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Editorial

Voting yes on Proposition 106 will help preserve local treasures

Residents who want to preserve the hundreds of acres of State Trust land west of Green Valley would do well to vote yes on Proposition 106 on Nov. 7.

A move to reform the way State Trust land is used in Arizona, Proposition 106, if passed, would finally add a conservation element to a process that has too long favored big developers.

It would initially set aside 694,000 acres of the most environmentally sensitive Trust land for conservation (out of a total of about 9.3 million acres), and would allow nonprofit

groups a chance to purchase Trust land without having to go up against deep-pocketed developers in a bidding war.

For more than a year, local biking enthusiast Bill Adamson and others have been gathering support for the so-called West Desert Preserve, a desert wonderland between Green Valley and the mines to the west that already has miles of trails where residents enjoy walking, biking, and exercising their pets.

While the West Desert isn't on the list of Trust land to be set aside, Adamson is confident

that passage of Proposition 106 will at least give the group a chance at preserving the land.

The measure would change the way Trust land is dispersed, requiring that the State Land Department take into consideration if a piece of Trust land is listed in planning documents on the local level.

The West Desert is already listed in two local planning documents, Adamson said.

Proposition 106 would "give us a foot in the door to negotiate with the State Land Office to purchase the land at fair market value with-

out it going on the auction block," Adamson said this week.

Already 37 Green Valley homeowners' associations have written letters of support for preserving the West Desert to Pima County, representing some 43 percent of the population.

That's a great start, but there's very little Pima County can do to preserve the land. If locals truly want to save a little slice of the endangered Sonoran Desert for themselves, they'll have to speak with their ballots by voting yes on Proposition 106.
