

## **Tucson Mountains Association Summer Update**

### **Spring Music Event**

The Tucson Mountains Association had a wonderful spring event on April 22nd at the Church of the Painted Hills. Musicians R. Carlos Nakai and Will Clipman put on a beautiful benefit concert for TMA. Dr. Li Schmidt sang three beautiful songs acapella as a warm up for the main event. Then came the incredible flute music of R. Carlos Nakai complemented by Will Clipman's penetrating rhythms from a variety of percussion instruments.



**Above: Will Clipman & R. Carlos Nakai**

**Left: Peter Chesson presents Habitat Award to John Dennis**

**Far Left: Dr. Li Schmidt**

The music was a perfect way to drive home the message that we all need to hear. Mr. Nakai and Mr. Clipman both spoke between the musical pieces about the importance of preserving our beautiful desert environment in the Tucson Mountains. They both live in the Tucson Mountains and clearly have a love for this special place. But their message through their music spoke to an even broader need. The need to take care of this earth. This fragile planet we live on. We need to not only take care of our local environment but the whole planet's environment. Our survival depends on it. The place to start is local, though, and that is why Mr. Nakai and Mr. Clipman did the concert for TMA. It was their way to help TMA increase its membership and thereby increase its influence on our local government officials to do right by our special desert environment.

So please do your part. Get your neighbors in the Tucson Mountains to join as members of TMA. The more members we have; the more voice we have in protecting the desert plants and animals we all enjoy here in the Tucson Mountains. Our website has PayPal now and people can join with the click of a button. Annual dues are only \$30 per household. So get your friends and neighbors to go to our website and join at [www.tucsonmountainsassoc.org](http://www.tucsonmountainsassoc.org).

### **Climate change**

The winter newsletter highlighted the importance of fighting climate change so that the Tucson Mountains remain a great place to live both for us and for the animals and plants that make it their home too. Since that time, we have seen a weakening of Federal policies to fight climate change, and a promise by President Trump to pull the USA out of the Paris climate accords. The Pima County Board of Supervisors was quick to respond. At their meeting, June 6, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution reaffirming their commitments already underway in Pima County to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to align County goals with the Paris accords, and to take a leadership role in regional collaborative efforts to develop solutions and policy recommendations. Thank you to all of you who showed up at the BOS meeting June 6 to give your support. You may have read in the news also that the mayors of Tucson, Phoenix, Tempe and Flagstaff signed a similar “Climate Mayors” statement. Moreover, 34 members of the Arizona State Legislature recently sent a letter to Governor Ducey urging him to sign Arizona up for the U. S. Climate Alliance and commit Arizona in the fight against climate change. We must support these forward thinking representatives at our local and state levels and push them further in these efforts. California, Hawaii and New York, and many cities throughout the country, are taking strong action to see that the USA in fact meets its commitments under the Paris accords despite the President’s position. We must do our best to see that Arizona joins in too. We have a lot to lose from uncontrolled climate change.

### **Roof top solar in Arizona, Action Alert!**

One thing we can all do personally to reduce our own contributions to global warming is to get solar panels on our homes. This action can be of significant economic benefit too, but only if the electricity rate structures in Arizona remain favorable. That is why we urge everyone to show up at the AZ Corporation Commission Public Hearing on Tucson Electric Power’s plan to penalize solar customers. It is Monday June 26, 400 W. Congress, 10 AM – 5 PM. Let your voices be heard! Speak or leave a comment. Support solar in our community!

### **The Border Wall**

The border wall was also on the agenda June 6 at the Pima County Board of Supervisors meeting. The City Council took it up as well on the same day. TMA was at both meetings in opposition to the wall, because as we said in our action alert, the border wall would be an impenetrable barrier for many species that normally move between Mexico and Arizona, and its construction would cause much environmental damage. The Tucson Mountains are only as biologically rich as they are because they are connected to a much larger area. We cannot afford to lose that connection. Thank

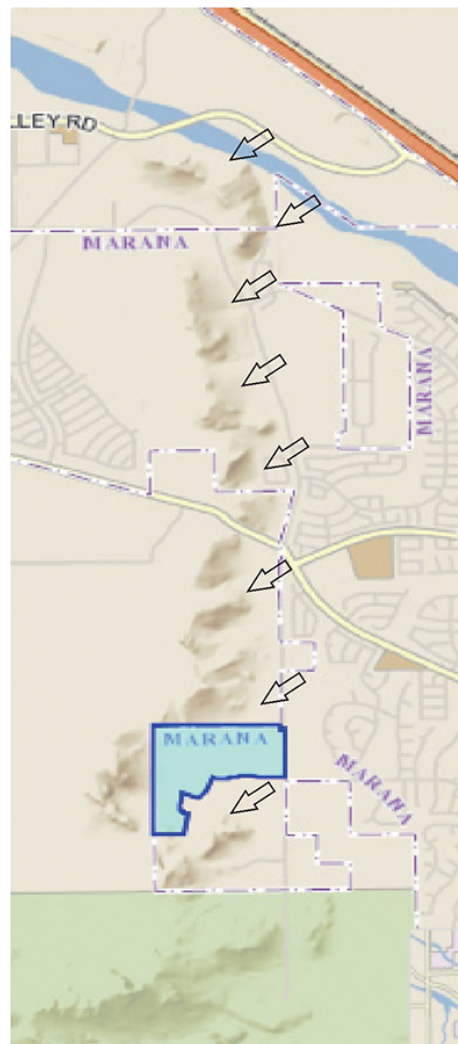
you all who came out in opposition to the wall on June 6. Both the County and the City passed very strong resolutions against wall construction. The resolutions give many reasons for being against the wall including not only the environmental effects, but also its likely failure to achieve its stated purpose, and its exorbitant cost.

### *More on connections*

The border wall would cut a biological link between Arizona and Mexico, but we are constantly fighting to prevent the Tucson Mountains from being isolated from their immediate environs too. The corridors connecting the Tucson Mountains to the Tortolito Mountains and to the Ironwood Forest are both under threat, the first by creeping development and the second by the I-11 freeway.

### **The Lazy K Bar Ranch**

The northern spine of the Tucson Mountains north of the Saguaro National Park is the corridor in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan that connects the Tucson Mountains across to the Santa Cruz River and beyond to the Tortolito Mountains. The Lazy K Bar Ranch upzoning and plan amendment will put a crimp on that by taking out important bajada and wash habitat in that corridor. Thank you everyone how who came out in opposition. This was the third attempt of the owners of the property to have it upzoned by the Marana City Council to allow 178 homes to be built—many more than allowed without a zoning change—placing a serious block on the landscape. Unfortunately, their third attempt was successful. The process did yield some concessions, however, largely due to the efforts of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection. So a wedge of land in the north of the property with beautiful saguaros and an important wash was set aside as open space, but unfortunately this open space does not have firm protections that would prevent it from being developed in the future.



**Northern spine of the Tucson Mountains** indicated by arrows and with shading on their eastern flank. This is the wildlife corridor that we need to protect.

The major part of the Lazy K Bar Ranch is in Blue. ('Marana' appears at the top.) A smaller adjoining part of the Ranch lies between the blue area and the mountain in the southeast.

The Santa Cruz River is shown in blue at the top, and the Saguaro National Park is in green at the bottom.

Much critical land for the wildlife corridor to the Tortolitas is in the City of Marana. We need to work to keep it open, and this means that we need to work with the Marana City Council and Marana residents to promote more environmentally sensitive development in the area. If you live in Marana, we would like to hear from you. You can help just by identifying yourself as a Marana member of TMA. Please send us an email: [tma@tucsonmountainsassoc.org](mailto:tma@tucsonmountainsassoc.org).



## **Interstate II**

The planned new interstate highway, I-11, from Nogales to Canada would potentially go through the Avra Valley, promote development there and cut off the wildlife corridor between the Tucson Mountains and the Ironwood Forest National Monument. However, another potential route would double up I-10 through Tucson. Or it might not happen at all. ADOT is still trying to decide where I-11 would go and if it will indeed be built. The public comment period is over, but you can still influence the outcome by letting your local and state representatives know that you do not want the highway to go through the Avra Valley. Public opposition is strong and growing and you can be part of it.



## **Habitat Competition**

Our habitat competition is strong and thriving. The idea is to promote stewardship of land in the Tucson Mountains. If you look after the natural values of your property, tell others about it so they will be inspired to do the same. One way to do that is through our habitat competition. We had three winners in 2016. 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. See our website for the entry categories. But get your kids involved too. It can foster their curiosity, inspire an interest, and provide an educational activity over the summer. The habitat competition for kids is designed for things kids can do. We have age categories to make the contest realistic even for the younger kids. Kids can send in photographs or written materials showing how they have learned about, protected or restored the places where wildlife lives. This may include simply leaving fallen branches and rocks in place, observing how wildlife uses them, or studying the needs of wildlife in books or online resources. Winners will receive certificates and ribbons at our annual meeting in October. For more information, see our web site.



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