The Importance of Interpretive Signs
They take a lot of hard work

Granite Mountain Loop Trail
Hike among the wildflowers

Beneficial Wild Pollinators
Learn about our desert bees
Connecting People to Place—The Story of the Interpretive Signs at the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads

By Scott Hamilton, Preserve planner, City of Scottsdale

On the most fundamental level, interpretive signs connect people to the place they are visiting. With a deeper understanding, you will see that there is more to the story.

Well-designed interpretive signs help us achieve the management objectives of Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Interpretive signs enhance visitor experience, promote education and understanding of the Preserve, foster stewardship of the Preserve’s natural and cultural resources, and improve visitor compliance with rules and regulations.

In his 1957 book titled Interpreting our Heritage, Freeman Tilden coined a phrase that has inspired generations of interpreters: “Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.” This theme served as inspiration during the creation of the interpretive signs for the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads.

These two trailheads, located in the northern region of the Preserve, are under construction and expected to be complete in early summer of 2019. They will be similar in size and amenities to the Lost Dog Wash and Tom’s Thumb Trailheads. The improvements include restrooms, passenger vehicle parking, equestrian trailer parking and staging areas, shaded seating areas, drinking fountains (Fraesfield only), and storage areas for maintenance supplies. Each trailhead will include interpretive, orientation, and regulatory signs.

The common trailhead amenities are important for providing a quality experience for our Preserve visitors. Parking for passenger vehicles and horse trailers is a given, because without parking, you have no trailhead. Restrooms are a fundamental element and are often the public’s most requested amenity. The other items, such as shaded seating areas and water fountains, serve an important role by providing visitors cool comforts on hot desert days.

There are many diverse and interesting trailhead amenities. TheFraesfield Trailhead includes a kiosk, picnic area, and educational displays. The Granite Mountain Trailhead will feature an amphitheater, interpretive displays, and a rest area. Both trailheads also feature interpretive signs that provide information about the natural and cultural history of the Preserve.

The design of the interpretive signs was influenced by the natural landscape and the Preserve’s mission to provide an understanding of the Preserve’s natural and cultural resources. The signs are designed to be accessible and engaging, providing information in a variety of formats, including text, images, and audio.

Interpretive signs are an important tool for connecting people to their natural environment. By providing information about the natural and cultural history of the Preserve, these signs help visitors develop a deeper appreciation for the Preserve and its resources. In turn, this appreciation can lead to greater stewardship of the Preserve and its resources.

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is committed to preserving the natural and cultural resources of the Preserve and providing visitors with a quality experience. The interpretive signs will play a key role in achieving these goals, helping visitors connect with the Preserve and its story.
The Sonoran Desert. People do not typically come to the Preserve seeking interpretive signs, the design team visited various Preserve sites, such as Gateway, Tom’s Thumb, and Brown’s Ranch Trailheads. The interpretive information at these sites has been a great success, as evidenced by years of enjoyment by a diverse population of Preserve visitors. The goal of reviewing these signs was to identify the features that worked well and those that we could improve. The overall observation from the team was that we have an important story to tell, and the greatest challenge is sharing it in a succinct manner. In our increasingly digital world, people’s attention spans are short. According to the National Park Service Guide to Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits, a user typically spends less than 45 seconds looking at an interpretive sign. From this, we knew our sign graphics for the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads needed to be concise and compelling.

The next step was to visit the two new trailhead sites and conduct a site analysis. We did this in the summer of 2018, prior to the start of construction. We found our way to the locations of the main trailhead structures using aerial photos as our guide. The team used the preliminary site plans and architectural graphics to identify locations where signs would be most useful and began identifying the general theme of each sign. We took time to take in the surrounding environment, surveying notable characteristics of the Preserve, observing the plant communities, and noting the things that inspired us.

Once the team established the general locations and themes for the signs, the process of drafting the sign copy began. The City of Scottsdale Reserve staff tackled the wayfinding and regulatory elements, and the Conservancy and Field Institute staff and stewards took on the natural history themes. The team held many meetings and reviews to refine the copy to concise messages. Once the team finished editing the copy, it was handed off to the architects and graphic designers at Smith Group JJR, the firm under contract with the City to design the trailheads. With its intimate knowledge of the architectural elements of the project, Smith Group excelled at producing artwork and designs that create a seamless connection between the architecture of the buildings and the sign panels.

It is not often noticed nor appreciated that there are dozens of minute decisions that are made for how sign panels integrate and mount to building walls, seat walls, steel columns, railings, and other elements of the site. Smith Group, working with Valley Rain Construction and E2 Innovations, detailed engineering and architectural decisions that are made during the design of a trailhead facility. Often, the interpretive signs are secondary to these decisions and sometimes are even an afterthought. But their importance should not be overlooked. Signs serve as a lens through which people see not only the minute details of the surrounding environment, but also the greater context of the Preserve and the Sonoran Desert. People do not typically come to the Preserve seeking interpretive signs, but it is our goal to present signs that satisfy an internal need. Visitors may not even have known they have. We want them to be drawn in and to walk away with a deeper understanding of the place they are visiting and its importance.

A well-thought-out sign package begins with a collaborative team approach. For this project, we sought representation from people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This included staff and stewards from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the Parsons Field Institute, staff from the City of Scottsdale and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and diverse professionals from Smith Group JJR, Valley Rain Construction, and E2 Innovations. This talented team followed a multistage process. It began with the review of existing Preserve interpretive signs, proceeded through a detailed site analysis of the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads, and culminated with the creation and editing of the artwork for the signs that ultimately led to fabrication and installation.

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It is not often noticed nor appreciated that there are dozens of minute decisions that are made for how sign panels integrate and mount to building walls, seat walls, steel columns, railings, and other elements of the site. Smith Group, working with Valley Rain Construction and E2 Innovations,
has done a stellar job with this. Valley Rain is the general contractor for the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads, and E2 Innovations is a specialty subcontractor for the sign panels, steel mounting structures, and other important steel features such as map boxes, brochure racks, donation drop slots, and bulletin boards. This highly talented team will produce an impressive product that helps us achieve the management objectives of the Preserve.

When you visit the new Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads, we hope you enjoy the interpretive signs. Please take a moment to ponder and appreciate the effort and expertise of the many people who dedicated countless hours of their time to bring them to you.

For current information on the status of construction of the Fraesfield and Granite Mountain Trailheads, please visit the City of Scottsdale website at www.scottsdaleaz.gov. You also can contact me directly at 480-312-7722 or email me at Shamilton@scottsdaleAZ.gov. I hope to see you out on the trail!
The Sonoran Desert is home to as many as 1,000 species of bees. Each species fills a unique environmental niche. This hearty and well-adapted insect plays a vital role worldwide in plant reproduction. Globally, 71 of the 100-crop species that provide 90% of our food supply are bee pollinated. Locally in the Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve, bees play an integral part in pollinating cactus, wildflowers, and many other plants. Bees also are a food source for birds, lizards, and other insects. Ground nesting bees aerate the soil with their tunnels, which provide a conduit for rainwater to reach plant roots. Their nitrogen-rich fecal matter fertilizes the soil. As you enjoy the trails in the Preserve, stop occasionally and listen. Most likely you will hear the hum and buzz of bees almost year-round. Look closely at the ground for one-eighth- to one-quarter-inch holes with small piles of soil particles around them. These holes can be a few inches to several feet deep. They are home to ground-nesting digger bees. Africanized bees live in the Preserve, and they tend to be aggressive when they feel threatened. You may encounter a mass of bees hanging in a tree, bush, or clustered in cracks of rock. This could be a colony of bees looking for a location to start a new hive. When Africanized bees are in this situation, they are usually resting and waiting for scout bees to find a home for the colony. They will move quickly after finding suitable hive locations under rocks, in large cracks in boulders, or in any area that provides protection and shelter. Many species of bees and wasps sting. You should always be cautious around them. A quick, but not frantic, exit of the area is best so as not to excite them. If you have difficulty breathing, swelling of the throat and tongue, nausea, or dizziness, call 911 immediately. Loss of consciousness may follow.

Tell the 911 operator you are in Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and provide the nearest emergency marker number of the trail you are on, and the nearest trailhead address. All trailhead addresses are printed on the Preserve trail map, so carry a map. Stay on the phone until otherwise instructed and try to stay calm. Encountering bees in the Preserve is a possibility. But such meetings rarely result in a sting. However, it’s good to know how to avoid stings and what to do when they do occur. If you follow these basic precautions, your experience in the Preserve will be as wonderful as can be.

**Bee Smart – Here’s How**

By John Loleit, Northern Preserve natural resources coordinator

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This wild honeybee colony made its hive in a cliff. Photo by John Weser

A mass of wild bees will attach to a tree limb to rest while scouts look for a nesting site. Photo by Lynne Russell

This bee hive has been in the same saguaro for many years. Photo by Lynne Russell
Restoring Degraded Lands

By Dr. Helen Rowe, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Parsons Field Institute director, and Dan Gruber, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy legacy steward

Like many other public lands, Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve’s history includes wildfire, grazing, and off-trail vehicle use. With numerous dispersed disturbed areas, it is challenging for land managers to prioritize which sites to restore and to determine which seeds will be most effective at returning those areas to a natural state. Also, as is the case in many places across the United States, local native plant material can be difficult to obtain. To address these challenges, the Parsons Field Institute at the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy developed a comprehensive approach to planning restoration efforts by mapping degraded areas and then creating site-specific native seed menus for restoration use.

To identify restoration candidates within the Preserve, we started with a Google Earth map showing known disturbed areas. We trained McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteers, who were Parsons Field Institute certified citizen scientists, to scan sections of the Preserve and mark additional candidate restoration locations measuring at least 10 by 10 meters. Using high-resolution aerial imagery, the volunteers identified 75 potential sites. A review of the sites reduced the number to 66. Ultimately, this amounted to about 10.5 hectares (26 acres) of disturbed Preserve lands. To help prioritize site restoration, we categorized all sites into types of disturbance, such as trail widening and old road, and measured the distance of the disturbance to a trail.

In addition to preventing further site degradation, the key to successful restoration is to plant an appropriate native seed mix at each disturbed site. To do this, we developed site-specific native plant lists using a tool created by the Web Soil Survey of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This resulted in a list of native plant species commonly found within the Ecological Site Description (ESD) for each disturbed site. Next, we used a generalized Sonoran Desert Priority Species List (SDPSL) recently developed by the U.S. Geological Survey. The list is based on several factors, such as importance to wildlife and pollinators, ease of propagation, and capacity for erosion control. We compared the ESD and SDPSL species lists associated with the Preserve with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy’s Preserve flora list. This process produced a refined seed menu of native species local to the Preserve that could occur at each site.

The completed degraded lands map and the associated seed menus will allow Preserve managers to prioritize and undertake successful restoration efforts and help prioritize species for regional native plant material development. We hope that the comprehensive approach developed by the Parsons Field Institute can be adopted by other land managers in their own restoration efforts.

We also wanted to create an overall list of plant materials appropriate for the Preserve. This list is critical for identifying which plant materials are available and which need to be developed. To combine the site-specific lists into an overall plant list for the Preserve, we compiled all the species that occurred in at least one of the ESDs in the Preserve that also were in our flora list and the SDPSL. The resulting 58 plant species were ranked according to the number of times they occurred in the Preserve ESDs. Finally, the lists were reviewed by two botanists, Steve Jones and Kara Barron, who have worked extensively in the Preserve. The resulting adjustments added 14 species, for a total of 72 priority species for the Preserve. We split the list into the most common species to prioritize for plant materials development and less common species to consider for additional site-specific seed mixes. The Desert Botanical Garden found that 22 of the 72 species are commercially available, but the origin of these species from commercial sources is unknown. For many plant species, using local seed is critical for success because it is adapted to the conditions of the site. Before making purchases, we need to identify the origin of the available seeds and evaluate whether the Preserve is within the known seed transfer zone of each species. Successful restoration is a complicated business!

The one-meter hiking poles lie at the intersection of the Anasazi Spur and Sunrise Trails show a large area affected by shortcutting and subsequent erosion. An area such as this would be a candidate for restoration. Photo by Dan Gruber
What’s in a brand? Is it a name? A logo? A tagline? Or is it something more? To quote the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a brand is “a public image, reputation, or identity conceived of as something to be marketed or promoted.” That’s a bit cold, perhaps, but closer to capturing the truest meaning of a brand. It’s the sum total of what someone feels about your entity—the whole of reactions evoked by your name, your logo, or your presence. It is a powerful force, because it speaks to the core perception of an organization, an individual, or a product.

In the case of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, our brand has many different meanings to many different people. That is a wonderful reflection of the breadth and depth of the offerings we present, from conservation to research, programming to education. To some, we are about hiking or biking. To others, we are about research or history.

It is a blessing to mean so much to so many. But, like any organization, the way we convey what we’re about to people who are encountering us for the first time is often through our name, our mission, and our logo. Organizations change over time. With that change in culture and objectives, the way that an organization represents itself must also change, and the Conservancy is no exception. It was established in the 1990s as an advocate organization and evolved into a stewardship organization. The Conservancy is now transforming again—into a science and education organization that does advocacy and stewardship as part of its overarching mission.

The Conservancy and BIG YAM, The Parsons Agency, funded by a generous donation from the Bob and Renee Parsons Foundation, undertook an intensive process to assess the Conservancy’s brand within the community. We interviewed stewards, donors, city staff, and elected officials. Then we carefully cataloged and assessed their feedback. We audited the missions and brands of similar organizations. And we concluded that the Conservancy’s current brand can be characterized as a caregiver archetype that showcases the land. Then BIG YAM recommended that the Conservancy’s current mission would be best reflected as a sage archetype, which showcases the work of the organization in that land.

We used this intelligence and recommendation to create the Conservancy’s new logo, color scheme and branding guidelines. The new logo, which is already in use, represents a new brand that will promote the Conservancy’s work as opposed to simply the land itself.

Our new brand and logo illustrate where we are going and who we want to be. The Conservancy has a lasting impact that stretches beyond the boundaries of Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve. It affects all levels of our community, from the children who benefit from our education programs to the businesses that enjoy the economic stimulation our tourism draws. This is the essence of the Conservancy’s mission.

We are also thrilled to announce that all active stewards received new shirts with the new logo. They were provided at no charge, courtesy of the generosity of the Bob and Renee Parsons Foundation. We hope you’ll join us in celebrating our new look, as we boldly move into our future. This is our new brand, reflecting the essence of who we are.
The car pulls up and our friends get out. “Where are we hiking today?” they ask. “Granite Mountain,” I reply. The Granite Mountain Loop Trail is a great place to take friends who are new to Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve. This wonderful, moderate, six-mile loop hike displays many of the treasures of the Preserve in the solitude of an uncrowded trail.

We bring along binoculars to view the birds. And we pack the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy field guide, Wildflowers and More, to help us identify the new spring flowers.

Let’s Go Hiking!

From the Granite Mountain Trailhead, we head in a northerly direction on the Bootlegger Trail, a broad, smooth path that winds through large granite boulders. Walking side by side, we can catch up on old times. A rock squirrel chirps to announce our approach as we smell the desert lavender in bloom. A short jaunt on Saddle Horn Trail connects us to the Granite Mountain Loop Trail where we see a dense stand of healthy saguaro cacti. At this fork, we pause to gaze to the south where views of the McDowell Mountains, Tom’s Thumb, and the Rio Valley spread out. We decide to travel in a counter clockwise loop around the mountain.

As we approach the base of Granite Mountain, the granite boulders become higher and larger, and we hear the canyon wren with its distinctive song in the distance. The foothills of Granite Mountain have one of the most impressive wild flower habitats in the Preserve. The warm southern exposure, the fine erosive soil, and water runoff from the mountain combine for perfect desert plant growing conditions. We see lupines, poppies, fairy dusters, and the ubiquitous brittle bush covering the hillside. These are just a few of more than 300 species of plants in the Preserve.

To the right of the trail is a small abandoned mine in a quartz field. After a mile of gentle climbing, we arrive at a scenic viewpoint where we are treated to an expansive view. Weaver’s Needle juts out of the Superstition Mountains 35 miles to the southeast. To the east, we see the Mazatzal Mountains at the boundary of the Phoenix Valley and the Colorado Plateau. Distinctive Four Peaks is one of the high points in the Mazatzal Mountains. Due east, we can see a glimpse of Bartlett Dam, one of the major dams on the Verde River. This would be a good place to return to the trailhead if time or energy were in short supply.

Hiking onward, we wind our way around the north side of the mountain. Fewer saguaros grace this area on the colder northern side of the mountain. At the three-mile mark, we realize that we have no visual contact with civilization. We take time to appreciate the calm and comfort saved for perpetuity by the existence of the Preserve.

As we hike onward along the west side of the mountain, the other three mountains of the Northern Preserve (Cholla, Brown’s, and Cone mountains) come into view, as well as old barbed-wire fences from bygone ranching days. The trail continues to circle the mountain, and we traverse a gorgeous, south-facing field of flowering plants. Reaching the Granite Mountain Trailhead, we decide to take it south and return to the trailhead via its intersection with Powerline Road #2. Otherwise, we could walk the brief distance to Saddlehorn Trail to retrace our steps to the trailhead via Bootlegger Trail.

It’s been a great three-and-a-half-hour morning hike, and our friends really loved it. I highly recommend that you take your friends—or even just yourself—here too.

Granite Mountain Trailhead is located off 136th Street on the far eastern border of the Northern Preserve. For a detailed map of the Granite Mountain Loop Trail, visit https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/preserve. There you’ll find the map for the Northern and Central regions of the Preserve.
Spring flowers, golden Mexican poppies (Eschscholzia californica ssp. mexicana) and purple Colter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus) blanket the mountainside after generous winter rain. Photo by Dennis Eckel
Peering into the center of a prickly pear flower, a face looks back at me. A short time later, its zebra-striped body comes into view. The belly of this beast shimmers with yellow pollen. After a slight pause, it takes flight and is gone. I am not alone for long as another one tumbles clumsily out of the air and onto the flower. It rapidly scrambles, plowing itself into the floral depths and out of sight.

These pollinator specialists of prickly pear flowers are cactus bees, not the familiar honeybee. Cactus bees are solitary bees that do not live in hives like honeybees. Rather, a female cactus bee lives a lifestyle that includes constructing her nest and raising her offspring alone. Cactus bees are just one group of our Sonoran Desert’s rich solitary bee fauna that contains approximately 1,400 species.

North America is home to 4,000 native solitary bee species that were pollinating plants long before the introduction of European honeybees. Solitary bees are immensely diverse in color, shape, size, and ecology. Although they feed on pollen and nectar, solitary bees are excellent pollinators, transporting high volumes of pollen on their hairy bodies.

Most bees carry pollen on their hind legs, but cactus bees and other members of their large family include mason and leafcutter bees. They are named after the materials they use for constructing their nests. They have large mouthparts for cutting leaves, flower petals, and wood. Leafcutting bees snip and remove leaf sections for lining their nests. Female bees use leaf toughness, leaf chemistry, floral symmetry, and antimicrobial properties when selecting leaves to cut.

Nests are often located in wood crevices, but in urban areas, nests can appear in door jams or slots in sliding windows. The female leafcutter bee carries leaves to her nest where she rolls the leaves into brood chambers that she arranges end to end in a row. Construction of a single brood cell may take up to three hours to complete. The bee provisions each cell with mixtures of pollen and nectar on which she lays an egg. Some leafcutter bee species prefer collecting pollen from only one plant family while others choose pollen from numerous species.

As I look up from the prickly pear, a flurry of movement at a nearby flowering creosote bush (Larrea tridentata) draws my attention. Creosote is an amazing survivor of desert extremes and produces flowers throughout much of the year. Creosote’s floral resources have not gone unnoticed by solitary bees. Twenty-two solitary bee species are reported to use creosote exclusively in completing their life cycle, while almost 70 additional bee species use creosote in combination with other plants.

Busy, Beautiful and Beneficial Bees
By Dr. John Weser,
Executive director of the Center for Native & Urban Wildlife at Scottsdale Community College

A bee rests on the stigma of a prickly pear flower. Photo by John Weser

Several bees share the wealth inside a prickly pear flower. Photo by John Weser

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Pollination

By Steve Jones, botanist

Our attraction to wildflowers is completely coincidental to the function of their beauty. Their brightly colored petals exist to attract pollinators such as bees, many of which coevolved with the plants being pollinated.

Plants such as conifers, grasses, bursages, and jojoba skip that process. They produce large quantities of light, dry pollen and depend on the wind to pollinated. But most other plants spend significant resources producing those objects of our attraction—colorful flowers. Their pollen tends to be heavier objects of our attraction—colorful flowers. Their pollen tends to be heavier and often slightly sticky, aiding in its pollinators such as bees, many of which coevolved with the plants being pollinated.

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Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve is one of Scottsdale’s greatest treasures. It’s open for everyone to use and to reconnect with nature. As the largest urban preserve in North America, it features more than 200 miles of scenic trails filled with diverse landscapes, plants, and animals. Whether you hike, bike, run, or ride the trails, you are linked immediately to the life contained within our living desert.

More than 700,000 residents and visitors from around the world visit the Preserve each year. Keeping the 30,500 acres of Preserve land safe and pristine is a considerable task. Yet the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and its steward volunteers are the champions who do just that. They ensure our Preserve will be around for generations to come.

Every year close to 600 stewards donate more than 55,000 hours working to maintain the unique habitat. What’s more, the Conservancy is a nonprofit grassroots organization that also offers educational programs, lectures, and workshops that the whole family can enjoy at little to no cost.

But, every champion needs a hero, and you can be a Conservancy Hero today!

Your annual contribution of $60 per person or $120 per family helps provide Conservancy stewards with the tools necessary to maintain the trails, patrol the lands, and protect the animals for today and tomorrow.

Protect the Preserve! Become a Conservancy Hero today!
Evolution is a vital process to the survival of all life in our Sonoran Desert. It is a vital element for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy as well.

Our ability to evolve to meet changes in our community, our environment, and our scope has sustained the Conservancy throughout our nearly three decades of existence. The past 12 months have seen us take healthy leaps forward in the evolution of our organization, our mission, and how we approach the essential responsibility we bear on behalf of the entire Scottsdale community.

We can proudly tell you that the state of our Conservancy is strong, and that is due in very large part to you. Over the past year, our Conservancy family has continued to thrive and flourish. Our stewards remain the backbone of our organization and our greatest resource in achieving success. Our steward base continues to grow, and we are proud of the more than 650 stewards currently invested in the Conservancy’s mission and operations. The year of 2018 saw significant milestones for the Conservancy. This included a substantial commitment of financial and resource support from the Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation that led to the renaming of our research center as the Parsons Field Institute. The generous gift from the Parsons Foundation will guarantee that the Conservancy will be able to continue its scientific efforts for years to come. It will also equally impact our education programs, particularly our ability to extend our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) educational offerings to local K-12 students.

We have vaulted into 2019 on the strength of a strong development effort and a successful annual campaign. We are looking ahead to our new membership program and the fiscal support it will continue to bring in, along with our increased financial support from the City of Scottsdale. Even as we continue to evolve as an organization, the Conservancy will always rely on, and sincerely appreciate, the support of all who work and contribute tirelessly to our preservation—our incredible stewards; our board of directors; our staff; our civic, community and business partners; and most importantly, you. We thank you sincerely for your continued support. It is an honor to serve for, with, and alongside you.

Justin Owen Richard Bourke
Executive Director Chair, Board of Directors

Financial Position

Statement of Activities

Notable Achievements

• Began receiving funding from the City of Scottsdale for the first time in the Conservancy’s history.
• Provided direct education programming for more than 1,000 K-6 students.
• Continued certification process for becoming the international specialist organization in science and research.
• Grew major research projects on preserve wildlife movement corridors, control of invasive plant species, and restoration of degraded habitats.
• Greatly increased community family events and youth education programs.

Audited financial statements available upon request.

Photo by Keranne Slaw Jensen

Hikers head up the East End Trail from Windgate Pass. Photo by Dennis Eckel
The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is grateful to YOU, the individuals, community, and corporate partners that believe in our mission to protect Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Your generous investments provide support to our volunteer stewards who devote time, energy, and resources to maintain the land and ensure its safety. The Conservancy Kids Programs provide stimulating opportunities for students and families to explore, connect, and understand our unique Sonoran Desert. The scientists from our Parsons Field Institute research our ecosystem to identify the rich plant and wildlife living in the Preserve. Through your generosity, the Conservancy will continue to preserve and advance natural open spaces through science, education, advocacy, and access for the entire community. Thank you.

Science is in Our Nature, Generosity is in Yours!

Thank you to our Individual Conservancy Coalition Donors for your gifts and pledges received from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

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This wonderful panorama is from the scenic viewpoint on the east side of Granite Mountain Loop Trail. Photo by Dennis Eckel