



LAS CRUCES HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

1001-B N. Solano • P. O.Box 2608, Las Cruces, NM 88004 • (505)-526-6126 • Fax (505) 525-8598

December 8, 2004

Ms. Nancy Stotz
Citizen's Task Force for Open Space Preservation
P.O. Box 422
Mesilla Park, NM 88047

Dear Nancy:

The Las Cruces Home Builders Association (LCHBA) proposes that the LCHBA, Citizen's Task Force for Open Space Preservation (OSP), and the community focus its resources on enhancing the Tortugas Mountain Cultural and Recreational Area (TMCRA) by creating a desert park on the southern portion of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) withdrawal property (south of Dripping Springs Highway, sections 24, and 25). In addition, we recommend including section 13 as the eastern end of the Tortugas Corridor. The LCHBA would like to work with OSP members to create a plan to achieve these goals.

As stated in the May 21, 2004 draft of *Vision: Open Space and Trail System For Dona Ana County*, there already exists much cultural and recreational resources in the area. This existing infrastructure could be used to attract investment in extending and enhancing the infrastructure. Also, the TMCRA forms a nucleus in which surrounding property could be added to grow the size of the TMCRA through accretion.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is working on developing two arroyo management plans on the East Mesa, the North Fork of the Las Cruces Arroyo and the Alameda Arroyo, that can serve as models for management of the Tortugas Arroyo and Filmore Arroyo. If resources are invested in the TMCRA, eventually a Tortugas Corridor can be created to link the Organ Mountains to the TMCRA.

The BLM will work with the LCHBA and OSP to return the NASA property to BLM administration. New Mexico State University already owns and manages the eastern portion of the Tortugas Mountain and will work with the LCHBA, BLM, and OSP.

The BLM, LCHBA, and OSP could attempt to preserve the entire NASA property for open space, but home owners in subdivisions located in Sections 14 and 15 may have issues with developing TMCRA infrastructure in their backyards. We recommend focusing on securing what we really need, namely, sections 13, 24 and 25. Also, these three sections have few neighbors.

Individual members of the LCHBA might be interested in investing their resources in open spaces, but need to have a single location identified for that investment. The LCHBA feels that it could successfully market the TMCRA to its members for community investment.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Rogers, LCHBA President

Michele Marshall, LCHBA Executive Officer