

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
450 West Paseo Redondo
Thursday September 14, 2006
3:00 p.m.**

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve the August 3, 2006 meeting summary, with clarification on agenda item 3 as a 2008 Bond action. Motion approved 6-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the August 10, 2006 meeting summary, with clarification on the location of the 414 parcels in the Rancho del Lago Subdivision removed from the Habitat Protection Priorities map. Motion approved 6-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to accept the end of Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Bond Program update. Motion approved 6-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to begin due diligence on the 23-acre Bigelow property, located one mile south of the Pinal County line, along the San Pedro River. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioner Wilson abstained).

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to include the 477-acre Altar Valley property, located in the southwest corner of the Hayhook Ranch Subdivision and east of the Coyote Mountains Wilderness Area, as part of the Northern Altar Valley project area under the proposed 2008 Bond Community Open Space Category. Motion approved 6-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Prouty to include the 78-acre inholding within Colossal Cave Mountain Park under the proposed 2008 Bond Community Open Space preliminary list. Motion approved 6-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to include the 10,927 acres identified in the Springs and Stream analysis as Habitat Protection Priorities in the proposed 2008 Bond package. Motion approved 6-0.

DIRECTION TO STAFF

- The Commission requested that staff differentiate properties under conservation status with time limits such as the Northwest property with a 99-year lease.
- Commissioner Hare requested information of development restrictions on the ridge top south of Twin Peaks Road at Rattle Snake Pass and part of the wildlife corridor between the Tucson Mountains and Tortolita Mountains.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the September 14, 2006 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 3:10 pm.

Commissioners Present

Tim Prouty (arrived at 3:40pm)
Trevor Hare
Bill Roe, Chairman
Tom Sheridan
Helen Wilson
Jan Johnson, Vice-chair
Chuck Pettis (left meeting at 4:40pm)

Commissioners Absent

Les Corey
Rob Marshall
Wanda Shattuck

2. Executive Session

No Executive Session held.

3. Approval of the August 3 and August 10, 2006 Meeting Summaries

The Commission requested that clarification be given to item 3 on the August 3, 2006 meeting summary to reflect that action taken was for the proposed 2008 Bond.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve the August 3, 2006 meeting summary, with clarification on agenda item 3 as a 2008 Bond action. Motion approved 6-0.

The Commission requested that clarification be given to the location of the 414 parcels within the Rancho del Lago Subdivision removed from the Habitat Protection Priorities map.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the August 10, 2006 meeting summary, with clarification on the location of the 414 parcels in the Rancho del Lago Subdivision removed from the Habitat Protection Priorities map. Motion approved 6-0.

4. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe reported that \$68.9 million has been expended to date. However, this number does not include due diligence costs, totaling approximately \$2 million.

Ms. Fyffe reported that Buckelew Farms would be heard by the Board of Supervisors on September 19, 2006. The Amadon, Des Rochers, and Route 606 properties are in the process of closing.

5. End of Fiscal Year 2005-06 Pima County Bond Program Update

Nicole Fyffe reported on the overall Bond Program update for Fiscal Year 2005/2006. This update is provided to the Conservation Acquisition Commission, Bond Advisory Committee and Board twice a year. The Open Space Program is found on page four of

the program update. Ms. Fyffe indicated that the Bond Advisory Committee usually accepts program updates, opposed to approving these.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to accept the end of Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Bond Program update. Motion approved 6-0.

6. Tucson Mountains/Tortolita Mountains Wildlife Corridor and Avra Valley Road/I-10 Underpass

A visual presentation produced by John Regan showed the Avra Valley Road and I-10 underpass corridor and the surrounding landscape. Kerry Baldwin presented the larger landscape level overview of the corridor in relation to the Tucson Mountains towards the Tortolita Mountains. Nicole Fyffe then reported on the key individual properties that make up this corridor on either side of the underpass, beginning with Saguaro National Park west area and ending in the Tortolita Mountains. Ms. Fyffe talked about the current negotiations with the Parsons and Wexler properties, both located west of I-10, and the TEP and Cascada parcels east of I-10.

The Commission requested that staff differentiate properties under conservation status that have a 99-year or less conservation lease.

7. Conservation Opportunities in the Tortolita Sub Area

A. Updates: (1) Linda Vista/Patrick and Red parcels

Nicole Fyffe reported that the Commission approved acquisition of the Linda Vista/Patrick property contingent on the acquisition of a conservation easement or in fee acquisition of the adjacent Reid property. The appraisal has been received, and staff will meet with Dr. Reid to discuss.

(2) La Cholla/Overton parcels

Diana Durazo reported on all of the appraised values for the Khan, Renwick, and Lowery properties, including the subsequent counteroffers made by the property owners. Ms. Durazo indicated that the difference in values is significant and far exceed 10% of appraised value. Negotiations continue.

Ms. Durazo reported that an appraisal for the recently received Quest Land property application for 13.2 acres has been ordered, due to its importance in the assemblage effort.

Commissioner Hare indicated that negotiations should be kept closer to appraised value or under.

B. New Application: Ramirez Parcels

(This item heard out of sequence after item A.1.)

Nicole Fyffe reported on the recent application received from the Ramirez family for 2 parcels totaling 9.12 acres, located west of the County-owned Stevenson property. The applicant is asking for \$992,000 (\$108,772/acre). Staff has contacted adjacent property owners in an effort to acquire a group of contiguous parcels and recommended not moving forward unless an assemblage is possible. No action was taken.

8. Bigelow Property

Diana Durazo reported on the application received for the Bigelow property, totaling 23 acres and located along the San Pedro River, one mile south of the Pinal County line. The Nature Conservancy indicated that the property has an associated surface water right and is supportive of the County pursuing acquisition. The applicant is asking for \$250,000 (\$10,869/acre). Ms. Durazo explained staff's initial position against pursuing acquisition due to modification of the land by agriculture and lack of connectivity to a reserve system.

Commissioner Wilson asked that alternative funding options be pursued, such as the Nature Conservancy (TNC) or the Pima Flood Control District. Commissioner Roe indicated that based on a recent discussion with TNC, they are not currently looking to buy land.

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to begin due diligence on the 23-acre Bigelow property, located one mile south of the Pinal County line, along the San Pedro River. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioner Wilson abstained).

9. Preliminary Recommendations for Possible 2008 Bond Election

A. Review of Commission Approved Preliminary List

Nicole Fyffe reported on the preliminary worksheet for the potential 2008 Bond package. The total estimate of identified properties under Community Open Space is \$188 million. The total Bond authorization requested for Community Open Space is \$71.2 million. The total estimate of identified properties under Habitat Protection Priorities is \$2.6 billion. The total Bond authorization requested is \$213.7 million.

Ms. Fyffe clarified that this list is just a preliminary list of eligible properties. The County could never afford to buy all of them. Ms. Fyffe also recommended that the Habitat Protection Priorities category be expanded to include and Associated Lands. Associated lands could include County held grazing leases outside of Habitat Protection Priorities, wildlife corridors, and important lands outside of Pima County.

B. Categories/properties still under consideration: Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Linkages, and Streams and Springs Analysis

Wildlife Corridors Analysis

Kerry Baldwin reported on the most recent Wildlife Corridors analysis. After further refinement, the list now includes twelve proposed areas covering approximately 24,356 acres. Mr. Baldwin reported that these areas have been prioritized into three tiers based on levels of priority. The final size of linkages could be considerably smaller and very site dependent to maximize maintenance of wildlife movement patterns.

The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection submitted a letter outlining their concerns over adding this new rural wildlife corridors acreage and competing with the existing identified Critical Landscape Linkages. Staff indicated that the Critical Landscape Linkages were purposely identified as very broad areas by the Science Technical Advisory Team (STAT) to not limit discussion and allow for flexibility.

The Commission expressed general support, however, it was requested that Mr. Baldwin provide further justification for the identification of these corridors and prioritization, and that STAT have an opportunity to comment.

Commissioner Hare requested information on development restrictions along the ridge of the Tucson Mountains, north of Saguaro National Park west and south of Twin Peaks Road at Rattle Snake Pass, part of the Tucson Mountains/Tortolita Mountain Corridor.

Wet Riparian Analysis (Springs and Streams)

Julia Fonseca reported on the most recent refinement of the Springs and Streams analysis. The total acreage identified for Springs and Streams is 10,927. Staff recommends that these be added to the proposed 2008 Bond package under Habitat Protection Priorities.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to include the 10,927 acres identified in the Springs and Stream analysis as Habitat Protection Priorities in the proposed 2008 Bond package. Motion approved 6-0.

Ms. Fonseca further reported on the findings of the Water Rights analysis. Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge boundaries include all of the previous recommendations.

(Commissioner Pettis left meeting at 4:40pm)

- C. New Proposals: Colossal Cave Inholding, Hayhook Ranch property
(This item heard out of sequence after item 9.A.)

Hayhook Ranch Property

Nicole Fyffe reported that a 477-acre property in Altar Valley was brought forth by the owner's representative for inclusion under Community Open Space in the potential 2008 Bond list of eligible properties. It is located in the southwest corner of the Hayhook Ranch Subdivision, adjacent to the Bureau of Land Management's Coyote Mountain Wilderness Area. Ms. Fyffe explained that this property could fit in the Northern Altar Valley project already proposed under Community Open Space.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to include the 477-acre Altar Valley property, located in the southwest corner of the Hayhook Ranch Subdivision and east of the Coyote Mountains Wilderness Area, as part of the Northern Altar Valley project area under the proposed 2008 Bond Community Open Space Category. Motion approved 6-0.

Colossal Cave Inholding

Nicole Fyffe reported on the second property brought forth by the Parklands Foundation to be considered for inclusion under the proposed 2008 Bond preliminary list. The property is a 78-acre inholding within Colossal Cave Mountain Park. Ms. Fyffe indicated that there is already a project under Community Open Space titled "Colossal Cave Mountain Park Expansion", where this property could be added.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Prouty to include the 78-acre inholding within Colossal Cave Mountain Park under the proposed 2008 Bond Community Open Space preliminary list. Motion approved 6-0.

10. Updates

- Six Bar Ranch: The County closed on this property on August 23, 2006.
- Buckelew Farms: This property will be heard by the board of Supervisors on September 19, 2006.
- Cienega Corridor Acquisitions: Amadon is pending closing.
- Sabino Creek Area: The County is waiting for the appraisal on the Sneed property.
- Brawley Wash parcels: John Regan will soon begin work on a Google Earth presentation of this area.
- Camino de Oeste Project Area: The Des Rochers and Route 606 properties are pending closing.
- Los Morteros: The land exchange with Dr. Moussa is pending. Due diligence and \$200,000 would be the costs charged to the 2008 open space bond program. The owners of the Welter property recently contacted the County again.
- Habitat for Humanity property: No update.
- Green Valley Hills: The developer has submitted a draft revised development plan. No action has been taken at this time.
- Las Cienegas Enhancement Act (H.R.5016): Jeremy Kaden, with Congressman Kolbe's Office, indicated that a bill did make it through the mark up session and now has to get to the house floor for full consideration.
- Resolution Copper Exchange (S.2466): No update.
- Catalina/Tortolita connection: No update.
- Buenos Aires Inholding: Nicole Fyffe reported that this item will be added to the Updates section. The County is pursuing the purchase of development rights on this property, south of the Madera Highlands property, owned by State Trust Land Department. Ms. Fyffe indicated that a draft conservation easement document has been submitted to the State for review.
- Rosemont Ranch: Nicole Fyffe reported that this item will be added to the Updates section. Augusta Mines has submitted a plan of mining operations to the Forest Service. It is under County review. Ms. Fyffe indicated that Supervisor Carroll placed a resolution against mining in the area on the agenda, but an amendment to the motion requesting a staff report.
- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Sherry Ruther reported that staff is expecting a cluster subdivision plan submittal for Desert Rose Canyon. The comprehensive plan amendment for Caleb-Lambert Lane project has been withdrawn. Ms. Ruther also reported that the Klein-Golder Ranch comprehensive plan amendment has been continued.

Commissioner Hare requested that development activities on Habitat Protection Priorities in other jurisdictions also be reported to the Commission. Nicole Fyffe explained that this information is being provided to the Commission.

11: Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2006 at the Manning House at 3pm. If there are no action items scheduled at that time, the meeting may be postponed until November 9, 2006.

12. Call to the Public

No speakers.

13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.