

Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan Newsletter

"To ensure the long-term survival of the full spectrum of plants and animals that are indigenous to Pima County through maintaining or improving the ecosystem structures and functions necessary for their survival."

August 2009

Wildlife Corridors

The Wildlife Linkages Working Group reviewed a proposal to construct wildlife crossing structures along State Route 77. Two underpasses and one overpass are proposed to increase permeability and maintain connectivity between the Tortolita and Catalina Mountains. The crossings would accommodate large mammals such as a mule deer, bear, and mountain lion, as well as smaller animals. The proposal will be considered for funding in October 2009.



Artist's rendering of wildlife overpass. Photo by Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection.

Buffelgrass Study

On August 17, the Board of Supervisors voted to allow a limited test of aerial spraying of buffelgrass on steep, remote hillsides. The project would monitor effectiveness of two application rates of glyphosate on twelve-1 acre study plots located in the Tucson Mountain Park. Details on the project can be found on www.buffelgrass.org.



Slope in Tucson Mountain Park infested with buffelgrass (yellow areas center and upper right corner). Photo by Marilyn Hanson.

Land Acquisitions

The Conservation Acquisition Commission approved acquiring Dos Picos in the Tucson Mountains. The 60-acre property protects a pair of prominent landmark peaks and adds to the Tucson Mountain Park boundary. The purchase was funded by the 1997 bond.



View of Dos Picos. Photo provided by Diana Durazo



Regulatory Reform

The Board of Supervisors has conceptually approved the first offsite riparian mitigation project under the County floodplain management ordinance. The project will compensate for loss of xeroriparian class C habitat in the southeast Tucson basin near Tucson Intercontinental Airport, where Granite Construction is expanding gravel mining activities. [Granite Construction](#) will work with University of Arizona College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA) and others to develop a plan for sustainable riparian enhancement and erosion control in the Kolb Regional Detention Basin. A final riparian habitat mitigation plan will be submitted to the Board for review and approval prior to any permit to allow mining to proceed.

The BOS approved a resolution requesting that the U.S. Congress pass legislation to reverse global warming, and to create an informed, well-funded framework to help state, local, and tribal governments protect natural resources and wildlife from the consequences of a warming world.

Species Updates

Are your hummingbird feeders being drained at night? Consider joining a bat monitoring project this summer. Two of our Priority Vulnerable Species are migratory, nectar-feeding bats. These bats are becoming common visitors to Tucson area hummingbird feeders in late summer and early fall. Contact Ted Fleming at ted@sonaura.net to join the project. More information about this project can be found at www.marana.com/bats.

At right, Tadpole shrimp are being reported in ephemeral pools of water near Rillito Racetrack. These small, native crustaceans eat detritus and mosquito larvae.

Environmental Education

From learning how to make prickly pear juice to whacking weeds in the desert, Pima County offers a variety of educational and interpretive programs. Visit http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/eeduc/PDFs/Programs_Brochure.pdf for more information.



Photograph courtesy of USFWS.



Photograph courtesy of Dick Fredericksen, Sonoran Arthropod Studies (www.sasionline.org)

