

Sahba leader says environmentalists' goal is "depopulating Southern Arizona"

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Oh, no. Not the pygmy owl again.

At about 6 1/2 inches long and weighing less than a hamster, the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl is not very intimidating.

But the president of the [Southern Arizona Home Builders Association](#) appears to find the pygmy owls — or at least efforts to get the birds back on the endangered species list — downright scary.

“Southern Arizona Hotbed for Rabid Environmentalism” was the headline for Sahba president Ed Taczanowsky’s message in Sahba’s July newsletter.

“The real goal of radical environmentalism is not to save species,” he wrote. “It’s about stopping the building of homes and infrastructure, and I believe, depopulating Southern Arizona.”

(Hmmm ... I can see it now. An army of organic produce-munching, hemp-wearing cactus-huggers concocts a nefarious plan to rid Southern Arizona of people. Sounds like the plot of a guaranteed summer blockbuster.)

Taczanowsky criticized efforts by the Defenders of Wildlife and The Center for Biological Diversity to pressure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service into reconsidering the agency’s removal of the little bird from the list.

[Environmentalists](#) say that about 500,000 acres of Southern Arizona under development restrictions could be available to builders if the pygmy owl is not classified as endangered.

“How many people can live here and who will be allowed to stay?” wrote Taczanowsky. “I bet the Center (for Biological Diversity) has its list, and it is really short.”