



Town of Marana Habitat Conservation Plan

February 17, 2010

Email Update for the Stakeholder Working Group

AZ State Land: A letter responding to the State Land's comments on the Public Draft Marana HCP was signed by the Town Manager and sent to Maria Baier on January 26, 2010.

HCP Mapping: The GIS Department is continuing to revise the maps in response to public comments on the Draft HCP.

Desert Tortoise Map: In accordance with recommendations by Scott Richardson, USFWS, the desert tortoise map will be revised to show habitat as it was originally depicted (on the Tucson and Tortolita Mountains), and to depict a larger area where surveys will be required by any development project to avoid lethal take for juveniles that may be dispersing across the area.

Burrowing Owl Map: The burrowing owl map has been revised to include a larger area encompassed by Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan Priority Conservation Area for this species. Areas along the Santa Cruz River with trees were removed from the potential habitat map because of the risk of predation by raptors that perch in the tall vegetation.

Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow Installation Project: An Eagle Scout is planning a project to install burrows adjacent to the Heritage Park with the help of the Town of Marana and Greg Clark, Wild at Heart.

Potential Burrowing Owls Management Area: Jennifer and Janine met with Barbara Johnson, General Manager for Public Services and Ryan Benavides, Assistant Public Works Director regarding concerns of placing a burrowing owl management area in the Proposed BOR Park (along Avra Valley Rd.). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the location of the owls in relation to the Marana Regional Airport (which will have future expansion to the south) that is adjacent to the project. The potential Burrowing Owl Management Area (BOMA) is approximately 3,900 ft from the end of the clear zone after the runway is extended and is outside of the fenced area. A plan will be developed to passively relocate any owls that move inside the airport fence. An area farther north in the proposed park will be evaluated for suitability, which would place the BOMA farther from the flight path. It was agreed that creating a BOMA in the park is not a serious safety issue for the Marana Airport. We will have to determine whether it is possible to install the BOMA prior to development of the rest of the park. To meet the requirement of the Bureau of Reclamation for the use of the land, a recreation component will also need to be included. We will need to work with Reclamation to make sure that the BOMA recreation component could consist of interpretive signage and a viewing area.

Mitigation Ratios for Zone 3: There was some discussion at the Stakeholder working Group meeting about what the mitigation ratio should be to create an incentive for acquiring mitigation land in the main wildlife corridor. More discussion is needed.

Protection for the Tortolita Fan: The Town is looking into the possibility of preserving the Tortolita Fan through designation as a National Monument, National Park, or some other means. We are discussing the possibility with Pinal County and will update the group when we have some more information. If anyone has experience with park, wildlife refuge, or monument designations please share your thoughts with us.