

## ACTIVITIES OF THE TUCSON MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION, 2023

### ISSUES

**TEP Substation:** Tucson Electric Power proposed a text amendment to build substations closer to houses. Instead of 200 feet, they want 20-60 feet from houses. They wanted to change the code regarding transformers to dilute the impact of sound. TEP wouldn't give TMA the locations they were planning because of security reasons. The TMA committee met in June with TEP. TMA provided a setback to TEP at the Planning and Zoning Commission hearing regarding the text amendment. There was a successful collaboration with TMA, Catalina Foothills, and Marana/Dove Mountain/Oro Valley. There were also discussions with Supervisors Grijalva's and Scott's offices. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted against the recommended change and TEP has not resubmitted the text amendment.

**Cellphone Towers in Neighborhoods:** Siting company, Vertical Bridge, for T-Mobile applied for two neighborhood locations in the Tucson Mountains: one in Picture Rocks (on hold) and the other on Gerhart Road (withdrawn and reportedly seeking another location on Gerhart Road). The issue was that the federal telecommunications law was written in the late 1990s and the technology has changed since then. Pima County prefers cell towers to be located at public buildings (churches, fire stations, libraries, etc.), not in neighborhoods. The Picture Rocks group hired an attorney to write a communications text amendment to better protect Pima County from lawsuits and neighborhood communities from cell tower companies. However, the project is currently on hold, in part due to HR3557, which is the American Broadband Deployment Act of 2023. If enacted, it would remove all local control over wireless facility siting and maintenance. It would have a devastating impact on the ability of local governments to regulate the siting and maintenance of wireless facilities, thus increasing adverse impacts on the property values, neighborhood character, historic preservation, environmental quality, and exposure to potential public safety risks. TMA asks that members write your federal representatives to ask them to Vote NO on HR3557. See: <https://www.americansforresponsibletech.org/stop3557>. If HR3557 is defeated, the Pima County communications text amendment will proceed and TMA will be able to review and submit comments.

**Tucson Mountain Park Committee / Pima County Kinney Trail:** The TMA committee met in July with representatives of the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department; the Tucson Office of Sustainability and Conservation; Tohono O'odham Tribal Historic Preservation Office; and Tohono O'odham Governmental Affairs Office. TMA obtained park ranger and trail comparison information from Maricopa County staff. It was decided that these groups would work together to revise the Tucson Mountain Park Plan, specifically concerning trails, design, trail conflicts, hiring park rangers for education, scientific research, and enforcement for overall stewardship of our natural and biological resources.

**I-11:** On January 25, 2023, U.S. District Judge John C. Hinderaker heard arguments on the federal government's motion to dismiss a portion of conservation groups' lawsuit challenging the Federal Highway Administration's approval of route options for Interstate 11. The proposed 280-mile highway would run between Nogales and Wickenburg. On May 24, 2023, Judge Hinderaker issued his decision and denied the federal government's motion to dismiss a portion of our lawsuit. This means the lawsuit can move forward in full. See: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/judge-rules-arizona-lawsuit-challenging-interstate-11-will-move-forward-2023-05-25/>

**Outdoor Lighting Code Committee:** This code is being revised from the 2012 code. The main objective of the new code is to reduce average lumens of outdoor lighting in new development by 20%. TMA supports this and has commented on the drafts of the code.

**Buffelgrass Pulls:** TMA organized 10 buffelgrass pulls during Spring 2023 totaling 1,015 volunteer hours, which equals \$25,375 in volunteer hours. Our President Denise Baldwin’s inspiration and dedication to take on the project, connect with our community, and produce successful results is very much appreciated. Volunteer hours were tracked as this was required for potential funding. Cubic feet of buffelgrass removed and bags of trash were recorded per site. Cubic feet of buffelgrass is measured by compressed buffelgrass in bags collected, not cubic feet found in nature which can be quite airy.

Spring 2023 Buffelgrass & Trash Removal Results											
	N of Anklam/ Around Maxwell	N of Anklam/ Around Maxwell	N of Anklam/ Around Maxwell	Gates Pass	Gates Pass	Mission / A Mountain	Starr Pass/ La Cholla	Ajo/ La Cholla	Ajo/ La Cholla	Ajo/ La Cholla	
	City	City	City	County	County	City	City	County	County	County	
<b>Events:</b>	1/14/23	1/28/23	2/11/23	2/25/23	3/4/23	3/18	4/1	4/15	4/29	4/30	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Buffelgrass ft<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>7,409 ft<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Bags of Trash</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1,015</b>
<b>Value Vol. Hrs.</b>	<b>\$4,400</b>	<b>\$4,050</b>	<b>\$3,050</b>	<b>\$3,175</b>	<b>\$2,800</b>	<b>\$2,800</b>	<b>\$1,600</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>\$1,675</b>	<b>\$1,125</b>	<b>\$25,375</b>

**Birthplace of Tucson Letter of Support:** The mission of The Friends of Tucson’s Birthplace is to preserve, honor, protect, restore, re-create and promote the cultural heritages and historic landscapes of Tucson’s birthplace at the foot of Sentinel Peak. A letter was sent recently to Diana Hadley in support of this project.

**Renaming Christopher Columbus Park:** There is interest in renaming the park the Danny Lopez Park, and TMA forwarded to Azul Navarrett-Valera, the main organizer, the contact information of local organizations that we felt could be helpful in this effort.

**ADVOCACY**

**Environmental Day at the State Capitol:** TMA advocated for the Tucson Mountains directly with state legislators.

**Sustainable Landscapes Expo:** TMA promoted sustainability, natural landscapes, the buffelgrass program and TMA advocacy at the event.

**Youth Empowerment Caucus:** TMA had a table at the “Take Action” portion of this caucus at the University of Arizona in August, and several students expressed interest in the work we do.

**Water Issues:** The Community Water Coalition of Southern Arizona has been dissolved. TMA formed a committee that will advocate for interests regarding water at the local and state levels.

## TMA 2023 Board Candidates



### **Vivian Harte (Renewal)**

Vivian served as past President, former Chair of the Speakers Bureau and former Chair of the Membership Committee of the League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson. She has also been active in the League's Advocacy Committee and Education Fund Board. Vivian Harte taught sociology and writing at Pima Community College and the University of Phoenix. She currently teaches online classes on assertiveness, self-confidence, and teamwork. She is the co-author of *Self-Esteem for Dummies* in the *Dummies* series. Vivian has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Indiana University and a Masters degree in Public Administration, emphasis in solar energy policy from the University of Arizona. In the 1990s, she was the Chair of the statewide group

Concerned Arizonans for Renewable Energy (CARE) that was successful in having many pieces of solar legislation passed by the Arizona legislature. She was a Commissioner on the Tucson-Pima County Metropolitan Energy Commission that advises the Tucson City Council and Pima County Board of Supervisors. She also was the Chair of the Arizona Solar Energy Association, which is a chapter of the American Solar Energy Society, and she educated many people in the public about solar energy. Vivian was the Arizona Manager for the Southwest Public Recycling Association, assisting rural communities around the state to start recycling programs, hosting workshops for Arizona recycling coordinators, and writing the state's manual on recycling. She also hosted her own radio and television shows for many years, most recently on KXCI-FM.



### **Debbie Hicks (Renewal)**

Debbie's love of the Sonoran Desert goes back to her early college exposure in the 1970's. Thirty years later, it was fortuitous to be able to buy a home in the Tucson Mountains, and equally lucky to learn about and become a member of the Tucson Mountains Association in 2003. She has been a Board Member since 2004, was President in 2007, and Treasurer since 2008 working on many zoning and open space issues. My passion is the environment and it's been a heartfelt honor to give back to this unique part of the Sonoran Desert.

Debbie's background has been in resource management issues, having graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management and an MBA in International Business. Before moving back to Arizona, she worked for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game focusing on fisheries management issues, and Saltwater Inc, a marine resources company based in Anchorage, Alaska that deals with sustainability of our oceans.



### **Ben Wilder (Renewal)**

Ben is the former director of the University of Arizona's Desert Laboratory on Tumamoc Hill and founder/director of the Next Generation Sonoran Desert Researchers (N-Gen), an organization that strives to create opportunities for cross-border collaboration to understand the Sonoran Desert. "The Sonoran Desert doesn't adhere to a border," Wilder said. "This kind of cross-disciplinary collaboration is essential to meet and solve the challenges we face in research and conservation."

### **Steve Dolan (Former TMA board member)**

Steve and Susan Dolan moved from the University of Arizona area to the Tucson Mountains in 1989. They joined the Tucson Mountains Association and Steve helped the Board with issues including the Trails End Road rezoning, proposed Painted Hills development, and Sweetwater Preserve. Steve looks forward to serving on the Board with his private engineering, Pima County, and Arizona government experience to help with land-use and water-related challenges to promote the quality of living in the Tucson Mountains.

### **Silvia Kolchens**

Silvia moved from Germany to Tucson in 1989 and has been a Tucson Mountain resident for the past twenty years. She fell in love with the desert when she started hiking through the surrounding mountain ranges discovering the rich biodiversity of the region. Silvia holds a PhD in chemistry from the University of Cologne, Germany, and is a semi-retired college instructor and community outreach volunteer. Her work focusses on environmental chemistry, sustainability, and locally relevant chemistry topics. Over the past twenty-eight years Silvia has served on many committees, held leadership and advisory positions, served as board member and chair, and is a member of the Women's Chemistry Group of the Southern Arizona Section of the American Chemical Society. She is looking forward to using her background in science and community outreach to better serve her local community and to further the mission and goals of the Tucson Mountain Association.

## Tucson Mountains Association – 2023 Election

*(Please refer to candidate biographies)*

Your vote is important! TMA members elect the Board. In January the new board will meet to select the current president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. You may vote for up to eight Board members.

Board Members: Choose up to eight (8):

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vivian Harte   | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbie Hicks    | <input type="checkbox"/> Ben Wilder     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steve Dolan    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sylvia Kolchins |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write in _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Write in _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Write in _____ |

Please return your ballot by mail at TMA, P.O. Box 86117, Tucson, AZ 85754 before October 29, 2023, or **in person, at the Annual Meeting and Potluck, November 1, 2023, by 6:00 pm.**

### Annual Meeting Location:

#### Westwood Hills Country Club

1941 W. Calle Del Reposo

South of Speedway/north of Anklam, west of Silverbell/east of Pima College West.

**Time: 5:00 – 8:00 pm, registration begins at 4:30 pm.**

**Ballot Deadline:** Annual Meeting, 6:00 pm November 1, 2023.

## Tucson Mountains Association – Membership Special

Join, Give or Renew today: Limited Special \$55 for 2 years\*

Household Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Household Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Text: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Phone Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_ Text: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Yes! I want to be a TMA Volunteer:  Board Member  Community Issues  Membership  Attend Public Meetings

Name of household member volunteer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

What do you love most about living in the Tucson Mountains? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Special Membership Prices Available through November 1, 2023!

**Online: [TucsonMountainsAssoc.org/Membership](http://TucsonMountainsAssoc.org/Membership) By mail: TMA, P.O. Box 86117, Tucson, AZ 85754**

Thank you for your support!