

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
450 West Paseo Redondo
Thursday May 19, 2005
3:00 p.m.**

A. Motions at the May 19 Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare, to approve the acquisition of the Madera Highlands property (366 acres north of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge) via an assignment of option to purchase from Arizona Open Land Trust to the County. Motion approved 9-0. Commissioner Shattuck recused herself from the discussion and abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

B. Direction to Staff

- Invite Bill Shaw and Bob Steidl (Science Technical Advisory Team) to a future Commission meeting for discussion of critical landscape connections
- Check on the status of Canoa parcels on the west side of I-19 between block one and existing development to the north
- Archive presentations to the Commission so that Commissioners can access the information at a later date
- Staff will look into the option of asking whether the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge could manage the Madera Highlands property for the County.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the May 19, 2005 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. with a quorum.

Commissioners Present

Bill Arnold
Trevor Hare
Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair
Rob Marshall
Chuck Pettis
Tim Prouty
Bill Roe, Chair
Wanda Shattuck
Tom Sheridan
Helen Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Les Corey

Christine Curtis announced that the County closed on the Rancho Seco today.

2. Conservation Opportunities in Connection Analysis Areas

Chairman Roe gave an overview of the field trip around the Oracle Road corridor and the Avra I-10 corridor. Chairman Roe, Vice-Chair Johnson, Commissioner Sheridan, and County staff participated in the field trip. Nicole Fyffe noted that staff has sent letters to the property owners identified in the Oracle Road corridor. Sherry Ruther stated she is attempting to assemble a group of biologists to tour the two corridors and provide more information as to the biological viability of the corridors. Vice-Chair Johnson noted that the road kill map for the area appeared consistent with the County's potential acquisitions. Commissioner Sheridan noted that the future status of the large tracts of State Land on either side of Oracle Road is very important to this corridor. Commissioner Marshall requested the attendance of Bill Shaw, Chair of the Science Technical Advisory Team (STAT), and Bob Steidl, member of the STAT, at a future Commission meeting to discuss potential acquisitions in the critical landscape connections.

3. Private Habitat Protection Priority Parcels Northwest of Arthur Pack Park

Nicole Fyffe presented a table of information summarizing the 38 vacant private habitat protection priority parcels northwest of Arthur Pack Park. Sherry Ruther briefed the Commission on two comprehensive plan amendments for private habitat protection priorities around Arthur Pack Park, one of which falls in this northwest group of 38 parcels. Ms. Ruther also reminded the Commission that a subcommittee of the Science Technical Advisory Team had previously assigned priorities to properties in this Tortolita sub area (First priority = Merodius parcels on Oracle Rd., Second priority = parcels northwest of Arthur Pack, third priority = parcels northeast of Arthur Pack). Commissioner Marshall stated that the habitat protection priorities in the Tortolita sub area are different than those selected in other subareas in that they were selected because Pygmy Owls either occupied the sites or used the sites as movement corridors.

4. Conservation Easements Fact Sheet

Comments from those in the Conservation Easements sub committee are being incorporated into the fact sheet. The fact sheet should be completed by the next Commission meeting.

5. Approval of April 21 Meeting Summary

Meeting summary was approved 10-0.

6. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

The Commission previously received an update of the 1997 and 2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures as of April 30, 2005. Nicole Fyffe noted that the minimum amount typically expended on due diligence per property is \$15,000. This includes a title report, appraisal, Phase 1 environmental assessment, biological assessment, archaeological survey, and labor costs.

7. Acquisition of Madera Highlands

Commissioner Hare asked whether the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge could manage the property for the County. Staff will look into this option. Commissioner Wilson asked that fencing be put up to exclude cattle from the property.

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare, to approve the acquisition of the Madera Highlands property (366 acres north of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge) via an assignment of option to purchase from Arizona Open Land Trust to the County. Motion approved 9-0. Commissioner Shattuck recused herself from the discussion and abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

8. Acquisition of Canoa Ranch Parcels – Concept Plan

Nicole Fyffe summarized the concept plan: Three parcels included in the 2004 bond ordinance as Community Open Space Parcels could be purchased for \$3 million in bond funds and approximately \$1 million in Floodprone Land Acquisition Program (FLAP) funds. Because the appraisals for these parcels far exceed this purchase amount, the concept plan also involves the transfer of 180 units of development from one of the three parcels on the east side of I-19 to a previously conserved parcel on the west side of I-19. The Board of Supervisors previously approved this concept plan. If the County is able to reach an agreement with the seller, the acquisitions will be brought to the Commission for approval.

Commissioners had questions regarding the waiving of fees to reach the approximate \$4 million acquisition cost, the status of Canoa parcels on the west side of I-19 between block one and existing development to the north, and why the Commission was not asked to approve the concept plan before the Board of Supervisors.

9. Bureau of Land Management Lands Adjacent to or Within County-Owned Properties

Commissioners and staff could not recall why this item was placed on the agenda.

10. Restoration on County-Acquired Lands

Ann Phillips, Tucson Audubon, gave a slide presentation on a restoration project currently underway on City-owned property in northern Avra Valley (the North Simpson Site). Ms. Phillips advice for beginning restoration on similar County-owned properties was to fence off areas using wildlife fencing, collect inventory data for the property, visit the site regularly to observe changes with rainfall seasons and drainage flow events, provide site tours for experts who can provide useful information and advice, and get a handle on invasive species.

11. Presentation on Tres Rios Project

Tom Helfrich, Water Resources Manager for the Flood Control District, gave a presentation on the Tres Rios Project, a restoration project that includes the Avra I-10 corridor area.

Commissioner Sheridan requested that presentations to the Commission be archived in some way that Commissioners can access the information at a later date.

12. Updates:

Bar V Ranch: The County is working on closing mineshafts and fencing a section of the northern parcel that will be managed by the County. Commissioner Hare asked about the location of the fencing in relation to the stream and the ridgelines. Kerry Baldwin stated that the fencing on the northern parcel would occur on the ridgelines of the canyon.

King98: The County has fenced the buildings for security issues and is currently working on a management agreement with the owners of the adjacent ranch, the Kings, to manage the King98 for the County. As owners of the King98 and the Rancho Seco, the County will be participating in fire management plans for the Altar Valley.

Rancho Seco: The County closed on the Ranch today and is undertaking the fencing of mine shafts and tailings in the Juniper Mine area of the property.

Carpenter Ranch: Diana Freshwater announced that the Carpenters are willing to sell the entire ranch, and would like to enter into a management agreement for the 75 cattle they run on 6,000 acres.

Camino de Oeste: Revised contingent acquisition agreements have been sent to certain property owners, and one has been received back for the Matesich property.

Poteet: County staff are currently reviewing requests by the agent for edits to the acquisition agreement. If these edits are deemed acceptable, the property will be placed on the Commission's next agenda for final approval to acquire.

South Corridor Project Area: The County has contingent acquisition agreements from Hiett, Mejo LLC, Berard, and Kay. Appraisals are due June 7th.

Belvedere Estates Property: Commission approved this acquisition on April 21. It is scheduled to go to the Board of Supervisors on June 7th.

Diocese Parcel: The auction is Saturday May 21st.

Green Valley Hills: No update.

Habitat for Humanity parcel and west 36th Street:

The City would prefer that the County acquire this parcel. The County would prefer to spend the bond funds on parcels closer to Tucson Mountain Park. Discussions between the City and the County and the seller will continue.

Federal Exchange involving Tumamoc Hill: No change in the update from last meeting.

Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: One additional habitat protection priority property north of Canoa Ranch, Canoa Hills, has entered the development process via a tentative plat sketch for a conservation subdivision.

13. Next Commission Meeting, June 23 2005

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2005 at 3 p.m. A suggested agenda was distributed to the Commission. The Commissioners will be asked which meeting date to keep, either July 21 or August 11th, and to select meeting dates for the first 6 months of 2006.

14. Call to the Public

Carolyn Campbell, Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection spoke about the Regional Transportation Authority transportation planning process, including \$10 million approved by the technical and citizen advisory teams for wildlife crossings. The plan, as well as a half-cent sales tax to fund the plan, is expected to go to the voters in 2006 for approval.

Commissioner Hare urged Commissioners to call their congressmen to show support for keeping transportation enhancement monies for wildlife crossings in the latest Federal transportation bill.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.