

Tucson Mountains ASSOCIATION SINCE 1934

Summer 2010

PO BOX 86117, TUCSON, AZ 85754-6117 • www.tucsonmountainsassoc.org • TMA@TucsonMountainsAssoc.org

Action Alert — Painted Hills is Alive!

We greatly appreciate your support for preserving the beauty of Painted Hills!

We recently asked you to attend the Tucson City Council meeting on June 8th to show your support for open space protection for the Painted Hills area. We packed the City Council room and adjoining viewing room with over 200 people.

We have obtained a "stay of execution" for 30 days while other alternatives are explored.

The Mayor and Council voted to direct the City Attorney to work with Pima County over the next 30 days to explore creative options to save the Painted Hills without going to court.

These options include identifying appropriate parcels to swap, and perhaps using remaining open space funds allocated to the City. TMA, Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association, and the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection are working with the County and City to ensure that everything possible is considered.

Your presence and support have allowed us to "live to fight another month" for Painted Hills, and we thank you. The next session on Painted Hills is July 6th, so save that date on your calendar. We may need your support again to keep the City Council on course.

Meanwhile, please take a few minutes to contact the Mayor and Council members and thank them; we are going to need their support throughout this process! We provided a contact list in our last newsletter, but it is available at the City's website.



Water Footprint — A Water Policy for Tucson

The Joint Water and Wastewater Committee submitted reports with substantial information and recommendations to guide future water policy. Their reports were approved by the City Council and County Board of Supervisors. When the City Council approved the reports, they directed staff to report back with a recommended water policy within 45 days.

Continued on Page Two...

President's Column — Ed Verburg

We have scheduled an open forum for our members. The forum will be at our August Board meeting, which will be held on the third Wednesday (August 18) at the COTA Academy (5601 W. Trails End Road) at 7:00 p.m. We meet in the Staff Dining Room, so come up to the second entrance and park anywhere a space is available. The forum will feature an opportunity for TMA members to speak for 3 minutes for the first part of the meeting to voice their support, present issues of interest, and suggest areas where more attention is needed in the future. You then can stay and see the Board operate though a business meeting if you wish. Hope you can join us and share your ideas!

- **Electronic Newsletter** — For everyone who agreed, we are sending our newsletter via email; all others will receive a copy in the mail.
- **Buffelgrass** — Debbie Hicks organized a successful buffelgrass pull along West El Camino del Cerro from the Fire Station to Silverbell Road.
- **F-35** — Provided comments on scoping of environmental impact statement.
- **Tax Exemption** — Negotiated an agreement with Sky Island Alliance to use their umbrella 501(c)3 to allow sponsors and major contributors to receive a tax exemption, which will not impact our not-for-profit status for our operating activities
- **City's Proposed Water Policy** — Offered recommendations to the City Council on the draft water footprint.
- **Neighborhood Concerns** — Responded to requests for assistance from TMA members related to zoning violations and other matters where we can add support.

Water Footprint, continued

Tucson Water and City staff developed a proposed "water footprint" without consulting with County staff. While the proposal follows many suggestions made by the Joint Committee, it ignores some important recommendations. As a result, we sent a letter to the Mayor and City Council members objecting to a number of matters (for example, no coordination with land use plans, no consultation with County staff, no mention of water harvesting and other technologies, and extension of water service outside of recommended growth areas). We particu-

larly highlighted the proposed extension of water service to several major parcels on the west side that were not recommended by the Joint Committee. Water service for these areas will significantly impact important riparian areas, wildlife corridors, open space that provides community-wide view sheds, and tourism on key scenic routes to Tucson Mountain Park, Saguaro National Park, and the Desert Museum. We shared these views at a City Council public hearing June 15th. The Council unanimously adopted a motion that: 1) deleted parcels on the west side by Painted Hills, and

2) requested staff to coordinate land use and water resources planning and report back at the first yearly review related to any recommended changes, and 3) added a reference to the importance of rainwater harvesting and new technologies in the new water policy.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**TMA ANNUAL PICNIC
AND GENERAL
MEETING
OCTOBER 30
COLUMBUS PARK
GOOD FOOD
AND LOTS OF FUN
FOR EVERYONE!**

Membership Challenge

We are pleased to have 500 members, but our objective is 1,000, so we are working on expanding our presence in the community and welcoming more folks to our efforts! If every member brought in a new member, we could reach our objective. The more members we have, the more influence we have with the City and County! (Please see the membership form on the back cover, and let us know if you agree to receive the newsletter via email to save funding for TMA.)

Letters to the Editor

The following are responses to the article in the last newsletter regarding the Air National Guard's plan to replace F-16 jet aircraft with the newer F-35a jet aircraft here in Tucson.

Dear Editor, here are some observations against deployment:

The beauty of the Tucson foothills is not only in the landscapes and the sunsets, but also in the sounds of nature that flow from the area. Often I sit on my patio and enjoy the harmonies of the various birds that inhabit the natural area surrounding my home. Sometimes the wail of a coyote or the cry of a bobcat will break the mountain silence. During monsoon, the distant roar of thunder over the mountains reminds

me of how powerful nature can be. Occasionally the drone of a small plane or helicopter breaks through; but not loud enough to destroy the tranquility of living here. Only the roar of F-16 jet airplanes destroys what is otherwise peaceful and quiet. Now the Air National Guard is planning to replace these noisy aircraft with the F-35, a jet three times noisier! This, to me, is very discouraging, and I encourage TMA to go on record as opposing this plan. Let's keep intact what we all enjoy.

Dr. Jo Ann Daly

Dear Editor, here are some observations in favor:

Tucson's prevailing winds require aircraft to take off towards the east most of the time. This is important because takeoff is when any aircraft is at its noisiest.

Aircraft in the landing pattern are generally pretty quiet as their engines are at reduced power. This means they're normally pretty quiet over the Tucson Mountains. The F-35 is loudest when using its afterburner. Any tactical aircraft rarely uses afterburner as this uses fuel at a high rate and shortens available flight time. And the afterburner is almost always only used when practicing tactics, which is only done over a range, many miles from Tucson or any other inhabited area. And a word here for those who really, really like the sound of jet noise – the ground troops who are being supported by those jets. I know I'm dating myself but the noise of an F-4 overhead was sweeter than Dvorak on the stereo when I was in Southeast Asia. Let's not forget those jets do more than make noise and funnel dollars into the city.

My final argument is that we as a country must bear the burden of supporting our armed forces. A little noise that disrupts virtually nothing is a small burden indeed. The Marine Corps boot camp in San Diego is located right beside the main San Diego civilian airport and we still managed to conduct close order drill despite the frequent deafening interruptions. What if the mayor of Chicago or the Governor of New Mexico had objected to the Manhattan Project and succeeded in delaying the effort? How many American, Japanese and Allied lives would have been lost if we had had to invade the Japanese home islands? The writer served 20 years in the military, including land-based aircraft, carrier-based aircraft and infantry operations.

Dave Bertagnoli

Northwest Fire District Seeking Public Input

The Northwest Fire District is seeking input from District residents regarding ways to address the impact of the economy on the tax rate and the services it provides. As you are aware, Pima County is projecting a decline in assessed property values. The primary source of revenue for the District comes from a secondary property tax. Assessed property values are projected to decline by 3.87 % in 2010-11 and 10.8% in 2011-12.

Property owners currently pay a secondary property tax of \$2.0857 cents per \$100 of the assessed value of the property. The tax levy for each property is based on the assessed value of a property multiplied by an assessment ratio, times the tax rate. So, if your property's assessed value is \$200,000 and the tax rate is \$2.08, the tax levied is what the property owner pays in taxes each year $\{(\$200,000 \times .10) \times .0208 = \$416\}$.

For the 2010-11 FY the District's Governing Board has directed staff to "hold" the tax levy. In order to do this the District is faced with raising the tax rate because of the projected decline in assessed values and increases in the cost of doing business. The good news is the tax levy will remain the same. The bad news is the District is faced

with cutting costs to address the increases in expenses. A much greater impact will be felt in the 2011-12 FY. The questions we put forth to the readers of this article are: Should the District:

- Hold the tax levy even if it means reducing or eliminating some services?
- Maintain the current level of service even if it means raising the tax rate and/or levy?
- Reduce the tax levy even if it means cutting service and/or laying off personnel?
- Increase the level of service even if it means raising the tax levy?

Please respond to the above questions. Indicate your choice of the options listed above and provide a brief explanation of why you selected the option. Send your responses to Division Chief Jim Grasham at:

Jim Grasham - Division Chief
Northwest Fire District
5225 W. Massingale Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85743-8416

***Thank you for
your time and
consideration
of these issues.***

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safety tips, see:

***FULL OF FUEL
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