

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
450 West Paseo Redondo
Thursday June 23, 2005
3:00 p.m.**

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan, to approve the acquisition of the Heater property (50 acres within the South Corridor project area at Mission and Ajo). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan, to approve the acquisition of the Berard property (7 acres within the South Corridor project area at Mission and Ajo). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan, to approve the acquisition of the Hyntington property (3.6 acres within the South Corridor project area at Mission and Ajo). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey, to approve the acquisition of the Poteet property (83 acres along Agua Verde Creek). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Johnson, to approve continued due diligence for the two Sahuarita parcels (Granite and TEP). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Shattuck, to direct staff to look for other funding sources to conserve the Double X Ranch. Motion approved 8-0. Commissioner Marshall abstained from voting.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the June 23, 2005 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. with a quorum.

Commissioners Present

Les Corey
Trevor Hare
Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair
Rob Marshall

Commissioners Absent

Bill Arnold
Helen Wilson

Chuck Pettis
Tim Prouty
Bill Roe, Chair
Wanda Shattuck
Tom Sheridan

2. Conservation Easement Fact Sheet

Commissioners received the draft fact sheet prior to the meeting. Commissioner Hare recommended that the County check that the photos included were not of private lands without easements. Jean Emery stated that comments were still being incorporated into the draft.

3. Critical Landscape Linkages and Conservation Opportunities Northwest of Arthur Pack Park

Nicole Fyffe provided an update on due diligence activities associated with the three corridors and parcels northwest of Arthur Pack Park:

- (1) Catalina/Tortolita Connection north of Catalina State Park across Oracle Highway – Letters of interest have been sent to the property owners. No response to date.
- (2) Avra I-10 - Marana may be dedicating mitigation fees in an estimated amount of \$900,000 to the County to invest in acquisitions in this area.
- (3) CAP canal west of Saguaro National Park West along Brawley Wash – Letters of interest have been sent to property owners. No response to date.
- (4) Parcels northwest of Arthur Pack Park– letters of interest have been sent to two property owners of several parcels adjacent to Arthur Pack. No response to date.

Bill Shaw, Bob Steidl, and Sherry Ruther, Chair, Vice-Chair, and member of the Pima County Science Technical Advisory Team answered questions from Commissioners regarding how the Critical Landscape Connections were identified, the level of data available to evaluate conservation opportunities in these connection areas, the variety of crossings suitable for various species, impacts of land uses adjacent to crossings, and resale of lands later deemed not functional. County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry stated that if properties were to be resold, this would have to be stated clearly before the purchase. Mr. Huckelberry also stated that the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) package currently under development contains \$10 million for transportation improvements related to wildlife crossings, and that he would recommend this amount be increased to \$20 million. Chairman Roe, noting the need for wildlife crossings, suggested increasing the amount to \$50 million.

4. Update – Canoa Ranch Acquisitions

Mr. Huckelberry explained the concept of how the County would acquire three of the remaining parcels in the Canoa Ranch, east of I-19, while giving up a block on the western side of I-19 previously identified as open space. He apologized for having to go to the Board of Supervisors to outline the concept before coming to the Commission. This was due to the need to submit a comprehensive plan amendment integral to this acquisition, during a certain time period. It is expected

that the acquisition agreement will be ready for Commission to review at the July meeting.

5. Approval of May 23 Meeting Summary

Meeting summary was approved 9-0.

6. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Prior to the meeting, the Commission received an update of the 1997 and 2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures as of May 31, 2005. It was noted that the major expenditure during this period was the acquisition of Rancho Seco at \$18.5 million. As of May 31, the County had expended almost \$45 million for Question 1 of the 2004 Bond Ordinance.

7. Acquisition of Tucson Mountain Park South Corridor Properties

Dr. Phil Rosen, University of Arizona School of Natural Resources, spoke about the importance of conserving the West Branch of the Santa Cruz; maintaining N-S connectivity from the Tumamoc/A-Mountain corridor via the West Branch and the Santa Cruz, to the San Xavier district; maintaining coyotes in the system to control non-native animals; and acquiring additional properties between 44th St. and 36th St. and the West Branch and the main channel of the Santa Cruz.

Suzanne Shields stated that the Flood Control District has purchased numerous properties in the West Branch area and is working with the City of Tucson to prevent further channelizing of washes in the area.

Nicole Fyffe explained that acquisition of the properties making up the South Corridor were important for scenic hillside protection and expanding recreational opportunities. Staff expects to have negotiated agreements with two more property owners, Firkins and Hiett, by the next Commission meeting.

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8. Acquisition of Poteet Property

MOTION: Commissioner Prouty moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey, to approve the acquisition of the Poteet property (83 acres along Agua Verde Creek). Motion approved 9-0.

9. Potential Acquisitions – Town of Sahuarita Jurisdictional Open Space Category

Suzanne Shields, Director of the Flood Control District, identified two potential acquisitions along the Santa Cruz within Sahuarita. One property, referred to as the Granite property, is approximately 60 acres and it straddles both sides of the Santa Cruz just north of Duval Mine bridge. Acquisition of the parcel would cost approximately \$280,000 and also provide a good location for that section of the Anza Trail. The other parcel is owned by Tucson Electric Power Company and is located near the wastewater treatment plant at the northern end of Sahuarita. This parcel contains dense riparian habitat. Via an intergovernmental agreement, Sahuarita may want to promote this parcel for bird watching. There is \$1.5 million identified in the bond ordinance Question 1 for Sahuarita open space.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Johnson, to approve continued due diligence for the two Sahuarita parcels (Granite and TEP). Motion approved 9-0.

10. Application for the Sale of Open Space to Pima County

Jean Emery summarized the application for the sale of the Double X Ranch to Pima County. The Ranch lies in both Pima and Cochise counties, north and south of Interstate 10, and includes 800 fee acres and 12,000 acres of State grazing leases. The Ranch is not included in the 2004 bond ordinance. Staff did not recommend acquisition with 2004 bond funds.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Shattuck, to direct staff to look for other funding sources to conserve the Double X Ranch. Motion approved 8-0. Commissioner Marshall abstained from voting.

11. Updates:

Carpenter Ranch: Due diligence is almost complete. Acquisition to include 360 acres. Anticipated to be brought before the Commission at the July meeting.

Camino de Oeste: Continuing to negotiate acquisition agreements with various owners.

Belvedere Estates Property: Commission approved this acquisition on April 21. Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved the acquisition on June 7th. County will close on the property shortly.

Madera Highlands: Commission approved the acquisition on May 19 and the BOS approved it on June 7th. County will close on the property shortly.

Diocese Parcel: County is working with the new owner of the Diocese property to either acquire a conservation easement on the property or exchange the property for another County property.

Green Valley Hills: No update.

Habitat for Humanity parcel and west 36th Street: Discussions between the City and the County and the seller continue.

Federal Exchange involving Tumamoc Hill: There have been some changes in the text of the bill and, according to Congressman Grijalva's office, there is some urgency to move the bill forward soon.

Resolution Copper Exchange: The Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act was introduced into Congress in May. The bill would allow for the exchange of 3,000 acres of Forest Service land around the Town of Superior, containing mining claims owned by Resolution Copper, to be exchanged for about 5,000 acres of private land, including a 3,000 acre ranch along the San Pedro River in Mammoth and the Appleton Ranch within the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Pima County has been working with the Resolution Copper Company to get lands in Pima County included in the exchange for conservation. Potential properties include the 160-acre Bloom property adjacent to Saguaro National Park West and the three parcels along Agua Caliente Creek adjacent to the Coronado National Forest.

Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: No changes, except that the Design and Review Committee continued the Sumpter Road property, Habitat Protection Priority north east of Arthur Pack Park, for 60 days.

12. Next Commission Meeting, July 21 2005

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2005 at 3 p.m. A suggested agenda was distributed to the Commission.

13. Call to the Public

No members of the public spoke at this time.

14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.