



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

June 9, 2020

Memoranda of Understanding for the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan with Saguaro National Park and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Background

In 2015, Pima County had memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with nearly every local, state and federal land-managing agency for the development of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. The state and federal MOUs were originally written circa 2000 and terminated upon Pima County's receipt of a Section 10 permit under the Endangered Species Act (Act). These MOUs supported the entire scope of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan including the ranch conservation program, the native plant nursery, mountain park expansion, wildlife and wildlife connectivity, and cultural heritage, not just the Section 10 permit. Because these state and federal MOUs provide an important mechanism to facilitate federal interaction and cooperation on the broader range of activities that support full implementation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, renewal is recommended.

Renewal of the MOUs with land management agencies is beneficial to maintain formal federal recognition of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and to acknowledge ongoing cooperation on various matters related to cultural and natural heritage conservation beyond the Section 10 permit. Currently, new MOUs have been developed with the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We expect to forward additional MOUs in the future to re-establish cooperation with other agencies. The MOU with the National Park Service strengthens existing ties with Saguaro National Park on our joint interest in resource management in the Tucson and Rincon Mountains, as well as public education, cultural resource protections, and wildlife connectivity. The MOU with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service facilitates enhanced collaboration on resource management and monitoring, beyond the 44 covered species in our Section 10 permit.

These MOUs do not obligate any expenditure of resources by any of the parties, but provide a basis for consensual collaboration in implementing the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

Recommendation

I recommend approval and execution of the MOUs with the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sincerely,

C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/anc - April 30, 2020

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Linda Mayro, Director, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation

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