

MEMORANDUM



TO: Rafael Payan, Director

FROM: Kerry Baldwin, Natural Resources Division Manager

DATE: September 17, 2008

SUBJECT: Parks Commission Report for September, 2008

Open Space/Ranch Property Management-

In general all of the ranches have received good rains. At this point we anticipate a general upward trend in condition of our monitoring transects that will be read in October.

The final version of Bar V Ranch Coordinated Resource Management Plan prepared in cooperation with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has been signed off on by Arizona game and Fish Department and State Land Department. We are waiting for the property Manager to also sign off on it and then our office will finalize it. Once signed this grazing production operational plan will be posted on NRPR web site for public reference.

Worked in cooperation with Pima County DOT to clean up and remove old trash dump at King 98 ranch and establish a secure equipment storage area for DOT.

Cleaned up storm damage at Empirita Ranch on several abandoned buildings and horse barns. Cleaned up Montana Camp on Ranch Seco of trash from UDIs.

Finalized a survey/monitoring document for Bureau of Reclamation for the Ranch del Cielo lands adjacent to Colossal Cave mtn. Park. Established photos monitoring points and did initial plant survey of Akers property adjacent to Rancho del Cielo. Also monitored the Stevens property for negative habitat impacts as per USFW Conservation Easement Agreements.

Completed biological/sensitive species survey for proposed water line route on Diamond Bell ranch.

Staff walked with PAG staff on annual wet and dry mapping survey of the Cienega Creek Nature Preserve.

Worked with PAG to establish a new Wildlife Task Force as a sub-unit of the PAG Environmental Planning Committee as a way to create a forum to discuss and collaborate on a broad range of wildlife specific topics.

Finalized fencing of the Habitat for Humanity property at 36th Street and La Cholla.

Worked on conversion and upgrade of well on Rancho Seco West unit to solar and began discussions with BLM on similar conversion of well on BLM lease property on Rancho Seco east unit. Both upgrades will reduce O&M costs and establish year-round water for wildlife.

Invasive Species/Buflegrass-

NRPR operations staff has been working on control of buffelgrass in urban and River parks. We got approximately a 50% treatment accomplished within urban Parks this summer.

NRPR staff and Weed Wackers worked on the rugged face of Bushmaster Peak in TMP this month. NRPR staff also worked second year on Greasewood road between Anklam and Speedway, around Tunmamoc Hill and along Starr Pass Blvd and 36th St. Over 22 miles of roadside were treated. Over 60 linear miles of roadway were treated in TMP this past month.

Additional spray equipment has been acquired and put into use. We now have a new 200 gallon truck mounted system, 25 gallon ATV unit and backpack sprayers for loan to qualified work groups.

The EE section hosted with the Starr Pass Marriott a buffelgrass public education workshop. The successful workshop brought together representatives of all the local jurisdictions, federal agencies, Tucson Clean and Beautiful and home owner groups. The hands on event focused on motivating and managing volunteers to help control buffelgrass infestations in the urban core.

Open Space Acquisition-

The Conservation Acquisition Commission approved due diligence on acquisition of parts of the historic Sopori Ranch at the September 4, 2008 meeting.

Staff will attend a meeting of the State Parks Board on 9/19 requesting final approval for up to \$3.5 million dollars to match appraised value of 320 ac. parcel of State Land associated with Tumamoc Hill that will come up for auction late in the fall.

The Conservation Acquisition Commission approved a recommendation to the Bona Advisory Committee to amend the 2004 Bond language to include new

lands recommended buy the CAC for listing as potential acquisitions in next Bond program. The new lands were determined utilizing the same scientific identification process as the 2004 lands. This decision will increase the flexibility of remaining 2004 Bond funds to be used to acquire high value properties at a reduced cost with current trend in real estate market.

Environmental Education-

The fall programming is beginning to gear up with increased calls and demand for school program scheduling. We will be interviewing for a new EE specialist position in mid September. Our pilot summer schedule showed that we can attract good program participation for early morning and evening programs. Our partnership with the libraries has also generated excellent participation and interest in our other programs. In August we contacted 775 people in programs. A new six-week volunteer training session for Feliz Paseos and Tucson Mountain Park will start on October 17, 2008.

NR Parks-

Significant work continues on layout, biological/cultural evaluation, construction and grooming of new trails in Robles Pass trails Parks. A ribbon cutting for Sweetwater Trails Park is being planned as part of a Tucson Mountain Association event in October.

The Canoa Advisory Committee plans a fall roundup at the Park on November 8, 2008 from 1-5pm. The invitation only event will work to provide a reunion to capture stories, documents and artifacts from those who lived and worked on Canoa over the decades for use in future interpretive and exhibit projects. On November 1-3, individuals and livestock will come to the Ranch to recreate the 1st night Anza camp and expedition for a historically accurate video production in the works.

At Catalina Regional we have established some test and weed control plots and are doing some research on the best control methods available to us. We are also reevaluating the concept design for the park to maximize improvements for the available funds left for the park start up. Actual construction projects are anticipated to start in the late fall and be completed by summer of next year. The park staff at Catalina discovered a network of paved drives on one of the parcels in the park that had been covered by 2-4 feet of sediment after the fire floods in 2002. They have been cleaning the area up and plans are being developed to utilize the find for a universal access (ADA) plant and wildlife viewing trail. The Park Manager continues to interface with local groups to answer questions on park development plans and development constraints. A public meeting on current planning status is planned at the Golder Fire District Center in Catalina from 6-9 pm on October 15, 2008.

The spring at Agua Caliente Park is flowing at a seasonal high of 29-32 gallons per minute and allowed manager to reduce supplementary water from wells to maintain water level in main pond. Some of the non native invasive palms around the main pond were thinned out at the Park. Agua staff also worked on fence repair and invasive plant management in Cienega Creek Nature Preserve.