

## **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

*Requested Board Meeting Date: August 19, 2013*

### **ITEM SUMMARY, JUSTIFICATION &/or SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Bighorn Sheep have been an iconic species in the Santa Catalina for hundreds of years. In the late 1990's, the population slowly declined and were eventually extirpated from the mountain range for reasons that are not fully understood. A diverse coalition of conservation and environmental groups have been working together for several years on a plan to bring the bighorns back to the mountain. The scientific consensus is that habitat and survival conditions may have changed in favor of the bighorns being successfully re-established. The first phase of a multi-year process is set to begin in the fall of 2013 with the release of 30 plus animals, individually equipped with gps radio collars to track their daily movements and provide additional research data. The ultimate goal of the project is a self-sustaining population of Desert Bighorn sheep in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

The majority of funds going towards this multi-year effort are currently coming from non-governmental and non-tax generated sources through donations and grants. Hopefully, interest in the project by local individuals, groups and organizations will bring additional contributions to the project funds over the next few years. Public awareness and support for the project will be important outcome of a successful reintroduction.

The Town Council of Oro Valley may consider a similar resolution later in the fall.

The Board of Supervisors through its decade's long guidance and support of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan has taken a leadership role in taking direct action in support of regional conservation and efforts to enhance native wildlife habitats and populations. The Board of Supervisor's is being asked to support the reintroduction program through this resolution.

**CONTRACT NUMBER** (If applicable): Kerry Baldwin – 877-6161

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S):** Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed Resolution in support of the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Santa Catalina Mountains.

**CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS:** Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation

CLERK OF BOARD USE ONLY: BOS MTG. 8/19/2013

ITEM NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PIMA COUNTY COST: N/A and/or REVENUE TO PIMA COUNTY: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE(S): N/A

(i.e. General Fund, State Grant Fund, Federal Fund, Stadium D. Fund, etc.)

Advertised Public Hearing:

|  |                          |     |                                     |    |
|--|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|----|
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO |
|--|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|----|

Board of Supervisors District:

|   |                          |   |                          |   |                          |   |                          |   |                          |     |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | All | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|

IMPACT:

**IF APPROVED:** This resolution will continue to demonstrate the county support for conservation efforts enhancing native wildlife populations and hopefully support outreach efforts to generate additional public awareness and support for a successful reintroduction effort.

**IF DENIED:** The project will continue without any formal county recognition or support.

DEPARTMENT NAME: Natural Resources Parks and Recreation

CONTACT PERSON: Kerry Baldwin TELEPHONE NO.: 877-6161

**RESOLUTION NO. 2013-\_\_\_\_\_**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN**  
**SUPPORT OF THE REINTRODUCTION OF DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP INTO**  
**THE SANTA CATALINA MOUNTAINS**

**WHEREAS**, Pima County's land and wildlife resources often face severe impacts from harmful natural and human caused conditions which may often be successfully mitigated with sound, science-based conservation management actions; and

**WHEREAS**, Desert Bighorn Sheep, once numerous in the Santa Catalina Mountains, declined and disappeared from the mountain range in the 1990's for reasons that are not fully understood, but contributing factors may have been urban encroachment, human disturbance, changes in habitat resulting from fire suppression, disease and increased predation; and

**WHEREAS**, recent investigations and coordinated efforts of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, US Forest Service, Center for Biological Diversity, Sky Island Alliance, The Wilderness Society, Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and other conservation organizations have determined that ecological and social conditions are favorable to successfully reintroduce Desert Bighorn Sheep into the Santa Catalina Mountains, and these groups have put into place a comprehensive plan to begin to do so in the fall of 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, Pima County wholeheartedly supports the conservation of native species as one of the fundamental goals of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and recognizes the ecological and economic value of reestablishing a population of Desert Bighorn Sheep to self-sustainable levels in the Santa Catalina Mountains for the enjoyment of county residents and visitors alike; and

**WHEREAS**, the reestablishment of this iconic wildlife species will be a successful model for other projects of a similar nature that may become needed and possible in Pima County, where groups that may be at odds with one another can successfully come together to address a complex problem and make a difference to wildlife with a shared vision; and

**WHEREAS**, this multi-year effort will return over 100 Desert Bighorn Sheep into the Santa Catalina Mountains at a cost of over \$600,000 generated from public and private funding sources that do not include any general tax revenue sources.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Pima County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the Santa Catalina Mountains Bighorn Sheep Restoration project, endorses the work of the associated Catalina Bighorn Advisory Committee and directs the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department and Office of Sustainability and Conservation to actively assist with the reintroduction efforts to the greatest extent possible within the operational missions of these departments.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

**PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

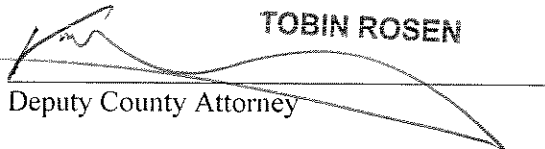


\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael Payan, Ph.D. Director

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



**TOBIN ROSEN**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy County Attorney