

Mountain Lines

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The Importance of Partnerships

One of the most impressive aspects of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is the degree to which our work is achieved through effective partnerships with individuals, organizations and government agencies. In my first few months as your new Executive Director, I've been amazed at the degree to which diverse members of the community work together to combine their skills to protect and grow the Preserve.

It begins with the City of Scottsdale, and the long-standing and effective collaboration between MSC and the city to protect the Preserve, provide education activities and advocate for its completion. There are all the local companies and community groups who staff workdays and contribute money and material to support the Preserve as well.

Then there are the hundreds of volunteer stewards, private citizens who give their time and expertise to benefit the Preserve in myriad ways. MSC stewards have contributed more than 180,000 hours of their time to the protection of the Preserve and furtherance of our work. It's the stewards that truly make MSC the community's best resource for the Preserve.

Our latest partnerships began to gear up in late January, when we met with scientists and researchers who will help MSC launch a comprehensive, multi-year inventory of the plants and animals that occur in the Preserve. The surveys will begin this spring with work on plants, reptiles and amphibians. These research partnerships represent an expansion of research that has already been conducted by some of our volunteer stewards, and promises to provide important information that will guide the future management of the Preserve.

You can help us continue to build those partnerships. Next time you're headed for the trails, call a friend who hasn't visited the Preserve. Show them what you've helped us accomplish, and invite them to explore the trails...join a workday...send a gift...become a steward...and discover the satisfaction of having a hand in protecting the living treasure that is the Preserve.

MSC is so pleased to have Mike Nolan join us as our 4th Executive Director. Mike spent 15 years with the Nature Conservancy, first as a director in the International Headquarters and then with the Missouri Chapter, leading strategic growth and financial success. He then served for 10 years with the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in Clermont, Kentucky, creating Bernheim's first development, marketing, public relations and visitor services programs, and increasing annual visitations there by 33 percent. He was selected as an Eisenhower Fellow and assigned to Budapest, Hungary for three months to consult with local non-governmental conservation organizations in 1997.

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Cover Photo: *Inspiration in One*, taken by Amy Novotny, participant in the 2010 Focus on Conservation photography contest

About MSC

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy champions the completion and sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. We connect the community to the Preserve through public and private partnerships, environmental education and stewardship.

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The Great Horned Owl

By Terry Stevens, Operations Manager at Liberty Wildlife

With 13 species present, Arizona is the home to one of the largest variety of owls in North America. The largest owl in Arizona (and the most powerful owl in North America) is the great horned owl. Great horned owls are extremely adaptable, being found from the Caribbean up to the Arctic Circle and are thus one of the most common species found in this country. We have a lot to offer great horned owls in this area since we don't get snow in most of the state and the prey base stays around all year. Owls in general, and great horned owls in particular, like to eat things that humans tend to attract, like rodents, skunks and rabbits. We also provide buildings with protected openings which provide a good selection of nesting sites for these birds who don't build nests on their own. In the Sonoran Desert, you'll find great horned owls usurping nests built previously by red tailed hawks and other larger birds as well as using flat areas formed by drooping palm fronds and the crooks of saguaro cacti. But the largest segment of the great horned population will be found close to human activity.

Great horned owls are most active at dusk and again just before dawn. They have many specialized adaptations that are keenly developed in this apex predator. Their eyesight is very good in limited light, and coupled with asymmetric ears which provide accurate targeting of their prey, they are extremely good at what they do. Equipped with twice as many cervical vertebrae as humans, they are able to overcome immovable eyes and rotate their heads close to 260 degrees in both directions. Having developed special feathers covering almost their entire body, any sound generated by flight as they approach their target is almost completely muffled, making them the original "stealth bombers" of the animal kingdom.

These large owls are also very strong, sometimes called the "Tiger of the Sky" by those that know their strength. They are able to exert up to 80lbs of squeezing pressure in their talons. This allows them to kill an animal that weighs much more than they can carry off. Normally hunting small to medium-sized rodents, if they become hungry enough, they have been known to take prey as large as raccoons or badgers!

All in all, these birds are a silent, deadly and beautiful denizen of the night skies and are often seen as a charismatic member of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve wildlife family.



photo: M. Jensen

Liberty Wildlife is one of many partner nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation organizations working with MSC. You will often meet Liberty Wildlife volunteers in the Preserve, as they provide information about the work they do and showcase rehabilitated birds. On special occasions, Liberty Wildlife will release a rehabilitated hawk or owl into the Preserve—illustrating the critical connection between the work they do and MSC's protection of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. 🦉

Partnerships Provide Access

P.A.C.E. – Passport to Access and Connection with the Environment

Through contributions given in support of the Bajada Nature Trail at the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is able to make a great difference in our community through P.A.C.E. – Passport to Access and Connection with the Environment.

This program recognizes and supports the individual and unique pace of the disabled and children. All of us learn, experience and discover...at our own pace. Spending time outdoors and learning about the natural world helps create a necessary human connection, with many studies showing that spending time outdoors diminishes stress, increases our ability to pay attention and increases feelings of being part of the world.

In partnership with the City of Scottsdale's Adapted Recreation Program, an after-school program geared for children and young adults with various types of disabilities, we facilitate learning in the outdoor classroom of the Bajada Nature Trail

through two 10-week programs. Also, through ASU's Public Allies program we are partnering with the Avondale School District to provide an outdoor experience for kids who rarely have the opportunity to experience open space.

Providing and supporting access to the Preserve's Bajada Nature Trail is an important element of fulfilling the purpose of the trail. P.A.C.E. program funding is used to support transportation, training, programming and service costs. Gifts to this fund help to provide the resources to enable us to support and expand partnerships with schools, youth groups and others that will ensure that our mission will be perpetuated. We are able to introduce many to the uniqueness of the Preserve and foster a collective sense of stewardship.

For more information about this program, please contact the MSC office at (480) 998-7971.

Linking Hands for Linking Trails

Working across boundaries to connect and expand open space trails

By Barbara Pringle, MSC Steward and MSPC Promotions Committee

If Isaac Newton were alive today and living nearby, he might have to retract one of his famous statements - *"We build too many walls and not enough bridges"* - after seeing the collaborative effort taking place between the cities of Scottsdale and Fountain Hills to link trails between Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Fountain Hills' McDowell Mountain Preserve. Count Maricopa County's McDowell Mountain Regional Park as another good neighbor in ongoing trail connectivity efforts, and the result could be a future trail system linking three large undeveloped land parcels - Fountain Hills' 740 acres, Scottsdale's eventual 36,400 acres and the Park's 21,000 acres - for the benefit of outdoor enthusiasts.

These trail links are not yet built and there are questions to be answered before trail work can proceed. Still, the discussions going on now are a great example of what the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy views as a most important conservation goal: regional collaboration, i.e. the ability to work across boundaries with people and organizations that have diverse interests yet share a common place and purpose.

Partnering with the Park

McDowell Mountain Regional Park has been a wonderful neighbor in trail-linking projects. It helped with the trail connections in the Dixie Mine area and is now working with Scottsdale in its northern Preserve area. The Park agreed to make accommodations for a trail connection that will "create a remarkable loop opportunity that affords access to the Marcus Landslide, the North McDowell Access Area, the Pemberton Trail, and popular climbing destinations like Rock Knob," notes Scott Hamilton, Scottsdale's trail planner.

Opening a New Dialogue

In the mid-1990s, early MSC steward Chet Andrews, Fountain Hills resident and avid hiker Roy Kinsey, and then-MSC Executive Director Carla began talking about a big regional trail network. That goal dropped off the radar for a while as trail building within each Preserve's boundary took priority.

Then in early 2010, Bill Myers, chair of the Fountain Hills McDowell Mountain Preserve Commission and Steve Fleming,

vice-chair of their Commission, approached the City of Scottsdale with a proposal to develop trail connections between the 60 miles of trails in Scottsdale's Preserve and the six miles of trails in Fountain Hills' Preserve. Those six miles were opened about 16 months ago via the Sonoran Trail through the Park to the north of Fountain Hills.

Fleming remembers seeing the hitching post on Scottsdale's Sunrise Trail while hiking Fountain Hills' Western Overlook Trail and thinking that would be a great spot to build a trail to and so connect both Preserves. Their proposal included two possible alternatives for connections. The northern route, which was termed "Segment A", connected the northern portion of the Fountain Hills Preserve west towards Thompson Peak. The southern route, termed "Segment B" connected the central portion of the Fountain Hills Preserve south and west to the Sunrise Trail.

"The trail connectivity of Scottsdale, Fountain Hills and McDowell Mountain Regional Park will help build additional public support for preservation. In addition, the connectivity will increase the McDowell Mountain Range presence as an outstanding Preserve area with all of the attendant benefits," said Myers and Fleming in their proposal.

Communicating among Stakeholders

Scottsdale's Planning Committee took the proposal and began reviewing it and providing feedback. The committee had a number of questions and concerns and passed on their thoughts to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission (MSPC). They took up the request and asked for an analysis from Arizona Game and Fish. Segment A was eliminated from consideration because of its potential for significant habitat fragmentation.

Scottsdale and Fountain Hills representatives hiked the proposed Segment B and accepted AZ Game and Fish's recommendation to move Segment B closer to Fountain Hills' future Adero



Photo by: S. Hamilton



Photo by: S. Hamilton

Canyon subdivision, so that habitat and wildlife movement through the Preserves was minimally impacted. Segment B was a ridgeline trail, and Fleming notes that while the views would have been phenomenal, Game and Fish told them that ridgeline trails are more upsetting to animal movement. So in the interests of continuing cooperation, “Segment B2” was drawn as the new proposed route. Because of its proximity to Adero Canyon, Myers took representatives from MCO, the owner/developer of the Adero Canyon land parcel, out for a look at Segment B2 and got their support for the proposed alignment.



Photo by: M. Jensen

The proposed trail will be about two miles long and travel through beautiful washes and desert foothills. The longest portion of the trail – about 1.3 miles – will wind through Scottsdale’s Preserve.

MSPC asked for a staff review of progress on the trail connection proposal and issued a report in September 2010. They noted that, “The construction of trails within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is governed by the Conceptual Trails Plan for the Preserve. This plan depicts the desired locations of trails within the Preserve. The plan was originally created in the 1990s, through a collaborative effort between the Preserve Commission, the Planning Subcommittee, City staff, Arizona Game and Fish, trail users and adjacent land managing agencies. Additions to the Trails Plan have been made at least three times since inception. In 2004, the Sunrise Peak Spur and the western end of the Sunrise Trail were added. In 2007, four trail segments through the interior of the Preserve were added. And, in 2009, the Marcus Landslide and Paradise Mine Trails were added to the plan.” Their goal in adding trails is to be sure “those future additions to the Trails Plan must be backed by compelling evidence that the new trail fits within the goals of the Preserve and has a demonstrable need.”

The Equestrian Question

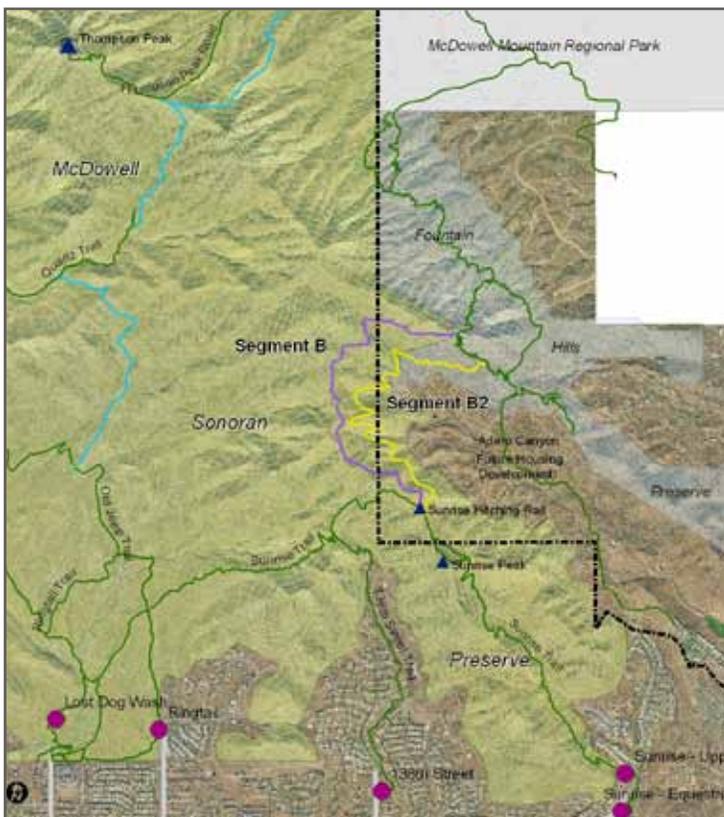
Because the Fountain Hills city code and preserve ordinance both prohibit equestrians, the MSPC deferred a final decision about whether to add the proposed B2 segment to the Trails Plan back to the Fountain Hills Preserve Commission, requesting resolution of the equestrian access issue. In December 2010 the FH Commission met and carefully examined the pros and cons. It was decided that, “at this time, the Commission would recommend to the FH Town Council that the provision stand as it is now written,” explains Fleming. At its January meeting, the council unanimously accepted this recommendation. “The primary concern we have is for safety, for the horses and their riders, and for other trail users,” notes Myers. “Our trails were designed and built using volunteers only and we don’t believe they are safe enough in some spots for horses.” Scott Hamilton agrees that the trail design standards are very different. “Our standard trail width ranges between 30 and 48 inches, with a smooth surface and without large rocks. We don’t build trails with steps that protrude from the trail, because they are barriers to equestrian and bicycle use. The FH trails are narrower and were designed primarily as foot paths for hikers.”

A potential solution could be to build a turn-around loop at Scottsdale’s hitching post with a sign telling riders that the trail into Fountain Hills is not designed for horse use.

Partnering for the Greater Good

While understanding that equestrian access is important, the MSPC voted in February to accept City Staff’s recommendation that the proposed B2 trail segment be added to the Conceptual Trails Plan. “We are not suggesting that approval of this trail means it jumps to the front of trail construction projects, but we believe this is a positive addition,” notes Kroy Ekblaw, Scottsdale’s strategic projects and preserve director. “This is a good opportunity to work together for the greater good of most trail users. Research done by the County Parks systems shows that 96% of trail usage is on foot or bikes, so it would be a shame to pass up this great opportunity to partner with our neighbor to create an expanded trail system that works for nearly everyone,” commented Rand Hubbell, MMR Park manager and MSP commissioner.

At the end of the day, most trail users don’t care “what trail belongs to what group,” says Hamilton. Ekblaw agrees that “we need to be good neighbors with our adjacent civic entities, private landowners and homeowners. And we take note that within Scottsdale’s ordinance governing the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is a management objective that calls for linking trails where appropriate with other city and regional trails.”



Map provided by the City of Scottsdale

Tom's Thumb Trailhead

Tom's Thumb Trailhead Construction – Partners and Participation!

By Claire Miller, Preserve Manager, City of Scottsdale

City staff has been working diligently over the last year with Fucello Architects planning and designing the next trailhead for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the Tom's Thumb Trailhead. If you've been out to the site, you can see just how challenging the terrain can be, with numerous washes, hills and valleys, rock and boulder fields – yet some of the most spectacular scenery around. The trailhead design incorporates the environmental sensitivity that all have come to expect within the Preserve, and will provide a beautiful amenity with a small, soft footprint on the land.



Photo by: M. Jensen

This area is already home to some of the more challenging trails in the Preserve, and has long been a popular location for rock climbers throughout the years. We are excited to be closing in on the final design elements and upcoming construction contract (Spring 2011).

As outlined in the public meeting fact sheet, the trailhead will provide parking and support amenities for the network of trails and rock climbing areas in the northern region of the McDowell Mountains. The trailhead will access the Tom's Thumb trail, the future Marcus Landslide trail and the trail network in the adjacent McDowell Mountain Regional Park, which is owned and operated by Maricopa County.



Members of the community work together at an Eagle Scout trail mitigation project at the future Tom's Thumb trailhead. Photo by: B. White



Photo by: B. White

The first phase of the trailhead will include:

- Parking for 120 cars
- Parking for 10 horse trailers
- Shade ramadas
- Restrooms
- Interpretive and directional signs
- Hitching rails
- Small storage shed
- Low-level security lighting
- Access-control gate
- No water in first phase

Given the budget challenges that we have all been facing, we are constantly working on identifying ways to “do more with less,” and this project is no exception. Partnerships and volunteer efforts will be a cornerstone of this project, similar to all of the previous trailhead construction projects – lovingly referred to as “value engineering.”

How can you get involved, you might ask? Opportunities of all sorts will be available! There will be native plants to salvage, deadfall to harvest, damaged areas to mitigate and restore, and possibly some new trail segments to be built, for example. Clearly there is a lot of work, which can't be done by any one single group; but with the efforts of many groups and numerous projects, success can be accomplished! Given that this trailhead site will be waterless, it may also provide unique educational opportunities that will be incorporated into the volunteer efforts as well.

Don't hesitate to join any of the upcoming projects related to the Tom's Thumb Trailhead construction.

After the work is completed, there's nothing more rewarding than to be able to look back at a beautiful facility and know that you helped make it what it is. There will be something for everyone – almost like going to a dance...you might prefer to swing, waltz or two-step...and sooner or later, we'll be playing your song!

For additional information about this project, go to: www.scottsdaleaz.gov/projects/capitalprojects/tomsthumb.asp

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy partners with corporate groups, and a variety of special interest groups of all sizes, as well as individual citizens who want to make a positive difference in their community. Check out the MSC activities calendar for the next community service project date, or contact Linda Raish at (480) 998-7971 or linda@mcowellsonoran.org for more information on a hands-on, team-building experience with your co-workers. 🧑‍🌾

The Marcus Landslide

A rare and massive landslide in the McDowell Mountains

By Brian F. Gootee, Research Geologist, P.G., Arizona Geological Survey

The McDowell Mountains are home to one of Arizona's largest landslides. About 500,000 years ago, a portion of the McDowell Mountains suddenly collapsed into a catastrophic rock avalanche flow where the landslide deposit, named the Marcus Landslide, is preserved. Its upper half is found in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and its lower half in the McDowell Mountain Regional Park. (Figure 1)

The chaotic mix of granite rock, vegetation and soil flowed eastward for 1.5 kilometers (about 1 mile) before coming to rest. The resulting landslide is a rare type of debris-flow deposit, also referred to as a sturzstrom. The landslide deposit is 500 meters wide (1,650 feet), 1,200 meters long (nearly 4,000 feet), and stands 30 meters (100 feet) above the valley floor. The Marcus landslide originated in weathered granite bedrock at 1,334 meters (4,067 feet) above sea level – near the second highest ridgeline in the McDowell Mountains' East End.

The landslide entrained nearly 5.25 million cubic meters (185.4 million cubic feet – enough earthen material to fill six ASU Sun Devil Stadiums!) of loose granite bedrock and weathered granite. The estimated total weight was about 11.7 billion kilograms (25.8 billion pounds), equivalent to 1.5 times the weight of water in Tempe Town Lake! (Figure 2)

The landslide event probably reached speeds of 16 to 44 miles per hour before reaching the valley floor 400 meters (1,200 feet) below. The resulting gaping scar, referred to as the "pocket," below the East End is stark evidence of the violent nature of this event. Steep levee walls – 15 to 30 meters high (45 to 90 feet) -- define the sides and toe of the slidemass. The interior of the slidemass has crude, large-scale

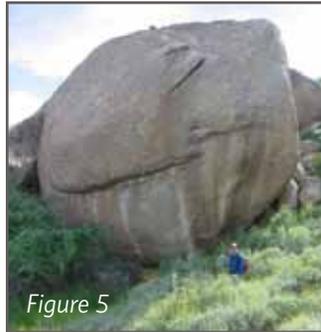


Figure 5

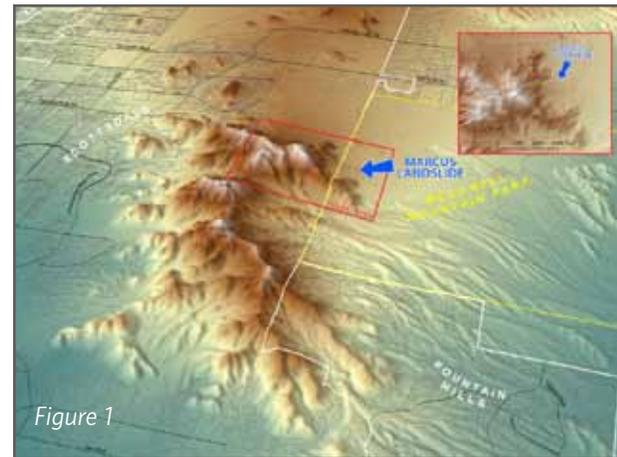


Figure 1

flow features, or pressure ridges, that formed as the slidemass buckled to a stop. The debris flow transported several hundred boulders, each weighing between 100 and 1,000,000 kilograms (220 and 2,200,000 pounds respectively), to the valley floor below. (Figures 3 and 4)

The energy released during this single landslide event was more than 46 Tera-Joules, the equivalent of driving a small car round-trip from Los Angeles to New York over 1,850 times!

Granitic boulders, many of which are several meters in diameter, help distinguish the slidemass from the surrounding plain. One particularly large boulder, "Clubhouse Rock" (Figure 5), is 10 meters wide (30 feet) and weighs about 1,090,090 kilograms (2,400,000 pounds). Close examination shows that each boulder is held together in a matrix of clay and sand. And each boulder hosts a dynamic micro-ecosystem of burrowing animals, plants, fungus, bacteria and lichen.

Much remains unknown and uncertain about the Marcus Landslide. Since its discovery in 2002 by geologist Brian F. Gootee and geographer John Douglass, many local institutions such as Scottsdale Community College, Mesa Community College, Paradise Valley Community College and ASU have led several field trips to observe and study this large feature unique to the region. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and McDowell Mountain Regional Park have collaborated with many local schools, groups and agencies to form successful and long-lasting partnerships involving research and education of the Marcus Landslide, and continue to do so. The City of Scottsdale, with guidance from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and Arizona Geological Survey, has plans underway to construct an interpretive trail to the Marcus Landslide.

The Marcus Landslide provides an excellent site for future research, recreation and education for generations to come. And it's right in our own back yard.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

MSC and the Arizona Geological Survey collaborated on a geologic survey in the Lost Dog Wash area of the Preserve that produced published articles and an interesting geologic discovery. MSC, AGS, and the City of Scottsdale also are working together to develop an educational trail to the Marcus Landslide. 🧑🏫

The Stoneman Road Task Force

An Historic MSC Partnership

By Len Marcisz, MSC Master Steward

At 4:00 p.m. on October 1, 1870, Colonel George Stoneman departed Camp McDowell, located near the confluence of the Verde River and Sycamore Creek, to scout a series of Native American trails. Stoneman, accompanied by a few troops and two ambulance wagons, intended to evaluate the trails for improvement as a wagon-bearing military road between Camp McDowell and Fort Whipple, which was located near Prescott, Arizona Territory. The scouting party camped near what is today the intersection of 136th Street and Dynamite Road on their first night, and spent their second night at springs near Cave Creek. They then proceeded up the Black Canyon toward Prescott.

Stoneman grasped the significance of the Native American trail system. He immediately ordered the 21st Infantry to improve the road for use by supply wagons.

For the next twenty years the road served as an important supply and courier route. It was a conduit for U.S. troops during the devastatingly effective winter campaign of 1872-1873 against elusive Yavapai and Tonto Apache bands residing in central Arizona. With the eventual containment of Native Americans on government reservations in Arizona by 1886, Fort McDowell was closed in 1890. The Stoneman Road fell into disuse, forgotten except for occasional references in local publications. The oldest artifact of U.S. settlement within the boundaries of the City of Scottsdale faded from sight.

In 2006, during an MSC hike near the site of Brown's Ranch, steward Larry Levy noticed a faint two-wheeled track heading southwest to northeast. Levy knew from his reading and steward education that segments of the road ran in the vicinity. In 2008, curiosity got the better of Levy and, with clearance from Claire Miller, McDowell Sonoran Preserve Manager, he began to closely examine the faint trail, assisted by stewards Bernie Finkel and Doug Watson. The examination provided evidence of road use – prehistoric and historic artifacts located (but not disturbed) along the trail. Levy and Watson researched old maps and correspondence. They were convinced that they had found vestiges of the trail within the recommended Preserve boundary.



MSC steward Bernie Finkel standing athwart the vestiges of the Stoneman Road. Photo provided by L. Marcisz

Coincident with the research conducted by Levy and Watson, steward Leonard Marcisz, Vice Chair of the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Commission, and Commissioner Bob Cook, a historian and vocational archaeologist, were considering opportunities

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General George Stoneman
Photo provided by L. Marcisz

for commemorating the 140th anniversary of the Stoneman Road scouting expedition in 2010. The four Stoneman researchers met in 2009. Their discussions sparked the idea of forming a Stoneman Road task force – an independent group of organizations committed to the commemoration of the road.

The task force was formed in July of 2009, comprising the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Commission, the Scottsdale Historical Society, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Scottsdale Chapter of the Civil War Roundtable, the director of the McDowell Mountain Regional Park, several city employees, an independent columnist and a former archaeologist with the Arizona State Parks.

The task force – an example of MSC partnership – began not with the Stoneman Road but rather with the birthday of General Irvin McDowell, the namesake of our Preserve. It seems that no celebration of McDowell's existence had ever been held in Scottsdale. This oversight was remedied in October of 2009, when the birthday was noted at the mayor's breakfast with speeches by stewards Marcisz and Dr. John Bamberl, a presentation of the National Colors by a Civil War reenactor group, and the serving of a birthday cake iced with General McDowell's portrait provided by the ladies of the DAR. The Irvin McDowell birthday has now become a Scottsdale tradition, celebrated again in 2010.

During 2010, the Stoneman Road task force accomplished the following:

- Scouted additional segments of the Stoneman Road within and emanating from the Preserve boundaries.
- Assembled the first comprehensive collection of Stoneman Road maps available in Scottsdale.
- Provided three educational presentations and panel discussions at various city facilities.
- Developed four traveling posters explicating the history of the Stoneman Road.
- Published several educational articles in local periodicals and were the subject of a half-page coverage in *The Arizona Republic* state & local section – a distinction normally reserved for local politicians, sheriffs, and the occasional spectacular felony.

The Stoneman Road task force will continue researching and publicizing the road, the objective being the designation of the road as a state historic trail during the Arizona State Centennial celebration in 2012. The task force serves as an example of the ongoing MSC partnership with the City of Scottsdale and local cultural institutions. For more information regarding the Stoneman Road contact Leonard Marcisz at lmarcisz@aol.com. 📧

The Year of Anniversaries

By Len Marcisz, MSC Master Steward

This year, 2011, is a year of three anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of the incorporation of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy; the 50th anniversary of the chartering of Scottsdale as a city; and the 60th anniversary of Scottsdale's incorporation as a town.

Scottsdale's incorporation as a town occurred on June 25, 1951. The community's population at the time numbered between 1,200 and 1,300, mostly clustered near the current downtown. The McDowell Mountains were clearly visible miles away, across open desert. The McDowells and their foothills were sparsely populated; small homesteads and a few large ranches encircled the range. The mountains were considered a convenient place to run cattle. Their scenic value was assumed to be a permanent resource, further underscored by the existence of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural school and summer residence at Taliesin West.

But progress changes all things. The town of Scottsdale, led by a succession of growth-oriented civic leaders and local entrepreneurs, shrewdly developed its image as the "West's Most Western Town" while also cultivating a reputation as an upscale resort destination and arts community. This carefully crafted ambiance attracted tourists and led to a growth of vacation resorts that dovetailed with, and profited from, the post-war increase in Americans' discretionary spending. In 1957, Motorola opened a large new office and manufacturing complex nearby. This further fueled Scottsdale's growth with an influx of executives, skilled workers and research scientists. The town population that was barely 1,300 in 1951 grew to 10,000 by 1960, to 60,000 by 1970, and nearly to 150,000 by 1980, with prospects of achieving 220,000 by 1990. (Data provided by US Census)

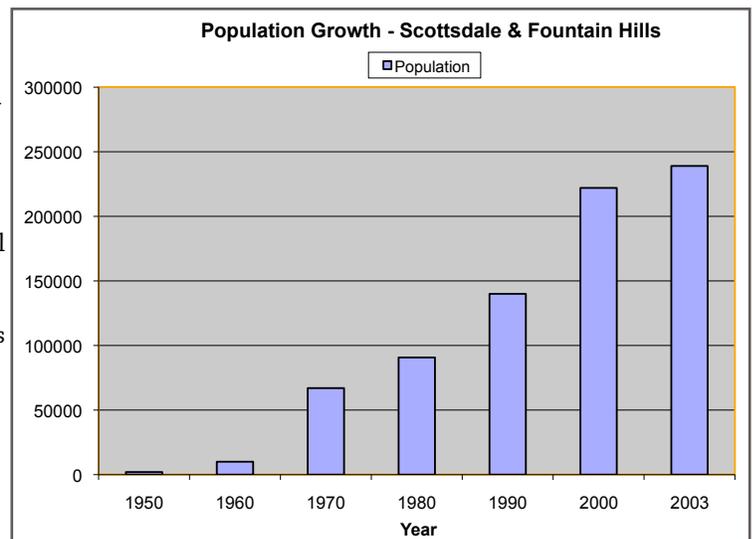
This growth moved generally east, then began to extend north to the McDowells and beyond. In 1991, a group of concerned citizens, realizing the emerging threat to the scenic and natural value of the mountain range, formed an organization to advocate preservation via land acquisition. That group -- led by Jane Rau, Karen Bertiger, Pete Chasar and Chet Andrews -- was known initially as the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust. Thus began the MSLT (now MSC) longstanding and successful efforts, in partnership with the civic leaders and voters of Scottsdale, to preserve the McDowell Mountains.

It is fitting that MSC and the City of Scottsdale celebrate concurrent anniversaries during 2011. A special city task force is preparing a two-month celebration under the banner of "60 days to 60 Years." Beginning on April 25th, a series of special events will culminate on June 25th with a giant community bonfire and western-themed event on the Civic Center grounds.

MSC will be participating in several of these events. Check the MSC website calendar and Facebook pages for upcoming information regarding the celebrations. 🗓️



Aerial view of Scottsdale in 1936 before construction of our home (site noted by "X" top left.) (Photo courtesy Labeula Mowry.)



Grow Your Own...Habitat?

By Russell Haughey, Executive Director, Center for Native and Urban Wildlife, Scottsdale Community College

While walking the trails of the McDowell Mountains I'm sure many of us have noticed a plant that impressed us with its especially pretty flowers, foliage or fruit. Have you ever thought about growing one of your favorite native plants from seed? Research has shown that native plants in a landscape tend to attract more native birds and other wildlife. These plants attract wildlife with their flowers or fruit, or because they provide cover. With a little effort, you can enjoy the satisfaction of cultivating a plant that you raised from seed, and marvel at the different kinds of wild birds you will begin to see in your garden.

When to Plant?

Basically, three times of year are best for germinating different kinds of plants. Winter annuals have evolved to take advantage of our winter rainy season and do best when planted in November or December. Summer annuals and our more tropical perennials, such as cactus, germinate best during the summer, especially in August. These plants have evolved to take advantage of our summer rainy season. Many other plants germinate best when their seed is planted in spring, i.e. March through May. These guidelines are very general, and it is often hard to predict when one of the 3,800 or so species of plants found in Arizona germinates best. So if you don't have any success with your seed in April, you may want to plant again during August through October.



Photo by M. Johnston

Planting the Seed

In general, seeds will germinate if given adequate moisture, oxygen and temperature. Commercial garden seeds are bred to ensure a high percent germination without any special treatment. But many wild seeds have a special dormancy requirement to ensure that these seeds will germinate at a time and under conditions that will give them a better long-term chance for survival. Some wild seed will germinate without any special treatment; others will require some special treatment. Many seeds are viable for about a year and the percentage of seed that will germinate will decrease every year thereafter.

Many seeds germinate better if they are "scarified" - especially desert bean trees like mesquite, acacias and other desert trees and shrubs. No, this does not mean that you have to sneak up and frighten the seed. It means the seed coat must be nicked through to the endosperm (white center) to allow the seed to more readily take on water when planted. In nature, this thick seed coat ensures

"One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides."

- W.E. Johns, *The Passing Show*

that the seed does not germinate until there is enough moisture from a big enough storm event to ensure that the developing seedling will have enough soil moisture to continue growth until the next rain. Scarifying the seed cheats the system and yields a higher percentage for the budding hunter/naturalist/horticulturist.

Seed of annual wildflowers should be broadcast, and then lightly raked over to cover the seed and hide it from birds. Keep the ground moist with a light, deep sprinkling until the seed begins to germinate. If conditions are right, germination should take five to ten days. After germination, water deeply only as often as needed to prevent the plants from wilting. Thin and weed as necessary, or as much as your time or patience allows. Winter annuals planted in late October will flower in March; summer annuals planted in June or July will flower in August or September.

MSC has enjoyed a long partnership with the Center for Native and Urban Wildlife, spreading seeds and re-vegetating the Brown's Ranch area of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve among other projects. 🌱

Seeds for plants like mesquite germinate most successfully if they are scarified, allowing them to better absorb water when planted.

Photo by M. Jensen

Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust

In November, 2010 the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy received a grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust to fund a baseline survey of the flora and fauna of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The baseline assessment will allow us to document and measure the impact of our conservation protection and restoration programs. The resulting data will then form the basis to establish the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute, an on-going monitoring center that examines the health and scope of the Preserve's living (plant, animal and insect) and non-living (rocks, water cycle) components.

The Pulliam Trust seeks to help people in need, especially women, children and families; to protect animals and nature; and to enrich community life in the metropolitan areas of Indianapolis and Phoenix. Its support of collaborative conservation and/or habitat and species protection, and environmental education and public awareness has helped many environmental nonprofits to protect natural open space and wildlife in both Arizona and Indiana.

"We are happy to partner with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the collaborative work they have planned to ultimately protect the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, one of our community's greatest natural treasures," said Robert Berger, Pulliam Trust environmental program officer.

MSC appreciates the support we receive from our Preservation Partners! For more information or to become a Preservation Partner, please contact Linda Raish at (480) 998-7971.



NINA MASON PULLIAM
CHARITABLE TRUST

Building a Legacy of Community
Grantmaking since 1998



MSC Community Development Director Linda Raish and Board Chairman Oliver Smith with the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust Board of Trustees

The McDowell Sonoran Field Institute

By Lesley Forst, MSC Conservation Outreach Specialist

With the help of our partners in the scientific community, the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute (MSFI) is developing "citizen scientists" from among our volunteer stewards and community members. Citizen scientists are volunteers that do not necessarily possess a science degree but are interested and enthusiastic in participating in research and learning. With the help of these dedicated volunteers, we can discover new insights about our Preserve, its history and the life that inhabits it.

The MSFI focuses on education driven by our findings through research. We hope to incorporate students in the community pursuing degrees in the life sciences and environmental studies. Hands-on learning in the field will be assisted by our stewards and science partners.

One of our first projects from the newly created MSFI is a flora and fauna survey of the Preserve. Steve Jones, the principle investigator for the flora survey, explains the importance of a baseline survey: "Combined with ecological study and with faunal studies, it will aid future Preserve managers in planning and in monitoring changes over time. In addition, it will be valuable to students of floristics of central Arizona and the state and region as a whole." In nearly 20,000 acres of land recognized as one of the most significant habitats outside of Tonto National Forest, there are bound to be some interesting and unique findings.

The flora portion of the survey successfully began on February 25, 2011. With the help of 20 dedicated volunteers, we collected over 20 specimens in our first outing; the list as well as descriptions of each specimen, is available here: <http://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/>

checklists/checklist.php?cl=2560. These specimens will be sent to Arizona State University's and Desert Botanical Garden's herbariums to serve as a catalogue of the plant life in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.



The fauna survey will be in full swing during the summer months, and is scheduled to go through April of 2013. Similar to the way we execute the flora survey, experts in different animal groups will lead trips to sample wildlife and record their findings. From bats, to tortoises, to mountain lions, we hope to gain a better understanding of the animals that share our desert home.

If you are interested in becoming a citizen scientist, and participating in one or both of these research studies, please contact Lesley Forst at (480) 998-7971 ext. 105.

The McDowell Sonoran Field Institute leads research projects with the help of partners in the science community, including ASU School of Life Sciences, Scottsdale Community College Center for Urban Native Wildlife, Central Arizona Project- Long Term Ecological Research (CAP-LTER), Arizona Game and Fish, The Audubon Society and The Desert Botanical Garden. 🌱

Wildflower Watch...

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's Wildflower Watch program, now in its fifth year, is growing faster than a field of poppies! Last year's Watch introduced a more convenient format on the MSC website, directing wildflower enthusiasts to the exact trailhead and corresponding trail for the wildflower or flowering plant of their seeking, complete with photographs and other detailed information. This year, with the help of Facebook, Picasa, and you, we are going interactive.

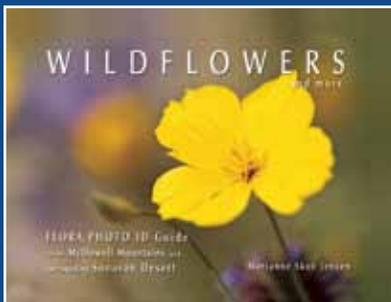
We anticipate a late, but excellent bloom of both wildflowers and cactus this year since there are a number of seeds in the upper soil layer from past years, and from the unforgettable bloom of 2005. Our usual spring time flowers are guaranteed to be out, like fairy dusters, brittlebush, ocotillo, globe mallow, as well as annuals like scorpionweed, fiddleneck, desert marigold, blue dick, lupine, desert chicory and the ever-favorite poppy. What will make the Wildflower Watch so unique this year is the ability to share your sightings, pictures and experiences instantly on the Facebook page via your smart phone or personal computer.

To make your online picture-posting and story-telling simple and fun, Lesley Forst, MSC's Conservation Outreach Specialist and savvy social media guru, is available to answer any questions you may have. Post your question on the MSC Facebook page wall, and Lesley will give you the tools you need for social media success within minutes! If you've never ventured to the Facebook page, find it easily at facebook.com/mcdowellsonoran-conservancy.

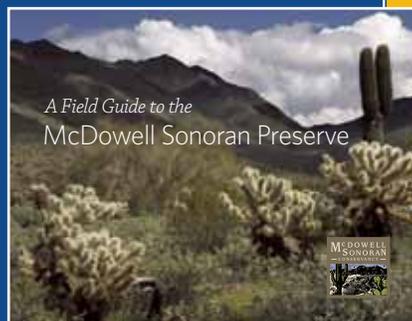
Thanks to the ecological uniqueness of the Sonoran Desert, you can see wildflowers not only in the springtime, but the summer as well. MSC offers guided hikes through June, so check the website to see which ones fit your schedule. Trained stewards and hike leaders will share their passion for the Preserve, the hidden treasures of the McDowell Mountains and the hopefully not-so-hidden wildflowers. Be sure to arrive 15 minutes before hike departure and don't forget your camera! 📷



Photos by M. Jensen



Prepare yourself now for the Spring/Early Summer Wildflower season in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve by using the best wildflower identification guide around. Author and photographer Marianne Jensen's new flora guide *Wildflowers and More* focuses on over 150 flowering plant, shrub and tree species located in the Preserve. Completely color coded, the guide includes detailed photos and descriptions for each species making it very easy to use and it's small enough to fit inside a small pack! Purchase your copy today through our online shop or by coming to the MSC office. All proceeds will benefit the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.



The newest version of the MSC Field Guide is hot off the presses! Filled with information about what you may find in the Preserve and a perfect size to carry on your hike, this guide is a must have for every visit to the Preserve. For more information on all the resource materials available for sale, please visit the MSC website at www.mcdowellsonoran.org

2011 Focus on Conservation Photography Contest

Take Your Best Shot for Conservation!

2011 FOCUS ON CONSERVATION ENTRY FORM

Complete this entry form and attach a copy to each submission.

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

1) Indicate a category for your entry (select only one)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plants and/or Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People | <input type="checkbox"/> Macro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscapes and/or Geology | <input type="checkbox"/> Seasons |

2) Indicate a division for your entry (select only one)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Amateur | <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

3) Descriptive title*

* If no title provided, "Untitled" will be assigned.

4) Approximate location photograph was taken

5) I have read the entry guidelines and hereby attest that my entry meets the criteria and I agree to contest guidelines.

Sign _____

Date _____



Photo by Narayan Kovvali

Participating in MSC's annual Focus on Conservation photography contest is one way you can help MSC achieve our mission. Eligible photographs may be taken in the Preserve between June 1, 2010 and May 30, 2011. Winning entries will be those whose overall impact best captures the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as a living ecological treasure.

CATEGORIES:

Seasons – Embody the essence of a season in a photograph.

Digital Art – Create a personal spin on nature through monochrome, time-lapse, infrared, composite, HDR or other technique.

Macro – Capture an image of the micro-desert.

Plants and Animals – Create a portrait of a Preserve resident.

Landscapes and Geology – Illustrate the many geographic aspects of the Preserve.

People – Explore the complex relationship of people with the Preserve.

Each entry category will have a winner selected from each division (advanced, amateur and youth) and at least one Award of Merit. The "Best of Show" will receive \$500 and the "Best of Show – Youth Division" winner will receive a special award.

Photographers must follow the Preserve Ordinance including staying on designated trails, not disturbing plants, animals or archaeological sites, and visiting between sunrise and sunset. Photos that obviously necessitated breaking the Ordinance will be disqualified. Preserve Ordinance and map can be found on the MSC website.

Submissions must include a print along with a single CD or DVD containing the digital files of all entries. Submissions will not be returned. Each photographer may submit no more than 5 images per category and a maximum of 12 images total. Photographer grants MSC the right to use photos for any purpose in support of the MSC. Copyright remains with the photographer.

McDowell Sonoran Conservancy
16435 N. Scottsdale Road
Suite 110
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Generous support for this program is provided by:



Green at Work



Did you know that you can support the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy at your workplace? MSC is among 29 leading environmental and conservation nonprofits that make up the Environmental Fund for Arizona – a vibrant partnership of Arizona’s “green” organizations working all across the state to improve our natural environment.

Since 2001, thousands of Arizona employees have been offered a “green” choice through EFAZ as part of their workplace giving campaigns, and collectively have raised over \$800,000 for the vital environmental work being done by our member groups, including MSC.

You can donate through EFAZ in the workplaces listed below. Also, if your current workplace doesn’t offer a “green” choice yet, please contact Laine Seaton at the Environmental Fund for Arizona if you’re interested in starting or including EFAZ in your workplace giving campaign!

(480) 510-5511 or laine@efaz.org

- Maricopa County
- State of AZ
- Combined Federal Campaign
- Pima County
- Coconino County
- City of Phoenix
- City of Goodyear
- City of Scottsdale
- City of Mesa
- City of Chandler
- Town of Queen Creek
- Town of Cave Creek
- Maricopa County Community Colleges
- Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine
- Wells Fargo
- JP Morgan Chase
- Ameriprise
- American Express
- United Health
- DMB Associates
- Orcutt Winslow Architects
- Raytheon
- Phoenix Zoo
- Desert Botanical Garden



For a complete list of EFAZ members and workplace partners, visit www.efaz.org.

Join Our Circle of Friends

As a community member who values the outdoors, and specifically the Sonoran Desert, you understand the importance of preserving and maintaining open space now to ensure its availability in the future. This shared appreciation of the desert is why we are inviting you to join us today as a Friend of the Preserve... by returning the membership form below.

Yes!

- McDowell Sonoran Society (\$1,500+)**
- Steward Circle (\$1,000)
- Trailbuilder Circle (\$500)
- Caretaker Circle (\$250)
- Pathfinder Circle (\$100)
- Hiker Circle (\$50)
- Other _____

- Please charge my credit card
- A check is enclosed

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name as it appears on the card _____

Name(s) by which you would like to be acknowledged _____

Address _____ Email _____

Phone _____

- I would prefer that my gift remain anonymous

Mail to: McDowell Sonoran Conservancy • 16435 N. Scottsdale Rd. • Suite 110 • Scottsdale, AZ 85254

I want to help preserve my desert and mountains by joining MSC's Circle of Friends.

Get Connected with MSC Through Social Media!

We have so many great ways for you to stay up to date with all of the latest happenings at MSC, and to share all of your pictures, videos and thoughts about your experiences in the Preserve:



Have you signed up for your Facebook account yet? Over 650 of your fellow conservation enthusiasts have liked MSC on Facebook and want you to join them. “Like” MSC and you can connect with other MSC Facebook fans, upload pictures and videos of your outings in the Preserve, share stories of hikes, and always know what event is coming up next. You can find anything from news articles, to highlighted hikes, to a chance to win a cool prize! The Facebook page is especially important during wildflower season, as you can refer to it to see on what trails people have found wildflowers, or to look at the pictures they have taken in case you live out of state. Also, don’t forget to check out Facebook on Fridays – there is guaranteed to be something fun to celebrate the start of the weekend! Check it out today at www.facebook.com/mcdowellsonoranconservancy.

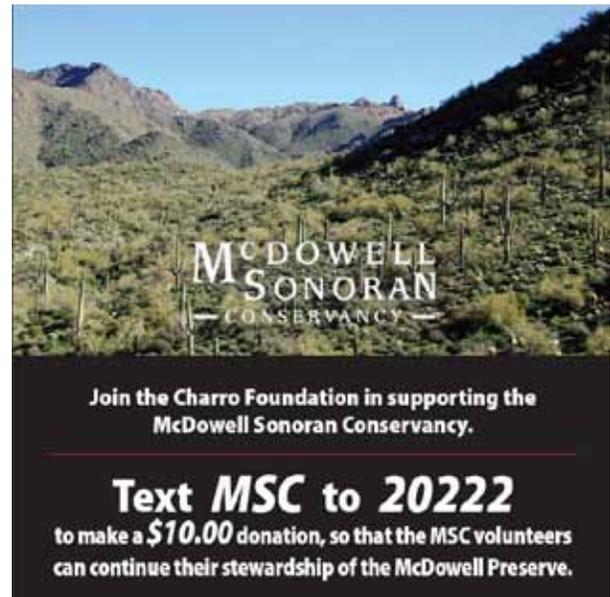


Jumo is a site that allows nonprofits to connect with potential supporters and volunteers from around the country and even around the world. It was launched recently by Facebook co-founder, Chris Hughes and already has over 3,500 nonprofits registered. On MSC’s Jumo page we keep our followers updated on events and activities, as well as relevant news articles. Jumo serves as a Facebook for nonprofits, combining social networking with social change. It is an easy way to learn what is happening in the nonprofit environmental community, as well as organizations working in arts and culture, education, human rights, health and other areas. Go to www.jumo.com and search for McDowell Sonoran Conservancy today!



When you find a place that you really like, you want to tell your friends you’re there. It might be a great view from the top of Tom’s Thumb trail, to a great post-hike café, or REI – a place to find all of your outdoor gear. The Facebook Places application is the newest way to spread the word.

During the 2010 holiday season, REI took the opportunity to use Facebook Places to make a positive impact on environmental nonprofit organizations across the country. Between November 5th and December 19th, each time a customer checked in at the Paradise Valley or Tempe REI locations, \$1 to as much as \$50 per check in was donated to MSC. A total of \$100,000 was distributed to all of the participating nonprofits. Members of the social media community helped to bring in over \$1,200 to MSC in that short period of time! Thank you to REI for their generosity, and to all of our local Facebook users for your partnership and successful collaboration.



The Charro Foundation

A one-time donation of \$10.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Messaging & Data Rates May Apply. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected by The Charro Foundation for the benefit of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at www.hmgf.org/t. All purchases must be authorized by the account holder. You can unsubscribe at any time by replying STOP to short code 20222; Reply HELP to 20222 for help.



Through MSC’s partnership with The Charro Foundation, you are now able to donate using a text message. Simply text “MSC” to 20222 and a \$10 donation will go straight to MSC. It doesn’t get much easier than that!

The Mountain Lines is going electronic!

We currently print the Mountain Lines on Forest-Certified paper with soy-based inks, but want to do more. To be more environmentally-conscious and also provide a convenience to our supporters who leave the Valley during the summer months, we will create the summer Mountain Lines issue electronically, and plan to print only three editions per year. We will send this summer edition via e-mail in July.

The summer Mountain Lines will be packed with news from the Preserve, as well as interesting educational articles about what makes the Sonoran Desert so special. **Please provide an updated e-mail address so you don't miss out!**

We will need to receive your e-mail address **by June 15th**, so don't delay. Go to our website and click on the green button that reads "Join our e-mail list". Or, call our office at (480) 998-7971 and we can take your information over the phone.

Thank you for your support.

www.mcdowellsonoran.org



Photo by D. Bierman