



2025 OPEN SPACE AD HOC TASK FORCE COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TO: Mayor Mr. Morris, Vice-Mayor Ms. Royer, Councilmembers Mr. Aughterton, Ms. Driskell, Mr. Freedman, Mr. McGuire and Mr. Rhoades

FROM: 4,005 Open Space Ad Hoc Task Force Committee Members: Chair Steve LaMar, Vice-Chair Bill Basore, Kathleen Abaie, David Ackerman, John Carbone, Annie Chmielewski, Stacy Daniel, Susan Demmitt, Paul Diefenderfer, Marcie Kremen, Barbara Miller, Janet Mohr, Monique Pacurariu, Carole Perry and Karen Teets.

DATE: Tuesday, January 27, 2026

RE: Study, evaluate and issue its findings and recommendations relating to the possibility of the Town of Cave Creek (TOCC) purchasing 4,005-acres of Arizona State Land Trust within the Town's municipal boundaries.

RECITALS:

September 24, 2005:

The Ad Hoc Committee met and divided up into three work groups which also met individually.

Evaluating/Prioritizing – Assess the various Open Space Conservation (OSC) and Open Space Recreation (OSR) zoned lands and make its recommendations on what priority areas should be focused on.

Communication/Outreach – Focus efforts on preparing any general information and education related materials pertaining to the acquisition and conservation of Open Space.

Financing/Stakeholders – Identify individuals, groups and agencies of which the Town should pursue partnering with and examine the funding and financing opportunities for the purpose of Open Space acquisition.

October 15, 2005:

- Presentations were made for branding and marketing ideas including a campaign logo.
- Exploration of using the existing non-profit 501(c)(3) FORCE account for private donations, partnerships with other agencies, and municipal tax-free bonds were favorably discussed before potentially taking a secondary property tax to the voters in 2026.
- Staff provided an updated map used to identify the various areas of owned open space, trails and connectivity and how they related to state land areas suitable to satisfy the initial 160-acre acquisition.

End of October:

Staff provided several separate tours to the parcels that are accessible by vehicle. Where possible, committee members were able to hike into the parcels to experience firsthand the individual characteristics.

November 19, 2025:

Presentation by RJ Cardin, the former Director of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation, and current consultant for the TOCC.

December 2, 2025:

The Committee's Progress Report was presented to the Town Council.

December 17, 2025:

Recap of the presentation was discussed. The committee voted in favor of raising money first and employing a secondary property tax as a last resort. The decision to present a white paper to Council was approved.

EVALUATING / PRIORITIZING WORK GROUP

OBJECTIVE:

Assess the various Open Space Conservation (OSC) and Open Space Recreation (OSR) zoned lands and make recommendations on what priority areas should be of focus.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Visual Tour: Discussions focused on the various parcels while taking into consideration the visual beauty they provide making Cave Creek a unique place to visit on many fronts with abundant saguaros and ocotillos found in Southern Arizona and Sonora, Mexico.

Zoning: How does the proximity of the designated zoning of Conservation (OSC) and Recreational (OSR) parcels border the community and what effect would that have.

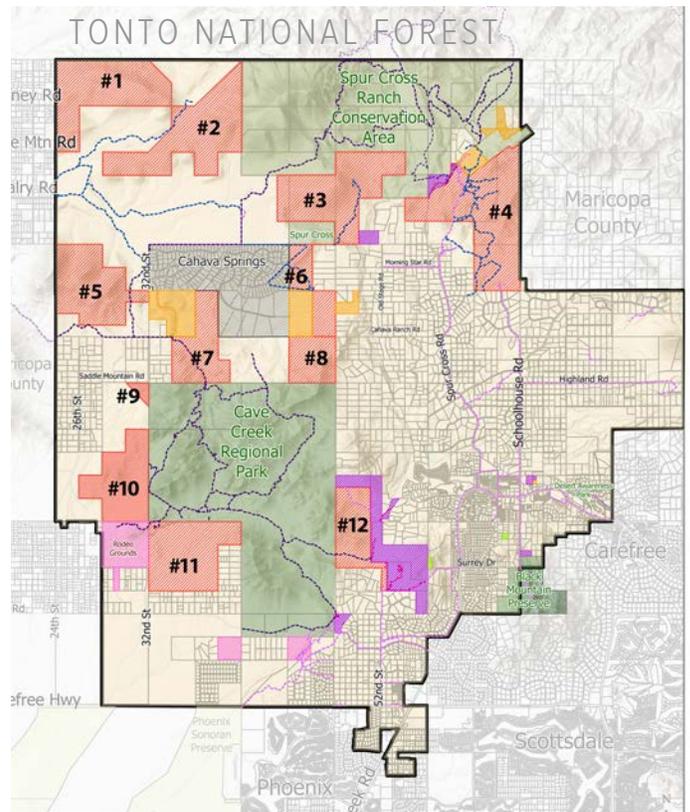
Identifying: Determine which parcels would be advantageous for Cave Creek to acquire in partnership with Maricopa County Parks Recreation (MC) and/or Desert Foothills Land Trust (DFLT).

CONNECTIVITY / EXPANSION:

Connectivity to expand the trail system from the Town to CCRP and SCRCA and beyond while providing **safe**, non-motorized trails for equestrian riders, hikers and off-road mountain bikers. Partnering with MC to purchase some of the parcels surrounding the CCRP would help **reduce the cost** to the Town in acquiring the remaining 4,005 acres.

- **Parcels #1 #5** would be attractive to surrounding communities for OSR access and possible park.
- **Parcels #3** would connect SCRCA to wildcat or future trails into Cahava Springs and south into CCRP and the west side of Cave Creek.
- **Parcel #4** would connect SCRCA to the trails at the north end of School House Road into town.
- **Parcels #7 #8 #9 #10 #11** connectivity of safe non-motorized trails within the CCRP throughout the TOCC and north to SCRCA for equestrian riders, hikers and mountain bikers.
 - The County would have the **opportunity to enhance and increase the camp grounds'** current capacity at CCRP.
 - A County and Town partnership would have the opportunity to explore **further equestrian sites for multiple uses** throughout the year – staging areas to trail ride.
 - Small recreation arenas for the public to exercise or train horses. Spillover areas for rodeo participants' horses during rodeo events. **The ideas are limitless.** Water and electricity are at the rodeo grounds.
- **Parcel #12** would directly connect DFLT with CCRP.

(EXHIBITS A-B)



RECOMMENDATION:

More insight is needed to determine which parcels are more “at risk” or have less interest at auction from other potential bidders. Since the TOCC is first in line to call for an auction, finding out what extent MC and other organizations would like to partner with us is a priority. This, along with implementing a comprehensive fundraising campaign, evaluating other financing options, and getting an updated cost assessment will help determine the best course of action: acquiring parcels over time or go “all in” and purchase all the parcels all at once.

COMMUNICATION / OUTREACH WORK GROUP

OBJECTIVE:

Evaluate ways to present facts and education material to the residents of Cave Creek, partners, and corporate sponsors why acquiring and protecting this vast network of 4,005 acres of Open Space from Arizona State Land Trust is important not only for the TOCC, but also for its residents, neighboring communities and tourists.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Create a brand identity starting with a campaign logo.
- Create a website flowchart. Utilize QR Codes for seamless transitions for non-profit donations.
- Create concept marketing materials that can be directed toward different target markets:
Private donations | Partnerships | Corporate sponsorships | Estate planning | CPAs and financial planners
- Create and expand on a list of facts and benefits.
- Explain the parcel maps in detail. When pieced together alongside land owned by TOCC, DFLT, CCRP, SCRCA and MC, they would create an abundant wilderness region for conservation, recreation and wildlife.
- Identify local residents who could be asked to participate in promoting the campaign using a photo and/or sentiment for personalization.
- Propose a series of questions for a survey of acquiring the 4,005 acres.
- Focus on neighborhoods adjacent to the parcels for in-home presentations.
- Discuss community outreach at Town Hall, Holland Center and the Library.
- Identify ways to partner with special events.
- Identify ways to work with the Sonoran Arts League with an “Arts for Acres” auction.
- Consider promotional merchandising, public relations and advertising.
- Discuss the idea of initiating a group of volunteers to help disperse information.

(EXHIBITS C-D-E)

CREATIVE TEAM VOLUNTEERS:

Karen Teets: copywriting.

Annie Chmielewski: online website and social media administrating.

Carole Perry: marketing, promotion and advertising.

Stacy Daniel: graphic designer.

- Complete the design and layout of appropriate concept marketing materials for the 4,005 campaign.
- Aid in the communication with vendors to get estimates.
- Provide content for online website and social media.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to work with the creative team to:

- Decide what funds are available for a marketing budget.
- Purchase the 4,005 URL and web hosting.
- Finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DFLT for acquiring the 4,005 acres of open space.
- Supply the legal description of how the donations will be used with regard to the OSC and OSR.
- Employ Michael Baker International to create and disperse a survey/questionnaire.
- Establish a cohesive online donation landing page that will correspond to the 501(c)(3) printed donation form.
- Decide who will be the main contact for Legacy Gifts and Estate Planning.
- Help obtain photography and drone footage.
- Be a liaison regarding quantities, distribution, final approval of marketing material content, expense budgets for website, promotional items, printed materials and advertising as seen fit.
- Consider copyrighting the 4,005 campaign logo due to the duration and scope of the campaign.

FINANCING / STAKEHOLDERS WORK GROUP

OBJECTIVE:

Examine the funding and financing opportunities for Open Space acquisition including identifying stakeholders interested in partnering with the TOCC for Open Space protection.

THE GOAL:

- **High estimate:** \$16M (including cost of a secondary property tax election and subsequent financing costs).
- **Estimated actual land cost:** \$13.3M. Actual cost subject to an updated appraisal and auction results.
- **Existing Funding:** TOCC Open Space Fund is expected to have \$2,500,000 by mid 2026. The existing non-profit FORCE 501(c)(3) has \$140,000. This places our goal at **\$13,360,000** to **\$10,660,000**.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Private Donations

- A. Provide CPAs, Tax Advisors and Tax Preparers and **Donor Advised Funds** with information so they can offer this tax-deductible item to clients. In particular, we are going to focus on donations of **Fully Appreciated Securities**. (EXHIBIT F)
- B. Direct Solicitations. Larger donations can acquire individual areas and earn naming rights. There are a total of 12 parcels.
- C. Create specific suggested levels of Donation:
Palo Verde..... \$40
Mesquite \$100
Prickly Pear \$400
Ocotillo \$4,000
Saguaro..... \$40,000
Mountain Lion .. \$400,000

2. Government, Corporate, Grants and Benevolent Funding

- A. GOVERNMENT. The **Land and Water Conservation Fund** (LWCF) is a federal program that is available to municipalities and can provide 50% of funds for acquisition of new land.
- B. CORPORATE. Publicly traded companies may have **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** requirements that encourage donations that contribute to support community and environmental projects.
- C. GRANTS. Apply to identifiable Environmental grants for nonprofits that align with specific mission goals.
- D. BENEVOLENT FUNDING. Apply to identifiable Trusts, Charities, and others. There are also opportunities in estate planning and bequeathment.

3. Partnerships

- A. MC has expressed an interest in obtaining several parcels adjacent to Cave Creek Regional Park.
- B. DFLT has expressed an interest in Parcel #12, located adjacent to the P.A. Seitts Preserve.

4. Municipal Financing

- Finance what private donations would not cover by selling municipal tax free bonds or other methods of financing.

5. Secondary Property Tax Election

- Use a secondary property tax to cover the payments on municipal tax free bonds. A quick formula for a horseback guesstimate is .07 times the amount borrowed, divided by the number of properties (est 4,000). Example: $\$13,000,000 \times .07 = \$910,000 / 4000 = \$227.50$ per year (this is a 20 year amortization). This secondary tax would sunset.

RECOMMENDATION

Funding Strategy For the 4,005 Acres

Form a partnership with Maricopa County Parks and Recreation, and Desert Foothills Land Trust, to jointly purchase the 4,005 acres. We, and our partners by extension, have 14 years under the current agreement to complete the acquisition. (A minimum of 160 acres in the first 4 years must be purchased.)

- The DFLT would administer the private fundraising efforts, and upon successful effort, acquire Parcel #12 adjacent to the P.A. Seitts Preserve.
- The TOCC would continue to accrue funds in its Open Space Fund and seek Federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. TOCC would evaluate the use of municipal financing and the secondary property tax as required. TOCC would acquire Willow Springs and Rogers Wash parcels.
- Maricopa County Parks would, depending on availability of funds, acquire Core Site and Apache Wash adjacent to the park.
- A letter of intent between the parties, to be accepted by the Arizona State Land Trust, and confirmed by the acquisition of the first parcel by Cave Creek would “seal the deal”.
- This would complete the purpose of the Open Space Fund (OSF) as the Town would have acquired all available open space. This could potentially free up \$500,000 per year currently dedicated to the OSF.

ESTIMATED ACTUAL LAND COST	\$13.3M
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MARICOPA COUNTY	\$4.6M
CORE SITE and APACHE WASH	

DESERT FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST	\$0.90M
CORE SITE SEITTS	

Funding Sources:
Private Donations

TOWN OF CAVE CREEK	\$7.8M
WILLOW SPRINGS and ROGERS WASH	

Funding Sources:

Open Space Fund 2026	\$2.5M
FORCE	\$0.14M
Federal Matching Funds	\$1.5M
Private Donations (estimate)	\$2.0M
TOCC Non Reserved Funds	\$1.66M

EXHIBIT A

Parcel Analysis Charts

PARCEL # ON MAP	PARCEL NAME	LOCATION	TOTAL ACREAGE	SAFE TRAIL CONNECTIVITY	VISUAL BEAUTY
1	Rogers Wash	NW area East of New River	460	2	3
2	Rogers Wash	NW area East of New River	500	2	3
3	Rogers Wash	S of SCRCA	460	3	3
4	Willow Springs	Adjoins SCRCA and School House Rd	660	3	2
5	Rogers Wash	N of 26th St and W of Cahava Springs	380	2	2
6	Core Site	Adjoins E of Cahava Springs and SCRCA ophan parcel	80	3	3
7	Core Site	N of CCRP	260	2	2
8	Core Site	Adjoins N of CCRP	240	3	3
9	Apache Wash	NW corner of CCRP at rodeo grounds	20	1	1
10	Apache Wash	W of CCRP near rodeo grounds	320	2	1
11	Core Site	W of CCRP near rodeo grounds	400	2	1
12	Core Site	W of CCRP adjoins DFLT and 52nd/54th Sts	225	3	2
TOTAL			4,005		

LEGEND

- ASLD = AZ STATE LAND TRUST
- CCRP = CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK
- DFLT = DESERT FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST
- MC = MARICOPA COUNTY
- SCRCA = SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA
- TOCC = TOWN OF CAVE CREEK

CAVE CREEK MAJOR OPEN SPACE MAP AND ACREAGE

- Cave Creek Regional Park.....2,730
- Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area2,235
- AZ State Land Trust4,005
 - Apache Wash = 340
 - Core Site = 1,125
 - Rogers Wash = 1,880
 - Willow Springs = 660
- Desert Foothills Land Trust350
- BLM Owned Parcel250
- TOCC Owned Parcels303

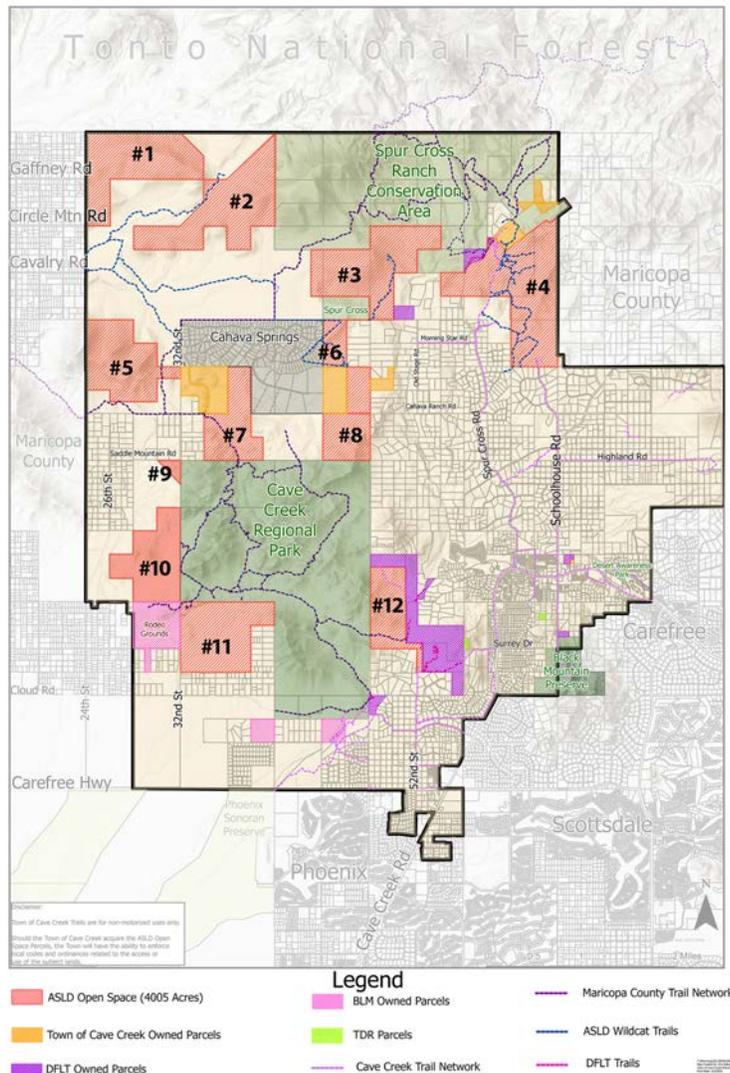
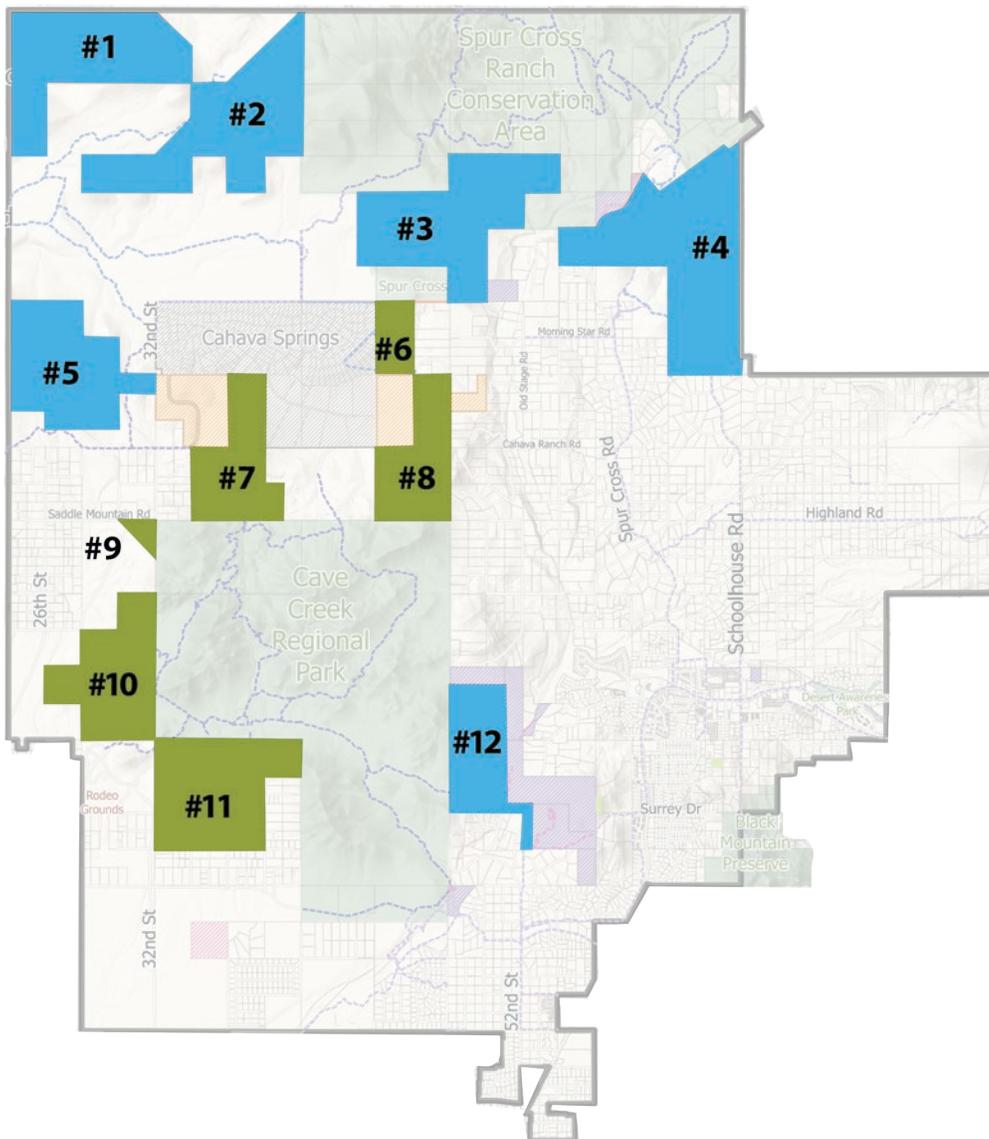


EXHIBIT B

Parcel Analysis Charts

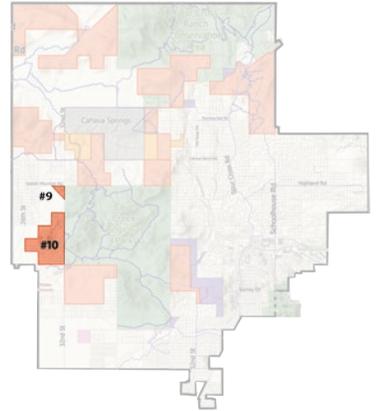
PARCEL NAME	PARCEL # ON MAP	2024 ASLD LAND INVENTORY	ACREAGE OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION	ACREAGE OPEN SPACE RECREATION	ZONING DISTRICTS DR-43 DR-70 COMMERCIAL BUFFER, CORE, AND GENERAL
Apache Wash	9, 10	720	–	340	380
Core Site	7, 8, 11, 12	7,105	225	900	580
Rogers Wash	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	3,940	1,800	80	2,060
Willow Springs	4	780	660	–	120
SUB TOTALS			2,685	1,320	
TOTALS		7,145	4,005	3,140	

■ CONSERVATION
■ RECREATION

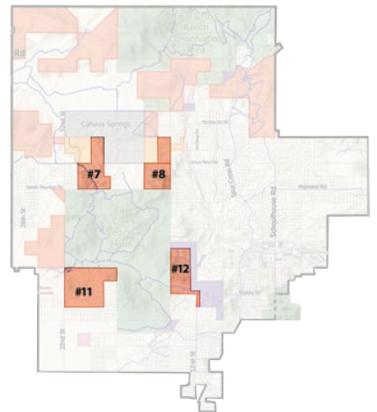


NETWORK OF PARCELS

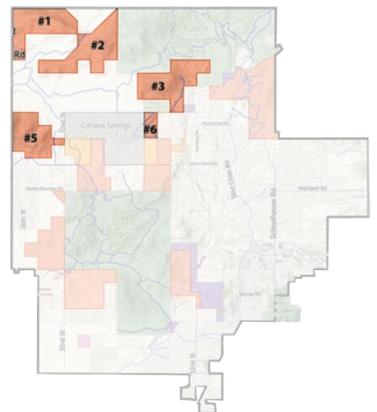
APACHE WASH



CORE SITE



ROGERS WASH



WILLOW SPRINGS

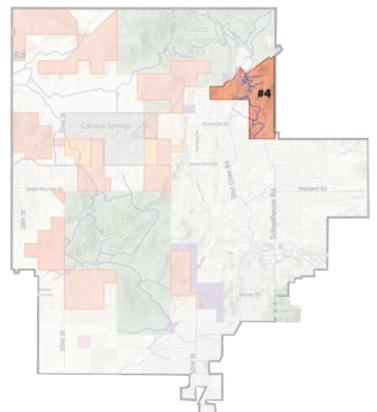


EXHIBIT C
Campaign Logo



Campaign Logo



Ad Hoc Committee Logo

- Design plays off the Ad Hoc Committee logo for continuity.
- Emphasis placed on acquiring the 4,005 acres of Open Space.
- Highlighting conservation and recreation.
- Abstract rectangles at the top visually imply the network of parcels that are not totally connected.
- Images of a mountain, creek and saguaro directly relate to the TOCC.
- Tagline highlights the specific focus of our goal “Protecting the Great Sonoran Foothills ~ Forever”.
- Location of Cave Creek, AZ is identified.

EXHIBIT D

Concept Website Flowchart

Home Page

Video and/or photo header.
Mission Statement / goal.
Social Media link to Facebook (if needed)

Donation Button (in nav bar)

Make a Donation | Employer Matching Donations | Legacy Gifts | Corporate Sponsorship

Donation page links to 501(c)(3) FORCE bank account and captures info for tax letter.

About Us

TOCC General Plan about Open Space and TOCC identity.

Touch on Ad Hoc 15 member committee.

Explain brief history of TOCC partnerships with:

- DFLT
- MC
- ASLD

Explain origin story of FORCE.

Exhibits

Map(s)

Chart showing parcel descriptions and features.

PDF files:

- Brochures
- Posters
- Flyer

Benefits

List Open Space benefits to help address concerns and misinformation.

Open Space Network

Explain OSC vs OSR.

Legal use verbage.

Features of the 12 parcel network:

- Apache Wash
- Core Site
- Rogers Wash
- Willow Springs

Our Partners & Supporters

Supporting our neighbors who share in our goal of protecting our wilderness:

- High dollar donations
- Partnerships
- Corporate
- Trust Lawyers
- CPAs
- Universities
- Sports Teams
- Estate Planners

Sponsor logos scroll at the bottom of the page.

Stay Connected

Fillable form for eblast updates and questions.

Supporter: Personal sentiments with or without photo.

Volunteer opportunities for:

- Neighborhood presentations
- Community Outreach
- Fundraising

EXHIBIT F

Fully Appreciated Securities Strategy

Original cost (cost basis) of XYZ stock: \$5,000 Federal long-term capital gains tax rate: 15%		>	Fair market value of XYZ stock: \$50,000	
<p>XYZ stock has risen in value to \$50 per share, so the total fair market value of her holdings is \$50,000</p> <hr/> <p>Long-term capital gains taxes paid</p> <hr/> <p>Charitable contribution and tax deduction</p> <hr/> <p>Tax savings</p>	<p>Option 1: Sell XYZ stock and then donate the after-tax proceeds</p>	<p>Option 2: Contribute XYZ stock directly to DAFgiving360</p>		
	\$6,750	\$0		
	\$43,250	\$50,000	(vs)	Additional amount available to grant to charities: \$6,750
	\$3,630	\$12,000		Additional amount saved on taxes: \$8,370

CPAs, Tax Advisors and Tax Preparers and Donor Advised Funds: Provide them with information so they can offer this tax deductible item to clients. In particular we are going to focus on donations of **Fully Appreciated Securities**.

This takes advantage of record high levels in the stock market, and, tax deadlines create a sense of urgency.