



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GILBERT MAN CONVICTED OF DESTROYING VEGETATION ON THE TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION

TUCSON, Ariz. - Craig Van Sickle, of Gilbert, Ariz., was found guilty today of 20 counts of unlawfully destroying trees on the Tohono O'odham Nation and one count of conspiracy to unlawfully destroy trees. Numerous tress and vegetation were destroyed when a roadway was bulldozed on the Nation. With today's conviction after a bench trial from April 22 to 24, 2008, U.S. District Court Judge Raner C. Collins found that Van Sickle was responsible for causing the bulldozing to occur.

The evidence at trial showed that Van Sickle was responsible for causing a roadway of about 16 miles to be bulldozed on the Tohono O'odham Nation's property without permission near Cocklebur in the Sif Oidak District of the Nation. The bulldozing destroyed 79 palo verde trees, 45 ironwood trees, 29 mesquite trees and 11 Saguaro cactuses. The estimated cost to repair the damage is \$180,000.

Sentencing is set before Judge Collins on August 8, 2008. Each of the counts of conviction carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison, a \$ 100,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Collins will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Tohono O'odham Police Department, the Natural Resource Department of the Tohono O'odham Nation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The prosecution was handled by Robert L. Miskell, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-112-TUC-RCC
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-113(Van Sickle)

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