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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: June 6, 2006

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: Cienega Creek Award of Excellence

The Pima County Board of Supervisors was recognized by the American Fisheries Society for their "protection, enhancement and overall management of riparian zones within the Cienega Creek Watershed." The Board of Supervisors was presented with this Award of Excellence in May of 2006.

Pima County's commitment to the Cienega Creek watershed began 20 years ago, when the Board authorized the purchase of the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve and adopted management policies assuring the conservation of the Preserve's natural resources. In 2004, Pima County rescinded the Vail Posta Quemada Masterplan that would have allowed high density development in conflict with the limited water supplies of the area. Concerned about mining in the area, the Board opposed new mineral leases in areas that would degrade the biological and economic values of lands adjacent to reserves, including Cienega Creek. Recently, Pima County entered a cooperative agreement, joining with organizations such as the Bureau of Land Management, the Cienega Corridor Conservation Council, the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership and others, to conserve natural and cultural resources in the Cienega Watershed.

The Award of Excellence highlights the County's efforts to protect riparian habitat for native plants and animals along the lower stretch of Cienega Creek. Beginning with barring off-road vehicular access and removing cattle from the Preserve, the County's management efforts have contributed to Cienega Creek retaining one of the richest and most intact aquatic habitats in southern Arizona. Gila topminnow and Gila chub naturally colonized the Preserve in 2003, demonstrating favorable habitat conditions (see attached images). Previously, these species had not been observed in the Preserve.

County staff continue to monitor conditions at Cienega Creek, including streamflow, groundwater, and documented baseline water quality, and conduct hydrogeologic investigations. Staff participate in public education about native and invasive aquatic species at various community events.

CHH/jj

Attachment

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works  
Suzanne Shields, Regional Flood Control District Director

# Cienega Creek Natural Preserve

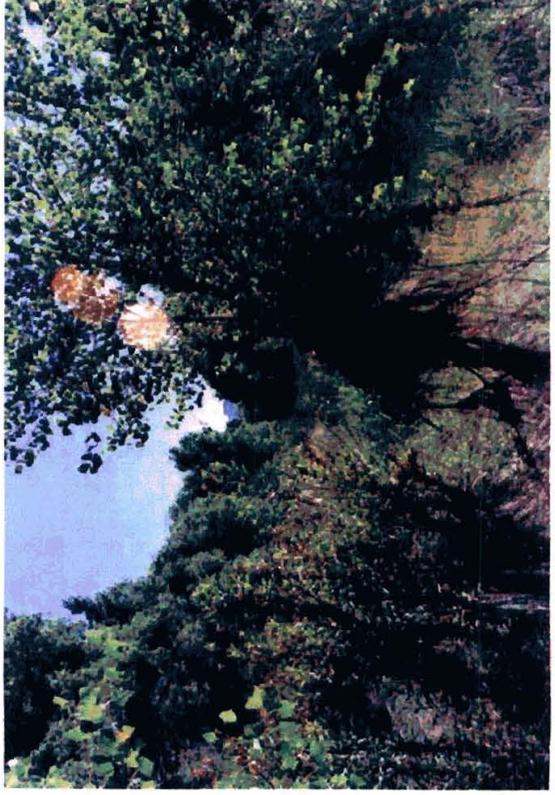
*Cienega Creek Natural Preserve-1988*



*Same location-1995-note peak in distance*



*Same location-1998-note peak in distance*



*Same location-2003-peak obscured*

