

**United States Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Telephone: (602) 242-0210 FAX: (602) 242-2513**

AESO/FA

June 17, 2005

Ms. Cindy Lester
Chief, Regulatory Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
3636 North Central Avenue, Suite 900
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-1936

Dear Ms. Lester:

Thank you for Public Notice 2000-01928-RWF (PN) dated June 6, 2005, issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The PN states that your office is preparing a supplemental environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed 608-acre Lone Mountain/Section 16 development in Maricopa County, Arizona (Section 16, T5N, R4E). These comments are provided under authority of, and in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) (FWCA), but do not constitute our final review of the permit application under the FWCA.

The Service is pleased that the scope of analysis of the supplemental EA is the entire 608-acre development area as well as the surrounding environment. We previously recommended the scope of analysis include the entire 608 acres in comments dated June 21 and September 27, 2001. We continue to believe the EA should address potential effects on Sonoran desertscrub vegetation communities and local and regional wildlife resources, including shifts in community structure, changes in diversity, relative abundance, and species richness, and long-term effects on population demographics and viability. The assessment should use standardized empirical methods to quantify and evaluate expected impacts on biotic resources.

We continue to support our previous comments and request an opportunity to review the draft EA and mitigation plan prior to permit issuance so that we may provide substantive comments and recommendations in accordance with the FWCA and Clean Water Act. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Mike Martinez (x224).

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas A. Gatz
Deputy Field Supervisor

cc: Regional Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, San Francisco, CA
Supervisor, Project Evaluation, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ

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