

Saguaro National Park Frog Habitat Restoration- Historic Notch Neighborhood backyard Pond Project REPORT 9/29/05 - 5/31/06

Although this project is ongoing, the portion of the project funded by the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit is complete. The CESU has been invoiced the full amount of the grant award (\$6,000). The progress report below serves as the final report for this project. The continuation of the project is being funded by funds remaining from the Cooperative Conservation Initiative award and by funds awarded by the Friends of Saguaro National Park.

This project has been very successful in accomplishing the expectations outlined in the CESU grant proposal. A number of park neighbors have participated in owning their own pond and/or have learned about the value of protecting frog habitat through interactions with Rincon Institute and park personnel. The long-term success of the ponds to support frog populations is yet to be determined, but significant indicators such as the presence of larva in two of the ponds show potential for these ponds to be successful in supporting the park frog population. Data collected from the existing ponds within the park show some of the frog populations to be surviving.

**Project Schedule:
Dennis Caldwell, Rincon Institute**

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9/29/05 Project Meeting

12/10/05 Started Construction of Rosco Pond

Rosco pond is more surface area than other ponds and includes an upper pool at the filter that flows down a stream to the large lower pool. Spent several days trouble shooting a slow leak until we got water stabilized. Introduced plants from first two ponds into the Rosco pond on 2/11/06.

2/11/06 Dealt with some maintenance issues with the water intake on the Hall pond

Pond intake was clogging up with vegetation causing the pond to over fill. Vegetation was cleared from the intake and owner was versed on what to watch for and how to avoid the problem in the future.

2/15/06 Project meeting and checkup on ponds

2/21/06 Troubleshooting slow leak on Rosco pond

Problem was attributed to unavoidable wicking and evaporation.

2/25/06 Hiked into Wildhorse Cyn in the Park to check status of frog populations in the upper reaches of the canyon

No frogs or tadpoles were found. Some suitable pools remain but most are dry.

3/5/06 Hiked Tanque Verde Falls and Del Pino Cyn area of Tanque Verde Cyn to investigate status of frog populations in that region

Found good numbers of frogs and larva in both canyons. Water is drying up but non seemed to be in immediate jeopardy.

4/15/06 Transferred 21 fish from Hall pond to Rosco pond

Water in Rosco pond was presumed suitable for fish, all seemed to deal fine with the new pond. One Long Finned Dace was observed already in the pond. It must have been unintentionally introduced with the plants on 2/11/06.

4/19/06 Returned to Tanque Verde Cyn with Forest Service to collect 8 larva and transfer them into the Rosco pond

The Tanque Verde Cyn population was identified as the core population of lowland leopard frogs for the watershed that the Wildhorse frogs belong to. Due to the limited gene pool the Notch Neighborhood frogs came from, all from one egg mass, it was determined to be beneficial to bring in diversity to the project frogs. For now the Tanque Verde frogs will be kept separate in the Rosco pond from the Wildhorse frogs in the other two ponds.

5/8/06 A remote camera was installed at the Hall pond to record wildlife visiting the pond

5/9/06 Hiked into Wildhorse Cyn to check on drying conditions of frog habitat where frogs were last seen

Found fair conditions at several pools. Two adult frogs were seen at one pool and One adult and two size classes of larva were observed at the pool where our original larva were collected from. The decision was made to transport 11 small larva from this pond to the Hall and Reifschneider ponds, 6 in one and 5 in the other.

5/24/06 Larva started transforming into frogs in both the Riefschneider pond and the Hall pond