



News Release

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Arizona Ecological Services Field Office <http://www.fws.gov/arizonaes/>

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CITY OF TEMPE REQUESTS ENDANGERED SPECIES PERMIT FOR RIO SALADO

The City of Tempe is developing habitat that could be suitable for three endangered birds on its portion of the Rio Salado Environmental Restoration Project. The City plans to maintain 182 acres of native wetland and riparian vegetation on a portion of the Salt River and Indian Bend Wash that could attract endangered southwestern willow flycatchers and Yuma clapper rails and threatened bald eagles.

The City has drafted a Safe Harbor Agreement and applied to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for an endangered species enhancement of survival permit. The draft Safe Harbor Agreement spells out how habitat will be restored and maintained.

“Tempe’s commitment to managing a portion of the Rio Salado for wildlife can assist in our national effort to recover endangered species,” said Steve Spangle, the Service’s Arizona Field Supervisor. “The Endangered Species Act encourages such efforts and has the flexibility to alleviate any regulatory concerns which land stewards, like the City of Tempe, might otherwise have.”

The Service recognizes that habitat improvement efforts might result in the attraction of threatened or endangered species. In order to relieve landowners from the regulatory concerns that can accompany endangered species and encourage landowners to assist in species recovery, the Endangered Species Act allows the Service to permit the measured incidental "take" of protected species.

The Service is seeking comments on Tempe’s draft Safe Harbor Agreement through Oct. 20, 2006. Comments should be sent to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Office, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, Ariz. 85021-4951 or faxed to (602) 242-2513. The draft agreement and relevant documents are available on the Service’s Web site at www.fws.gov/arizonaes or by request at (602) 242-0210.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies. Visit the Service’s website at <http://www.fws.gov>.

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