

Tucson Mountains Association

Spring 2019

NEWSLETTER

TMA Adopts Painted Hills Park

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**TMA Members
make an impact.
Give a Membership today.**

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Cover photo courtesy Peter Chesson

Letter from Peter Chesson

Spring is a delightful time in the Sonoran Desert. This is a spring to remember. Winter had rain, lots, and even a couple days of snow. Now we are seeing the bounty it has brought forth. It is so obvious here that life revolves around the supply of moisture. The cacti store water, and then offer it later in their fruits as a juicy enticement for animals to disperse their seeds. The ocotillos rejoice in it with leafy displays, and the annual plants demand it or they won't show. The annuals, aka spring wildflowers, are showing this year, and they are giving us a riot of color, but have you noticed how different they can be from year to year? It is not just whether they are abundant, but which species are abundant, and that has much to do with how different species tune into the weather. They just won't germinate if the weather is not right, and different species like different weather. And of course, different species like different places, which we can see from the patches of color painting our landscapes in the spring wildflower displays.

Diversity of weather and diversity of places add up to a diversity of species. Where we live, the Tucson Mountains, has all of these. With both summer and winter rainfall, it is a relatively mild arid environment catering for different species at different times of the year. And the Tucson Mountains have steep areas, along with rolling hills and washes down to the river. There are diverse opportunities here for living things, and a diversity of living things is what we see. But can we keep them? Climate change threatens our weather patterns, and development threatens our diversity of habitats. The steep areas of the Tucson Mountains are protected from development in the National Park and County parks, but the beautiful rolling hill country where many of us live is under constant threat. That is why TMA is always fighting to retain our current zoning, which restricts building to at most one house per 3.3 acres over large areas of the foothills. It is also why it is important that everyone who lives here looks after their property, and retains as much of the natural vegetation as possible.

Let there be no mistake, the diversity of life on Earth is seriously challenged. Who would have thought 20 years ago that the great North American migrations of the monarch butterfly might disappear? Yet that is the threat we are facing now. Moreover, it has been estimated that the USA has 14,000 to 35,000 endangered species. The reason is that humans are largely trampling over the rest of life on Earth. But we do not have to be doing this, and we can start right here at home in the Tucson Mountains. We must treat the whole area from the crests of the mountains down to the valleys as one integrated natural system, and the people living in that system must respect the wild animals and plants that have long lived here. It is a wonderful system now, and by making an effort, we can keep it this way. In this newsletter, you can read about various threats the Tucson Mountains have faced recently, how the community has responded, and what you can do to help keep the Tucson Mountains rich with life.

Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.

Gary Snyder



Photo courtesy Ed Handel

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Ed Hendel

TMA welcomes new TMA Member, Ed Hendel who submitted this and other photos while enjoying the snow February 22, 2019 in the Tucson Mountains.

Ed is an inspired photographer. We look forward to finding the beauty and spreading the passion of the Tucson Mountains together.

TMA thanks Ed and all TMA Members for their photos. Keep Sending them in!

What do you find beautiful in the Tucson Mountains?

Join Promote Volunteer Advocate
Be a TMA Member.

Water Matters! EPA and ADEQ Rule Changes

Proposed changes under the Federal Clean Water Act threaten Arizona surface waters.

The EPA. On the new Waters of the US (WOTUS) rule (<https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule>). Comments are close April 5, 2019.

ADEQ's (AZ Dept of Environmental Quality) Triennial Review. Would adopt the new EPA federal definition of surface water (<https://azdeq.gov/draft-and-proposed-rule-water-quality-division>), and may invalidate the current 22 Outstanding Arizona Waters (<http://static.azdeq.gov/wqd/stormwater/oaw.pdf>), which are not allowed to be degraded under current rules. Comments close March 28, 2019.

Background: Arizona currently relies on federal surface water definitions. The EPA is proposing a new rule that would redefine regulated surface waters and impact protections available to protect those waters from contamination, pollution and physical changes such as dredging and filling of waterways. The Governor has instructed ADEQ to support and, if approved, adopt the proposed EPA rule changes. In AZ, this appears to imply that only the Colorado River and a small tributary, the Bill Williams River, would be protected. Hence seeps, springs, rivers, streams, tributaries, and washes that are not physically connected to the Bill Williams or Colorado Rivers, and waters that are ephemeral and/or intermittent (ie do not flow year-round) could be excluded from protection. These rule changes have been advocated for by developers and mining companies, including Hudbay Minerals Inc., which is seeking to develop the Rosemont Mine in the Santa Rita Mountains.

AZ Water Facts:

1. All AZ waterways are connected to groundwater, even if intermittent or ephemeral; however, under current AZ water law, surface water and groundwater are treated as separate entities. This leads to inadequate protection of groundwater.
2. Adoption by ADEQ of any new federal rules which would deregulate most of AZ's surface waters will make it easier to dredge and fill these waterways and may make it more challenging to regulate and/or protect effluent streams and other surface waters from chemicals and other pollutants previously regulated under federal rules.
3. The health and safety of Arizonans could be adversely impacted by these changes.
4. Unprotected riparian ecosystems could threaten the health and resilience of native plants and animals, including federally listed threatened or endangered species.
5. Economic benefits of tourism and recreation would be negatively impacted, and new and existing industries and employers could view AZ less favorably.
6. AZ statutory law (unlike CA, for example) prohibits more stringent regulation than existing federal law.
7. The Santa Cruz River and the intermittent and ephemeral streams in the Tucson Mountains that feed the Santa Cruz could lose some or all of their current protections. This is true of the San Pedro and Gila Rivers as well.
8. ADEQ does not have the financial or personnel resources, nor does the state government currently have the political will, to protect AZ's precious and dwindling water resources.

For more information please see CommunityWaterSoAZ.org.

SUBMIT YOUR PICTURES!

Do you have Tucson Mountains pictures to share?



Spread your passion of the Tucson Mountains.

We can't wait to see your pictures!

Email: denise2b@cox.net

Photos may be used by TMA to represent the Tucson Mountains.



TMA in ACTION

Pima County Flood Control District

TMA has been invited to provide input for the Floodplain Management Plan. TMA board member, Steve Dolan, is spearheading this matter with his engineering, Pima County and Arizona government experience in land use and water matters.

Pima County Floodplain Management Plan

The Pima County Flood Control District (District) is preparing a Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) to be completed by the end of 2019. Tucson Mountains Association (TMA) is one of over 25 Community Stakeholders invited to provide input for the FMP. At the March 2019 TMA Board meeting, a District FMP project representative explained the FMP process to provide input as Stakeholders. Individual residents can also provide input to the FMP via a Community Survey, the link included in the TMA MEMBER CALL TO ACTION.

The Pima County Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) purpose is to identify floodplain management activities by watershed. The District strives to use forward-looking planning practices to minimize the risk of flood and erosion damage for all county residents, property, and infrastructure. The FMP will help the District identify the activities and practices that will be most effective in watersheds.

The Tucson Mountains are one of 20 Urban Watersheds identified by the District for the Floodplain Management Plan. The FMP effort is to create watershed-based floodplain management strategies and not replace current studies or identify site-specific practices. The District has

studied 14 smaller watersheds in the Tucson Mountains such as Picture Rocks Wash, to Sweetwater Wash, and south to Anklam Wash.

December 6, 2018 was the first Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) Planning Committee for Stakeholders attended by TMA Board member Steve Dolan. Based on that first meeting, Steve prepared general TMA concerns for the FMP, which were discussed and revised by the Board. These general TMA concerns will be provided to the District.

In the Tucson Mountains watershed, there are 810 acres of federal floodplain, 888 acres of locally identified floodplain, and 2,575 acres of Pima County Regulated Riparian Habitat. Buildings in federal or local floodplains often have flood insurance. The District participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System that allows flood insurance premium discounts when communities exceed minimum NFIP standards. In addition to the forward-looking floodplain management planning practices and watershed-based strategies, the completion of a Floodplain Management Plan will help further reduce flood insurance premiums.

Over the next few months, TMA will attend the Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) Stakeholders meetings and provide input to the District. The FMP timeline is for a draft plan to be published for the District website this summer. In future TMA Newsletters or e-alerts, the progress of the FMP and further input for watersheds will be explained.

TMA MEMBER CALL TO ACTION:

1. Please contact TMA for questions about the Pima County Floodplain Management Plan or to discuss Tucson Mountains watershed concerns.
2. TMA residents can visit the Pima County Regional Flood Control District website for more information and answer a Community Survey at the Floodplain Management Plan webpage or at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCFC_survey.

Contact TMA:

Steve Dolan 520-743-3770 or SteveDolan@comcast.net

Contact Floodplain Management Plan: www.pima.gov/fmp/

Announcing: TMA Painted Hills Adopt-a-Park

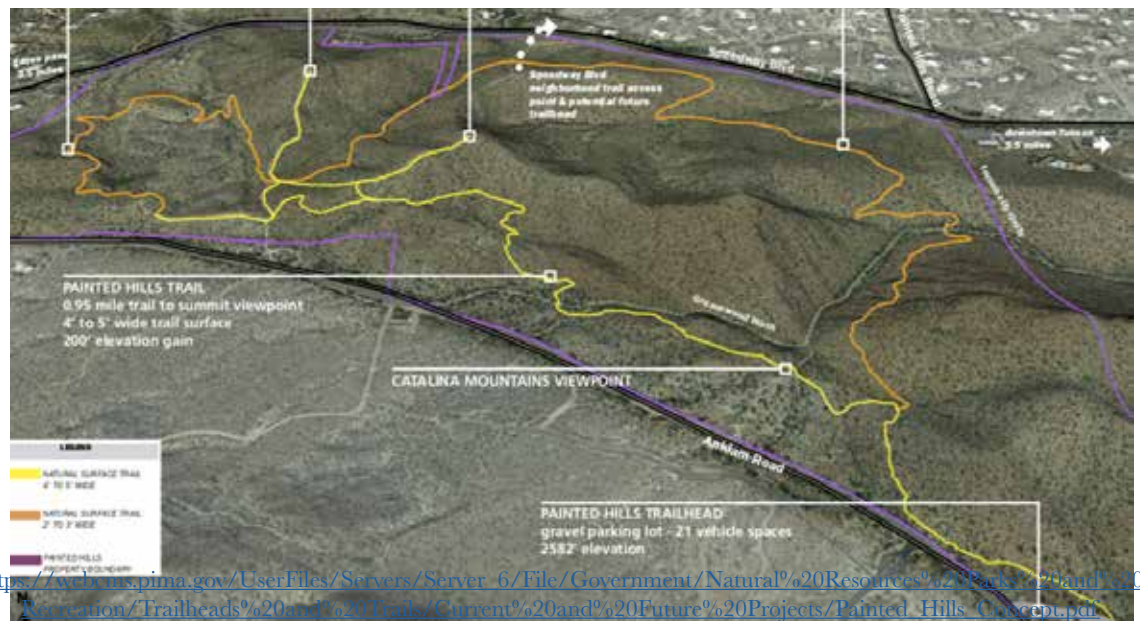
Painted Hills Park is a reality and TMA has adopted the park for clean-up. See [\(Park Plan Link\)](#)

TMA and Members opposed development of the Painted Hills property, donated money to preserve it as an open space and now can help maintain the park for nature and the community to enjoy.

TMA has adopted the park to clean up trash.

The park has 289 acres and four miles of dirt trails.

Sign up to volunteer to clean today!

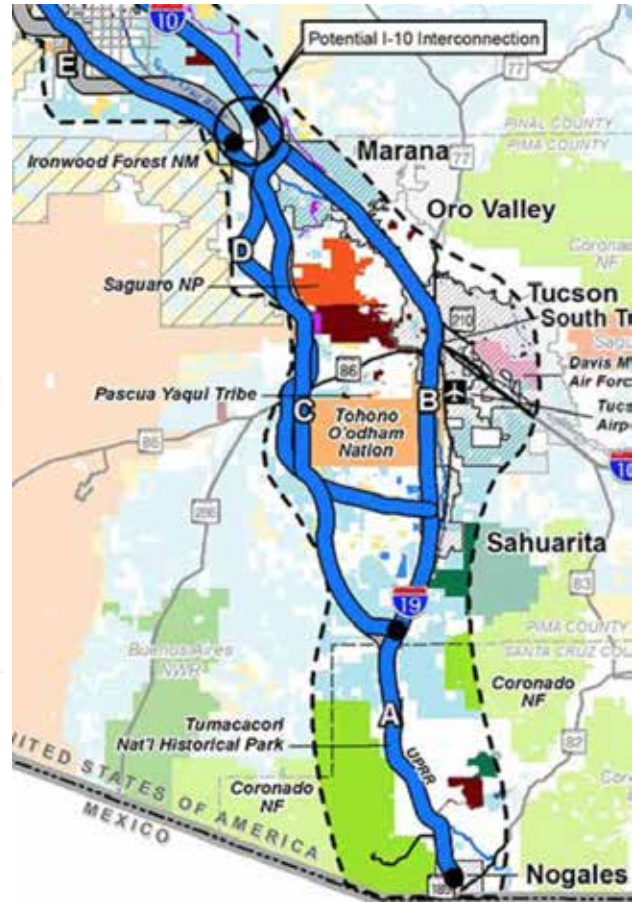
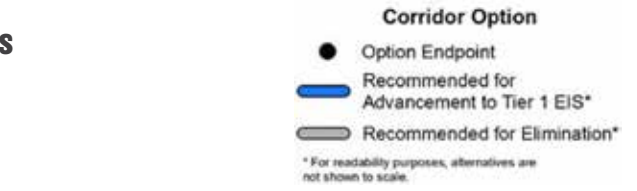


https://www.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Natural%20Resources%20Back%20and%20Future/Trailheads%20and%20Trails/Current%20and%20Future%20Projects/Painted_Hills_Concept.pdf

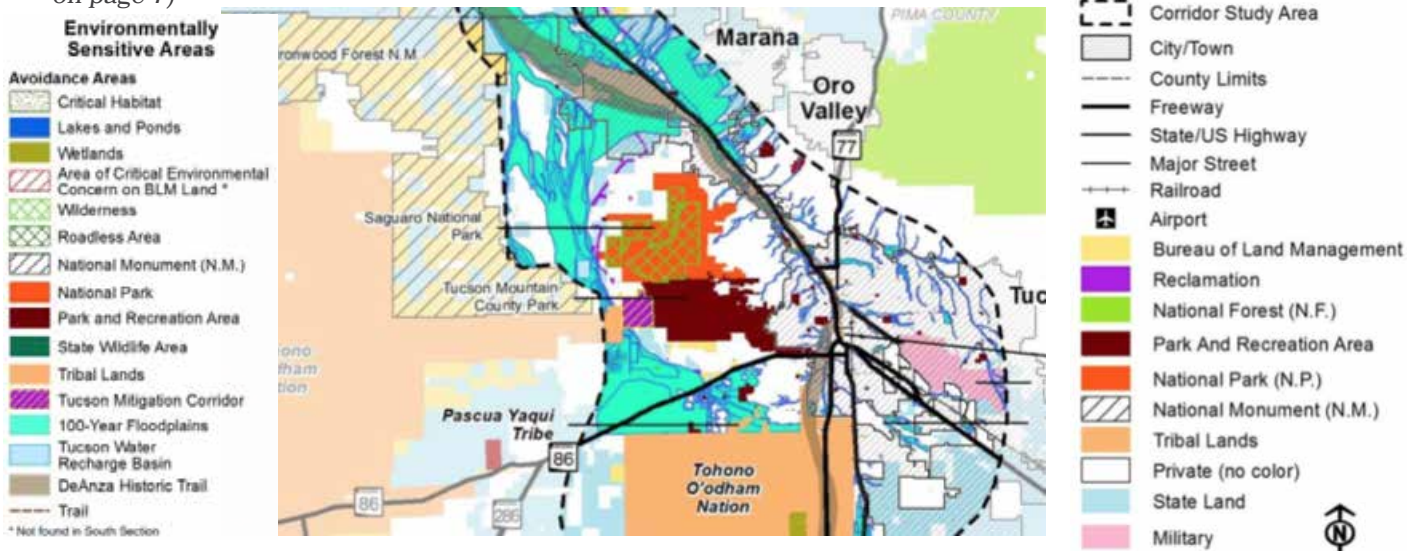
The proposed I-11 corridor

► An environmental hazard for the Tucson Mountains

We have been hearing about a north-south freeway to connect Mexico and Canada for more than 20 years. In 2015, the potential became more of a reality when the Arizona Department of Transportation joined with Nevada to approve I-11. This effort was as a result of the Intermountain West Corridor Study and Federal legislation named the "Fixing Americas Surface Transportation" (FAST) Act. Since then there have been various scoping meetings and meetings to identify alternative routes. The result has been the determination of various alternatives and can be seen in the Corridor Option map (or [Corridor Option](#)) link.



The choices offered for the south section either take I-11 west of the Tucson Mountains and through Avra Valley or expand I-10. A third option is to do nothing and keep the status quo. The Environmentally Sensitive Area Map (or [Environmentally Sensitive Area Map](#)) link shows how, the Western I-11 alternatives squeeze between the Ironwood National Forest and The Saguaro National Park and The Tucson Mountain Park. This would effectively cut off these parks and make them islands between city developments on either side. The wildlife and larger ecosystem we so treasure would be cut off and would surely suffer. (Continued on page 7)



TMA Habitat Competition

**TMA Members make an impact!
Environmental stewardship. Preservation. You.**

**The TMA Habitat Competition advances long-term improvements
to preserve the Tucson Mountains.**

The habitat competition is all about encouraging people to look after their properties for wildlife. People who enter the competition set an example, and this is how you can make a difference.

If you look after the natural values of your property, tell others about it so they will be inspired to do the same. You do not have to have an impressive property or have made changes. Keeping it natural is the way to go. And you can win for doing just that. Why? Because it shows that you value sharing your property with its wild inhabitants. You can also win in a new category “Best habitat restoration in progress.” In this case, you tell us about your plans and intentions. Your property might have serious flaws that you are going to fix, and you win by telling us what you plan to do. Entries do not have to be involved or complicated. Just give it a shot. And do not forget to get the kids involved. Kids can win their competition by showing their knowledge and understanding of the needs of wildlife, or simply by submitting observations or pictures about wildlife and habitats. This can be a great project for kids, and will get them outdoors.

Competition Categories and Deadlines

Adult Competition

Deadline: October 1, 2019

Entry Categories:

1. Best preserved natural habitat, 3+ acres
2. Best preserved natural habitat, < 3 acres
3. Best habitat restoration
4. Best provision for wildlife corridors
5. Best provision for species at risk

Kids Competition

Deadline: August 1, 2019

Entry Categories:

- I. Describe in words and pictures about the local wildlife, including what they do and how they live.
- II. Describe how you preserve or protect a habitat for wildlife.
- II. Describe how you restore or plan to restore habitat for wildlife.

**Enter to Win!
Join the Desert Stewardship Solution.**

See details at: TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

Backyard Astronomy

Spring nights are glorious in the Tucson Mountains. Two meteor showers excite the night sky, The Eta Aquarids are from the debris from Halley's Comet and is related to the Orionid showers in October. Two Full Moons are named to embrace the seasonal floral beauty. Even the night sky is celebrating spring.

<p>4/19/19 7:27 pm Rise 4:12 am Full</p>			<p>5/18/19 7:18 pm Rise 2:11 pm Full</p>	<p>6/17/19 8:04 pm Rise 1:30 am Full</p>	<p>6/21/19 5:17 am Rise 8:54 am Event</p>
<p>Pink Moon In honor of the first spring flowers traditionally found on the ground.</p>	<p>Lyrid Meteor Shower Peak: 4/23 Range: 4/16-25 #/Hr: 15-20 Best: The E. horizon. Feature: Trails Parent: Comet Thatcher</p>	<p>Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower Peak: 5/5-6 Range: 4/19-5/28 #/Hr: 10-30 Best: Pre-dawn Feature: Trains Parent: Comet Halley</p>	<p>Flower Moon Named to honor the spring flowers of the season.</p>	<p>Strawberry Moon This full moon celebrates the wild stawberry harvest.</p>	<p>Summer Solstice Today is 4h:14m longer than Winter Solstice. Enjoy your day!</p>
			<p>Blue Moon It's the third Full Moon within a Full Moon season.</p>		

Gift a Membership

Tucson Mountains Association

Strength in Members
and Action.
1 Year for \$30

TMA needs your support.

Join at:

TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

Save the
Tucson Mountains

TMA Painted Hills Adopt-A-Park Clean-Up Day Saturday, May 4, 2019

TMA Volunteers Needed

It's as easy as:

1. RSVP: Email Denise at: Denise2b@cox.net
2. May 4 Clean-Up Day: YOU Make a difference!
3. Have fun! Send TMA your pictures:
[TMA Facebook](#) or email Denise: denise2b@cox.net

TMA Desert Bloom Potluck

April 20, 2019 11-1 pm
Brown Mountain Picnic Area

TMA Members and Friends Invited
Socialize & Have fun!
Celebrate the season!

RSVP to Denise at denise2b@cox.net [Link for Location Directions](#)

Water will be provided. Please bring a preferred dish.



Proposed I-11 corridor (con't)

(continued from page 4)

Next Steps

ADOT will soon announce their "recommended alternative" route for I-11 along with publication of the draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (draft Tier 1 EIS). The latest word from ADOT is that they are still finalizing the locations for the next round of public meetings. Once that is complete they will go through the process of getting public notices out and into the Federal Register. Once the meeting is scheduled there will be a 45 day public comment period.

Getting Involved

Please make your voice heard to protect the Tucson Mountains.

The ADOT I-11 Study website will be updated when the next round

of public meetings are announced:

<http://i11study.com/Arizona/index.asp>

A related issue to consider is that ADOT has requested to take over the I-11 federal environmental process. The Avra Valley coalition is concerned that handing over the responsibility to ADOT will allow them to bypass the protective regulations in place. See the following article for more information: <https://arizonadaily-independent.com/2019/02/14/adot-maneuver-would-bypass-opposition-to-interstate-11-sonoran-corridor/>

TALKING POINTS & ACTION:
Contact the Pima County Board of Supervisors and EIS Study Team.

1. The only acceptable alternative is to expand/reconfigure the existing I-10 and I-19 corridor. A bypass through Avra Valley is not acceptable.

2. Attend the public meetings when announced and voice your opinion.
Next:

Wednesday, 5/8/19 | 3–8 p.m.
Tucson Convention Center Ballrooms/Lobby 260 S. Church Avenue

Saturday 5/11/19 | 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Marana High School Cafeteria
12000 W. Emigh Road, Marana

**Thanks to TMA Members
for protecting the
Tucson Mountains.**



*The desert tells a
different story
every time one
ventures on it.*

Robert Edison Fulton, Jr.



Southwest corner of Silverbell and Sweetwater

Residents were distressed in the fall to see extensive blading of natural desert vegetation on the 3.33 acre parcel in this corner. Fortunately quick action by local residents alerted Pima County Development Services, and the blading, which exceeded any permit that had been obtained, was immediately halted.

TMA was especially concerned that the vegetation be adequately restored as this property sits at the intersection of two important wildlife corridors in the eastern foothills of the Tucson Mountains. One of these corridors follows a major wash all the way from the Tucson Mountain Park to the Santa Cruz River. The other corridor follows the westside of Silverbell Road from City of Tucson preserved open space across Sweetwater Drive to Sweetwater Wash.

We can be especially grateful for the quick action of local residents and Pima County for stopping this blading.

Unfortunately, substantial damage has been done, but the County is requiring revegetation and TMA is keeping in touch with the County on the details of the revegetation. Unfortunately, full recovery of the area will take many years.

TMA has been working with the City of Tucson, neighborhood groups and individuals to enforce existing zoning and protect existing environmental protections against Via Elegante Phase II expansion.

It is likely that you have seen the billboards, heard radio spots or received the flyers for the new assisted living home called Via Elegante. Their literature describes beautiful homes with “a serene backdrop of natural desert landscape with breathtaking mountain and city views”. This is the third Via Elegante property in Southern Arizona, with the other two located in Sierra Vista and Northwest Tucson. Their newest location is at 2797 N. Cerrada del Beto, west of Silverbell between Ironwood Hill Dr. and Goret Rd. The facility had its Grand Opening on December 7th but only opened for its first handful of residents last week. Eventually they hope to fill their 66 rooms with up to 100 residents.

During Via Elegante’s Phase I Grand Opening, TMA Board members Ivy Schwartz, Denise Baldwin and Elizabeth Koleski were present.

Ms. Koleski had the opportunity to speak to the Executive Director who described plans to develop an additional 20 acres that the organization purchased around the property. They hoped to re-zone the area and develop it into high density housing for Phase II. Currently the zoning is SR (Suburban Ranch) which would only allow seven units on the property versus the 150 originally proposed by the organization.

After strong opposition from the surrounding neighborhoods as well as TMA, the Via Elegante organization has put plans for Phase II on hold. It is however important that we remain vigilant as increasing the density would have many damaging effects; it would greatly increase traffic and lighting, which is in violation of the rural character of the area. For example, this new facility’s industrial kitchen will be preparing meals for the onsite residents as well as the residents for their other Tucson location. This would undoubtedly mean truck traffic three times a day on a small residential road.

In addition, it would be impossible to preserve existing drainages and wildlife corridors. The Tucson Mountain foothills were planned

as a buffer zone with diminishing density toward the Tucson Mountains and Saguaro National Park, and that buffer zone would be lost.

Via Elegante Phase I is in a quiet Neighborhood at the end of a small street. According to the city of Tucson Development Services, its zoning is commercial, but as a residential facility its zoning does not require access to major streets and routes.

It will be important for neighbors to continue to monitor developments, or the serene breathtaking mountain backdrop, which the company advertises, will be ruined for not only its residents, but the neighbors surrounding it.

**Thanks to TMA Members
for being involved.**



C. B. Brown: A future of preservation

TMA celebrates Members and efforts to preserve the Tucson Mountains for the future. This month, we honor the legacy of Cornelius B. Brown. Brown pushed to set aside land to create Tucson Mountain Park and set the tone for preservation in the Tucson Mountains

From Kansas, Brown moved to Tucson in 1920. He became so enamored with the Tucson Mountains he knew it must be protected. By 1929, Tucson Mountain Park was created with 30,000 acres and the help of Senator Carl Hayden and County Supervisor Jack Kinney.

Brown’s influence of preservation continued through former AZ Congressman and newly appointed Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. Of Udall’s first accomplishments in 1961, was President Kennedy’s designation of 15,000 acres to Saguaro National Monument West. In 1994, Congress upgraded the Monument to a National Park.

TMA furthers this cause to bring together partners to donate or preserve open space in the Tucson Mountains. If you, or someone you know would like to preserve land in the Tucson Mountains for the future, please contact TMA.

Please join TMA April 20, 2019, 11-1 pm at Brown Mountain Picnic area to enjoy the open space and preservation efforts started by C. B. Brown while we enjoy the Desert Blooms together!

Get Involved with TMA

Membership...

Is a great gift.
1 Year for \$30

Membership
makes the Difference.

TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

Save the
Tucson Mountains

TMA Desert Bloom Potluck Picnic

April 20, 2019 11-1 pm

Brown Mountain Picnic Area

RSVP to Denise at denise2b@cox.net
Water will be provided.
Please bring a preferred dish.

See p. 6 for more details.

TMA Painted Hills Adopt-A-Park

**Clean-Up Day
Saturday, May 4, 2019**

Join the TMA Park Team!

RSVP to Denise at denise2b@cox.net

See p. 6 for more details.

Be a Volunteer

Membership Relations:
Events, Communications, Membership

Community Action:
Park Clean-Up, Weed-Pulls, Attend Meetings
(zoning, water, conservation, construction issues,)

Please contact: Denise at denise2b@cox.net

Tucson Mountains Association

TMA Members make things happen.

Join or email at: TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

PO Box 86117
Tucson, AZ 85754-6117