At the beginning of this year I encouraged all of us to open new doors and see what’s behind; that you’d be encouraged. Well, we’ve opened several new doors this year including another last week when Pima County reached out and asked if the GVR Board of Directors would partner to direct appropriate activities regarding restoration and reuse of the former Canoa Hills golf course.

Now, let me be clear. Neither Pima County nor GVR is entering into the golf business. However, we are all aware of the recent demise of the Canoa Hills golf course and the eyesore left behind. The intention of this joint venture with the County is to provide a new purpose for the former golf course, including transforming the natural open space into a passive public recreation resource in the form of trails and walking paths, former fairways restored to natural Sonoran Desert vegetation, wildlife linkages and corridors, and other adaptive uses. The possibilities are endless: bike trails, walking paths, trails for jogging, bird watching. I can envision the endless projects of community garden clubs. I see covered pavilions for picnic areas. An area set aside for a dog park. Use your imagination. If completed, it would be one of the first adaptive reuses of a golf course infrastructure. The County has all the appropriate technical resources needed for this endeavor. Conservation science, native plant nursery, wildlife educators, and other specialized staff can provide the technical expertise and guidance to make such a conversion successful.

The former owner is making a donation to the County. The clubhouse is a separate venture that the County is negotiating with the owner. The investment by GVR will be to assist in forming an appropriate multi-disciplinary taskforce to evaluate and explore options for long-term natural resource, passive recreation and environmental uses of this property. I have asked GVR Director Don Lathrop to represent GVR with this taskforce, and he has accepted.

Look for updates from GVR as discussions about partnering with Pima County for the reuse of the former Canoa Hills golf course moves forward. Oh by the way, of the emails GVR has received on this topic, over 80% have been positive.