

# **Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society - Pima Prickly Park**

## **DRAFT -An Information Management System Needed for Plant Information**

Some plant information needs to be collected and managed for certain plants in Pima Prickly Park (PPP), both existing and added plants. An Information Management System ("system") which includes manual procedures and computer entry, storage, and access of data and photos needs to be developed. This information needs to be accessible for basic management of PPP, studies and educational activities. Research studies, initiated by others, will most likely require supplemental systems and additional information. The items below are defined as a means to scope the size and direction of this initiative. Assume if something is not listed below, it is not included in this system design/scope.

### **Objective:**

To capture pertinent data on selected plants or plant species so that types, quantities, locations, general conditions, photos and current status of plants are documented for the purpose of monitoring, evaluating, knowing plant origins, locating and determining the PPP inventory. This needs to be done for plants in PPP when the system goes live and then on an ongoing basis as plants are added.

### **General Approach:**

Since all the work to collect, maintain, develop procedures and systems to manage the information will be performed by volunteers with limited time and TCSS has finite funds, the system will be implemented in the simplest form possible. Designs and processes to allow for expansion for more sophistication at a later time if justified..

### **Techniques:**

A paper form for recording information from field collected, purchased and donated plants will be used employing a unique Accession number. Some plants will have their own unique number, others will be in groups sharing an Accession number (to handle quantities of the same specie from the same source at the same time). PPP will be mapped into grids based on garden areas, about 20, for defining plant locations.

Microsoft's Access relational database will be utilized for electronic storage of plant information and a separate computer based system (TBD) will be used for photo storage and access. A web based system will not be pursued at this time nor automated data entry systems due to their complexity. Occasional extracts/views from the data file(s) will be used for general public access from the Pima Prickly Park web site.

### **Processes:**

It is important to define the steps in collecting, recording, storing, reporting, extracting information before any of the steps or parts are automated. See attached document (not completed or included)

### **Types of information to be Collected and Managed:**

A list will be created to define what information is believed to be of value to be collected and managed. It is recognized that there is a lot more information than on the list. Those listed are deemed to be the most important and viable to manage with limited resources for the stated Objective. Additional information items can be added later but going back to add the new information for existing plants may be too time consuming and in many cases the information may not be readily available or even exist. See attached document (not completed or included)

### **Steps to Initiate an Information Management System:**

- Identify key personnel to assist with items listed above that are not completed, review and comment on decisions
- Map the park into a garden based grid system, about 20 sections
- Review and revise the existing data collection form and revise over time as necessary
- Develop Processes and List of Types of information to be collected and managed
- Design Access database (included with MS Office software suite and is commonly used by others)
- Survey PPP to identify and fill out information sheets for existing notable plants
- Test database process and code using a small set of actual information, possible existing plants mentioned above
- Develop procedures for all functions needed including collecting information, input of data, backups, etc
- Identify and train volunteer(s) to input information, backup information, extract information, etc.