

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

## Agreement Would Convert Former Vistoso Golf Course to a Nature Preserve



### Agreement would convert former Vistoso Golf Course to a Nature Preserve

Preserve Vistoso announced today that The Conservation Fund (TCF) will purchase 202 acres of the former Vistoso Golf Course. TCF will protect the property with a conservation easement as a nature preserve and community trail. The Town of Oro Valley is expected to become the eventual owner. TCF is a nationally recognized conservation nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, redefining conservation to emphasize its essential role in the country's future prosperity.

### Agreement should be final by year end

The property transaction should be final by year-end, contingent on the community raising \$1.8 million for TCF to complete the purchase. Last year, community members conducted a successful pledge drive, but TCF's offer to purchase the property was rejected. Now that an agreement was reached, there will be another opportunity for the community to raise the funds.

### Goal of a "preserve" is at hand

"Our community's goal to preserve the property is finally close to becoming a reality," said Gayle Mateer, president of Preserve Vistoso, a 1,860-member community 501(c)(3) nonprofit. "After the Vistoso Golf Course closed in 2018, we formed Preserve Vistoso so the community would have a voice in saving the property as a nature preserve and community trail. Now as a community we need to secure the funds to complete the purchase to save some of the last remaining large parcels of Sonoran desert in Oro Valley as open space."

### ...and it will be spectacular

Tom Weiskopf designed and opened the Vistoso Golf Course in 1995 with more than 70 percent of the property retained as Sonoran desert habitat. It has spectacular mountain scenery, abundant wildlife, more than six miles of paved trails, three restrooms and trail underpasses for major roads. The area was once home to a Native American village called Sleeping Snake, as evidenced by the petroglyphs that can be found on the property.

### Thanks to the community for the support

"Our community would not give up," Mateer said. "Our volunteers persistently raised the issue of preserving the property with Town Council members and Town management. Preserve Vistoso membership grew as more community members supported our efforts to preserve the property for community use. TCF has been our valued and trusted partner. We also applaud the involvement of Oro Valley Mayor Joe Winfield, Vice Mayor Melanie Barrett, Town Council members, Town Attorney and Town Manager in negotiations for the purchase. Their support and direction were critical to our success."

(Source: October 13, 2021 press release of the organization "[Preserve Vistoso](#)")