

## Editorial

# Legislature should reform State Trust Land system once and for all

Another election season has come and gone, and so, too, has another multimillion-dollar failure to reform the State Trust Land system.

It is beginning to be a kind of joke, this ongoing effort to bring together conservationists, ranchers, homebuilders, developers, and the public schools to change a system that many don't quite understand.

The latest failure, Proposition 106, was rejected in last Tuesday's general election. It would have amended the Arizona Constitution to set aside some 694,000 acres of the state's 9.3 million acres of trust land for preservation as open space, and would have set up an oversight board to watch the state's administration of the land.

Voters also rejected Proposition 105, a competing red-herring referred to the ballot by

the state Legislature that would have preserved less land, given lawmakers discretion on which property to include in rural areas, and loosened leasing requirements.

Local activists working to preserve the hundreds of acres of State Trust Land west of Green Valley, an area they've taken to calling the West Desert Preserve, had hoped that the passage of Proposition 106 would provide at least a framework for what many advocates of open space preservation have long wished for: The ability to simply take some of that 9.3 million acres off the development table.

As it is, moneyed developers have a disproportionate influence, as state land under the current system goes to the highest bidder.

But with so much acreage still in the system, it would be criminally shortsighted of the state's leaders not to set some aside for

conservation, especially considering the hyper-growth of the state, a trend that has for too long threatened to get away from us.

Reform, if it comes at all, should come from the Legislature.

Under its umbrella, all the various and varied parties with an interest in trust land can gather and work on one bill that, hopefully, can satisfy them all.

This should be a priority in the next session, and Gov. Napolitano, using the political capital she gained through her thumping of the opposition last Tuesday, should be relentless on this particular subject.

To our way of thinking, any bill should include at least these core principles:

- A list of the most environmentally sensitive and important acreage in the state land system to be set aside for permanent and un-

touchable preservation.

- A mechanism by which trust land can be added to that list, based on local conditions and priorities.

- Public oversight of the system.

- Assurances to ranchers that grazing access to state land will continue in some form.

- Assurances that the public school system will continue to be funded through the sale and use of state land, which, after all, is the stated first use of the land.

It may seem like a daunting task, but, really, the future of state depends upon its completion.

As we have said here many times, there is growth and then there is smart growth. Too long have we as a state sighed and shrugged at the inevitability of the former while paying mere lip service to the latter.

## Letters to the Editor

### Open letter to McCain

Editor:

An open letter to Sen. John McCain:

Dear Senator McCain,

First, let me say that I am a lifelong Democrat who at one time admired you so much that I would have voted for you anytime, anywhere, for anything.

The first disappointment was how you accepted the vicious attacks on you by the Bush crowd during the primary campaign, then end up kissing him on the podium. The last straw was your genuflection to Jerry Falwell.

Now, as the old saying goes, I would not vote for you for dogcatcher.

Many I have spoken to feel the same way. Also, there is the matter of you declaring publicly that if the Democrats came to power, you would commit suicide.

Please let me know when this event is taking place, as I would like to attend.

**Magaret Terrell**  
Green Valley

### Reconciliation

Editor:

A time to remember Edwin Markham's "Poem of Reconciliation."

To put a stop to the increasing, divisive and tiresome partisan political rankling, I hope we can live the wisdom expressed by America's and democracy's greatest poet, Edwin Markham (1852-1940):

"He drew a circle that shut me out. Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But love and I had the wit to win; we drew a circle that took him in."

**Ronald R. Brill**  
Green Valley

### He has a solution

Editor:

Genetics worldwide—my solution to the world's problems in these confusing times. Why?

Allow me to answer that this way: What would happen if a person could draw all of

the super brains together for analysis of modern-day ills?

Genetics worldwide is designed to work with the mentally gifted and super-intelligent, which seems to be the only corner left in man's search for cures of the Earth's problems.

The person best suited for this awesome task would seem to be a fellow genius.

All around the globe there are many mentally gifted and talented individuals plus people that are so smart they stand out as anomalies.

For the most part, they are unrepresented.

I would like to represent them through an all-scientific organization (with a think tank included) and draw them together into a unique group that would share their views with society and the government.

I perceive new inventions, better international relations, abundant employment opportunities, and a greater understanding between business and society.

I propose all of this, plus improving the understanding between student and the education system. There is much more but, this is a good rundown of the basics.

**Red Raines**  
Green Valley

### Do the right thing

Editor:

Now that the elections are behind us, my hope is that both our old and newly elected members of Congress will get on with an agenda to achieve affordable and accessible health care.

They have a good model already in place—America's Community Health Centers. This program has a 40-year record of proven success reducing disease and keeping down health care costs.

Because of this record, the program has unmatched bipartisan support and now serves nearly 16 million people in rural and urban medically underserved areas across the country, where medical providers are in some instances scarce.

I along with many others use the Continental Clinic, a community health center right here in Green Valley.

By having a regular source of care, I and others can lead healthy, productive lives and

stay out of crowded and expensive hospital emergency rooms.

The new Congress has a chance to put politics aside and do something concrete to confront America's growing health care crisis.

Supporting community health centers offers every member of Congress the chance to hit the ground running by joining a bipartisan consensus around a proven solution in an otherwise contentious debate related to health care.

All they have to do is support legislation that will increase funding for the program so it can reach more people.

Let's hope the new Congress doesn't waste time in doing right thing.

**Dick Hansen**  
Green Valley

### Disturbing event

Editor:

This is a letter of concern.

On Sunday, Nov. 5, while many of the congregations in the Green Valley/Sahuarita churches were peacefully worshipping, uninvited partisan election workers came through our parking lots and distributed election materials on our vehicles.

This is a very distasteful and misleading approach to politics.

In this recent season of dirty electoral politics, it appears that we have descended even one step lower.

In the future, at least have the respect for our congregants to ask before you distribute such material on sacred property.

**Members of the**  
**Santa Cruz Valley Interfaith Council**  
**Beth Shalom Temple Center**  
**Church of Religious Science**  
**Desert Hills Lutheran Church**  
**First Church of Christ Scientist**  
**The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ**  
**Green Valley Community Church**  
**Our Lady of the Valley Roman Catholic Church**  
**St Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church**  
**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Green Valley**  
**Unity Church in Green Valley**  
**Valley Presbyterian Church**  
**Bahai Congregation of Green Valley**


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The News reserves the right to edit contributions for length, accuracy and clarity. Letters exceeding 300 words will be edited. Readers are invited to submit guest commentaries

which should not exceed 700 words. Writers of commentaries may submit an accompanying photo and brief biographical information. The News also retains the right to reject any

letter and limit frequent contributors to a maximum of one per month. All contributions must include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification purposes.


Letters and commentaries should be submitted to any of the following: Fax: 520-625-1603. Email: [letters@gvnews.com](mailto:letters@gvnews.com) Mail: P.O. Box 567, Green Valley, AZ 85622



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