

I am a real estate broker and retired wildlife biologist living in Portal, and I strongly suspect that nobody involved in mapping out the northward expansion of the Tombstone MOA had any idea that within a 10 mile radius of Portal AZ there is a high-end retirement community much like Sedona, AZ. This area is by no means a vacant patch of desert. Our residents include many scientists, professionals, and a unique community of amateur astronomers for whom the term 'amateur' is much too modest. One of these "amateurs" belongs to a group that gets time on the Hubble scope.

Cave Creek Canyon is also the location for the Cave Creek Canyon Birds of Prey Area, a Special Designation awarded by the US Forest Service as a Zoological Botanical Area for having the highest concentrations of nesting birds of prey measured in the US, exceeding the concentrations found in the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in Idaho.

The American Museum's Southwestern Research Station has a vibrant 70-year history of biological research in this canyon, hosting researchers from the US and abroad. Thousands of publications have resulted from scientists using this unique establishment.

We have the highest biodiversity of any land ecosystem in the US and visitors come year-round to take advantage of the opportunities for birding and photography found here. Ecotourism is Portal's economic engine.

This expansion of the MOA's northern boundary ten miles north must not happen.