



# **Flood Control District of Maricopa County**

**Pinnacle Peak West Area Drainage Master Study  
Issue and Risk Assessment**

**June 12, 2013**

**A122.101**

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# Executive Summary

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## Purpose of the Study

In spring 2012, the Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) began planning for the Pinnacle Peak West Area Drainage Master Study (PPW ADMS), the purpose of which is to use the most current technology and data to identify the extent of flooding hazards and develop suitable mitigation measures for portions of northeastern Phoenix, northern Scottsdale, Cave Creek, and Carefree.

The results of the study will include recommendations for potential future flood hazard mitigation projects. The District believes a new study is needed because nearly one-quarter of the 99-square mile study area is in a delineated FEMA 100-year floodplain that includes approximately 7,500 structures. Most of these floodplains were delineated in the mid-1990's. Since then many changes have occurred in the watershed that can affect the flow of storm water and change the floodplain. Approximately 48% of the land in the study area is State Trust Land; 41% is privately owned and encompasses commercial properties, large lot residential, and master planned communities like Desert Ridge and Tatum Ranch as well as undeveloped areas.

Among the goals of the two-year study are:

- Compile and document information on specific flooding issues from area residents and other property owners
- Develop a prioritized list of recommendations for potential future flood hazard mitigation projects
- Develop support from area residents, stakeholders, and project partners on the project's results

## Overview of the Issue Assessment

To assist in obtaining data and opinions from the study area publics, Gunn Communications Inc. (GCI) conducted issue assessment interviews, initially with approximately 15 study area government leaders, termed Tier 1 participants, and then with other community and opinion leaders representing major land developments, businesses, organizations, and residents (16 Tier 2 participants).

The main purpose of the interviews was to elicit the issues and concerns that should be most carefully considered by the Flood Control District of Maricopa County in designing study approaches and making decisions about the PPW ADMS project. Details of the issue assessment process are provided in Chapter 1 of this report.

## Brief Summary of Responses to Interview Questions

Full responses to the questions asked during the interviews are provided in Chapter 3 of this report. The following is a summary of responses to questions, numbered by question. A complete listing of all responses is located in Chapter 3.

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**1. Do you have any thoughts about past and current flooding problems in this neighborhood?**

People mentioned problems in the aftermath of the 2007 storms; the need to plan ahead and stage barricades in flood-prone areas in Scottsdale; homes at risk around Pinnacle Peak, Rawhide, and Reatta Pass; and challenges posed for emergency response units.

**2. Describe the flooding problems in the area.** Problems mentioned include changes in land and topography (subsidence, wash migration), past property damage, emergency response challenges, and area residents' tolerance of "natural" desert conditions including flooding.

**3. Do you believe that research needs to be done about area flooding?** Almost everyone said additional study would be helpful to gain a broader understanding of holistic area-wide solutions, update flood maps to make them more reliable, and complete original commitments that were made to some developments (e.g. DC Ranch) and watersheds (Pinnacle Peak, Rawhide, Reatta Pass).

**4. What are your biggest concerns about a study like this?** Concerns mentioned included public skepticism of need for the project, potential changes to people's natural desert lifestyle, accuracy of data used, impacts on property owners of expanding the delineated floodplain, consistency with local master planning, and lack of a political champion.

**5. How do you think other people in the area will feel about the study?** Responses were mixed, with some people suggesting that residents would be open to new ideas (as long as they are innovative and natural solutions) because development is not such a relevant issue as it used to be. Others noted that there may be confusion and suspicion because of the complexity of the issue and inconsistency in technical opinions. Desert Greenbelt-era residents and COPP (Coalition of Pinnacle Peak) will probably still be opposed.

**6. What are your perceptions of the Flood Control District?** About half the respondents were positive and supportive of the District and its perceived role as a credible mediator among jurisdictions. One had a negative comment and the others had mixed or no opinions.

**7. Are you aware of any past controversies or issues about flooding in the community?**

Items mentioned were the 1993 floods, a couple of Carefree lawsuits over private property flooding, and a lawsuit between Pinnacle Center and ADOT. One person noted that "flooding has been a way of life and controversy in Scottsdale for years."

**8. What can you tell me about the neighborhood and the people who live in the area?** A portion of the area was characterized as populated by wealthy, conservative, older, and independent people who want to "get away from it all". Several people suggested, however, that there is a silent minority of different opinions. Other parts of the study area are more diverse in terms of age and income, with more of a family orientation.

**9. Do you know of any future plans for this neighborhood?** Most people mentioned State Lands as key. Specific proposals include revival of Desert Ridge City North mall, Bell Road "activity corridor" east of Pima, and extension of Sonoran Parkway.

# Executive Summary

**11. How, when and what are the best ways to communicate with and include people in this study?** Most participants urged using the widest possible range of communication techniques to let people know about this project and obtain their input.

## Critical Issues & Concerns for the Study

Several key issues were distilled from the 33 interviews conducted that serve as a backdrop for the District in designing study approaches and making decisions about the PPW ADMS project. These are more fully described in Chapter 2 of this report and can be characterized as:

- Study Timing & Politics
- Out of Sight, Out of Mind
- Community Character
- History
- Public Skepticism of Development
- Need for Additional Flood Control Studies
- Transparency of the Public Participation Process

## Risk Overview

Some past government flood control planning projects, particularly in the north Scottsdale and Pinnacle Peak areas, have been met with public opposition, anger, and outrage (as defined by Dr. Peter Sandman. Based on this issue assessment conducted in 2012/2013, it appears that many of the past perceptions relative to flood control in north Scottsdale remain, as does related mistrust of government.

Many of the same people who successfully opposed the Desert Greenbelt project believe that proposed flood control research or plans are driven primarily by the economic development community and backed by elected officials and staff influenced by business and developers. Reducing actual or potential public outrage and opposition requires actions and activities that mitigate those perceptions.

## Recommendations Overview

GCI offers several recommendations for designing and implementing a public participation program for the PPW ADMS project that take into account the concerns and suggestions of Issue Assessment participants. These revolve mainly around the need for accuracy of data, transparency of the outreach process, and provision of multiple avenues for citizen and stakeholder education and involvement.

Between July and January 2013, 33 interviews were conducted with key area leaders and residents to discuss this project. GCI conducted community research to identify a broad range of potential community leaders, opinion influencers, organizations, special-interest groups, and individuals who might be able to contribute valuable information and insights. The District reviewed this list and helped decide who to interview. They also reviewed and approved the interview questions before the process was started.

The purposes of this Issue Assessment were to:

- Identify local organizations and community leaders
- Identify the critical issues and concerns as described by organization officials, community leaders, and community members potentially affected by this project
- Identify preferred methods of communication between the District and the community
- Identify the common themes and topics on which to develop a design for the public involvement program
- Suggest recommendations to the District on how to proceed in designing and implementing this outreach program

Issue Mapping consists of a tiered interview process with each interview having been documented. The questions asked and the answers provided are qualitative in nature. This assessment is not intended to gather quantitative data, but to elicit thoughtful analysis of community concerns from respondents. To encourage frankness in conducting the interviews, respondents are assured that their answers will be confidential and that specific comments are not attributed to specific individuals. The research described in this report is intended to give the District a “snapshot” of the current community to assist in discussions and decision-making.

*Tier 1* consisted of a series of interviews with institutional stakeholders such as agency leaders, elected officials, and policy-makers. These are people who have a good understanding of the issues that both the agency and the community face, but they probably don’t have a substantial stake in any particular outcome or solution. These interviews were documented in a report completed in July 2012.

*Tier 2* interviews were conducted with high-level leaders from identified stakeholder communities and other residents and community leaders. Interviewees often speak with authority for the groups they represent but may provide “party line” answers to questions. This report includes the Tier 2 interviews conducted during December 2012 and January 2013.

This report interprets the common themes identified by the Tier 1 and Tier 2 interviewees and provides all responses to interview questions grouped by these themes (see Chapter 3). Appendix A is a copy of the interview instrument, and Appendix B includes the names and affiliations of those interviewed.

Based on the 33 interviews conducted through January 2013, it appears that the key issues expressed directly or indirectly by participants can be characterized as follows. Several issues and concerns were discussed across the spectrum of interviewees. These are likely the issues that should be most carefully considered by the Flood Control District in designing study approaches and making decisions about the PPW ADMS project.

### **2.1. Study Timing & Politics**

Particularly in Scottsdale, where the November 2012 Council/Mayor elections were highly contested, there was great concern this issue might create an unnecessary distraction and magnify the level of public concern. This issue was considered by the District in the timing of study activities.

The election resulted in several new Council members whose opinions on this subject are not known but should be further investigated.

### **2.2. Out of Sight, Out of Mind**

There is not a sustained public interest in or awareness of the flooding/flood control issue. As one person ironically put it, “Flooding is only a problem when it rains.” Most people don’t know or think there’s a problem, so part of the District’s outreach efforts needs to be an education process.

### **2.3. Community Character**

Many people who live in this area tend to be higher-income conservatives who moved there to get away from urban development. They value, and in some cases, fiercely protect the area’s natural desert landscape and rural character and don’t want to see anything changed. They have demonstrated a history of careful and vocal scrutiny of governmental planning and infrastructure proposals, especially in Scottsdale. They also fear that publicly-accessible open space might bring undesirable “outsiders.”

In other parts of the study area, particularly the more recent planned developments like Desert Ridge and Grayhawk, there seems to be more diversity in demographics, opinions, and community values.

### **2.4. History**

In Scottsdale, the Desert Greenbelt proposal is remembered by residents and groups like Citizens of Pinnacle Peak as a bad and divisive experience. In particular, proposals for structural improvement were not well-received (see the above issue). This historical experience should be considered in development of future flood control solutions.

### **2.5. Public Skepticism of Development**

The need for flood control is perceived by some as a development-driven issue in an area where “development” is a negative concept. Given that there are still large parcels – mainly State Lands –

that may be available for development in the future, a link between current flood control proposals and any connection with facilitating development should be made clear.

### **2.6. Need for Additional Flood Control Studies**

In general, most officials GCI spoke with agreed there is a need for new and additional studies that take into account better knowledge about flooding characteristics over the past decade and changes in development patterns.

However, related to the out of sight/out of mind issue, there is a significant number of people who are neither aware of the need or care to see public money spent on it.

### **2.7. Transparency of the Study Process**

Participants in the interviews urged the District to make sure the entire community knows about the study, has adequate and accurate information to consider, and be kept informed through all available communication channels. In part, this may be a reaction to past perceptions of “back-room deals,” but many positive suggestions were provided on how to do this; and most participants offered to assist by disseminating information through their organizations.

This chapter includes the substantive responses provided by participants to each of the interview questions. The responses are grouped into common theme categories. Quotes from participants are used throughout the chapter to illustrate the polarity and/or saliency of the issues.

### 3.1. Do you have any thoughts about past and current flooding problems in this neighborhood?

A person's belief of whether or not their neighborhood has flooding problems is dependent on what type of community they reside in and where the neighborhood is located in the study area. Some interviewees believe there is or may be a flooding problem while others are adamant there are no problems and the District should not be conducting this study. With the 99 square-mile study area, some residents will be in areas with little or no potential flooding hazards and some may be in areas with high potential hazards. It will be difficult to get residents throughout the study area to agree there is or may be a flooding problem and, therefore, to agree the study is needed.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Flooding has been or might be a problem
- Mitigation has helped
- Flooding hasn't been a problem
- Don't know

*"People here are willing to take that risk of flooding."*

*"A lot of projects in the past few years have been down-zoned to make flooding more controllable."*

*"The potential for severe flooding exists in this area but because there has not been a problem in recent years the problem is out of sight and out of mind."*

#### 3.1.1 Flooding Has Been / Might Be a Problem (Not a unanimous belief)

- A problem exists at the east end of the La Vida development. The shopping center's parking lots run into two culverts into the community.
- SR51 will be extended and there are concerns about 'dropping it on a school.' The community looked at pushing the road west of the high school but that area was filled with flood issues.
- Moved into the community (Desert Ridge) in 2008. Haven't seen much flooding except Pinnacle Peak and Tatum and a few other roadways like that.
- City should require a flood plan and a site plan before any approvals are considered. Initially when this issue came up before, people on staff at the city (Scottsdale) 'weren't engineers and didn't really know what to do', and gave the developers too much latitude

and too many options for what needed to be done. City is now, 'with the hiring of Ashley', looking at it seriously. City inspectors are now going out on inspections for these things, which wasn't being done before. There is still a problem in the review process, however, with developers driving too many of the decisions.

- Increases in density cause problems in this area. A lot of projects in the past few years have been down-zoned to make flooding more controllable.
- Some people in Grayhawk still have to buy flood insurance. People east of Pima are upset because they're still in the flood area. Mitigation would be a great idea but not some concrete channel.
- 'Desert Greenbelt would have destroyed the area'. There was a lack of clear identification of flood-prone areas. Once it's shown that an area is subject to flooding, there are constraints for building. The alluvial fan covers all of the area. Residents (in the Pinnacle Peak area) will resist any channelization. People here are willing to take that risk of flooding. If the objective is to cram more rooftops, this (study and any potential remedy) won't work.
- 2007 storms caused some flooding – totals were above 100-year flood numbers.
- The potential for severe flooding exists in this area but because there has not been a problem in recent years the problem is out of sight and out of mind. An aggressive technical and construction solution was proposed previously and opposition perceived it as a development-driven issue.
- Ongoing problems exist in Scottsdale when it rains. Work crews stage barricades in likely areas of flooding, and it's an ongoing and recurring problem.
- It depends. Things have gotten better, but if a huge storm is coming we have to stage the (Scottsdale) Police Department and Fire Department up north. Legend Trails area is a challenge for responses.
- MCFCD has done studies for both Cave Creek and Carefree, within about the past 3 years.
- There probably is a need for improvements.

### **3.1.2 Mitigation Has Helped**

- LaVida has a small wash that runs seriously when it rains. The community took steps to mitigate that – they paved the channel to increase the speed of the water.
- Too much water was coming into us (La Vida) until the Pima Road flood control project was completed which has mitigated the problem and has really helped.

- Lived in Desert Ridge since 2000 and seen a lot of changes. Tatum & Pinnacle Peak has been a problem in the past but most of those problems have been fixed; nothing else (no other flooding problems) in Desert Ridge comes to mind.
- Tatum Highlands board has been active in flood management and our flooding mitigation is in place.
- In Gayhawk, flood control systems are in place.
- Had to do major flood mitigation for a 70-acre Westcor project at SR101 and Scottsdale Road.

### **3.1.3 Flooding Hasn't Been a Problem**

- None at Desert View
- For hiking, biking and equestrian trails it hasn't been a problem.
- People don't see the need for flood mitigation and would (likely) say leave it (the area) alone. A viaduct currently under construction will take care of many of the problems here. (Viaduct being constructed in a southwesterly path that crosses several properties at Pinnacle Peak east of Scottsdale Rd.)
- There's some flooding but it's not a problem.

### **3.1.4 Don't Know (no knowledge or hasn't been in area long)**

- Two respondents said they don't know.

## **3.2. Describe the flooding problems in the area.**

People's perceptions about whether or not they have flooding in their area seem to be based solely on their personal experiences. If they personally have not had a problem, they tend to believe flooding is not a problem in the area. Also, because there has not been any recent damage due to flooding in this area, some believe the problems have been fixed.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Roadways and travel
- Changes in land and topography
- Property damage and off-site impacts
- Not a problem
- Community perceptions and expectations

*"It's only a problem when it rains."*

*“The flooding situation has gotten significantly better; it’s primarily the lesser, unpaved streets that are a problem these days.”*

*“The area is divided – those who see the need and those who don’t want improvements.”*

### **3.2.1 Roadways and Travel**

- Sometimes Scottsdale Road has standing water after a big rain. New developments have taken steps to mitigate flooding.
- (There are) Some wet crossings and (there have been) complaints about no (travel) access (sometimes when it rains) in Pinnacle Peak area.

### **3.2.2 Changes in Land and Topography**

- The (natural) break on the north side of the (Sonoran Mountain) preserve splits runoff between the Verde and Salt Rivers.
- In the past 20 – 25 years, topography in this area has changed. Subsidence around the airpark has occurred. About a foot of subsidence related to pumping has been reported.
- We’re seeing changes in the Pinnacle Peak area, for instance in Reata Wash.
- Alluvial problems remain. Localized solutions have been constructed but the holistic characteristic of the area is unknown right now.
- We’re in pretty good shape right now - no significant problems; but the Cave Creek Complex fire has changed things relative to drainage and flows in this area.

### **3.2.3 Property Damage and Off-Site Impacts**

- Seeing some problems in subdivisions (unspecified locations). There certainly are (flooding) issues that should have been addressed well before now.
- Some mitigation in the area by developers might be substandard.
- Believes that some people in Pinnacle Peak area will be losing a little property from mitigation.
- Most things seem to be working as intended, but some changes have had consequences on adjoining parcels.
- 4-5 years ago flooding took out part of a school in this area. Scottsdale appointed a flood control coordinator partly as a result of that.
- The flooding situation has gotten significantly better; it’s primarily the lesser, unpaved streets that are a problem these days. No structural damage has occurred since 2008.

## 3.2.4 Not a Problem

- Mostly solved at LaVida with a couple of small problems still remaining
- Nothing at Desert View
- Haven't seen flooding in Grayhawk
- Not significant, not too bad at Wildcat Ridge and Desert View. Reach 11 takes in a lot of water. We don't see a lot of flooding. You might see some farther north of us in the Cave Creek area.
- At Desert Ridge/Desert View, Reach 11 has been really well done. None of the past heavy rains have washed anything out; hasn't seen major issues. There is a 404 fund for improvements as necessary, but haven't used it much to date.
- At Desert Highlands at Pinnacle Peak, there have been no problems. What needs to be done probably has been done or is being done currently. It's likely that nothing will be required.
- I've heard there are flooding problems in some areas, and that's their problem, not mine.

## 3.2.5 Community Perceptions and Expectations

- Most people don't know what an alluvial floodplain is. Much has been done already to make things better.
- North Scottsdale, Carefree, Cave Creek expect people to move there who appreciate the natural wash areas that tend to migrate from time to time.
- The area is divided -- those who see the need and those who don't want improvements.
- It's only a problem when it rains.

## **3.3. Do you believe that research needs to be done about area flooding?**

Most people felt that a new study would be beneficial. The main reason given for this is to better understand the current potential problems. There are, however, a few concerns the study is being done to justify building a big flood control structure or is simply not needed.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Additional study needed
- Things OK as is
- It depends
- Don't know

*“Don't present a solution in search of a problem.”*

*“A broader understanding would be very useful for everyone in the area.”*

*“Our first intention would probably be to let it go – do nothing until problems clearly present themselves.”*

### 3.3.1 Additional Study Needed

- Probably would be a good thing to take a look at it.
- Yes
- Yes, I think so.
- Knowing that development is starting again, it would be helpful.
- You kind of have to do that, don't you? It's important to consider what impacts have occurred that will affect Rio Verde.
- If it's been 20 years, it would make sense.
- I'm hopeful there will be a study.
- Definitely
- Absolutely
- Research needs to be done...when it rains it can be torrential.
- Yes, definitely. Some washes disappear and then reappear in odd places. When you get down to the detail some changes will need to be made.
- You can't make one single assumption about the area. Each flow path is unique.
- A study would be very helpful.
- The piecemeal solutions that have been implemented might be effective and what's been done already needs to be considered. But a broader understanding would be very useful for everyone in the area.
- Heard that DC Ranch was designed presuming that flood mitigation would be in place, and that commitments had been made to ensure this would be done.
- Definitely yes, and on a regional level.
- Yes. Water management will be very valuable and research would be very useful. Those current water maps aren't very useful now because of development.
- Yes it does. Ashley Couch (City of Scottsdale) has started mapping for 100- and 500-year flooding areas.

- Three watersheds were included in Desert Greenbelt, no improvements have been done on some of those, and some homes are at risk. (Pinnacle Peak, Rawhide and Reatta) There would be great benefit for some of those homes and developments.
- Carefree manages their own floodplains and a study might be good to help provide advice to prospective lot buyers.

### **3.3.2 Things OK As Is**

- I think that's been done; it's not necessary.
- We need to be careful with our money so I'd say no.
- FEMA is already updating area one maps.
- Our first intention would probably be to let it go – do nothing until problems clearly present themselves.

### **3.3.3 It Depends...**

- Never hurts to look but not much to see. Do what you have to do but don't assume that some kind of construction will need to be done. Don't present a solution in search of a problem.
- Our first recommendation would be to do no harm if FEMA revisits this.
- It depends -- people in that area will come unhinged over any changes. Desert Greenbelt people will oppose this.

### **3.3.4 Don't Know**

- Three respondents said they don't know

## **3.4. What are your biggest concerns about a study like this?**

Many of the concerns about this study are based on a fundamental mistrust of government and perceptions that the study will lead to building facilities that will affect the natural desert and/or lead to further development of the surrounding area.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Future development
- Public awareness
- Evaluate the effectiveness and benefit of flood control features
- Environmental impacts
- Changes to natural desert lifestyle
- Accuracy of data

## Chapter 3

# Interview Responses

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- Impacts of expanding delineated floodplain
- Consistency with local master planning
- Politics
- Public skepticism of need
- No concerns

*“On the political side of things, there is a belief that this is being done to further develop the area.”*

*“The way it tends to have gone in the past, MCFCD hasn’t paid much attention to environmental impacts of their solutions relative to the amount of flood control achieved.”*

*“Residents have gone years without flooding and may not believe any study that says the potential exists.”*

*“I have zero concern.”*

*“Make it public and solicit ideas from people. Do some public outreach. Do what you’re doing...call people.”*

### **3.4.1 Future Development**

- Happy Valley & Pima raw property needs to be considered; if that’s developed it will cause problems.

### **3.4.2 Public Awareness**

- Make it public and solicit ideas from people. Do some public outreach. Do what you’re doing...call people.
- As it relates to the preserve, we’d like to know more about flows.
- There is a high likelihood that you will run into most of the same arguments this time as were heard during the Desert Greenbelt opposition.
- It may be that you need to identify and very clearly explain the priorities.

### **3.4.3 Evaluate the Effectiveness & Benefit of Flood Control Features**

- Water is held back by the structure built by COE and leaks around the east side (Desert Ridge/Desert View). What will happen with water leaking around that structure, and if we get a significant amount of water, how much damage will there be?
- They need to start at the north end (of Grayhawk) where the water is coming from. Different developments will be affected differently.

- Once the study starts, the people running it might feel they need to build something – but it’s likely nothing needs to be built here now (Pinnacle Peak area).

### **3.4.4 Environmental Impacts**

- The way it tends to have gone in the past, MCFCD hasn’t paid much attention to environmental impacts of their solutions relative to the amount of flood control achieved. Minimal construction is likely called for in this area (Pinnacle Peak).
- There are issues of invasive species.
- It would result in changes to the characteristics of the area.

### **3.4.5 Changes to Natural Desert Lifestyle**

- Some people may want to stop anything.
- Anti-growth, desert way-of-life preservationists - and the factors surrounding that attitude - will likely still be a driving force for this new study.
- People in northern areas of Scottsdale moved there to get away, and those people by and large don’t want improvements of any kind. They want to maintain the isolation, don’t mind occasional flooding, and aren’t easily convinced that they need to protect areas downstream.

### **3.4.6 Accuracy of Data**

- Ensure that a communications and educational program clearly describes the benefits to city residents vs. proposed changes, quality of life issues.
- It will be important to look at the flow north of Loop 101 and east of Loop 101 to the mountains, and how the flow would be managed.
- Doesn’t know how accurate current maps are.

### **3.4.7 Impacts of Expanding Delineated Floodplain**

- If 2/3 of Carefree is built out, new delineations might move people into floodplains requiring flood insurance, which would be a problem.

### **3.4.8 Consistency with Local Master Planning**

- Make sure you consider the Carefree and Cave Creek master plans for this.
- Carefree Highway would be a concern.

### **3.4.9 Politics**

- Desert Greenbelt lacked a political champion; you need to have the support of someone key who can speak for the community at large.

- On the political side of things, there is a belief that this is being done to further develop the area.

### **3.4.10 Public Skepticism of Need**

- Is this just driven by developers and development? Knows there is a problem that needs to be solved. Recreational users likely won't be concerned about a study.
- It might result in recommendations that might increase my taxes.
- Residents have gone years without flooding and may not believe any study that says the potential exists.
- Public perception may say a study is hogwash.

### **3.4.11 No Concerns**

- Nothing comes to mind.
- Flooding will not affect the preserve significantly.
- I have zero concern.
- It's not necessary.
- Wouldn't have too many concerns. (Believes we're going into global warming and, therefore, an abnormally dry period)
- No
- Two people indicated they don't have any or many concerns.

## **3.5. How do you think other people in the area will feel?**

Interviewee statements indicate that a wide range of opinions, ideas, and concerns can be expected when the project team begins to hold public meetings. Opinions may range from those concerned about impact to natural environment, to opposition to future growth as an outcome of the study, to suspicions about the study purpose. Some expressed the importance of involving people to ensure information is available from sources other than the rumor mill.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Uncertain
- Neutral – don't care
- Suspicious
- Open to ideas
- Confused
- Opposed
- Supportive

*“That depends on the project’s presentation and the goals that are stated. A balance of flood control and the environment is definitely called for in this area.”*

*“It will take all the agencies coming together as well as the public and political support.”*

*“Innovative and natural solutions have to be very prevalent in this project...”*

*“... people won’t hear about it from the project sources and will only hear about it from the rumor mill”*

*“If people are included in the process you should be fine...get them involved.”*

*“... mitigation is designed to facilitate further development, and that will be seriously opposed”*

*“Dozens of engineers and varying levels of expertise have shown contrary technical opinions.”*

*“It’s a very complicated scenario. People want to simplify the area but it’s not that easy.”*

### **3.5.1 Uncertain**

- Don't know - flood control is a hot button issue in this area.
- Concerned that people won't hear about it from the project sources and will only hear about it from the rumor mill
- No real feel for it. If it's pure science I can't imagine they're going to be concerned.
- It will take all the agencies coming together as well as the public and political support. Rawhide Wash in particular will have to have a political champion.
- One person said he doesn't actually know how people might feel.

### **3.5.2 Neutral / Don't Care**

- Haven't heard concerns since Tatum Blvd was fixed
- Most people won't know and some won't really care.

### **3.5.3 Suspicious**

- People (in the Pinnacle Peak area) will be deeply concerned.
- Feels that mitigation is designed to facilitate further development and that will be seriously opposed

- Skeptical that this is not about more density
- Depends on who pays for it...
- They will feel the same way that I feel (don't do it).
- Suspicious
- Desert Greenbelt decision being made during the freeway project was an unfortunate situation of timing.

### **3.5.4 Open to Ideas**

- If they're (the people who will be affected) included in the process you should be fine...get them involved.
- That depends on the project's presentation and the goals that are stated. A balance of flood control and the environment is definitely called for in this area.
- Innovative and natural solutions have to be very prevalent in this project – solutions beyond the constructed solutions that were previously proposed.
- Scottsdale will always be a conservative city but it may adjust in the future depending on what happens in the upcoming election.
- Both sides of the coin will be represented. Some people supporting this might have their own agenda.
- Newer move-ins and new people in the area might have a different idea.
- Thinks they'll be more receptive now than they were back then (Desert Greenbelt controversy)
- During Desert Greenbelt, Scottsdale was going through a great deal of development and people saw this as an opportunity to slow/stop that growth. Rawhide was an opportunity to consolidate 10 washes into 1. This is no longer about accommodating development but removing people from risk. Most people don't know/think there's a problem -- this is an education process.

### **3.5.5 Confused**

- Dozens of engineers and varying levels of expertise have shown contrary technical opinions.
- It's a very complicated scenario. People want to simplify the area but it's not that easy.

### **3.5.6 Opposed**

- COPP will drive the opposition.
- COPP is still very powerful.

- A lot of COPP advocates are ultra-conservative – wanting no changes, period. A small group of people will “get it”, but won’t stand up for a project and oppose the highly vocal minority.
- Section 31 was annexed during Drinkwater’s era and promised that they would forever be left alone. (Gave an example of how opposed to change most of the neighborhood is – even for critical services like emergency response - while a silent minority sees the need for change.)
- People in this area will likely oppose anything that includes publicly-accessible open space, fearing the idea of allowing people to recreate in the areas they perceive as being their private domain.

### 3.5.7 Supportive

- I don’t know anyone who will be opposed.
- Anybody with flood insurance will be ecstatic. People who “think” will be fine with it.
- The primary supporters will be the developers, which plays into the hands of those who lay claim to the fact that this is just a developer-driven initiative.

### 3.6. What are your perceptions of the Flood Control District?

People’s perceptions of the Flood Control District are mixed, but not many seem to be strongly held. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the district’s purpose and role in flood water management.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Positive
- Mixed feelings
- Negative
- As a coordinator
- Not sure
- No opinion

*“The District needs to play the role of mediator and make sure things are consistent between jurisdictions.”*

*“They have a tough job.”*

*“MCFCD has not been sensitive to environmental considerations in the past.”*

## Chapter 3

# Interview Responses

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*“Never dug into it but nobody complains about flooding, so I guess they do a great job.”*

### 3.6.1 Positive

- Never dug into it but nobody complains about flooding, so guess they do a great job.
- They have a tough job.
- Haven't dealt with much but they've been very good when we have.
- We have good relationships.
- Very positive

### 3.6.2 Mixed Feelings

- I'm a fiscal conservative; there better be a good reason for their existence.
- They don't really touch us but in the past they've had a need to construct flood control structures of a significant magnitude even when not necessarily warranted.
- Scottsdale has had a strange hot-and-cold relationship with the County. There's been a feeling that FCDMC has not wanted to put much money into Scottsdale - perhaps Scottsdale has not been a priority.
- Haven't worked with them much, there's a divide in the City (Scottsdale). Some people think they're overreaching and don't respect the needs of local communities.

### 3.6.3 Negative

- MCFCD has not been sensitive to environmental considerations in the past.
- Scottsdale puts a lot of money into it and we don't see all of those dollars coming back.

### 3.6.4 A Coordinator

- They should be involved in this.
- The District needs to play the role of mediator and make sure things are consistent between jurisdictions.
- The District might be a more credible voice for this issue.

### 3.6.5 Not Sure

- People don't know the agency.
- Don't know the MCFCD
- No bias either way

- Not much experience – (they’re another) bureaucratic (organization)
- MCFCD never comes up.
- Don’t know them well

### **3.6.6 No Opinion**

- Seven respondents said they don’t have any particular opinion of the District.

### **3.7. Are you aware of any past controversies or issues about flooding in the community?**

When asked specifically about past controversies, most respondents were vague or alluded to past lawsuits or major floods.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Not aware of any
- Controversies

*“Flooding has been a way of life and controversy in Scottsdale for years.”*

*“... people will complain about minor puddles...”*

*“...not necessarily aware of any that has been elevated to the District) level”*

#### **3.7.1 Not Aware of Any**

- Five respondents said they aren’t aware of any problems of controversies in their areas.
- Not necessarily aware of any that has been elevated to their (the District) level.

#### **3.7.2 Controversies**

- Lawsuit by Palisades against ADOT and HDR resulted in a substantial settlement.
- Flooding has been a way of life and controversy in Scottsdale for several years.
- Public perception of drainage – people will complain about minor puddles; dealing with residents is a mixed bag of tricks.
- A couple of issues where the town was sued over private property flooding in which the town ended up doing mitigation.
- 1993 floods were the most significant.
- Flooding problems have occurred in the Cave Creek area.
- (This has) Obviously (been a controversial issue here)

- Irrigation (in this area) has been controversial.

### 3.8. What can you tell me about the neighborhood and the people who live in the area?

The 99 square-mile study area contains a wide diversity of communities, which makes it almost impossible to generalize about the residents. For example, the neighborhoods in the northeast include the wealthier, conservative residents while the Desert Ridge area is very family oriented. The northwestern portions of the study area are more rural with lower densities and include people with a preference for relative isolation.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Many snowbirds – empty nesters
- Residents – family oriented
- Strong sense of community
- Environmentally sensitive – desert orientation
- Wealthy, conservative, independent
- Want to get away from it all
- Can't generalize

*“People will give us feedback about everything.”*

*“People who've gone out there have done so to get away from rules and regulations and don't want to answer to the government.”*

*“This is a nice, affordable community.”*

*“...close knit, people talk a lot, flood control not a big topic”*

*“They are upscale and deeply concerned about preserving the character of this area.”*

*“...highly skeptical and believe they've been lied to in the past”*

#### **3.8.1 Many “Snowbirds”/ “Empty-Nesters”**

- There are 60 homes in La Vida, about 50/50 full time and snowbirds, no kids, and empty nesters

#### **3.8.2 Residents/ Family-Oriented**

- Rural, low density, low lighting parcels. Not diverse, similar families, lots of kids, family oriented, mix of ages and incomes. No extremes.

- 261 homes, 50% rentals, 50% owner-occupied. Family homes, 50% original owners, ¼ bought during boom and ¼ bought since. Nice people, few complaints, most work in the area. Average incomes are about \$100k, and 95% white.
- 1432 homes, a Circle K, and split by Jomax Rd. partly Phoenix and Cave Creek. Single family homes, a few renters, few foreclosures, values are ticking upwards, mid to late 90 construction. This is a nice, affordable community.
- Grayhawk is mixed with families and people with secondary homes. More families are building larger homes and more upscale homes, fairly expensive homes.

### **3.8.3 Strong Sense of Community**

- Close knit, people talk a lot, flood control not a big topic.
- People will give us feedback about everything.

### **3.8.4 Environmentally Sensitive / Desert Orientation**

- People are extremely protective of the preserve, a rural attitude and sensitivity to the ecosystem. Concerns exist about the visitor centers and traffic and influx in their community.

### **3.8.5 Wealthy, Conservative, Independent**

- They are upscale and deeply concerned about preserving the character of this area.
- Upscale, they're aware of the possibility flooding but they've had no serious problems so people aren't concerned or see the need for some kind of mitigation.
- Upscale and concerned people live in this area.
- Highly skeptical and believe they've been lied to in the past.
- Some have moved there because of their income and have a sense of entitlement; don't like to be told what to do.
- This study area is a somewhat mixed bag of upper income conservative people.
- Upscale and independent
- Upscale, part time residents, tend to be more active politically than others; engrained in their current lifestyle and don't want change.

### **3.8.6 Want to Get Away From It All**

- People who've gone out there have done so to get away from rules and regulations and don't want to answer to the government.
- North vs. South issues will be prevalent. Messages need to be the same but the approach might need to change. Might help to find a champion – someone with courage.

### 3.8.7 Can't Generalize

- Master developments want to protect their collective interests and each looks at things differently. They want to minimize any threats to their homes. Each needs to be dealt with differently.
- Same circus, different clowns...

### **3.9. Do you know of any future plans for this neighborhood?**

Some people stated they see an explosion of growth and rooftops in this area while others felt their communities were built out and would have no more growth. There is an awareness the development of the State Lands could have a major impact on the area. There is still a strong movement to protect the natural desert and open space in the study area. Open space is valued, although some see this as a double-edged sword by encouraging use by “outsiders”. A few people believe the McDowell Sonoran Preserve will expand.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Residential – increased development
- State lands
- Commercial
- Roadway corridors
- Open space and preservation
- Minimal changes

*“The highest and best use of State Lands will be key for this.”*

*“...more residents and more commercial...”*

*“The people who moved to this area for its lifestyle and amenities will do whatever they can to preserve that lifestyle.”*

#### **3.9.1 Residential / Increased Development**

- (I expect to see) Higher density in the area, nothing new in La Vida.
- Wildcat is built out but the surrounding area will grow. Open space in the area will be filled in.
- The current Scottsdale City Council sees more rooftops and density as the answer to their challenges and (they) have (shown) very little concern about the environment. That will affect this area in the future.

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- Just don't know from a City planning perspective. There are some pretty intense fights underway over density. We now have a development-friendly City Council. More development will be approved.
- Massive explosion of development is coming.

### **3.9.2 State Lands**

- Woodland Ridge will be in planning/construction. Two hotels will be built near Tatum & SR101. State Land sold the ground for a lot of money and has taken back parcels. They'll auction them in blocks as constructed before. State Land will be forced to release their parcels in the not too distant future...perhaps the next few months.
- Highest and best use of State Lands will be key for this. A lot people up there don't want development, obviously, but it would be an area well suited for a Master Planned community.
- Development on State Lands will be key – desert vs. city lifestyle depending on density.
- A couple of State-owned parcels north of 101 may be attractive to commercial or resort developers, or similar.

### **3.9.3 Commercial**

- Greasewood Flat property is up for sale. Pinnacle Peak Patio may be as well.
- Plans for the 'gooseneck' (north of Tom Thumb Trailhead, 128th Street & Paraiso north to Dynamite) – early plans for development, an ecoresort. Other speculative ideas also exist.
- More residents and more commercial, based on 1 – 1.5 % growth in Cave Creek and Carefree
- City of Phoenix is again dealing with the original developer of the Desert Ridge City North area to reignite those plans for development.

### **3.9.4 Roadway Corridors**

- The City (Scottsdale) is trying to get their arms around Bell Road. This area will be/is designated as an 'activity area' along with the Desert Discovery area. The Ice Den is there. The neighborhood sees this kind of development as an amenity rather than an encroachment. Neighborhood concerns are generally about height of structures and not affecting their sight lines and visibility.
- When Sonoran Parkway gets extended, that may have major implications.

### 3.9.5 Open Space & Preservation

- East of Pima / north of Dynamite will be (an) additional (part of the) preserve if the money is available.
- The people who moved to this area for its lifestyle and amenities will do whatever they can to preserve that lifestyle.
- There is a definite isolationist mentality that exists for many people who aren't interested in developing amenities for publicly accessible open space. Promoting the wildlife corridor benefits might be a better sell.
- A lot as it currently is.
- The preserve will expand.

### 3.9.6 Minimal Changes

- Tatum Highlands is built out. Someday the desert will go away.
- We're built out; we're done (Grayhawk).
- We're built out (Pinnacle Peak area)
- Not many changes in the immediate Pinnacle Peak area.
- Will work to keep it the same as it is (McDowell Sonoran Preserve).

### **3.10. Who would be specifically affected and should be included in the study?**

Many suggestions were given on who should be included in this study from everyone to no one to a list of specific individuals.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Everyone
- No one
- Groups
- Specific developments
- Specific individuals

*“Every resident in north Scottsdale needs to know.”*

*“Each master planned development needs to be treated specially.”*

*“You’ll find a number of people who have been involved previously who need to be involved again.”*

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# Interview Responses

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### 3.10.1 Everyone

- The HOA's, of course, and other residences, and individual homeowners need to be contacted.
- Every resident in north Scottsdale needs to know.

### 3.10.2 No One

- There's no need for a study, don't do it.

### 3.10.3 Groups

- Any of the realtors need to be involved.
- Management firms
- COPP needs to be involved.
- People in the Village Planning Committee (Phoenix) who live in that area need to be included.
- Desert Foothills Property Association (large lot, low density) will weigh in on anything that goes in.
- Commercial interests are loose and scattered.
- Coalition of Pinnacle Peak - COPP ("Meet with COPP, they have been a little more understanding recently about the holistic approach.")
- Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners Association, Les Conklin (also the leader of the scenic corridor)
- An 'open space' entity – Desert Foothills Land Trust would be good to include. Sonia Perillo
- McDowell Mountain (Sonoran) Conservancy
- High-end homeowners will push back.

### 3.10.4 Specific Developments

- The golf course, Pinnacle Peak Country Club should be included.
- Residents need to be involved and Rio Verde needs to be involved.
- Each master planned development needs to be treated specially.
- DC Ranch
- McCormick Ranch
- Scottsdale Ranch

### 3.10.5 Specific Individuals

- Presidents of associations and management companies would be good to talk to.
- You'll find a number of people who have been involved previously who need to be involved again.
- Linda Whitehead
- Howard Meyers
- Wait to see who is elected on August 28th. Get them on your side and make sure that you're talking with them within their first 6 months in office, and then pack the Kiva if decisions are needed.
- Kit Weiss at City of Scottsdale has a comprehensive list and is anxious to work with the District.

### **3.11. What are the best ways to communicate with and include people in a study? How and when should this be done?**

Most people recommended using as many methods of possible to reach people and not to rely on only one method. Many of the suggestions included digital media.

Responses to this question have been categorized into the following themes:

- Overall approaches
- Specific techniques
- Key messages

***"All avenues need to be used. People in that area are well connected."***

***"Lots of hand-holding is required."***

***"Multiple approaches. Direct mail is best, door hangers, flyers in newspapers, newspaper ads, HOAs"***

***"Presenting lots of flooding and safety facts from neutral experts be extremely helpful."***

#### 3.11.1 Overall Approaches

- City has lots of avenues for reaching people. Planning Department
- Multiple approaches - Direct mail is best, door hangers, flyers in newspapers, newspaper ads, HOAs.

- People in this area have email list serves and regular mailers, use those avenues.
- Lots of HOA's in the area, talk to them and use their communication devices. Mass mailings are also probably the best ways.
- Email----if you start with meetings you'll get a lot of people.
- McDowell Sonoran Conservancy tends to communicate through the HOA's or one-offs on the County islands.
- Lots of hand-holding with Council (Scottsdale) people is required.
- Lots of hand-holding with all of the groups is required.
- All avenues need to be used. People in that area are well connected -- any news gets out fast -- like wildfire.
- In as many ways as you can
- Everything from email to websites, small meetings, large meetings, everything and anything should plan to be used.
- Start with small meetings with higher-level people and build it from there.
- In the strongest terms -- Do nothing till after November -- the next election (Scottsdale) will be very interesting.
- Not until after November 2012.
- Most participants urged using the widest possible range of communication techniques to let people know about this project and obtain their input.
- The most effective specific methods will be further evaluated after speaking with more people during this Issue Assessment.
- Regarding timing of public communication, the City of Scottsdale representatives we talked with strongly urged that general public notification of the PPW ADMS project not be made until after the Scottsdale elections in August and November, since the potential controversy surrounding the issue could affect the Council elections of existing and new candidates.

### **3.11.2 Specific Techniques**

- Contact LaVida and they'll get the word out.
- Pinnacle Peak Magazine -- They have a website & newsletter service.
- Sonoran News
- Desert Ridge Living magazine. We have 3000 email addresses for the 5000 residences here. We have a DesertRidgeMagazine.com

- Reach out to the Wildcat Ridge HOA and we can help.
- The Black Mt Boulevard website has been useful.
- Use Twitter and Facebook.
- Go to the HOA's as primary methods.
- Desert Property Association has various email lists and would be happy to review your material and pass it along.
- No (do not use) door-hangers, (use) USPS, Tatum Highlands does a quarterly newsletter. (The month of) May homeowners' meeting is not well attended but MCFCD is invited to meet with their Monthly Board at any appropriate time.
- The Buzz is a monthly publication and a weekly newsletter – Michael Fee can make that happen.
- Call COPP and we'll talk to you.
- Through COPP and the other distribution lists.
- The Village Planning Committees would be a good way to do this. There is a very active Desert Ridge HOA and their planners would have that specific information.
- Most groups are pretty sophisticated, and social media works to a degree.
- TV-11 works sometimes.
- Note that 15-20% of customers pay water bills online, and there are no water bill inserts anymore.
- Email
- Website
- In-person & small meetings
- Large meetings
- Telephone
- Local newspapers -- Sun Times and Scottsdale Republic
- Carefree has a list serve and website that you could link to.
- Carefree Council chambers have a bulletin board.
- Local YMCA is used for public meetings.

### 3.11.3 Key Messages

- Factually pointing out the consequences of Las Vegas flooding from a few years ago and offering comparisons to flooding potential in this area might be a compelling argument.
- Presenting lots of flooding and safety facts from neutral experts would be extremely helpful.

### **3.12. Who else should we talk to?**

- Brian Straight PPCC
- Get to the HOAs in the Pinnacle Peak area. Winfield, Terra Vita, Troon & Troon North
- Jim Davis – was HOA president during the time of ‘The Network’ – a predecessor to Desert Ridge. He worked for the general manager for Ross Martin Graham on Desert Ridge.
- Terrence Smith (GM for Desert Ridge)
- JW Marriott might have experience with washes and golf course issues – Tom Foreberger
- The developers need to know. Surrounding stakeholder HOA’s, school district.
- Stay away from anyone who makes money from higher density.
- Dean Butler – Insurance agency
- Michael Fee (Manager of Grayhawk management group)
- Arizona State Land Department
- RED Development
- Home builders
- Talk to the Village Planner, Tricia (City of Phoenix).
- Linda Whitehead (mentioned twice)
- Howard Meyers (mentioned twice)
- Don and Marilyn Andrews
- Judy Wagmon
- Jacob Zahn, Tricia Gomes – the past and current City of Phoenix Village Planners are two people that will have the best knowledge about this area.
- Phoenix City Councilman Jim Waring

- McDowell Sonoran Conservancy will be a key stakeholder in this study.
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Michael Clack –Chief Development Officer in Scottsdale – give him some time (after August) but talk with him – bring him into the circle.
- Paul Katsenes @ City of Scottsdale
- Cave Creek Unified School District should be on the list.
- Black Mountain Sewer Company in Carefree
- MCDOT – owns Carefree Highway
- Dave Meinhardt (Scottsdale)
- Ashley Couch (Scottsdale)
- Dan Worth (Scottsdale)
- Derrick Earl (Scottsdale)
- Dan Worth (acting Scottsdale City Manager) would be a good guy to talk to.

### 3.13. What else should we have asked? What else should we know about?

- No respondents had any specific suggestions.
- We don't want trails, just stay out of here.

### 3.14. Additional Responses

Two interviewees submitted comments, questions, and ideas after the interviews. Copies of the correspondence are reproduced here. One requested to be part of the public record so the name of the sender is included. The name of the other person's email was removed to protect the anonymity that was promised as part of the interviews.

#### **3.14.1 Letter from Mr. J.D. Helms**

To: Mr. John Godec

From: J. D. Helms, resident of north Scottsdale

Re: **Flood Control, with comments FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD**

Dear John:

I'd like to add some further comments to our conversation last week with regards to flood controls in north Scottsdale, and the proposed Pinnacle Peak South Area Drainage studies. I am a member of the Pinnacle Peak Heights Coalition LLC and can speak for many neighbors in the Heights and Vistas who have expressed concerns over the years. Several years ago, I helped secure over 350 petitions opposing flood control and trails in our neighborhood. These petitions were filed with the City during one of the Council open meetings and are part of the public record.

During our previous call, you asked my opinion regarding flooding issues and how my neighbors and I might feel about conducting another study reflecting changes, caused by development, that have occurred since the last study 20 years ago.

For the past 13-1/2 years my wife and I have lived near the intersection of Pinnacle Peak and Church Roads, an area that is presumably exposed to 100 year flooding. I told you we have not experienced any flooding in this area, but that I was aware there were some homes in DC Ranch (I believe ten in number) that were issued building permits and are still in noncompliance. Another area in the Pinnacle Peak South Area Drainage Master Study located below DC Ranch is Windgate Ranch Subdivision with 95 Lots in violation which I believe are now in litigation. The City, County and FEMA are all aware of these violations which represent only a small fraction of the existing structures. I do not understand why anyone but the owners of these structures should be held accountable for mitigating any violations brought on by themselves.

The failure to build to standards by a few homeowners/developers is now being used as an excuse for another expensive study that will accomplish what? A recommendation for another Desert Greenbelt project and perhaps an accompanying improvement district with special tax zones to pay for it?

If that is where this is leading, I can assure you there will be a wall of resistance from the Pinnacle Peak Heights Coalition LLC and many of my neighbors. We fought that battle for several years and prevailed because of cost and gross mismanagement. We still carry the battle scars from that war, and the political damage was deeply felt.

The main reasons we will oppose another project the scale of the Greenbelt include 1) our distaste for the ugly scars it will create, 2) the irreparable damage to the Sonoran Desert eco-system and Wildlife Habitat which is part of Scottsdale's heritage, 3) the Disregard of Scottsdale's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance 4) and possibility of being taxed without any benefits.

#### **Ugly Scarring and Impact on the Wildlife:**

If you didn't catch the January 12-13, 2013 article in the WSJ entitled 'Los Angeles Reimagines Its Waterway,' I quote: "Eighty years after the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers cast the LA River in concrete, turning this city's original lifeblood into a storm drain, a new generation of Corps members is working to bring back at least some of its natural habitat." The article states they are spending \$10M on a study to develop options for restoring native habitat. This is another example of a well-intentioned flood control project gone bad.

When we first moved into our home, we enjoyed seeing coyotes, javelinas, bobcats and mule deer. I attribute the steady decline in these sightings to the continuing development of nearby homes and the lack of City enforcement of ordinances which were enacted to protect the natural

environment. Hard retaining walls (gunnite, e.g.) would virtually ensure we would never see this wildlife again.

### Costs:

Homeowners and developers who built in violation of known floodplain elevations should be made to pay for their errors, and it would be unfair to tax or otherwise penalize the homeowners who are in compliance. Another study showing changes in topography or water flows would only be caused by this development activity.

### Summary:

The bottom line is the great majority of the residents in my neighborhood do not have flood issues and are chiefly concerned with maintaining privacy and preserving the eco-system. We are skeptical of studies because we don't see any need for general mitigation in our area. We would like to be left alone to enjoy nature.

With regards,  
J. D. Helms, 23205 N Church Road, Scottsdale, AZ  
480-419-5963

### 3.14.2 Email chain from Interviewee

John, I should have said this earlier but just in case it's not already on your radar...

I think virtually all trail users and other supporters of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve would adamantly oppose any sort of flood control structures or other topographical flood mediation projects within the Preserve. I'm not trying to speak for everyone. That's just my sense of it.

Ok, I'll leave you alone for now. Hope you have a great weekend!

---

Thank you, John. Yes, that is helpful. You undoubtedly said most of that yesterday but it is good to have it summarized.

Did you have a chance to review the information for which I sent you links yesterday? I'd be very interested in hearing how efforts in this area by the City of Scottsdale dovetail (if they do) with your work.

City staff represented to me and other residents that the item approved in October was mandated by FEMA and approving it filled the square. Obviously, there seems to be a bit of a logical disconnect between that position and any ongoing flood mitigation assessment.

Did I hear you say that the City of Scottsdale was somehow involved in the work you are doing? I could have conflated our conversation with some of the earlier actions.

Now that I think of it, I don't recall that MCFCD was mentioned in the earlier discussions. I remember hearing there was input from FEMA, ADWR, USEPA, and ADEQ. If indeed MCFCD was left out of that process, it seems like a remarkably amateurish oversight on the part of City of Scottsdale stormwater management staff.

## 4.1. History and Perspective

Some past government flood control planning projects in the north Scottsdale and Pinnacle Peak area have been met with public opposition, anger, and outrage.

In 1993 Peter Sandman identified twelve components of public and stakeholder outrage. Questions that might be asked to determine the extent of that outrage include:

- Is it voluntary or coerced?
- Is it natural or industrial?
- Is it familiar or exotic?
- Is it not memorable or memorable?
- Is it not dreaded or dreaded?
- Is it chronic or catastrophic?
- Is it knowable or not knowable?
- Is it controlled by me or by others?
- Is it fair or unfair?
- Is it morally irrelevant or morally relevant?
- Can I trust you or not?
- Is the process responsive or unresponsive?

Projects perceived as coerced, industrial, exotic, memorable, dreaded, catastrophic, not knowable, controlled by others, unfair, morally relevant, untrustworthy, and administered through an unresponsive process most often inspire the greatest outrage in people who believe they might be affected. Issues reflecting the former rather than latter attributes have the highest chance for public opposition. Reducing actual or potential public outrage and opposition requires actions and activities that mitigate those perceptions.

Citizens, many of whom resided in Scottsdale's Pinnacle Peak area, successfully drove an effort in the early 2000's to derail the Desert Greenbelt flood control project planning process. Citizen opposition from 'more than 800 residents' in the area was based on their belief there was 'virtually no public demand' for flood control in the area, and there was 'no historical evidence' provided that proved a need for the project. In addition it was stated 'homes are not built in washes' and that 'professional and expert opinion' held that the proposed design for mitigation was wrong and would result in 'irreparable damage' to the sensitive and fragile Sonoran desert.

### 4.2. Current Conditions

Based on an issue assessment conducted in 2012/2013 it appears many of the past perceptions and mistrust of government remains relative to flood control in the north Scottsdale area.

Many of the same people who successfully opposed the Desert Greenbelt project believe that proposed flood control research or plans are driven primarily by the economic development community and backed by elected officials and staff influenced by business and developers. As stated in the issue assessment, many of the residents of north Scottsdale are extremely protective of their unique Sonoran desert environment and investments and will adamantly oppose any proposal they believe might jeopardize their status quo. These “preservationists” tend to be extremely mistrustful of government in general and Scottsdale government in particular. Many of these residents view past proposed Scottsdale project efforts as coercive, industrial, exotic, memorable, dreaded, not knowable, controlled by others, unfair, morally relevant, untrustworthy, and administered through an unresponsive process. These beliefs would suggest that future initiatives in the north Scottsdale area are likely to be at least met with suspicion and skepticism by many residents.

Based on comments provided by the Issue Assessment participants, GCI offers these recommendations for designing and implementing a credible and effective public participation program for the PPW ADMS project. Suggestions for the type of approaches and flood control solutions the District should consider are also provided in response to themes expressed by those interviewed.

## 5.1. Program Design

- It is imperative that flooding problems are clearly identified and characterized before any potential solution is suggested. If residents do not believe a problem exists, they will not be willing to accept or support any kind of solution.
- A high level of public engagement and information is called for and requested by those interviewed for the issue assessment.
- The project web presence and social media plan must be handled in a robust and careful manner knowing the north Scottsdale community is quite connected and well organized.
- It is imperative to ensure the information gathering and engineering data collected is transparent and available to the public. Any action that suggests otherwise is highly likely to be met with incredulity and opposition.
- In addition to currently planned larger public meetings, it will be necessary to seek opportunities to meet with smaller key stakeholder and citizen groups and individuals in the area on an as-needed basis and as issues arise. Regular briefings of key stakeholders and groups in north Scottsdale should be built into any public participation plan.
- It's likely that MCFCD has greater credibility with some members of the north Scottsdale public than do City of Scottsdale staff and officials; therefore, it will likely be helpful for the success of the project for MCFCD to maintain a higher public presence and profile than the City of Scottsdale until trust is rebuilt.

## 5.2. Flood Control Solutions

- Solutions to any problems need to be presented in a context-sensitive manner with care taken to protect the existing natural environment of the north Scottsdale area and remaining pristine Sonoran desert.
- A significant concern and opposition exists around potential flood control improvements which might include or encourage public access to residential areas. Such improvements need to be carefully considered for their public acceptability.

# Appendix A Interview Script and Questions

## Pinnacle Peak West Area Drainage Master Study Issue and Risk Assessment Questionnaire

It has been about 20 years since the flood hazard maps in your area have been updated. In that time, there has been significant new development; both master planned and new single family homes in the unincorporated county islands. These changes could affect how flooding occurs in your community.

As a result, the Flood Control District of Maricopa County began a study in March 2012 to determine if there are flooding hazards in your community and, if so, to determine the types of hazards. The District's project team will be using information provided by residents, data from a July 2007 storm that caused flooding in the area, and updated technical models to identify the hazards.

One of the first steps of the study process is to identify community issues and potential concerns about the study. As a community leader, we would like to ask you a few questions.

1. What are your thoughts about past and current flooding problems in your neighborhood?
2. How would you describe the flooding problems in your area?
3. Do you think research needs to be done to determine where flooding is or may occur in your community?
4. What would be your biggest concerns about a potential study on area flooding?
5. How do you think other people in the area will feel about this study?
6. What is your perception of the Flood Control District?
7. Have there been any past controversies or issues about flooding in your community?
8. Tell me about this neighborhood and the people who live in this area.
9. What do you think the future holds for this neighborhood?
10. Who do you think would be specifically affected and should be included in this study?
11. What do you think are the best ways to communicate with and include people in this study? How do you think we should involve people and when?
12. Who else do you think we should talk to about this study?
13. What else should I have asked you about this? What have I forgotten?

# Appendix B Interviewees

## Tier 1 Interviews

### City of Phoenix

Chris Hallett, Director, Neighborhood Services Department  
Debra Stark, Director, Planning & Development Services  
Tricia Gomes, Desert View Planner  
Toni Maccarone, Public Information Director, City Managers' Office

### City of Scottsdale

David Richert, City Manager  
Connie Padian, Administrator -  
Planning, Neighborhoods & Transportation  
Erin Perreault, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager  
Don Hadder, Principal Planner - Planning Coordination  
Raun Keagy, Director, Neighborhood Resources  
Kit Weiss, Manager, Neighborhood Resources  
Mike Phillips, General Government Public Affairs Manager,  
Office of Communications  
Annie DeChance, Water Department Public Participation and Outreach Manager, Office of Communications  
Kelly Corsette, Mayor and City Council Communications and Public Affairs Director, Office of  
Communications  
Brian Dygert, General Manager, WestWorld of Scottsdale

### Town of Carefree

Gary Neiss, Town Administrator  
DJ Stapley, Assistant Town Planner, Planning & Zoning

### Town of Cave Creek

Usama Abujbarah, Town Manager

## Tier 2 Interviews

LaVida - Dave Boland  
Greater Pinnacle Peak Association - Les Conklin  
Desert Ridge / Desert View - Doug Dickson  
Resident- JD Helms  
Wildcat Ridge HOA and Desert View VPC - Tim Lacy  
Westcor Desert View - Ron Lorch  
Desert Properties Association - Howard Meyers  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy - Mike Nolan  
Desert View - Lynn Pleskoff  
Resident and FEMA contractor - Massoud Rezakhani  
Resident - Edie Shannon  
Tatum Highlands Association - Carl St. John  
Grayhawk Homeowners Association - Cliff Tate  
Formerly COPP president - Bob Vairo  
Scottsdaletrails.com - John Washington  
Former COPP & McDowell Sonoran Preserve commissioner - Linda Whitehead