

14990 S. Sasabe Road
Tucson, AZ 85736



www.altarvalleyconservation.org

March 5, 2014

To: Members of the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee;
Mr. Chuck Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator; and
Supervisor Sharon Bronson, Pima County Board of Supervisors

Regarding: **Proposed Bond Project -- Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project (PR 262)**

We are writing today to urge your continued support of the Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project (PR 262) as an integral component of the next Pima County bond proposal. This project is a unique and valuable public works project for our region that integrates flood control measures with environmental restoration. The project would occur on and adjacent to Pima County's Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System holdings that are critical for meeting the needs of both the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) and the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

The Altar Valley is located southwest of Tucson, and comprises approximately 610,000 acres of Sonoran desert grassland, some of the most biologically rich and ecologically threatened biotic communities in the world. The sweeping view of the valley can be seen from the south facing overlook of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, which is fitting, as most of the plants and animals seen in the museum make their home in the Altar Valley. Pima County recognized the importance of land in the Altar Valley by purchasing several ranches in the valley as part of the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System.

The severe encroachment of the Altar Wash began in the early 20th century. The floodplain area was a travel and trade route - a road. A major flood occurred in 1904 when Aguirre Lake breached. Other land use and climatic changes added to the situation -- drought, fire suppression, overgrazing, and fuel-wood cutting. The deeply incised channel is now 20 miles long, 20 feet deep and 1500 feet wide in places. During rain events, high velocity water and heavy sediment loads surge out of the valley instead of recharging aquifers and supporting the microhabitats on which the region's native species and working landscapes depend. Water thus races downstream, carrying soil and water resources to locations where they become a nuisance (creating flooding in Avra Valley and Marana), rather than holding them farther upstream in the Altar Valley where they are a vital resource. Head-cutting in uplands and the erosion of banks along the main wash work destructively in tandem to vacate hundreds of acres of viable habitat.

The Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project (PR 262) would develop a comprehensive watershed restoration plan, and provide start-up construction funding, for restoration of the highly eroded Altar Wash. The project area encompasses the headwaters of the Altar Watershed, just north of the border near Sasabe, Arizona, and heads north about 45 miles to the intersection of the Altar Wash and Highway 86 (Ajo Highway), just west of Three Points, and the effects of restoration in the project area will be felt downstream in Avra Valley and Marana. The general purpose of this project is to begin rebuilding the natural floodplain function of the Altar Valley watershed to maximize watershed stability and wildlife habitat potential in the headwaters of this river system. This upstream watershed work will decrease the intensity and volume of downstream water flows and associated flood potential in developed areas such as Marana, where the Altar /Avra drainages join the Santa Cruz River.

Altar Valley landowners and public partners have championed this project concept dating back to the 1970s. Several phases of planning and attempts to gather funding have occurred over the years. Many partners have become involved, including the US Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona Department of Transportation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Tackling the restoration of the main stem of the Altar Wash will be complex and expensive. To date, the right combinations of stable funding and institutional commitment have not aligned. PR 262 was designed by Pima County Regional Flood Control District (RFCD) and Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation (NRPR) specifically to remedy this situation. The aim is to accomplish state-of-the-art restoration planning to launch the project, and then have construction funding available to begin work and leverage other funding sources.

In the meantime, the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, working collaboratively with dozens of partners, has tackled watershed restoration in the tributaries at a variety of scales and continually works to bring top-notch resource management, restoration, scientific, and regulatory expertise to the watershed community. The Alliance works with land owners and managers to identify project sites, coordinate projects and bring resources and techniques to the table. The scale of restoration projects varies considerably. We have accomplished a lot with volunteers and small rocks in the upper reaches of the watersheds; however, extensive engineering and environmental analysis and complex plans will be necessary to address larger drainage issues connected to the Altar Wash. Nearly twenty years of dedicated work has created an effective collaborative environment necessary to do the work to repair the Altar Wash. Every project, large and small, brings diverse partners together, laying the foundation for work on the main stem of the wash. A major source of financial and institutional support, such as the Pima County bond program, would launch Altar Valley watershed work to the larger scale that is essential for success throughout the watershed.

Positive economic benefits include both cost reduction and the generation of additional sources of conservation revenue for the region.

- Bond funding would have a multiplying effect, as it would be used to catalyze other funding sources. This process is already at work in the uplands in the Altar Valley, where a \$50,000 from Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Foundation was leveraged into a \$200,000 plus watershed restoration project. Similarly, two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants using previous SDCP Bond land acquisition as in-kind match are at work in the Altar Valley, each of which more than doubles the value of the original

grant.

- Similarly, Pima County institutional support, in combination with the wide range of private and public sector partners already working in the Altar Valley, can accomplish far more working together than any one entity can do alone.
- Public infrastructure maintenance costs for County and State maintained roads, the Ajo Highway bridge west of Three Points, and downstream areas affected by flooding would be decreased.

This project builds on Pima County residents' strong support for open space acquisition and the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. ***The Altar Valley Watershed Restoration Project is a unique public works project that adds conservation infrastructure to implement SDCP goals.*** Over 200,000 acres of the Altar Valley is now owned or leased by Pima County as part of the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System. This project will enhance the value of Pima County's acquisitions by increasing the conservation value of Pima County land as well as adjacent lands. All together, the combined effect results in enhanced conservation of an over 600,000 working landscape and open space resource – a true Sonoran desert conservation jewel that can be a source of continued and enhanced pride for the residents of Pima County.

We believe that Pima County's regional investment in sound land-use planning and conservation planning, as evidenced by the SDCP and MSHCP, in concert with ongoing watershed work in the Altar Valley, make this the right time to seriously commit resources and energy to Altar Wash restoration. Thank you for your support for the Altar Valley Restoration Project, PR 262, thus far. We hope that your commitment remains steady as you work through planning for the next bond election.

Sincerely,



Patricia King
President,
Altar Valley Conservation Alliance



Mary Miller
Vice-President - Programs
Altar Valley Conservation Alliance

CC: Suzanne Shields, P.E. Director, Pima County Regional Flood Control
Chris Cawein, Director, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Nicole Fyffe, Pima County Administrator's Office
Deseret Romero, Pima County Administrator's Office
Sherry Ruther, Environmental Manager, Pima County

March 6, 2014

Chairman and Members
Pima County Bond Committee
130 West Congress
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Oro Valley Historic Preservation Commission to express our support for the inclusion of funding for Steam Pump Ranch (SPR) in the proposed Pima County Bond. The historic Steam Pump Ranch is an important part of the town's heritage and completion of the items proposed in the SPR Master Plan would enable the town to showcase this property to the fullest extent possible. The residents of Oro Valley have already shown their interest in this property through their enthusiastic attendance at the various activities held at the ranch. There is no doubt that were we able to complete all the projects proposed in the SPR Master Plan, Steam Pump Ranch would become a highlight of any visit to Oro Valley.

We encourage you to include funding for Steam Pump Ranch in the proposed bond as we believe preservation of this important part of the history of southern Arizona will benefit visitors and future residents to come.

Sincerely,



Ellen D. Guyer
Chair, Oro Valley Historic Preservation Commission

March 6, 2014

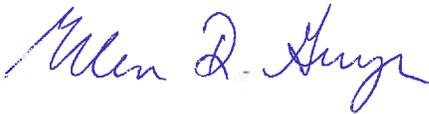
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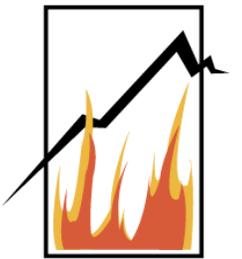
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Sincerely,



Ellen D. Guyer
Chair, Oro Valley Historic Preservation Commission

SOUTHERN ARIZONA



Buffelgrass
COORDINATION
CENTER

1955 East 6th Street | Tucson, Arizona 85719 | www.buffelgrass.org

March 18, 2014

C.H. Huckleberry
Pima County Administrator

Dear Mr. Huckleberry and Bond Committee,

*A regional information
and coordination center
that emphasizes cross-
jurisdictional and
integrated management
approaches for the
control of buffelgrass
and reducing its impacts
in Southern Arizona*

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Jim Upchurch
Coronado National Forest
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Claire Crow
Ironwood Forest National Monument
Monument Manger

SABCC appreciates the opportunity to submit a proposal for Open Space restoration. We understand the concerns of the committee that this may not exactly fit the general understanding of capital investment, but we are convinced that it does indeed belong in that category. When historic buildings are purchased for public use, extensive restoration is often required to bring them back to a useful and safe condition. This is exactly the case with the lands purchased for the public good. Because the condition of the land has deteriorated due to neglect of the former landowners, the ecosystem services and safety of the properties are compromised. As with any capital investment in historic properties, restoration is an integral component of the process.

Another concern is the willingness of the public to fund this project. At this time, because of the ongoing effort by the county and many other organizations, most citizens of the county are aware of the problem of buffelgrass and are willing to do something about it. At the public meetings in 2009 when the testing of aerial application of glyphosate was proposed, most people who were opposed to herbicide spraying conceded that the problem had to be addressed and we had few other options. With thousands of individuals actively participating in the physically demanding work of buffelgrass removal each year, we believe the citizenry is prepared to take the next step and fund the efforts on their public lands.

Using bond funds in the manner proposed is not unprecedented. Flagstaff in 2012 held a bond election to use their tax money for restoration work on federal and state land for wildfire mitigation and erosion control to protect their watershed. The proposal passed with 74% of the voters saying yes.

The benefits to the community of this project range from restoration and preservation of a unique ecosystem to securing our standing as a world class tourist and business destination to developing a market for invasive eradication technologies.

Since buffelgrass is currently in its exponential growth phase and escalating to the point where effective control is impossible without massive inputs, we must act now to reverse its impact on the lands we most treasure. We must understand that doing nothing now is a decision that will impact our ability to recover these precious lands in the future. \$10,000,000 will not remove all the buffelgrass from at risk county properties, but it will secure the most valuable and vulnerable areas and institutionalize the processes and procedures for ongoing stewardship of the land.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lindy A. Brigham', written in a cursive style.

Lindy A. Brigham
Executive Director



1955 E. 6th Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center – 2015 Bond Proposal

The Sonoran Desert provides a unique backdrop for the blending of cultures and nations, two of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas, Tucson and Phoenix, a vibrant tourism industry, and expansive public lands – from world renowned Saguaro National Park to military facilities vital to our national defense. Yet, this unique environment faces a serious threat. Across southern Arizona, buffelgrass, an invasive non-native perennial grass, has introduced a new fire risk and threatens to irrevocably alter the sensitive ecosystems within the Sonoran Desert. Buffelgrass is a fire prone, shrubby grass introduced from the African savannah that grows in dense stands, outcompetes native plants, and creates a new fire regime (from an essentially non-existent regime) in the desert. This will lead to devastating fires that will convert the ecologically rich Sonoran Desert into a more monotypic exotic grassland environment. Buffelgrass is also spreading rapidly in our urban areas, threatening the safety and homes of our residents. Brush fires can kill our magnificent saguaros and, in turn, threaten our entire ecosystem and our tourism economy. Our region also risks the loss of public investment made in preserving our environment. Take away the saguaros and other desert plants, and Arizona will lose much of its appeal to visitors from the rest of the nation and around the world. We will lose the beauty that brought many of us to settle and live here. Economic impacts include losses in Tucson’s annual \$3 billion tourism industry, decreased property values, increased cost of fire suppression in urban and natural areas, and frequent interruptions to transportation and other essential services. A Gallup Arizona Poll in 2009 measured the emotional attachment people feel for “place,” as reported in “The Arizona We Want.” The poll found Arizonans believe that Arizona’s natural beauty and open spaces make up our state’s greatest asset.

The path to effective management is not controversial. There is only one realistic method: aggressively reduce the infested area (which is currently spreading at an exponential rate) to the point where annual monitoring with spot treatments (when necessary) is all that is required. To accomplish this millions are necessary now. Substantial resources need to be devoted now to give land managers and urban property owners the ability to economically control this weed going forward.

Buffelgrass spreads aggressively by seed and establishes itself readily in areas that have been disturbed. Once established in the disturbed areas the invasive grass can then move into native desert habitats on hillsides and along drainagesⁱ. Buffelgrass stands can burn at over 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit and the fires are almost three times hotter than those generated by flammable native vegetation. Buffelgrass fires are highly detrimental to cacti and native trees and can eliminate them from the landscape. The occurrence of fire in ecosystems that evolved in the absence of fire often can lead to species loss and future restructuring of plant and animal interactions, favoring fire-adapted exotic species over nativesⁱⁱ. Such wildfires do not significantly impact the buffelgrass stands which can come back more vigorously than before the fireⁱⁱⁱ.

The Sonoran Desert within Pima County supports habitat for 16 species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 4 species that warrant protection (candidate species) under the ESA, and 49 species considered sensitive and warrant protection under Pima County's Multi-Species Conservation Plan Section 10 permit (Pima County 2009).

In 2001, Pima County updated the Comprehensive Land Use Plan by integrating land-use policies and principles of conservation developed in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. The SDCP identifies five main elements (Critical Habitat and Biological Corridors, Riparian Restoration, Mountain Parks, Historical and Cultural Preservation, and Ranch Conservation). The buffelgrass invasion now threatens the conservation of all of the elements.

The state of Arizona listed buffelgrass as a noxious weed in 2005. Buffelgrass is Regulated (controlled to prevent further infestation or contamination) and Prohibited (prohibited from entering the state) by Arizona Administrative Code R3-4-244 and 245. In 2008, Pima County adapted Ordinance No. 2008-117 which addresses the buffelgrass issue specifically.

An example of specific lands at risk is the Canoa Ranch, a 4,800 acre parcel with a 4,000 year history of human habitation. The County plans to preserve and restore the historic buildings as well as implement efforts to protect important habitat and restore natural systems. The county spent \$9.1 million to buy the 4,700-acre ranch in stages starting in 2001, and has spent another \$3.4 million for protection and preservation, with all money coming from open space bonds approved by voters in 1997 and 2004. This property is at high risk from the standpoint of its value to the community and its location in an area of extensive buffelgrass infestations (see Figure 1)

The Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center proposes to target Pima County managed protected lands to develop and implement a large scale buffelgrass mitigation project on these lands, with the ultimate goal being to reduce buffelgrass infestation so that future mitigation can be achieved with the normal operating expenses.

Goals

1. Restore the ecological function of the conservation lands.
2. Restore the native fire regime.
3. Restore the value of these lands for the public trust.
4. Preserve the Sonoran Desert experience for tourism, business recruitment and local enjoyment.
5. Establish a baseline condition to allow for long-term efficient management of the properties.
6. Engage citizens in actively contributing to the restoration efforts.

Objectives

1. Develop analysis protocols for determining priority areas to restore. These will be used going forward on all future restoration projects.
2. Identify, prioritize, and schedule areas for restoration. These will be based on current knowledge and restoration efforts being funded.
3. Develop monitoring protocols for restoration areas. Data collected will be used long-term to evaluate the efficiency and efficacy of the materials and methods employed.

4. Integrate data collection and mapping efforts between county and iMapInvasive – develop protocol for seamless data sharing.
5. Integrate restoration plan into management plan. Equipment and protocols will be used for ongoing management efforts on the restored land and other properties.
6. Enhance and expand current volunteer efforts to restore and maintain critical areas. In addition to the manual pulling teams employed by the volunteer groups, a volunteer spray program has been developed to increase the range and efficiency of the volunteer restoration efforts.
7. Disseminate successful strategies with other local and regional land managers. This will allow them to better manage on properties adjacent to county lands and facilitate joint projects where feasible.
8. Foster a local workforce capable of handling large scale mitigation projects using best buffelgrass mitigation practices.

Strategy

Work on this project began with the development of the Buffelgrass Working Group in response to the realization that land managers across the jurisdictions in Southern Arizona needed to develop a plan for buffelgrass mitigation. Single entities would not succeed if only some of the areas were managed. In the 1970s and 80s, buffelgrass had been planted along highways and on mine tailings for erosion control. With its light weight seed, buffelgrass soon spread throughout the region. At this point, most suitable terrain has been colonized to some extent and the strategy now is to manage it on our most valuable and vulnerable lands. These lands include our federal forests, parks, monuments and wildlife refuges, and our county open space and conservation lands. Many of these lands abut and require a collaborative effort to mitigate the impact of buffelgrass across the boundaries.

Starting in 2006, in recognition of the impediments to working across jurisdictional boundaries, representatives from jurisdictions, agencies and organizations who had contributed financially to regional buffelgrass research and control efforts met to develop a regional plan. The 2008 Buffelgrass Strategic Plan that resulted from the efforts included the recommendation to create the Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center (SABCC) and five key strategies. 1, Minimize spread in areas where buffelgrass has not yet become established 2, Set and implement control priorities based on actual and potential impacts 3, Restore treated areas in ways that increase resilience against future invasion 4, Mitigate wildfire risks to life and property in areas where control is no longer feasible, 5, Motivate legislation aimed at sustaining the control effort.

In 2010 SABCC developed a risk assessment for the Tucson Basin and surrounding lands within Pima County in collaboration with federal, state, county and municipal partners to determine areas of high habitat value and high risk for buffelgrass impact. Pima County manages ~300,000 acres of protected lands under the Conservation Lands System, 165,459 acres of which was included in the Tucson Basin Buffelgrass Assessment. It was found that 81,100 acres of Pima County managed protected lands fall into the category of High Risk for buffelgrass, based on the ecological value and risk of buffelgrass infestation.

Since the development of the plan, cooperating members of SABCC have developed more precise mapping and control strategies that will be used to effectively and efficiently manage the buffelgrass infestation in the county control effort.

Long-term, buffelgrass management will be greatly decreased in high value areas to the point where normal vegetation management is sufficient.

Scope

Since the assessment was completed in 2010, in most places identified as high risk there has been minimal mitigation work performed. A group of volunteers, the Tucson Mountain Weedwackers, manually removes buffelgrass from Tucson Mountain Park on a regular basis. Sporadically, volunteer groups may pull buffelgrass from other protected areas. While useful and locally successful, volunteer efforts are not enough to make the large scale impact that is necessary to fight the buffelgrass infestation. 81,000 acres were identified as high risk in the initial broad assessment of the Tucson Basin, however all of these may not prove to have critical structure/infrastructure or highest value as determined for the defined area by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan or even to have much buffelgrass. The first steps for this project will be to identify protected lands with the highest value and at most risk, and assess the buffelgrass infestation at each location. SABCC and contributors will accomplish this by using a variety of tools. SABCC will start by interviewing local land manager's to determine the distribution of buffelgrass infestation at specific sites. GIS maps will be produced and a ground truthing surveys will be performed to "fine tune" the buffelgrass locations within each site. High Resolution aerial imagery from Pima County GIS and PAG and existing buffelgrass survey maps will also be used to assess additional buffelgrass locations not identified from local knowledge or ground based surveys. Maps of biological cultural resources will be integrated into the work plan to determine the appropriate treatment alternative. An initial pre-treatment buffelgrass distribution will be developed from this process and will be used to determine treatment areas, as well as a tool for contractor use, and as initial distribution for analysis of efficacy.

Buffelgrass mitigation is a long term process. Buffelgrass plants are hard to kill and one application of herbicide may not suffice for killing 100% of the plants in any given patch. Buffelgrass seeds are also viable for 4-5 years in the soil, so repeat treatments (at least 4) are necessary. Based on previous large scale buffelgrass mitigation projects (Pima County Wildfire Risk Mitigation Project (FEMA), Avra Valley aerial spraying, Coronado National Forest buffelgrass herbicide treatments, Bureau of Land Management Snyder Hill project), SABCC estimates that the funding will be able to treat 15,000 acres, repeated five (5) times.

After initial assessment of Pima County managed protected lands and open spaces, 15,000 acres of the highest risk/value land will be selected for treatment. Previous projects at the Tucson International Airport and Pima County Mission Road Complex (Pima County Wildfire Risk Mitigation Project), Bureau of Land Management (Snyder Hill and Cerrito Represo), estimates from the City of Tucson and estimates from the US Forest Service and Saguaro National Park suggest an average cost for buffelgrass mitigation at \$100/acre. On-the-ground herbicide treatment ranges from \$40-\$170/acre, depending upon type of application method (Backpack, ATV hose-mounted, or Boom Truck), and terrain. Aerial herbicide application ranges from \$30 -\$300/acre depending upon type (Fixed-wing, Helicopter),

distance from landing area, acreage, and connectivity of patches. Given the locations of openspace land, we will be using a variety of treatment methods that best suits any particular area. If after several years of successive treatments analysis shows effective buffelgrass control for any particular area, that area will be transferred to the Pima County NRPR buffelgrass maintenance program and a new area for intensive restoration will be chosen. By transferring land into maintenance and adding land for intensive restoration we will be able to treat more than the initial 15,000 acres. We will also be continually assessing the budget set for intensive restoration and if we find we can treat more acreage than stated we will add areas in order of risk and value.

Contractors will be hired from the Tucson community to accomplish buffelgrass treatments. Treatments will be accomplished using roadside boom spraying, ATV mounted sprayers, backpack spraying, and aerial spraying (Helicopter and Fixed-Wing) depending upon location and terrain. Consultation with other land managers regarding best options for will help determine the treatment type or combination used at a specific site. Treatment types will also be chosen to best minimize off target impacts to native vegetation, biological and cultural resources.

A Buffelgrass Mitigation Certification course has been developed as part of the Pima County Wildfire Risk Mitigation Project (FEMA grant for Tucson International Airport and Pima County Mission Road Complex). The course goals are to train herbicide applicators and landscape contractors on proper buffelgrass mitigation techniques as well as State, County and Local laws/codes/regulations, buffelgrass life history and proper identification. The course entails a 2hr classroom presentation, infield identification, in class group project and course evaluations (multiple choice test and take home project development). All contractors hired to mitigate buffelgrass under bond funds will be required to complete and pass this course to ensure best practices are being used on conservation lands.

Efficacy of the treatments will be assessed three-fold. Immediate random samples, 3 weeks post treatment, will be performed to assess visible impacts resulting from herbicide treatments. Long term assessments (Permanent Plots) will be performed 1 year post-treatment to assess mortality and new seed germination. Both immediate and long-term post-treatment surveys will be performed in conjunction with every treatment session. Overall assessment for each site will also be performed using a GIS model currently being developed by SABCC and University of Arizona Geographic Information Systems Technology Department.

A program coordinator will be hired to expand and manage the volunteer efforts. These will include identifying areas that are accessible to volunteers and include cultural and historical areas of interest to the public that can elicit long term support.

Benefits

The main benefit of this project is the preservation of the Sonoran Desert for our current and future safety, quality of life and economic security. The citizens of Pima County have already committed to preserving this unique environment with dollars for open space acquisition. This project will complement the goals set forth in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

Buffelgrass, is currently in exponential growth phase and must be treated immediately in all areas of high risk, simultaneously if possible to protect the efforts already underway. Federal agencies are investing in mitigation on the forests, parks and monuments in the county. Pima County will be

increasing the efficacy of and benefit from the federal efforts and protect the current and future investments in open space lands.

Alternatively, Pima County would have many more fires throughout the year which would necessitate not only larger fire fighting forces, but also involve regular loss of property and structures, and even lives. Property values would drop and the region would be less attractive to businesses, both of which would impact County tax revenues negatively

A major component of Southern Arizona's economic base is tourism. The economic impact of the 634,286 visits to Saguaro National Park in 2012 alone was \$37,000,000 and over 500 jobs in the community^{iv}. The exponential growth of buffelgrass in this area means the loss of the Sonoran Desert (its iconic vegetation and animal life) to a fire-prone Savannah. Visitors from all over the world are drawn to this unique environment. Recruitment of highly educated and skilled workforce for our institutes of higher education and research, development of high tech industries, and large and small scale businesses depends heavily on our environment. In addition, this multi-year project will employ local contractors and develop the regional expertise needed to provide these specialized services long-term.

All members of the residential and business community need to be part of the ongoing solution. People in Pima County need to know what buffelgrass is and understand the importance of eliminating it from their homes and businesses. A comprehensive eradication project would certainly accomplish considerable public education. SABCC has developed a certification program for landscape contractors who can develop and market their expertise in buffelgrass mitigation. Organizations such as the Primavera Foundation are developing work crews for buffelgrass work on public and private properties

Treating now reduces the immediate risk of increasing the spread into more lands and the catastrophic results of a fire on the landscape. Reducing the amount of buffelgrass now also reduces the future costs of treatment and the risk of fires of greater scope and impact.

To fail to address the buffelgrass infestation is tantamount to giving up on stewardship of the Sonoran Desert – the lushest most diverse desert ecosystem in the world.

On-going Federal, State and Private Investments

Federal Land Managers:

Federal Agencies managing public land in Pima County are deeply committed to buffelgrass mitigation. The Forest Service has been spending upwards of \$200,000 a year on buffelgrass management on the Coronado. Saguaro National Park, with the cooperation and help of Pima County, the City of Tucson, the BLM and the Forest Service, has developed an aerial spraying protocol that they will use for management in the remote areas of the Park. Extensive and comprehensive mapping efforts in the park were completed in 2012. The BLM is currently contracting with SABCC to manage buffelgrass on the monument and on lands adjacent to county lands including Snyder Hill.

Federal Funding for Private and County lands:

In 2012, FEMA awarded Pima County OEM a \$3.4 mil pre-disaster mitigation grant to control buffelgrass on the Tucson International Airport and the Mission Rd Adult Detention Facility. This indicates the level of danger the federal government attributes to buffelgrass on our vulnerable resources.

Private Funding:

The nonprofit Tucson Clean and Beautiful, has an extensive buffelgrass mitigation program that is funded by private monies as well as the City of Tucson. The mining company Freeport McMoran recently awarded the Green Valley Council \$60,000 to manage buffelgrass in 105 member homeowners association coalition.

Volunteer hours:

In 2012, 2,175 volunteers put in 17,832 hours of work pulling buffelgrass from federal, state, county, and private lands. The value of this work is \$388,737.60 using the 2012 federal rate for volunteer hours of \$21.80. 3,000 of these hours were specifically for Tucson Mountain Park where buffelgrass infestations have been greatly reduced and entire vistas are now free of buffelgrass. These numbers only represent one (1) year, volunteer weedwackers have been battling buffelgrass throughout Tucson for more than 10 years. With SABCCs education and outreach efforts, this number increases every year. Besides the contribution of this effort to the elimination of buffelgrass this shows the commitment of the community to the preservation of the lands their tax dollars support.

Budget

Budget Category	Position/Item	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	
Personnel	Accountant (\$35/hr)	\$18,200	\$18,200	\$18,200	\$18,200	\$18,200	\$91,000
	GIS Analyst (\$24/hr)	\$24,960	\$24,960	\$24,960	\$24,960	\$24,960	\$124,800
	Program Coordinator/Outreach (\$22/hr)	\$22,880	\$22,880	\$22,880	\$22,880	\$22,880	\$114,400
	Benefits (33%)	21793.2	21793.2	21793.2	21793.2	21793.2	\$108,966
Operating Cost	Overhead (~14%)	\$272,000	\$272,000	\$272,000	\$272,000	\$272,000	\$1,360,000
	O&M Supplies	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
	Vehicle Maintenance	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
	Travel/Meeting ¹	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Capital Equipment	Applicator Contractor/Herbicide	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$7,500,000
	Natural Resource Contractor/Survey and Monitoring ³	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000
	4x4 SUV	\$34,000					\$34,000
	Volunteer Applicator Equipment ⁴	\$2,000					\$2,000
	Volunteer Applicator Chemical ⁵	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$12,500
Total by Year		\$2,028,333	\$1,992,333	\$1,992,333	\$1,992,333	\$1,992,333	\$9,997,666
	Budget Narrative						
	1. Travel expenses, Per Diem, Meeting Registration for various meeting to inform public and weed managers about project. POV reimbursement for business related use.						
	2. Cost per acre varies by application method and terrain and acreage. Ground application can vary from \$40/acre to \$170/acre. Aerial Application can vary from \$30/acre to \$300/acres.						
	3. On the ground Surveys to verify Buffelgrass extents, Monitoring and data collection for efficacy analysis. Contracting on a similar project (FEMA Wildfire Mitigation) average \$100/hr.						
	4. Supplies to expand Pima County NRPR's capacity to have a volunteer applicator program. Backpack Sprayer, Repair Supplies, PPE (Gloves, Glasses).						
	5. Chemical for Volunteer Applicator Program. (Glyphosate, Imazapy, Surfactant, Conditioning Agent, Dye).						
	6. With effective herbicide application, it is possible the initial area may not need to be treated extensively throughout the length of the project. If, after successive treatments, a buffelgrass population has been brought to a maintenance level population, that area will be transfer to the Pima County NRPR maintainace program, and a new area will be selected for intensive buffelgrass treatment.						

SUMMARY

Need:

- Buffelgrass invasion is in exponential growth mode
- Loss of critical habitat and conversion to fire-prone savannah
- Loss of much of economic base
- 300,000 acres of PC managed conservation lands
- 81,000 acres in high risk areas.

Scope:

- 15,000 acres will initially be treated and monitored for 5 years after priority analysis
- Additional acreage will be treated based on outcomes of initial 15,000 acres.
- Contractors hired from the community.
- Treatment will include roadside truck, ATV mounted, backpack, and aerial spraying. Monitoring will determine the efficacy of the treatments and additional acreage will be treated if possible.

Benefits:

- Protect County investment in open space and conservation lands (Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan)
- Protect federal investments in public lands
- Protect economic base of Southern Arizona
 - Tourism
 - High wage employment
- Reduce frequency and cost of emergency response efforts
- Develop economic specialty

ⁱ Burquez-Montijo et al. 2002 Burquez-Montijo, A. M., et al. (2002). Mexican grasslands, thornscrub, and the transformation of the Sonoran Desert by invasive exotic buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*). Invasive exotic species in the Sonoran region. B. Tellman. Tucson, AZ, The University of Arizona Press - The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum: 126-146.

ⁱⁱ Richard J. Hobbs and Laura F. Huenneke (1992). Disturbance, Diversity, and Invasion: Implications for Conservation Conservation Biology Vol. 6, No. 3 (Sep., 1992) , pp. 324-337

ⁱⁱⁱ Cox, J. R., et al. (1990). "Fire effects on grasses in semiarid deserts." General Technical Report - US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service(RM-191): 43-49.

^{iv} [2012 National Park Visitor Spending Effects](#)

**Pima County NRPR
BUFFELGRASS CREW COST ESTIMATE
3.14.14**

1 Crew Leader with Pickup	2080hrs @ \$23.95/Hr. = \$ 49,823.00
4 Vegetation Laborers	4160hrs @ \$13.45/Hr. = \$ 55,952.00
1 Spray Tech	2080hrs @ \$21.00/Hr = \$ 43,680.00
	<hr/>
	Total = \$149,455.00

Labor	= \$149,455.00
Mileage	= \$ 17,500.00
Misc O&M	= \$ 25,000.00
Chemicals	= \$ 20,000.00
	<hr/>
Total	\$211,955.00

NRPR Overhead 33% = \$ 70,652.00

Spraying's primarily effective when the plant is green. There is about a 4-6 month window in the spring and fall when spraying is effective. In the off spray period, staff would focus on monitoring previous treatment areas, mapping new high criticality treatment sites and assisting with mechanical treatment activities.

\$ 282,607.00 annually

Description

A threat to the ecological and public health and safety in the region, the non-native species Buffelgrass was brought to Arizona as an erosion control plant and livestock feed in the 1920s. NRPR was tasked to provide an estimate for a buffelgrass control team within the Natural Resources Division to implement and enhance ongoing County efforts to control the invasive grass species on county lands and as a follow-up of a proposed \$10 million dollar Bond control effort.

The Team will use and update existing maps to identify areas for treatment, coordinate treatment activities, assist in implementation of the Bond project during its timeline, provide equipment, utilize volunteers on treatment projects and evaluate treatment effectiveness once the Bond project is completed to reduce or eliminate regrowth of hazardous stands of the invasive grass.

Staff

- 1- FTE Natural Resource Specialist Crew leader @ 2080 hours
- 1- FTE Spray Tech @2080 hours
- 4- Intermittent Vegetation Laborers @ 4,160 hours

Operational Expenses

Existing equipment is available within NRPR to outfit two spray teams and additional equipment should be made available to NRPR after the Bond project ends. Annual costs will involve the maintenance of that equipment, added vehicle mileage, herbicide supplies, landfill charges, personal protection equipment, applicator training and other operational expenses.

Revenues

No specific revenues are expected. However, the possibility will exist for other governmental jurisdictions or agencies to utilize the services of the team when County demands have been met. These costs and revenue will have to be planned after several years of operations by the team.

Impact if not Funded

Buffelgrass is a very aggressive invasive exotic grass species It has the potential to change the visual landscape and ecological foundation of the Sonoran Desert as it has too many landscapes in Mexico. Its expanded distribution and invasion into urban and suburban landscapes bring significantly increased fire danger and increased public safety issues

Source of Mandate

The Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 2005-265 on Invasive Species Management that gave Public Works responsibility to develop and coordinate invasive species activities. In 2007 and again in 2008, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed resolutions specifically directing the county to take a leadership role and participate in buffelgrass control effort across the county. The County has been a significant partner in the formation and maintenance of the Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center.

Goals & Objectives

The program goal will be to enhance coordinated buffelgrass control programs based primarily in spraying herbicides on the grass stands and augmenting that with physical removal of these stands. The program will coordinate efforts with other governmental jurisdictions and

public organizations to capitalize on volunteer support The program enhance will allow the county to monitor and maintain the control impacts to buffelgrass infestations targeted under the Bond program. As the necessary operational and maintenance follow up to the Bond project, it is our goal that an expanded effort can substantially set back the buffelgrass invasion in those critical areas of ecological and public health and safety vulnerability.

Deseret Romero

From: Deron Beal <deron@freecycle.org>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2014 9:41 AM
To: bondinfo
Subject: Open Space Bond funding increase

TO: Mr. Larry Hecker
Chair of the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee
130 W Congress St., 10th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

FROM: Deron Beal

RE: support for increasing bond allocation for open space purchases

Dear Larry,

I wanted to put in a good word for allowing the maximum amount of funding for open space bonds coming up. The Sonoran Desert is a gem and a big reason folks visit here and spend dollars. Seems like an initiative that all voters can get behind and it seems like there is still a lot of open space saving that needs being done in order to keep key wildlife corridors open. Part of what makes living in Tucson special is knowing that we care about where we live and that we remain a part of this natural and healthy environment. I appreciate your role in helping make Pima County the special place it is.

Thanks for your consideration,

Deron Beal

Deron Beal
Executive Director
The Freecycle Network
Email: deron@freecycle.org
Web: www.freecycle.org

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Deseret Romero

From: Lucy Probyn <lucypro.lp@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 4:09 PM
To: bondinfo
Subject: Save the Sonora

Dear Mr. Hecker and Committee Members,
Save the beautiful Earth and it will save us.

Deseret Romero

From: Greta Anderson <greta@riseup.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 5:20 PM
To: bondinfo
Subject: please support the bond package for open space

Larry Hecker, Chair & Committee Members,

I am writing today to urge you to support a fully-funded bond package that will maximize the Conservation Open Space that is so near and dear to our hearts in Pima County. The Sonoran Desert CP is not perfect, but it is a model for what communities can do to achieve balance between development and preservation of the natural environment. In order for the ideals of that plan to be manifest, the BAC needs to approve the complete recommended amount of \$285 million dollars, and I urge you to do so. This will be money well spent protecting the special plants, animals, and habitats that share our southern Arizona home.

Thank you.

Greta Anderson
Tucson, Arizona

Deseret Romero

From: Kevin Dahl <kdahl@npca.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 6:21 PM
To: bondinfo
Subject: supporting open space bonding

Larry Hecker, Chair & Committee Members,

I support a robust and large open space allotment for the upcoming bond. Pima County is well-known for its beautiful open spaces, and this commitment needs to continue.

Sincerely,

Kevin Dahl

1609 E. Spring St.

Tucson, AZ 85719

Deseret Romero

From: jocx@juno.com
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:34 AM
To: bondinfo
Subject: Open Space Bond Package

Dear BAC,

I am writing to urge you to support a bond package as fully funded as possible for open space. I strongly agree with the following three bullet points:

- Experts advise the county to add about 600,000 acres of select open space to its inventory for the desert to continue to thrive with protected areas and connected corridors.
- These funds are vital to meet the goals and vision of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and are necessary for long-term survival of unique and rare local native species.
- The Sonoran Desert is the top attraction for both residents and visitors in Southern Arizona. A thriving economy depends on our open space!

Sincerely,

Jack Strasburg
31 W Los Reales Rd # 221
Tucson, AZ 85756

Deseret Romero

From: WILLIAM C <cactusworld@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 11:07 AM
To: bondinfo
Subject: Open space and buffelgrass control

Dear Chairman Hecker and Bond Committee Members,

As a second generation Arizona native and lifelong "cactus hugger" I've seen Tucson grow from a small desert town to a vibrant and culturally diverse city. Unfortunately growth hasn't always been well planned to recognize the economic and aesthetic value of our unique Sonoran Desert, one of the world's most biologically diverse and endangered ecosystems.

Fortunately a forward looking group of stakeholders including conservationists, planners, and developers came together to chart a course for future development in a manner consistent with preserving Sonoran Desert habitat that makes Tucson a destination for visitors from around the world.

The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan has accomplished a lot but the job is not finished. Experts have advised the county to add approximately 600,000 more acres of select open space to protect critical habitat and wildlife corridors.

Voters have overwhelmingly supported previous open space bond packages and the time is right to secure funds necessary to complete the goals and vision of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Open space bonds are a sound investment that will pay big dividends. Please assemble a bond package that will enable the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan to fulfill it's goals.

Control of invasive grasses and weeds is another critical component of habitat conservation. The progress we've made in preserving desert habitat will be hollow achievements indeed if we watch our "preserved" desert go up in the smoke of invasive fueled fires. Please include adequate funding for invasive plant removal and control in any bond package.

Sincerely,

William C. Thornton
2955 E. Chula Vista Dr.
Tucson, AZ 85716
Tel: 520-795-6028
E-mail: cactusworld@msn.com

Deseret Romero

From: Julie Rogers <julierogers03@ymail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 4:34 AM
To: bondinfo
Subject: Support for fully funded open space bond package

Dear Mr. Hecker and Bond Advisory Committee Members,

I am writing to urge the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee to support a fully funded bond package for open space acquisitions.

Although the Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission recommended that \$285 million be allocated for Conservation Open Space, thus far only \$120 million has been tentatively adopted. Many areas important for the conservation of rare native plants and animals are still at risk of development and need to be purchased, soon.

Important open space acquisitions are need in the Southern Altar Valley Reserve and the Upper Santa Cruz River areas. In addition, the Santa Catalina-Tortolita wildlife corridor north of Oro Valley is not yet complete, and the Rosemont ranch property must be preserved as critical wildlife habitat. Catalina State Park has yet to be enlarged to serve our county's growing population. And the list goes on.

Local support for preserving open space and fulfilling the forward-thinking vision of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan has been demonstrated again and again. Pima County needs a fully-funded open space bond program to preserve our beautiful, unique Sonoran Desert habitat for the plants, animals, birds, and humans currently living here, and for future generations. Please do your part.

Thank you!

Julie Rogers
9072 E. Igo Place
Tucson, AZ 85710
(520) 721-3465
julierogers03@ymail.com

Deseret Romero

From: Dick Eggerding <rmegger@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 12:50 PM
To: Jack-Sally Evert
Cc: bondinfo; warren@dancinglizards.com; Jim; Paul Loomis; Williams Jim; josephine di gennaro; Roxy Johnson; Joyce Rychener; Adler Bill
Subject: Re:

Jack, well written!
Best, Dick E

On Thu, Mar 20, 2014 at 12:39 PM, Jack-Sally Evert <Saljack439@msn.com> wrote:

***Larry Hecker, Chair & Committee Members
Pima County Bond Advisory Committee***

My name is Jack Evert, and I am the VP of the Oro Valley Historical Society. We are a group active in Oro Valley on a variety of historical and archeological-related activities the most notable of which is the Steam Pump Ranch. I am sure you are aware of this historical gem, and with the strong support of the Town, it is rapidly becoming a focal point for community activities in our fair Town. As I noted in a presentation to the Town Council this February, we are pleased with the upgrades in which the Town has invested such as providing parking and rest rooms to support the wonderful ramada used for the relocated farmers' market. The area of concern, however, relates to historical restoration.

The last restoration concerned the original Pusch family ranch house. As a regular docent at the ranch house I can attest to the attraction people feel when they tour it. After walking around the house and absorbing what it must have been like in the late 1870s when it was built, their typical response to me is, "This is so cool". It gives me great pride to be part of their experience because I think it helps them connect with their (our) history, and that is a core value of our mission and strategic plan.

The iconic building on the site, the steam pumphouse has deteriorated to where it is problematic as to whether it can be restored. The other buildings on the site (e.g. Procter/Leiber house, hired hand bunkhouse) are also of adobe and subject to the same deterioration as the pumphouse experience. The good news is that they are still in a fully restorable condition, and we would urge serious consideration of providing sufficient funding that this may happen. I am not qualified to suggest an amount; others from the Town are far more qualified to provide such. My only objective in writing to you is make sure you are aware of the fact that we have a historical gem in our midst that previous restoration has shown can be a tremendous asset to our community (and to a lesser extent the region). It needs attention now to insure that its maximum value will be realized.

Thank you.

Jack Evert

Deseret Romero

From: Jack-Sally Evert <Saljack439@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 12:39 PM
To: bondinfo
Cc: warren@dancinglizards.com; parquo@aol.com; ploomis@msn.com; Williams Jim; JoJoZ3@yahoo.com; orovalleylady@comcast.net; joyceholloway2@gmail.com; Adler Bill; rmegger@gmail.com

Larry Hecker, Chair & Committee Members Pima County Bond Advisory Committee

My name is Jack Evert, and I am the VP of the Oro Valley Historical Society. We are a group active in Oro Valley on a variety of historical and archeological-related activities the most notable of which is the Steam Pump Ranch. I am sure you are aware of this historical gem, and with the strong support of the Town, it is rapidly becoming a focal point for community activities in our fair Town. As I noted in a presentation to the Town Council this February, we are pleased with the upgrades in which the Town has invested such as providing parking and rest rooms to support the wonderful ramada used for the relocated farmers' market. The area of concern, however, relates to historical restoration.

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The iconic building on the site, the steam pumphouse has deteriorated to where it is problematic as to whether it can be restored. The other buildings on the site (e.g. Procter/Leiber house, hired hand bunkhouse) are also of adobe and subject to the same deterioration as the pumphouse experience. The good news is that they are still in a fully restorable condition, and we would urge serious consideration of providing sufficient funding that this may happen. I am not qualified to suggest an amount; others from the Town are far more qualified to provide such. My only objective in writing to you is make sure you are aware of the fact that we have a historical gem in our midst that previous restoration has shown can be a tremendous asset to our community (and to a lesser extent the region). It needs attention now to insure that its maximum value will be realized.

Thank you.

Jack Evert



To: The Pima County Bond Advisory Committee

March 18, 2014

Re: Habitat protection and open space funding included in the 2014 Bond Election

I write to support the recommendation of the Conservation Acquisition Commission for an allocation of \$285 million for Conservation Open Space on the next County bond election. Strong scientific evidence implies that the richness of the plant and animal life of an area is directly related to how large it is, and how well connected it is to other areas. If preserved areas are small isolated areas, we can expect substantially impoverished plant and animal life in the future. Current rates of species extinctions are estimated to be more than 100 times the pre-industrial rate. Much of this is due to destruction of habitat.

Global warming is predicted to greatly exacerbate this problem. To reduce its effects on impoverishment of our natural environment, we need large connected areas, covering a range of habitat types so that plants and animals can move to new areas as their previous habitats become unsuitable. There is a special need to ensure adequate wildlife corridors between some of the large protected areas that we have. There is also a need for improved representation of habitats in these areas. Without heeding these problems we have little hope of preserving endangered species, because habitats that are suitable now will not remain so in the future, and many more species are likely to become endangered. Moreover, every species is profoundly affected by a web of interactions with other species. Maintaining the whole web of life on which an endangered species depends requires substantially greater measures than the County has taken so far.

The Conservation Acquisition Commission has identified a slate of areas that will help fill gaps in current representation, but more will need to be done. The process of open space acquisition should not stop now or in the near future. In the Tucson Mountains in particular (the brief of TMA), there remain opportunities to extend the preserved areas, fill gaps, and reduce fragmentation of preserved areas. This is especially so on the east side of the mountains where lower elevation sites are not so well represented, yet have diverse habitat and are not as well connected as they could be for optimal effectiveness. Reducing or ideally eliminating these gaps will add substantial value to the areas already preserved. However, the Tucson Mountains will be harmed in the long run by failure of effective conservation elsewhere because of the needs of organisms to migrate over the landscape.

The economy and our quality of life benefit greatly from the biologically rich open space that is a current feature of Pima County. Open space in this region supports tourism and makes it attractive to skilled professionals and high tech industries, providing strong support to the economy. We should not risk undermining these strong economic and quality of life benefits.

Pima County has been farsighted in the preservation of open space, but its job is not done. The

people of Pima County have regularly voted for bond issues to preserve open space. They need to be given the chance once more to show their strong support for open space preservation. This is not the time to have a lull in the process. It will be more expensive in the future, and irreparable damage is bound to result from a lull in the process.

Sincerely,

Bob Gilby
President, Tucson Mountains Association

Dear Pima County Bond Committee,

Please Support the *Sunshine Mile Commercial District Corridor* bond item.

Not only is Broadway Boulevard an important corridor and gateway to Downtown-Tucson it is a Mid-Century Marvel. This corridor is in desperate need of reinvestment.



I support Broadway because:

I think it is important
to preserve the historic
mid-century architecture
and small businesses.
Our roads are wide
enough, we need to find alternate
solutions

Pima County Bond Committee
Pima County Governmental Center
130 West Congress Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701-1317

Wendy E. Martin
NAME
3111 E. 4th St. #242
ADDRESS
Tucson, AZ. 85716

Dear Pima County Bond Committee,

Please Support the *Sunshine Mile Commercial District Corridor* bond item.

Not only is Broadway Boulevard an important corridor and gateway to Downtown-Tucson it is a Mid-Century Marvel. This corridor is in desperate need of reinvestment.



I support Broadway because:

The development of
the downtown area,
nicely underway,
needs this old &
interesting "entrance"
to the area.

Pima County Bond Committee
Pima County Governmental Center
130 West Congress Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701-1317

JEAN W. CLIFF
NAME
5024 E. GOLDER RANCH DR
ADDRESS
TUCSON, AZ 85712

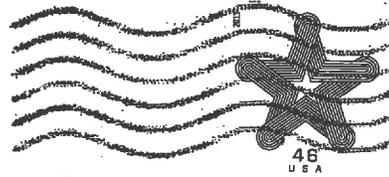
Dear Pima County Bond Committee,

Please Support the *Sunshine Mile Commercial District Corridor!* bond item.

Not only is Broadway Boulevard an important corridor and gateway to Downtown-Tucson it is a Mid-Century Marvel. This corridor is in desperate need of reinvestment.

PHOENIX, AZ 852

18 MAR 2014 PM 11 L



I support Broadway because:

there are many historic
buildings & well
established long-time
businesses on the
boulevard which are
tremendous assets to
Tucson.

Pima County Bond Committee
Pima County Governmental Center
130 West Congress Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701-1317

Judy Roman
NAME
2302 S. FORGEUS AVE,
ADDRESS
TUCSON, AZ 85713

133299





100 NORTH STONE AVENUE #303
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85701
ph 520 624-0595 • Fax 520 624-3001

info@TucsonPimaArtsCouncil.org

www.TucsonPimaArtsCouncil.org

DATE: March 17, 2014
TO: Pima County Bond Committee
FROM: Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC)
RE: Bond funding request, Performing Arts Center

During the 1990's, the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department operated the Downtown Performing Arts Center as a home for emerging performing arts groups. The decision to close the site due to deteriorating structure was difficult, but necessary. Since that time, more than one capital project has enabled the site to come closer to complete restoration. Interest in the use of the site by emerging arts groups remains high. It is anticipated that the Center will continue to be used, per the COT Deed of Preservation Easement completed in 2007, as a performing arts venue.

At the time of closing, the City Parks and Recreation Department contracted with the Arizona Theatre Company to oversee the operation of the site. This beneficial contract exemplified the continuing desire of the City to establish partnerships to produce quality community activities. The involvement of for-profit and non-profit agencies strengthen the ability to produce the best for all citizens, and their involvement assists in developing shared goals.

To this end, the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department and Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) are having continuing conversations about a potential partnership to utilize the Performing Arts Center as a community arts venue. In support of this, TPAC is pursuing a possible Kresge Foundation Grant to explore how this property and other such public properties can best be used, funded, and operated.

We urge the support of the Bond Committee to allow this opportunity to offer Pima County and the citizens of Tucson a historic venue to be used for the arts and cultural activities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roberto Bedoya".

Roberto Bedoya, Executive Director
Tucson Pima Arts Council



Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

300 E. University Blvd., Suite 120
Tucson, Arizona 85705
p (520) 388-9925 • f (520) 791-7709
www.sonorandesert.org

March 20, 2014

Arizona Center for Law
in the Public Interest

Arizona League of Conservation
Voters Education Fund

Arizona Native Plant Society

Bat Conservation International

Cascabel Conservation
Association

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Environmental
Connections

Center for Environmental Ethics

Defenders of Wildlife

Desert Watch

Drylands Institute

Empire Fagan Coalition

Environmental and Cultural
Conservation Organization

Environmental Law Society

Friends of Cabeza Prieta

Friends of Ironwood Forest

Friends of Madera Canyon

Friends of Saguaro National
Park

Friends of Tortolita

Gates Pass Area Neighborhood
Association

Native Seeds/SEARCH

Neighborhood Coalition of
Greater Tucson

Northwest Neighborhoods
Alliance

Protect Land and
Neighborhoods

Safford Peak Watershed
Education Team

Save the Scenic Santa Ritas

Sierra Club—Grand Canyon
Chapter

Sierra Club—Rincon Group

Silverbell Mountain Alliance

Sky Island Alliance

Sky Island Watch

Society for Ecological
Restoration

Sonoran Arthropod
Studies Institute

Sonoran Permaculture Guild

Southwestern Biological
Institute

Tortolita Homeowners
Association

Tucson Audubon Society

Tucson Herpetological Society

Tucson Mountains Association

Wildlands Network

Women for Sustainable
Technologies

Mr. Larry Hecker, Chair
Pima County Bond Advisory Committee
130 W Congress St., 10th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Mr. Hecker and Committee Members,

I submit the enclosed comments on behalf of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, founded in 1998 and comprised of 41 environmental and community groups working in Pima County. The Coalition's mission is to achieve the long-term conservation of the Sonoran Desert through comprehensive land-use planning, with primary emphasis on Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

The Coalition has an active interest in the allocation of open space bond funds. These public funds are necessary to purchase valuable open space for protection. As in past bond elections, these purchases are intended to ensure the lasting health and integrity of the Sonoran Desert and contribute to the conservation of important habitat areas. In previous county bond elections, Pima County voters showed overwhelming support for acquiring conservation lands.

As stated in Pima County's Sustainable Action Plan (August 2008), *"The County will acquire land and facilities that are best suited for the intended use and will most effectively achieve the goals of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan"*.

The Coalition is concerned about two categories of open space, Habitat Protection Priorities and Associated Lands (HPP) and Community Open Space (COS). HPP was developed in 2003 to identify the most biologically important lands under Pima County's Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) and the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP). These lands are vital to the survival of vulnerable plant and animal species and are critical to the protection of water quality and flood prevention. COS lands are valuable for maintaining natural open spaces, protecting scenic views, recreational opportunities, and biological and cultural resources.

In 2010, the Conservation Acquisition Commission (CAC) recommended to the Bond Advisory Committee (BAC) and the Board of Supervisors that an amount of \$285 million be allocated in the next countywide bond package. The BAC has "tentatively approved" an amount of \$110 million for HPP and \$10 million for COS, less than half of what was recommended by the county's Commission.

The amount of funding for open space needs to be sufficient to purchase eligible lands that are critical to the success of the SDCP, and that may become available in the 10 to 15-year bond cycle. The Conservation Acquisition Program was designed to accomplish SDCP goals of preserving biologically important lands. The Coalition remains concerned that the currently recommended open space funding allocation will be insufficient to achieve habitat acreage goals within this bond cycle.

As you are aware from the open space project sheets (attached), lands that are eligible for purchase for open space amount to \$2.8 billion; the CAC recommended that \$285 million, or approximately 10 percent of the total amount identified, be included in the next bond package.

Some of the specific needs acknowledged are as follows:

1. Over 400,000 acres of important State Trust Land alone are eligible for acquisition.
 - Approximately 2500 acres of the Arroyo Grande wildlife linkage lands remain to be acquired north of Oro Valley. This will expand Tortolita Mountain Park to the east, reconnecting to Catalina State Park (with the RTA-funded wildlife bridge over Oracle Road). The cost is estimated to be \$10 million.
 - The Town of Marana is currently in discussions with Arizona State Land Department to end its 99-year lease on the 2400-acre Tortolita Preserve, which will necessitate purchase if it is to continue to function as a preserve. This land serves as an important anchor in protecting the wildlife linkage between the Tortolita and Tucson mountain ranges.

2. Private lands that are, or most likely will be, available for purchase in the next 10-15 years include:
 - Marley Ranch (Phase I has been acquired. Remainder available, with county option to purchase. Currently valued at \$65.8 million).
 - A 540-acre parcel which if acquired, would preserve the "I-19 / Santa Cruz River Corridor Critical Wildlife Linkage," connecting Marley Ranch to the Santa Rita mountain range (valued at approximately \$5 million).
 - Painted Hills (currently available for approximately \$10 million).
 - Rosemont Ranch (approximately 21,000 acres could be eligible for purchase or lease if the proposed Rosemont mine fails. This was offered to the county in 2004 at \$11 million).
 - Kelly Ranch (valued at \$5 million in 2004. The development proposal for this property was officially withdrawn in January 2014, making purchase a possibility).
 - Saguaro National Park expansion, East and West units.

In Pima County's recent bond survey, residents chose habitat and community open space as the *top priorities* for bond funding in the Historic, Cultural, and Natural Area Conservation category. It is evident that the purchase and preservation of these critical areas continues to be what the public values. Additionally, the delay in bond elections due to economic factors has postponed much needed purchases that would contribute to the SDCP's biological goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Christina McVie
Board Chair

Future Pima County Bond Election Proposed Project

Project Name: Habitat Protection Priorities & Associated Lands

Location: Numerous eligible properties throughout eastern Pima County (map available).

Scope: Purchase for conservation as many of the eligible properties within this category as possible with the funds available. The Habitat Protection Priorities were developed in 2003 in order to identify the most biologically important lands to protect first under Pima County's Multi-Species Conservation Plan and Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. The Habitat Protection Priorities were updated in 2006 to reflect information not available in 2003, and to delete properties that were purchased by Pima County and to delete properties that were developed since 2003. The lands identified as Habitat Protection Priorities include a wide range of invaluable natural areas critical to the survival of numerous vulnerable plants and animals in Pima County, and critical to the protection of water quality and flood prevention for residents of Pima County. The types of properties range from large working ranches containing high quality semi-desert grasslands, to small properties containing important riparian areas.

NOT ALL ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES WILL BE ACQUIRED: The number of properties within the Habitat Protection Priorities is in excess of the number that can be purchased with the proposed bond fund allocation. Pima County acquired 47,000 acres within these Habitat Protection Priorities with 2004 bond funds. The future bond program will enable Pima County to continue efforts to acquire more of these invaluable natural areas.

Benefits: Acquiring these properties will expand Pima County's reserve of natural open spaces, protecting scenic views, recreational opportunities, biological and cultural resources, and natural floodplain functions. In addition, Pima County is applying for an incidental take permit under Section 10(1)(a)(B) of the federal Endangered Species Act. Under this permit, conserving these natural areas will ensure that public and private development projects can continue in areas suitable for development. The County's reserve system is an integral part of our local economy. One of the most important industries in Arizona is tourism. According to the Arizona Office of Tourism, the primary activity for a majority of travelers to Arizona included nature-based outdoor activities. Moreover, in a visitor survey conducted by Visit Tucson, it was found that the surrounding natural environment and outdoor/desert activities were cited by visitors as Tucson's greatest attractions.

Costs: \$2.6 billion

Bond Funding: \$110,000,000

Other Funding: Federal and State Grants

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: TBD

Project Management Jurisdiction: Pima County

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: Based on the average cost to operate and maintain the existing natural open space parks system of Pima County, it is anticipated that future operations and maintenance will cost approximately \$7 per year per acre of added natural open space.

Regional Benefits: The eligible properties are located throughout eastern Pima County and within other jurisdictions.

Supervisor District of Project Location: ALL

Requestor: County Administrator's Office – Conservation Bond Program
Date: 3.5.14

Future Pima County Bond Election Proposed Project

Project Name: Community Open Space

Location: Numerous eligible properties throughout eastern Pima County

Scope: Purchase for conservation as many of the eligible properties within this category as possible with the funds available. Many of the eligible properties were proposed for conservation by members of the public, conservation organizations, or neighborhood associations. The following property areas are eligible, and will be further defined by parcel code and map:

- A-Mountain
- Camino de Oeste
- Catalina State Park Expansion (State Trust land)
- Catalina Conservation Easements
- Colossal Cave Mountain Park Expansion (State Trust land and private land)
- Dos Picos
- Double XX Ranch
- Gerlich Property
- Green Valley West Desert Preserve
- Kelly Ranch
- Los Morteros
- Loving J Ranch Santa Cruz
- Mt. Lemmon
- Northern Altar Valley
- Painted Hills
- Rosemont Ranch
- Sabino Canyon
- Saguaro National Park East Expansion
- Saguaro National Park West Expansion
- Tortolita Mountain Park Expansion (State Trust land)
- Tucson Mountain Park Expansion (State Trust land)
- Tumamoc Hill (State Trust land)

NOT ALL ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES WILL BE ACQUIRED: The number of Community Open Space properties identified is in excess of the number that can be purchased with the proposed bond fund allocation. This provides the necessary flexibility during the property acquisition process.

Benefits: Acquiring these properties will expand Pima County's reserve of natural open spaces, protecting scenic views, recreational opportunities, biological and cultural resources, and natural floodplain functions. In addition, Pima County is applying for an incidental take permit under Section 10(1)(a)(B) of the federal Endangered Species Act. Under this permit, conserving these natural areas will ensure that public and private development projects can continue in areas suitable for development. The County's reserve system is an integral part of our local economy. One of the most important industries in Arizona is tourism. According to the Arizona Office of Tourism, the primary activity for a majority of travelers to Arizona included nature-based outdoor activities. Moreover, in a visitor survey conducted by Visit Tucson, it was found that the surrounding natural environment and outdoor/desert activities were cited by visitors as Tucson's greatest attractions.

