

MBCA News  
Wednesday, October 30, 2013

Here are some items of interest to MBCA and some action opportunities.

1. MBCA Clean 'n' Green Team

Put Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> on your calendar (8 a.m.) to join MBCA Clean and Green Team and partner Joshua Tree Clean Team members for an hour of exercise, environmental good karma, and camaraderie. Go to our "Take Action" Page on our website for more information and the fall schedule:

[http://www.mbconservation.org/take\\_action](http://www.mbconservation.org/take_action)

Special thanks to Director Deb Bollinger for heading up this effort.

2. Alta Mira Gated Community Housing Project (Joshua Tree)

As announced recently via local radio and newspaper media, the County approval process is being reactivated for this project. A Project Planning Notice dated October 17 was received by a number Joshua Tree residents near the proposed project. Its scope seems to many of us to be out of character with the rural life in Joshua Tree. It is in a location with some conservation values, has approximately one thousand Joshua Trees and very likely has tortoise present.

County Planner Kevin White said the "Initial Study" or Environmental Review is not out for public review yet. We were told there will be a three step process of notification of the proposed Alta Mira project. The October 17th notification is the first step. Obviously, people don't have much information to react to when there's no recent (in the last three and a half years) description of the project. The County Planning Department is recommending approval of the project and has to decide if this project deserves an Environmental Impact Report or whether it will give the project a Negative Declaration, excluding the need for an EIR.

This proposed "Alta Mira Gated Community" is 248 single family houses, 40 multi-family units and a clubhouse on 105 acres surrounded by a wall and having one unguarded gate entrance on Sunny Vista Rd. that is card activated by the residents. The proposed Alta Mira Gated Community surrounds Friendly Hills Elementary School to the North and West. This proposal was met with absolutely no support (other than the proponent) by the Joshua Tree community at a Joshua Tree Municipal Advisory Council meeting February 19th, 2009.

Comments on the project must be received by the Land Use Services Department by this Thursday, October 31, in order for the comment writers to be included in the final project action. The contact person for comments is Kevin White. His telephone number is (909) 387-3067, and his email is Kevin.white@lus.sbcounty.gov. If you are interested in being officially notified of this project's status, you should leave contact information with the County Planner ASAP (phone, email and/or mailing address).

3. Morongo Basin Conservation Values Map

Many of you remember or participated in 3 years of discussions about conservation and community in the Morongo Basin, via the Morongo Basin Open Space Group. As we have noted before, MBCA has contributed to the development of an interactive website

that visually places the conclusions of that effort on a regional map. You can type in your own parcel number or address, or roam around by zooming in and out and changing the values that are represented. Give it a try! Here's the link:

<http://websites.greeninfo.org/morongo/mbcv/live/>

#### 4. New County Municipal Advisory Council

Residents of unincorporated County areas in the Morongo Basin are now represented by a group with the shorthand name "the Big MAC," which becomes the connection between residents and the County Supervisors and staff. We are happy to note that two of these participants are MBCA members, Mike Lipsitz and Elizabeth Karman.

Max Rossi of Wonder Valley

Mike Lipsitz of Landers

David Peach for downtown Joshua Tree

Mark Lundquist for east Joshua Tree

Elizabeth Karman of Yucca Mesa

Larry Parrott of Flamingo Heights

Jack Dugan of Pioneertown and Rimrock

Gayl Swarat of Morongo Valley

Mary Helen Tuttle of Copper Mountain Mesa

[http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article\\_7ced0d18-3b96-11e3-82e0-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_7ced0d18-3b96-11e3-82e0-001a4bcf887a.html)

Finally, if you haven't already seen it, take a look at our photos and summary of the recent Desert Wise Landscape Workshop: <http://www.mbconservation.org/events>.

Thank you.

#### Your 2013 MBCA Board

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[www.mbconservation.org](http://www.mbconservation.org)

*MBCA advocates for a healthy desert environment  
that nurtures our rural character, cultural wealth,  
and economic well-being.*