



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 14, 2017

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

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

Re: **Conservation Effluent Pool**

In recognition of the severe threats to riparian areas from drought and other factors in the Southwestern United States and the importance of this type of ecosystem in the Tucson area, Pima County and the City of Tucson have reserved up to 10,000 acre-feet of effluent per year for use in riparian restoration projects. Any use of this "Conservation Effluent Pool" (Pool) would require a decision from the Pima County Board of Supervisors, as well as the City's Mayor and Council.

An annual summary of activity of the Pool is required from staff under the Implementing Agreement adopted under Board Resolution 10-302. This memorandum provides an update of the recent discussions regarding use of the Pool by the Board, along with recommendations for further action.

Background

Use of effluent from the Pool is restricted to those entities identified in the 2001 Supplemental Agreement between the City of Tucson and Pima County, including a number of local water providers and the Regional Flood Control District. Any project using the Pool must be well planned in advance. Thirteen potential projects that might use effluent from the Pool were identified in a 2014 report of the Conservation Effluent Pool Taskforce. Thus far, none of these has applied for the Pool water.

Four projects were identified as having immediate potential for implementation. One of these was Paseo de las Iglesias Phase 1, an environmental restoration project located upstream of 29th Street on the Santa Cruz River, which has been completed. Because the County still has some of its own effluent to use at the project location, the Regional Flood Control District is receiving County effluent for that project rather than requesting Pool water.

In 2015, the Community Water Coalition requested that both City of Tucson and Pima County allocate portions of the Pool to the effluent-dependent reaches of the Santa Cruz River downstream of the metropolitan treatment facilities. Neither Pima County nor City of Tucson have done so. Knowing the concern about preserving effluent flow in the river, Pima

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: Conservation Effluent Pool

June 14, 2017

Page 2

County responded to the Coalition's request by suggesting the Coalition support legislative efforts to provide full credits for effluent recharge in the riverbed. Pima County is supporting changes to State law to provide incentive for effluent to remain in the channel, and the City of Tucson and other water providers have joined in this effort.

A change to State law to allow full credit for managed recharge of effluent would incentivize dedication of effluent flow to riparian systems in many areas of the state, not just Tucson. A recent recommendation to Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) from the Recycled Water Subcommittee of the Governor's Water Advisory Committee was to support making this statutory change.

Prospects for New Project Requests

In 2016, Tucson Water initiated discussions about a potential use of City effluent that could also be supplemented with an allocation from the Pool. The City's Agua Dulce in-channel recharge and restoration project could use the Pool to support riparian vegetation along the Santa Cruz River near Mission Lane (see attached flyer). This project, and the Conservation Effluent Pool, were discussed at the March 2017 Santa Cruz River Research Days. Pima County's administrator for the Pool has offered to meet with Tucson Water and the City of Tucson's Pool Administrator to discuss a potential allocation.

Pima County has also discussed use of the Pool with representatives from Marana (El Rio project) and Friends of Tucson's Birthplace (Mission Gardens and vicinity). The Mission Gardens project was one of the original four, high-priority projects identified in the taskforce report.

Pima County will not support use of Pool effluent for riparian restoration in the active flood flow channel of any major watercourse unless there is a corresponding vegetative management plan to ensure the flood flow conveyance capacity of the watercourse is not substantially impaired.

Action Items

1. Pima County's Pool Administrator, Julia Fonseca, will continue to work with potential applicants. Coordination with Tucson Water on potential Pool projects should work to confirm with them our understanding that Pool water flowing in managed recharge projects remains eligible for recharge credits.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: **Conservation Effluent Pool**

June 14, 2017

Page 3

2. Pima County will continue to coordinate with Tucson Water regarding hydrologic information and studies of the new flow regime in the Santa Cruz River. Such information will be of value in assessing proposed Pool projects along the river.
3. Pima County's lobbyist will work with others to seek full credits for in-channel recharge of effluent in the Tucson Active Management Area.

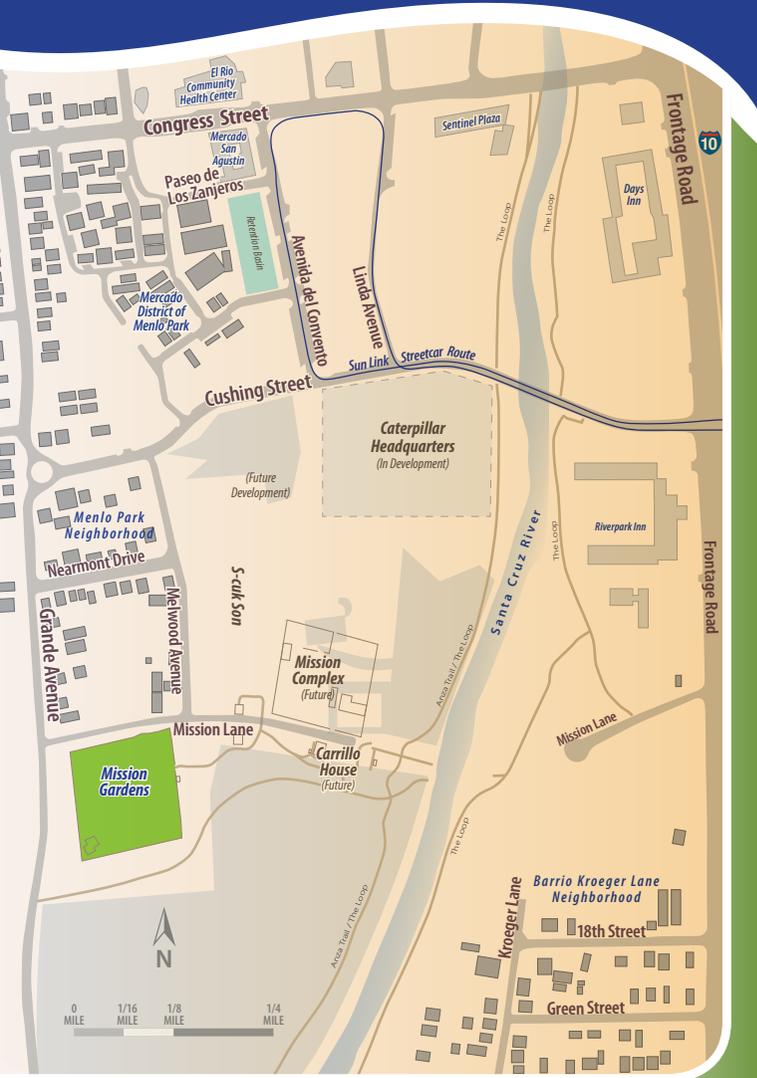
CHH/anc

- c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works
Suzanne Shields, Director, Regional Flood Control District
Jackson Jenkins, Director Regional Wastewater Reclamation
Carla Blackwell, Director, Development Services
Linda Mayro, Director, Sustainability and Conservation
Julia Fonseca, Environmental Planning Manager, Sustainability and Conservation

AGUA DULCE

THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

HERITAGE PROJECT



Area of Interest

AGUA DULCE

THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

HERITAGE PROJECT

For more information

Fernando Molina,
Public Information Officer

(520) 837-2185

Fernando.Molina@tucsonaz.gov

www.tucsonaz.gov/water



rev. 11.4.16

AGUA DULCE

THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

HERITAGE PROJECT

Work in Progress

Decades ago water flowed in the Santa Cruz River and a true riparian area flourished along the watercourse. Today, Tucson has the opportunity to recreate a portion of the traditional Santa Cruz River basin.



Water

IN DOWNTOWN TUCSON

The City of Tucson is studying a plan to introduce a portion of the City's reclaimed water discharge into the downtown area. Agua Dulce – The Santa Cruz River Heritage Project would create a regular flow of water in the Santa Cruz River in the area south of 22nd Street.

Construction of off-channel water features in the area of Tucson Origins Heritage Park is also being studied and discussed with potential collaborators.

The Potential Benefits of Agua Dulce

- Provides more efficient water management of our reclaimed water resource.
- Restores an urban riparian area.
- Supports historic and cultural community projects such as Mission Gardens.
- Sparks economic development, driving public-private investment, tourism, and housing development.

Although more studies, research, and planning are necessary, the concept of Agua Dulce is feasible. Bringing water to this area of the Santa Cruz has been discussed for many years, but was never considered possible. Today that has changed.

Tucson's Reclaimed Water System has the Capacity for this Project

For more than 30 years, Tucson Water has expanded its reclaimed water system, providing irrigation water to more than 900 golf courses, parks, schoolyards, and street medians. All of the major users are receiving reclaimed water and projections show limited future growth in reclaimed users.

Agua Dulce would move some of the City's reclaimed water to an area where it provides multiple long term benefits to the community.

Tucson's Water Future is Secure

Our City has sufficient water resources for the future – water to provide for our children, our grandchildren, and for our anticipated growth.

There are three ways Tucson Water is committed to a reliable supply of quality water:

- A strong commitment to conserving water and using it efficiently, including increased use of rainwater and stormwater.
- Planning for and expanding use of our renewable water supplies.
- Storing water today for future use.

