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MEMORANDUM
Director's Office
Regional Flood Control District



DATE: April 24, 2006

TO: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

FROM: Suzanne Shields, P.E.
Director *S Shields*

SUBJECT: **Triennial Review: Outstanding Water Nomination for Davidson Canyon in Pima County, Arizona**

The purpose of this memorandum is to respond to your letter dated November 9, 2005 to Steve Pawlowski of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) regarding the Triennial Review: Outstanding Waters Nomination for Davidson Canyon.

Julia Fonseca recently spoke with Steve Pawlowski regarding the omission of Davidson Canyon as "Unique Water." Davidson Canyon is an important tributary of Cienega Creek, which provides habitat for leopard frog and native fish. The Water Resources Division has provided the water quality data to support the protective designation.

In October 2005, Mr. Pawlowski said that Davidson Canyon was not going to be protected as Unique Water in the Triennial Review. The rationale was that our three plus mile long reach included certain segments that are known to be intermittent along with a 0.75-mile perennial reach.

Today, Mr. Pawlowski said that ADEQ would be including Davidson Canyon in the proposed rule for water quality standards as part of the Triennial Review. In addition, ADEQ will propose to modify the Unique Water program description to recognize that there may be intermittent stream segments between perennial stream reaches. The proposed rule should come out in May 2006.

I will continue to keep you informed.

SS/tj

cc: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator – Public Works
Paul Bennett, Deputy Director, Wastewater Management Department
Kathleen Chavez, Water Policy Manager – County Administrator's Office
Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Julia Fonseca, Program Manager – Water Resources Division
David Scalero, Senior Hydrologist – Water Resources Division
Robert Glennon, Water Policy Advisor – University of Arizona

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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C. H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

November 9, 2005

Steve Pawlowski, Unit Supervisor
Surface Water Monitoring Programs
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
1110 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Triennial Review: Outstanding Waters Nomination for Davidson Canyon in Pima County, Arizona

Dear Mr. Pawlowski:

I am writing this letter in response to the omission of Davidson Canyon as an "Outstanding Arizona Water" within the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's (ADEQ) Triennial Review of Arizona's Water Quality Standards. It is my understanding that the basis for this omission was due to the occurrence of ephemeral reaches along portions of the stream proposed for this nomination and that the entire stream length was not a perennial water as described in A.A.C. R18-11-112.D.1. Based on review of the water quality standards under Title 18 of the A.A.C., however, Pima County staff contend that this should not be the sole reason for precluding a stream from the Outstanding Water classification. For one thing, most of the surface water reaches currently classified as Outstanding Waters are not entirely perennial. Secondly, the current drought in Southeastern Arizona has significantly decreased the amount of surface water flows, thus reducing the lengths of perennial waters in our rivers and streams. It may be quite possible that the portion of Davidson Canyon that is now ephemeral could one day be perennial during a time period of wetter weather conditions.

The stream segments of Davidson Canyon chosen for this nomination were based on the information provided in Appendix B of A.A.C. R18-11. The perennial waters are contained within the reaches starting from the unnamed spring at 31° 59'00"/110° 38'46" to the confluence with Cienega Creek. To maintain consistency with the current documentation, the County strongly recommends that ADEQ consider all three segments for the Outstanding Arizona Water nomination. However, if there is a concern about the recommendation of stream segments that have ephemeral reaches, County staff would be willing to modify its nomination of Davidson Canyon to include only those portions containing perennial surface water flows.

Steve Pawlowski

Triennial Review: Outstanding Waters Nomination for Davidson Canyon, Pima County, Arizona
November 9, 2005

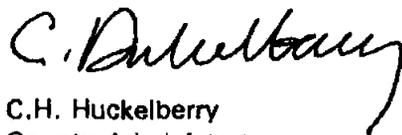
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The perennial water issue aside, the County believes that Davidson Canyon does deserve classification as an Outstanding Arizona Water based on the remaining characteristics listed in A.A.C R18-11-112. These were described in the report titled, "Unique Waters Nomination for Davidson Canyon," which was prepared by the Pima Association of Governments for the Pima County Regional Flood Control District in February 2005. A copy of this report was submitted to ADEQ. If there are concerns about the other criteria, please let me know.

Davidson Canyon is a very unique and outstanding resource, and is considered one of the priority streams for protection by the County under its Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Designation of this stream as an Outstanding Arizona Water would help protect it from activities such as mining that could degrade the existing water quality. Also, this stream is hydrologically linked to the lower reach of Cienega Creek, which is currently designated as an Outstanding Arizona Water.

I would appreciate your time and effort to look into this matter and help resolve the issue of what constitutes a perennial water under the Outstanding Arizona Waters criteria. Please contact either David Scalero or Julia Fonseca of the Water Resources Division of the Pima County Regional Flood Control District at (520) 740-6350 if you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/jj

- c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works
Suzanne Shields, Regional Flood Control District Director
Joan Card, Director, Water Quality Division, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Mike Fulton, Director of Operations, Southern Regional Office
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Julia Fonsaca, Program Manager, Regional Flood Control District
David Scalero, Senior Hydrologist, Regional Flood Control District