

CACTUS CAPITAL CHATTER 1972

The Staff of CHATTER 1972 is being organized with hopes of publishing the best newsletter ever. Staff members will be announced in the next issue of CHATTER. I plan special reporting by qualified members on the subjects of Haag Memorial Cactus Garden at Desert Museum; the proposed change in the Arizona Native Plant Law; exploring Baja and Mexico for rare cacti; gardens and gardening in the Southwest with native plants; succulent culture - conservation. As always, I invite members of Cactus Club to submit to me at any time, material that they think might be suitable for CHATTER. Dependable and prompt mailing to all members in Tucson and Green Valley for 1972 is assured. Lura Fuller and Lena Marvin again take on this work which they have performed for you for several years. We are most grateful for their work.Editor: J.K. Shelby.

PUBLISHED BY

TUCSON CACTUS & BOTANICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 3723 College Station

Tucson, Arizona 85722

PURPOSE of Tucson Cactus & Botanical Society shall be to function continuously in study of cacti and native flora; to further the protection of cacti and native flora of Arizona; to sponsor a botanical garden in Pima County near Tucson, Arizona; to sponsor plantings of cacti and native flora in other suitable places. --- BY-LAWS of the Tucson Cactus & Botanical Society, Inc. Article I Section 2.

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1971 ANNUAL REPORT OF CACTUS
CAPITAL CHATTER

Number of periods published -- each of the four quarters of 1971. Number of copies mailed to members in Tucson and Green Valley -- 320. The fine mailing work was done by Lura Fuller and Lena Marvin. Number of copies mailed to other addresses - 180. This included: 4 Tucson Public Libraries. University of Arizona: The Library, The Herbarium, Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum. Desert Botanical Garden. Other cactus societies in Missouri, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, California. Cactus clubs in foreign lands - New Zealand, Australia, Scotland. Out-of-state subscribers in 8 states USA, Africa, Asia, Europe, New Zealand. CHATTER operated in 1971 on a \$200.00 budget.

PRESIDENT HORST'S 1972 MESSAGE TO EACH MEMBER

Are YOU an ACTIVE member of Tucson Cactus & Botanical Society -- the kind of a member who would be missed? Or -- are YOU just contented that your name is on the list? Do YOU attend all meetings and mingle with the crowd? Or do you stay at home and complain both long and loud? Do YOU take an active part to help Cactus Club along? Or are you satisfied to be the kind to just belong? Do YOU ever go to VISIT a member who is sick? Or, leave the work for just a few, then talk about the "clique"? There's quite a program scheduled for 1972. That means SUCCESS if done, and it can be accomplished with the HELP OF EVERYONE. So ATTEND the meetings regularly. HELP with HAND and HEART. Don't be just another member; TAKE AN ACTIVE PART. THINK IT OVER, members -- are we RIGHT or are we wrong? Are YOU an ACTIVE MEMBER, or do you just belong?
(From Berks County Chapter of The Izaak Walton League, and including some variations by CCC editor).

CACTUS CHATTER SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE AT ONCE. CHATTER is free to paid-up members of TCBS, \$1.00 to U. S. addresses, \$1.50 to foreign addresses. Please make subscription checks payable to Tucson Cactus & Botanical Society.

A TINY BAJA TREASURE

William A. Pluemer

The story of Yale Dawson's discovery of the Baja mammillaria bearing his name (C & S J1 XXXII) has always fascinated me. Perhaps because the time of his discovery roughly corresponded to that time in my life when I first became interested in cacti. However, I was to wait another forty years to collect his namesake, after two abortive attempts.

Again accompanied by cactophile Joe Kellet of Los Angeles and neighbor Ray Lucas, who came along to break in his new Blazer, we made El Arco our southern terminus, arriving there mid-morning October 31, 1971. From here we planned to take the Guerro Negro road to the Rancho La Espinita cutoff, continuing on the coastal road to Miller's Landing and beyond. But the strange vagaries of Baja's roads were to change these plans before the day was out.

Before departing El Arco, we revisited the type locality of *Lophocereus schottii* var. *monstrosus* near Pozo Aleman. Much to our dismay we found the surrounding hills heavily scarred with newly bladed access roads. Copper ore had been located some 400 metres underground in the area. Since this plant appears limited in range, our fears are great for its survival, as the new roads are encroaching from all directions. How fragile the life-thread of nature's gifts in the face of the almighty dollar!

Two miles North of El Arco we turned West toward Guerro Negro. (See map inset). The road here was one of the better ones, winding through lush desert scenery. The heavy growth of epiphytes on ocotillo, machaerocereus and cardon provided good photographic subjects. Then the desert flora began to thin rapidly toward the sea. As hard as we looked and cross-checked mileages we found no indication of the turnoff so plainly indicated on our maps. In England years ago I had left all my supersitions behind me upon completing thirty missions over Germany as a B-17 pilot. Now, somehow, the thought crossed my mind that, after all, this was Halloween, and Baja could just as well be "tricking" us as "treating" us. All doubts were removed as Guerro Negro finally appeared on a windy, chilly afternoon. In retrospect we felt perhaps we were lucky at that. The flat, monotonous country offered nothing but sand, dust, and low scrub. Not a comfortable place to camp on a windy night.

With daylight rapidly fading, the new Motel "Dunas", bravely advertising hot showers, received three more customers. Earlier arrivals had depleted the archaic hot water supply, but even cool water does wonders to Baja grime. The motel has no electricity as yet, but perhaps this is too much to ask for at \$4.80 US per night. The camp stove and lantern were set up in Ray's room, and we held a map study session over post-stew coffee.

Next morning found us waiting for the cook at the "Los Pollos" Cafe in town. Excellent bacon, eggs, toast and coffee were consumed with relish. Our tanks were topped off with 100 octane fuel at the new Pemex station operated by two Japanese gentlemen. (No English - speak Japanese or Spanish, please). Then, after two very confusing false starts, we found the road leading to Rancho La Espinita.

Taking the left fork from the now-deserted ranch site, our maps indicated a "packed sandy road". After several hours it was apparent that either the cartographer had let his imagination help smooth the way, or Baja's Summer monsoons had resurfaced the road in their own inimitable manner. The coastal region through which we were passing was uninteresting, with a multiplicity of unmarked roads appearing and disappearing at will. Long after our indicated map mileages ran out, we finally raised the sea in early afternoon.

Several spot checks along the coastal slopes failed to reveal any plant material. We continued in a Northerly direction, always taking the road closest

to the sea, but becoming more and more uncertain of our position with each passing hour. Suddenly the road turned sharply inland, disappearing over a sharp rise. Certain that we must now be running out of coast road, Joe and I decided upon one last search in a deep wash fairly close to the water's edge. Here was a very small colony of wind-splayed and dwarfed ocotillo and Torote. (Elephant Tree). Ancient and weathered, none appeared more than three feet in height.

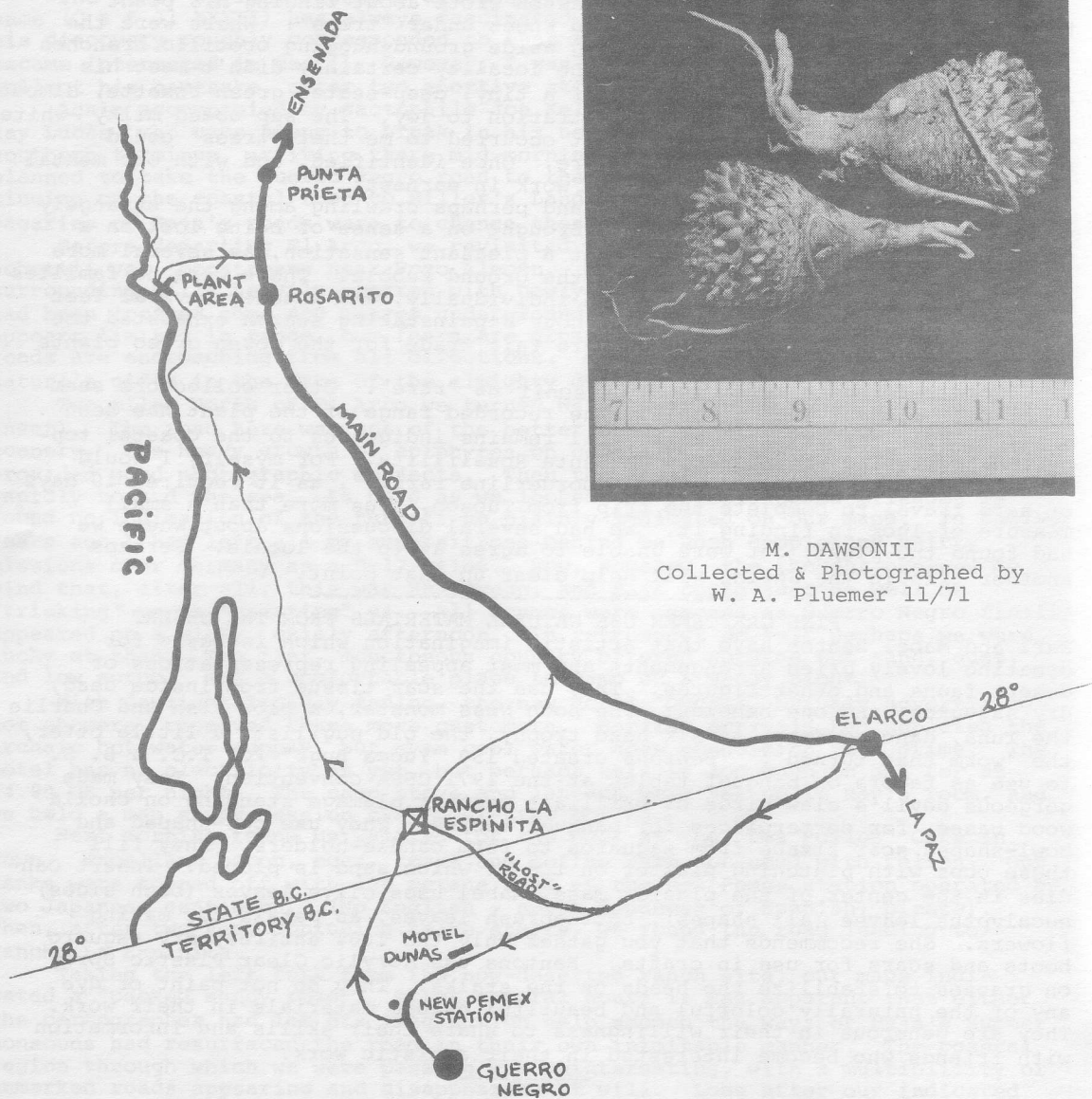
If my memory is correct, Yale Dawson wrote about finding his plant by scratching around on his hands and knees under "trees". Where were the trees in this desolate spot? Pushing aside ground-hugging ocotillo branches I began my search, although I felt the locality certainly didn't meet his description. The sudden discovery of a tiny, deep-seated green rosette, almost invisible in the rubble, turned frustration to joy. The sap oozed milky-white, confirming my find. Now, at last, it occurred to me that "trees" could mean torotes, as shrunken as they were. Once identified, and with our mental images registered, Joe and I went to work in earnest.

Squatting down, kneeling down, and perhaps crawling among the strangely stunted and awry ocotillo and torote brought on a sense of being lost in a Brobdingnagian bonzai dish. But what a pleasant sensation, as several more of the midget mams were found among the ground rubble. There were no families of *M. Dawsonii*, each had to be found individually, and usually several feet away from its nearest neighbor. An hour's painstaking search exhausted the small wash, but our aching backs were fair trade for the dozen or so plants now in our bags.

Some references refer to *M. Dawsonii* as "rare". Other collectors seem to find it without much trouble. The recorded range of the plant has been expanded over the years, but it still remains indigenous to the coastal topography centering around Bahia de Santa Rosalillita. For myself, I would rate it "hard to find", or even a "borderline rarity", as it required 10 days of hard travel to complete the trip from Tucson, plus more than a small measure of luck in finding it. We had several discussions about where we had found the plant, but were unable to agree as to the locale. Perhaps another trip in the Spring will help clear up that point.

FINE CRAFTSMEN USE NATURAL MATERIALS FROM THE DESERT

Earl and Mabel Benton have that artistic imagination which is basic for creating lovely dried arrangements and most appealing representations of desert fauna and other figures. They use the scar tissue from inside dead, dry saguaros, and one beholds: The Loch Ness monster, a blow fish and Charlie the Tuna, dancing frog, an elk head trophy, the old pugilist, a little otter, the "worm that turned"! Bentons created 150 "Yucca Bugs" for T.C. & B. S. to use as favors on banquet tables at the 1971 CSSA convention. They made gorgeous devil's claw birds of brilliant feather plumage standing on cholla wood bases, for centerpiece for banquet tables. They use cup-shaped and bowl-shaped scar tissue from saguaros to form candle-holders. They fill these cups with platching plaster on top of which sand is placed. Insert candles in the center of the plaster mass. Mabel uses olive leaves (both sides) eucalyptus leaves (all shapes), bottlebrush leaves, as petals for making flowers. She recommends that you gather only the 100% entirely dry saguaro boots and scars for use in crafts. Bentons use Acrylic Clear Plastic Spray on grasses to stabilize the heads on the stalks. They do not paint or dye any of the naturally colorful and beautiful nature materials in their work. They are generous in their willingness to share their skills and information with friends who become interested in their artistic work.



M. DAWSONII
 Collected & Photographed by
 W. A. Pluemer 11/71

ECOLOGY AND CACTI

Paul S. Henshaw

Ecology is more than the study of pollution. It deals with the Law of Supply and Demand as it operates in nature. It is a study of the way things, including living things, interact and affect each other. The task in Ecology is to understand the interacting forces that enable a species of plant or animal to survive and perform.

Naturally enough, cacti have their environments the same as any other thing or species of organism, and to a considerable degree we are aware of the central determinants of their existence. Among these are the soil nutrients, water, sunlight and heat (temperature). In the desert one can see, perhaps more clearly than in other environments, the interaction of these elements and how their interrelated variations make such a difference in the vigor and survival rate of plants. We are aware of how cacti are adapted to conserve moisture, for example, by having waxy surfaces to prevent evaporation, and by having chlorophyll in these same surfaces to absorb light without the necessity of moisture-losing leaves.

Cacti, like all other organisms, have their enemies--their predators and their detrimental environmental agents. There are bacteria, insects and birds that feed on them and mutilate them. Also there is man who insists on the right to have the land on which cacti live, the right to put things into the atmosphere that are detrimental to cacti, and on the right to take the water on which cacti depend.

There are also the human friends of cacti--people who admire and love them. Such people, in their desire to protect these plants and have them appreciated more, move them from natural environments into yards, gardens and parks, often not knowing nor even asking whether the new ecologic setting is one which cacti can tolerate. Thus, the friends of cacti--despite affection and good intention--may unwittingly and unintentionally be the enemies of cacti.

Now cacti, it is evident from the study of evolution, emerged on the earth by natural selection and survival of the fittest, and in time came to fit a particular ecologic niche--the niche consisting of the comparatively limited desert areas. It is a safe assumption that most cacti would not do well in other than desert environments or they would be living there already. As we know, cacti are fairly fragile, and already the friends of cacti are aware of their deterioration and are concerned about their lasting potential.

Let us take note of the change that has occurred during the short history of the TCBS. When this society was formed, less than ten years ago, there was comparatively little concern about the depletion of cactus populations. Now we have a law that prevents indiscriminate collecting of "native" cacti, and, as we are aware, discussions are occurring about the need for still stricter regulations.

Now, as easy for every one to see, human society is at the point of an intensifying impasse--not only from the standpoint of cacti, but other species of organisms as well. We have on the one hand the real estate developers, the farmers, the miners and others, who assume the right to exploit their properties as they choose; moreover, they are backed in this assumption by our system of free enterprise, by our constitution and by precedent extending back almost indefinitely in time. On the other hand, we have the environmentalists, who,

on the basis of strong scientific evidence, are calling attention to the ecologic confrontation due inevitably to occur and which is coming in our time.

Conceivably, man could live without cacti, but suppose that in the process of letting it go--assuming we might be willing to let this happen--we would let the palo verde, the oaks, the pines and the wild life, including the algae of the streams and the plankton of the seas, go at the same time, doing this as we build our highways, promote our land developments, operate our smelters, spray our crops and use our automobiles. It is now completely clear that freedom to grow and to exploit will not be feature characteristics in the period ahead.

Human society is on the verge of major change and the lowly cactus is helping us to understand the problems and helping to point the way.

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February 13, 1972 at 2 p.m. Tucson Cactus & Botanical Society will meet at Wilmot Branch of the Tucson Public Library, 530 North Wilmot Road. The program will feature a talk by Paul S. Henshaw, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, on the subject of Ecology and Cacti. Dr. Henshaw, a biophysicist, has done extensive cancer research and has been associated with the Atomic Energy Commission.

 NEWS FROM NATIONAL CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY FOR EACH OF YOU

1. \$7.50 is the new rate that individual subscribers will now pay for the annual subscription to CACTUS & SUCCULENT JOURNAL.
2. The 7TH ANNUAL CACTUS SHOW "CACTUS EXPO '72" presented by Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc. is now being planned. Special attention will be given to attract entries and visitors from Affiliates all over USA. There will be openings in Open, Advanced, and Novice Classes; programs and seminars will be held during show hours and evenings; tours to interesting gardens. These efforts will entice members from other areas to spend a Cactus Vacation at Cactus Expo '72 over the long Fourth of July week-end 1972.
3. Myron Kimnach, FCSS, President of CSSA, does not believe that its present organization is satisfactory. He says the Society should be composed of chapters all of whose members subscribe to the CACTUS & SUCCULENT JOURNAL. This would make the Journal independent of present subsidizations. News items of the present "Affiliate Reporter" could be an insert or enclosure to be sent with each issue of the Journal. All members of CSSA should consider these possibilities so that CSSA can be guided in the proper direction.

SECOND ANNUAL CACTUS SHOW TO BE PRESENTED BY TUCSON CACTUS & BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Date: April 8, 9 1972. Place: Randolph Park Recreation Room, Tucson, Arizona. Hours: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. April 8th; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 9th. The national convention of Men's Garden Clubs will be held in Tucson in April 1972. Over 2000 members are expected to attend. An advance group of its members will arrive in Tucson during the week-end of our ANNUAL CACTUS SHOW. This is a world-wide group in membership. The welcoming committee of the Tucson Men's Garden Club will coordinate with Tucson Men's Garden Club in arrangements for making our Cactus Show available to the visiting delegates. Our members are now beginning to groom their plants to be shown. Scale and mealy bug must be eradicated. Plant pots must be cleaned. Plants must be firmly established in their pots. Plant owners should now decide on and secure any pot dressing and decorations they prefer. They must be absolutely sure of the correct nomenclature of all plants exhibited.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CACTUS SHOW sponsored by the Phoenix Gazette and the Desert Botanical Garden. Date: February 20th and including February 27th, 1972. Place: Webster Auditorium, Desert Botanical Garden, Papago Park, Phoenix, Arizona. Hours: Open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Classifications: Cacti, Succulents Other Than Cacti, Desert Trees and Shrubs, Arrangements, Arts Desert Subjects, Educational Exhibits, Junior Class, Open: Non-Competitive. TCBS members are eligible to enter this Show. For specific information, phone 1-947-2800. Write to Desert Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 5415, Phoenix, AZ. 85010.

HAAG GARDEN NOTES: P. G. and Alta Nichols have given gifts of many plants to be placed in Haag Memorial Garden. The Nichols were close friends of Cactus John Haag who founded Tucson Cactus Club in 1960. They gave three barrel cacti and two dozen small-flowered agaves parvaflora. The 12-headed barrel cactus will be in its place in Haag Garden by March 12th and can be seen by our members there on that date. This magnificent cactus was donated to Haag Garden by Mrs. Harry Anderson, in memory of her lately deceased husband. The Haag Garden Committee met at the Garden on January 15 for a planning and gardening period of work. Don Ducote directed the work done by: Dr. & Mrs. Thos. Kesson, Mr. & Mrs. Roger Dean, Christine Henshaw, Dorothy Levering, Louise Hillgert, Alma Steininger, Elsie Niehus, Josephine Shelby.

March 12, 1972 at 2 p.m. our meeting will be held at Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The program will be in charge of Don Ducote, Curator of Plants there. Don will present a movie, "Desert Dwellers" as an informative portrayal of desert flora and fauna.

1972 OFFICERS OF TCBS: President: Carl O. Horst, serving a second time. Vice President: Paul S. Henshaw. Secretary: Mrs. Lois Clarke, serving a second time. Treasurer: George Snyder.

REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDS: Admiral Halloran has been hospitalized in San Antonio Texas for brain tumor surgery. Joe F. Brick reports satisfactory progress in his post-operative recovery from cataract surgery. Alta Nichols (Mrs. P.G.) tells us she is feeling as well as possible after recent major surgery. Betty Blackburn has followed a strict daily schedule for several weeks to recover from phlebitis. Mrs. Hugh Dobbins lately underwent major surgery and is reported recovering very well.

NEW PUBLICATION GUIDES CACTUS CLUBS TO SUCCESSFUL CACTUS SHOWS: C.S.S.A. has published a booklet, "SHOWS", written by its Judging Standards Committee. This serves as a guide for affiliate cactus societies that stage cactus shows. The Committee has endorsed the following Arizonans as qualified judges for cactus shows: J. A. Robbins, Sierra Vista, AZ.; Alan Blackburn, Tucson, AZ; W. H. Earle, Phoenix, AZ.

NEW ZEALAND CACTUS & SUCCULENT JOURNAL SENDS US THIS INVITATION: Write them about the plants we grow; our successes; our failures; conditions under which our plants grow well; our methods of cultivation. Please also tell them something about yourselves personally. Send them photographs of yourselves and your plants. All will be welcome. All will add to the interest of all New Zealand members. Write to: 208 Campbell Road, Green Lane, Auckland 5. New Zealand.

YOU borrowed from our Cactus Library Vol. 22, National Cactus & Succulent Journal - long time ago. Search memories! Search bookshelves! Return this valuable book TODAY to our Library. Seriously!

MEMBERS! HAVE YOU

1. READ THE BY-LAWS OF TUCSON CACTUS & BOTANICAL SOCIETY?
2. READ THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE SOCIETY?
3. Become well acquainted with a good percentage of our membership so that you can nominate some of them, from the floor, for officers at election time every November?
4. Read the Cactus Club History which is in charge of our Historian? It helps you become a better informed member.
5. Ever used our little Library for good information on cacti and other succulents? Why not?
6. Read your CACTUS CAPITAL CHATTER NEWSLETTER each issue, to keep abreast of pertinent news offered to you?
7. Visited HAAG MEMORIAL CACTUS GARDEN at Desert Museum?

PERSONALS;

Our members, Lee and Lura Fuller, will present the tremendous contrasts of fabulous Old-World cities and stark, barren plateaus in Spain, at the February 16th program of "Travel Through Photography" series presented by the YWCA. In the same series, our members, Mr. & Mrs. B. N. Smith, will present "Quail Trail Parade" by popular request. Their slides feature the birds' antics in all seasons against a backdrop of desert fauna and flora.

Our Czechoslovakian friend, Dr. Vit Hrabe, sent best wishes for Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 1972 to all members of TCBS.

CORRIGENDUM Chatter No. 4, 1971: "Helpful Hints For Your Cactus Gardening" by Alan Blackburn. Corrected statement: "Nurseries sell Vita Bark Potting Soil with shredded redwood which is good to use for cacti needing an acid quality in the soil."

HEARING SET ON SAGUARO PARK PLANS

A hearing to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the establishment of a wilderness area within the Saguaro National Monument will be held March 25, National Park Service officials have announced.

The public hearing, required by the Wilderness Act of 1964, will be held in the City Council chambers from 1 p.m. until everyone has had a chance to speak.

Copies of the draft master plan for the 78,644-acre national monument, west and northeast of Tucson, will be available at the council chambers beginning at 9 a.m. that day.