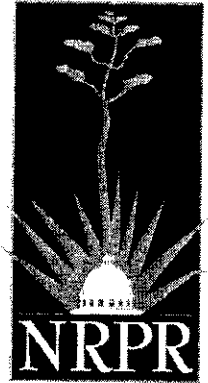


M E M O R A N D U M
Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department



TO: Karla Reeve-Wise, Pima County DOT
FROM: Kerry Baldwin, Natural Resources Division Manager
DATE: September 22, 2008
SUBJECT: RTA Wildlife Linkages Proposal Review-
Sunrise Road Wildlife Permeability Study



Thank you for the opportunity to review the Sunrise Road Wildlife Permeability Study proposal. I think you have a proposal that has high merit, good research design elements and clear objectives that can drive actual roadway construction design features and enhancements as a result. I hope that the RTA Wildlife Committee gives it a detailed review and recommends it for full funding.

The project area selected for the study is clearly a key area of concern for current and future impacts to wildlife movement in the area. The transportation corridor is a critical barrier within that study area that can either assist or restrict movement and long-term viability of native species movement. As outlined in the proposal, the study methodology proposed will lead to more detailed and data supported decision making and identify the most critical points within the corridor to focus attention on and how to best mitigate the impacts of the current and future road construction.

I have previously discussed the structure of the proposal directly with the SWCA staff, most specifically Mr. Chris Haas and Mr. Geoff Soroka. I know that they have put considerable time into looking at an integrated overall design and have brought to the proposal successful elements from studies elsewhere in Arizona and the western US. As a company they have the skills and track record to very successfully and professionally conduct the proposed project. More importantly, I know they will freely share the study process and final deliverable evaluations with others in the wildlife field that could value from understanding the results of their work.

The structure of this proposal has the potential to be a basic template on how to design similar studies usable by other entities. The process, objectives and deliverables will stay the same with just the size and location of study area changing to meet the specific need.

NRPR has been an active member of the informal regional level wildlife corridors technical work group for several years now. We will continue to take a lead for Pima County at the broader landscape level consistent with our responsibilities under implementation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. As a result we would offer to be an identified supporter of this project and be available to assist with technical review of data and/or deliverables developed.

My only criticism with the proposal has nothing to do with basic research design, objectives or deliverables but how the proposal is being packaged. I believe that the proposal should be going to the RTA Wildlife

Committee as one proposal with three phases and one integrated budget. I don't think the project will be as effective if the phases are split up for funding individually and must come back to the RTA Wildlife Committee as the prior phase is completed for consideration of the next phase.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to review the proposal and do support it. I would recommend it to the RTA Wildlife Committee for funding as is but would encourage consideration of funding a full three phase multi year study with a new comprehensive budget developed to take into consideration all levels of the project as proposed.

I will try to be at the appropriate RTA Wildlife Committee meeting to speak on behalf of the proposal in the call to the public.

If I can answer any additional questions or assist you in getting this proposal moving through the system please feel free to contact me.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Coronado National Forest
Supervisor's Office

300 W. Congress
Tucson, Arizona 85701
Phone (520) 388-8300
FAX (520) 388-8305
Deaf & Hearing Impaired 711

File Code: 2610

Date: August 27, 2008

Karla Reeve-Wise
Pima County Department of Transportation
201 North Stone Avenue, 6th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Karla:

We recently received a copy of the Pima County Department of Transportation and SWCA proposal to conduct wildlife connectivity studies in the area of Sunrise Drive. One of the management goals of the Coronado National Forest is to maintain viable wildlife populations, and providing corridors for wildlife passage between our "sky islands" is integral to this effort. We are therefore interested in any proposals that may help meet this goal directly, or provide information on methodology that would help us indirectly.

We note that SWCA's proposal entails a number of strategies including: baseline surveys to indicate current wildlife habitat use and movement paths, review of available information to help show historical wildlife distribution based on habitat type and land use management, and long-term movement of wildlife across the landscape, and monitoring to determine the effectiveness of various mitigation measures including crossing structures, vegetation treatments and techniques to influence driver behavior. SWCA notes they intend to provide agencies access to their datasets to help us all deal with the issue of wildlife connectivity plus driver safety.

Our experience of working with SWCA has been positive. We have found SWCA to be a very professional organization, responsive to our needs and timely in their performance.

We recommend your consideration of their proposal.

Sincerely,

JEANINE A. DERBY
Forest Supervisor

cc: Geoff Soroka and Tom Furgason of SWCA



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