



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Saguaro National Park
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson AZ 85730



IN REPLY
REFER TO:

Memorandum

To: Pima County Hearing Administrator

From: Superintendent, Saguaro National Park

Dan Salmey 6/21/14

Re: P21-14-003 El Cortijo LLC, Conditional Use Permit Request for Minor Resort

Saguaro National Park was established by the National Park Service in 1933. The purpose of the park is to "preserve and protect saguaro cacti; diverse biotic communities (including the Sonoran Desert, associated mountain ecosystems, and Rincon Creek); cultural and archeological features; and scientific, scenic, and wilderness values. The park provides opportunities for research, education, and public enjoyment, and strives to protect its resources from the effects of the encroachment from urbanization and development".

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments and concerns regarding the proposed Bike Ranch at 3700 S. Old Spanish Trail. We support the concept of a bicycle resort in Tucson, and believe it would be a welcome economic development opportunity-- *if appropriately located*. We also appreciate the proponent's sustainable design elements that take the natural environment into account. However, we have serious concerns about the development as currently proposed, and its location immediately contiguous to Saguaro National Park. Our concerns include:

- Saguaro National Park is one of only 401 National Park sites in the United States, garnering the highest level of protection of any land management agency. It is a national and international destination. People come here from all over the world to see pristine stands of saguaro cacti and associated diverse Sonoran Desert vegetation and wildlife. It is a national treasure. As such, we feel that this proposed level of development and activity adjacent to the park is incompatible with park values.
- The Pima County Buffer Overlay Zone was established specifically to preserve and protect the open space characteristics of lands in the vicinity of eighteen various preserves. First on that list of eighteen is Saguaro National Park. The

proposed development and activity does not appear to be in alignment with the intent of the Buffer Overlay Zone.

- The proposed development could result in potential impacts to wildlife corridors, scenic viewsheds, night skies, and the remote/rural characteristics of the area.
- The proximity of the proposed development so near the park's main entrance and Visitor Center is also a concern with regard to traffic, congestion, public safety, and visual aesthetics.
- Saguaro National Park's 8 mile Cactus Forest Loop Drive, which is a focal point for visitors (and directly across the street from the proposed development), is a designated roadway on the National Register of Historic Places. It was originally built in the early 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corp. It is a narrow one lane road designed for light traffic and slow speeds. Today it serves to provide a visitor experience offering people a respite from our fast-paced society, essentially transporting them "back in time" to a simpler place and a slower pace. Although we encourage bicyclists to enjoy this loop drive, they must follow slow speed limits and avoid user conflicts with other park visitors, including hikers, walkers, runners, and motorists. Regardless of NPS Commercial Use Stipulations or the best-intentioned efforts of the Bike Ranch staff, the establishment of the Bike Ranch would certainly infuse additional numbers of high speed bicyclists onto the Loop Drive, increasing the likelihood of visitor use conflicts and safety concerns.
- Finally, Saguaro National Park has an outstanding relationship with our park neighbors. These neighbors are also regular park visitors and supporters of the park, and they help us to protect park resources. Many of our neighbors have told us that they oppose this development. They state that they specifically moved to this area to be adjacent to the open spaces and natural resources of the park, unimpeded by commercial development. We hear and share their concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. We appreciate the forward-thinking of Pima County—both with establishing the Buffer Overlay Zone, as well as protecting critical resources important not only to Tucson, but the nation.

Dear Twin Hills Neighbor,

I am addressing you as a neighbor because I am one. I have lived on the far east side of Tucson for nearly forty years. If I had to live anywhere else in Tucson, I would, frankly, leave. In short, I am not an outsider coming in to damage or exploit the land or the neighborhood, I'm an insider with an idea from which everyone is going to benefit.

My husband and I have always lived within a mile or so of Saguaro National Park. We've have biked there, hiked there, and know every trail there. The Park is arguably one of the best cycling destinations in the United States, and because of its location across the street, the property at 3700 S Old Spanish Trail sparked our vision of creating a world class boutique resort devoted to cycling. This is an innovative, creative idea that would have only a positive effect on our area, the Park and the Tucson as a whole.

Over time, I've seen the far eastside become more developed with the kind of unexceptional suburban sprawl endemic to this valley. We purchased the property from the Calvert family who had subdivided all the land bordered by OST, Houghton and Escalante Roads and were the original owners of Saguaro Corner's Restaurant. The property also has eight rental houses dating from the late 1950s. These are a grandfathered "non-conforming use" on the SR-zoned property. Without going through any zoning approval process whatsoever, we could subdivide the property into approximately twelve 3.3 acre home sites, and use the rental houses for short term lodging, up to about 25 rooms. More of the same. Easy to do but not particularly inspired. Our idea aims much higher and it took a year to think through, hone and develop the concept and potential of the Bike Ranch.

That fully formed idea of the Bike Ranch requires a conditional use permit allowable within SR-zoning to the category of Minor Resort. There is a history of small guest ranches throughout Tucson, and this is what motivated the County to create the Minor Resort category when they established the zoning code. The Bike Ranch perfectly fits with the intent of the Minor Resort. The property falls within the one mile Buffer Overlay Zone of Saguaro Park. You can read the full ordinance here: <https://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16119>, but I will say that the Bike Ranch meets the purpose and objective of the Code which is summed up in the first line describing its purpose: *Preserve and protect the open space characteristics of those lands in the vicinity of the public preserves while at the same time permitting the economically reasonable use of lands.*

If you are a member of Friends of Saguaro Park (and if you aren't, I urge you to join at www.friendsofsaguaro.org) you know that the national parks in this country are underfunded and have to look continuously to augment their funding from the private sector. We cannot think of any idea that will have a greater potential for private /Park partnership than the Bike Ranch. The fact that the park is a great cycling destination is a key to its future, not a liability. Like the well-known lodges in many of the great National Parks, the Bike Ranch will be an asset to the Saguaro Park.

Many people in this area have erroneously assumed that we will be drastically adding to traffic. Bicycle traffic, absolutely. Motorized traffic, hardly at all. Most of our guests will be flying into Tucson and will be shuttled by us to and from the airport. While they are here, they'll be on bicycles, not in cars. Our staff will be incentivized to commute by bicycle--for most of them, that's their preferred means of travel.

In speaking with neighbors, we realized that there is a general frustration about traffic. As long term residents, we share that concern. The problem is that the roads have not kept pace with building permits and we all contend with more traffic and more traffic danger than we should. Without the Valencia Bridge, which was mandated in the Rocking K rezoning after building permits exceed 1440 in the Diamond developments, the full burden of access for the hundreds of new homes in Rincon Valley built in the last 20 years is Escalante, OST and Freeman Roads. (http://azstamet.com/business/local/rocking-k-closer-to-development-smaller-scale-project-will-start/article_ab1d61ef-26af-533e-9836-d25ba6dc6a45.html). We have a common interest with the neighbors in making the roads safe. You can bet that we will lobby very hard for the County to address this issue. Its worthy of a side note that even though bicycle traffic has increased annually in Tucson, accidents between cars and bicycles have decreased as a result of better bike lanes throughout the city.

Regardless of whether or not you like bicycles, every forward thinking community in the United States has embraced them, and they are an important part of Tucson's community vision. Tucson has spent more than \$70 Million on the Loop, one of the largest non-mechanized urban pathways of any city in this country. http://webcms.pima.gov/government/the_loop/. Major Rothschild had this to say in a letter earlier this year sent to Tucson Businesses: Cities that promote cycling "are the same cities that attract an educated work force. Studies consistently rank bikeability as one of the determining factors in an individual's decision of where to live. Supporting alternative modes of transportation is more than a nicety, it is a critical piece of our economic development picture." When you talk about business prospects for Tucson, it's a short list. Bike Ranch is going have a huge impact on the profile of this community to the people whom we most want to attract.

By the way, there is no example in Tucson of resorts hurting home values—to the contrary, they tend to increase them dramatically and are viewed by appraisers and realtors as having a net positive effect.

One of your community leaders has questioned the sincerity of our commitment to the objectives of health, fitness and environmental sustainability. I think it's presumptuous for someone who doesn't know us to question our motives and convictions. There are much easier ways to make money--like the alternative I described in the beginning of this blog. If we weren't fully committed to the good this project can create, we wouldn't be doing it.

Tucson doesn't have many really smart, innovative ideas like the Bike Ranch. If there are those of you reading this that still believe that the property is better used as a mid-tier subdivision, I'd like very much to know your reasons.

We welcome any discussion of this project and can be reached by telephone at 298-0390, or by email at bikeranch@outlook.com.

Kelley Matthews

Buffer Overlay Zone Ordinance

Not surprisingly, everyone in our area seems to have heard of the Buffer Overlay Zone Ordinance, but hardly anyone has read it. The stated purpose of the Ordinance is:

1. *Preserve and protect the open space characteristics of those lands in the vicinity of the public preserves while at the same time permitting the economically reasonable use of lands;*
2. *Protect and enhance existing public preserves in Pima County as a limited and valuable resource;*
3. *Establish mechanisms that will protect the public preserves and result in an ecologically sound transition between the preserves and more urbanized development;*
4. *Assure the continued existence of adequate wildlife habitat and foster the unimpeded movement of wildlife in the vicinity of Pima County's public preserves;*
5. *Provide for an aesthetic visual appearance from and to Pima County's public preserves;*
6. *Promote a continued economic benefit to the region by protecting the public preserves for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike; and*
7. *Neither promote nor discourage changes in underlying zoning, but rather provide continuing performance standards for the unique lands within the buffer overlay zone.*

Section 18.17.010 of the Zoning Code states that, "*Suburban ranch is intended as a low density zone principally for single-family residences and associated conditional uses on large lots. A wide range of agricultural and ranch uses are permitted. The large minimum lot size requirement of this zone insures a considerable reservation of open space.*"

Clearly other uses allowable within SR-zoned property (riding schools, churches, veterinary clinics, nurseries to name a few) can also be allowed within the Buffer Zone as long as they have the required minimum acreage, have the appropriate setbacks, and meet the standards for preservation of wildlife habitat and visual quality. In any event, gas stations, Circle-Ks, and other blatantly commercial uses that neighbors worry could occur if the Bike Ranch were to be approved are expressly not allowed in SR-zoning and therefore would not be allowed in the Buffer Zone.

I could literally demonstrate line by line our compliance with the letter and the spirit of the Buffer Overlay Zone Ordinance. The Minor Resort category is an allowed use within Suburban Ranch zoning and it is an allowed use within the Buffer Zone. Because a resort places more value than most other uses on open space and visual integrity, it is actually a very appropriate use within the Buffer, as I think any visit to the Tanque Verde Ranch would support.

Although we have included a small amount of publicly accessible retail and food space within the Bike Ranch, it does not thereby define the project as a commercial property. The Kickstand coffee/juice bar and the Bike Shop together represent less than 5% of the gross area and are set back more than 300 feet from OST. The Bike Ranch is, in fact, more accurately described by its open campus and residential character.

Not only will the Bike Ranch exceed all the requirements for open space, preservation of natural habitat and wildlife corridors, it will maintain the visual integrity, color, lighting, and landscaping standards set forth in the Buffer Ordinance. A subdivision guarantees none of these things, and is actually under less stringent requirements than the Bike Ranch will be for preservation of open space, arguably the most important intent of the Buffer Overlay Zone.

Section 18.67.050 of the Buffer Ordinance Performance Standards, Section L reads:

Natural Open Space. Thirty percent of the land subject to the buffer overlay zone shall be preserved as natural open space, except that fifty percent of the land subject to the buffer overlay zone shall be preserved as natural open space for any land parcel subject to a specific plan or a rezoning approved on or after August 11, 1998.

The site coverage of our development on 21 acres, including parking, is 19.75%. An additional 21 cars spaces beyond our requirement was added for use by the Park. The plan allows for approximately 741,365 square feet of open space (over 80% of the total site area), the vast majority of which will be unaltered natural desert. The Ordinance allows single family homes to alter 70% and leave 30%, nearly an inverse ratio from our plan.

Section 18.67.050 of the Buffer Ordinance Performance Standards , Section G reads:

Setback: No structure, parking lot, private driveway or road shall be placed within one hundred fifty feet of a public preserve, except that the setback shall be three hundred feet for any land parcel subject to a specific plan or a rezoning approved on or after August 11, 1998: An exception may be sought in accordance with Section 18.67.060.

Our development plan is set back 374 feet from the Park Boundary, which exceeds the Buffer Ordinance by 74 feet. If the property is developed as Suburban Ranch, the setback requirement will be 150 feet from the Park Boundary, roughly 70 feet from the west side of OST instead of 294 feet in our development. The setback in our development plan is great enough that given the topography of the site, very little of our buildings will be visible to OST. The same will not apply to houses, particularly since there is an established precedent for two story houses along the road.

Finally, any look at the Visual Quality Standards of the Buffer Ordinance clearly would value the Bike Ranch over housing . The residential area along the Park is characterized by a lack of cohesive design and some truly inappropriate eyesores like naked cinderblock walls and a cell tower. These are most certainly not in keeping with the visual quality standards of the Ordinance, but they are what you get with unrestricted single family homes. The Bike Ranch which will have high quality, integrated design executed in natural materials will be an infinite improvement over the haphazard development that has occurred.

May 15, 2014

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AZDS article 5.18.14

From: mllemen@earthlink.net
Sent: Sun 5/18/14 10:52 AM
To: bikeranch@outlook.com

Hi,

I read with interest the article in today's Daily Star about your proposed Bike Ranch on your property near Saguaro Nat'l Park East. Sounds like an awesome use of your land, and I hope you get what you need from PC to make it happen!

My name is Martha Lemen, and I'm a very active bike advocate in the Tucson area, especially mountain biking. I'm a certified instructor with both the League of American Bicyclists for Road Safety, and with IMBA for mountain bike skills coaching, and I'm an active board member of the Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists (SDMB.org). Biking is my passion and profession.

I'd like to help spread the word about your ranch, and would need more info about it. Can you provide me with any selling points not already mentioned in the article?

Thanks, and good luck!

Martha Lemen

www.fattirefinesse.com
520.400.9095

the controversy

From: **Ellen Steiber** (esteiber@earthlink.net)
Sent: Wed 5/14/14 3:56 PM
To: bikeranch@outlook.com

Hi, Kelley:

I'm one of your neighbors who has been following the controversy over the proposed zoning change. I read the packet of info describing Bike Ranch, and I also read the note just posted to Next Door via Sue Watts. And I've got to say that while I am as wary of development as the next person, I think your plans sound terrific. The only thing that would be better is if they actually included a restaurant open to the public. (I have been dying for a decent restaurant on the east side.) In the meantime, though, the juice bar sounds inviting.

However, the reason I'm writing is that what I'm getting from the people who are stridently opposing this is that they're afraid that if a variance is granted to Bike Ranch, other variances will follow and we will lose the 3-acre protective buffer zoning that we all cherish. This morning someone even suggested that we might wind up with a Circle K on Freeman. So that's what's scaring people.

Truthfully, I don't know enough about zoning to know if these fears are valid. Is this something you can address?

With all best wishes,

Ellen

Ellen Steiber
11651 E. Calle Aurora
Tucson, Arizona 85748
esteiber@earthlink.net
www.ellensteiber.com

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Bike Ranch

From: **Mark Russell** (drmarkr@gmail.com)

Sent: Wed 5/14/14 3:48 PM

To: bikeranch@outlook.com

Hi Kelley,

I'm a Twin Hills resident, a 30 year Tucsonan, and an avid bicyclist. My entire family are as well. I'm interested in more information on the Bike Ranch proposal? If you have a website/written literature/other materials that I could use to support your cause, I'm happy to do so.

Feel free to contact me by phone if you would prefer.

Mark Russell
11210 E. Calle Linda Vista
Tucson, AZ 85748
520-907-3879

From: wluckydog <wluckydog@aol.com>

To: elcortijo <elcortijo@aol.com>

Subject: Bike ranch proposal.

Date: Tue, May 20, 2014 7:32 pm

To whom it may concern:

I live in the twin hills neighborhood and am the area leader in our neighborhood watch. I am very much in favor of having the Bike Ranch at Old Spanish Trail and Escalante. Tucson is known nationwide for cycling. The climate and terrain suits perfectly. This is truly a fantastic opportunity to enhance the economy of Tucson. I can see nothing but positive, a real asset to Tucson and the Eastside. It will be very sad if this proposal is denied.

Sue Watts

RE: New Project

From: **Kelley Matthews** (bikeranch@outlook.com)
Sent: Sun 5/18/14 7:15 PM
To: Kirsten (kirsten@frankirsten.com)

Hi Kirsten,
Sorry, your email has been sitting in my spam file and I just saw it.
Feel free to call me and we can discuss your questions.
Thanks,
Kelley
LL. 520.298.0390
C. 520.404.7454

> Date: Sat, 17 May 2014 10:53:05 -0700
> From: kirsten@frankirsten.com
> To: bikeranch@outlook.com
> Subject: New Project
>
> Hi Kelley,
>
> I have a question about your new project and I hope it is ok for me to
> contact you this way.
> My family lives off of Freeman; north of your new location. I am
> wondering, in your opinion, what my family will gain from supporting
> your new endeavor?
> I have seen many opinions about the project but I was curious what
> reason you are giving neighbors to support your business.
>
> Thanks
>
> Kirsten Walker
>
> ---
> This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.
> <http://www.avast.com>
>

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Proposal

From: **Bill McCourt** (bmccourt@outlook.com)
Sent: Tue 5/20/14 9:36 PM
To: bikeranch@outlook.com

I just became aware of your proposed project and am thrilled about the prospect of such a facility. I live up the road at Academy Village and cycle the area frequently. I am a snowbird alternating between Tucson (came here because of the great biking opportunities) and Bellingham Washington and currently headed north. If there is anything I can do to support your application please let me know.

Bill McCourt

7711 S Galileo Lane

Tucson AZ85747

My wife, Tamara Mitchell, and I are both very strongly in favor of this project for East Tucson. We feel it will enhance the area with a healthy and environmentally friendly activity. We believe it will attract clients who will be responsible and contribute economically to the area. We have numerous family and friends who are active cyclists and they have commented that they have been looking for just such a place.

Regards

Ed Fix and Tami Mitchell

The Growing Bike-loving Community needs more support, and any additions such as the Proposed bike resort can only be seen as helping in this needed growth

By Robert Smeaton, retired teacher

As a proud member of the growing biking community here in Tucson, I feel that the property owners, Kelley Matthews and Peter Lasher, proposed development of a 49-room, bike ranch near the corner of East Escalante Road and South Old Spanish Trail is just what our "Green" and growing bike-friendly community needs. The safe bike riding information in the ramada of the Saguaro National Park suggests "slowdown and enjoy the Park." As many of us do on a weekly basis, the best way to enjoy this wonderful Park is to walk or ride a bike around the 8-mile paved loop road. In addition to local bike riders such as myself that use this Park, we often see biking-visitors from all corners of the U.S. and many foreign countries. Since this proposed bike ranch will be focused on the needs of both serious and leisure cyclists, safe-riding instruction will be critical to the success of this proposal and to the continued growth of Tucson as a hub for enthusiasts of our bike-friendly community.

Having just returned from another overseas visit, this time England and Ireland, I am sure we can learn something from how both government and communities work to support the growing cycling communities in these, also, bike-friendly countries. For example, on page 3 of *The Guardian*, May 6, 2014, we see the news headline: "Tickled pink: Ulster gears up for Giro d'Italia." The background for this news story was that for the first time the second largest cycling race in the world was starting in Ulster, Northern Ireland, still part of the U.K. And then after the first two stages would move down to Dublin, Ireland, where I happened to be visiting. Even in the rain, thousands turned out to greet some of the best racers in the world. Both Northern Ireland and Ireland thought this race, the Giro, was the chance to showcase the beautiful locations these two countries are. Everyone in the cycling community, worldwide, loves to cheer the racers in these colorful sports events, while the local economies get a boost.

Here in Tucson, we also need to get behind both serious and leisure bike riders to promote a better future and a more green community. On my biking adventures in Dublin, London, and Amsterdam, I have seen an increase in the numbers of riders using bicycles both to get to work and then to enter weekend events such as our EI Tour. North of London on the Grand Union Canal tow path I saw greater numbers using mountain bikes, as well as greater numbers using road bikes on country roads. All of this with the support of groups such as the National Cycle Network and Information Centers that supply cycle maps.

Tucson bike paths have grown as the numbers using these paths has also grown, and as a result we are seen as a bike-friendly community. With the addition of a bike ranch, we can only hope to build on this positive image, and make the future better for all of us.

Annex. Frank
11631 E. Cull, Loveland

Two things not mentioned - people had to leave
and asked me to say this:

1. Frank included the fact that bicyclists
stop and go to the bathroom in the desert.
That reason can be why ride all day.
2. A surge of 70 of Hispanics come here to train on
road races (Ray Frank's nephew comes
yearly). They can ride 100 miles per
day and go south to all the roads around
Sahyeta and north to Mt Lemmon. Access
is Houghton. Access to Houghton from proposed
development is Escalante which has no
side lanes, is narrow, and very hilly.

Thank you again

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Mark & Nancy Cochran
11615 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730
885-3672

I have two comments for the board.

First, the proposed Bike Ranch pushes the limit of the meaning of 'minor resort'. At 49 rooms, over 17 new structures including 2-story buildings; dining, retail, and bicycle maintenance facilities; and over 100 parking spaces, it is only ONE room short of a MAJOR resort. This is a significant development with far greater impact than even the worst-case subdivision of the property into 3 1/3 acre single family homes. The resort as planned fronts over 1,000 feet on Old Spanish Trail directly across from the National Park entrance and will have substantial negative impact on the character of the area and visual impact from Old Spanish Trail, which is a designated scenic highway, and the Park. The commercialization of the Park entrance area is a terrible precedent and may lead to other similar ventures in the immediate vicinity of the Park. Once this door is open, there is no going back; you will have to approve other commercial development along Old Spanish Trail.

Secondly, the developers have stated that the impact of additional traffic in the area will not be significant. They plan to transport guests from the airport and incentivize employees to commute via bicycle. This flawed plan is naïve at best. At 110 planned parking spaces, over 2 vehicle spaces per guest room, the resort is clearly preparing for heavier traffic from sources other than the airport and in fact will support the concept of a 'destination' resort with the greatest volume of customer traffic originating locally and regionally. The stated intent to incentivize employees to commute by bicycle is irresponsible. Unless all of those employees travel during daylight hours only, the resort operators are exposing their potential employees to great danger bicycling on Old Spanish Trail, Freeman Rd., or Escalante Rd. at night. None of these routes have sufficient lighting for safe biking at night.

Currently, one only need observe the Park entrance during open hours to see that cars, many of them transporting bicycles, are frequently parked on Old Spanish Trail opposite the entrance

due to the limited parking available inside the entrance. Resort parking and services to bikers will encourage more traffic in the area by drawing more bicycles transported by cars.

The close proximity of the Park entrance, the resort entrance, and the intersection of Old Spanish Trail and Escalante, all falling within a 40 mph zone, is of great concern for the increased congestion caused by this additional motor vehicle and bicycle traffic. Without significant improvements in the design and construction of the roads and mitigation of safety issues in that area, Pima County is greatly increasing its exposure to liability from accidents. In the event the Conditional Use Permit and existing development plans are approved, at the very least, an independent traffic study should be required to be conducted funded by the developers and managed by a county-appointed trustee. Any recommendations for road, access, and intersection safety improvements should then be implemented and paid for by the developers.

The developers claimed alternative of a smaller facility within current zoning regulations and without retail and other Conditional Use permitted activities may be a more acceptable alternative and keep the character of the buffer zone intact.



Friends of Saguaro National Park

Providing financial and volunteer support for Saguaro National Park

May 21, 2014

We oppose the application for a conditional use permit for the Bike Ranch LLC at 3700 South Old Spanish Trail, directly across the road from Saguaro National Park and the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center.

The Friends of Saguaro National Park are concerned about potential impacts from proposed development within the Buffer Overlay Zone, adopted by Pima County in 1988. The intent of the Buffer Overlay Zone is to ensure increased protection of natural open space around preserves, including the Park, so that wildlife movement remains unimpeded, open space characteristics are protected, and ecologically sound transitions between the preserves and urbanization are maintained. This proposed development in the Buffer Overlay Zone will have a decided negative impact on the Park.

Additionally, any development at the Park's entrance requires careful scrutiny. At this location, threats to Park resources and visitors' experiences are magnified.

Friends of Saguaro National Park is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner of the National Park Service at Saguaro – created in 1996 to help protect wildlife and habitat, preserve cultural resources, promote environmental education, improve recreational trails, enhance visitor experiences, and build environmental stewardship for Saguaro National Park.

We believe this application is premature and lacking in details that would ensure the protection of intact Sonoran Desert habitat and a quality National Park Service visitor experience. There are many promises made about what might happen. We need a plan that guarantees that promises made will be implemented, and that the Park's mission will be protected in perpetuity.

5/28/2014

HOW STRONGLY DO THE NEIGHBORS FEEL ABOUT HAVING A HIGHER DENSITY THAN SR ZONING AROUND THE SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY? To answer that question let's look at what some neighbors did in 1995. Many who were involved then are now gone! Their efforts have protected the park for 19 years and will continue for another 21 years.

According to an editorial in the Arizona Daily Star in January 1995. Saguaro National Monument had become a National Park. Land in Pima County was being scraped bare, homes were being crammed into new, crowded subdivisions and the developments were creeping closer to Saguaro National Park.

The lot owners from (North to South) East Broadway to East Golf Links Road and (East to West) South Freeman Road to South Melpomene decided to stop asking for protection and to start securing it for themselves by putting deed restrictions on their property into a covenant to limit the growth to one house per 3.3 acres. The covenants would run to 2020 with a provision for a 20 year extension. According to the editorial „They were citizens that took responsibility for the fate of the land, rather than relying on the largess of the Board of Supervisors,” and “If actions speak louder than words, the Neighborhood is making one powerful statement against unwanted development.”

Saguaro Forest Associates sponsored the effort. No deeds would be recorded until at least 60% of the lot owners approved. They insisted on overwhelming support from the area.

Some residents stated that since Saguaro National Monument had received the designation as a national park , they feared that it would attract business people wanting to build hotels, restaurants and cluster housing (beside the park.). A situation we find ourselves in today.

Back then, some opponents to the covenants said they believed that “the fact that the area is considered a buffer zone for the parks make the covenants unnecessary.”

By November 1995 the effort of all those who participated was paying off! The project was nearing completion, and an editorial comment in the Star congratulated the neighborhood and volunteers . “They are not asking government to do for them what they cannot do themselves....In the best of American traditions, they simply are putting their money where their mouth is...It is an effort from which we all can gain inspiration. We hope the other 14 signers will come forth quickly.”

The project had taken a year. On November 14, 1995 the covenant deeds were recorded. 61.6% of the neighbors had put their money where their mouths were to protect the area around Saguaro National Park. 284 lots now had covenants on their deeds. No visitors would see new businesses beside the Park from Golf Links Road to Broadway for at least 20, maybe 40 years.

Today, we urge the Pima County Board of Supervisors to continue the efforts of those citizens, to do what those citizens could not do for the Park. We urge the Supervisors to assist the Park, and the neighborhood, by denying the application for any new businesses on the Park's boundary and maintaining the traditional SR zoning in the area.

Thanks to all of you for hearing our plea!

Ellen Barnes
3501 S. Saguaro Shadows Dr
Tucson Az 85730

Ellen Barnes

HEARING, MAY 21, 2014- BUFFER ZONE REQUEST FOR CONDITIONAL REZONING FOR THE PROPOSED BIKE RANCH IN FRONT OF SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK ON OLD SPANISH TRAIL

My name is Ellen Barnes. I thank you for permitting me to share my concerns. We have lived on Saguaro Shadows Drive since 1985 and been Tucson residents since 1969. I was a volunteer for S N Monument when it became a National Park. Since wildlife and all animals are special to me, I have been a volunteer and supporter of the Tucson Wildlife Center which is located on Speedway. It is one of the neighbors of SNP on the north.

I support Courtney's remarks re: _____

I speak , FIRST, for our wildlife and their offspring, which we have had the privilege of observing for many years. SECONDLY, I ask for the continued protection of the Park by maintaining the existing urban environment in this one mile buffer zone.

We are here to promote protecting the Park as it now exist. The most important thing in real estate is LOCATION! What a location for a business! Directly across from the entrance to Saguaro National Park where the wildlife roam, making trails across neighboring homesites and roads , and for the most part, feeling safe from the humans they encounter.

The owners of the property requesting the proposed zoning change have presented attractive plans. The business would be good for Tucson and they vow to protect the animals and desert plants (after the bulldozing, building, and putting in parking spaces for 110 vehicles). We like their plan, BUT WE DO NOT LIKE THE LOCATION. The proposed bike ranch plans appear well done, and WE WISH THE DEVELOPERS LUCK IN ANY LOCATION EXCEPT THE BUFFER ZONE BORDERING THE SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK. There will be much greater impact on the site and surroundings , than would be the case under present SR zoning.

A zoning change to business will BRING A DENSITY on this 12 acres of 75-100 people at one time, along with 110 parking spaces. Compare that vision with what 10-15 SR home lots look today today. Ever if all homes had three(3) garages each they would not have the same impact on the land as this resort with its anticpated activity at the ranch. With homes build in the same area , the wildlife would hopefully experience minimal changes to their habitat.

Speaking of impact. What of the anticipated increase in traffic along Escalante Road, Old Spanish Trail and Freeman Roads? (One neighbor describes them as "Vail Valley Freeways" with vehicles traveling at 50 MPH and higher.)

These are TWO LANE ROADS, constantly crossed by the wildlife such as javelin herds, coyotes, deer, bobcats , and smaller desert residents like squirrels and quail families. With the anticipated traffic increase, more "road kill" will occur. Turtles and gila monsters don't do well in this kind of environment either.

What about humans crossing the road on foot, bicycle or vehicle? Today they must exercise extreme vigilance when coming or going out of their paths or streets, especially off Escalante or Freeman Road. One needs to be extra alert for traffic when crossing Old Spanish Trail from the curve at the intersection of Freeman Road, south, to the Escalante Road Intersection. Can this possibly be a good location to place additional business traffic on Old Spanish Trail across from the park entrance? Then, imagine heading to Tucson on Escalante Road with its hills and deep dips where visibility is poor. The driveways, and especially the dips between the hills serve as natural animal crossings. With bike paths on either side of the road, drivers, bicyclist and animals have uncomfortable experiences when sharing this road. Some animals and birds don't live to tell about what happened to them or why.

My message to the owners if rezoning occurs. Please note: the pack rats will chew up the wiring in your visitors' cars as they did in our car and motorhome before we had a garage built; the wood peckers will try to make holes in the roof and outside walls; the javelina will break your water lines and irrigation system; scorpions and lizards may welcome your guest in their bathrooms; rattlesnakes will be your sentries of the night, supported by coyotes who love small pets. The rock squirrels will tunnel under your walkways and foundation while the wolf and jumping spiders come inside the bedrooms to catch insects. The cone nosed beetle, kissing bug to us, won't show up until May. Lots of people have terrible reactions to kissing bug bites, but these bugs should be gone before the tarantulas and Colorado River Toads come out, checking around the lights and porches for Japanese beetles. The good news is that the gila monsters only visit during the summer, while the bobcats, raccoons, javelina, skunks and foxes can come all year. Mountain lions normally show up about August.

Now to the owners, if you are having second thoughts about your friendly critter neighbors, wouldn't it be better to let individual homeowners cope with these problems, rather than having pack rats chewing up car wiring of your guests. The Park neighbors would welcome animals on this SR zoned property and vehicles would be safe in garages. Please find a more suitable location for your wonderfully planned Bike Resort, and look at the bright side: you won't have to construct a septic tank for the use of so many people. Just build beautiful homes on these parcels.

To the Board of Supervisors: We ask of you, please **do not to approve this zoning request** which will adversely affect the area around Saguaro National Park in so many ways. Instead, give the developers as much support as possible at another location.

Thank you!