

APPENDIX E

LETTER FROM NANCY BURNETT, COTTONWOOD RESIDENT TO CHIP DAVIS, YAVAPAI COUNTY SUPERVISOR

December 5, 1999

Chip Davis
Board of Supervisors
10 South 6th Street
Cottonwood, Arizona 86326

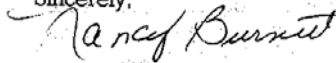
Dear Chip,

Thanks for your letter of encouragement. That project we undertook with NAU proved most educational. As you know, the health of the riparian habitat greatly affects the quantity and quality of the water. We tagged and counted every sapling in a section running 230 feet east to west, along marker 6, after our study of the old growth section in Dead Horse State Park. We met with Sharon Lopez, biologist from NAU and Francis McCracken, retired plant pathologist, to help us interpret our findings. The old growth forest is dying! Roots smothered, roots exposed, placing the trees in stress, evident from the epichormic branching, and die back. We then found trees that had died suddenly, evident from the horrible smell of the decaying cambium layer.

The environment played the greatest part, the change of the ecosystem. After that everything we found was secondary, but educational, for myself and the kids. We found leaves containing the fungus septoria, chlorosis (lack of chlorophyll), the fungus pleurotus, the bacteria wet wood, which was causing the trees at times to lose their entire branch. We found the fungus causing canker called botryodiplodia, (bot-tree-od-i-plodia). We checked soil texture, we measured distance from the river to the dying or dead tree, we measured bank height, we checked pH of the soil, we counted every single tree surrounding a dead or dying Cottonwood. We found, as suspected, competition from the imported trees. Ailanthus, which some call Tree of heaven, or paradise trees was the major culprit at Dead Horse. But the cursed tamarisk had well worked its way into our riparian area. The area of saplings we tagged, along the Verde River, contained 719 Cottonwoods, 159 Willows, 205 Tamarisks. Our study area proved to be pretty grim.

This amount of tamarisk was a great concern. Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve had a volunteer program in which volunteers came on Saturday, cut down the Tamarisk and poison the stump. For them to use poison, in a riparian area would show the greater potential harm from the tamarisk. If we wish to preserve what Cottonwood and Willow we now have, our suggestion would be to have the same program here, especially in the young sapling growth along the river. Perhaps you could help by using your people that need to complete community service time. Thanks again Chip for everything you are doing, I hope this report is of concern to you.

Sincerely,



Nancy Burnett