management Act, and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), and all other applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and policies. These Acts require management of National Forest System (NFS) lands for multiple uses on a sustained basis to ensure a continued supply of goods and services to the American people. Decisions made in the Forest Plan are implemented only after the environmental review requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have been met.

It is both Forest Service and County policy to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed land management actions on the physical, biological, social, cultural and economic aspects of the human environment. Both parties seek to involve each other in the planning of decisions before they are rendered; to provide early notice of upcoming proposals to other agencies, government officials, and

stakeholders; and to provide timely notice to each other regarding the need for new or revised environmental planning documents and the processes that govern their preparation.

The Forest Service and the County agree to enter into this MOU and have the authority, through the Forest Supervisor and the County Board, to do so. It is mutually recognized that

1. This MOU shall not be construed to affect the jurisdictions of Federal, State, County or other local government agencies that exist as a matter of law.
2. The Forest Service has three administrative units in Pima County. The Santa Catalina Ranger District manages land and resources in the Santa Catalina and Rincon Mountains. The Nogales District manages the Santa Rita and Tumacacori Mountains. The Sierra Vista Ranger District manages the Whetstone Mountains.
3. This MOU is intended by the County and the Forest Service to ensure that their individual and joint planning and enforcement activities consider the impacts of future decisions on the culture, as well as the economic and social stability, of the County and its residents.

County and Forest Service planning activities require different forms of documentation prior to decision making and implementation. For the Forest Service, planning is mandated by Federal laws, regulations, and guidance including, but not limited to, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, and Forest Service policies, procedures and regulations.

The County has planning activities mandated by State and local laws.

**C. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:**

- Both agencies wish to develop procedures to ensure that each may efficiently and effectively meet its responsibilities as a public entity.
- Both agencies wish to communicate openly and provide a conduit for exchange of information concerning common issues and problems.
- Both agencies wish to provide a framework to fully consider the social, economic, and cultural impacts of public land and resource management decisions as part of their respective and collective planning and decision making processes.
- Both agencies wish to work cooperatively to monitor implementation of the Coronado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
- Both agencies wish to establish a conflict resolution process at the lowest administrative level without having to resort to judicial review.
- Both agencies wish to conduct a periodic review of this MOU for evaluation of its effectiveness.

**D. THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL:**

**THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

1. Scoping

- a. At the discretion of the Forest Service decision maker, advise the County of proposed implementation of specific projects authorized under the Forest Plan as they are developed and ripe for NEPA analysis. If a written scoping notice is prepared for public distribution, a copy shall be provided to the County for review.
- b. At the discretion of the Forest Service decision maker, plan, organize, and implement meetings, in response to the County's request, to clarify project goals, objectives and/or issues. To the maximum extent possible, such meetings will focus strictly on specific issues related to each project. Both agencies may request persons with special expertise to attend such meetings to present and discuss information.

2. Development and Evaluation of Alternatives and Mitigation

- a. Provide detailed information about the proposed action, alternatives, and mitigation if the County has expressed an outstanding concern or requested further information.
- b. Fully consider County plans and policies related to issues raised. Inconsistencies between the proposed action and such plans and policies shall be fully discussed and evaluated, as warranted, in the NEPA document.

3. Notification and Comment

- a. Follow its procedures for Notice, Comment, and Appeal.
- b. Provide the County with legal notice of the availability of each NEPA document for public review and a copy of the document itself.
- c. Provide written notice of each NEPA decision to the County for all actions in which the County has indicated interest.

**FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT, AMENDMENT OR REVISION  
UNDER THE NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT**

1. Adhere to requirements for coordination and collaboration with the County during any revision or pertinent amendment of the Forest Plan in accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy. The National Forest Management Act requires public participation during development and revision of land management plans [16 U.S.C. 1604].
2. Work closely with the County to develop, revise or amend Forest Plans that are intended to provide a strategic vision for 10 to 15 years and establish the desired conditions and management

objectives that will sustain multiple uses while maintaining long-term productivity of the land, such that they best meet the needs of the American people [NFMA (16 U.S.C. 1600 (note))].

3. Provide opportunities for the County to collaborate and participate openly and meaningfully in the planning process. Specifically, the Forest Service shall request County participation in these key planning activities:
  - a. Developing reports that document needed changes in Forest Plan management direction.
  - b. Developing Forest Plan direction.
  - c. Designing the Forest Plan monitoring program.
  - d. Evaluating monitoring results regarding the effects of Forest Plan implementation, and designing appropriate corrective actions as needed.
4. Meet with and provide early opportunities for the County to be involved, collaborate, and participate in planning for management of NFS lands.
5. Seek assistance from the County, as necessary, to address management issues or opportunities.
6. Provide formal public notification in newspapers of record (those identified in the Federal Register) of the following opportunities for public involvement AND send such notices directly to the County:
  - a. initiation of Forest Plan revision or amendment processes;
  - b. public comment periods on proposed amendments or revisions;
  - c. opportunities to review according to the administrative review process; and
  - d. issuance of approval documents for Forest Plan revisions or amendments.
7. Apply the following principles to guide collaborative activities during land management planning:
  - a. Build and maintain working relationships, trust, and collaborative capacity with people of diverse values, backgrounds, and incomes, including underserved and low-income citizens, and with Federal, State, and local governments, tribes, private landowners, and interested individuals and organizations.
  - b. Encourage a shared understanding of the values, concerns, roles, and responsibilities of all participants while establishing a common base of understanding about the existing Forest Plan and relevant social, ecological, and economic information.

- c. Follow an iterative approach to the development of a revised Forest Plan, one that integrates County and other stakeholder ideas and comments as the Plan is developed, working collaboratively with these entities to improve the Plan as it is implemented.
- 8. Grant the County or other governmental entities an opportunity to review draft documents and participate in Government-to-government discussions about the Forest Plan, as necessary, without general public notice or participation [2 U.S.C. 1534 (b)].

**OTHER PLANNING AND ASSESSMENTS**

- 1. Notify the County of other mid-level assessments and plans that do not approve, authorize, limit, or prohibit any specific land-use activities and do not require NEPA compliance.
- 2. Adhere to the same requirements for cooperation and participation with the County previously described for implementation of project-level or Forest Plan-level activities when conducting other mid-level planning that does not involve project-level NEPA decisions or Forest Plan approval. Examples of these include watershed or landscape-level assessments, wildlife habitat assessments, fire management plans, community wildfire protection plans, roads analysis process, and similar analysis efforts that evaluate resource and land use conditions, set priorities, or discuss possible implementation strategies.

**E. THE COUNTY SHALL:**

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

- 1. Scoping
  - a. Monitor the quarterly updates of the Forest Service’s Schedule of Proposed Actions (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1) on the internet at [www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado) and inform the Forest Service of projects of interest to the County. The County will be prepared to act promptly upon receipt of scoping notices or other requests from the Forest Service regarding County input or actions.
  - b. Refer notices soliciting input and comments, such as scoping notices, to the appropriate County advisory committee(s) for prompt consideration and action. The County will, within the response time specified in the scoping notice, provide either written comments on the proposal or inform the Forest Service in writing of one of the following:
    - i. The County has no concerns about or issues with the proposal and does not intend to comment further. The County may request to review a pre-decisional NEPA document regardless of whether or not it expressed concern or otherwise commented. This request must be made in writing.

- ii. If the County needs additional information, it may request a meeting with the Forest Service. This may be a public meeting that will be conducted in accordance with State and local law. Issues, alternatives and/or mitigation measures may be presented to the Forest Service by the County at the time.
  - c. In response to a scoping notice, make a good faith effort to raise any and all concerns it deems important in as specific a manner as possible. The County shall describe applicable County laws, plans and policies that may apply to the proposal or affect the decision.
  - d. The Forest Service or the County may request a meeting to clarify individual project goals and objectives or pertinent issues. The County will, to the maximum extent possible, organize and conduct such meetings with a focus on specific issues or projects. Both agencies may request persons with special expertise to attend such meetings to present and discuss information.
2. Development and Evaluation of Alternatives and Mitigation

Provide the Forest Service with timely information and data and, as warranted, an analysis of the potential impact of alternatives on and their relationship to County plans and policies. The County shall promptly inform the Forest Service if it is unable to provide the information requested.

3. Notification and Comment

- a. Provide timely written notice of proposed County ordinances, policies, and procedures that may affect Forest Service programs on NFS lands. At a minimum, the County will mail or fax the agenda of relevant County meetings to the Santa Catalina, Sierra Vista, and Nogales District Rangers and the Forest Supervisor. The County shall also provide early notice, either by telephone or in writing, of any such activities for possible Forest Service input or involvement.
- b. Provide copies of any County ordinances, policies, or procedures, or activities that are relevant to Forest management to the District Rangers and the Forest Supervisor at the time they are approved by the Board.

**F. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY ALL PARTIES THAT**

- 1. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA).** Information furnished to the Forest Service under this instrument is subject to public release, except for information protected by specific exemptions identified in the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C.552).
- 2. **PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES.** This instrument in no way restricts the Forest Service or the County from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- 3. **COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION/TERMINATION.** This MOU shall be effective upon the signature of the Forest Supervisor and the Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors, and shall

remain in effect for a period of five (5) years from the date of execution. This MOU may be extended or amended upon written request of either the Forest Service or the County and the subsequent written concurrence of the other. Either party may terminate this MOU following the delivery of a 60-day written notice to the other.

- 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES. The Forest Service and the County and their respective agencies and offices will oversee the activities set forth herein as individual roles and responsibilities and will utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of funds, in pursuing these objectives. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- 5. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS. The principal contacts for this instrument are:

*Forest Service Contact*

Forest Supervisor  
Coronado National Forest  
300 W. Congress Street  
Tucson AZ 85701  
Phone: 520-388-8300  
FAX: 520-388-8305  
E-Mail: [jderby@fs.fed.us](mailto:jderby@fs.fed.us)

*County Contact*

Chairman  
Pima County Board of Supervisors  
130 W. Congress Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
Phone: 520-740-8126  
FAX: 520-884-1152  
E-Mail: [Richard.Elias@co.pima.AZ.US](mailto:Richard.Elias@co.pima.AZ.US)

*Forest Service Administrative Contact*

Grants and Agreements Specialist  
Coronado National Forest  
300 W. Congress Street  
Tucson AZ 85701  
Phone: 520-388-8325  
FAX: 520-388-8331  
E-Mail: [nnorris@fs.fed.us](mailto:nnorris@fs.fed.us)

*County Administrative Contact*

Clerk of the Board  
Pima County  
130 W. Congress, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
Phone: 520-740-8449  
FAX: 520-622-0448  
E-Mail: [Lori.Godoshian@co.pima.AZ.US](mailto:Lori.Godoshian@co.pima.AZ.US)

- 6. NON-FUND OBLIGATING DOCUMENT. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate either the Forest Service or Pima County to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of the Forest Service and Pima County will require executions of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

- 7. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.
- 8. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES. By signature below, the cooperator certifies that individuals listed in this document as representatives of the cooperator are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.

THE PARTIES HERETO have executed this instrument.

PIMA COUNTY

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST

  
RICHARD ELIAS                      SEP 09 2008  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS                      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
JEANINE A. DERBY                      DATE  
FOREST SUPERVISOR

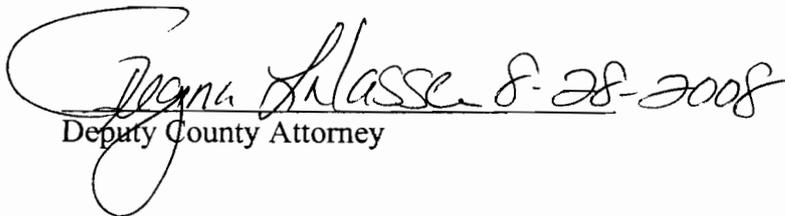
ATTEST:

  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

The authority and format of this MOU has been reviewed and approved for signature.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NORENE NORRIS                      DATE  
FS Agreements Coordinator

  
Deputy County Attorney

Supplement B. Letter from Pima County to Forest Supervisor Derby regarding the Coronado Forest plan update.



## 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

December 26, 2008

Jeanine A. Derby  
Coronado National Forest Supervisor  
Attn: Plan Revision  
300 West Congress  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

**Re: Coronado National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan Update**

Dear Ms. Derby:

Pima County and the Coronado National Forest share similar interests in collaborative planning and decision making processes regarding the social, economic, and cultural impacts of public land and resource management decisions. In recognition of our mutual interests, Pima County and the Forest Service have established a recent Memorandum of Understanding outlining both parties' relationship with the development and implementation of the Forest Service's Land and Resource Management Plan. The Forest Service has three districts which operate in Pima County: the Santa Catalina, Nogales, and Sierra Vista districts. As a participant in the Forest Plan Update, Pima County offers the following considerations.

We would like to see support in the Forest Plan Update for increased or continued protection of water quality. As part of the water quality element for the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP), Pima Association of Governments and Pima County staff created a list of highest priority streams for water quality and quantity monitoring, management and restoration (see report, *The Water Quality of Priority Streams in Pima County*, <http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/reports\d19\092THE.PDF>). Stream selection was based primarily on the presence of perennial or intermittent flow, the areas of riparian habitat, the presence of historic or existing populations of native fish and frog species, and location with respect to other surface water sources and possible wildlife corridors. The Pima Association of Governments has identified 38 streams with perennial or intermittent reaches that had flows that originated in the Santa Catalina, Rincon, or Santa Rita mountains. Of these streams, several originating in the Coronado National Forest were prioritized for further study and protection, including Florida Canyon, Rincon Creek, and Wakefield Canyon. A comprehensive effort to ensure that the water quality of priority streams in Pima County is

not degraded will likely involve three components: planning to identify future land uses that are appropriate near the streams; minimization of impacts from existing and future land uses; and regularly-scheduled monitoring to ensure that water quality and habitat of the streams is not degraded. We would like to encourage cooperation and collaboration in protection and in support for studies on these streams.

We also ask that the Forest recognize the community's interest in protecting the water quality of Davidson Canyon, which has its headwaters in the Forest. In 2005, Pima County and the Pima Association of Governments nominated Davidson Canyon for a State anti-degradation designation (known now as Outstanding Waters of the State of Arizona). The State recently approved this designation and the designation will become active in early 2009. The document detailing the nomination, entitled *Davidson Canyon Unique Waters Nomination*, is available at [www.pagnet.org](http://www.pagnet.org).

I encourage the plan update to address additional protection of groundwater supplies. The SDCP recognizes the important links between groundwater, streamflow, and vegetation that exist along some streams and springs in Pima County. Various components of groundwater-dependent ecosystems have been identified in Pima County: shallow groundwater zones, perennial and intermittent stream segments, and springs. The Coronado and its landscapes are essential in providing groundwater recharge through natural surface water recharge along washes and wetlands, and recharge that moves into bedrock faults and fractures in mountainous regions. We would like to see the Coronado National Forest Plan update prohibit the removal of additional groundwater in the Coronado National Forest for export off the Forest.

Leopard frogs and native fish were once found in locations throughout Pima County. As lowland sites were developed, dried out and invaded by non-native species, the native fish and frogs are now primarily found in mountain canyons. The report, *Aquatic Vertebrate Conservation in Pima County* at <http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/reports/d7\007AQU.PDF> identifies sites in the Coronado that serve as refuge for leopard frogs and native fish. These sites are valuable for their ability to harbor native aquatic species and provide stock for natural dispersion or for transplants to suitable or restored locations. The report states:

“Without significant efforts to preserve habitat and species in mountain canyons, the Gila chub and the lowland leopard frogs may face extinction before we have any opportunity to return them to valley floors where they were formerly abundant.”

It is critical to identify and protect key refuge sites, and to develop and implement conservation strategies in which current and developing land uses may be compatible with species preservation. A priority for these remaining sites is the removal of non-native species. Key canyons with invasive species threats include Romero Canyon, Sabino Canyon, Bear Canyon, Agua Caliente, and others listed in the report's gazetteer.

Jeanine A. Derby

**Coronado National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan Update**

December 26, 2008

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Along with the aquatic species we recommend a careful evaluation of the opportunity for the Coronado National Forest to further protect and conserve special status plant and animal species Forest-wide. We would request that the Coronado National Forest operationally include priority vulnerable species identified in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan to the list of USFS identified species.

The Coronado National Forest has made significant efforts at invasive species removal, most recently in giant reed and buffelgrass removal efforts in the Catalinas. Pima County supports language in the update that reflects the Forest Service's dedication in invasive species issues, to reduce the spread of invasives, and to eliminate and prevent non-native invasive species where they occur. The update needs to address and give the Coronado National Forest the ability to utilize the full spectrum of strategies and techniques available to address current and future invasive species management needs.

Pima County supports the recommendations of the Sky Island Alliance's special interest areas in the Santa Catalina and Santa Rita districts. In the Catalinas, the proposed Finger Rock Canyon Research Natural Area and Agua Caliente Zoological Area are classified as Biological Core under the Conservation Lands System (CLS) of the SDCP. Designation of the special interest areas is consistent with land uses under the CLS designations.

The proposed Rosemont Valley Historical Area in the Santa Rita Mountains also merits consideration as a special management area to preserve this culturally significant area. This area exhibits the full historical heritage of the region – prehistoric and historic Native American cultures, Spanish Colonial and Mexican use and settlement, and American Territorial mining towns, mines and ranches, which can provide sustainable economic opportunities through heritage and nature tourism – key benefits to the region as noted in the Feasibility Study for the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area. As a largely unspoiled area, the Rosemont Valley Historical Area provides a unique and exceptionally authentic experience for heritage tourism and nature tourism, which are currently the cornerstones of the regional tourism industry. We have previously transmitted to the Coronado National Forest a report about the historical significance of Rosemont Valley entitled "*Preserving the Santa Rita Rosemont Ranch*" (<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/reports/d29/RosemontRanch.pdf>). The County further recommends that the Forest Plan update and minimize land designations that limit the ability for active management activities of the Forest and its management partners on a landscape level.

Recreational shooting is a legitimate use of the Coronado National Forest. The Forest Plan update needs to affirm the importance of that use and maintain opportunity across Forest lands. The Forest needs to provide designated sites with minimal safety enhancements that can be monitored and controlled and also be able to restrict use where unsupervised shooting results in a public health and safety issue, or compromises wildlife objectives.

Jeanine A. Derby  
Coronado National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan Update  
December 26, 2008  
Page 4

Access to public lands in southern Arizona continues to be a significant issue. The County encourages the Forest to continue to identify needs. Current and future Forest trail systems should be integrated with the Pima County Regional Trail System wherever possible.

We encourage the Coronado National Forest to consult on a government-to-government basis with American Indian tribes that have cultural ties to the area regarding traditional cultural places of significance. Protecting cultural heritage, including places where contemporary traditional practices continue, is important to these groups and to Pima County. The Coronado National Forest begins to address this topic in a briefing paper for Forest staff titled "*Overview of Traditional Cultural Uses and Traditional Cultural Places in Pima County and the Coronado National Forest*" (<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/reports\d2\007OVE.PDF>). The paper suggests that while the current Forest Plan does not consider traditional cultural properties, the Forest Plan Update will describe existing and desired conditions of such resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

CHH/jj

- c: The Honorable Chairman and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
  - John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works
  - Suzanne Shields, Regional Flood Control District Director
  - Maeveen Behan, Director, Office of Conservation, Science and Environmental Policy
  - Rafael Payan, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Director
  - Linda Mayro, Cultural Resources Manager
  - Julia Fonseca, Program Manager, Conservation, Science and Environmental Policy
  - Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator

Supplement C. Pima County Board of Supervisor resolution supporting mineral withdrawl in the northern Santa Rita Mountains.

**RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO WITHDRAW AREAS FROM MINING AND MINERAL EXPLORATION**

WHEREAS, filling of mining claims, trespass, mineral extraction, and mineral exploration activities have become a significant threat to our conservation of natural landscapes, wildlife, water resources, and public health; and

WHEREAS, within the last two years, the County has had to commit taxpayer resources to opposing mineral exploration and mineral extraction activities on or adjacent to County natural reserves including Rancho Seco, Six Bar Ranch, Oracle Ridge properties, Bar V Ranch, and Cienega Creek; and

WHEREAS, the County has expended over \$50 million in County bond funds to purchase these properties for conservation; and

WHEREAS, these properties were purchased by Pima County to conserve federally endangered and threatened species, and prevent the future listing of vulnerable species as endangered or threatened; and

WHEREAS, even portions of the County's Tucson Mountain Park are still open to mineral entry and were subject to exploratory activities in the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 2007-15 on January 16, 2007 opposing the proposed Rosemont Mine in the Santa Rita Mountain Range of the Coronado National Forest, and requesting the withdrawal of certain areas from mineral entry; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 2005-124 on June 7, 2005 opposing mining within County reserves and biologically sensitive areas; and

WHEREAS, rapid population growth throughout Arizona, combined with significant tourism and economic development that is dependent on the natural beauty of this State, make the State incompatible with current mining practices and mining laws; and

WHEREAS, current mining practices and mining laws have resulted in inadequate and under-funded mitigation and reclamation in connection with mining activities; and

WHEREAS, inadequate and under-funded mitigation and reclamation have resulted in irreversible impacts to our native fish and wildlife, impacts to water quality and quantity, and visual blight; and

WHEREAS, the taxpayers of this County see few local tax benefits from mining and are instead left with the undue burden associated with air, water and visual pollution from previous mining activities; and

WHEREAS, mining has lead to public health concerns in Pima County, including impacts to ground water in and around the mines in Green Valley, and on Bureau of Land Management land known as Saginaw Hill; and

WHEREAS, in the case of Saginaw Hill, the Bureau of Land Management is left with the expense of assessing the public health impacts from mining activities that occurred historically on the property and remediating such impacts in order to protect public health; and

WHEREAS, 1,299,600 acres of Federal lands in Pima County, made up of the Ironwood Forest National Monument, Organ Pipe National Monument, Saguaro National Park, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Goldwater Gunnery Range, Pusch Ridge Wilderness Area, Rincon Wilderness Area, Mt. Wrightson Wilderness Area, Baboquivari Peak Wilderness Area, and Coyote Mountain Wilderness Area are already closed to mineral entry subject to existing valid rights at the time of designation; and

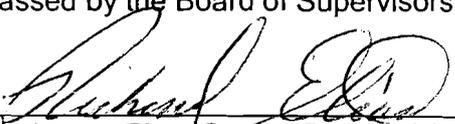
WHEREAS, withdrawing from mineral entry the federal lands within the Santa Rita Mountain Range of the Coronado National Forest in Pima County, excluding the Mt. Wrightson Wilderness Area which is already closed to mineral entry, would close an additional 52,000 acres to mineral entry; and

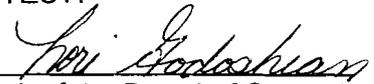
WHEREAS, withdrawing from mineral entry the remaining federal lands within the Coronado National Forest in Pima County, excluding wilderness areas and the Santa Rita Mountain Range, would close an additional 186,000 acres to mineral entry.

NOW, THEREFORE, UPON MOTION DULY MADE, SECONDED AND CARRIED, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

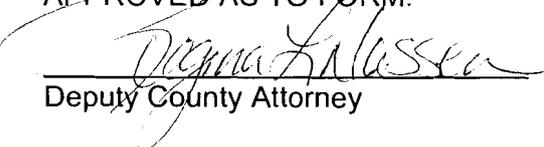
1. The Pima County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Arizona Congressional Delegation initiate the permanent withdrawal, from mining and mineral exploration, of all federal lands within the Santa Rita Mountain Range of the Coronado National Forest in Pima County.
2. The Pima County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Arizona Congressional Delegation initiate the permanent withdrawal, from mining and mineral exploration, of the remaining federal lands within the Coronado National Forest in Pima County.
3. The Pima County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Arizona Congressional Delegation initiate the permanent withdrawal, from mining and mineral exploration, of all County-owned natural reserves where the federal government owns the subsurface mineral rights.

Passed by the Board of Supervisors of Pima County, this 20th day of February, 2007.

  
Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:  
  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
Deputy County Attorney