



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MONTEZUMA CASTLE & TUZIGOOT NATIONAL MONUMENTS
527 S. Main Street
P.O. Box 219
Camp Verde, AZ 86322



H4217

November 14, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service is proposing to develop a comprehensive management plan for Tavasci Marsh to restore and enhance native wetland plant communities to create quality wildlife habitat, while providing adequate visitor use infrastructure to allow the public to enjoy the resource. The National Park Service acquired the marsh in December 2005 as part of a 324-acre expansion to Tuzigoot National Monument. Tavasci Marsh is a spring-fed freshwater wetland that occupies an abandoned oxbow of the Verde River to the north and east of Tuzigoot ridge. It is the largest freshwater marsh away from the Colorado River in Arizona and has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society.

Since the time of the Sinagua, the marsh system has had a varied management history including irrigated agriculture fields, pasture for a dairy operation, soil extraction, flushing through of waters from the adjacent Pecks Lake for nutrient and mosquito management, draining of the Shea springs marsh water for additional pastureland, and hydrological modifications to increase wetland areas for waterfowl and wildlife habitat. This use history has contributed to its current disturbed state with a cattail monoculture over most of its area. The marsh also has large areas of invasive plants, enhanced West Nile Virus vector mosquito breeding habitat, and serious impacts from invasive aquatic animals. With all of these impacts, however, Tavasci Marsh still supports high quality waterfowl and marsh bird habitat.

The park will be preparing an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) analyzes a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, 2) evaluates issues and impacts to park resources and values, and 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts.

The park encourages public participation throughout the planning process. There will be two opportunities to comment formally on the project; once during initial project scoping and again following release of the Environmental Assessment. The park is currently in the scoping phase of this proposed project, and invites the public to submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the proposed project online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.

If you are not able to submit comments electronically through this website, you may submit written comments at the address on this letterhead. Please provide comments by December 19, 2008. These comments will be considered during preparation of the Environmental Assessment. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Davis
Superintendent

