

News Release

For Immediate Release
August 6, 2015

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Feasibility Study on Lower Santa Cruz River to Become Reality

FLORENCE - The Board of Supervisors, sitting as the Pinal County Flood Control District, unanimously approved the participation with the Army Corps of Engineers on a Feasibility study for the Lower Santa Cruz River Watershed.

"This is a huge step forward in eventually being able to come up with a plan to address the flooding that occurs nearly every year on the Santa Cruz River," Stated Supervisor Anthony Smith. "It seems that every time the Santa Cruz goes over its banks, there is major property damage. I am looking forward to the day when it does rain you won't be thinking in the back of your mind 'how bad can will this get?'"

In the past, flooding on the Lower Santa Cruz has destroyed small farming communities along the river and damaged critical infrastructure, as well as caused significant damage to the towns of Maricopa, Casa Grande and Arizona City.

The feasibility study is the second stage in a formal process carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers. The first stage was a reconnaissance study that was completed in 2014. This study found federal interest in developing a potential solution to the flooding problem. The Army Corps of Engineers also gave the recommendation to proceed with the feasibility study.

The study is expected to be completed within three years at a total cost of no more than \$3 million. The agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers will have the Federal Government and County split the cost of the study, including in-kind contributions from the County.

"The study is a necessary and important step in the process," Supervisor Smith said. "When it comes down to it, this is a critical part of our economic future. Working proactively on a comprehensive solution in partnership with stakeholders, the Congressional Delegation and Corps will help position the County for economic growth and it sends a message to businesses that the County is serious about creating the conditions for their success."

The feasibility study is also good news to the non-profit Lower Santa Cruz River Alliance. The group is comprised of 20 public and private entities who advocate for a comprehensive, regional solution to the flooding on the Lower Santa Cruz. Supervisor Anthony Smith is an executive committee member of the Alliance.

"We are delighted that the County and the Corps have entered into this agreement to conduct the study and ultimately protect from flooding one of the country's fastest growing and most dynamic regions," said Steven Bloch, the President of the Lower Santa Cruz River Alliance. "The President, Congress, Corps and local stakeholders have all recognized the importance of this project and together they have helped advance it to the study phase."