



TANQUE VERDE VALLEY  
ASSOCIATION

# TANQUE VERDE VALLEY COMMUNITY NEWS

## AQUA CALIENTE PARK RENOVATION



**A**qua Caliente Renovation – Pima County Parks and Recreation Department proposed a \$5,000,000 renovation of the Aqua Caliente County Park funded by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The TVVA Board voted not to support this project and worked to convince the Pima County Parks and Recreation Department to terminate the Agua Caliente Spring and Wash Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration project. This termination resulted in no alterations or renovations to the Agua Caliente Park. The proposed project included six alternatives, one of which if adopted might have resulted in the draining of all of the ponds to transform them into a cienega with limited public access. The opposition to the renovation was a joint effort with The Friends of Agua Caliente.

## KIRK-BEAR CANYON LIBRARY

The TVVA has worked since 1997 with City and County Staff members and the Friends of the Kirk-Bear Canyon Library to plan for the start of construction in 2004 of a 5,000 square foot expansion of the Kirk-Bear Canyon Library.

Our representative on the Design Committee provided input to the architect in the

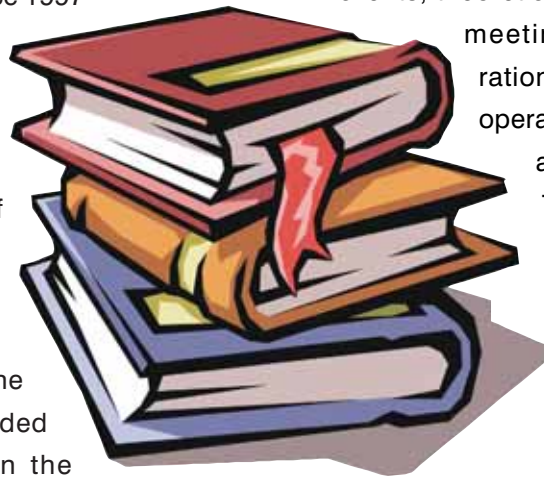
preparation of construction drawings now completed. The project is in the bidding stage. Expansion of this busy branch will allow it to better serve the Tanque Verde Valley's burgeoning community.

## BED AND BREAKFAST ZONING RULES

TVVA played a major role in getting new Bed and Breakfast rules.

During the past few years, area neighborhoods have battled numerous commercial developments. TVVA has been helpful in these battles. One business organization wanted to convert a home into a behavioral care facility housing 14 people; provide them individual and group counseling along with activities including neighborhood walks. Pima County was considering applications for such an operation by comparing it with ad hoc rules that had been established over the years to approve Bed and Breakfast operations. In another case a home was converted as a retreat center with bedrooms for up to 6 clients, theoretically, and some minimal meeting areas.

Again the rationale for approving this operation was that it was "like a bed and breakfast." That operation was shut down when, on their first big retreat, up to 24 attendees were counted.

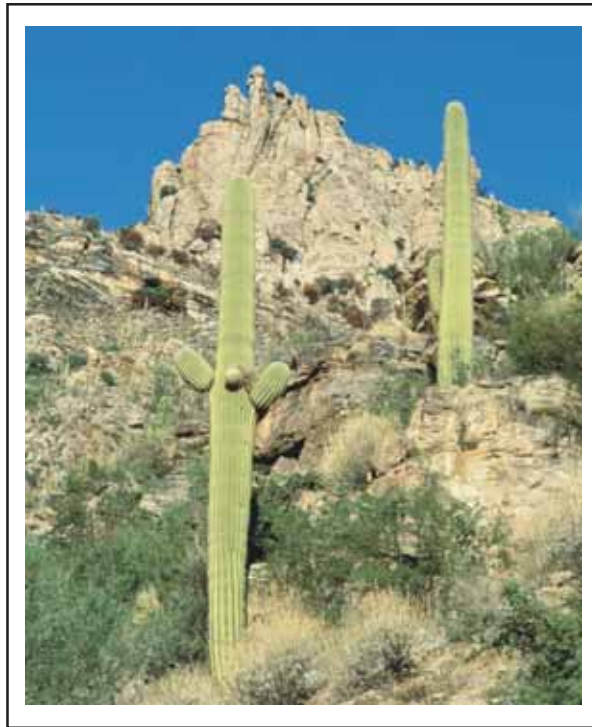


The T.V.V.A. Board decided that it was difficult and costly to always fight these operations after they had been allowed to open initially under very cloudy law and regulation.

TVVA Board decided to seek changes in rules allowing for advance notice when such operations were being considered. Pima County instead held meetings to lay out new rules for Bed and Breakfast operations including related kinds of operations. The “final” outcome of that process (often contentious) resulted in new and much more restrictive rules for B&B’s. We know that given the public nature of much of the land in the East Valley there will always be businesses which wish to exploit this natural beauty, wildlife and solitude...but in many case would destroy that which they seek to exploit. Working together we can continue to monitor developments and seek changes when necessary.

## OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

From its inception the Tanque Verde Valley Association has been recognized as a major proponent for “Quality of Life” in Pima County, in general, and the Tanque Verde region, in specific. It has been, and remains, at the forefront of many preservation and environmental enhancement efforts: It has fought to protect fragile riparian areas from commercial and urban development, as in its successful opposition to the “original” High School site in the Tanque Verde Wash floodplain and the proposed “Platinum Farms” development in another area of the floodplain. It is represented on the advisory board for Saguaro National Park and has been a major force in protecting the sensitive areas adjacent to the Park boundaries. It has worked with community leaders



over the years to acquire funding, through local bond issues and both State and Federal Grants, to purchase and preserve critical Open Space and Habitats. Equally importantly, TVVA has played an instrumental role in insuring that those funds are used to good effect; the TVVA Board is represented on Pima County’s OSARC (Open Space Acquisition Committee) which recommends parcels for acquisition by the County, the CCCC (Cienega Corridor Conservation Committee) which is attempting to preserve critical watersheds and wildlife migration corridors, and other key organizations.

## CATALINA HIGHWAY SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Pima County’s plan to widen Catalina Hwy was approved in the 1997 bond election. Justification was based on projections of huge increases in traffic over the next 15 years. “Improvements” planned included a 5 lane highway, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, retaining walls, and sound walls with “public art”.

In March 2003, the Tanque Verde Valley Assoc. (TVVA) and the Tanque Verde Coalition (TVC) brought the fact to the County’s attention that a “new” model currently in use by the County invalidated data used in the 1997 decision. Traffic projections using the “new” model showed very little traffic growth over the next 20 years nullifying the need to widen the highway. The TVVA and the TVC were also concerned about the impact of the County’s proposed “improvements” on our community character. In light of numerous complaints and inputs by neighbors, the TVVA and the TVC, and

the County’s newly accepted “revised philosophy” regarding the project, Pima County scaled back the project from the original estimate of \$8.3 million to \$4 million saving taxpayers \$4+ million dollars for more critical road work.

New plans for Catalina Hwy include a center-turn lane between Harrison and Houghton, bike lanes and improved alignment of streets and drainage. “Public art,” a requirement of all new road projects, has been scaled back to 4

monuments depicting changes to the Catalina's, including name changes of the mountains over the years.

For details of the project design see  
<http://www.roadprojects.pima.gov/catalinahwy/>

## MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL

The Tanque Verde Valley Association is dedicated to maintaining the natural beauty and quality of life in the Tanque Verde Valley.

Please encourage your friends to join the Tanque Verde Valley Association. To promote new membership, all new members will be given one year of membership free, no dues and no strings attached. We will bill \$10/year thereafter. Just send the name, address, phone number and email address (if available) to:

T.V.V.A.  
8987 E. Tanque Verde Rd.  
PMB 189  
Tucson, AZ 85749

We encourage all comments, concerns, questions and all points of view in the Valley. Board meetings are open to members and usually occur on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Rincon Sheriff Station.

## Platinum Farms Proposal

A large commercial equestrian center, named Platinum Farms, was proposed for development on a parcel of land on the north side of the Tanque Verde Wash, east of where the wash intersects Houghton Road. The T.V.V.A. took the position that Platinum Farms should be disapproved. This proposal would allow a major horse event location, equipped with a 900-seat arena and restaurant, to forever change the character of Tanque Verde Valley.

The project was being pursued as a "school and stable," a permissible use in SR zones. However, in reality Platinum Farms was closer to the County Fairgrounds than a stable. It was the position of the TVVA that uses such as "a school and stable" are not allowed to front for major commercial ventures. Platinum Farms is the largest and most egregious such use

in recent memory. This is an old problem. TVVA has in recent years fought against using an outmoded ordinance to approve and/or consider a bulimia clinic, a conference retreat center and a wedding chapel as though it was a Bed and Breakfast (B&B) establishment.

An event center with horse facilities, arena seating, parking, casitas and a restaurant located in the delicate mesquite-bosque habitat will not preserve any semblance of the natural environment. The environmental damage will be immeasurable at that site and to the entire Tanque Verde wildlife/habitat corridor with the loss of the last major intact riparian area in the Tucson metropolitan area. The loss of habitat and quality of life in this county will be great. The Sabino Creek-Tanque Verde triangle is Pima County's last chance to save a semblance of our natural washes

Members were encouraged to get the word out to make this protest known to the Board of Supervisors. Members attended hearings and testified against the proposed development. It appears that the efforts of many dedicated individuals and the TVVA have paid off - the developers have withdrawn their request for a conditional use permit. We thank everyone for the support. However, it is not a question of IF these commercial developments are going to be proposed again for the Tanque Verde Valley, it is a question of WHEN and WHERE.

## Mountain Lions

About the recent killings of mountain lions: the bicyclists on Mt. Lemmon reacted appropriately and no one was "attacked" or injured. Others can behave the same way and teach our wildlife to avoid humans. The Game and Fish Department has expressed their interest in and use of non-lethal methods - the better alternative. At the April TVVA Board meeting, board members unanimously voted to support a "NO KILL" policy. We here in the Tanque Verde Valley have historically supported a "Live and Let Live" attitude toward our precious and fast disappearing wildlife.



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