



# NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Office of the Secretary**  
For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Stephanie Hanna 202/501-4633  
Peter Umhofer 202/208-6011

## **SECRETARY BABBITT TO HOST STAKEHOLDER MEETING REGARDING THE PIMA COUNTY CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will be in Tucson, Arizona, on Thursday, December 3, to meet with the Pima County Board of Supervisors and others involved in the habitat conservation effort for the pygmy owl and the Sonoran Desert conservation plan. Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and other stakeholders will attend the meeting.

"Pima County has embarked upon an innovative process to protect threatened and vital habitat for federally listed species like the pygmy owl. Conservation planning also means that many other animals and plants may avoid the need for protection under the Endangered Species Act if this effort succeeds," Secretary Babbitt said. "We are seeing more and more places around the country where habitat conservation planning is also saving for future generations the quality of life that brought people to beautiful places in the first place. Good conservation planning will allow a thriving economy and a healthy and sustainable environment for the people, wildlife and plants that share this fragile desert landscape."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl as an endangered species in March, 1997. The Service is continuing to work closely with tribal, state and local governments as well as with private citizens and organizations on efforts to develop a long term conservation plan that protects the pygmy owl as well as 18 other listed animal and plant species in Pima County.

Following the meeting, which is open to media, Secretary Babbitt will be available for questions from the press. The Board of Supervisors meeting, which the Secretary will join at 11:30 a.m., will be held on the ground floor of the Pima County Superior Court Building, 110 West Congress Street in Tucson. The Secretary's press availability will probably be held in front of the building immediately afterwards, at approximately 12:10 p.m.

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*Directions to the site from Phoenix: Take I-10 south to Exit 258 towards Congress St/Broadway. Turn right onto West Congress Street. Turn left onto Pennington Street. Take first right for parking.*

*Directions to the site from Tucson: Take West Congress Street and turn left onto Pennington Street. Take first right for parking.*