

**THE FRIENDS OF TUCSON'S BIRTHPLACE  
POSITION STATEMENT  
REGARDING THE RESTORATION OF A SONORAN DESERT PARK  
ON THE FORMER A-MOUNTAIN LANDFILL**

**Friends of Tucson's Birthplace**

The Friends of Tucson's Birthplace (FOTB), which operates Mission Garden, was incorporated as an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2009 with the following mission prescribed in Arizona Corporation Commission filing and FOTB bylaws:

**SECTION 3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES**

The specific purposes of this corporation shall be:

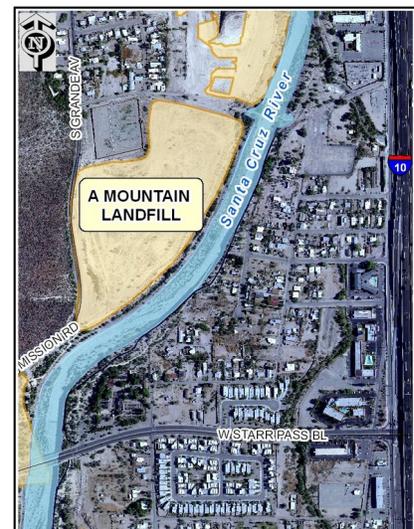
- 1) To preserve, honor, protect, restore, and promote the cultural heritage of Tucson's Birthplace.
- 2) To create a diverse, international community of supporters, educated about the multi-cultural heritage, historic landscape, and the unique 4,000-year history of cultivation at the site known as Tucson's Birthplace.

The specific objectives of this corporation shall be:

- 1) Conservation and protection of the historic and archeological resources and landscapes at the site known as Tucson's Birthplace, on the west side of the Santa Cruz River, on the east side of Sentinel Peak, within the boundaries of the city of Tucson, Arizona.
- 2) Conservation and protection of historic resources to be accomplished through, but not limited to: scientific research, community outreach and education, public education, land management, collaboration with governmental authority, collaboration with individuals and other NGO's, and collaboration with educational institutions.

**FOTB Position Statement**

**Background.** This 28-acre landfill site is crucially located between the Santa Cruz River and Sentinel Peak. The property adjoins Mission Garden to the east and south. It is the last remaining significant open space area near Tucson's urban core and the only location where the emblematic saguaros touch the river. During the first half of the 20th century, the Tucson Pressed Brick Company excavated clay for brick manufacture, leaving "borrow" pits which operated as a city landfill between 1953 and 1962. The landfill has been officially closed for more than six decades and has undergone capping at least three times. Recent years of routine agency monitoring of gas generation and water quality have determined that no offsite methane gas migration nor groundwater contamination exist. The property is currently owned by the Rio Nuevo Improvement District.



Graphic: City of Tucson

**Position Statement.** Consistent with FOTB’s mission statement, our organization stands firmly for the protection of open space and the preservation and restoration of this historic cultural landscape as a proposed Sonoran Desert Park, representing an integral component of Tucson’s Birthplace. The springs and *cienea* at the southern end of this 28-acre area created an “oasis in the desert,” which provided water for 4500 years of cultivation, making the Tucson Basin the longest known cultivated area in the United States. These water sources also nurtured the O’odham village of *S-cuk Son*, which gave Tucson its current name. As the most culturally and spiritually significant portion of Tucson’s Birthplace, this area should rightfully remain in its entirety as essential open space. All restoration efforts therefore should:

1. honor the ingenuity and achievement of the Native American ancestors who stewarded and cultivated this area for more than 4500 years;
2. honor the cultural and religious significance of the springs and *cienea* which spread water across the southern end of the property, providing the essential water that led to Tucson’s existence;
3. recognize the importance of the Santa Cruz River and its floodplain for the regenerative value of riparian vegetation for climate mitigation and bank stabilization;
4. value the historic legacy of the landscape, viewscape, and land uses of the property;
5. protect and assure safe habitat and wildlife corridors between the Santa Cruz River and the Tucson Mountains, providing essential access to water for birds and all wildlife species;
6. reflect community values as expressed in the 1999 vote in favor of Proposition 400, which overwhelmingly supported historic, cultural, and ecological restoration, and support for this has only since increased;
7. address the scarcity of green space and trees within Tucson’s urban core, thereby mitigating heat generation, providing shaded urban cooling, improving air quality, and increasing carbon sequestration;
8. provide outdoor recreation space for community enjoyment, health benefits, and quality of life;
9. offer learning opportunities for students, visitors, and the public at large;
10. highlight the wisdom and foresight of Tucson in creating a unique urban riverside park in the Sonoran desert;
11. create a unique amenity that will attract and satisfy the expectations of cultural and ecological tourists, thereby generating and increasing dollars from tourism, one of the primary income sources in southern Arizona.