

## CCA Conservation Committee Activities April-August, 2024

For more detailed information about any of these activities inquire of Pearl.

Conservation Committee members:

Pearl Mast, chair, Barbara Clark, Daniel Baker, David Omick, Lynn Smith-Lovin, Nancy Ferguson, Sue Newman

### I. Advocacy

#### SunZia

--Served on the Legal Committee (Pearl and David) that supported Plaintiff Peter Else in challenging the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) for their approval of Amendments to SunZia's Arizona permit. As such, they helped develop the Plaintiff's statement for Oral Arguments at the Court of Appeals, which took place on May 10. The appeal was denied by the 3-judge panel on June 13. Peter has declined to pursue the case to the AZ Supreme Court.

--Continued special fund to support Peter's legal action. Paid out \$15K during this period, with ~2500 remaining in fund. Marissa Katz maintains a [GoFundMe site](#) in support of this fund, which has generated almost \$52K to date.

--Joined the Center for Biological Diversity in documenting in an early May letter to US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) that nesting raptors were located within the SunZia construction zone, contrary to requirements of the USFW. A press release about this letter was also made. After two strongly worded follow-up letters requesting USFW immediate action, USFW staff responded tepidly in late July, stating that flight paths had been adjusted near the nests and that in the future a search would be made for nests before construction commences

--Signed on to August 13 letter developed by Archaeology Southwest drawing the BLM's attention to the extensive erosion taking place around SunZia construction sites and roads and requesting that erosion control measures required by the SunZia 2023 Plan of Development be enforced.

--Continue to support the Tohono O'odham Nation and the San Carlos Apache Tribe in their legal challenge of the failure of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to fulfill their responsibilities for coordinating with Native American tribes regarding cultural resources. Both the Preliminary Injunction and the legal challenge were denied, and an appeal was filed in the Ninth Circuit Court with no schedule yet for adjudication.

--Hosted and helped to coordinate four NAU students who came to Cascabel and created a short [video](#) about the San Pedro Valley and SunZia's potential impact.

--Represent CCA on a new working group that formed to pursue research and outreach activities in the fight against SunZia through the San Pedro Valley.

--Communicate with Pattern Energy representatives by email for updates on their construction plans and schedule, since they suspended our regular monthly meetings.

## **II. Monitoring/Data Collection**

### **Wildlife Cameras**

--Cameras continue to be serviced by Joe Page when he is in Cascabel. Objectives at this time are: Watch for T&E species, maintain large data set (which can serve as a rally point in defense of public action even if the data is not useful in a court of law), document presence/absence of species at a given point, track movements of feral pigs in the Valley, document illegal or undesirable activities.

### **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

--Submitted Research Agreement renewal request to the BLM (Barbara Clark). This agreement allows our continued data collection on BLM lands in Cascabel, mostly via the wildlife cameras.

## **III. Collaboration**

### **Lower San Pedro Collaborative**

--Continue to participate in the Collaborative, which includes over 20 organizations and agencies focused on sharing information and working together on non-controversial projects.

--Continue to participate in the Collaborative's Connectivity Work Group (Alex and Pearl), though this group has not been active during this period. The Fence Removal subgroup has decided to postpone further work until more participation is available.