



Sonoran Audubon Society

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Linda Mariaito, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
Tucson Field Office
12661 East Broadway
Tucson, AZ 85748-7208

Dear Linda,

The Sonoran Audubon Society in Phoenix would like to participate in the scoping process for the revision of the Resource Management Plan for Martinez Canyon. Tom Taylor is requesting the nomination of Martinez Canyon to an ACEC designation. Tom Taylor has been volunteering immeasurable hours over the years attempting to restore and protect the natural and cultural resources of Martinez Canyon, a desert riparian area in the Gila watershed northeast of Florence and east of the popular Box Canyon drainage. Projects involve removal of crayfish and introduction of native fish.

Several of us in different environmental advocacy groups have visited, camped, hiked and enjoyed both upper and lower Martinez Creek over the years. Most believe that Martinez Canyon and the perennial pools of water should be removed from the agility tests of the four wheel drive vehicles. Sonoran Audubon would like to join Tom Taylor in his nomination of Martinez Canyon for an ACEC designation (Area of Critical Environmental Concern). The purpose would be to preserve, restore, and enhance critical environmental resources, to identify and designate these ecological areas, to increase the level of protection for ACECs, and to facilitate and support the stewardship of ACECs. We would hope that this designation would reduce/eliminate continued destruction of habitat for the native fish. With motorized vehicles gone, Bighorn Sheep in nearby White Canyon Wilderness might return to Martinez Canyon.

Martinez Canyon is on the Audubon Arizona list of possible Important Bird Area sites. It is an exceptional riparian area warranting BLM designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). There is growing evidence that the small riparian corridors in Arizona are critical stopover sites for songbirds on the northward migration. Other riparian canyons that have BLM land ownership in this planning unit that should be carefully considered for protective measures include Walnut Canyon and White Canyon.

Sincerely

Robert A. McCormick
President
Sonoran Audubon Society