

Tucson Mountains ASSOCIATION SINCE 1934



September 2014

E-mail: TMA@TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

2014 Annual Meeting

Painted Hills Preservation; Celebrate our success!



October 19, 2014

**Milagro Co-housing Community
3057 N Gaia Place
Tucson, AZ 85745**

**Over the last several years the TMA has advocated and effected positive outcomes on many divisive issues and we would like you to join us to celebrate and honor you, our members, who have been instrumental to our success! To donate items for the auction contact:
[Lori Andersen lorijandersen@gmail.com](mailto:LoriAndersenlorijandersen@gmail.com)**

Green tour 5 PM/ Dinner 6 PM

Live Music from the Titan Valley Warheads

Delicious pot luck food, Please bring a side dish or dessert to share

Annual board elections

Amazing Silent Auction: Bring your checkbook !

**Awards will be presented for:
Public Servant of the Year,
Conservationist of the Year,
and Volunteer of the Year.**

Fall Newsletter

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October 19th, 2014

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TMA board members and contact

Your TMA Board Members:

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

It has been a remarkable year for the Tucson Mountains Association's work:

- After many years of highs and lows, the Painted Hills property has been secured for the residents of Pima County into the foreseeable future. Look for the full article elsewhere in this newsletter for the in-depth story.
- We continue our work to preserve wildlife corridors and open spaces to ensure that the residents of the Tucson Mountains neighborhoods can enjoy the delightful ambiance of our piece of the Tucson valley.
- We have taken an early position opposing the I-11 freeway corridor through Avra Valley. This project would alter the water and wildlife balance in Avra Valley and the Tucson Mountains beyond recognition. The project is in its early stages and we will keep you updated as the conversation progresses. See more about the project at <http://111study.com/wp/>.
- We have maintained our relationships and credibility with Pima County and the City of Tucson governing bodies. We continue to work with our coalition partners on Sonoran Desert and wildlife protection and on water assurance. We reached out to the community at large by tabling at the Tucson Audubon Society's Bird and Wildlife Festival.
- In October we are hosting the TMA Annual Meeting, election of the board, and Picnic (more picnic than meeting) with live music by the Titan Valley Warheads (folk / blues / country, very danceable), a silent auction, and a potluck dinner at the Milagro Cohousing Community. Bring a friend or neighbor and introduce them to the TMA. We will be accepting new and renewing memberships at the picnic. So bring your checkbook.

Thank you for letting us represent you and your neighborhood values throughout this year. We look forward to another year preserving the Tucson Mountains delight.

Bob Gilby, President

Candidates for Board of Directors of Tucson Mountains Association:

Lori Andersen: Lori recently joined the TMA Board of Directors as an at large member of the board. Lori has served on the Board of Directors for the Friends of Ironwood Forrest, and on the Mountain/ Glenn Neighborhood Association. Lori also served as the Assistant Director at the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection. Now residing in the Painted Hills area, she looks forward to furthering regional conservation efforts.

Paul Eckerstrom: Paul moved to the Tucson Mountains when he was nine years old in 1968. His parents built a home on Painted Hills Rd. He fell in love with the Sonoran desert hiking in the nearby Painted Hills with his brother and their dogs. He moved back in the area in 1998 with his two kids. He has always been active politically with an eye on preserving the Sonoran desert surrounding the Tucson area. He joined the board of TMA in 2002 and has been a participant in the fight for the Sweetwater Preserve, Painted Hills, the Peaks and Ridges ordinance.

Peter Chesson: Current Secretary of the Board and returning Board member. Peter has been on the TMA board for about six years. He is a professor of Ecology at the UA, and serves on the Pima County Parks and Recreation Commission. He is dedicated to nature conservation in our region, and as a board member will work to further this goal.

PAINTED HILLS: CITY AND COUNTY PARTNERSHIP—A SUCCESS STORY! by Ed Verburg

Many residents and visitors see the Upper Sonoran Desert for the first time while driving along West Speedway and Anklam Road on their way up Gates Pass to the Old Tucson Studios and Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This 287-acre property is known as Painted Hills. It contains valuable wildlife corridors, dense stands of mature saguaros, and peaks and ridges of unparalleled scenic beauty.

Painted Hills has a long history. The property was included in a list of projects under voter approved bonds in 1997 and 2004, but developers also had an eye on the property and several purchases occurred. The last one was by the Dallas Police and Fire Pension Fund for \$27 million at the height of the real estate market. A site plan with a housing cluster option was approved for 260 units, but the developer did not renew their water assurance letter with the City of Tucson.

The Tucson Mountains Association, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, and Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association formed a three-way partnership and worked diligently to preserve Painted Hills. However, the ultimate credit goes to the City and County for taking decisive actions at certain critical points. Here is what they did that is so remarkable:

The City:

Denied the annexation request by the Dallas Police and Fire Pension Fund,

Declined to re-issue the water assurance letter for Painted Hills, which resulted in litigation by the Pension Fund that was favorably resolved by the Arizona Supreme Court (a substantial win for the newly adopted water policy),

Convinced the Arizona State legislature not to pass legislation requiring the provision of water to Painted Hills, and

Negotiated with the Pension Fund on a possible land swap.

The County:

Attempted to work out an agreement with the owners of the property prior to the purchase by the Dallas Police and Fire Pension Fund,

Responded favorably to the land swap undertaken by the City of Tucson, which did not result in an exchange of property,

Designed a concept plan that will link Painted Hills to Tucson Mountain Park so it can be made a part of this outstanding County park, and

Negotiated with the Pension Fund and accepted an offer from them on June 10, 2014 (total price of \$8.3 million).

The City and County recently voted to approve \$3.5 million from the 2004 bond election to help pay for the purchase of Painted Hills. The County will pay the residual amount over the next five years. We congratulate and thank the leaders of the City and County for making the preservation of Painted Hills a reality for our entire Tucson community. Our special thanks to Council Members Regina Romero, Ward 1, and Paul Cunningham, Ward 2, Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, County Supervisor Richard Elías, District 5, and County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry.

Thanks go to our TMA members for supporting TMA's commitment to open space within the Tucson Mountains

TMA has an accomplished past and a bright future:

By Paul Eckerstrom, TMA Board Member since 2002.

During my tenure on the Tucson Mountain Association Board since 2002, I have been amazed at the accomplishments of TMA. First and most important was the preservation of the Sweetwater preserve property. In the early 2000's this property was in danger of being developed. It is beautiful Sonoran desert abutting the Tucson Mountains and bordered by Sweetwater road and the housing near Camino Del Cerro to the north. The owner group wanted to sell this land and approached TMA about preserving it. With the great leadership of Debbie Hecht, the heavy lifting of fundraising done by Paula Chronister and the many monetary contributions made by TMA members, TMA was able to purchase, with the help of a preservation non-profit, an option to buy the land before it would be sold to private developers. This bought TMA time to obtain an understanding from the County Board of Supervisors that a bond referendum would go to the voters for open space purchases and that Sweetwater would be the first purchase with the bond money. The bond referendum passed and the rest is history.

The County not only bought the Sweetwater Preserve, but recently bought an additional 188 acres that bordered the Sweetwater Preserve that could not be purchased at the time of the original purchase.

The second big accomplishment that TMA had a hand since 2002 was the passing of the Peaks and Ridges Ordinance by the Board of Supervisors. Then President of the TMA Board, Debbie Hecht, was a tireless advocate and lobbyist for the passing of this ordinance. With the backing of TMA, the ordinance restricted development of peaks and ridges throughout Pima County. No longer can a house be built on top of a mountain or the top of high ridges spoiling the enjoyment of the view of those peaks and ridges by the rest of the residents of the Tucson area. Much of the credit for the Peaks and Ridges ordinance goes to Debbie Hecht's dogged lobbying efforts of County officials and of the Board of Supervisors.

Lastly, TMA's efforts with a coalition of other people and groups in the Tucson Mountains to have the County purchase as open space the Painted Hills was especially close to my heart. I grew up on Painted Hills Rd. and hiked in the Painted Hills when I was a kid. Now the Painted Hills has been bought and preserved as open space thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of TMA members.

Of course TMA has had smaller victories as well over the last 12 years dealing with cell towers, water storage facilities, homeowner violation of ordinances and the like. But these three big accomplishments are significant in the TMA's mission to preserve the rural setting of the Tucson Mountain area and the sensitive biological diversity of the Sonoran Desert that we all love about the Tucson Mountains. Our members need to pat themselves on the back for the influence they have asserted over our elected officials in the fight for the Sweetwater Preserve, for the Peaks and Ridges ordinance and preservation of the Painted Hills. Your membership in TMA has made a huge difference in preserving what is special about the Tucson Mountains.

WATER MATTERS: Restoration of Riparian Areas By Ed Verburg

TMA was one of the founding members of the Community Water Coalition (CWC). Over the last year, the CWC hosted a City, County, and Pima Association of Governments group to identify candidate projects for the use of reclaimed water from the Conservation Effluent Pool (CEP).

The City and County dedicated 5,000 acre feet the first five years, and 10,000 acre feet thereafter for this purpose. The reclaimed water will be used for the restoration of riparian habitat. The recently issued task force report recommended 13 candidate projects for review and consideration by the City and County Administrators of the CEP.

Two of these projects likely will be implemented over the next six months to a year. They include: 1) 29th Street to Ajo: Paseo del Las Iglesias Phase 1, sponsored by the Pima County Flood Control District, and 2) Tucson Origins Oasis (part of the Mission Gardens area, and sponsored by the City of Tucson). Both of these projects are adjacent to the Santa Cruz river and near downtown. Other proposed projects are spread throughout the metropolitan area.

SUN LINK STREETCAR: READY TO RIDE

The Sun Link streetcar's opening weekend in late July was a huge success! Approximately 60,000 people rode the Sun Link Tucson Streetcar during its first three days of operation along the 3.9-mile route between the University of Arizona, 4th Avenue, Downtown, and the Mercado area just west of Interstate-10.

The economic impact of the streetcar continues to grow. The latest estimate from the Downtown Tucson Partnership quantifies more than \$900 million in public and private investment along the line from west of Interstate-10, downtown, 4th Avenue and the University of Arizona.

For complete information on how to ride the streetcar, including fare information, hours of operation, and parking along the route visit the Sun Link streetcar site.

Now is the time to Renew your membership \$ 30.00 annual Fee, and invite your neighbors to join! Just copy and print out this form, fill out and mail with a check to:



TMA, PO Box 86117, Tucson, AZ
85754-6117

Name _____

Business Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

E-mail _____

A Big Thank You to the following TMA Annual Silent Auction Sponsors and supporters, Please support these Tucson Treasures!

Jo Andersen- Artist, Hotel Congress, Loft Cinema, Proper, Seis Kitchen, Agustin Kitchen, Diablo Burger, AIO Financial, Native Seeds SEARCH, StoryArts Group, Inc. Antigone Books, AZ Hearing Specialists, Silverbell Eye Care, Lori Andersen-Artist ,Tucson Olive Central, David "Fitz" Fitzsimmons, Cactus Cards and Silverbell Dental!

Its not too late to donate, contact Lori Andersen by October10, 2014 lorijandersen@gmail.com



Proposed Development of Lazy K Bar Ranch Threatens Saguaro National Park

A proposed high-density redevelopment of the Lazy K Bar Guest Ranch property -- just 1/2 mile north of Saguaro National Park -- could threaten the fragile Sonoran desert ecosystem, jeopardize vulnerable wildlife species, and impede wildlife movements to other protected areas, according to Park officials. The property's current zoning would allow one house per 3.3-acres as a permitted use -- resulting in 42 homesites on this 138-acre property. The proposed redevelopment, however, provides for 178 homesites, or four times the number of houses allowed under existing zoning. The National Park Service and Friends of Saguaro believe that this redevelopment proposal would result in an unacceptably high level of housing density for this property just 1/2 mile from the boundary of Saguaro National Park, and that the proposal is not consistent with Marana's current zoning that provides for a transition between natural areas and urban subdivisions. Further, this property lies within a significant wildlife movement corridor identified by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan -- a corridor allowing movement of animal species between the Tucson Mountains and the Tortolita Mountains. The Marana Habitat Conservation Plan calls for properties in this important movement corridor to have a minimum of 80% undisturbed open space; the high density proposed in this plan provides only 55% open space.

Both the National Park Service and /Friends of Saguaro National Park appeared at the August 27 meeting of the Marana Planning & Zoning Commission to express our opposition to this development as proposed. Yet, despite our concerns, and overwhelming opposition to the proposal expressed by area residents, the Commission approved the plan as presented, and it now goes to the Marana Town Council for final approval.

The Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 7, at 7:00 pm in the Marana Municipal Complex, 11555 West Civic Center Drive. Hopefully, these elected Town officials will be more responsive to the public's concerns than were the unelected members of the Planning & Zoning Commission, and send this unwise plan back to the developer for revisions.

You can read more about this proposal in today's /Arizona Daily Star in a Guest Opinion piece by retired teacher and local historian Ken Scoville . . . a piece that was entitled "Marana is About to do Irreparable Harm to Saguaro National Park." Just go to <http://tucson.com/news/opinion>

Taft Library Meeting with residents for planned development in Marana: at Silverbell and Ina by Cindy Campbell

The meeting was held by Brian Underwood and Linda Morales of "The Planning Center". The company representing the developer (who's name we were unable to get from Linda). Linda told us that who the developer is really doesn't matter, it's a developer that has been in Tucson for awhile.

There were no Pima county or town of Marana officials there - this was apparently just the first step in the process. This was a "Public Notification Meeting".

There was a very good turn out - about 75 residents. Especially considering the only people who were notified of this meeting, and of the project, are property owners within 300 feet of the proposed development.

There was 100% opposition to the proposed "re-platting" of this 61 acre parcel.

The next meeting will be in front of the Marana Planning Department at Marana Town Hall on Oct 29th at 6:30pm. Please come and support this areas residents! Here is a very brief history of this project.

Prior to 2002 this property was zoned 1 house to 3.3 acres in 2002 the property owners (U of A Foundation) requested a rezoning to 1 house per 1 acre. That rezoning was granted with restrictions. One of which was that only 41 homes could be built (even though the zoning technically allows 61). There were many other restrictions.

Fast Forward to 2014, the property has been sold and the new owner has applied for a revision to the 2002 approved plat, increasing the number of homes to 59. An increase of 18 homes! This is an environmental disaster in the making.

The homeowners in the area feel that major concessions were made in 2002 by agreeing to the 41 homes - It was a compromise - a deal with the devil..

These 61 acres are pristine, saguaro studded, and rich with diverse wildlife. Also on this property are two major wildlife corridors.

This is from the 202 ordinance:

Public Hearing: Ordinance No. 2002.19: Ina Silverbell Rezone: Consideration of approval of a proposal to rezone approximately 61.2 acres of land from the "R-144" zone (Single Family Residential, minimum lot size 144,000 sq. ft.) to the "R-16" zone (Single Family Residential, minimum lot size 16,000 sq. ft.). Located in a portion of Section 2, Township 13 South, Range 12 East; south of Ina Road and west of Silverbell Road. Assessor's Parcel Number 214-040-0430.