



CITY OF TUCSON

MEDIA RELEASE

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CITY RECEIVES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN GRANT OF \$253,000; 3-YEAR GRANT TOTALS MORE THAN \$700,000

The City's Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development (OCSD), in cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, was awarded a \$253,000 Habitat Conservation Planning grant through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grant for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This year's grant brings the City's three-year grant total to \$715,000. The OCSD was one of 19 successful applicants competing for \$7.5 million of available grant funds this year.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) are a tool under the Endangered Species Act that provides a framework for individuals, companies, cities or other agencies to complete projects while conserving at-risk species of plants and animals.

"The City is very committed to this program and it is just a part of the many complementary resource conservation efforts we are currently working on," said OSCD Director Leslie Liberti.

A substantial portion of the money will go toward the development of an HCP for the City's anticipated water supply development projects. Once approved, the plan will allow for the development of water supply facilities and infrastructure while minimizing and mitigating the effects of those projects on sensitive species. "Sustainability for our community entails more than ensuring adequate water supplies," stated Tucson Water Director David Modeer. "It means that we must operate in a manner that helps protect our fragile desert environment and the plants and animals that we share it with."

OSCD has also added a new member to its staff. Ann Phillips, former restoration manager for the Tucson Audubon Society and 2-year member of the City's HCP Technical Advisory Committee, will provide assistance to the HCP program. Phillips will also work with developers and community groups regarding wash preservation, water harvesting, and other aspects of environmentally-sensitive and sustainable design.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service envisioned Habitat Conservation Plans as integrating development and land-use activities with conservation in a climate of cooperation. The HCP program has prompted local citizens to think about the future of their communities, the issues affecting their quality of life, and how conservation plays a role in both. By working together, state and local governments and private developers have found that they can accomplish their plans and conserve the environment.

For more information on the HCP and to review the preliminary draft Habitat Conservation Plan, log on to the City's Planning Department website at <www.tucsonaz.gov/planning>.

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