



CITY OF TUCSON

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD UNDERWAY FOR AVRA VALLEY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN; OPEN HOUSE IN APRIL

The public is invited to comment on a proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for City-owned lands in Avra Valley. This planning tool helps ensure that steps to preserve and protect vulnerable plants and animals are included in future land use decisions. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service evaluates HCPs to ensure they provide sufficient protection.

As part of developing an HCP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife will review and consider the possible effects of its approval. Interested stakeholders and residents are invited to provide comments on issues or possible effects of an approval of an HCP and associated permit for the lands in Avra Valley. The comment, or scoping, period will end on Monday, May 18, 2009. The City of Tucson offers several ways to provide written comments. For information, go to www.tucsonaz.gov/ocsd/HCP

The City and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also hold a public open house to provide an opportunity for the public to learn more and ask questions. The open house is scheduled for Thursday, April 16, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Javelina Room of Ryan Airfield, 9700 W. Ajo Way.

Background: Approximately 20,000 acres of properties in Avra Valley were purchased in the 1970s and 1980s for their water rights. These lands provide habitat for several vulnerable species, including the federally-endangered Lesser Long-nosed Bat. In addition to species protection, the proposed HCP will facilitate compliance with the Endangered Species Act for potential City water supply and renewable energy projects on the Avra Valley properties.

A preliminary draft of the Avra Valley HCP, frequently asked questions, and a map of the planning area are online at: www.tucsonaz.gov/ocsd/HCP

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