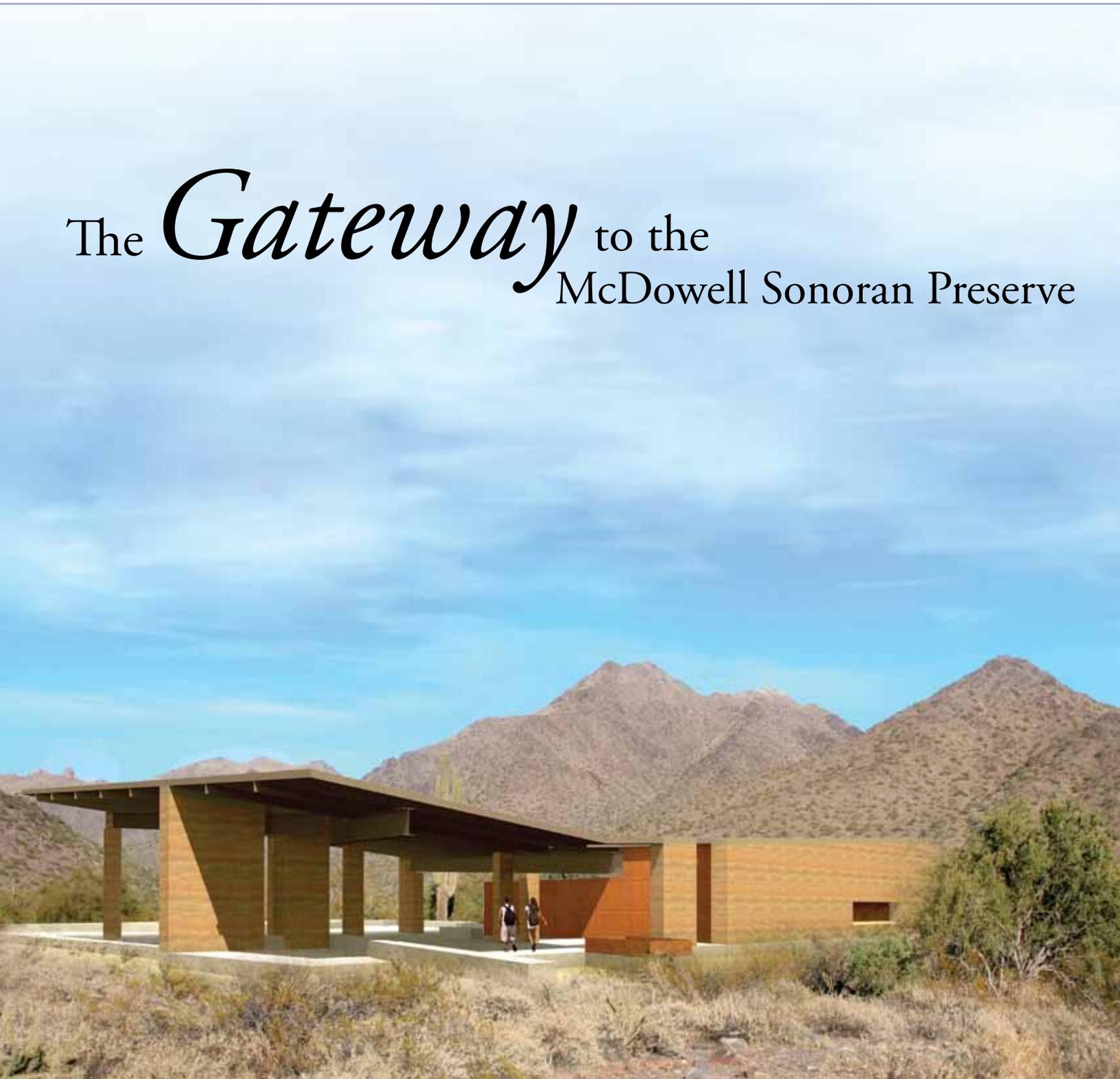




# Mountain Lines

Vol.14, No.11 April, 2009 Preserving Our Desert and Mountains [www.mcdowellsonoran.org](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org)

## The *Gateway* to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve



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# A Gateway to Meeting Our Mission

By Con Englehorn, Chairman, Board of Directors and Ruthie Carll, Executive Director

Thanks to our partnership with the City of Scottsdale, the opening of the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is a milestone for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (MSC) as it adds a significant tool for us to utilize in fulfilling our mission.

The Gateway introduces its owners, the citizens of Scottsdale, as well as visitors from throughout

the nation and the world, to the Sonoran Desert and mountains of the Preserve. The short Gateway hiking trails, which include a barrier-free interpretation trail, along with the amphitheater and other facilities, provide MSC excellent opportunities to offer education and recreation programs for both the casual visitor and the serious student of the natural history of the Sonoran Desert.

*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.*

## Connecting the Community through Stewardship

MSC Stewards, staff and our community partners have been diligently working for the past year to get the Gateway ready for public enjoyment of the area. Our trail crews have been building new trails and rebuilding trails to connect with Gateway site amenities. MSC corporate partners helped supply additional manpower to MSC work crews, spending hours re-vegetating old jeep roads, moving native plants to “safe zone” locations within the project

site, and installing wayfinding signage and emergency markers along the new Gateway trails.



Stewards move a barrel cactus out of the path of the new Tom's Thumb Trail.

Stewardship for MSC is more than trail-building and patrol though. It is also carrying out scientific research to understand that which we steward.

It is educating people about the uniqueness of the resources in the Preserve, its value, and how to interact with it to encourage sustainability of the resource. MSC is working in collaboration with Arizona State University, Arizona Game and Fish, and others on research to help us understand the threats posed by years of drought and expected climate change to wildlife species and all ecological systems in the Preserve, so that people now and for generations to come can enjoy these same experiences.

## Connecting the Community through Partnerships

Special thanks to MSC's corporate and civic partners whose employee volunteers and members participated in more than 20 trail projects to help create the Gateway:

### American Express

APS

Boeing

Dial

Fitch

Medtronics

MBAA

Scottsdale Community College

### Scouts Groups

Wells Fargo

Wespac



## *Completion and Sustainability of the Preserve*

Just as the Preserve was first created by the community, it will take the community to complete and sustain it. Through the Gateway, MSC will introduce many to the Preserve, foster their sense of stewardship, and combine their voices with others into a unified and powerful call to action.

All of the private land within the Preserve boundary has been acquired and what land remains to be acquired is state trust land. Until the community raises a loud, collective voice demanding that our leaders create and implement an acquisition plan, the Preserve will remain a half-achieved goal waiting for statewide state trust land reform. MSC believes that the best way to prod the community into action is to ensure that the Preserve has a recognizable face in each community members' mind. This face is not that of an individual. Rather it is, with incomparable beauty, the landscape of the Preserve itself. Every individual who meets this living treasure through an initial experience at the Gateway will surely do everything they can to complete and sustain it.



## *Connecting the Community through Environmental Education*

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve is a place where the majesty of the wilderness is unspoiled. The desert, bajadas, arroyos and mountains accessible through the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve are living classrooms for bringing the community to a more profound understanding of nature, self-awareness, and the joy of living. Through amenities in the Gateway, MSC will host additional guided hikes, amphitheater talks and demonstrations, and create new visitor resources like an audio tour and trail guide.

A new barrier-free interpretation trail, scheduled to open in September, will help MSC to engage teenagers in our steward program. The trail, less than 1 mile long, also offers opportunities for MSC to provide environmental education for a self-guided visitor, through panels and signage along the trail, as well as a guided experience, through an informal docent program.



*A steward releases a rehabilitated hawk at a trailhead class.*

As the City of Scottsdale's primary partner in stewardship of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, MSC is pleased to announce the gifts of both a to-scale model of the Preserve that illustrates the topographic complexity of the landscape and its influence on the trail system, as well as all other informational exhibits in the Gateway.

# Kids Page

Go Ahead - Ask Me!

ASK ANGIE



Hi Angie, How much water should I carry when I hike? - Nandee

Good Question Nandee! I always bring as much water as I can carry when I go hiking. My heavy pack reminds me to keep drinking. Then, as I drink, my pack will keep getting lighter!

Now I've got a question for you!



If I have 6 bottles of water and I want to drink 1 bottle per mile, for which of these 3 hikes do I have enough water?

### Hike 1

Gateway Loop to Bell Pass Trail (1 1/2 miles) then to Windgate Pass Trail (3 miles) and then back to the trailhead (1 1/2 miles)

### Hike 2

Desert Park Trail to Horseshoe Trail (1/2 mile) then to Gateway Loop Trail (1 mile) then to Saguaro Loop (1 mile) and then back to the trailhead (1/2 mile)

### Hike 3

Gateway Loop to Windgate Pass Trail (1 1/2 miles) then to Inspiration Viewpoint (1 1/2 miles) then back to Windgate Pass Trail then to Desert Park Trail (1/2 mile) and then back to the trailhead (3 miles)

## The Gateway, MSC, and Kids

By Len Marcisz, MSC Board Member

The Gateway facility is a trailhead; a place to park and embark on a walk, hike or ride into the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. For adults it represents a convenient portal to escape from the urban milieu. But for a child, the Gateway opens possibilities for experience and education unavailable at school, in the neighborhood, or at the PC screen. The Gateway provides an opportunity to meet unfiltered nature head on. This is important.

Our children and grandchildren will spend most or their entire lives in the 21st Century. They will confront challenges of increasing urbanization, natural resource scarcity, and climate change. Confident responses to these challenges will require an understanding of natural processes. If you are a child of the 20th Century, you probably recall the natural lessons you learned through play on a local beach, in a nearby copse of trees, or perhaps on the empty lot down the block. Those opportunities for childhood exposure to nature are narrowing. If you can find a Gateway to nature for your children – take them to it and through it.

Their future will be better for it.

## A Cryptogram Challenge!

A cryptogram is a message written in code. Your challenge is to figure out this secret message!

**HINT**  
"B" equals "O"

KBE'R WFBA SR – MBBK GFCEJRX CDJ YCDK RB LSEK.

After you have decoded this message, talk with your family about what the message means to you.

# What's Going On at the Gateway this Summer?

## A Lot!

### Breakfast Briefings in the Gateway Amphitheater

These casual talks are just the thing on a Saturday morning this summer. You'll have juice, fruit, and danishes while participating in a potpourri of discussions that range from "Hiking Gear 101" to "How Do Desert Fruit Get Around?". Our expert speakers love to share their knowledge in this easy going atmosphere. There won't be any PowerPoint shows - just interactive conversations. No registration required.

Every Saturday in June and July, 7 to 8 a.m.



*Tortoises move slowly so may seem to be simple animals. In fact, they are quite complex! Learn more about them at a Breakfast Briefing this summer.*

### Summer Hikes

Hiking in the summer? You bet! The desert is full of life in the summer - if you visit at the right time of day. That's why we have early morning hikes in May and June. Our guides can point out some of the Preserve's secrets, things you might not notice on your own. Because of the season, we take our time, stop often to talk about what we see, and admire our surroundings. All of these hikes begin at 6:30 a.m. and end around 8:30 a.m. More detailed information is available on our website.

**May 31, Sunrise Trail to the Overlook**

**June 6, Gateway Loop**

**June 14, Desert Park Loop**

**June 20, Taliesin Overlook via Quartz Trail**

**June 28, Ringtail Loop**

## Green Teens

*Presented by APS with additional support from REI*

This May, MSC is launching a Green Teens program. These programs introduce 14 and 15 year-olds to the desert through hip, thematic adventures. Does your teen watch Survivor Man? Here is a chance to be in the desert with an authentic version: Peter Bigfoot, founder of the Reevis Mountain School. Do you have a 'techy' at home? Get them outdoors with Richard Eastman, a geocaching and orienteering expert. Perhaps you have an animal-lover without something to do. A trip to Southwest Wildlife and a hike with Game and Fish Rangers will have them asking for more. What about the artist in the group? A day in the Preserve with a poet, a photographer, and other artists will open their eyes to nature's beauty.

**These workshops will turn your teen into a Green Teen!**

**Fee:** \$35-one workshop / \$25-two or more

**Registration:** 480-998-7971

**Times:** 8 a.m. to Noon

**Dates and Themes:** May 9 Orienteering and Desert "know how"

May 16 Desert Survival

May 23 The Art of Nature

May 30 Desert Dwellers

## A Sneak



## Peek

**at what is coming up in the Fall at the Gateway**

This Fall, a new barrier-free desert education trail will open at the Gateway. This trail, designed to be accessible to everyone, will have exhibits that bring the desert to life. During the second phase of the trail's development, a docent program that will compliment the exhibits with hands-on, 5-senses opportunities, will be added. Finally, the third phase brings audio-tours and guide books to complete the project.

**If you are interested in becoming a Gateway Docent, please contact us at [volunteer@mcdowellsonoran.org](mailto:volunteer@mcdowellsonoran.org).**

# How Green is the Gateway?

By Phil Weddle, Architect, Weddle Gilmore

The Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve illustrates how innovative design, careful construction, and a community committed to sustainability can create a major trailhead while still respecting the environment. After construction is complete, the project team will apply to the U.S. Green Building Council for LEED certification. This is an independent, third-party verification that the project meets the highest green building measures.

Here are just a few of the features of the Gateway that support our application for LEED certification:

The site **minimizes heat gain** using stabilized granite rather than typical pavement in parking areas and driveways.

**Rainwater harvesting** occurs by collecting all of the rainwater that lands on the roof each year into a cistern, fulfilling all of the site's irrigation needs.

**Water efficient plumbing** features save about 250,000 gallons annually.

Photovoltaic panels produce enough **renewable energy** annually to power all of the site's needs.

The building's **energy performance** is much greater than typical buildings due to window placement, building materials, and efficient mechanical systems.

Building materials contain more than 20% **recycled materials**, minimizing environmental impact caused by mining raw material and creating new construction supplies.

Construction materials (22%) were **regionally produced**, reducing energy consumed by transportation.

**Native plant preservation** included salvaging and relocating all native trees/plants within the site's footprint while **minimal habitat impact** occurred outside of the site's footprint.

**Protection of fragile habitat**, such as arroyos, included hand digging, hand soil removal and restricted travel.

Plant litter was collected from the site's footprint and stored for **habitat restoration** efforts, including redistributing vital organic matter and seeds.

**Waste recycling** efforts led to approximately 90% of the construction waste, even cement drippings, funneling into local recycling programs.

## WEDDLE GILMORE black rock studio

Founded in 1999 by Philip Weddle and Michael Gilmore, WEDDLE GILMORE is a design practice focused on creating structures that are responsive to unique cultural, climate and site-specific influences. The firm's experience in the architectural and planning field centers on environmentally appropriate architecture within a culturally diverse range of communities.

WEDDLE GILMORE's work, found throughout the southwest as well as Europe and Asia, has garnered awards and recognition for environmental excellence in design. The firm was awarded the Sustainable Firm of the Year by AIA Arizona in 2008.

Philip Weddle's work includes a series of projects that explore the urban-desert interface and the people and wildlife that inhabit these spaces. These projects include the Rio Salado Audubon Nature Center, Gateway Access Area, Lost Dog Wash Trailhead, Pinnacle Peak Trailhead, and the Salt River Memorial Hall.

### Gateway Project Team

#### City of Scottsdale

Bob Cafarella, Preservation Division Director  
Robin Rodgers, Project Manager  
Scott Hamilton, Senior Planner

#### McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

Ruthie Carll, Executive Director

#### WEDDLE GILMORE black rock studio

Philip Weddle, AIA – Principal Architect  
Brandon Gowen – Project Manager

#### JJR Floor – Landscape Architect

Chris Brown, ASLA – Principal Landscape Architect

#### Associated Mechanical Engineers – Mechanical Engineer

Bakkum Noelke – Structural Engineer

Construction Zone - Building Contractor

GREN A/E Consulting – LEED Consulting

Kland Huval – Civil Engineer

Quest Energy – Energy Modeling & LEED Commissioning

Valley Rain Construction - General Contractor

Woodward Engineering – Electrical Engineer

Soil and rock removed during construction were ground, sifted, and pressed into molds to create the walls of the building, leading to greatly **reduced construction waste**.

# The Gateway is Essential to Scottsdale's Visitors

By Brent DeRaad, Executive Vice President, Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau

When the Gateway opens, it will answer one of the most frequent asked questions the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) receives from Scottsdale visitors—"How do I access the Preserve?"

The Scottsdale CVB conducts extensive research regarding what drives visitors to come to Scottsdale. The data consistently indicates that our unique Sonoran Desert environment is among the top reasons people choose to visit our city. This means it is essential to have a place within the Preserve where tourists can go to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

While the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, City of Scottsdale staff and countless volunteers have planned and built several trails within the Preserve, the long-awaited Gateway serves as its largest and most significant entry point. Access to gathering areas, restrooms, and interpretive exhibits significantly enhances the outdoor experience, particularly for tourists who have different needs than residents. Many residents already know where they want to access the Preserve and are familiar with the amenities of their favorite trailheads. Visitors, however, will be more apt to use the Gateway's parking, facilities and way-finding signage to explore the Preserve.

The Gateway will also serve as an attraction to the thousands of corporate, incentive and association meeting delegates who convene annually in Scottsdale. Meeting planners are continually looking for meeting destinations that offer something unique to their attendees. With its bus access, gathering areas and barrier-free access to the desert, the Gateway will make the Preserve much more accessible to meeting and business travelers, who represent as much as 60% of the business for large Scottsdale hotels and resorts.

The addition of the Gateway makes it feasible for meetings delegates to extend their stays in Scottsdale by adding to their itineraries a day before or after their trips to explore Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. While visitors have admired it from afar for many years, it is now easily accessible.

"The Gateway is a tremendous addition to Scottsdale's tourism product in that it makes more accessible our biggest tourism attraction, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve," said Rachel Sacco, president & CEO of the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Customers in our top feeder markets of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles have told us repeatedly that they come to Scottsdale to escape their daily realities and that our Preserve is an ideal place to do so."

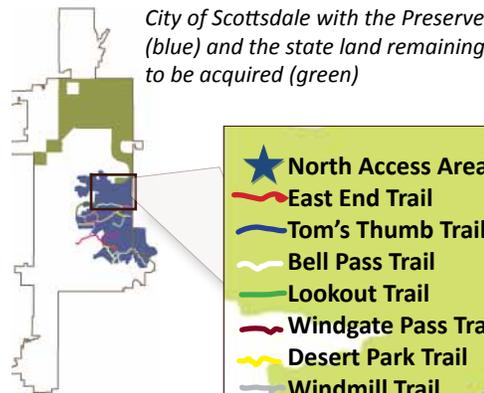
## Connecting the Gateway to Tom's Thumb

By Scott Hamilton, City of Scottsdale Trails Manager

In 2007, work began to layout the Tom's Thumb and East End trails and construction began in October, 2008. Okanogan Trail Construction was hired to build the trails due to their expertise in trail building in mountainous terrain. The construction crew was assisted by the City of Scottsdale's Preservation Division staff and an enthusiastic crew of Stewards. Both trails were recently completed, and are now open to public use.

These trails are narrower than the other Preserve trails (30" wide) and overall are more challenging. There are a few lengthy sections of switchbacks, where elevation is gained rather quickly. The views are amazing, and the topographic diversity beyond compare, making it a worth-while trip. The landscape around Tom's Thumb is different from the southern portion of the Preserve, as it is dominated by large granite boulders and plants that receive a slightly higher amount of rainfall.

Access to the Tom's Thumb Trail is available from the Gateway by following the Windgate Pass Trail to the Tom's Thumb Trail intersection, just west of Inspiration Viewpoint. Also, parking is available at the north end of the trail near 128th Street (follow the sandwich board signs.) The dirt roads in that area are not maintained, so travel is at your own risk. Detailed maps of the new trails in the north area will be available at the grand opening of the Gateway Access Area on May 2nd.



City of Scottsdale with the Preserve (blue) and the state land remaining to be acquired (green)

### Three New Trails by the Numbers

	Tom's Thumb Trail	East End Trail	Lookout Trail
Length:	4.25 miles	1.25 miles	0.5 mile
Elevation Change:	1,311 feet	1,041 feet	168 feet
High Point:	3,751 feet	3,608 feet	3,858 feet

# The Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Pre-

By Bob Cafarella, Preservation Division Director, City of Scottsdale

The Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve will be the visible statement of mountain and desert preservation in Scottsdale, and the portal, or front door, to the Preserve. Located north of Bell Road on the east side of Thompson Peak Parkway, the Gateway is strategically located to be both easily accessible from the region and highly visible from the surrounding transportation system serving the northeast Valley.

The Gateway will be the most usable portion of the Preserve, accessible to users of all abilities and passive recreation interests. It will serve as a staging area for exploration of the Preserve through connection to the existing and planned citywide trail system both in and outside of the Preserve.

The Gateway will contain a broad range of amenities including parking, shade ramadas, view terrace, restrooms, amphitheater and equestrian facilities. It will also contain Preserve office and storage space, and other infrastructure improvements to serve passive recreational users and tourists.

The Gateway will be the primary location for educational activities and for visitation from the casual tourist or visitor seeking a genuine desert experience. The amphitheater nestled in the desert, with a striking view of Toms Thumb,

The Gateway grand opening is another hallmark in our progress to complete the most significant undertaking in Scottsdale's history. Profoundly grand in its achievement, it quietly demonstrates our citizens commitment to desert and mountain protection.

Jim Lane, Mayor, City of Scottsdale

will be the venue for educational programs, lectures and other activities offered by volunteers from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and other groups. These programs will enhance the community's understanding and appreciation of the desert environment where we live. Additionally, interpretive and directional materials, including a barrier-free, interpretation trail that will tell the story of the magic and wonder of the Sonoran Desert and the Scottsdale preservation effort, will be located in the Gateway.

No matter one's age or physical ability, the Gateway will provide the opportunity for the visitor to venture out to have a natural desert experience. This is the place the entire community will come to experience the Sonoran Desert in which we are so fortunate to live.

The Preserve has a handful of handsomely designed side entrances and now it has a grand front door. I invite everyone, resident and tourist alike, to visit our living treasure through its new entrance, the Gateway. This barrier free facility ensures that our unique desert environment is accessible to everyone. The exhibits and amenities help everyone have a safe and enjoyable experience.

John Little, City Manager, City of Scottsdale

## MSC Kept the



Behind the Scenes Tours



Special Previews

## Community Connected

Demonstrations



Lectures



Events

## During Construction