

Friends of the Desert

Issue 46 Fall 2014

A Strong Voice for the People and Wildlife of the Sonoran Desert

Why We Need More Open Space in Pima County

Your input is critical to a successful 2015 Open Space Bond

If you take a look at the surrounding Tucson area, what do you notice? Dense saguaro stands? The complex and harmonious call of a rich variety of bird species? More species of grasses and scrubs than you can count? The unexpected beauty of a flowering hedgehog cactus? We live in an incredibly unique, richly diverse, and fragile place. The Sonoran Desert has over 500 unique animal species and upwards of 2,000 native species of plants. There is nowhere else like it in the world.

Yet, even the intrinsic beauty and rarity of the Sonoran Desert cannot halt encroaching development that coincides with a growing population. Natural spaces are turning into housing developments and roads are being built and widened to accommodate for these changes. The desert cannot protect itself from the threats to its fragility, but luckily, it has people to speak for it. The community has stepped up again and again throughout the years to support Sonoran Desert protection.

The foundation for open space conservation in Pima County is the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP). Adopted in 1998, this visionary plan identified our most biologically important areas and created special protections for them based on the best available science. These lands, the Conservation Lands System (CLS), require special protection measures if

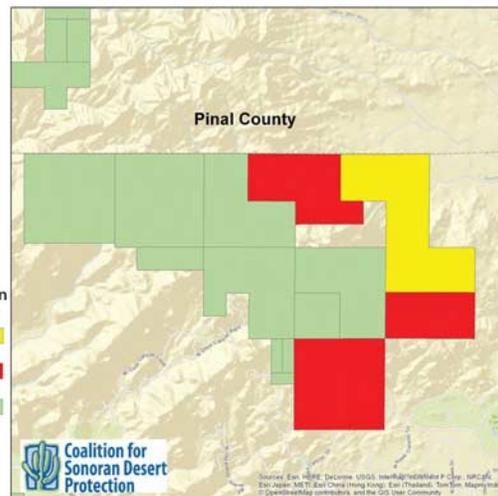
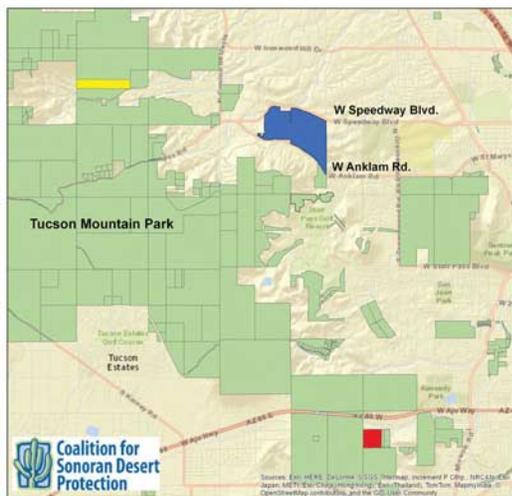
development occurs on them. The CLS also helps prioritize the purchase of open space with voter-approved bond funds.

In the past, Pima County voters have shown support for the conservation of open space and habitat protection. In 1997, voters approved \$27 million in open space bond funds and then \$174 million more in 2004. Last summer, when Pima County conducted a survey about possible new bond projects, participants chose open space and habitat protection as one of the top priorities.

Pima County has spent past open space bond funds to preserve over 200,000 acres of land. This encompasses important wildlife habitat, including critical riparian areas and rare springs. A citizens' advisory committee is responsible for making funding, land acquisition, and management recommendations to both the Bond Advisory Committee

continued page 3

Because of your help, Pima County recently bought the stunning Painted Hills property near the Tucson Mountains as protected open space.



Your support contributed to these recent open space purchases in Tucson and Tortolita Mountain Parks.



Who We Are

The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection works daily to create a community where:

- ☘ Ecosystem health is important;
- ☘ Nature and healthy wild animal populations are valued;
- ☘ Residents, visitors, and future generations can all drink clean water, breathe clean air, and find wild places to roam.

In 1997, the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl received protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This spurred dozens of conservation and neighborhood groups to come together to form the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection (Coalition) in February of 1998. Since then, the Coalition has advocated for the development and implementation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, with the goal of protecting our region's natural resources and biological diversity. The Coalition is a leader in local planning processes and conservation efforts.

The Coalition is currently comprised of 41 member groups. These groups represent well over 30,000 members. The Coalition staff works on a grassroots level with thousands of direct supporters. The Coalition has non-profit 501(c)3 status through the fiscal sponsorship of Coalition member group Sky Island Alliance, and is able to operate through donations from individuals and support from a variety of foundations.

The Coalition's wide array of outreach, education, advocacy, grassroots activism, and conservation planning activities are focused on achieving consensus between all stakeholder groups, demonstrating overwhelming community support for regional conservation planning to ensure that our Sonoran Desert remains whole and viable for current and future generations to enjoy.

Learn more about the Coalition and how you can help support our efforts at www.sonorandesert.org

Carolyn's Corner Getting more chills



Do you get chills, like I do, every time you see another beautiful and mighty jaguar, captured on camera right here in southern Arizona? Or a local photo of its endangered cousin, the ocelot? How about when you see desert bighorn sheep from cameras in the Ironwood Forest National Monument? Or magnificent trogons, mule deer, or just about any owl?

A recent morning walk in the Tucson Mountains brought an overwhelming sense of joy and contentment as I experienced the lush September desert: the smells of greasewood after a rain, the sight of blooming grama grasses, the shadows of the monsoon clouds, a roadrunner crossing the trail, the calling of a sparrow.

In this newsletter, you will find news, updates, and calls to action about many urgent issues that the Coalition continues to work on: the latest endangered species to be found in and around the proposed Rosemont Mine site; animal footprints in the newly-constructed wildlife underpasses near Kitt Peak; the Coalition's exciting volunteer-driven wildlife camera project; the latest acquisitions of important habitat with 2004 bond funds, and preparations for an upcoming conservation bond.

Why is the Coalition working on all of these projects, and why do you, as our supporters, care about this? We want to get more chills. We want to see more charismatic predators, like the jaguar, puma, ocelot, and bobcat, roaming through our wildlands. All of these projects are so worthwhile because we, and you, are making a difference in protecting the web of life here, where we live in the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona

This is why we all continue to work to protect and connect open spaces, keep destructive industries like open pit mining from our scenic Santa Rita Mountains, and protect the riparian areas that remain. This is not a thankless job. Future generations of wild animals and people will thank us for it, whether we hear it or not.

You are making a difference in protecting the web of life in the Sonoran Desert.

Urgent: Your Voice Needed NOW!

Open Space Bond funding is in danger of being CUT from the 2015 Bond Package (see next page for details).

Your attendance is needed at the November 7, 2014, Pima County Bond Advisory Committee meeting to speak up for open space. Keep checking www.sonorandesert.org for more information.

Write a letter to the Bond Advisory Committee telling them why open space is critically important for the economy, community, and Sonoran Desert wildlife. Send your letter to: Larry Hecker, Chair, and Committee Members, Pima County Bond Advisory Committee, 130 W Congress St., 10th Floor, Tucson, AZ 85701; **or email your letter to bondinfo@pima.gov**

Open Space

continued from page 1

and the Board of Supervisors. Purchases of these lands work to meet the goals and vision of the SDCP.

Recently, Pima County residents have also been able to see the successes of other open space funding sources. In December 2013, Pima County expanded Tortolita Mountain Park by 818 acres using a matching grant for \$1.225 million from Arizona State Parks. The rest of the funding came from development fees and 2012-2013 general funds. The expansion is an important milestone because the Tortolita Mountains are part of a major wildlife linkage from the Tucson Mountains to the Santa Catalina Mountains.

In August, the Board of Supervisors approved the purchase agreement to acquire Painted Hills, adding it to Tucson Mountain Park. The total cost will be \$8.3 million and the purchase will be completed over five years. This 286-acre property west of downtown Tucson contains dense stands of saguaros, pristine habitat, and wildlife. For many years, the Coalition, Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association, and Tucson Mountains Association have been advocating for this acquisition. Purchases like this help connect already protected areas and create a functional ecosystem for many Sonoran Desert species. Moreover, it gives residents and visitors the opportunity to experience an unspoiled desert landscape.

Your support has contributed to some tremendous open space purchases. Thank you!

In July, the Pima County Board of Supervisors authorized the purchase of two state land parcels, totaling 100 acres, to expand Tucson Mountain Park, which will also utilize other funding sources. The Trails End Parcel and the Robles Pass Parcel will provide protected habitat and contribute to the ecological, cultural, and historic value of the park. Pima County will buy the lands using recently-awarded Growing Smarter grant funds and the Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Fund. The properties are scheduled to be auctioned by the State Land Department in November of this year, and if the county is successful, these lands will be open to residents and visitors soon after!

These recent open space successes have been tremendous. Every acquisition made to complete the vision of the SDCP is worth celebrating

Looking ahead, Pima County intends to ask the voters to approve a bond package in November 2015. Currently, there are 465,000 acres of private and state land eligible for acquisition, estimated to be valued at \$2 billion. Understanding that not all properties will be purchased (some will be developed), and that it will take multiple bond elections to implement the conservation vision, the value of these lands exceeds the amount allocate for open space bonds.

The Bond Advisory Committee previously voted to recommend \$120 million of open space funding to be included in the upcoming bond package. **But now with new competing needs, there are many members who would like to significantly reduce this amount. There will need to be a great amount of public support, and pressure on this board, to keep this amount in the bond package.** With your action, we hope that the Bond Advisory Committee, and ultimately the Board of Supervisors, will include \$120 million or more to purchase and protect important Sonoran Desert habitat. *Please see box on page 2 for simple ways you can help — we need you NOW!*

Open space is also not only just about habitat conservation. It provides flood control, reduces sprawl, and makes Pima County residents happier and healthier. Having access to open space promotes exercise and reduces stress. It is also good for the economy. In 2011, watchable wildlife opportunities and access to protected open space contributed

continued page 5

Coalition Member Groups

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest
Arizona League of Conservation Voters
Education Fund
Arizona Native Plant Society
Bat Conservation International
Cascabel Conservation Association
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Connections
Center for Environmental Ethics
Defenders of Wildlife
Desert Watch
Drylands Institute
Empire Fagan Coalition
Environmental and Cultural Conservation Organization
Environmental Law Society
Friends of Cabeza Prieta
Friends of Ironwood Forest
Friends of Madera Canyon
Friends of Saguaro National Park
Friends of Tortolita
Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association
Native Seeds/SEARCH
Neighborhood Coalition of Greater Tucson
Northwest Neighborhoods Alliance
Protect Lands and Neighborhoods
Safford Peak Watershed Education Team
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
Sierra Club—Grand Canyon Chapter
Sierra Club—Rincon Group
Silverbell Mountain Alliance
Sky Island Alliance
Sky Island Watch
Society for Ecological Restoration
Sonoran Arthropod Studies Institute
Sonoran Permaculture Guild
Southwestern Biological Institute
Tortolita Homeowners Association
Tucson Audubon Society
Tucson Herpetological Society
Tucson Mountains Association
Wildlands Network
Women for Sustainable Technology

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What's the Latest with Rosemont?

An Ocelot, Hudbay and the Threat of an Environmental Disaster

by Gayle Hartmann, President, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas

Yet another cat from the subtropics has moved northward into the eastern foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains. An ocelot has joined its larger relative, the jaguar, and is now making its home in the vicinity of the proposed Rosemont Mine. Over the last several months, the ocelot, looking sleek and healthy, has been photographed by the remote cameras of various federal and state agencies.

As a result of the arrival of the ocelot in the Santa Ritas, as well as the presence of the jaguar and concerns about impacts on water supplies affecting the endangered fish in Cienega Creek and Davidson Canyon, the Coronado National Forest is preparing a new Biological Assessment. When completed, this assessment will go to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and will be included in a new round of formal Endangered Species Act consultations between the two agencies. These consultations are expected to continue into 2015.

In other agency news, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has written to Rosemont that plans to mitigate the mine's damage to vital watersheds are inadequate, thus jeopardizing the essential Section 404 permit. The Corps stated that Rosemont's most recent mitigation plan (in its application for a Clean Water Act permit) fails to fully compensate for damage the proposed mine would cause to springs, washes and wetlands. The mine cannot be built without the 404 permit.

Another significant recent event in the on-going Rosemont saga is the acquisition of the Rosemont property by Hudbay Minerals from Augusta Resource. Hudbay is another Canadian company, with a long history of establishing an industrial toehold in a region and then constructing

numerous mines in the immediate vicinity. Hudbay's CEO, David Garofalo, recently told the Green Valley News and Sun editorial board that, "What attracts us to Arizona is it is an historic copper district, it's copper country. Our geologists and geophysicists salivate over the potential within this district, and our objective, in addition to building Rosemont, is...to start to accumulate property positions, hopefully within spitting distance of the industrial complex we'll build at Rosemont...."

In order to achieve its goals of developing Rosemont, Hudbay now assumes the regulatory burden of getting the project approved, which, given recent developments, is far from certain. The EPA has stated that the massive open-pit mine that would destroy more than 3,000 acres of Coronado National Forest would result in "substantial and unacceptable

impact" to water supplies of "national importance" and that the proposed mitigation measures are "scientifically flawed" and "grossly inadequate."

It is important to understand that Hudbay has an unsavory history in both environmental and humanitarian arenas. For 80 years, Hudbay operated an antiquated, highly polluting copper smelter in the small community of Flin Flon in central Canada. Pollution from the smelter and other mining operations has contaminated the soil in the community, leading to studies testing for lead and other metals in children.

Hudbay has also left behind a troubling legacy in Guatemala where forced relocation of indigenous people near a nickel mine once owned by Hudbay has led to allegations of gang-rape, murder and shootings. Three lawsuits are currently ongoing relating to these incidents.

A final issue of considerable concern is the environmental catastrophe that occurred in early August in British Columbia. The international engineering firm that designed a Canadian mine tailings dam that collapsed is also playing a key role in the development of the proposed Rosemont Copper Mine's tailings dump.

The catastrophic failure of Imperial Metal's Mount Polley tailings dam sent millions of gallons of toxic slurry laden with heavy metals and other pollutants into waterways of central British Columbia. The enormous spill has resulted in an emergency ban on drinking water, devastation of important salmon habitat and damage to the region's tourism and outdoor economy.

The engineering company, Knight Piésold Ltd., provided the design, construction supervision, quality control, and annual inspections of the tailings facility, according to Canadian regulatory filings. In a recent

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Without your advocacy, the Rosemont Mine could have disastrous consequences for wildlife like the jaguar and ocelot.



This rare and endangered ocelot was recently photographed in the Santa Rita Mountains near the proposed Rosemont mine, which would destroy vital ocelot habitat. *Courtesy of USFWS/UA/DHS*

An August mine spill in Cananea, Mexico released toxic chemicals into the Sonora River and possibly into the San Pedro River which flows into Arizona. This shows us the devastation a Rosemont Mine could, and likely would, bring to surrounding watersheds.

\$1.4 billion to Arizona's economy¹. Last year, visitors to Saguaro National Park contributed \$41 million to the local economy². Wildlife, plants, and people alike all benefit from open space.

As the next bond election approaches, it is important to encourage the Bond Advisory Committee to recommend as much money as possible for open space. Currently, Pima County has identified nearly 464,000 acres as acquisition priorities for the next bond. Every day we can see how special our Sonoran Desert home is. The Sonoran Desert needs advocates like you to continue functioning as one of the most diverse and unique places on Earth.

¹Tucson Audubon Society: The Economic Contributions of Wildlife Viewing to the Arizona Economy: A County-Level Analysis. 2013. Southwick Associates /Arizona Game & Fish Department.

² National Park Visitor Spending Effects Economic Contributions to Local Communities, States, and the Nation: Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR—2014/824. 2014. 2013. National Park Service.

Open Space

continued from page 3



Long-time supporters Susan Shobe and Staffan Schorr with their children (l-r) Dahlia, Violet, and Willow.

Donor Spotlight: Susan Shobe

I grew up in Tucson and southeast Arizona; my kids are now 3rd generation at their public school here. My heart beams to hear my kids exclaim, “Look at the vegetation!!” after a desert rain, or “The hawks have left the nest!!”, or “Dad, you need to put more sugar water out for the hummingbirds.” We are a part of this desert and this community, and it is a part of us.

I've been a long-time supporter of the Coalition because I've been inspired by the work they've accomplished in protecting our vanishing wild desert areas.

They truly are a coalition—building relationships and working with others to find common ground while holding true to the mission of

We are a part of this desert and this community, and it is a part of us.

protecting habitats that will sustain the full range of our native species to the greatest extent possible. Their work reminds us again and again what is best about Pima County, and that the hard work and dedication to saving it really can pay off.

When my husband and I had our 2nd child, we decided to become monthly donors—we find it easier to budget in a small amount each month rather than to part with a large sum at once, and it provides more certainty that we are able to meet our heart's desire to contribute when finances are tight. We actually contribute more now, because it's all in small increments. We are happy to have this option that allows us to continue to support the Coalition's great work, and we encourage all families or others on a small or fluctuating budget to consider this option. — Susan Shobe



This beautiful Cooper's Hawk was captured by one of our wildlife cameras.

[See page 8 for more!](#)

statement, Knight Piésold stated that they ended their relationship with the Mt. Polley mine in 2011. In Arizona, the same company conducted laboratory testing on materials that would be used in Rosemont's proposed tailings facility as a subcontractor for AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc., which prepared the final design report for Rosemont's dry stack tailings storage facility in April 2009.

It is important to keep in mind that, notwithstanding the PR spin from mining companies, the worst case scenario can and does happen. Although there are some differences in the design, if even a fraction of the devastation that occurred in Canada were to take place at the proposed Rosemont Mine, the drinking water supplies of a metropolitan area of 1 million people would be impacted, not to mention the destruction of important desert riparian habitat.

All of these factors, and others, add up to a surplus of reasons why this mining proposal is in a completely unacceptable location and must never be built.

Rosemont

continued from page 4



This wildlife underpass near Kitt Peak was constructed by "dropping in" large pre-cast concrete arches, replacing a small, dark box culvert. Your support helped make this happen!

Protecting Wildlife Linkages near Kitt Peak

Wildlife Can Now Safely Cross State Route 86 Through New Wildlife Underpasses

Background

Highways constitute one of the most significant forces altering natural ecosystems. Wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) are a serious threat to wildlife populations and contribute to human injuries, deaths, and property loss. Even more pervasive are highway barrier and fragmentation effects that contribute to diminished habitat connectivity and highway permeability. Efforts have increased dramatically over the past decade to address the impact of Arizona's highways on wildlife, but until 2013, were largely confined to northern Arizona. That since has changed as significant Pima County connectivity projects are now underway along State Routes (SR) 86 and 77, both made possible with funding by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and its commitment of up to \$45 million to connectivity over 20 years.

SR 86 links Tucson to the Tohono O'odham Nation (TON) and its Tribal seat, Sells, and beyond. ADOT has embarked on a program of widening the existing narrow 2-lane roadway with limited shoulders to improve motorist safety. In 2011, as ADOT planned and designed the Kitt Peak (Mileposts [MP] 132 –137) and Santa Rosa Ranch (MP 128–132) widening projects, the TON advocated for integrating wildlife connectivity into the projects, and expressed concern that

Wildlife tracks of bobcat, coyote, and deer have already been found in the new Kitt Peak wildlife underpasses.

failure to seize upon these "projects of opportunity" could forego addressing connectivity for decades. Furthermore, the extension of many existing concrete box culverts, some meeting wildlife passage needs, to accommodate 30-foot safety zones would diminish their utility for wildlife passage.

The 2006 Arizona's Wildlife Linkages Assessment ranked the Kitt Peak Linkage that overlapped these widening projects as one of 28 "highest priority" linkages of 152 in the state due to habitat value for mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, javelina, and many reptile species including desert tortoise. Further, it constitutes a landscape-scale corridor for far-ranging species like mountain lion with its strategic location along the string of "sky islands" stretching along the Baboquivari Mountains from Mexico northward. The project area constitutes the northern boundary of recently designated critical habitat for the endangered jaguar.

Developing a Strategy to Promote Connectivity

Thus, with a rapidly narrowing window of opportunity to integrate wildlife connectivity into the widening projects, ADOT worked with the TON to expedite development of strategies to promote connectivity. They focused on identifying suitable sites for retrofit

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One of the two recently completed Kitt Peak wildlife underpasses, making this wildlife linkage safer for both wildlife and motorists.

(“drop in”) passage structures that could be built quickly during widening. We identified six sites for underpasses, and two overpass sites where roadway excavation would not be needed. In 2011, RTA approved funding for two wildlife underpasses and committed to future funding of an overpass and the wildlife funnel fencing to link the structures and make them effective. This approach addressed RTA’s cash flow limitations while capitalizing on the widening projects of opportunity; it promotes highway passage and connectivity, improves motorist safety, and reduces the impact of WVC on wildlife populations.

In November 2013, work on the state’s first two pre-cast arch wildlife underpasses was begun, with the first half of each underpasses structure installed in less than a single day (following lengthier excavation and foundation work). Once backfilling and paving over the partial underpasses was completed, the second halves were installed in February 2014. The Kitt Peak underpass measures 11’ high × 32’ wide × 88’ in length, while the Santa Rosa Ranch structure measures 8’ × 32’ × 88’. A short video clip of the installation process can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=snrha2-JCJo. Since completion, and without wildlife funnel fencing, animals are already using the structures as evidenced by tracks. Cooperative, rigorous camera monitoring of wildlife use of the underpasses by TON with ADOT support will begin this summer now that construction is complete. Separate U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant funding obtained by the TON will provide dedicated funding for monitoring.

Kitt Peak

continued from page 6

We are working hard, with your support, to help construct two wildlife overpasses for bighorn sheep near Kitt Peak.

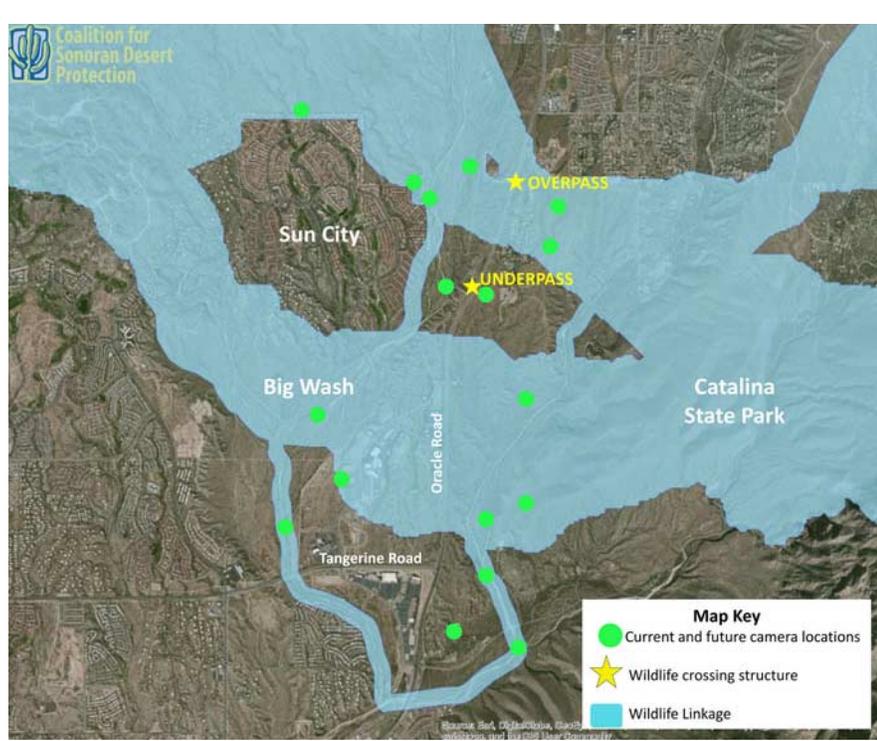


A print from a deer or bighorn sheep was found beneath one of the underpasses. Your support is helping to protect and re-connect this wildlife linkage!

Making a Good Strategy Even Better

In May 2014, with underpasses in place, the TON submitted a refined proposal for the construction of two wildlife overpasses and the construction of wildlife fencing to link the two underpasses (and ultimately the overpasses). After initial approval by RTA’s wildlife linkage committee, final approval will occur by late-September. This enhanced strategy will better meet the full range of wildlife passage needs along the entire Kitt Peak Linkage, especially bighorn sheep and potentially even jaguar.

Southern Arizona’s first wildlife passages are now in place, just 30 months after first being conceived, with wildlife fencing and monitoring to soon follow. The cooperative spirit between the TON and ADOT mixed with the proactive funding and support provided by the RTA will ensure that wildlife reap the benefits of improved connectivity as they move across the southern Arizona landscape.



Coyote, deer, javelina, and jackrabbits are just a few of the wildlife species captured by our Wildlife Camera Project near Catalina State Park. Our camera locations, maintained by an amazing group of volunteers, are shown on the map to the right.

Photos for Conservation: *Expanding our Wildlife Camera Project*

Lights! Camera! Action! We're excited to announce we're expanding our wildlife camera project. Thanks to two new grants from the Sun City Community Assistance Committee and the Sun City Community Foundation, we'll be adding six more cameras this fall, bringing our total to 17 cameras in Big Wash, Canyon del Oro wash, Catalina State Park, and Sun City Vistoso!

These six additional cameras will fill in current "gaps" in the project area and give us a better understanding of wildlife presence and behavior between the Santa Catalina and Tortolita Mountains. Data from these cameras will be used to monitor the nearby vegetated wildlife bridge and wildlife underpass currently under construction and to advocate for more open space conservation and future wildlife crossings around the region.

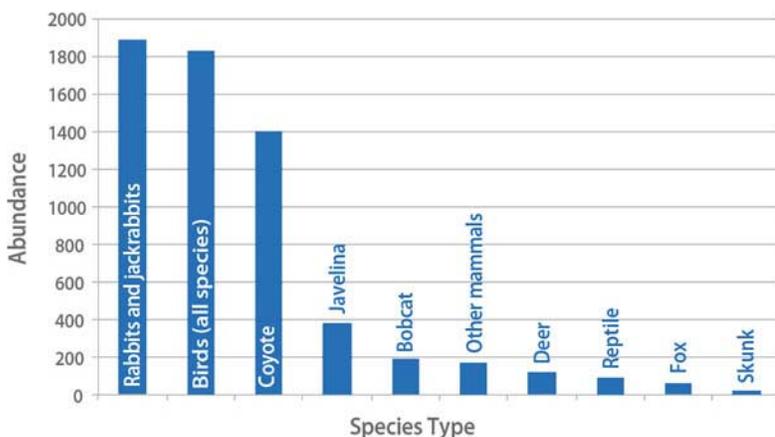
Over 45 unique species of wildlife have been documented with our Wildlife Camera Project.

We currently have 16 amazing volunteers who maintain the cameras, retrieve photos, and make the project possible. And we are in the process of recruiting at least 10 more volunteers to help with the new cameras and with photo processing in our office.

One of the most powerful tools to gather information about wildlife, promote conservation, and increase understanding of the natural world is with photo and video data. This method

is utilized worldwide and involves installing motion activated cameras in wildlife habitat, especially areas containing rare and sensitive species. The remote photos we've collected in the Santa Catalina-Tortolita Mountains wildlife linkage have given us invaluable insights into wildlife behavior and range in this area threatened by habitat fragmentation.

Species Abundance April 2012–August 2014



Over the life of the project, our cameras have documented over 45 unique species of wildlife. This includes mountain lion, desert tortoise, gila monster, ringtail, badger, raccoon, deer, bobcat, coyote, and more. With more cameras and dedicated volunteers, we are excited to start documenting even more stunning Sonoran Desert wildlife and further increase our understanding and awareness of the animals that benefit from protected open space.

Interested in volunteering? Contact Hannah at hannah.stitzer@sonorandesert.org or call us at 520.388.9925.

See all photos and more information on our website: www.sonorandesert.org/?p=2917

8 Wildlife cameras have provided concrete documentation of jaguar and ocelot presence near the proposed Rosemont mine.

Remembering David P. Kelly

by Gabe Wigtil, former Coalition staffer

It's with heavy hearts that we report the passing of one of the Coalition's great champions. David P. Kelly, a long-time supporter of ours and a volunteer for not only the Coalition but other environmental organizations across southern Arizona and the country, passed away in August. David, proudly from New Jersey though having spent most of his working life in Connecticut, retired to Tucson with his wife Barbara and quickly took advantage of all that the Sonoran Desert had to offer. David was an avid birder and wildlife watcher and was always excited to share the latest sighting from his yard. David had a quick wit, a no-nonsense attitude, and was extraordinarily generous with his time, wisdom, and resources.

David was a stalwart office volunteer (he preferred the title "Beloved Old Volunteer" which we emblazoned on a nametag for him) at the Coalition from 2011 until his passing. Soliciting an opportunity to help out at the Coalition, David unsarcastically jumped at the chance to help me with an office-wide filing system overhaul. I couldn't believe that he was actually excited about the task (I myself had been procrastinating the project), but knew instantly that he had the knack and energy for the project when I saw him tackle nearly fifteen years worth of files effortlessly. Proving his mettle, David quickly took on other projects around the office, putting his meticulousness to good use. David could stuff and stamp thousands of fundraising mailings in record time. He was always willing to help out other organizations in our building as well.

When the Coalition's wildlife camera project was launched, David became our go-to image sorter. To put that task in perspective, while the cameras are very good at detecting wildlife (using heat sensors), they can also be very good at taking false positives to the tune of thousands

of photos (often when the camera settings don't match the environmental conditions or when the environmental conditions are rapidly changing). Undeterred, David took on this herculean task, sorting photos for hours. Often, when the number of false positives was particularly bad, David would implore wildlife to show up with threats of converting their homes into the newest QuikTrip convenience store location. As a tribute to his efforts, the Coalition will be naming a new wildlife camera after him, and I truly hope that it quickly finds the elusive and rare critters.

David was a great source of humor around the office. Whenever Carolyn's hounds were in the office, David would ask them if they had caught any escaped prisoners lately. After the Coalition's showing of the movie *Bag It* and my work with Tucson's Plastic Bag Working Group,



David P. Kelly, our "Beloved Old Volunteer"

David told me of his world's-best 15,000 plastic bag collection (these weren't your cheap grocery store bags, nay, these were high quality bags from events like the 1988 Madison Square Garden Cat Show or celebrating "Yugo—the car—\$3990"). David always had a great book or movie recommendation and provided great career advice ("take a real two-week vacation").

David lived his life to the fullest, a trait we can all hope to achieve. His support for the Coalition and the greater environmental cause will not be forgotten. His enormous

spirit, energy, and excitement for each day has had a lasting impact on all of those who were fortunate enough to have known him. Our deepest condolences to his wife, Barbara, and his extended family. We know how much he will be missed. I will miss him. Carolyn, Kathleen, Hannah, and all the others around the Coalition office will miss him too.



Is your favorite t-shirt falling to bits?

**Beloved hat worn from too many hikes?
Adored coffee mug chipped?**

We are here to help! Our online Coalition Store is now open. Items include organic cotton USA-made caps, shirts (ladies style too), ceramic mugs, and BPA-free aluminum water bottles. Visit us online at: www.sonorandesert.org/store/ for pricing and more information.



Painted Hills: Now Protected as a Community Treasure

The saguaro-studded ridges of Painted Hills are now permanently protected because of your voice and support.

Nearly 17 years after voters asked Pima County to purchase Painted Hills as open space, all of our hard effort and perseverance have paid off and the majestic 286-acre saguaro-studded Painted Hills is going to be protected forever. Located west of Tucson between West Speedway and West Anklam roads, Painted Hills will be added to Tucson Mountain Park as an area with pristine Sonoran Desert habitat, important open space for wildlife movement, and a place for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

On August 18th, the Pima County Board of Supervisors, on a vote of 4 to 1 (Supervisor Ally Miller was opposed), approved the purchase agreement that finalized the acquisition. The purchase officially closed on September 17, 2014, and payments will be completed in five years. Initial funding will come from 2004 open space bond funds. Further funding may come from a future bond election or the Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Fund, or a combination of both.

Places like Painted Hills maintain the integrity of our Sonoran Desert home and keep untouched and pristine places close to us. Being just west of downtown Tucson, Painted Hills gives the community easy access to open space, which promotes health and draws in visitors, boosting our economy. With an estimated 9,000 saguaros, this area is ecologically important for plants and animals to thrive and move to nearby open space. Painted Hills will be protected for future generations who can marvel at the wildlife, explore the steep and rocky ridges, and enjoy such a special place so close to home.

Painted Hills, now permanently protected as open space, contains almost 9,000 saguaros.

Vote No on Prop 122!

Proposition 122 is another BAD IDEA that was put on the ballot by the State Legislature. This proposed constitutional amendment would allow the legislators, by passing a bill, to restrict all state, county, city, or town government from spending any financial or human resources to administer **any federal law or action that they disagree with!**

Keep checking, www.sonorandesert.org, for more information.

Sources:

Elias, R., & Romero, R. *Arizona Daily Star*. "City-county Cooperation Saves Saguaro-studded Painted Hills" (2014, August 19).

Elias, R., & Romero, R. *Arizona Daily Star*. "Pima County to Acquire Painted Hills Property" (2014, June 13).

1960s:

Painted Hills zoned to allow for development. Unique environmental constraints prevented development and Painted Hills remained undisturbed.

1997 & 2004:

Pima County voters approved open space bond funds to purchase Painted Hills.

2005:

Five Painted Hills parcels bought by local land developer for \$4.4 million.

2006:

Painted Hills sold to the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System for \$27 million. The new property owner sought to develop the area with 260 houses.

2008:

The Tucson City Council adopted a new Water Service Area policy that discontinued the "automatic" granting of water to areas outside Tucson Water's obligated service area.

2010:

The property owners went to the Arizona Supreme Court to gain access to water rights. The court ruled in the City's favor and development was put on hold.

2010-2014:

With no water available the land could not be developed. In response, the community and organizations such as the Coalition, Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association, and Tucson Mountains Association joined forces and voiced support for the purchase of Painted Hills to be preserved as open space. The community was active in letting both the Pima County Board of Supervisors and the Tucson City Council know that residents stood in favor of the purchase.

Summer 2014:

Pima County reached an agreement with the Dallas-based property owner to purchase Painted Hills for \$7.5 million with interest. The Tucson City Council voted to approve its remaining \$3.5 million of 2004 county open-space bond funds to purchase Painted Hills, and the Board of Supervisors approved a bond ordinance amendment to make the purchase possible.

THANK YOU for your generosity. Your donations are making all of this work possible!

This list reflects donations from 9/17/13 to 8/18/14. For questions or concerns about your donation, please call 520.388.9925.

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You're helping to build the Sonoran Desert's first wildlife bridge!

Construction has started on the Oracle Road wildlife crossings! By next year there will be a large vegetated wildlife bridge and a wide underpass for animals to cross this busy roadway safely. Visit www.sonorandesert.org for more information and updates.

The walls of the Oracle Road wildlife bridge are officially under construction!



Nothing we do would be possible without you.

With your help, the Coalition works tirelessly to protect sensitive habitat and speak up for wildlife, open space, and our beautiful Sonoran Desert home. We have had incredible accomplishments during the course of our 16 years, and we continue to work hard every day for healthy and connected ecosystems.

A great way to show your support is by becoming a monthly donor. Our Desert Champions provide the steady support we need to continue our work and promote local conservation efforts. **Will you join us in supporting a healthy future for the Sonoran Desert by becoming a monthly donor today?**

Anything you can give helps us tremendously.

Contact the Coalition office (520.388.9925) to sign up for a donation program or simply visit www.sonorandesert.org and click on the DONATE NOW button.