



PUBLIC LANDS: 700,000-acre conservation plan would preserve 'legacy of Arizona' (05/26/2011)

April Reese, E&E reporter

About 700,000 acres of public land near Phoenix -- one of the West's fastest-growing cities -- would receive additional protection under a broadly supported proposal unveiled by environmental groups yesterday.

The [initiative](#), presented at a press conference in Phoenix, calls for establishing three types of protected lands in the area. All are found within Bureau of Land Management lands in Maricopa County, home to more than 4 million people.

The proposal conserves natural and cultural resources and protects key wildlife corridors while allowing for renewable energy development and recreation, proponents said.

"This endeavor is about preserving the history, the heritage, and the legacy of Arizona," said Marshall Trimble, Arizona's state historian.

The proposal calls for establishing two new national conservation areas, two special management areas, and 17 wilderness units, some of which would be expansions of existing wilderness.



The Sonoran Desert Heritage Campaign seeks to significantly expand protections for public land surrounding the Phoenix metro area, including an addition to the Eagletail Mountains Wilderness (above). Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management.

The lands, which form a rough crescent in an area known as the West Valley, would protect the unique Sonoran Desert ecosystem and wildlife corridors used by bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer and other species, supporters said. And by protecting open space, the initiative would also preserve flight training airspace and corridors between Luke Air Force Base and the Barry M. Goldwater Range to the south.

"It's very easy for us to support this project because it's supporting the mission of the base," said Ron Sites, executive director and president of Fighter Country Partnership, an organization that advocates on behalf of the

military personnel based at Luke Air Force Base. The proposal protects the air space the base and other installations need to continue their missions, he added.

The proposal also has the blessing of city and county officials, developers, conservationists, military representatives, recreationists and the faith community, and the groups will gather further input from the public over the next few months before taking the proposal to Congress, said Mike Quigley, Arizona wildlands campaign coordinator for the Wilderness Society.

The diverse base of support reflects a unified desire to protect the scenery and recreational opportunities that draw so many people to the region, he said.

"It's a beautiful landscape," he said. "Arizona in the past decade or two has been rapidly growing in population and infrastructure, and I think people who live here have seen the development of open space, and I think that might be a motivator of people protecting this."

Maricopa County's population grew by about 30 percent between 2000 and 2010, according to census figures.

Larry K. Yount of LKY Development Company Inc., said the initiative is a selling point for the town of Belmont's 20,000-acre master planned community near the Belmont Mountains, which would be surrounded by the Sonoran Desert Heritage proposed wilderness area.

"We couldn't be more pleased with this proposal, as it gives added natural value to why prospective buyers want to live in western Maricopa County," he said.

According to recent polls, between 60 and 80 percent of residents support protecting open space in the area, Quigley said.

The initiative would not conflict with proposed solar projects in western Maricopa County because those sites are outside its boundaries, he added.

Dennis Godfrey, a spokesman for BLM's Arizona state office in Phoenix, said the agency is aware of the initiative but cannot take an official position on it until it goes before Congress.

"This seems to be kind of a broad-based grass-roots thing, and we certainly support that," he said. "But in terms of the specific proposal, my understanding is there's not a bill yet, so we're not in a position to comment."

The proposal has the support of Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.). But Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), whose district also includes some of the lands, has yet to endorse it, although he has said he is open to the plan. "We're optimistic we'll gain their full support for legislation," Quigley said.

The groups hope to see a bill introduced in Congress by next year.

[Click here](#) to read the proposal.

Reese writes from Santa Fe, N.M.

<http://www.eenews.net/Landletter/2011/05/26/4/>

[May 26, 2011](#)



Major Preserve Proposed for Lands West of Phoenix

PHOENIX - Large swaths of pristine desert land in western Maricopa County would remain unspoiled under a plan unveiled Wednesday. The Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal would preserve recreational opportunities while protecting wildlife habitat and migration corridors.

Now is the time to act, says Marshall Trimble, Arizona's official state historian, because urban Phoenix continues to expand.

"We need these little sanctuaries like this, where people can go, where they can have their parks and have their hiking trails and their biking and their horses, that a crowded suburban area needs."

Ron Sites, director of *Fighter Country Partnership*, a Luke Air Force Base support group, says the proposal dovetails nicely with the flight-training mission of the base.

"It supports the future airspace that Luke Air Force Base needs to continue its mission. We all know what kind of economic engine the base is for our economy. There's a lot of benefits for preserving the ground and the air."

The plan helps preserve some of the wide-open spaces that help define the history, heritage and legacy of Arizona, Trimble says.

"You can get out of your car and take a hike and make footprints on land that maybe no human has left a print for a thousand years."

The lands in the proposal form a rough crescent shape from north to south, on the western side of the White Tank Mountains. Wildlife includes desert tortoises and herds of bighorn sheep. Trimble says preservation would be "a gift" to the people of Arizona and future generations.

"(It) really belongs to everybody and nobody. And it's free and it's got plant and wildlife galore. And even if you don't want to go out there, it's still comforting to know that there is a sanctuary out there."

The proposal is backed by organizations ranging from cities and conservation groups to developers and supporters of Luke Air Force Base. No private lands are involved. Congressional approval would be needed.

More information is online at sonoranheritage.org.



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Today's weather:

High 96, low 72

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Court backs sanctions law

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has sustained Arizona's law that penalizes businesses for hiring workers who are in the United States illegally, rejecting arguments that states have no role in immigration matters.

By a 5-3 vote, the court said today that federal immigration law gives states the

authority to impose sanctions on employers who hire unauthorized workers.

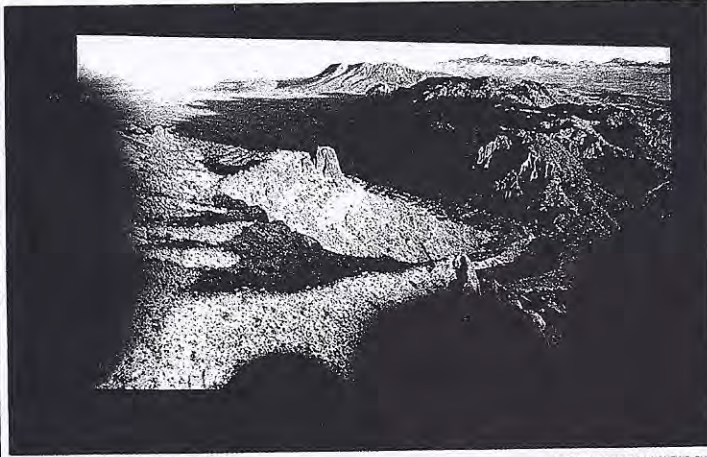
The decision upholding the validity of the 2007 law comes as the state is appealing a ruling that blocked key components of a second, more controversial Arizona immigration enforcement law. Today's decision applies only to business licenses and does not signal how the high court might rule if

the other law comes before it.

Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for a majority made up of Republican-appointed justices, said the Arizona's employer sanctions law "falls well within the confines of the authority Congress chose to leave to the states."

Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader

SEE RULING, A5



DAVE MARTINEZ/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Attendees watch a short video on Sonoran desert preservation during a presentation by the Sonoran Desert Heritage on protecting western Maricopa county public lands.

Preservation group presents plan for West Valley

JEFF DEMPSEY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A broad and enthusiastic coalition of local leaders met Wednesday at the Wigwam Resort for the unveiling of the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal, an initiative aimed at planning for future development while preserving the Sonoran wilderness for future generations.

"This room is filled with

an all-star cast of local leaders," said Matt Skroch, executive director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. "This is an important milestone we've reached today."

Indeed, Sonoran Desert Heritage boasts support from a wide range of people and entities, from local mayors to housing developers, wildlife preservation groups, military interest

groups and churches. The public lands encompassed by the proposal are primarily in western Maricopa County and form a rough crescent shape from the northern to the southern portions of the county.

All of the lands covered in the proposal are west of the White Tank Mountains.

SEE DESERT, A5

Medicare explodes as ballot issue

DAVID ESPO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Jubilant Democrats demanded Republicans abandon their sweeping plans to remake Medicare on Wednesday after casting a House race in upstate New York as a referendum on the popular program and emerging victorious.

"The top three reasons for the election of a Democrat in one of the most conservative Republican districts in America are Medicare, Medicare and Medicare," declared New York Rep. Steve Israel, chairman of the party's congressional campaign committee.

House Republicans made little if any attempt to demonstrate widespread support for their controversial proposal during the day. And the National Republican Congressional Committee offered no explanation for having let hundreds of thousands of dollars in Democratic-funded attacks on the proposed Medicare overhaul go unchallenged in its own television advertising.

GOP officials said the presence of a third-party contender and other factors contributed to their unexpected defeat in New York. They accused Democrats of campaign scare

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DESERT

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public lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

The proposal was about four years in the making, and Dave Richins, director of the Sonoran Institute's Sun Corridor Legacy Program, said he was eager to reach this step.

"It's exciting to see this come to a point where it is ready to be vetted by the public," he said. "We want to hear from you. We want to know what we may have missed."

Richins, also a Mesa councilman, said he is proud of the Sonoran Desert Heritage project.

"I think in the future, people will look back and say this is how land conservation ought to be done," he said. "It considers the future of Luke Air Force Base. It considers the economies of West Valley communities."

An important part of the plan, he said, was

to work with developers and gather their input.

"It considers the future of development," he said. "There are some places we should be developing and there are some places we should not be. This proposal attempts to identify and protect the places we should not be developing. The goal is to protect those BLM lands now and come up with a thoughtful plan for them in the future."

Scott McCoy, a member of the board of directors of the Fighter Country Partnership, said his organization was quick to get involved.

"It didn't take the board long to realize this was a real opportunity to preserve not just the land but the flight corridors above that land," he said.

John Graham of Sun Belt Holdings said it has always been his philosophy to develop land responsibly.

"You can't have a healthy economy without a healthy environment," he said. "And

I'm proud of the effort we've made here. It's really a testimony to how this process should work. The final product is something everyone can be proud of."

Marshall Trimble, Arizona's official historian, said this generation has been tasked with something no previous generation had to worry about.

"We have been given the responsibility of protecting our wilderness," he said. "No previous generation had to worry about that, but we have inherited from them the role of caretakers. And we have to take care, because once it is lost it is gone forever."

The western Maricopa County region identified in the proposal includes rugged

terrain that provides an escape for hikers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts of every kind. It is also home to a wealth of wildlife, from the bighorn sheep to the desert tortoise and the Gila monster, bobcat, and more than 300 species of native birds. Supporters indicated the goal is to develop a finished proposal before the end of the year.

To become law it will require legislation in Congress and the coalition hopes it will be considered in the 2012 session.


For more information about the proposal, visit www.sonoranheritage.org.

Jeff Dempsey may be reached at 623-876-2531 or jdempsey@yourwestvalley.com.

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After a 9-hour delay, Beaty is put to death



Arizona Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch asks a question Wednesday morning during a hearing on the scheduled execution of Donald Beaty. He was put to death Wednesday night for the 1984 rape and murder of a 13-year-old Tempe girl. PHOTOS BY MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

Challenge over protocol for lethal injection fails to keep killer from execution

By JJ Hensley and Jim Walsh
The Arizona Republic

FLORENCE — An emotional Donald Beaty used his last words to apologize to the family of his victim, 13-year-old Christy Ann Fornoff, moments

young *Phoenix Gazette* newspaper carrier. After he died, Fornoff's family could be seen hugging and consoling each other.

"We are here to bring closure to the loss of our beloved daughter and sister, Christy Ann For-



Coalition seeks to preserve desert

W. Valley group eyes
700,000 acres of land

By David Madrid
The Arizona Republic

A coalition of environmentalists, business leaders, developers and mayors announced a proposal Wednesday to protect roughly 700,000 acres of public lands in the West Valley.

The group wants to preserve for future generations the ecology, cultural heritage and recreational opportunities in the Sonoran Desert west of Phoenix.

The public lands, which are managed by the Bureau of Land Management, form a rough crescent stretching from the northwest edge of the Maricopa County to lands west of the White Tank Mountains and southeast of Estrella Mountain Regional Park.

The proposal would protect the Sonoran Desert environment, its open space, the varied plants and wildlife and the corridors used by wildlife, including bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer, Gila monsters, Sonoran Desert tortoises and 350 species of birds.

Equally important, organizers said, is the preservation of open space beneath flight corridors used by Luke Air Force Base and

See PRESERVE, Page B6

Official: MCSO drug case hints at border woes

By JJ Hensley
and William Herrmann
The Arizona Republic

Maricopa County Attorney Bill

Preserve

Continued from B1

other military installations that fly to the Barry M. Goldwater Range west of Ajo.

Matt Skroch, executive director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, said the main objective is to maintain a balance of economic development, growth and environment in one of the state's fastest-growing regions.

"Because of the vast landscape of public land ... real discussion began about how to shape the destiny of parks and natural areas to complement the incredible growth," Skroch said.

Protecting open space means millions of recreational dollars to the state, group members say.

They say that outdoor recreation supports more than 15,000 jobs in the state, and hunting and fishing generate more than \$1.3 billion. All outdoor-related recreation in Arizona, such as bird-watching, sightseeing and hiking, produces nearly \$5 billion annually in services and re-

tail sales across the state.

And Luke Air Force Base has 7,000 employees and an annual financial impact to the state of more than \$2.1 billion annually.

Mike Quigley, Arizona's representative for the Wilderness Society, said the group wants to preserve the heritage of the West Valley.

"Our outreach efforts so far have included discussions with developers, business interests, cities and towns in the West Valley, utilities, environmental-conservation organizations, landowners and others to identify important public lands," Quigley said. "Now, we're casting a wider net and asking our fellow Arizonans to join us in this process."

The plan requires congressional approval, which the group hopes to obtain by 2012. The conservation initiative must have Congress designate the lands as three categories that offer differing levels of protection to specific areas, such as making some land wilderness, some national-conservation areas and some special-management areas.

Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., who represents part of the area, said he is "very open" to the plan.

"One of the more important benefits would be furthering the mission of Luke Air Force Base," said Franks, adding that the proposal should be drawn up in a way that doesn't hurt plans for the proposed Interstate 11, which would be a critical part of the Canamex Corridor, a highway and rail route that would connect Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. I-11 would connect I-10 to U.S. 93 near Wickenburg.

However, he wouldn't commit to sponsoring a bill.

Adam Sarvana, communications director for Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz., whose district includes some of the land, said the congressman supports the concept but won't take the lead on the legislation.

Dennis Godfrey, a spokesman for the Bureau of Land Management, said the bureau can't comment on the proposal until there is specific legislation.

For more details, go to sonoranheritage.org.

NOTABLE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

» Daniel Monarrez, a graduate of Trevor G. Browne High School in Phoenix, was offered a \$360,000 scholarship to the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. The scholarship also comes with a five-year commitment and a guaranteed \$60,000-a-year job after graduation. If he commits longer, the Coast Guard will pay for his graduate degree.

» Aaron Webb, a Gilbert Mesquite High salutatorian, was offered \$562,000 in scholarships. He plans to attend Brigham Young University and wants to be a physicist.

» Autumn Shone, a Central High graduate, was offered \$600,000 in scholarships and full rides to Dartmouth, Yale and Stanford. She chose Yale and wants to be a lawyer.

» Metro Tech valedictorian Jorge "George" Calderon has his school

Beaty

Continued from B1

minute drug substitution, which was announced late Tuesday, would infringe on Beaty's constitutional rights or constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

They also suggested that corrections officials should have taken more time to train executioners in the use of pentobarbital, since it was not a part of the state's existing execution-drug protocol. One filing called the last-minute change "unconscionable."

Those arguments were first made before the Arizona Supreme Court on Wednesday morning, but the state's high court rejected them several hours later after meeting on the matter behind closed doors. Rejections continued throughout the afternoon: first in U.S. District Court, then twice at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected two other legal arguments put forth to block the execution

*"I'm sorry,
I'm sorry.
God will let you see
her again."*

DONALD BEATY
To his victim's family

Supreme Court declined to consider further appeals.

Disappearance

Fornoff disappeared on the evening of May 9, 1984, while collecting money on her newspaper-delivery route at a Tempe apartment complex. Her mother, who was accompanying her, had let her out of her sight just long enough to chat with a neighbor, and within hours, police were combing the complex with canine units as Fornoff's parents and neighbors knocked on doors.

Two days later, Beaty, the complex's maintenance man

on the body.

Beaty's first trial ended in a hung jury, but during his second trial, prosecutors learned that a psychiatrist had been overheard saying that Beaty had confessed to the murder. Prosecutors took the matter to the Arizona Court of Appeals to overrule the doctor-patient privilege that would ordinarily attach to conversations between Beaty and the psychiatrist. The doctor was ordered to testify.

On the stand, he testified that Beaty had not intended to kill the girl, but had put his hand over her mouth to muffle her screams and she suffocated on her own vomit. Beaty was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Finally at peace

Beaty was fed a last meal Tuesday night of a chimichanga, a double cheeseburger with fries, ice cream and a Diet Pepsi.

Afterward, he was transported from the state's death row at the Eyman Complex to a holding cell at ASPC-Florence. He wasn't taken to the

Scholarships

Continued from B1

offers and a chance to study a most anywhere in the country.

Two other students in Mesa Public Schools were also offered more than \$1 million in scholarships. Mesa seniors were offered \$72.8 million in scholarships this year, and more than 60 students were each offered more than \$200,000 in scholarships, according to district data.

These students usually start from their freshman year picking the right classes and activities to get them into the college of their choice. They were involved in many extracurricular activities, took Advanced Placement classes and did everything they could to stand out in the tough competition for good scholarships.

Alex Gale, who graduated from Metro Tech last week, is attending Arizona State University in the fall to become a biomedical engineer. He was offered \$540,000 in scholarships, including the Dorrance Scholarship sponsored by the Arizona Community Foundation, which is given to 25 Arizona students. Gale's tuition is taken care of, along with



View photo by Jim Painter.

THE SADDLE MOUNTAIN area, pictured here, is part of the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal, a plan to protect Arizona's natural and cultural legacy for future generations.

Group works to preserve Sonoran Desert

by Sara Bisker
staff writer

This generation is responsible for the environment of generations to come was the core point of a presentation on the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal last week at the Wigwam resort.

The plan provides for conservation efforts of U.S. Bureau of Land Management acreage, said Ian Dowdy, a representative of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

The public lands encompassed by the proposal are primarily in western Maricopa County and form a rough crescent shape from the northern to the southern portions of the county. All the lands in the proposal are west of the White Tank Mountains and are public lands managed by the BLM.

Other partners of the project include the Sonoran Institute, the Wilderness Society, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Friends of Saddle Mountain, various developers, cities and towns and Fighter Country

Partnership, which advocates for Luke Air Force Base, he said.

"This is a comprehensive, pragmatic conservation plan," Dowdy said. "The goal is to try to marry the reality of people who actually use the land with conservation needs, because sometimes they're in conflict."

He spoke during an unveiling of the proposal May 25 at the Wigwam in Litchfield Park.

"Right now, as it stands, the land cannot be developed by developers or private interests," he said. "It doesn't mean it can be that way forever."

Since 1961, about 6 percent of federal lands in Arizona have become private lands.

The Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal outlines ways to protect the land, which will ultimately be encroached upon by development as populations continue to expand, Dowdy said.

The land also needs to be protected from recreational users by giving them

designated areas to enjoy their sports in, he said.

"Reality is, development is imminent on the edges of these lands," he said.

"When that happens, people buy the homes and then the next thing they do is buy the ATV because they have a desert behind them. And that is fine, because a lot of land has already been impacted and used for riding, but people need to do it on the parts it's reserved for."

To protect the lands, the proposal will go to the public first for resolution on any issues still needing to be addressed. Organizers then want bipartisan support from state legislators.

To be finalized, the plan must be approved by Congress.

The proposal preserves natural, cultural and recreational resources; ensures the viability of nearby military facilities; allows for future renewable energy

"We inherited a challenge that must be dealt with and we must step in and face this challenge."



— Marshall Trimble
State Historian

development; and protects important wildlife habitats and migration corridors, organizers said.

Above all, it protects our future, Arizona historian Marshall Trimble said.

"No one quite predicted the rapid growth that took place in Arizona over the last half of the 20th century, and thus we have inherited this globe as caretakers" he said. "We inherited

a challenge that must be dealt with and we must step in and face this challenge.

"Your children will thank you. Your children's children will thank you, as will continuous generations yet to come."

For more information about the plan and to view maps of the area, visit www.sonoranheritage.org.

Sara Bisker can be reached by email at sbisker@westvalleyview.com.



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View photo by Michael Clawson

JOHN GRAHAM, LEFT, PRESIDENT of Sunbelt Holdings, speaks with Fighter Country Partnership Executive Director Ron Sites and state Sen. John Nelson (R-District 12) at the Sonoran Desert Heritage event May 25 at the Wigwam resort in Litchfield Park. Sonoran Desert Heritage's mission is to preserve Arizona's natural and cultural legacy with controlled building and expansion.

Proposal a big step to preserve our open space

Thursday, June 2, 2011 at 03:43 PM

Our View: The Arizona Republic editorial board, West Valley

Spend a few weeks among the high-rise buildings in major cities back East, and the Valley's mountains and vistas are the first thing you notice upon arriving home.

We're fortunate to have wide, open spaces and sunlight beaming down most of the year. It's what makes us the envy of the nation and a tourism destination.

Arizona, for the most part, has done a good job of preserving the unique landscape that makes us what we are. Efforts to continue that preservation must be encouraged and supported. To spoil the state's natural beauty with acres of subdivisions is shortsighted.

Last week, a group of environmentalists, business leaders, developers and mayors announced a proposal to protect about 700,000 acres of public lands in the West Valley.

The concept of the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal is to allow future generations the same ecological, cultural and recreational opportunities that we enjoy. It also will benefit Luke Air Force Base and the Barry M. Goldwater Range near Ajo by keeping encroachment at bay.

The area in the proposal stretches from a far northwest portion of Maricopa County to lands west of the White Tanks and southeast of Estrella Mountain Regional Park in the Southwest Valley. Public lands in the targeted area are managed by Bureau of Land Management. The proposal doesn't affect private-property owners and is embraced by developers who already have plans to build on nearby land west of the White Tanks.

The West Valley will be an attractive area for growth when the economy fully recovers. It makes sense to work now to protect what could become an exclusive destination similar to north Scottsdale.

Area leaders see the benefit of setting aside natural parks. Coalition members include the mayors of Goodyear, Peoria, Buckeye and Surprise, business leaders, community leaders and others.

"We need to provide a legacy of open public lands," Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck said. "Once the land is developed, we can't get it back, and we know the good Lord isn't making any more land."

The effort also has the verbal support of the area's two West Valley congressional delegates, Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., and Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz. Their support is critical because the conservation initiative needs congressional approval for differing levels of protection, including

making some land wilderness, some national-conservation areas and some special-management areas.

Unfortunately, neither representative said he is willing to take the lead to sponsor the required legislation. We hope one or both reconsider.

Protecting the public lands ensures the viability of military facilities and fosters economic development through tourism opportunities. But, most importantly, “it preserves the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the land and protects important wildlife habitat and migration corridors,” said Matt Skroch, executive director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

The open space is home to varied plants and wildlife, including bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer, Gila monsters, Sonoran Desert tortoises and 350 species of birds.

Every effort should be made to preserve the West Valley's open space for future generations. We need our representatives in Washington to show leadership on this issue.

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

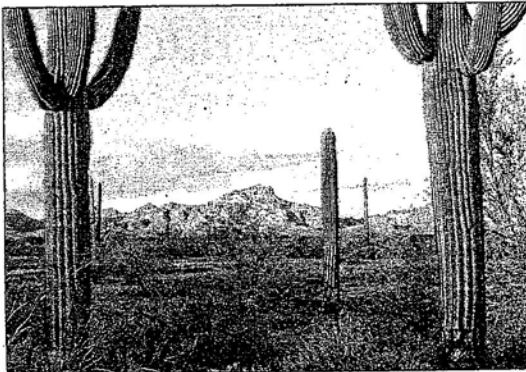
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THE ISSUE: DESERT CONSERVATION



If the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal is approved by Congress, it will protect about 750,000 acres. ARIZONA WILDERNESS COALITION

HERITAGE PLAN DESERVES SUPPORT

Mix together the military, wildlife, petroglyphs, tourism, the desert and economic development ... and you have one amazing idea.

It's called the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal, and if approved by Congress, it would protect about 750,000 acres of public land in western Maricopa County.

The area, which forms a crescent west of the White Tank Mountains and curving south of Interstate 10, is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. None of it is private. What it needs is an extra layer of protection and oversight, especially as urban development continues to expand in that direction. The proposal isn't a single project but an umbrella that would designate:

» Two new national conservation areas. The proposed Gila Bend Mountains National Conservation Area, for example, is home to bighorn sheep and includes 2 miles of basalt cliffs with prehistoric petroglyphs.

» Additional wilderness. Places like the purple-tinged Belmont Mountains, 50 miles west of Phoenix, show off the untamed desert and form important connections for wildlife migrations.

» Two special management areas, which allow a range of visitor and recreational development. They include the Hieroglyphic Mountains, with cliffs for climbing, camping spots, hidden canyons for hikers to discover and a motorized loop trail through the desert.

The Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal has been a long time in the works, with input from a wide variety of stakeholders. The range of

support is impressive: West Valley mayors, horse lovers, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, local churches and businesses, solar companies, developers and Luke Air Force Base. Luke is a major economic engine for the West Valley and the entire state. But urban development has been limiting the area where pilots can fly and jeopardizing the long-term viability of the base.

Here's an effective tool for keeping flight corridors open and maintaining the connection with the Barry M. Goldwater Range. This is particularly important as the Air Force considers where to conduct training for the future F-35 fighter jets.

The proposed conservation designations would ensure that nothing incompatible is developed on the ground. The economics go beyond Luke. Developers recognize the value of protecting adjacent scenic landscape. Local officials and businesses understand that the desert is a tourism draw and part of their identity. Supporters are finishing a draft proposal, which should be ready as Congress ends its summer recess. With its economic and conservation power, the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal deserves bipartisan support from Arizona's delegation, especially the two representatives whose districts span the area: Republican Trent Franks and Democrat Raúl Grijalva.

With Arizona's centennial around the corner in 2012, what could be a better birthday gift than conserving these iconic places?

See the proposal at sonoranheritage.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

God wants us to care for the Earth

I affirm your Aug. 21 editorial, "Heritage plan deserves support." As a Christian pastor, I am pleased to see that local churches are involved in land protection.

The Bible highlights over and over the role that the desert had in the lives of Jesus, Moses and Abraham. It is only appropriate that we find ways to protect the Sonoran Desert so we may know the power and beauty of this place.

As Christians, we are called by God to be stewards of the gifts we have been given. The Sonoran Desert is one of those gifts, and we must honor and protect this blessing.

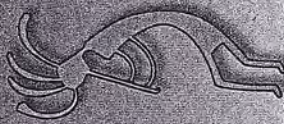
Caring for the Earth is a central part of living out Christ's Gospel. The Sonoran Desert is a unique part of God's creation and is particular to Arizona.

Not only will this proposal conserve an irreplaceable part of our state, it will help protect jobs, maintain the value of the West Valley and provide a place for prayer and reflection.

— **The Rev. Doug Bland**, *Tempe*

■ AVONDALE COP SHOOTS MAN DEAD, PAGE 3

West Valley View



westvalleyview.com — the newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ 50¢ Tuesday, November 1, 2011 (623) 535-8439



**SONORAN
DESERT
HERITAGE**

We want your input!



The Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation initiative - a broad coalition of communities, organizations, developers, military interests, and faith groups - is inviting the public to provide feedback on its proposal to conserve and protect federal lands in western Maricopa County.

This proposal will conserve certain federal BLM lands to protect recreation values, wildlife habitat, and our economy.

Please plan to attend one of these meetings to make your voice heard!

November 3, 2011 7-9 PM

Avondale Church of God
2605 N. Avondale Blvd.
Avondale, AZ 85323

November 8, 2011 6-8 PM

Saddle Mountain RV Park
40902 W. Osborn Road
Tonopah, AZ 85354

November 10, 2011 7-9 PM

Wickenburg Community Center
175 E. Swilling
Wickenburg, AZ 85390

November 15, 2011 7-9 PM

Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce
16126 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374

November 17, 2011 7-9 PM

Buckeye Chamber of Commerce
508 E. Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326

Note: These meetings are an open house format so please show up at any time during these advertised hours.

www.sonoranheritage.org

SOUTHWEST VALLEY REPUBLIC

MIDWEEK, NOVEMBER 2, 2011

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southwestvalley.azcentral.com

Z5 SECTION SW

SW VALLEY NEWS

Z5 MIDWEEK » NOVEMBER 2, 2011

Input sought on initiative

By David Madrid
The Republic | azcentral.com

A series of public meetings are designed to get public opinion on the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal, a conservation initiative that seeks to protect about 750,000 acres of desert from potential negative impacts of population growth and development.

A coalition of communities, organizations, developers, military interests and faith groups has worked to craft a proposal that would designate land uses for Bureau of Land Management areas.

The proposal is designed to protect the desert, its wildlife and their migration corridors and to preserve archaeological sites while striking a balance that allows for tourism, recreation, development and business.

After the meetings and once public input has been incorporated into the plan, Congress would have to approve land designations that offer varying degrees of protection.

The official designations would be wilderness, national-conservation areas and

SONORAN DESERT HERITAGE PROPOSAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

- » 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Avondale Church of God, 2605 N. Avondale Blvd., Avondale.
- » 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Saddle Mountain RV Park, 40902 W. Osborn Road, Tonopah.
- » 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 10, Wickenburg Community Center, 175 E. Swilling, Wickenburg.
- » 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 15, Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce, 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza, Surprise.
- » 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 17, Buckeye Chamber of Commerce, 508 E. Monroe Ave., Buckeye.

special-management areas.

Backers of the plan say they need public feedback on the draft proposal.

A series of meetings will begin Thursday in Avondale and then additional meetings will be held in Tonopah, Wickenburg, Surprise and Buckeye.

The public meetings will be informal so participants can see the draft proposal and

See CONSERVATION, Page 7

SOUTHWEST VALLEY REPUBLIC

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MIDWEEK, NOVEMBER 2, 2011

Z5 SECTION SW

Z5 MIDWEEK » NOVEMBER 2, 2011

SW VALLEY NEWS

CONSERVATION

Continued from 6

look at maps and materials. Coalition members from local groups will attend the meetings to answer questions and take comments.

By 2030, the Maricopa Association of Governments estimates that 34 percent of the county's residents will live in the West Valley. That population is moving westward into undisturbed areas of the desert.

"This is a great opportunity to set a new standard for how conservation is done in Arizona and around the country," said Dave Richins, director of the Sonoran Institute's Sun Corridor Legacy Program. "Our inclusive public process will allow us to shape what these irreplaceable public lands will look like in 50 or 100 years."

The 750,000 acres form a rough crescent shape from the northwestern edge of Maricopa County to lands west of the White Tank Mountains and land southeast of Estrella Mountain Regional Park.

"This area, while far to the west now, will continue to be scrutinized for development potential," said Eric Gorsegner, associate director with the Sonoran Institute's Sun Corridor Legacy Program. "The goal of the proposal is to protect open space, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities,

which bring more than \$5 billion annually into Arizona's economy."

Gorsegner said the current plan has been crafted to take into account future development, transportation, energy infrastructure plans and the needs of Luke Air Force Base.

Ian Dowdy, an urban planner with the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, said the Sonoran Desert Heritage Proposal did not begin in a vacuum, nor should it be considered by Congress until it has been appropriately vetted by the public.

"People of Arizona take umbrage with dictates handed down from Washington," Dowdy said. "This proposal is just the opposite. (It's) driven by local groups and tailored to fit the needs of all stakeholders of these valuable landscapes."

Sonoran Desert Heritage coalition members kicked off the initiative in May, highlighting details of the plan with key stakeholders attending.

The stakeholders included Fighte Country Partnership, an advocate for Luke Air Force Base; DMB Associates Inc. and Sunbelt Holdings, land-development companies; Abengoa Solar, a solar-power company; official state historian Marshall Trimble; church leaders and area mayors

THE WICKENBURG SUN

Print Page

Input sought for area conservation

The Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation initiative is inviting the public to provide candid feedback on its proposal to conserve and protect additional public lands in western Maricopa County.

Meetings are planned throughout the west Valley, including a meeting at the Wickenburg Community Center on Thursday, Nov. 10 from 7 to 9 p.m.

These meetings kick off a crucial planning phase for the conservation initiative, which aims to protect approximately 750,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands for recreational access, wildlife, and archaeological significance in the region west and south of the White Tank Mountains. Additional meetings are scheduled in Tonopah, Surprise, and Buckeye. For the full schedule of meetings and locations, visit www.sonoranheritage.org.

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PHOTOS BY NICK COTE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Surprise resident Sid Gaver returns a serve during the first Surprise Pickleball Tournament last weekend. Pickleball enthusiasts from all over the country gathered at Surprise Community Park for pickleball, raffle prizes and silent auctions. Proceeds from the event will go toward improving the courts at the park.

SURPRISE DILL-IVERS



Shari Farrell and her sister Susan, both from Apache Junction, play in the first Surprise Pickleball Tournament.

Coalition seeks feedback on public land conservation, protection

STAFF REPORT

The Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation initiative, a coalition of communities, organizations, developers, military interests and faith groups, is inviting the public to provide feedback on its proposal to conserve and protect additional public lands in western Maricopa County.

A series of public meetings begins today in Avondale to kick off the planning phase for the conservation initiative, which aims to protect approximately 750,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands for recreational access, wildlife, and archaeological significance in the region west and south of the White Tank Mountains.

"This area — while far to the west now — will continue to be scrutinized for development potential," said Eric Gorsegrner, associate director with the Sonoran Institute's Sun Corridor Legacy Program. "The goal of the proposal is to protect open space, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities, which bring over \$5 billion annually into Arizona's economy.

We've crafted it carefully, taking into account future development, transportation and energy infrastructure plans, and the needs of Luke Air Force Base."

The public meetings require no RSVP and will be structured in an informal way so that participants can peruse maps and materials about the draft proposal, officials said. Coalition members from local groups will be present to answer questions and take comments from those who attend.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Public hearing for the Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation initiative.

WHEN: 7 to 9 p.m., Nov. 15.

WHERE: Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce, 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza, Surprise.

"This proposal did not begin in a vacuum, nor should it be considered by Congress until it has been appropriately vetted by the public at large," says Ian Dowdy, an urban planner with the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. "People of Arizona take umbrage with dictates handed down from Washington—this proposal is just the opposite: driven by local groups and tailored to fit the needs of all stakeholders of these valuable landscapes."

For more information about the proposal, visit www.sonoranheritage.org.

Poker night benefits Peoria Rotary Foundation

STAFF REPORT

The Peoria Rotary Club is hosting a fundraising Poker Night featuring a Texas Hold'em tournament on Saturday.

Registration and instruction will begin at 5 p.m., with the tournament beginning at 6 at Landscape Mart, 8028 W. Thunderbird Road, Peoria.

The \$25 entry fee includes food

and beverages. Beer and wine will be available for purchase.

First-, second- and third-place prizes will be given in the amounts of \$100, \$50 and \$25.

Net proceeds from the event will support the Peoria Rotary Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)3 organization.

For information, call Alex McEachern at 480-510-5910 or Dave Tiller at 602-421-7921.

Supervisor Max Wilson receives lifetime achievement award

STAFF REPORT

WESTMARC has named Maricopa County Supervisor Max W. Wilson winner of the John F. Long Lifetime Achievement Award.

Wilson, whose district includes the Sun Cities, is a U.S. Air Force veteran who was appointed to the Board of Supervisors after serving on the Litchfield City Council.

"This is a very special award for me, just to be mentioned in the same breath as John F. Long, a friend and role model," Wilson said.

Wilson is being honored for his

service as a West Valley builder, founder of Design Master Homes, as a civic leader active in support of Luke Air Force Base, Wickenburg, the Northwest and Southwest Valley chambers of commerce, Sun Health/La Loma Board of Directors and WESTMARC, a coalition of industry, business and governmental leaders formed in 1990 to promote the West Valley.

The presentation will be made today at the 19th Annual Best of the West Awards at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel & Spa.

House hop showcases quilts, crafts

STAFF REPORT

Calico Cut-Ups is playing host to a House Hop — a traveling quilt show presented in selected homes in Surprise.

The event is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Nov. 12. Tickets are \$5.

The House Hop will also have an antique quilt turning, two boutiques of handmade quilts, wall hangings,

sewing supplies, jewelry, painted ornaments and other crafts for sale.

The tour starts at 15149 Waterford Drive, 15680 W. Saguardo Lane or 15946 W. Monte Cristo Ave. in Surprise. Tickets are available at the door, and include a list of all stops on the House Hop.

For information, call Ruby Koch at 623-214-8575.



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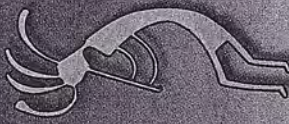
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■ CIVILIAN CUTS AFFECT LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, PAGE 5

West Valley VIEW



westvalleyview.com — the newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ 50¢ Tuesday, November 8, 2011 (623) 535-8439



SONORAN
DESERT
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508 E. Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326

Note: These meetings are an open house format so please show up at any time during these advertised hours.

www.sonoranheritage.org

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GLENDALE REPUBLIC

MIDWEEK, NOVEMBER 9, 2011

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Z19 SECTION G

OPINIONS

Z19 MIDWEEK » NOVEMBER 9, 2011

Fighter Country Partnership backs conservation



My Turn
RON SITES

The Sonoran Desert Heritage draft proposal for protecting public lands in western Maricopa County is not simply a conservation effort. It is supported by a broad cross-section of hometown Arizona public and private interests for a variety of environmental and economic reasons.

Fighter Country Partnership is proud to support the Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation plan because its passage will further protect Luke Air Force Base and its \$2.1 billion annual economic impact to our community.

The Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation proposal will protect and maintain the necessary open spaces over which missions are conducted, thereby preserving the vital air corridors necessary for flight operations at Luke. This protection is more critical now than ever because Luke is the preferred alternative for training pilots of the new F-35 Joint

The Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation proposal will protect and maintain the necessary open spaces over which missions are conducted, thereby preserving the vital air corridors necessary for flight operations at Luke.

Strike Fighter.

Proactive conservation of this landscape also helps safeguard wildlife species outside of Arizona's military bases and the Barry M. Goldwater Range, thereby reducing the risk to these species concerned and the financial burden of managing them.

Over the course of more than five years, local organizers for this effort have been reaching out to communities in the West Valley to find partners to help shape this draft proposal into a well-vetted measure to be introduced in Congress. Fighter Country Partnership was

PUBLIC FEEDBACK SOUGHT

The public is invited to give feedback on the Sonoran Desert Heritage draft proposal during a series of open-house meetings. All meetings are from 7 to 9 p.m. Additional information is available at www.sonoranheritage.org.

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one of several stakeholder groups that recently met with our congressional delegation in Washington to support the draft conservation proposal. Other supporters include West Valley churches, like the Avondale Church of God; energy companies such as Abengoa Solar Inc. and NextEra Energy Resources LLC; wildlife and outdoor groups such as the Arizona Wildlife Federation; Arizona State Horse

men's Association, and Friends of Saddle Mountain; and companies like DMB Associates, and Sunbelt Holdings, residential developers of Verrado and Douglas Ranch, respectively. Fighter Country Partnership is proud to be part of this collaborative, transparent process to protect Arizona's heritage. We encourage the public to offer candid feedback on the Sonoran Desert Heritage draft proposal during a series of open-house meetings at West Valley.

Ron Sites is president and executive director of Fighter Country Partnership, which supports the mission of Luke Air Force Base.

YOUR VOICE COUNTS

E-mail: walley.letters@arizonarepublic.com
Fax: 623-412-9577
Mail: The Arizona Republic, West Valley Letters, 17235 N. 75th Ave., Suite A-100, Glendale, AZ 85308
Please include your name, address and phone number. Please limit letters to 200 words and columns to 400 words.

INSIDE: ACTIVITIES APLENTY HONORING VETERANS » PAGE 4

PEORIA REPUBLIC

peoria.azcentral.com

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MIDWEEK, NOVEMBER 9, 2011

Z2 SECTION P

Peoria aims to nab major employer

Peoria agrees to set aside \$6.7 million for a potential economic development project in Vistancia. The council agreed to partner with Sunbelt Holdings, the developer of the north Peoria community.

PAGE 3

Ex-educator pleads guilty to child abuse

A former Peoria Unified assistant principal guilty of child abuse for having a sexual relationship with a female student.

PAGE 5

OPINIONS

Conservation vital to Luke

Columnist Ron Sites says the Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation proposal is important to Luke Air Force Base.

PAGE 27

THINGS TO DO



Native American veterans feted

ASU West's annual powwow celebrates Native American veterans. Music, dancers, crafts and food will be available.

PAGE 2



An emerging star from Vistancia, with tawny good looks and a muscular frame, "Dog" is "Mr. February" in a recently released calendar. PAGE 6

JACK KURTZ/THE REPUBLIC



Theater presents tribute to Sun Records success

Arizona Broadway Theatre honors the record label that helped the careers of some of rock and roll's biggest names — Elvis, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis.

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Sports	24-25
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OPINIONS

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Over the course of more than five years, local organizers for this effort have been reaching out to communities in the West Valley to find partners to help shape this draft proposal into a well-vetted measure to be introduced in Congress. Fighter Country Partnership was

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men's Association, and Friends of Saddle Mountain; and companies like DMB Associates., and Sunbelt Holdings, residential developers of Verrado and Douglas Ranch, respectively.

Fighter Country Partnership is proud to be part of this collaborative, transparent process to protect Arizona's heritage.

We encourage the public to offer candid feedback on the Sonoran Desert Heritage draft proposal during a series of open-house meetings in the West Valley.

Ron Sites is president and executive director of Fighter Country Partnership, which supports the mission of Luke Air Force Base.

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My Turn
RON SITES

INSIDE: HOW NASCAR FANS CAN NAVIGATE JAMS » PAGE 18

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SURPRISE REPUBLIC

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OPINIONS

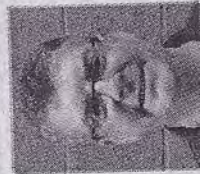
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Sonoran Desert Heritage Conservation Proposal

Author: Mayor Jackie Meck, Town of Buckeye



In 2012, Arizona will celebrate its Centennial statehood anniversary. My family has been in the West Valley for more than 100 years, when my grandparents started a dairy in Buckeye. I support the Sonoran Desert Heritage conservation proposal—for protecting the very outdoor values that make towns like Buckeye special places to live. The draft proposal uses a combination of national conservation areas, wilderness, and other multi-use management zones on U.S. Bureau of Land Management lands to provide a variety of protections, access, and recreation for the sustainable future of

West Valley residents.

Many of our communities function as jumping off points for those needing services, supplies, and overnight accommodations when they come to explore the public lands in our backyard. Wildlife-related recreation, such as bird watching and hunting, supports more than 15,000 jobs in the state; all active outdoor recreation in Arizona supports 82,000 jobs. Those are important statistics for small towns like Buckeye that are looking to grow their economy while holding on to the beauty and open space that makes them desirable places to live.

For more than five years, local organizers for this conservation effort have been reaching out to West Valley communities—big and small—to find partners that can help shape the draft proposal into a well-vetted measure to be introduced in Congress. This month, a series of public meetings are underway in towns like Tonopah, Wickenburg, Surprise, and here in Buckeye to gather broad public feedback on this conservation plan. The Town of Buckeye is proud to be part of such a localized, transparent process to protect Arizona's heritage; our meeting is on November 17th at the Buckeye Chamber of Commerce from 7 to 9 p.m. Other meeting times and places can be found at www.sonoranheritage.org.

Equally important to our economic interests is remembering what makes Arizona unique. Many of the areas in this draft proposal are rich in cultural relics from prehistoric and historic times, helping visitors understand the extensive human record in the Sonoran Desert over the centuries. Special designations like national conservation areas and wilderness will help us better protect these irreplaceable sites for future generations.

Please take the time to come to the public meetings and offer your own insight about why the Sonoran Desert Heritage draft proposal is a good one—for today's Arizonans and those who will settle here in years ahead.



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Photo by Rhonda Costa

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Helicopter Makes Emergency Landing
Article & Photo by: Marlene Turner

STATE PLAYOFFS

Buckeye Valley News

Since 1912

November 10, 2011

Vol 88-NO. 45

40¢

WEST VALLEY



Defending the Desert

A groundbreaking coalition aims to preserve acres of wild Valley land and the plentiful wildlife, tourism and heritage it supports.

FOLLOWING A DECADE of massive and unprecedented growth, a question emerges: How does one protect the pristine land that makes Arizona so appealing? A broad coalition of Valley organizations has the answer: Designate it as wilderness.

“We use our natural environment here to market Arizona and our resorts, to market our golf courses, but when it comes to really cherishing it, we fall down a little bit,” says Eric Gorsegner, associate director of the Sonoran Institute, one of the organizations spearheading The Sonoran Desert Heritage proposal.

Most of the undeveloped land in the western half of Maricopa County is publicly owned and federally managed. The Sonoran Desert proposal – if ratified by Congress – would render large swaths of it permanently off-limits to developers. Most of the proposed protections fall under the auspices of “official wilderness,” pristine land that allows only foot traffic. A National Conservation Area would encompass and unify the wilderness. NCAs prevent privatization but allow motorized access and off-road recreation.

Currently, Maricopa County has several official wilderness sites, but the parcels are far-flung and isolated, or what Gorsegner calls “crown jewels.” Such piecemeal efforts do little to preserve ecology. Conversely, by expanding and connecting the West Valley

wilderness – home to thousands of species of native desert plants, 300 species of birds, Gila monsters and rare Sonoran Desert Tortoises – the Sonoran Desert proposal would preserve the natural animal migration passages that allow desert species to maintain healthy habitats and breeding.

Altogether, the proposal protects 750,000 acres – or about 1 percent of Arizona’s total land mass – in and around Tonopah, Wickenburg and Gila Bend. It’s a huge undertaking backed by more than 80 official supporters of a surprisingly diverse mix: Luke Air Force Base, preservation groups, multiple city mayors, real estate and solar-power companies, local businesses and even churches.

“This has been a ground-up rather than a top-down project,” Gorsegner says. Five years ago, the Sonoran Institute started the effort by evaluating the proposed areas in



western Maricopa County, where personnel mapped out areas sufficiently unspoiled to constitute wilderness. They then overlaid maps illustrating wildlife migration passages, high biodiversity, future transportation and solar-development projects, and even Luke Air Force Base flight paths.

Rusty Mitchell, the director of the community initiatives team at Luke Air Force Base, says the project is a win-win proposition for the base – a moratorium on development preserves the airspace where the military trains the majority of the nation’s F-16 fighter pilots. Another official supporter, the developer-backed Land Advisors Organization, also sees preservation as an advantage. CEO Greg Vogel says that nearby open space is a premium amenity that can ultimately add up to \$150,000 to a home’s value. The tourism and hunting industries are also supporters. “Wildlife recreation in Arizona is more than a \$5 billion industry,” says Kate Mackay, deputy director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

As if the swirl of money, military and conservation couldn’t get any motlier, add another interest group to the project’s roster of advocates: Valley churches. Gorsegner says dozens of churches have joined the effort, generally viewing the preserved lands as a resource for people to enjoy positive activities and spiritual reflection.

“As we approach our Centennial for the state of Arizona, there’s all these economic and biological reasons to protect the landscape, but this is really part of our identity as a state,” Mackay says. “It’s part of who we are.”

— Kaila White

For more information, visit sonoranheritage.org.

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Details: 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix. 480-941-1217, www.dbg.org.

» **Arboretum at Flagstaff:** For summer wildflower viewing, this is what the backyard of your dreams looks like. Native plants flow from one garden to another beneath a canopy of ponderosa pines. Visitors can follow winding gravel paths at their leisure or take a guided tour to gain more insight into the lush flora spread across the arboretum's 200 acres. The arboretum opens Thursday, May 3.

Details: 4001 S. Woody Mountain Road. 928-774-1442, www.thearb.org.

WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Learn how to photograph wildflowers and explore proposed wilderness areas in western Maricopa County at two workshops offered by Sonoran Desert Heritage.

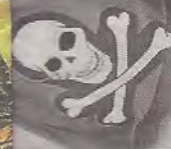
Colleen Miniuk-Sperry, an outdoor photographer, will be the instructor. She is the author of a new book, "Photographing Arizona's Wildflowers: A Guide to When, Where and How."

The workshops will take place from 1 to 7 p.m. Sunday, March 4, in the Belmont Mountains, near Tonopah, and from 2 to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 17, at Saddle Mountain, also near Tonopah.

Participants should be able to carry their gear while walking on and off trail. Snacks and water are provided. Having a high-clearance vehicle is desirable. Workshops cost \$65-\$75. Registration is required.

Details: 602-252-5530, sonoranheritage.org.

— Ron Dungan



Contest

**Sunday, February 26
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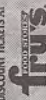
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Bill to Benefit AZ Wildlife, Military

Public News Service - AZ | April 2013 | Download audio
 Public Lands/Wilderness Environment Endangered Species & Wildlife Animal Welfare



PHOTO: The proposed Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act would protect flight corridors for Luke Air Force Base training missions. CREDIT: City of Goodyear.

April 29, 2013

PHOENIX - Nearly a million acres of public lands, mainly in western Maricopa County, which has Phoenix as its seat, would be preserved as wilderness, national conservation and special management areas under a bill introduced by Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva.

According to Grijalva, the measure would benefit wildlife, the state's military bases, and the tourism economy.

"One of the key ones is of course the environmental protection that would come, the conservation that would be locked into place, and as a money maker for the state, those would be protected for the long haul," the congressman said.

He said the Air Force's Barry Goldwater Range would also be protected from encroachment by development.

The Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act is the result of years of work by a diverse collection of interests, including conservationists, developers, and military interest groups.

A major goal of the legislation is protection of flight corridors on the Goldwater Range, used for pilot training by several military bases in the state. According to the Range's retired director, Jim Uken, both the military and wildlife, such as the endangered Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope, stand to benefit.

"To me it's more than a natural marriage because we would like to preclude further urbanization underneath those corridors, and those same corridors then could serve as wildlife corridors between different areas to the west of Phoenix, for example," Uken said.

Ron Sites is president of Fighter Country Partnership, a non-profit advocacy group for Luke Air Force Base. In addition to protecting Luke's military training routes, Sites said, the Sonoran Desert Act will provide a buffer around the Goldwater Range.

"If they run into a situation where there's endangered species on some of the lands that are off the range, and because of development they get forced onto the range, those create some challenges for the Department of Defense and the Air Force when they're managing those lands," he said.

Grijalva said his bill will not affect hunting, game and fish management, existing grazing permits or utility corridors. And it deals only with public lands.

"There's no taking, there's no eminent domain, there is no private land," he declared. "These are already federal land. We're doing a consolidation. Some have been redesignated as wilderness, but essentially, we're talking about no additional acquisition."

Grijalva said he's heard no objections to his bill from the rest of the state's congressional delegation, and hopes several of them will sign onto the measure as co-sponsors.

Doug Ramsey, Public News Service - AZ

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Newscasts

PNS Daily News - April 29, 20130

We're covering a variety of topics including: some who say the end of air travel delays is leaving toddlers on the tarmac; a report points to stormy waters for Smallmouth Bass in Pennsylvania; and a one-week challenge to step away from the screen.



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Environmental study touts freeway

ADOT: S. Mountain leg would ease congestion, aid air quality

By Sean Holstege
The Republic | azcentral.com

Build the South Mountain Freeway and the Valley's traffic moves more smoothly and the air gets cleaner than if the region builds nothing at all, according to a long-awaited environmental impact statement for the \$2 billion project released Friday.

After 12 years and \$21 million, the study answered some

technical questions about the proposed 22-mile reliever for Interstate 10 but didn't seem to change any minds on the plan.

The extension of Loop 202 has been controversial since regional traffic planners penciled it on the map 30 years ago.

Friday's environmental study is among the most complex in Arizona Department of Transportation history.

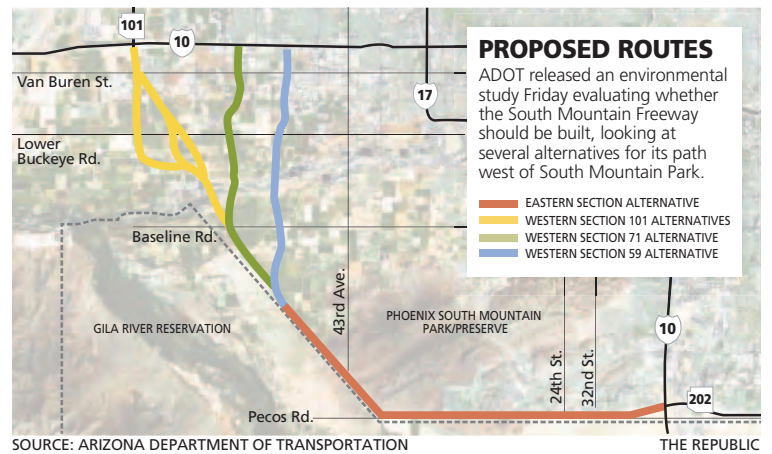
Its release moves the project into the final planning phases,

but it ramps up the divisive politics of the route on and off the neighboring Gila River Reservation.

The study compared building an eight-lane highway between Laveen and Chandler, which is projected to carry about 140,000 cars a day, with doing nothing.

Federal environmental law requires planners to compare

See **FREEWAY**, Page A4



Conservationists, military, developers back Grijalva bill



Wilderness officials Mike Quigley and Kate Mackay look over the desert northwest of Gila Bend. PHOTOS BY DAVID WALLACE/THE REPUBLIC

Measure would preserve vast area west of Valley

By David Madrid | The Republic | azcentral.com

Roy and Ella Pierpoint continue a 1,500-year way of life, farming near an area awash in Hohokam and Patayan treasures.

The Pierpoints, who farm the land the Hohokams cultivated, say they want Congress to shield the ancient sites from vandals, limit future development and protect the wildlife that lives there.

The farmland lies 30 miles southwest of Phoenix, near the mouth of Red Rock Canyon. The canyon's red-sandstone walls are dotted with ancient petroglyphs and graffiti.

The Pierpoints have joined a wide-ranging coalition of political groups, including Luke Air Force Base advocates, environmentalists and de-



This lizard is in an area that would be protected as part of the Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act.

velopers, to support a bill that would preserve more than 950,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management property, mostly in western Maricopa County.

The Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act of 2013 was introduced by Democratic Rep. Raúl Grijalva of Tucson on Friday, said Adam Sarvana, a spokesman for Grijalva's office.

Military supporters say the bill would protect open space beneath critical military flight corridors between Luke and the Barry M. Goldwater Range.

Environmentalists want the natural resources to be protected. And developers who support the

See **DESERT**, Page A13

CIA had flagged mom of suspects

Zubeidat Tsarnaeva on terror list in 2011

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence agencies added the mother of the Boston bombing suspects to a government terrorism database 18 months before the bombing, two officials told the Associated Press. She called it "lies and hypocrisy" and said she has never been linked to crimes or terrorism.

The CIA asked for the older suspect, now dead, and his mother to be added to a terrorist database in the fall of 2011, after the Russian government contacted the agency with concerns that both had become religious militants, according to officials briefed on the investigation.

About six months earlier, the FBI investigated Tamerlan Tsarnaev and his mother, Zubeidat Tsarnaeva, also at Russia's request, one of the officials said.

The FBI found no ties to terrorism.

The younger suspect, 19-year-old Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, was moved overnight from a hospital to a federal prison medical center to continue his recovery from a throat wound and other injuries suffered during a getaway attempt.

Tamerlan, 26, died in a shootout with police.

Also, FBI agents picked through a landfill near the campus of the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, where

See **BOMBING**, Page A4

Ariz. entering new, high-stakes era for 3rd-grade readers

By Melissa Leu
The Republic | azcentral.com

Third-grade teacher Christine Ford sits behind a desk with three students, each with a book in hand. For seven minutes of the day, she gives them her undivided attention.

Then, the timer rings. "If you are cleaned up, get ready to rotate. Please walk to the next station," Ford says to her class — 25 students in all — on a recent Tuesday morning at Glendale American School.

The three students move on to the next area of focus and are

quickly replaced with new ones.

Another group huddles in the back corner, listening to an audiobook through oversize headphones, the hard-copy version lying in front of them. Others work independently on the computer, writing paragraphs, even playing flash-card games.

Maximum group size for each reading station? Three.

In the dozen years since Ford began teaching, she has fine-tuned the use of small groups to help students advance.

Advance far enough, she hopes, to perform well on the state reading test.

Ford is among thousands of elementary-school teachers across the state using small groups and other techniques to boost their students' reading skills, a method fueled by a state literacy law that kicks in next

See **READING**, Page A15

NATION & WORLD

Part of 9/11 jet is found in NYC

Twisted metal believed to be landing gear for one of the hijacked jets that slammed into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, is found wedged between an apartment building and a mosque site about two blocks from the former Twin Towers. **A15**



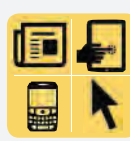
AP

Country star Jones dies at 81

Country singer George Jones, who recorded dozens of hits over a 50-plus-year career, including the heart-breaking classic "He Stopped Loving Her Today," dies at 81 in Nashville. The hard-living Jones influenced generations of country singers. **A6**

BUSINESS

Economy expands: Pushed by consumer spending, the economy grew at a strong clip in the first quarter. Federal budget cuts, though, are expected to slow that pace. **D1**



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Mike Quigley of the Wilderness Society and Kate Mackay of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition walk through a sandstone canyon. PHOTOS BY DAVID WALLACE/THE REPUBLIC

Desert

Continued from Page A1

proposal see economic benefit in preserving the past and wild areas as metro Phoenix grows.

For the Pierpoints, the issue is simple.

"Farmers are the original tree huggers," Roy said. "If you abuse the land, you just can't farm."

Although the bill has ample local support, its fortunes in Congress are less certain. The bill has no Republican co-sponsors, which could make passage difficult. And at a time when Washington has slashed federal spending because of deep partisan disagreement over the budget, no cost figure is specified in the bill.

Its Arizona supporters hope, however, that the bill's broad appeal here will improve its chances there.

Among the supporters are Fighter Country Partnership, a non-profit that supports Luke Air Force Base; the Sierra Club; and developers DMB Associates and John F. Long Properties. The proposed law is also backed by West Valley mayors.

"We feel there has been good work done in terms of keeping a broad and diverse group of support," said Grijalva, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Right now, the land specified in the bill is overseen by the Bureau of Land Management. Although the federal agency can limit how the land is used, parcels can be sold or leased with congressional approval.

New protections

The bill would add three levels of protection to the land: National Conservation Areas, Special Management Areas and Wilderness.

» The bill creates about 682,400 acres of National Conservation Areas, areas that have scientific, cultural, ecological, historical and recreational value.

The bill would permit vehicles on designated roads and trails in conservation areas, but no additional roads could be built unless they're necessary for public safety or protecting resources.

In some areas, such as Red Rock Canyon, off-roaders have improved trails.

» It would add about 144,000 acres in two federal Special Management Areas. This type of public land is managed to protect scenic or recreation areas and wildlife.

The Sentinel Plain Special Management Area would ensure wildlife can roam between the Goldwater Range and Gila Bend National Conservation Area.

The Rainbow Valley Special Management Area would allow wildlife to move between the Sierra Estrellas and the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

» The bill would also add 291,000 acres of new Wilderness, the highest level of federal protection. Wilderness ensures long-term protection of natural landscapes, and it protects wildlife habitat. Wilderness areas are managed to retain their primitive and wild characteris-



Ella and Roy Pierpoint stand in their alfalfa field on their 1,000-acre farm. The Gila Bend Mountains are in the background.

“Farmers are the original tree huggers. If you abuse the land, you just can't farm.”

ROY PIERPOINT

Farmer, who farms near an area awash in Hohokam and Patayan treasures



Petroglyphs that could date back a 1,000 years can be seen in the Gila Bend Mountains between Gila Bend and Buckeye.

tics, so vehicles are prohibited.

Hunting, fishing and grazing would be allowed in each of the three areas, and private-property owners would still be able to access their land. Grijalva said the bill would not take existing rights from any landowner or affect mining claims.

Plans for the conservation and special-management areas would be crafted within three years of the bill's passage and take into consideration public input and land studies.

Passing the bill is also critical to protect flight paths near two key military installations, supporters say.

"Whatever preserves the ground, preserves the air, so by default, it's protecting the flight corridors Luke Air Force Base utilizes when they're training their F-16 pilots and their future F-35 pilots," said Ron Sites, executive director and president of Fighter Country Partnership.

The economic impact of Luke has been pegged at about \$2 billion a year. Residential and airspace encroachment threatens the base.

Protecting corridors also helps the installations attract future military programs such as the F-35 Lightning II pilot-training mission and unmanned aerial vehicles, he said.

The sprawling area protected

by the Arizona Sonoran Desert Heritage Act would help maintain military-training routes to the Goldwater Range, 1.7 million acres of relatively undisturbed Sonoran Desert southwest of Luke between Yuma and Tucson and south of Interstate 8.

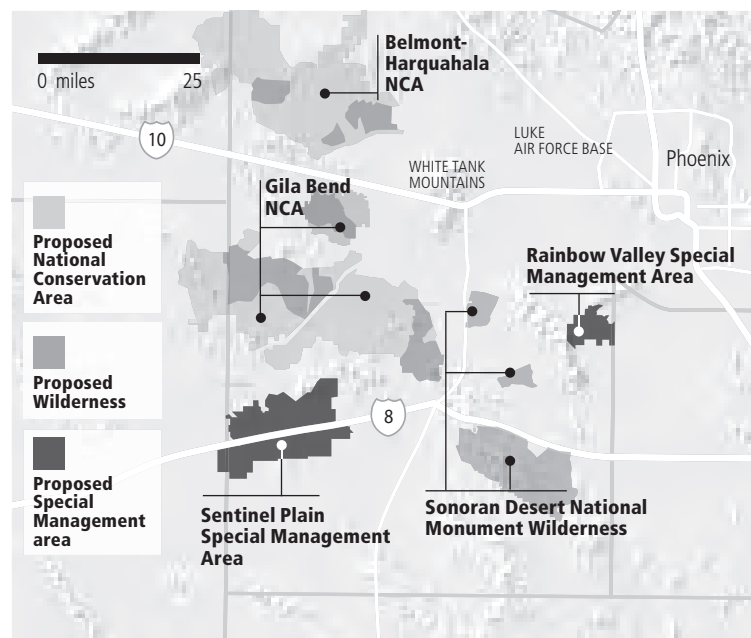
Keeping homes and businesses out of the corridors allows air crews to practice low-altitude flights and minimizes the risk that training disturbs or endangers the public, said Jim Uken, a retired Air Force officer who ran the Air Force side of the Goldwater Range for more than 12 years.

Many animals live in the proposed preservation area. Near the Pierpoints' 1,000-acre farm, they have seen deer, mountain lions, javelinas, Gila monsters, coyotes, tarantulas, foxes, badgers and desert tortoises.

Mike Quigley, Arizona representative for the Wilderness Society and a backer of the bill, said there is a danger that when the economy improves, unrestrained population growth along Interstate 10 could destroy wildlife habitats.

"One of the biggest threats to wildlife survival, especially for large mammals, is they need to be able to move across the landscape to find a mate or to get to food and water sources seasonally," Quigley said.

ARIZONA SONORAN DESERT HERITAGE ACT'S PROPOSED NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS



Belmont-Harquahala National Conservation Area: About 276,100 acres. » Would add about 17,000 acres to existing 31,200-acre Hummingbird Springs Wilderness; creates about 19,000 acres of new Belmont Mountains Wilderness. The conservation area would also cover the 21,000-acre Big Horn Mountains Wilderness and the 22,880-acre Harquahala Mountains Wilderness.

Gila Bend National Conservation Area: About 406,300 acres. » This would create about 24,200 acres of Saddle Mountain Centennial Wilderness; about 68,800 acres of Gila Bend Wilderness; and adds about 33,525 acres to the existing 64,000-acre Woolsey Peak Wilderness and the existing 13,350-acre Signal Mountain Wilderness.

Sonoran Desert National Monument Wilderness: About 128,300 acres near the existing 63,200-acre North Maricopa Mountains Wilderness and the 60,100-acre South Maricopa Mountains Wilderness.

» The proposed wilderness is east of Gila Bend and south of Buckeye within the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

Rainbow Valley Special Management Area: About 23,400 acres south of the Sierra Estrella Wilderness, which is part of the Sierra Estrellas.

Sentinel Plain Special Management Area: About 120,600 acres southwest of Gila Bend.

MORE ONLINE: To see a video of petroglyphs and graffiti at Red Rock Canyon, visit southwestvalley.azcentral.com.

TO LEARN MORE about the Sonoran Desert Heritage Act, go to sonoranheritage.org.

Another danger to wildlife is roads that "fragment the habitat," Quigley said. One of the primary benefits of a Wilderness designation is leaving the land intact, he said.

The bill would enlarge Woolsey Peak Wilderness to include 33,525 acres of the Gila Bend Mountains near the Pierpoints' land.

"It (the bill) would add more protection for all of the archaeological ruins that are along this river, and there are a lot," Ella said.

"The Hohokam farmed right through here, and the reason they did was because the river, a long time ago, used to flow most of the year."

The area is so rich in archaeological artifacts that when Roy Pierpoint plows his land, he turns up stone ax heads and manos and metates, stones used by ancient inhabitants to grind corn. The acreage also contains the remains of villages and rock art spanning centuries.

Existing protections?

Bureau of Land Management officials say the agency cannot comment on Grijalva's bill because the agency will study the proposal and testify before Congress about the bill.

The agency has some power

to protect environmental, cultural and archaeological areas, said Deborah Stevens, a spokeswoman for the Arizona BLM office.

The BLM also must conduct inventories of the property to determine whether there are any significant resources, including cultural resources, federally listed or sensitive plant and animal species, critical habitat and riparian areas.

But backers of the plan say a designation by Congress has more teeth and would carve out stronger protections than the BLM offers.

Grijalva said he will contact the Arizona delegation in an effort to find co-sponsors.

Among those members is Rep. Paul Gosar, a Prescott Republican whose district encompasses some of the land in the bill.

Grijalva said he will approach Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake in an effort to have mirror legislation introduced in the Senate.

Gosar could not be reached for comment.

"We're going to try real hard to get a (committee) hearing so we can bring people to testify," Grijalva said. "At this point, I think it was important to get it (the bill) out and start the public dialogue."