

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
Thursday, June 14, 2007
2:00 p.m.**

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to approve beginning due diligence for the Diamond Bell Ranch property, located near Sasabe Highway and Diamond Bell Ranch Road, totaling approximately 200 acres in fee, 30,000 acres in State grazing lease, and 700 acres in BLM grazing lease. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve the May 10, 2007 meeting summary. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the additions to the 36th Street Corridor project area, totaling 445 acres, the Agua Caliente/Tanque Verde Creek confluence, totaling 258 acres, and Habitat at 36th and Kino property to the list of properties under Community Open Space in the 2008 Bond program, as proposed by Gayle Hartmann and supported by the City of Tucson. The addition of these properties will replace the \$13.7 million previously identified by the City of Tucson. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioner Corey left meeting, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to approve additions in the Northwest to the 2008 Bond Program, as recommended through a meeting with various interested parties, including the Fish and Wildlife Service. The additions total 1,360 acres and would fall under Habitat Protection Priorities Private in the 2008 Bond program. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioner Corey left meeting before vote, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to send a letter of support to the Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee for the Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project, as proposed under the 2008 Bond program, not recognizing any preconceived need for structures. Motion approved 5-1 (Commissioner Marshall opposed, Commissioners Corey, Prouty and Pettis left meeting, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

DIRECTION TO STAFF

- The Commission asked staff to develop a recommendation to the Commission regarding the four parcels that Arivaca Watershed Education Taskforce (AWET) proposed for inclusion in 2008 bond program, and a recommendation regarding the purchase of development right program also proposed by AWET.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the June 14, 2007 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 2:07 pm.

Commissioners Present

Helen Wilson
Bill Roe, Chairman
Chuck Pettis
Les Corey
Tom Sheridan
Tim Prouty
Rob Marshall
Trevor Hare
Jan Johnson, Vice Chair

Commissioners Absent

Jim Marian
Wanda Shattuck

2. Executive Session

None.

3. Diamond Bell Ranch: Altar Valley Project Area, 2004 Bond Program

Nicole Fyffe reported on the County's difficulty in acquiring lands with Pima Pineapple Cactus (PPC) habitat. The map showing the PPC Priority Conservation Areas identifies portions of the King Anvil property, the Palo Alto Ranch, the Marley Ranch, the Diamond Bell Ranch, and the Santa Rita Experimental Range as proposed mitigation banks by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The State Land Department is the largest land owner of suitable PPC lands. An opportunity has come up in Altar Valley to purchase the Diamond Bell Ranch.

Ms. Fyffe said that the Diamond Bell Ranch has 200 acres in fee, 30,000 acres in State grazing lease and 700 acres in BLM lease. Some improvements are on the two private in-fee properties, and the owner, Tom Chilton, is asking for \$2 million. Ms. Fyffe noted that one third of the State grazing lease is identified as Habitat Protection Priority State land in the 2004 Bond program. Mr. Chilton would like to remain on the property under a management agreement with the County. The Commission was asked to approve due diligence on the Diamond Bell Ranch.

The Commission raised the question on the ordinance language and the fact that none of the fee property is identified under the 2004 Bond program. Ms. Fyffe said that given the language, there is no need to amend the Bond ordinance for this property.

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to approve beginning due diligence for the Diamond Bell Ranch property, located near Sasabe Highway and Diamond Bell Ranch Road, totaling approximately 200 acres in fee, 30,000 acres in State grazing lease, and 700 acres in BLM grazing lease. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

The Commission asked that the price be reduced. Ms. Fyffe also mentioned the Forest Service Montana grazing allotment, which is for sale by Jim Chilton. The habitat values are well known for several endangered species, including Sonoran chub. The property has 181 deeded acres and 21,000 acres of Forest Service allotment. The asking price is \$1.5 million.

4. Approval of the May 10, 2007 Meeting Summary

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve the May 10, 2007 meeting summary. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

5 Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe reported that little monies have been expended this last month. The Tang and Wexler properties were approved by the Commission and the Board of Supervisors, but will not close until after July 1, 2007. There are \$90 million remaining in the 2004 Bond program and \$5.6 million in the 1997 Bond program.

6. Harvest Property: SD-05 Tortolita Mountain Park 1997 Bond Program

Nicole Fyffe requested that this item be continued for another month.

7. 2008 Bond Program Proposed Additions

A. Conservation Easements in Arivaca

The Arivaca Watershed Education Taskforce (AWET) gave a presentation to the Commission on AWET's proposed additions to the 2008 Bond program. Mary Scott said that the Arivaca Cienega is dying and in dire need of protection. The construction of the dam at Arivaca Lake, combined with the drought and increased groundwater pumping is negatively impacting the riparian corridor.

Dr. Richard Conway spoke about the hydrology of the area and the threat of increasing development and groundwater pumping. Peter Ragan spoke along the same lines and reported that the area can yield 2,000 parcels if all were to be lot split. AWET is prepared to do all of the groundwork necessary for these proposed acquisitions.

They are proposing that the Commission add all properties within the Biological Core and Important Riparian Areas within the CLS surrounding the Arivaca cienega and the riparian corridor leading to Rancho Seco for purchase of development rights. They would like for the Commission to further add four additional parcels with grandfathered water rights for fee simple acquisition.

The Commission asked staff to develop a recommendation to the Commission regarding the four parcels that Arivaca Watershed Education Taskforce (AWET) proposed for inclusion in 2008 bond program, and a recommendation regarding the purchase of development right program also proposed by AWET.

(Commissioner Corey left meeting at 3:05pm)

B. Proposed Additions to the 36th Street Corridor Project

Diana Durazo reported that the County received a letter from Gayle Hartmann requesting that the Commission consider adding properties to the 2008 Bond program. Some of the properties were previously identified in the 2004 Bond program, but were not transferred to the 2008 Bond program, due to the City of Tucson not submitting specific parcels for consideration, but instead a dollar of \$13.7 million. Ms. Durazo noted that it is the County's understanding that the City of Tucson is in support of these additions and will replace the \$13.7 million request with these specific parcels if approved by the Commission.

Ms. Hartmann requested that three projects be included, which would include: six parcels totaling 445 acres as part of the 36th Street Corridor Project Area, eighteen parcels totaling 258 acres as part of the Agua Caliente/Tanque Verde confluence project area, and the 26-acre Habitat at 36th and Kino property.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the additions to the 36th Street Corridor project area, totaling 445 acres, the Agua Caliente/Tanque Verde Creek confluence, totaling 258 acres, and Habitat at 36th and Kino property to the list of properties under Community Open Space in the 2008 Bond program, as proposed by Gayle Hartmann and supported by the City of Tucson. The addition of these properties will replace the \$13.7 million previously identified by the City of Tucson. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioner Corey left meeting, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

C. Proposed Additions to the Agua Caliente Area Project

Please see discussion for Item 7.B.

D. Proposed Additions to Northwest Habitat Protection Priorities

Diana Durazo reported that a recommendation was forwarded to the County for the Commission to consider adding additional property in the Northwest. This recommendation was a result of a meeting between various interested parties, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, where properties of relatively large size, in proximity to existing conserved lands containing high habitat values were identified. Ms. Durazo noted that 86 parcels, totaling 1,360 acres, are being recommended for addition to the 2008 Bond program under Habitat Protection Priorities Private.

The County received a letter of support from Steven Spangle, Field Manager for the local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office, and Jenny Neeley, with Defender's of Wildlife, spoke in support of these additions.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to approve additions in the Northwest to the 2008 Bond Program, as recommended through a meeting with various interested parties, including the Fish and Wildlife Service. The additions total 1,360 acres and would fall under Habitat Protection Priorities Private in the 2008 Bond program. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioner Corey left meeting before vote, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

8. Commission Support for Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project (2008) Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee

Nicole Fyffe reported that this project is part of the proposed projects being reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee for the 2008 Bond Program. At the last Commission meeting, Commissioner Sheridan requested support of this project.

Commissioner Sheridan reiterated that this is a request for the Commission to send a letter of support to the subcommittee and the Board of Supervisors for this project. The Commission also discussed the need for tracking the City of Tucson proposed salt ponds and the proposed alternate I-10 route in this area.

(Commissioner Prouty left meeting at 3:45pm)

Commissioner Sheridan introduced David Sieberts, who will be working with him on a fellowship for this restoration project for work in the uplands.

Commissioner Marshall expressed concern over the project proposed as written.

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to send a letter of support to the Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee for the Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project, as proposed under the 2008 Bond program, not recognizing any preconceived need for structures. Motion approved 5-1 (Commissioner Marshall opposed, Commissioners Corey, Prouty and Pettis left meeting, Commissioners Marian and Shattuck absent).

9. Updates

- Sneed Property: The owner contacted the County and asked for another copy of the proposed acquisition agreement be sent to her.
- Stonehaven Property: The owner has still not committed to sell to the County.
- Lewis Property: There has been no further contact with the property owner.
- Boa Sorte Property: There has been no further contact with the property owner.
- Kettenbach Property: Update will be given under proposed development activities section.
- Bloom Property: No update.
- Los Morteros: No update.
- Avra/I-10 Wildlife Connection (TEP, Cascada, Union Pacific, ADOT): Tucson Electric Power requested that the County craft an agreement for them to consider regarding the corridor. There has been no update from Cascada. There is a letter from ADOT indicating that they are willing to work with us on the corridor but no further communications over this matter.
- Green Valley Hills: More information will be provided under proposed development activities section.
- Las Cienegas Enhancement Act: The act has been reintroduced.
- Resolution Copper Exchange: No update.
- Catalina/Tortolita connection: No update.
- Rosemont Mine: Augusta did not submit their plan in March as expected. Legislation on this area has not moved forward at this time.

- Buenos Aires Inholding (PDR): The Purchase of Development Rights application is still on hold by the State Land Department. The State Land Department recommended that the County auction the property without conservation restrictions.
- Davidson Canyon (PDR): In litigation due to mining issues.
- First United/Sopori Ranch Property: Two comprehensive plan amendments have been submitted in Pima County, and are in Santa Cruz County.
- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Tedra Fox reported on two projects that involve properties identified for acquisition under the 2004 Conservation Bond program.

Ms. Fox reported that the Cielo Madera (Kettenbach) development project is scheduled for hearing with the Design Review Committee on June 21, 2007. The project details are basically the same. It calls for 75% open space and because it is a cluster subdivision, the CLS guidelines do not apply.

Ms. Fox also reported on the Ironwood Ridge (northwest) development project. The tentative plat was approved for 8 lots and 50% natural open space. The final plat has not been submitted.

10. Next Commission Meeting

The next scheduled Commission meeting will be on July 12, 2007, at 2pm, at the **Downtown Library**. The Commission will serve as the review committee for hearing of the proposed 2008 Cultural Resources projects and making recommendation to the Bond Advisory Committee.

11. Call to the Public

Kerry Baldwin introduced Iris Rodden, recently hired as a biologist for Natural Resources.

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.