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Wildlife Linkages Working Group

Minutes of July 10, 2009, Meeting

Committee Members

Rafael Cancino, Town of Sahuarita
Jennifer Christelman, Town of Marana
Rick Ellis, Pima County, Chair
Janice Przybyl, Sky Island Alliance
John Windes, AZGFD

Staff

Jim DeGrood
Steve Matthews
Joan Reedy
Teresa Ruiz
Claire Zucker

Public/Agencies

Tom Furgason, SWCA
David Grandmaison, AZGFD
Chris Haas, SWCA
Michael Ingraldi, AZGFD
Jennifer Jennings, Logan Simpson Design
Siobhan Nordhaugen, ADOT
Scott Richardson, USFWS
Ray Schweinsburg, AZGFD
Geoffrey Soroka, SWCA

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Rick Ellis at 9 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 12, 2009

Motion was made by Jennifer Christelman, seconded by Janice Przybyl, to approve the minutes of June 12, 2009. The motion was approved.

3. In-Kind Contribution Form

Terry Ruiz, Working Group Liaison, passed around the in-kind form for member participation.

4. RTA Board Update

Jim DeGrood, Director of Transportation Services, said that the RTA Board is expected to meet on July 23 and the RTA Technical Management Committee to meet on July 29. The current status of projects is as follows:

- 265 approved projects
- 113 completed projects

- 36 projects under way

Mr. DeGroot reported that the fiscal year ended with a \$102 million funding balance. This amount is expected to be drawn down over the new fiscal year as a number of large road construction projects are starting. Fiscal Year 2010 expenditures are expected to be near \$160 million; revenues are expected to continue to stay depressed with a slow recovery. A revenue budget of \$62 million was adopted.

5. Proposal Review

Rafael Cancino, Town of Sahuarita, presented three proposals. The purpose of these proposals varied; construction of wildlife crossing improvements for Sahuarita Road, initial assessment of wildlife needs for other near term Sahuarita roadway projects, and pre and post construction monitoring to determine placement and type of wildlife linkages for roadway construction improvements that are currently planned for these roadways.

Proposal 1) Town of Sahuarita, Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club) Wildlife Linkages Structure Construction

MOTION by Rick Ellis to move forward the proposal at the estimated funding level of \$568,400 with certain conditions: 1) that a hydraulic analysis be performed to determine the need for inlet aprons; 2) the understanding that the design of the wildlife crossing elements will be refined as the project moves forward and any cost savings associated with those elements be made available to offset costs for the complementary features such as fencing; and, 3) a commitment from the Town of Sahuarita that the preservation of the wildlife corridors served by these improvements be integrated in the Town's General Plan. Janice Przybyl seconded; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cancino agreed to convey the Working Group's concerns.

Proposal 2) Town of Sahuarita, Initial Assessment (Pima Mine Road, Old Nogales Highway, Nogales Highway, and Quail Creek Crossing Extension

MOTION by Janice Przybyl to accept this proposal as written at a cost of \$100,000. Seconded by Rick Ellis. Vote passed with one abstention. John Windes voted NO based on monitoring concerns, but said he won't delay the proposal.

Proposal 3) Town of Sahuarita, Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club) Pre and Post Construction Monitoring of Wildlife Crossing Structures

MOTION by Rick Ellis to accept this proposal provided the objective statements are modified. The proposal cost is \$135,000. Motion seconded by John Windes. Discussion followed. SWCA agreed to absorb camera costs of \$1,420. The motion was approved unanimously.

PowerPoint: RTA Wildlife Linkages, Construction Funding Proposal: Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club Road), Town of Sahuarita, July 10, 2009.

HANDOUT: Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club Road) Wildlife Linkages Structure Construction Proposal, pg. 1-11.

Initial Assessment of Pima Mine Road, Old Nogales Highway, Nogales Highway, and Quail Creek Crossing Extension Proposal, pg. 1-4

Initial Assessment of Pima Mine Road, Old Nogales Highway, Nogales Highway, and Quail Creek Crossing Extension, SWCA Environmental Consultants, pg. 1-7, June 26, 2009.

Sahuarita Road, (La Villita Road to Country Club Road) Pre- and Post-Monitoring of Construction Proposal, pg. 1-5.

Sahuarita Road, Pre- and Post-Construction Monitoring and Adaptive Management, SWCA Environmental Consultants, June 26, 2009, pg. 1-8.

6. Updates and Announcements

Siobhan Nordhaugen, Arizona Department of Transportation, said they are still working on the SR-77 Proposal. They will meet with the Oro Valley Town Council, July 15, 2009, with a presentation. She is going to the final design phase fairly soon and finishing the ITA. There would be three structures; two culverts and a land bridge. The overpass or wildlife (only) land bridge is under the jurisdiction of the Bridge Group, because it is a bridge. The current bridge design is 25 feet high and 190 feet across and would join the Santa Catalina and Tortolita Mountain ranges. Ms. Nordhaugen said that in the future SR-77 will be widened to eight lanes and this proposal will accommodate this expansion of roadway. She presented Jim DeGroot with a draft copy of the document and a rendering. One big question remains to be answered; whether the wildlife corridor will be secured.

7. Future Agenda Items

SR-77 Wildlife Proposal or Progress Report

8. Call to the Audience

Jennifer Christelman, Town of Marana, shared an update on Tangerine Road and La Canada Boulevard.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Rick Ellis, at 11:35 a.m.