

December 21, 2007. Submitted to ADOT on behalf of Cascabel Working Group at State Transportation Board of Supervisor's meeting in Oro Valley.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Transportation Board,

My name is Jacquie Dale, I am a member of the Cascabel Working Group, a Preservation Archaeologist for the Center for Desert Archaeology, and a resident of Cascabel. I am here today to highlight how an interstate bypass would destroy the San Pedro River Valley's cultural landscape.

The San Pedro River Valley preserves one of Arizona's richest archaeological records. People have been living in this river valley for the last 12,000 years and much of this evidence remains to the present day. Recently, a partial inventory recorded nearly 500 archaeological sites along the river between Benson and Winkelman.

The San Pedro River Valley is unique in that it still holds tremendous research potential. The high degree of preservation makes it an ideal place to study the human history of the Desert Southwest. Several village sites dating from 1275 to 1400 AD were home to prehistoric migrants from northern Arizona. Nine villages with platform mounds and five villages with ballcourts are still preserved as well.

There are many burial sites, both prehistoric and historic along the San Pedro River. Many historic settlers in the area who acquired land as part of the Homestead Act have family cemeteries that are still used by their descendants.

Large sampling surveys and excavations would have to be carried out in an attempt to mitigate the impact of a bypass. The cost would be very high. The Center for Desert Archaeology estimates that this could easily cost taxpayers 50 to 100 million dollars. And even such huge expenditures do nothing to offset the cultural impacts. In reality, there are no adequate mitigation measures that can be applied.

In summary, the San Pedro River valley is a very old place and is home to generations of hunters, farmers and traders. Each people left their own unique footprints, inscribing the land with distinctive stories and meanings. This place is very special to many people. Its scientific and cultural values would be severely harmed by the construction of a bypass. It holds an important and irreplaceable part of Arizona's heritage.