

Appendix vi - Past Open Space Planning Efforts in Pima County

During the research for this report, a 1998 report was reviewed called Open Space in Pima County; A Supplemental Report on the Open Space Committee Findings. The report was generated by a Committee appointed by the Pima County Board of Supervisors in 1985. It included a list and brief summaries of prior open space planning efforts. The list is reproduced below and more recent open space planning efforts have been added to the list.

1976 – Trails Access Plan. This plan located several areas and developed public acquisition strategies where access in existing public lands was in jeopardy of disappearing because of urban development.

1978 – Parks, Recreation and Open Space: A Conceptual Plan. This study provided the background framework for the open space element of the first comprehensive plan adopted by the City of Tucson in 1982.

1978 – Tucson Urban Study. The study developed both short term (10 to 15 years) and long term (50 years) alternate plans to integrate watercourses and other water resource projects into locally developed regional recreation plans.

1982 – Santa Cruz River Park Master Plan Update. This was the first major river park in Pima County.

1982 – Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City of Tucson and contained an open space element which called for the acquisition of major washes to link open public lands and for a more complete and detailed metropolitan Open Space and Regional Park Plan.

1984 – Rillito Corridor Study. The recreation element of this study proposed acquisition along the Rillito River for park development and a proposed connective series of trails along the Rillito River, Tanque Verde Creek and Sabino Creek. The flood control element provided flood plain management and acquisition of flood storage areas along Rillito, Tanque Verde, Sabino and Agua Caliente Washes.

1984 – The ULI/AIA Plan for Action. This plan called for implementation of the 1978 conceptual plan for open space and parks, and advocated early acquisition of open areas along the Rillito and Pantano Creeks.

1986 – Canada del Oro Master Plan. This plan was the first recreational river plan developed after all structured flood control improvements were completed on a major river.

1986 – Urban Design Commission Report. This report was an effort of local experts in planning, engineering, architecture and landscape architecture to improve the future urban form through quality design techniques. The Commission proposed a desert belt be created to define the Tucson southern boundary and supported the river park concept.

1986 – Critical and Sensitive Wildlife Habitats Study. This study identified areas of critical and sensitive wildlife habitat which should be preserved in the future.

1988 – Regional Trail and River Park System. This study was an interim step in developing primarily a regional system for Pima County. More detailed studies will be completed in the near future.

1988 – Regional Goals of Eastern Pima County. The adopted regional goals state: “A major asset of the region is its existing natural open spaces. To preserve open space amenities as urbanization continues, there is a need to integrate the mountains, foothills, floodplain and urban and natural parks into a continuous open space system.”

1988 – The Findings of the Pima County Open Space Committee. This report was generated by a Committee appointed by the Pima County Board of Supervisors in 1985. It provided recommendations on the types of lands that should be conserved, criteria that should be used to more narrowly select lands for conservation, mechanisms to protect such lands, and ideas on how to implement an open space program.

1998 – Open Space in Pima County. A Supplemental Report on the Open Space Committee’s Findings. This report is a supplement to the above report. It includes a history of past planning and funding efforts for open space preservation, the roles of federal agencies and State Trust lands, the lack of tax impacts from acquiring open space, the need to plan for open space in conjunction with development planning, summaries of other communities efforts at open space preservation, and local funding options for open space preservation.

1989 - Eastern Pima County Trails System Master Plan. The principal purpose of this plan was to identify acquisition priorities for the development of a trail network across eastern Pima County for pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists, handicapped users, and other non-motorized trails users.

1993 - Pima County Open Space Land Acquisition Program. The report provided recommendations for a 3 year open space land acquisition program, including the identification of lands to purchase, and the following funding sources to purchase these lands: \$600,000 of General Fund monies approved by the Board earlier that year, proceeds from the sale of surplus property, state and federal grants, and a 15 million general obligation bond issue at a future bond election.

2000 – Open Space Acquisition Master Plan and Staff Report. This report was drafted by the Open Space Acquisition Review Committee (OSARC), appointed by the Pima County Board of Supervisors to oversee the 1997 open space bond program, and Pima County Staff. The plan identified properties that could be purchased with the 1997 bond funds.

2003 – Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan Steering Committee Report to the Pima County Board of Supervisors. This report documented the Steering Committee’s recommendations on issues related to the County pursuing an Endangered Species Act Section 10 Permit, including the acquisition of a group of lands known as Habitat Protection Priorities, and a request for a 2003 bond election to be held to fund such purchases.

2004 – Conservation Bond Program Proposal. The Pima County Board of Supervisors appointed a committee to make specific recommendations for a 2004 bond election regarding the dollar amounts, categories, and types of properties to be acquired for conservation. The Pima County Conservation Bond Advisory Committee produced this report as their proposal. It called for the conservation of lands known as Habitat Protection Priorities, as well as lands known as Community Open Space Properties, as one tool for implementing the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

2007 – Conservation Acquisition Commission Recommendations. The Conservation Acquisition Commission appointed to oversee the implementation of the 2004 conservation acquisition bond program, developed recommendations for a tentative 2008 bond election. The recommendations continued to implement the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and focused on properties that were not able to be acquired with the 2004 bond monies, as well as some additional priorities.