

History of the Tucson Mountain Wildlife Area

A Chronology by Julia Fonseca, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation

1890-1905 When Edward Vail drove a herd of cattle in the vicinity of the University of Arizona in 1890 he noted the whole surrounding countryside had been cut over (of mesquite) and nothing remained but creosote bush. By 1905 fuel became a problem for the people of Tucson. Every tree over seen inches in diameter had been cut within a ten mile radius of town. In 1933 when Saguaro was proclaimed a monument nearly every mesquite tree large enough for fuel or fence posts had been taken from the western portion of the area. (Clemensen 1987)

1900 Unregulated market hunting of big game species and severe overgrazing by livestock was driving several species to extinction. (AZGFD 2017)

1912 Arizona became a state, with powers to regulate hunting and trapping. (AZGFD 2017)

16 September 1916 Aldo Leopold addressed Tucsonans regarding the protection of game. The meeting was held at the Chamber of Commerce. At the meeting, Tucson Game Protective Association was organized, and adopted principles for wildlife protection. D.S. Cochran, W.M. Pryce, W. H. Thomson, Ed Vail and E.G. Sporleder were elected to the Board. (Arizona Daily Star)

1917 Arizona Legislature created four game refuges to promote recovery of game species. The first refuges were on national forest because there were Forest wardens who would enforce prohibition on hunting and trapping of deer, antelope, turkey and other game. (Brown 2012)

1920 Mr. Brown came to Pima County in 1920. In the 1920s, the Tucson Game Protective Association headed by C. B. Brown started a movement to have the area withdrawn from homesteading and set aside as a park and game refuge (NPS Park Brief 2016)

1928 AZ Game Code gave AGF Commission authority to create and manage the wildlife refuge system. (AZGFD 2017)

Fall 1929 Tucson Game Protective Association requested the Game and Fish Commission to establish a Tucson Mountain Game Refuge with three goals: 1) to produce more deer for surrounding areas, 2) to safeguard residents, and 3) insure preservation of game for aesthetic purposes. (Clark 1953)

April 6, 1929 Game and Fish Commission grandfathered existing game refuges and added more; State Warden Bayless also recommended that the commission support the Tucson Mountain Game Protective's request, provided that Pima County take over the refuge's management as a county park. (Brown 2012)

April 11, 1929 Tucson Mountain Park was designated on BLM lands. The Board created Tucson Mountain Park at the urging of C.B. Brown, president of the Tucson Game Protective Association. He sought to have a portion of the range "...set off from mining and homesteading encroachments." Mr. Brown, for whom Brown Mountain in Tucson Mountain Park is named, later served as chairman of the Pima County Park Commission Board and is regarded as the "Father of Tucson Mountain Park." (Pima County no date)

April 29, 1929. At the request of U. S. Senator Carl Hayden, the Department of the Interior issued Recreational Withdrawal Order 21 on 29,988 acres of land in the Tucson Mountains. This prevented mineral and homesteading entries. (Clemensen 1987)

December 15, 1930 Pima County obtains a lease on 15,787.9 acres of BLM land. (Camp Pima document), According to C. B. Brown (1932), the initial lease was for 8978.6 acres.

May 4, 1931 A supplemental lease pertaining to the remaining BLM land was provided to Pima County. (Camp Pima document) bringing the total to approximately 15,500 acres of lease by 1932. (Brown, 1932)

1931 Game and Fish Commission created Tucson Mountain Game Refuge according to AZGFD (Note: this is two years after the Park designation, according to AZGFD 2017). Remaining deer population was 25 animals and no bighorn sheep. Ensure the preservation of game for “aesthetic purposes”. AZGFD transplanted two bucks and five does from Kaibab National Forest to TMP. (Clark 1953)

April 10, 1932. Formal opening of the Tucson Mountain Recreation Area. (Camp Pima), under the leadership of the Tucson Game Protective Association (Clark 1953)

1932 “A dependable and ample water supply for game and domestic use has been one of the biggest problems confronting those in charge of the Area. In addition to the well and pipeline referred to, there has been completed one dam which will give a reservoir capacity of 1.1 acre-feet, and another dam well along toward completion....” (Brown 1932)

1932 Pima County Board appointed a five-member commission to assist with administration: T. D. Mallory of the Tucson Natural History Society, L. B. Hart of the Tucson Game Protective Association, Stanley Kitt of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. E. P. Matthewson and C. B. Brown representing the public at large. (Clark 1953)

1933 Pima County began patenting BLM lands it previously leased via the Recreation Act of 1926 and later under the revised Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The patents require continued use as a park and allow the federal government to retain the mineral rights under the 1872 Mining Act. (McGann 2008)

1934 Livestock grazing eliminated. 1937 deer census by CCC tallied 153 mule deer in the refuge. (Clark 1953)

1934 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act passed, to protect wildlife and habitat from impacts of federal or federally-authorized water resource development projects. Requires coordination between the federal project agency and USFWS and state wildlife agency. Authorizes acquisition and use of lands for wildlife conservation purposes, the use of which shall be in “accordance with general plans approved jointly” (P.L. 116-9).

1934 Tucson Mountains Association was founded in 1934 by families homesteading in the Tucson Mountains. The members used to get together one each year for a big social gathering. They would swap back one another’s cattle, which roamed freely through the grasses that abounded in the area then, and make plans to improve their living conditions. (TMA webpage)

1938 CCC developed four wells and tanks for use by the wildlife, however a severe drought dried two of the wells up. Numerous deer were found dead, or nearly so, at these dry waterholes. Pima County Parks Commission, aided by Pima County government, hauled water until the summer rains (Clark 1953)

1949 Deer herd has increased to the point that AGFD proposed limited hunting. (Clark 1953)

1950 First authorized hunt. 153 legal male deer were harvested 1950-1953 (Clark 1953)

1951 Sep 13 Deputy County Attorney Mo Udall gives legal opinion that TMP can be posted against hunting (except state inholdings) and in light of new ban on firearms in County parks, there is a desire to do so on the part of the local populace. Commission creates Game Management Unit 38M. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1951 Sep 25 Letter from Director of AGFD stating that the refuge and game management unit of TMP will be abolished if the commission is "denied the prerogative of managing the wildlife thereon"; by October the perimeter is being posted closed to hunting. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1951 Commission established Tucson Mountain Game Management Unit (Clark 1953) Parks Commission denies Az National Guard to use TMP for training area. Resolves to post boundary to prohibit hunting and collecting of all types. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1952 Continued controversy over hunting and request for patrolling to prevent the killing of deer (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1952 Waterholes dried up until summer rains. Man-made water sources were used by deer (Clark 1953)

1953 Clark study recommended archery as a means to control deer population in the WA during times of drought in particular. "The restricted home ranges of the deer in this area and their evident reluctance to move from these ranges point to the conclusion that the Tucson Mountains as source of deer for populating the surrounding areas through natural movement is of little value." "Availability of free water is very important during the summer months."

1955 Water is being hauled from Tucson because the wells in TMP have gone dry. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1957 Pima County's lease of federal lands ran out in 1957. (NPS Park Brief) Archery hunters ask for permission to hunt, are denied. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)

1958 Arizona Game and Fish Commission abolished the Tucson Mountains Wildlife Area but the action was given a reprieve due to the concern of residents that an open deer season would pose a danger to homeowners. The dilemma was solved by making the Tucson Mountain Wildlife Area open only to archery hunting regulated by the Commission. (Pima County Parks Commission Notes 1947-1960)). Motor vehicle travel is restricted to designated roads or areas (AZGFD 2017)

1958 MOU between Pima County and the Commission affirming Commission's intention to limit take of wildlife to archery only. (Windes 2019)

September 9, 1959, the United States Department of the Interior, through Assistant Secretary Roger W. Ernst, issued Public Land Order 1963, which reopened 7,600 acres of federally-owned property within Tucson Mountain Park to mineral entry. The order generated a furor in Pima County, and public protest was reportedly "...intense and widespread." The Department of the Interior conducted a hearing on the matter at the Pioneer Hotel in October 1959, that was presided over by Assistant Secretary Ernst. As a result of the passionate appeals made by local conservationists, community leaders and citizens, the order opening the park to mineral entry was withdrawn in December 17, 1959. (NPS Park Brief, Clemensen 1988)

Jan 11 1960 Mo Udall introduced House bill to create Saguaro National Monument from a portion of TMP. (AZGFD 2017)

February 1961. Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater proposes the transfer of ownership of the entirety of Tucson Mountain Park from the federal government to Pima County. Senator Goldwater's bill, S 827, was ultimately withdrawn in deference to a proposal made by then-Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who suggested transferring the northern part of Tucson Mountain Park to the National Park Service to create the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Monument. Secretary Udall's proposal received the support of President Kennedy, who implemented it through Executive Order #3439 on November 15, 1961. The Antiquities Act of 1906 provided the executive authority used by President Kennedy to create the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro.

1962 Pima County adopts Tucson Mountain Area Plan which established a low-density land use policy for the eastern foothills area in order to better protect the wildlife and Mountain Park. (Behlau 2000).

1964-65 Meeting with TMA; AGFD commission records Director's secy. (Dave Brown says Jim Ledy Cmo Nuestro knows the history; he was part of it.)

1966 The Department of Transportation Act (now part of U. S. Code) provides that Secretary of Transportation shall cooperate and consult with the States in developing transportation plans and that the Secretary shall not approve any project which requires the use of any publically-owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, State or local significance as determined by the Federal, State or local officials having jurisdiction unless there is 1) no feasible or prudent alternative to the use of such land and 2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm. (AGFD 2017)

1968 AGFD recommended abolition of the Tucson Mountain Wildlife Area due to increasing urban encroachment. Pima Board, City of Tucson, thousands of petition signers and citizens objected. Commission voted unanimously to retain the Tucson Mountain Wildlife Area. (AZGFD 2017)

1976 Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Monument was expanded. (P.L. 94-578)

1976 Saguaro Wilderness designated by the 94th U.S. Congress (P.L. 94-567).

1981 AGFD commissioned to catalog potential wildlife losses along CAP and recommended wildlife corridor protection pursuant to FWCA. Deer population estimated 200-400. Documented animal movement between Tucson Mountains and Garcia Strip. Mitigation measures identified need for purchase of four sections of ASLD (AZGFD 2017)

1985 ROD with BOR Environmental Commitments included future development of an Environmental Commitment Plan for construction, operation and maintenance activities for Tucson Aqueduct – Phase B. There were two primary alternatives, a west side and east side alternative. The west side alternative Included acquisition and management of a wildlife movement corridor (TMC), which was a key to selecting this as the preferred alternative. (AZGFD 2017)

1986 Environmental Commitment Plan was issued, assigned responsibility to BOR Environmental Division, including acquisition and management of TMC and “additional mitigation recommended by the FWS, AGFD, BLM and others would be implemented as appropriate” (AZGFD 2017)

1987 BOR asked AGFD to manage Tucson Mitigation Corridor (TMC); AGFD declined.

1987 TMC acquired. (USBR, 1987).

1988 Pima County rezones TMC from RH (rural homestead) to IR (institutional reserve). (Pima Co. 1988).

1988 BOR & USFWS request removal of “San Joaquin Road extension” from being shown on TMC property (USDOI, 1988a & USDOI, 1988b).

1990 BOR and Pima County enter into a “Cooperative Agreement for Use of Project Lands for Wildlife and Plant Conservation and Management”; the agreement was characterized as a “general plan” under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. This agreement had no termination date, but if Pima County failed to administer, management would transfer back to BOR. The Master Management Plan within this document contains several references to Pima County. TMC is compensation for wildlife movement disruption caused by aqueduct between Tucson Mountains and the Nation; also to preserve Tumamoc globeberry, night-blooming cactus, Thornber’s fishhook cactus, desert tortoise and Gila monster. Management plan was developed between BOR and AGFD according to AGFD 2017. Management Plan *“prohibit[s] any future developments within the area other than existing wildlife habitat improvements”*

1992 CAP construction completed

1993 North American Free Trade Agreement includes CANAMEX highway, based on 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. CANAMEX highway concept later became Interstate 11.

1994 Saguaro National Monument receives elevated protection to become Saguaro National Park (P.L. 103-364)

1994 Reclamation proposes to develop the wildlife corridor leading to the TMC as part of the Schuk Toak EA. One of the proposed biological mitigation measures was an agreement to keep Tucson’s retired farmland from being developed. This never happened. Reclamation also asked USFWS to waive the requirement that all wildlife crossings and watering sites would be monitored to determine whether additional crossings are needed, in favor of the Krausman study, which was funded. (USBR 1994)

1997 bond authorizes expanding the park by 1600 acres

2001 Pima County Board of Supervisors adopts Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System guidelines recognizing need to repair connectivity across CAP aqueduct, and establishing mitigation guidelines for development subject to Board’s authority. Reinforcing the 70-year policy of managing the park for both resource conservation and appropriate public use. (McGann 2008)

2002 The 1990 Cooperative Agreement was superseded by new Cooperative Agreement with Pima County. Purpose of this was to transfer funds for continued O&M. Pima County responsibilities did not change and Master Management Plan was attached, except for requirement to provide detailed financial reports to BOR. (McGann 2008)

2004 Bond election adds another 395 acres to TMP and 700 acres at Sweetwater Preserve, all within the Wildlife Area.

December 18, 2007 Pima County Board of Supervisors pass resolution 2007-343 opposing construction of an interstate highway link that bypasses Tucson and traverses pristine and invaluable Sonoran Desert areas, and supporting multi-modal capacity improvements in existing transportation corridors.

June 17, 2008 Pima County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 2008-150: A resolution of the Pima County Board of Supervisors adding Bureau of Reclamation mitigation land to official county maps and calling for the distribution of maps of conservation areas in Pima County.

2008 ADOT Interstate 10 Phoenix-Tucson Bypass Study completed identifying one route through Avra Valley and another through San Pedro Valley. (ADOT, 2008)

2008 USBR opposed Avra Valley Corridor in comments to the Arizona State Transportation Board. (USBR, 2008).

2008 Tucson Mountain Park Management Plan recognized County's obligations for management of the TMC, and anticipated that the cooperative agreement "will be renewed and will continue without significant modification." (McGann 2008)

September 30, 2009 expiration of the 2002 Cooperative Agreement between BOR and PC NRPR; AZGFD AG says this also resulted return of responsibilities for management to BOR. BOR is obligated by the 1986 Environmental Commitment Plan developed under the FWCA to prohibit future developments within TMC unless jointly agreed to by BOR, AGFD, USFWS and Pima County.

2012 Pima County Wildlife Connectivity Assessment completed by AGFD identifying opportunities to improve wildlife connectivity across CAP canal utilizing the RTA funds. L26, L27, C3, C4 (AZGFD 2017)

2014 I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor Study completed (<http://i11study.com/IWC-Study/index.asp>)

2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act designated an I-11 through Arizona. (I-11 draft EIS, 2019)

2016 First known dispersal of bighorn sheep into the Tucson Mountains in 50 years, thought to be from Silverbell Mountains to Tucson Mountains. (AZGFD 2017)

2017 Letter to FHWA from AGFD re Tucson Wildlife Area with map and history, stating the AGFD's position that the publicly-owned portions of the Tucson Mountain Wildlife Area qualify as a Section 4(f) property in the category of a significant state recreation area and state wildlife refuge. (AZGFD 2017)

April 13, 2018 Letter from C. H. Huckelberry to Alex Smith, BOR stating County's expectation that any mitigation for TMC provided for the Tier 1 EIS be routing through leadership and signature of each party to the TMC master management agreement, including Pima County.

2019 ADOT and FHWA release draft Tier 1 EIS for a bi-modal (interstate highway, freight rail, passenger rail, utility corridor) transportation facility, with a no-action alternative, alternative involving expansion of I-10 through Tucson, and a Recommended Alternative bisecting the TMC and Avra Valley.

July 5, 2019 Pima County requests individual 4f evaluation and consideration of CLS as an "Affected Resource" and provide approximately 11,000 acres of mitigation for those system impacts.

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