

# 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.”*

**October/November/December 2009**

## [Maeveen Marie Behan Memorial](#)

Maeveen Behan passed away November 3<sup>rd</sup>, shortly after the Pima County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to dedicate the County's [Conservation Lands System](#) in her name. Much has been said in the past month about Maeveen and her many accomplishments; needless to say, we miss her greatly. Donations in Maeveen's memory may be made to the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System Memorial Fund, care of Diana Freshwater, with the Arizona Land and Water Trust ([www.alwt.org](http://www.alwt.org)).

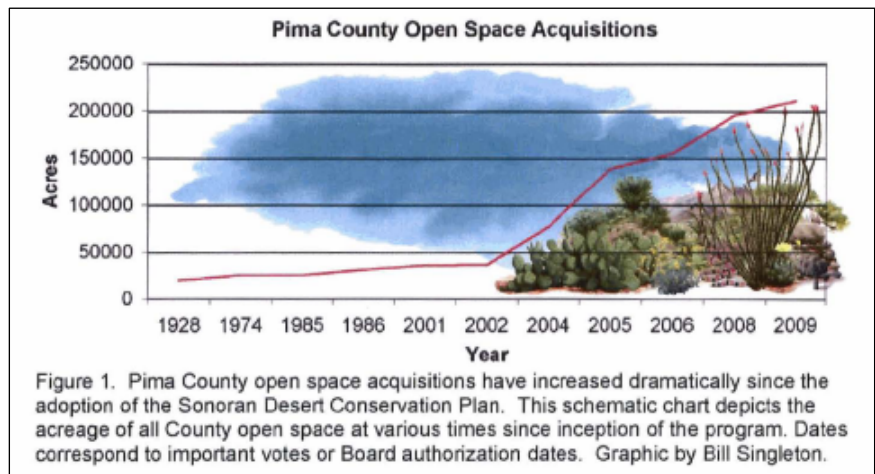
## **Hero's Appreciation**

Pima County Natural Resources Rangeland Manager, John L. Sullivan, rendered aid to a man found crawling along Redington Road, and facilitated the rescue of the man's companion, who was lost in a remote, rugged canyon. John's quick response and intimate knowledge of the land were key to her rescue. In December, the Pima County Board of Supervisor's [recognized](#) John's extraordinary efforts.

## **MSCP Update**

The report, [Measuring Effectiveness of Open Space Land Acquisitions](#) examines how effectively Pima County's natural open-space acquisitions have addressed priorities for conserving species' habitat and landscape features identified in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

Another study, [Habitat Mitigation in the Pima County Multiple Species Conservation Plan](#), provides the US Fish and Wildlife Service with an analysis that identifies anticipated impacts to each of the covered species. The report summarizes species by species accounting of the potential, direct, habitat losses that could occur due to activities covered under the MSCP.



## Species Updates

The Pima County Public Works Departments have developed a standard operating procedure for buffelgrass removal to coordinate, manage, control the spread of, and eliminate buffelgrass on county rights of way and county owned property.



A troupe of coatis, photographed at the 6 Bar Ranch. Photo taken by Kerry Baldwin.

## Environmental Education

The Sonoran Desert Kids Club recently [revealed](#) the Nature Pack, backpacks filled with items to encourage outdoor exploration. The packs contain magnifying glasses, rulers, compasses, binoculars, a guide to identify wildlife, and a Pima County park activity guide. The backpacks and activities are designed to encourage families to explore the outdoors. Visit <http://www.pima.gov/cmoo/sdcp/kids/index.html> for more information.

## Comments Sought on the County's Ranch Management Program

The county has acquired a number of ranch properties in Pima County, totaling over 200,000 acres of land. These properties are being managed as working landscapes with an emphasis on conservation and maintenance of the biological values rather than maximized livestock production. Many of the properties have had long-term commitments to sustainable ranching by the previous owners that the Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Department wants to build on. To best manage these properties it is important to build a flexible management system for the future that can adapt to changing weather patterns, increasing recreational uses, illegal use impacts and changing land-use demands.

To address these management challenges, NRPR has established a set of Standards and Guidelines for the grazing program. The document is intended to provide a vision and set of guidelines for the ranch operators and county oversight program to use in partnership. This document is also intended to be applied flexibly based on current conditions, available resources and monitoring data collected from the specific lands involved.

The draft is now available for public review until December 31, 2009.

[http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/parks/nrparks/PC\\_Grazing%20Standards\\_Draft\\_1209.pdf](http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/parks/nrparks/PC_Grazing%20Standards_Draft_1209.pdf)

