

# Sabino Springs

## History of Sabino Springs

from memorandum by Joe Willis  
Feb 3, 2017

The development of Sabino Springs had a contentious beginning.

In the Tucson Citizen article “*Sabino Springs ready to go*” by William G. Clemmons, January 4, 1994, the author recites the effort in 1991 to force a county wide referendum on the rezoning sought to allow the development which ultimately led to litigation all the way to the Arizona Supreme Court which ruled the Petition for the Referendum fell short of the minimum number of signatures to qualify. The chief opposition came from a group called the Sabino Canyon Coalition. Mr. Frank Luiz was its President.

A travel/golf writer, David R. Holland, later described the contest and result this way:

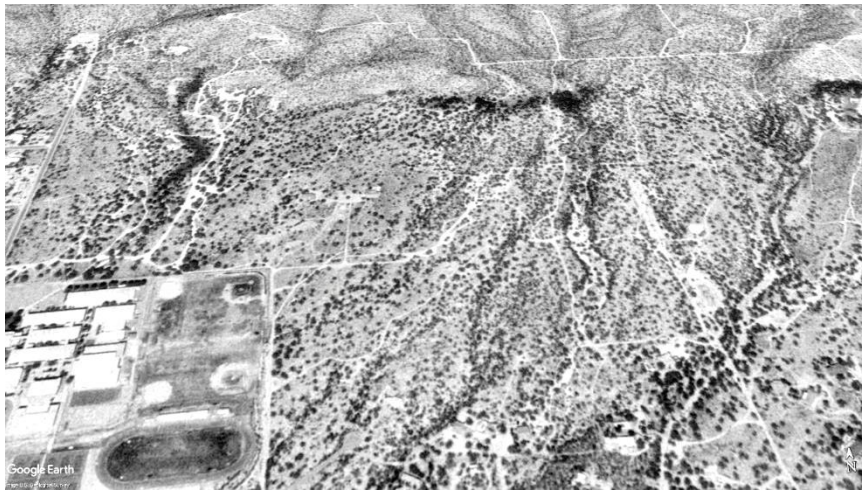
The Saguaro-huggers (ouch) force this one all the way to the Supreme Court of Arizona.

In a land of nine natural springs, historic Hohokam Indian ruins, a vital forest of saguaros, mesquite, palo verde trees, numerous species of cacti and desert plants, and jillions of arid-land critters, the environmentalists didn't much like this pristine Sonora-desert landscape being ruined by a golf course back in the mind-1990's.

During construction an archaeologist-horticulturist paced ahead of bulldozers as they scraped the fairways to look for Indian ruins, fragile plants and to keep desert critters safe. In the process they uprooted and replanted 2,500 saguaros and more than 60,000 desert plants.

Pima County had authority to approve the development under what is commonly referred to as BOZO, Buffer Overlay Zone, and Chapter 18.67 Pima County Code. This Ordinance allowed more intense developments of some lands adjacent to the Coronado National Forest which abuts Sabino Estates to the north. The development request met the functional standards of the BOZO. A tremendous number of detailed studies were required to demonstrate meeting the standards during a prolonged effort to obtain approval.

The Developer sought approval of a Specific Plan changing the zoning to allow the Golf Course and Subdivision which was considered and ultimately approved under the criteria set forth in the BOZO. The Sabino Springs Specific Plan (January 1996 edition) states literally that it is consistent with the BOZO so the Sabino Spring Specific Plan is the operative land use document along with the Covenant, Conditions and Restrictions (“CC&R's”) recorded as part of the development process and the Amended and Restated Declaration of Covenant, Conditions and Restrictions for Sabino Springs recorded April 26, 2006. Also, the development progressed in phases. Several individual plats were recorded as containing detailed locations of each lot, streets and locations of Common Areas, Natural Open Space, various easements, and Bufferyard Areas.



**May 1992**

Before development began. High school was the only thing here.



**October 1996**

After roads and golf course in. No homes yet.



**August 2002**

After many homes were built.

Aerial photos from Google Earth timeline